

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE ROVERS?"

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WILLY'S DOG!

THIS WEEK'S GRAND SCHOOL YARN.



Willy dashed among the fags, scattering them like ninepins. Chubby went over with a roar, and Juicy reeled sideways as Willy's fist struck him on the ear. "Any more complaints?" asked Willy.

ON THE TRAIL OF A SCOUNDREL!—Willy Handforth is determined to get Lightning, the greyhound, back from Bill Brice, but that scoundrelly bookmaker has covered his tracks well. Help comes unexpectedly, however, and Willy and his elder brother, Edward Oswald Handforth, pass through many exciting adventures before Lightning becomes—

WILLY'S DOG!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

(Author of the St. Frank's stories now appearing in "The Popular," every Tuesday.)

CHAPTER 1.

Strange Behaviour of Willy!

CHUBBY HEATH, of the Third Form at St. Frank's, thrust his hands deeply into his trousers' pockets, and leaned disconsolately against the wall of the gymnasium. He gazed bleakly across the old Triangle, and Juicy Lemon, who was with him, looked even more glum. And yet it was Saturday morning, and lessons for the day were over. The sun was shining, and there was a keen nip in the air.

"Let's hope he'll be better to-day," remarked Chubby Heath, after a long pause.

"Well, he can't be much worse," said Juicy Lemon. "That's one consolation."

"Consolation, be blowed!" said Chubby, with a frown. "Ever since Thursday morning Willy has been going about like a chap in a dream. He's lost all his enthusiasm—all his pep. If he goes on like this, he'll fade away to a shadow!"

"I wouldn't have believed it!" said Juicy firmly. "I mean, a chap like Willy! Always so jolly handy with his fists—always so ready with something to say! And yet, for practically three solid days he's been as silent as the Lynx."

"You mean the Sphinx," grunted Chubby.

"Same thing," said Juicy Lemon indifferently.

The two fags heaved a couple of sighs, and were silent for a bit. Willy Handforth was the subject of their conversation. Incidentally, Willy Handforth was the usually cheery young skipper of the Third Form. Among the fags, his word was law. He was a leader amongst leaders—and Chubby and Juicy were his own particular chums.

"He's pining—that's what it is!" said Chubby, after a bit. "Pining over that silly greyhound of his. We're not blind. Somebody came and pinched the dog on Wednesday night, and Willy has been like a side of frozen mutton ever since."

"The greyhound wasn't a bad dog," admitted Juicy Lemon. "And Willy was teaching him some decent tricks, I believe. But a dog, after all, is only a dog. Willy's an ass to be so cut up. And then, what about the footer?"

"Yes, what about it?" said Chubby Heath gruffly. "What about to-day's game?"

Juicy Lemon brightened up.

"Oh, well, of course, to-day's game will make a difference," he said. "Even Willy will buck up this afternoon, and I dare say the game will put new life into him."

At the mention of the word "footer," both the fags had changed their expressions. As though by magic, their gloomy looks vanished, and their eyes sparkled.

"It isn't often we get a really decent fixture," said Chubby Heath enthusiastically. "Just because we're fags, people think that we can't play football!"

"Nerve!" said Juicy indignantly.

"But we can play!" continued Chubby. "And Willy is as keen as mustard, too. What's more, he's been working like a Trojan ever since the season started—and at last he's got those River House fatheads to agree to a game."

"Nobody thought it was coming off," said Juicy. "But then, Willy is a bit of a marvel, on the quiet."

Everybody in the Third was thinking the same. Willy Handforth's Eleven was regarded, more or less, as a joke. Nobody believed that the fags could play serious football. The very idea was ridiculous. It was all very well for these Third-Formers to punt a football about, and to kid themselves that they were playing the game. Actually, however, they might just as well have played marbles.

That was the general impression.

But Willy, with his usual forcefulness, had set out to prove that the Third could play better football than some of the other juniors. During the previous week he had tried to fix up a game with the Fourth; but John Busterfield Boots, the skipper of the Fourth, had scoffed at the idea.

However, Willy had approached Armstrong, of the East House. Armstrong was in the Fourth, too, and he considered himself to be a strong man. Anyhow, Willy had induced Armstrong to form an Eleven of East House Fourth-Formers—and then the fags had proceeded to lick the East House Eleven by three clear goals.

As a consequence of that victory, one of Willy's dreams had come true.

For weeks he had been trying to arrange a game with Hal Brewster & Co., of the River House School. Now, at last, it was to be a reality. Hal Brewster had promised that the River House Junior Reserves should come over to St. Frank's that afternoon, in order to play Willy's Eleven.

It was a triumph for the cheery young skipper of the Third.

Slowly, but surely, he was causing Third Form football to be recognised. Hitherto it had been laughed at—treated as something that was beneath contempt. Now Willy's good work was having effect.

"Yes, he'll buck up this afternoon," said Chubby cheerily. "When he's on the field, playing against those River House chaps,

he'll forget everything else. The game will do him good, too."

"The funny thing is, he didn't seem to be particularly bucked when he heard the news," remarked Juicy, frowning. "Those River House chaps only made the definite arrangement yesterday. And when Willy heard it, he just grunted and said 'All right.' He seemed as though he didn't care twopence about the match."

"And yet, at the beginning of the week, he couldn't talk of anything else," said Chubby. "It's all that silly dog! I can't understand a chap making such a fuss—"

"Look out!" murmured Juicy cautiously. "He's coming!"

Willy Handforth had appeared in sight, and it was quite obvious that he was not his usual sunny self. His hands were thrust deeply into his pockets, he walked slowly, and his chin was nearly resting on his chest. He seemed to be far, far away.

There was a frown on his face, and his eyes were troubled. He would have walked right on, without even noticing his two chums, but Chubby gave him a hail.

"Hallo, hallo!" he said indifferently, looking up.

Juicy and Chubby gazed at Willy in wonder. He seemed to be looking more down in the dumps than ever.

The two fags were amazed. It was difficult for them to understand how a chap could so thoroughly change just because he had lost a dog. But then, although they were Willy's study-mates, they did not realise his deep-rooted love for animals—and Lightning had been an extra-special chum.

"Just a minute, 'Villy,'" said Chubby, as he and Juicy joined their leader. "What about this afternoon's game?"

"This afternoon's game?" repeated Willy.

"Yes."

"What game?"

"What game!" yelled Chubby, in amazement. "My only hat! You haven't forgotten, have you?"

"Oh, don't bother me about games!" said Willy, with a grunt. "I'm not in the mood to talk about games now."

"But—but this is a special thing!" put in Juicy excitedly. "You haven't definitely chosen the Eleven yet, Willy! Of course, Chubby and I are going to be in, and—"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Willy, with a start.

"Just remembered?" said Chubby sarcastically.

"Yes," nodded Willy. "I've just remembered. Of course, we've fixed up a game with the River House Junior Reserves for this afternoon, haven't we?"

His chums looked at him in a stupefied kind of way.

"But—but you're rotting!" protested Chubby. "You couldn't have really forgotten it, Willy! It's the game you've been dreaming about for weeks!"

"I'd better go indoors, and get a Notice ready," said Willy. "It's only fair to the

fellows to let them know. I'll select the Eleven straight away."

"I suppose you'll be playing centre-forward?" asked Chubby.

Willy was thoughtful for a moment. A pained look came into his eyes—an expression of keen regret. Then, slowly, he shook his head.

"I shan't be playing at all," he replied briefly.

Chubby gave a kind of gulp.

"You—you won't— Here, what's that you said?" he ejaculated. "Did you say that you won't be playing at all?"

"You heard me," said Willy.

"But—but you're dotty!" shouted Chubby Heath. "What do you mean—you won't be playing?"

"I mean exactly what I say," replied Willy steadily. "Sorry, you fellows; but I can't play this afternoon!"



CHAPTER 2.

Very Remarkable!

CHUBBY HEATH and Juicy Lemon were flabbergasted.

It was unbelievable.

It was fantastic. After

all Willy's work! After all his painstaking efforts to fix this big match up! Now he was calmly saying that he had no intention of playing!

"Of course, you're rotting!" ejaculated Chubby Heath at last.

"I'm not rotting," retorted Willy.

"But—but you must be!" insisted Chubby.

"Look here, Willy! You can't let the Third down like this!"

Willy winced.

"I'm sorry if I'm letting the Third down, but I can't play," he said quietly.

"Why can't you play?" put in Juicy Lemon.

"Well, I can't."

"That's no answer."

"It's all the answer you'll get," said Willy coldly.

"You're fit, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"No sprains, or anything?"

"Of course not, you fathead!"

"Then you've no excuse!" said Juicy warmly. "You've admitted that you're fit, and so you'll have to play."

Willy sighed.

"How the dickens can I play in this match when I'm going out?" he demanded. "If you can tell me how I can be in two places at once—"

"But you mustn't go out!" said Chubby excitedly. "You can't go out this afternoon, Willy."

"I'm going!"

"But where the dickens are you going to?"

"That's my business!" said Willy stiffly.

His manner was so strange that his chums looked at him in fresh amazement. As a general rule, Willy was so sunny and so cheerful; now he was curt and cold. He seemed to be irritated, too. The very mention of the football match had put him into a bad humour. And yet, according to his chums' way of thinking, it ought to have bucked him up no end.

He was looking more troubled than ever as he stood there, leaning against the wall of the gym, gazing unseeingly across the Triangle. Dicky Jones and Tommy Hobbs, of the West House Third, came over, looking eager and excited.

"Oh, here you are, Handforth minor!" said Dicky Jones briskly. "We've been looking for you!"

"Well, here I am," said Willy bluntly.

"What about to-day's game?" asked Dicky. "Am I included in the Eleven?"

"Oh, I suppose so!" said Willy wearily.

The two West House fags stared.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Tommy Hobbs curiously. "You're not ill, are you?"

"No, I'm not!" roared Willy.

"Don't speak to him!" said Chubby Heath bitterly. "There's something wrong with him this morning. He says he's not going to play in the match."

"Not going to play!" ejaculated Dicky Jones, as though he couldn't believe his ears.

"What rot!"

"All right—ask him!" said Chubby.

"You needn't ask me," grunted Willy.

"I'm not going to play. I shall be away this afternoon."

"But you're the captain!" protested Dicky.

"Usually, yes!" agreed Willy. "But, this afternoon, Chubby will be skipper."

Chubby Heath brightened up.

"Of course, I don't mind!" he said. "I'll captain the side, if you like, Willy."

"Rats!" burst out Tommy Hobbs excitedly. "Is this a joke, Willy? You know jolly well that we can't beat those River House chaps without you!"

Willy did know it, and the thought was troubling him exceedingly. He was by no means vain, but he was quite certain that the Third Form Eleven would go to pieces unless he was on the field to keep the fags under control.

He had had some experience of them, and he knew their weaknesses. With a strong man to lead the forward line, and to keep the whole team together, there was more than a chance that the fags would beat the River House Junior Reserves.

But with Willy out of the game, that strong leader would be conspicuous by his absence. Chubby was the next best thing, but Chubby was always excitable on the field, and he would probably allow his men to play a ragged game.

"You can't let the Third down like this!" said Dicky Jones indignantly. "We've been waiting for weeks for this match, and if we lose it we shall be the laughing-stock

of the place! And we shan't get another fixture, either! It's a—a sort of test game. You know that as well as we do, Willy!"

"I'm sorry, but——"

"And you can't get out of it!" put in Chubby grimly. "If you don't agree to play, I'll tell your major."

Willy regarded this threat with scorn.

"Tell him!" he snapped. "Do you think I care? Blow my major! Bother him! If he starts any of his rot with me, I'll tell him to go and eat coke!"

"It's all because of that dog!" said Chubby complainingly, as he turned to the other fags. "You know—Lightning. He was stolen on Wednesday night, and ever since then Willy has been getting worse and worse. He doesn't even care about the footer now."

"My only sainted aunt!" said Dicky Jones, staring. "You don't mean to say that he's going to miss the game because he's worried about that silly dog?"

"That what dog?" asked Willy ominously.

"That silly dog!" roared Dicky. "It's all piffle! A dog is only a dog! Dash it all, Willy, you can't allow your pets to mess up the football! You're a traitor to the Third!"

Willy turned red, and his eyes blazed.

"Put up your hands, Dicky!" he said thickly.

"Here!" gasped Dicky. "I—I——"

Biff!

Willy went for him with tremendous vigour, and Dicky Jones lasted about five seconds. He went over with a bump, and then Willy spun round on the other fags. Before they could get away, he dashed in amongst them, and scattered them like nine-pins.

Chubby went over with a roar, Juicy reeled sideways as Willy's fist struck him on the ear, and Tommy Hobbs sat down with a tremendous thud.

"Any more complaints?" demanded Willy gruffly. "Once and for all, I'm not playing in the match this afternoon! When I say a thing, I mean it!"

And he strode off towards the Ancient House, leaving the other fags more flabbergasted than ever.



CHAPTER 3.

Willy's Dilemma!

TRAITOR to the Third!

The words sang through Willy's head as he opened the door of his little study in the Ancient House, and strode in. He was uneasy and worried.

"Oh, what's a chap to do?" he asked helplessly.

He had not entered into that recent battle with any enthusiasm. For he knew, at heart, that his companions had been justified in upbraiding him. Knocking them down

had given him momentary satisfaction, but now he was feeling rather guilty.

A traitor to the Third!

Those words had enraged him; but, after all, weren't they true? He had made up his mind to go off this afternoon, and leave the Third Form Eleven to get along without him. And he was the strong man of the team—the one player who could keep the fags together. He had arranged this match after a lot of difficulty, and, now that it was a reality, he had decided to give it a miss!

"Isn't it just the way of things?" complained Willy, in a bitter voice, as he sat down at the table. "I've got to go to Bannington this afternoon to make inquiries. It wasn't any good going yesterday, or Thursday, because there aren't any greyhound races. They only hold 'em on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. This is the first chance I've had. And, of course, it comes on the same afternoon as the first big fixture we've ever arranged."

His feelings were more bitter than ever. But his mind was quite made up. In no circumstances could he stay at St. Frank's. It was necessary for him to go to Bannington—absolutely necessary.

As Willy sat there, he forgot all about the football match, and his mind went back to his dog, Lightning. His dog! The law could say what it liked, but that dog had been his, by every moral right.

During the week or two that he had possessed Lightning, he and the greyhound had become greatly attached. Willy had always been passionately fond of animals—his numerous pets were clear evidence of this. But, somehow, he had grown more fond of Lightning, the greyhound, than he could have believed possible. And the dog had reciprocated this affection.

Willy's blood surged within him at the thought of all the recent events.

Lightning had been called Domino originally, and he had been a track-racer. He had been owned by Mr. Bill Brice, the book-maker, who had acted like a brute.

The unfortunate dog had been run over, and Mr. Brice had taken it for granted that he was killed. He had kicked the dog into a ditch, and had left him there to die—as he certainly would have died, if Willy had not come along and rescued him.

With gentle care, Willy had fanned that dying spark of life, and had brought the greyhound back through convalescence to health. Even now, Lightning was not thoroughly fit. He needed a further week or two before he could be really himself.

Without any question whatever, the dog morally belonged to Willy, since he had rescued it and had tended it, and had saved its life. Legally, no doubt, Brice was still the owner. But Willy cared nothing for legal points or details. Even Mr. Nelson Lee, the famous schoolmaster-detective, had decided that the dog belonged to Willy Handforth, and he had even sent Mr. Brice about his business.

So Mr. Brice, cunningly enough, had made an arrangement with Gore-Pearce & Co., the cads of the Remove; and on Wednesday night the cads of Study A had helped Mr. Brice to seize the dog and to get away with it.

Fortunately for Gore-Pearce & Co., Willy knew nothing whatever of their part in the despicable business. Willy was convinced that Brice had been to the school, and had taken the dog. And Willy was filled with unhappiness because he could not get on the track of the bookmaker.

He had spent a day or two of misery.

There was no trace of Lightning—no trace of the man who had stolen him. And it was useless to make any complaint to the police, because the dog was Brice's legal property.

Willy had made a vow that he would get Lightning back. The dog was his—his! Never for a second would he admit anything else—and he was going to get him back!

This afternoon would provide the first opportunity of learning something about Mr. Brice's whereabouts. How, therefore, could Willy play in this match? He couldn't be in two places at once, and it was far more important for him to be in Bannington.

At least, that was the way he looked at it. His lost dog came before everything else. His love of animals was so great that even football faded into insignificance.

Mr. Brice was not a local inhabitant. He did not live in Bannington; he only came there for business when the greyhound races were held. Not that there was much chance of finding Mr. Brice at the Bannington Greyhound Arena this afternoon. Willy did not fool himself like that.

But there would be other bookmakers there, and it was quite possible that they would know something of Mr. Brice's present whereabouts. Perhaps Willy would be able to get the information he required from them. He certainly could not get it from any other quarter. His only course was to go to the Arena, and to make his inquiries personally.

He couldn't even get somebody else to go for him—since the Arena was strictly out of bounds. Any St. Frank's fellow found there was liable to a flogging, or expulsion. It would be a risky business, and if there was anything risky to do, Willy believed in doing it himself.

No; there was nothing else for it. He would have to go. This was the first greyhound meeting that had been held since the dog had been stolen. Until now, therefore, Willy had just been marking time. But his determination was as keen as ever.

"Oh, well!" he muttered. "I suppose I'd better get the list out."

He drew a piece of paper towards him, and took out a pencil. Then, at that second, an idea came to him, and his eyes took on a new sparkle.

"By Jingo!" he muttered. "Why not?"

In a flash, he was on his feet, and he had left the study. He dashed into the Junior Common-room, and, although there were two or three Removites present, he took no notice.

He made for the telephone box which stood in a corner. Every Common-room at St. Frank's was provided with one of these semi-public telephones. It was a modern innovation which was greatly appreciated by the fellows.

Willy took twopence out of his pocket, and then gave his number. Within three minutes he was speaking to Hal Brewster, of the River House School.

"Oh, it's you, young Handforth, is it?" said the River House Junior skipper. "What's the trouble?"

"I'm wondering if this afternoon's match can be postponed," said Willy promptly.

"Eh?" came Hal Brewster's voice. "What rot! It's a lovely day for footer, and the Reserves are all ready. Kingswood is going to skipper the side—"

"Yes, that's jolly decent of Kingswood," interrupted Willy. "But the fact is, Brewster, I can't play this afternoon."

"Injured?"

"No; but, all the same, I can't play," said Willy. "So can you chaps do me the very great favour of postponing the match until next Wednesday afternoon? I shall be able to play then—and I'm as keen as mustard on the match, really."

"What's the urgent business that prevents you from playing this afternoon?" asked Hal, in a laughing voice. "Oh, well, perhaps I oughtn't to ask. You know your own business best, I suppose. Still, it's like your cheek!"

"Then it's O.K.?" asked Willy, with relief.

"I suppose so," said Brewster. "We'll fix it for next Wednesday afternoon, then."

"Thanks awfully!" said Willy gratefully. "You're a brick, Brewster!"

A minute later he rang off, and, when he hurried back to his study, his face was expressive of keen satisfaction.

Soon afterwards he arrived in the Ancient House lobby, and he found Chubby Heath and Juicy Lemon and a number of other fags holding a kind of indignation meeting. They became silent as Willy appeared.

Willy went across to the board, pinned a notice on it, and then stood back. There was an immediate rush.

The notice was brief, but it was to the point:

"Third Form Eleven versus River House Junior Reserves. This match is postponed until next Wednesday afternoon."

"WILLY HANDFORTH (Skipper)."

"Well I'm jiggered!" said Chubby Heath blankly.

"Postponed!" gasped Juicy Lemon. "Well, of all the swindles!"

There was an immediate uproar.

"Keep your hair on!" said Willy coldly. "You grumbled enough a little while ago, didn't you? You complained because I said

I couldn't play. Well, I've fixed the game up for next Wednesday, instead of this afternoon. I shall be able to play then. So what are you growling about?"

And Willy walked out, feeling that no longer could he be accused of being a traitor to the Third. Postponing a match, after all, was quite an ordinary event.

There was a good deal of fuss in the Third, but nobody could get any further satisfaction out of Willy, and at last the fags resigned themselves to the inevitable.

After dinner, Willy managed to avoid his fellow fags, and he went to the bicycle shed and got out his machine. He took the private lane to the road, hoping that he would be able to get out unnoticed.

But as soon as he arrived at the gates he ran full tilt into his major.

"Oh, so here you are!" said Edward Oswald Handforth, of the Remove. "Caught you, my son! I had an idea that you would try to steal out on the quiet."

Willy looked his major straight in the eye.

"Look here, Ted," he said, "for goodness' sake don't start any of your rot. I'm in a hurry!"

Handforth bristled.

"Oh, you're in a hurry, are you?" he said. "That's very interesting! That's very good! And do you think I care whether you're in a hurry or not?" he added indignantly. "I've been hearing things about you, my lad!"

"You shouldn't believe all you hear," retorted Willy.

"What's this about your match against the River House Junior Reserves?" went on Edward Oswald accusingly. "The fags have been telling me that you're not going to play!"

Willy sighed, and came to the conclusion that a certain amount of delay was inevitable.



CHAPTER 4.

No Luck!

THE celebrated leader of Study D had planted himself in front of Willy, and he was looking very stern and fatherly.

"Come along, my lad!" he said curtly. "Out with it! What's the idea of letting your side down?"

"Cheese it, Ted!" said Willy. "I'm not letting the side down."

"Are you playing this afternoon, or not?"

"I'm not."

"Then you're letting the side down!" said Handforth triumphantly.

"Nobody is playing this afternoon, ass!" said Willy. "The match is postponed until Wednesday."

"Oh!" said Handforth.

"Satisfied?"

"No, blow you, I'm not satisfied!" roared Edward Oswald, recovering himself. "Why have you postponed the match?"

"Because I can't play this afternoon—and because I want to play on Wednesday."

"There's something fishy about this!" said Handforth suspiciously. "It's a glorious afternoon for footer—fine, crisp, and bright. Next Wednesday afternoon it may be pouring with rain."

"Or it may be snowing," nodded Willy. "That's the worst of our English weather. We can never tell what's coming."

"Then why have you postponed the match?"

"Because I'm going out this afternoon," replied Willy patiently. "Oh, my goodness! What's the matter with you, Ted? Why are you taking such an interest in Third Form football? Up till now you've sneered at it."

"I'm taking an interest in you!" said his major sternly. "What's all the mystery about? Where are you going to this afternoon?"

"I'm going to the Greyhound Arena," replied Willy promptly.

"You silly young ass!"

"Don't you believe me?" asked Willy.

"Of course I don't believe you!" snorted Handforth. "You can't spoof me with a yarn like that, you young donkey! Going to the greyhound races, eh?"

"Yes."

"Will you tell me the truth?" hooted Handforth.

"Oh, what's the good?" said Willy, appealing to the thin air. "I answer him, and he only gets excited. I might as well talk to a brick wall. Ted, you can go and eat coke!"

Willy pushed past, and before his major could stop him he had mounted his bicycle and was off.

"Hi!" howled Handforth. "Come back!"

But Willy refused to come back. He pedalled on, and vanished down the road. Handforth breathed hard with indignation and anger.

"The young bounder!" he ejaculated breathlessly. "Just wait until he comes home! By George, I'll tan him until he howls!"

In the meantime, Willy pedalled on through Bellton, and his ride to Bannington was uneventful. He made for that quarter of the town where the gasworks were situated. Here there were many wide open spaces. One of them was the Bannington Town football enclosure; and, a little further along, there was the Bannington Greyhound Arena.

Until recently, the Arena had been robbing the football club of many of its patrons, but now that state of affairs was altering, largely owing to the efforts of the St. Franks' juniors. There was a big match on this afternoon—a Third Division game—between Bannington Town and Hammersmith. Enthusiasts were already beginning to trickle



Handforth found his Austin Seven completely hammed in by the crowds. "Better put that thing in your pocket, kid," suggested some humorist. "If you don't, you might lose it!"

up, although the match was not due to start for another hour.

Willy parked his bicycle in a little confectioner's shop, and then he walked to the entrance of the Arena. He paid his admission money, and went in. He was quite indifferent as to the possible consequences; his mind was centred upon his missing pet. And as he was doing nothing dishonourable he was in no fear.

There weren't many people in the Arena, although a good number of bookmakers were standing about waiting for the afternoon's activities to commence. Willy approached one of these gentry at once.

"Excuse me," he said. "Do you know a man named Brice?"

The bookmaker, who was a rather genial-looking man, stared curiously at the fag.

"Brice?" he repeated. "Well, yes, I know him, in a way."

"He's not here this afternoon, I suppose?"

"No; not this afternoon," said the man. "In fact, as far as I know, he's not coming to this track again."

"Left it for good, eh?"

"Yes," said the bookie. "Does he owe you some money—or do you want to pay him some?"

Willy shook his head.

"It's not a question of money," he replied. "I'm rather keen on finding Mr. Brice—

that's all. Perhaps you can tell me where he's gone to?"

"Sorry, kid," said the man. "I haven't the faintest idea."

"Do you know his old address, then?"

"Never heard of it," said the man. "In fact, I don't think he had an address. He was only in lodgings here."

"Well, do you know the address of his recent lodgings?"

"Sorry, I don't."

This was not very satisfactory. Willy thanked the man, and strolled across to two other bookmakers, who were holding a little discussion. Nearly all these men were down at heel in appearance. The Bannington Arena had a pretty poor reputation, and it only attracted the lesser lights of the racing fraternity.

Willy made inquiries persistently, but none of the men could give him any satisfaction. Most of them had heard of Mr. Brice—in fact, they knew him. But they didn't know where he had gone to. They were not interested in him. They only knew that he had left Bannington.

Willy, although he was not the kind of junior to admit defeat, gradually became very depressed. This was most unusual for him—since it took a great deal to dampen his spirits.

But his efforts were all so useless.

He could do nothing—he could discover nothing.

He had been hoping that this visit to the Arena would bear fruit. He had been certain that many of these bookmakers would know Mr. Brice, and he had hoped that they would be able to put him on the track. He only wanted to find out where Brice was—and then he would be able to make further plans. For where Brice was he would find his dog, Lightning.

Willy wandered back towards the first bookmaker he had spoken to. This individual, according to his bag, was blessed with the name of Josh Platt. He grinned as Willy came up.

"Any luck, kid?" he inquired.

"No," growled Willy. "Nobody knows where Brice has got to."

"What's the trouble?" asked Mr. Platt curiously. "You seem pretty keen on finding Brice, don't you? I'll bet he owes you some money."

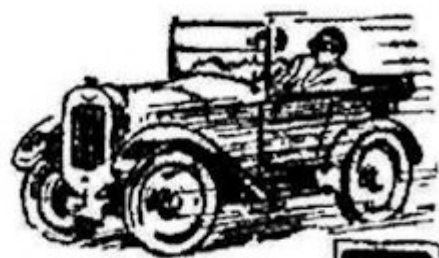
"No, he doesn't," replied Willy. "I don't want to see him about any betting transaction. Are you sure you can't tell me where he is?"

Mr. Platt grinned.

"My dear kid, what do you take me for?" he asked. "I'm not one of Brice's pals. I hardly knew the man, except by sight. Sorry, but I can't give you any information at all."

Willy became more despondent than ever.

What could he do now? His one hope had failed. Nobody knew anything about Brice. The man had left Bannington, and his new whereabouts were unknown. It was a bitter disappointment for Willy, who had counted so much upon this visit.



CHAPTER 5.

A Special Occasion!

J

JOHN BUSTERFIELD BOOTS, Bob Christine, and a number of other Fourth-Formers, cheerily

wheeled their bicycles towards the gates. Handforth, who was standing there, looked at them curiously. Church and McClure, Handforth's chums of Study D, were equally interested.

"Going out?" asked Handforth bluntly.

"Oh, no!" replied Buster Boots. "We're just wheeling our jiggers about to give them exercise."

"Fathead!" said Handforth, turning red.

The other Fourth-Formers chuckled, while Buster Boots grinned.

"Well, if you must ask these unnecessary questions, you must expect to have your leg pulled, Handy, old man," he said genially. "What are you doing here, anyhow? Regulating the traffic?"

"You fellows seem in a hurry," said Handforth, without deigning to reply to Buster's question. "Going somewhere important?"

"Well, yes," put in Bob Christine. "We're going to see the match at Bannington."

"What match?"

"Bannington Town versus Hammersmith."

"Oh!" said Handforth, with sudden interest. "I'd forgotten for the moment. It ought to be a pretty good game."

"Well, after all we've done for the club, the least the players can do is to give a good showing," said Buster Boots. "We're just going along to watch things. We want to see if our efforts have been successful."

Of late, the St. Frank's juniors had taken quite an interest in the Bannington Town Club. The Junior Eleven, in fact, had played the Town Reserves, and had thrashed them soundly.

Then, on the Wednesday afternoon, Nipper and his men had had the nerve to play against Bannington Town's First Eleven. And, what was more to the point, the game had been a draw. The schoolboys had aroused tremendous interest and enthusiasm in the town, and to-day's match was the first League fixture since the club's affairs had begun to mend.

The Greyhound Arena had done much to dishearten the professional footballers. Added to this, Bannington Town had started the season very badly; they hadn't won a single League match yet. But, owing to the efforts of the schoolboys, the professionals had now gained new heart. So to-day's match should be exceptionally interesting.

"By George! It's a pretty good idea!" said Handforth suddenly. "Why shouldn't we go, too?"

"Why not?" asked Buster Boots. "The road's open, and I dare say you'll be admitted at the turnstiles, Handy, if you turn your face away from the moneytaker."

"Idiot!"

The Fourth-Formers mounted their bicycles and rode off, leaving Handforth & Co. in the gateway.

Nipper and Fullwood and Tregellis-West and Travers and one or two others had come up by now, and they had been listening to the conversation.

"Supposing we all go, you fellows?" suggested Nipper. "We haven't a fixture for this afternoon, and we thought about getting up a scratch game. But I'm rather inclined to follow the example of the Fourth-Formers, and see how Bannington Town gets on."

"It suits me, dear old fellow," said Vivian Travers.

The others were in agreement.

Within five minutes, the majority of them left, and Edward Oswald Handforth was enthusiastically putting some petrol into the tank of his Austin Seven. Church and McClure were looking on interestedly.

"We might as well go in style," Handforth was saying. "There's no hurry, either. Might as well let those other chaps get well ahead. We can do it in half the time in the bus."

"Yes, but we don't want to leave it until too late," said Church. "There'll be a terrific crowd there, Handy. It's a Third Division fixture, remember."

"What does that matter?"

"Well, we don't want to get mixed up in the crowds," said Church. "Wouldn't it be a good idea to leave the car in the big garage in the High Street? We can walk the rest of the way."

If Handforth had thought of this suggestion himself, he would have been enthusiastic about it. As Church had proposed it, however, he frowned.

"Not likely!" he said. "We'll take the car all the way, and park it in the enclosure somewhere."

Church and McClure did not argue; the time was getting limited as it was.

In any case, the Austin was Handforth's car, and he could do as he liked with it. Church and McClure had long since ceased to give him any advice where the Austin was concerned. Such advice had been generally sound, but as Handforth had never taken any notice of it, it was a waste of breath to utter it.

Quite unnecessarily, Handforth decided to go round the chassis with the grease-gun, and another ten minutes slipped by. At last, however, the Study D trio started off.

And once on the road, there were no further delays.

The trusty little Austin hummed along and arrived in Bannington in fine style. Handforth did not change his mind. He drove right on towards the football enclosure, and, as a natural result of this, he soon found himself in difficulties.

He managed to get behind a big charabanc, and this was all right as far as it went. But the charabanc unexpectedly turned off into a little side road near the football ground, and Handforth continued straight on. In less than a minute, after sounding the electric hooter continuously, he found himself completely hemmed in by the crowds.

They were on all sides, marching in solid masses towards the turnstiles.

"Better put that thing in your pocket, kid," suggested one of the townsmen. "If you don't, you might lose it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd laughed good-humouredly.

"Mind your car don't drop down one of the drains, young gent!" warned somebody else, grinning.

"Here, steady!" roared Handforth, as the crowd pressed tightly round the little car. "Mind what you're doing, there! Look out for my mudguards!"

"Well, you came here yourself, young 'un," said somebody. "You can't blame us if your car gets crumpled up. Better look out, or it'll get trampled underfoot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Very funny!" said Handforth, with a sniff.

Church and McClure discreetly remained silent. They could have told Handforth that

this would happen, but they were wise. Now that the difficulty had arisen, they felt that their best policy was to remain silent.

"Look out, you kids!" said a man nearby. "Here comes a bobby. I expect he's going to pinch you."

"He'll probably keep the car, too!" said another man. "Then he'll take it home for the kids to play with."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A burly policeman pushed his way through the throng, and he looked at Handforth rather severely.

"You oughtn't to have come along here, you know," he said.

"Why not?" asked Handforth. "We're going to the football match. I'm going to park the car in the enclosure—"

"There's no room there," said the constable. "If you want to park the car, you'll have to take it into one of the side roads further along. Come on, I'll help you out of this."

"Yes, but—"

"Sorry, my lad, but I'll have to get you out of it," said the policeman. "You're causing an obstruction."

Handforth boiled, but there was no help for it. And the crowds laughed afresh when the policeman cleared a way, and guided the little Austin through the densely-packed mob in front of the turnstiles, until they reached a clearer road.

"There you are!" he said, pointing. "You can park your car round one of these side turnings."

"Thanks!" said Handforth gruffly. "But I'm jiggered if I can see why I couldn't have parked it inside the enclosure."

The constable chuckled, and went about his duty again. Handforth, considerably indignant, was obliged to take the Austin to one of the official parking places. Then he and his chums moved towards the turnstiles. It was necessary for them to pass the big gateway of the Greyhound Arena, which was on the other side of the road.

In all probability, Handforth would have noticed nothing; but McClure suddenly uttered an ejaculation.

"My hat!" he said. "Look over there!"

Handforth and Church looked. Three young fellows were just about to enter the Arena. They were wearing overcoats with turned-up collars, and their tweed caps were pulled down over their faces.

"Well, what are we to look at?" asked Handforth, staring.

"Those three chaps!" said Mac. "Don't you recognise them?"

"Never seen 'em in my life!" replied Handforth promptly. "And if you think I'm interested in these fatheads who go to the greyhound races— By George! Why, what the—"

His tone changed. For one of the young fellows in the tweed caps had slightly turned his head, and, in that second, Handforth had recognised Claude Gore-Pearce, of the St. Frank's Remove!



CHAPTER 6.

A Shock for Handy!

GORE-PEARCE & Co., of Study A, were trying to get into the Arena without attracting any attention.

Gulliver and Bell, perhaps, would have preferred to go to the football match, but Claude Gore-Pearce wouldn't hear of it. He insisted upon dragging his pals into the Arena. In his opinion, there was far more excitement to be obtained from watching the greyhounds—particularly if they had a little bit of money on their "fancies."

They had been in before—several times. And, as yet, they had been safe. The Arena, of course, was strictly out of bounds, and any St. Frank's fellow found there by the school authorities would get into serious trouble.

As a precautionary measure, the cads of Study A wore tweed caps, instead of their distinctive school caps. It was only by chance that McClure had spotted them.

"Oh!" said Handforth ominously. "So that's the game, is it? These rotters are sneaking in to see the greyhound races! Come on, you chaps! We're needed!"

His chums grabbed him by the arms.

"Hold on, Handy!" said Church. "Why interfere?"

"Interfere?" repeated Handforth wrathfully. "Are you suggesting, Walter Church, that I'm going to interfere?"

"Well, what are you going to do, then?"

"I'm going over to these cads!" replied Handforth grimly. "And you fellows are coming with me! We're going to grab them by the scruff of their necks, yank them round, and boot them away from the Arena."

"And don't you call that interfering?" asked Church interestedly.

"No, I don't!" snapped Handforth. "It's a duty."

"We'd better not butt in, Handy," said McClure. "If these chaps like to be such fatheads, it's their business."

But Handforth wouldn't listen. He had nothing against greyhound racing as a sport, but he knew perfectly well that Gore-Pearce & Co. were only going into the place so that they could indulge in some betting, and that was quite a different thing. Handforth felt that the honour of the Remove was at stake. If Gore-Pearce & Co. had belonged to the Fourth, he might have hesitated. But they were Removites, and he was a Removite. It was a matter that affected his own Form.

"Just a minute, you rotters!" he said, grabbing at the trio before they could enter.

Gore-Pearce & Co. turned, startled.

"You silly fool!" snapped Claude Gore-Pearce, with a scowl. "You gave me a start."

"I mean to give you a start!" said Handforth. "Are you fellows going into this Arena?"

"Yes," said Gore-Pearce, staring. "Why?"

"Why can't you mind your own business, Handforth?" said Gulliver. "Clear off! We can do as we like without your permission!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bell.

Handforth rolled up his sleeves.

"You're not going into this place!" he declared. "Understand? I'm not going to let you disgrace the school——"

"Rot!" said Gore-Pearce.

"What?"

"I said 'Rot!'" repeated Gore-Pearce savagely. "If anybody's disgracing the school, you are—by causing a scene. We're not wearing the school colours, so how the deuce can we disgrace it?"

Handforth became excited.

"I don't care whether you're wearing the school colours or not!" he said hotly. "You belong to the Remove, and you know jolly well that the Arena is out of bounds. Now, you can take your choice. Are you going away quietly, or would you prefer me to blacken your eyes?"

For a moment it seemed that Gore-Pearce was going to fight; then he caught sight of Church and McClure, just in the rear, and he knew that he and his chums would stand no chance against the redoubtable juniors.

"You'd better get away from here, Handforth!" he said, in a low voice. "If you don't, I'll call some of the stewards, and have you taken away. You're creating a disturbance outside the Arena, and——"

"A disturbance?" repeated Handforth. "By George! If you call this a disturbance, I wonder what you'll call the trouble that's going to start in about ten seconds?"

"Why can't you look after your own affairs, and leave us alone?" shouted Gore-Pearce furiously.

"This is my affair," retorted Handforth. "You may not be wearing the school colours, but lots of people know who you are. You're not going to disgrace St. Frank's by entering this place and mixing with a lot of questionable bookies."

One of the men at the gates came forward, and he looked at Handforth in a grim sort of way.

"Look here, young man, you'd better make yourself scarce!" he said unpleasantly. "We don't allow people to create scenes outside this gateway."

Handforth stared at him in amazement.

"Well, and what are you going to do?" he asked. "If you touch me, I'll knock you down!"

The man, who was a burly sort of fellow, of a bruiser type, scowled savagely.

"That's enough!" he snapped. "Clear off!"

Handforth instinctively clenched his fists, and Church and McClure became uneasy. The whole affair was assuming ugly proportions. In another moment, Handforth

would probably be scrapping with this man, and then there would be a regular brawl. Handforth, in his efforts to uphold the honour of St. Frank's, would only bring discredit on the old school. It was just like his blundering ways.

"Steady, old man!" urged Church, grasping Handforth by the arm. "There's no sense in letting the thing go further——"

"Here, wait a tick!" interrupted Claude Gore-Pearce, with a gloating note in his voice. "You've been grumbling at us, Handforth, for bringing disgrace on St. Frank's, eh?"

"You'll bring disgrace on St. Frank's if you enter this place!" retorted Handforth hotly.

"And we're not even wearing the school colours!" sneered Gore-Pearce.

"That doesn't matter——"

"Oh, doesn't it?" interrupted the cad of Study A. "Then perhaps you don't object to your own minor being inside the Arena?"

"My minor!" ejaculated Handforth blankly.

"And wearing the school colours, too—as bold as you like!" laughed Gore-Pearce tauntingly. "By gad! If you want to interfere with somebody, why not interfere with your own minor? He's inside the place—but we're still in the road!"

Handforth looked round with a startled, dumbfounded expression on his rugged face. Church and McClure were staggered, too. They were staring into the Arena. And Handforth, following the direction of their gaze, jumped nearly a foot into the air.

For it was true!

During that first dreadful moment, he had believed that Gore-Pearce was trying to fool him. But no! That awful statement was perfectly true!

There, right inside the Arena, and talking earnestly with a bookmaker, was Willy Handforth, of the Third!



CHAPTER 7.

Rough on Willy!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH was stunned.

The thing was horrible — indeed,

well nigh incredible. His own minor—inside this greyhound racing enclosure! His own

minor! Yes, and what was worse, Willy was actually in conversation with a man who had a bag slung round his shoulders—a man who was, without question, a bookie!

"Great Scott!" gurgled Handforth faintly. Claude Gore-Pearce chuckled.

"Well, what about it now?" he jeered.

"By gad! This is a bit of a come-down for you, Handforth! Your own brother backing his fancy! A mere fag at that, too! After this, you'll have to sing pretty small!"

It is doubtful if Handforth heard Gore-Pearce's words. He was staring dazedly at his minor—who was quite ignorant of the sensation he had unwittingly caused. Willy was still in close conversation with the bookmaker, and he was taking no notice of the people who were coming in through the big gateway.

"By gad!" went on Gore-Pearce. "Willy—the chap who keeps such a stern eye on the Third! Why, he's only a humbug——"

"You'd better dry up, Gore-Pearce!" said Church, turning fiercely on the cad of Study A. "You know as well as I do that Willy has come here to inquire after his dog."

Gore-Pearce started.

"Eh?" he ejaculated. "Oh, that's rot——"

"It's true!" insisted Church. "He lost the dog on Wednesday night—and it was a greyhound. It's as clear as daylight

that he came here to make some inquiries about that chap Brice. So you'd better not do any more jeering."

Gore-Pearce was silent—struck by the obvious truth of Church's explanation.

But Edward Oswald Handforth, whose brain, following the shock, was in such a condition that he could not think clearly, hadn't heard those words of Church's, and, as a matter of fact, he was only just coming out of his stupefied condition.

"My minor!" he breathed hoarsely. "In here! Talking with a bookie! By George!"

Handforth suddenly seemed to come to life. With one tremendous bellow, he dashed through the gateway, easily avoiding the men who tried to stop him. Church and McClure were thoroughly startled; they hadn't expected any such move as this.

Handforth went tearing up to his minor, and the first indication that Willy had of Edward Oswald's presence was when he felt a heavy hand clutched on his shoulder. He was swung round with considerable violence.

"Willy!" fumed a grim, breathless voice.

"My hat!" groaned Willy. "It's Ted!"

"I've caught you!" said his major accusingly. "Caught you red-handed, you

young bounder! Come on! You're coming out of this rotten place!"

Willy stared in amazement.

"Why, Ted!" he ejaculated. "You don't think——"

"Come out of this!" thundered Handforth.

"But—but——"

"No arguments! You're coming!"

And Willy went. There was no help for it. Handforth had secured a firm grip, and he fairly yanked his minor towards the gates. The bookmaker grinned, and several of his colleagues grinned; a good many members of the public grinned, too.

"Go easy!" said Willy gruffly. "Mind what you're doing, Ted! There's no need to make a scene——"

"I'll make as many scenes as I like!" interrupted Handforth, who was not only angry, but shocked. "When I find my minor in a place like this, it's my duty to drag him out!"

"But, my dear fathead——"

"Silence!" ordered Handforth curtly.

Willy did not care for the situation. His major, of course, had made a blunder; he had jumped to a ridiculous conclusion. And he had obtained such a grip that Willy knew he would not be able to escape; and Willy disliked being dragged through the crowds in this way. With an effort, he half-pulled Handforth to a stop.

"Hold on!" said Willy. "Leave go of my collar, Ted. I'll come quietly."

"I'm taking no chances!" snapped his major.

"Honest Injun, I won't dodge off," said Willy. "Only don't make a scene."

"Honest Injun?" repeated Handforth, relaxing his grip.

"Yes."

"All right, then," said Edward Oswald, knowing full well that he could accept his minor's word. "Perhaps it'll be better to get you out quietly, without attracting attention."

They now walked to the exit in a more sedate manner, Handforth's face full of stern anger, and Willy's full of patient resignation. When they got outside they found Church and McClure waiting.

"Where have those cads gone to?" asked Handforth, looking round.

"I don't know," grunted Church. "They went off somewhere. What does it matter?"

"Nothing matters now!" replied Handforth bitterly. "By George! To think that I should find my minor in a place like this!"

He was nearly overwhelmed by the shock of it. And, characteristically enough, he did not pause to think.

So this was why Willy had missed the Third Form match!

He had become a victim of the greyhound racing craze! Instead of playing football on this bright, brisk afternoon, he had gone to the dogs! And it was only by the merest chance that he—Handforth—had spotted him. Very well, then! It was his duty, as an elder brother, to take strong, drastic action.

Church and McClure, who were more level-headed, had immediately guessed the truth. They knew how much Willy had been worrying over his missing dog, Lightning, and they knew that the dog had originally belonged to a bookmaker named Brice. It was a simple matter for them to put two and two together.

"Now then!" said Handforth sternly. "Come along with me!"

"We're outside now Ted, so you needn't keep up this rot," said Willy coldly. "If I were another chap, I might get thundering wild. I don't enjoy being humiliated——"

"I don't care whether you enjoy it or not!" interrupted Handforth. "You gave me your word of honour, and I'm going to make you stick to it. Come with me!"

"Oh, all right!" said Willy resignedly.

Handforth led the way to the side street, and at last they reached the little Austin Seven, which was parked against the curb, sandwiched between other cars. Church and McClure followed, and they were rather relieved to find that there was scarcely a soul in this little side street.

Handforth pointed to the Austin.

"Get in!" he said grimly.

"Are we going for a ride?" asked Willy, with icy coolness.

"Get in!" ordered Handforth.

Willy got in, looking very meek.

He came to the conclusion that it would be better if his major let off a certain amount of steam. It would save a lot of time in the long run.



CHAPTER 8.

The Fatherly Touch!

HANDFORTH leaned over the side of the Austin, and he looked at his minor with cold, calculating eyes.

"You young scamp!" he said sternly.

"Please, Ted——"

"Silence!" commanded Handforth.

"You're going to listen to me, my son! I've caught you red-handed, and now I mean to tell you a few home truths!"

"Go ahead!" said Willy patiently.

"You had a match fixed up against the River House fellows this afternoon," continued Handforth, "but, instead of playing in that game, you went off on your own somewhere. You wouldn't explain where you were going. You wouldn't tell anybody."

"The match is postponed," said Willy, who thought it wasn't worth the trouble to remind his major that he had told him he was going to the Arena, but hadn't been believed. "We're playing the River House chaps next Wednesday."

"That's a point of no importance!" interrupted his major. "The fact remains that

you sneaked out of St. Frank's, and went off somewhere on the quiet. By the purest chance, I spotted you in this Greyhound Arena. So this is where you came to? This place!"

"Yes, Ted," nodded Willy.

"Instead of playing football, you come to a disreputable resort like this!" continued the Removite, with fatherly sternness. "I'm not going to be wild with you—I'm not going to shout at you. But by George! I'm disappointed. I'm shocked! This thing has hit me hard!"

Church grabbed at Handforth's sleeve.

"Look here, Handy, you ass!" he said. "You're mad! There's no need to jump to these silly conclusions——"

"If you don't mind, Walter Church, I'll deal with my minor!" said Handforth coldly. "I don't want any interruptions from you."

"Yes, but Hand——" put in McClure.

"Or from you either, Arnold McClure!" said Handforth. "Dry up, the pair of you! In fact, clear off! I want to speak to my minor privately."

Church and McClure glanced at one another, shrugged their shoulders, and dried up. But they did not clear off.

"Finished, Ted?" asked Willy steadily.

"I haven't begun yet!"

"Just what I thought!" sighed Willy.

"Well, buck up. Time's going, you know."

"I'm ashamed of you!" said Handforth scathingly. "You—my minor! And I've always thought that you were so straight and decent, too! Yet I find you here, in this rotten Greyhound Arena, associating with bookies! And to make matters worse, that cad Gore-Pearce was the first one to spot you!"

"I don't care who spotted me," said Willy.

"You don't seem to understand——"

"I understand that you were in that place!" broke in Handforth. "If anybody had told me that you were there, I should have knocked them down. But seeing is believing."

"You mustn't believe all you see," said Willy. "At least, appearances are sometimes deceptive——"

"You needn't try to make any excuses," said his major coldly. "You were in that place, and you were talking to a bookmaker. By the way, did you put any money on with him?"

"Why you—you silly ass——"

"Did you?" thundered Handforth.

"No, I didn't!"

"Then I must have just caught you in the nick of time!" said Handforth. "Have you ever been inside this Arena before?"

"Never."

"Thank goodness for that!" said Handforth. "Well, I may be in time to save you from this downward path."

"My only hat!"

"It's my privilege, as an elder brother, to show you how wrong it is!" continued Edward Oswald sternly. "Of course, you're only a fag, and I dare say you don't realise

the dreadful nature of the thing you've done."

"But I haven't done it."

"Then you were on the point of doing it!" said Handforth accusingly. "Don't quibble, my lad! By a merciful piece of luck, I'm in time to save you from this—this downward path. I'm in time to rescue you from the hands of the vile companions you were on the point of associating with."

"Go it!" said Willy, grinning.

In spite of himself, he could not keep up his feeling of anger. His major was too funny.

"You—you hardened young rascal!" roared Edward Oswald. "Don't sit there, grinning! Don't you realise that this is a terribly serious matter?"

"Sorry, old man, but my sense of right and wrong must be dulled," said Willy.

"Personally, I can't see that I have done anything shady."

"Then it's my duty to tell you the truth!" said Handforth, in a more fatherly voice than ever. "Shouting at you and tanning you won't do you much good. I want to point out, as gently as I can, that this downward path is strewn with obstacles. At any moment you might trip, and come a terrible cropper. Instead of devoting yourself to football, and to healthy sports, I find that you have been drawn into this dreadful business of betting."

"Horrible!" said Willy, with feeling.

"Silence!" commanded his major. "Don't dare to use that tone! I caught you red-handed, and you can't have any excuse. If you promise me that it won't occur again, I'll let you off. Of course, it's a big shock to me—it's knocked me all of a heap." His voice became sad. "I never dreamed that you, my own brother, could descend to such depths. I'm disappointed, Willy—I'm sick at heart. I thought you were stronger—I thought you were more decent."

He became silent, and his eyes were troubled.

"Finished?" asked Willy, after a pause.

"Yes!" said Edward Oswald. "What's the good of talking? I hate lecturing, anyhow. But it's my duty, as an elder brother——"

"I think you mentioned that before!" broke in Willy. "Now, Ted, it's my turn."

"Eh?"

"I think you ought to let me do a bit of talking," said Willy, a cold note creeping into his voice. "You silly ass!"

"Why, what the dickens——"

"You howling chump!" said Willy sternly.

"You lunatic!"

"Look here——"

"Do you think I went into the Arena to put some money on the dogs?" proceeded Willy. "Do you think I went in there because I was interested in racing? Do you think I was talking to that bookie because I wanted to back my fancy?"

Handforth stared blankly.

"What were you there for, then?" he asked.

"I was inquiring after my dog!"

"Your dog!" gasped Handforth, a flash of realisation coming over him.

"Lightning!" nodded Willy. "Last Wednesday night he was stolen from St. Frank's. You know that as well as I do, Ted."

"By George! So he was!"

"And you know that a rotten bookie named Brice was the dog's original owner," continued Willy relentlessly. "Brice came to the school and wanted to take the dog away, but Mr. Lee sent him about his business. Then, on Wednesday night, somebody broke into the outhouse and took Lightning away. Brice did it, and since then Brice has vanished."

"My only hat," ejaculated Handforth. "I—I had forgotten—"

"The only people who know Brice are to be found here—in this fatheaded Arena!" continued Willy. "And this is the first meeting since Wednesday. Naturally, I came to the one place where I might be able to pick up some news. I've been going round asking all these bookies if they can tell me where I can find Brice. Because, if I can find Brice, I shall probably be able to find my dog. That's why I missed the footer match this afternoon. That's why I came to this disreputable Arena!"



CHAPTER 9.

Play Up, the Town!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH gave a kind of gulp.

"Then—then you didn't go into the place because you've taken to betting?" he asked feebly.

"Because I've chosen the downward path, eh?" said Willy, his voice rising with indignation. "No, you chump! No, you hasty, fatheaded cuckoo! I came here to inquire about my dog. And the luck's all against me. Nobody knows where Brice is, and I'm dished."

"But—but—but—"

"Can't you trust me?" continued Willy hotly. "You suspicious rotter! Do you think I'm capable of dropping to the level of Gore-Pearce? Do you think I care a snap about betting? I'm ashamed of you, Ted!"

Handforth tried to speak, but he felt choked.

In a flood of realisation, he knew that Willy was speaking the truth. It was obviously the truth. Why hadn't he seen it earlier? Any ass would have known that Willy wouldn't go into a place like the Arena for the purpose of betting on dogs. It wasn't in Willy's nature. Handforth could have kicked himself.

"We tried to tell you this, old man, but you wouldn't listen," said Church gently. "In fact, we made it clear to Gore-Pearce why Willy was in here."

"Eh?" said Handforth, with an expression of relief in his eyes. "You told that to Gore-Pearce, did you?"

"Of course we did!" put in McClure. "We weren't going to let that cad believe that your minor was up to these tricks. So we explained that he had come here to inquire after his dog, and Gore-Pearce froze up."

Handforth took a deep, deep breath.

"Well, I'm glad!" he said fervently "Willy, old son, I was wrong!"

"Go hon!" said Willy tartly.

"In fact, I was an idiot!" said Handforth, with perfect frankness. "And I apologise, too."

Willy got out of the Austin Seven.

"Cheese it!" he protested uncomfortably.

"Of course I apologise!" continued Handforth. "I ought to be boiled for having such thoughts about you, my lad! You've always been true blue—and you always will be. It was just like my fatheaded, blundering, idiotic ways to accuse you without thinking. I'm awfully sorry, Willy."

There was something very refreshing about Handforth's complete climb-down.

"Let's forget about it, Ted," said Willy gently. "I'm not feeling particularly cheerful at the moment, anyhow, and we've had enough of this jawing."

"Can't you find out where Brice has gone to?" asked Handforth.

"Nobody knows," said Willy. "Or, if they do know, they won't tell me."

"Then I'm going into the Arena!" said his major firmly. "I'll make some inquiries—and if they don't tell me, I'll dot them in the eye!"

"It's not a bit of good, old man," urged Willy. "If you go in there, you'll only get yourself thrown out. It's a rotten sort of place. I wouldn't have gone in, only I'm anxious about Lightning. I want to know where he is—I want to get him back. But the luck seems to be dead against me."

"The trouble is, we don't know where to look," said Handforth, frowning. "If none of these bookies know where Brice is, we're done. He may have gone to London—or Birmingham—or Manchester. Anywhere, in fact. As far as I can see, we shall never be able to get hold of him. It's only natural that he would get as far away as possible after breaking into the school premises and pinching the dog."

"But it was his own dog," pointed out Church.

"It wasn't!" said Willy. "Lightning is my dog!"

"But legally—"

"He's my dog, and I mean to get him back!" insisted Willy fiercely. "I don't know how I'm going to do it, but there'll be a way. There must be! There's got to be!"

Handforth looked at his watch.

"But you've definitely decided that you can't find anything here in the Arena?" he asked.

"Yes."

"In that case, you might as well come along with us—to the football match," said



"You've been grumbling at me for wanting to go in to see the greyhound racing, but just look who's already in there," sneered Gore-Pearce. Handforth looked—and saw his minor Willy. And Willy was talking to a bookmaker!

Handforth briskly. "It's due to start in a couple of minutes."

Willy grunted.

"I don't feel like watching football," he said.

"That doesn't matter—you'd better come!" said his major. "It'll buck you up, my son! It'll put new life into you—new hope. There's nothing like a good game of footer."

"Well, perhaps your right—"

"No perhaps about it!" said Handforth firmly. "Of course, it's better to play in a game than to watch one. Still, I dare say we shall have an entertaining afternoon."

They found it rather difficult to get into the enclosure.

The grandstand was packed; there was not another seat. So the chums of Study D and Willy were compelled to squeeze on to one of the terraces. The vast crowds were roaring enthusiastically, for the game was just about to begin.

More by luck than anything else, Handforth & Co. found themselves standing near Buster Boots and Bob Christine and a crowd of other St. Frank's juniors. And Buster Boots, in particular, was looking happy.

"A record crowd!" he said, with satisfaction. "If the Town doesn't play up to-day, it'll deserve to go bankrupt!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Handforth.

"It won't matter so very much even if they lose—providing they play convincing football," said Bob Christine. "But before

we took a hand in their affairs they were so despondent that they couldn't play for nuts."

This was true enough. Bannington Town hadn't won a League match this season. Things had gone from bad to worse, and the players had become thoroughly disheartened. Their usual supporters had deserted them, adding to their worries.

Then the St. Frank's Junior Eleven had fixed up a match with the Reserves, and had beaten the Reserves. After that, following a good deal of boisterous publicity, the Juniors had had the nerve to play the First Eleven—and had had the added nerve to force a draw.

Tremendous enthusiasm had been worked up during those two matches, and now the Bannington people were again crowding into the enclosure. They were hoping against hope that the Town would reveal its old form.

As it happened, the crowds were treated to a rare display of excellent football that afternoon.

Hammersmith was a successful team; it had only lost one game since the season had commenced. And Hammersmith confidently expected to win this match against Bannington Town, which was at the very bottom of the Third Division table.

But Hammersmith received a shock.

For Bannington Town played virile, convincing football. From the very first moment of the kick-off, Fred Hearne, the centre-forward, led his men ably. Within five,

minutes Bannington scored—a ripping, devastating goal. A first-time shot from the centre-forward's sure foot.

Following that, Bannington Town went from success to success. By the time the game was over, they had penetrated the visitors' goal no less than six times. A perfect orgy of goals, in fact, much to the delirious delight of the crowds. It seemed that Bannington Town was making up for lost time.

The visitors, who played a splendid game, only succeeded in replying twice, so Bannington's victory was a decisive one. And the St. Frank's fellows were justified in taking some of the credit themselves. They had done a good deal towards restoring the Bannington players' morale.

Mr. Billings, the secretary-manager, was overwhelmed with delight and satisfaction. As he told some of the boys, after the match, the club had now turned the corner. This victory would have a tremendous effect upon the men, and Mr. Billings was certain that the dry-rot was cured.

Even Willy was feeling very bucked up after the match. He had been thrilled—and he had forgotten his dog for the time being. But, as he made his way homewards towards St. Frank's, his despondency came over him once again. What was he to do? How was he to get on the track of Brice, the bookmaker? It was a problem that taxed even Willy's ingenuity. In fact, he was compelled to confess that he was stumped!

CHAPTER 10.

Gore-Pearce Learns Something!



"FIVE quid!" said Claude Gore-Pearce happily.

"Lucky beggar!" said Gulliver. "Bell

and I have only collected thirty bob each."

"Well, you didn't put so much money on," said Gore-Pearce. "So you needn't grumble."

"We're not grumbling," grinned Bell. "In fact, we're perfectly satisfied."

For once, the cads of Study A had had a successful afternoon. More by luck than judgment they had backed a winner—at a good price—and now they were flush. Their bookie had paid up, and they were feeling highly delighted.

"We ought to go on the spree this evening, just to celebrate," said Gulliver contentedly.

"What about having a bob or two on the last race?" asked Bell.

"Not me!" retorted Gulliver. "I know when I'm lucky! I'm satisfied with one winner."

"Rot!" said Gore-Pearce. "You've got no spirit! I'm going to put a quid on Dinky Dan for the last race."

"And I'll have five bob's worth!" grinned Bell.

They approached their bookmaker—who happened to be the cheery-looking individual named Josh Platt, whom Willy Handforth had approached earlier.

"Going to do me down for some more money, young gents?" he said genially.

"You bet we are!" replied Gore-Pearce. "I want a quid to win on Dinky Dan."

They made their bets, and Mr. Platt regarded them curiously.

"Well, I don't think you'll be seeing us here much longer," he remarked. "Business is rotten!"

"It's the football," said Gore-Pearce. "Everybody seems to have gone to the match this afternoon."

"And left us in the cold," nodded the bookmaker. "Between you and me, young gents, this place is going smash. The trouble is, it's never been run right. Too slipshod. It's one of the duds."

"Can't the place be bought up by a big syndicate?" asked Gulliver.

"I don't think it's worth buying," replied Mr. Platt. "Now, let me see," he added thoughtfully. "Aren't you young gents pals of Brice's?"

"Brice took a lot of our money, if that's what you mean," grunted Gore-Pearce.

"Well, I didn't exactly mean that," said Mr. Platt. "But you knew him pretty well, eh?"

"Pretty well," nodded Gore-Pearce.

"He's over in Helmford now," continued the bookmaker.

"Helmford!" ejaculated Gore-Pearce, staring. "But he told us he was going north!"

"Bunkum!" grinned Mr. Platt.

"But I tell you——"

"Oh, I'm not doubting your word, young gent," said the bookmaker. "It's Brice's bunkum—not yours. Going north, eh? He wouldn't care to show his face up north, if I know anything about him! He's been warned off all northern tracks for months!"

"By gad!" said Gore-Pearce. "I rather thought he was that sort!"

"Regular crook," proceeded Mr. Platt. "Does a lot of harm to our sort of business, you know," he added confidentially. "There are good and bad in all trades and professions. If you got your money out of Brice, you were lucky."

"We never got any," said Gulliver bitterly. "He got ours!"

"Which is like him!" nodded Mr. Platt.

He looked round, in the hope of seeing further customers, but none were coming his way. There hadn't been many people all the afternoon, and now the Arena was looking very deserted and drab.

"You young gents are from St. Frank's School, aren't you?" went on Mr. Platt inquiringly.

"Yes; although you needn't talk about it," said Gore-Pearce.

Mr. Platt winked.

"None of my business," he said cheerfully. "Only there was another youngster from St. Frank's here earlier in the afternoon."

Quite a kid. He was inquiring about Mr. Brice."

"That would be young Handforth," said Gore-Pearce promptly. "We spotted him talking to you, as a matter of fact."

"He rather wants Brice, I believe," said the bookmaker. "Yet he didn't look a very sporty kid."

"He's not," said Gore-Pearce. "He only wants Brice because of a dog. I dare say you heard something about it? Brice thought his dog was dead, but young Handforth found him, and nursed him back to life. And Brice pinched this dog from the school. Anyhow, that's the yarn that's been going about."

The bookmaker did not seem particularly interested.

"The kid wanted me to tell him where Brice was to be found, but I kept my mouth shut," he remarked. "You young gents are different—you're the sporty kind."

"Oh, so you didn't tell young Handforth anything?"

"Not a thing," said the bookie. "I don't think much of Brice, but, at the same time, I didn't want to give him away. I thought, maybe, the kid wanted him for something pretty big."

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter!" said Gore-Pearce. "We don't care a hang about Handforth minor and his rotten dog. But you say that Brice is to be found in Helmford?"

"At the Stadium there," agreed Mr. Platt.

"Oh, they've got a Stadium, have they?" asked Bell.

"A regular fine place," said the bookmaker. "You need to be somebody big to do business there. I've tried to get in lots of times, but they're a bit too powerful for me. Talking about dogs, though," he added thoughtfully, "what was the name of this dog you've been speaking about?"

"Lightning."

"H'm! It's not the one I was thinking of," said Mr. Platt.

"But he was called Domino before the accident," added Gore-Pearce.

"That's right!" said the man. "Domino! Well, I'm darned!"

He took a card from his pocket, and inspected it.

"Yes, that's right," he repeated. "Domino."

"What's that you've got?" asked the cad of Study A.

"This?" said Mr. Platt. "A race-card—for this evening. The programme for the Helmford Stadium. They have meetings in the evening over there."

He handed the card over, and Gore-Pearce looked at it with interest.

"I'm thinking of trotting over to Helmford myself after tea," went on the bookie, with a grin. "Might be able to pick up some business outside."

"By gad!" said Gore-Pearce.

There, on the card, was Brice's name—and, coupled with it, the name of Domino, the greyhound. But Mr. Bill Brice did not figure as a bookmaker here, but as a dog-owner.

"Can I keep this?" asked Gore-Pearce suddenly.

"Well, I don't know—"

"I rather thought I'd like to go over to Helmford this evening," added Gore-Pearce. "This card will come in useful."

"Oh, well—keep it, if you like!" said Mr. Platt good-naturedly. "I expect I can get hold of another easily enough."

His attention was distracted just then, because the last race was about to start. Curiously enough, Claude Gore-Pearce took no interest in

the runners, and he did not seem particularly disappointed when he learned that he had lost his money.

"Rats!" said Bell. "Another loser!"

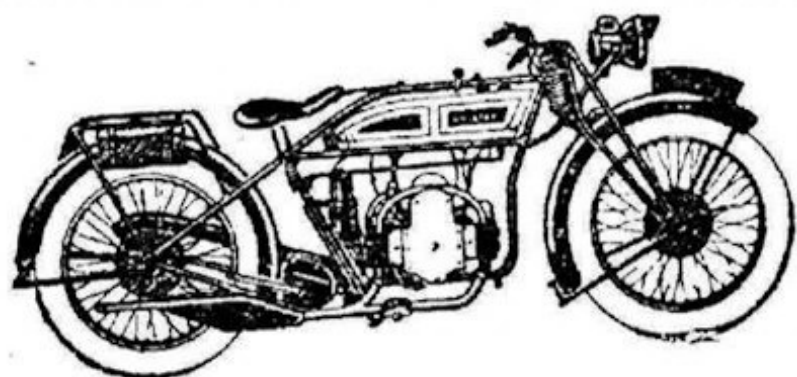
They nodded to Mr. Platt, and made their way out of the Arena. Once clear of the place, they removed their tweed caps, and donned their ordinary school caps.

"Well, we're safe now," said Gulliver, with relief, as they entered the familiar High Street. "You know, it's a bit risky going to that place. If a prefect or a master happened to spot us—"

"Dry up!" interrupted Gore-Pearce. "I've been thinking, you fellows, and there's something we can do. Something to get even with that brute, Brice!"

Gulliver and Bell looked at their leader wonderingly.

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CHAPTER 11.

A Way of Revenge!

GORE-PEARCE had a vindictive gleam in his eyes. "The liar!" he said savagely. "The rotten, confounded liar!"

"Who?" asked Gulliver. "Brice?"

"Yes!" snapped Gore-Pearce. "He told us he was going north! And here he is, in Helmford all the time! Under twenty miles away! The swindling beast!"

"Well, you needn't get so excited," began Bell.

"I'm not excited!" interrupted Gore-Pearce. "But, by gad, I'm angry! What about that money that Brice promised us? What about our part in that affair on Wednesday night? We didn't get a cent for all our trouble!"

Gulliver and Bell were not very impressed.

"Well, we didn't do much," said Gulliver.

"Didn't do much!" snapped Gore-Pearce.

"You silly fool! Brice promised me twenty quid—and you fellows a tenner each! And he took the dog, and went off without giving us a penny!"

Claude Gore-Pearce spoke with bitterness. He had no reason to regard Mr. Bill Brice with affection. For that burly rascal had played a low-down trick on him.

Little did Willy Handforth realise that the cads of Study A had taken part in that despicable business, on the Wednesday night! Little did Willy guess that he had to thank Gore-Pearce & Co. for the loss of his dog, Lightning!

Yet this was the truth.

Brice, knowing that he could never obtain the animal by fair means, had adopted foul. He had persuaded Gore-Pearce & Co. to help him; they had stolen down at midnight, and they had opened the big outhouse—the idea being for them to seize the dog, and to take him out to Brice, who was waiting with a motor-car and a friend.

It was true that there had been some mishaps. Gore-Pearce, floundering about in the darkness, had released some of Willy's pets, and in the end Mr. Brice had been compelled to come and secure the dog for himself.

Then he had driven off, telling Gore-Pearce that he wouldn't pay him a penny. The cads of Study A had had all their trouble for nothing, and since then they had lost sight of the bookmaker altogether.

The three rascally Removites had only just managed to get back into their bed-rooms without being spotted, for Willy and a good many other fellows had been aroused. But nobody guessed that Brice had had any helpers from the school.

The whole business would have been positively criminal but for the fact that Gore-

Pearce was satisfied that the greyhound really did belong to Brice. Legally, the dog was his. But Brice seemed to have reasons of his own for not openly claiming the animal. He preferred to take him away at dead of night.

Domino had been valuable—an extraordinarily fast runner. But since he had become Lightning, he had been kept merely as a pet. Willy and the dog had become greatly attached, and ever since the theft Willy had been moody and unhappy.

Brice, knowing that Domino was still alive, and knowing his capabilities, was ready enough to take a risk in order to get the animal back into his own hands. As events had turned out, he had got the dog very easily, without being a penny out of pocket.

"The rotter!" said Gore-Pearce vindictively. "I've a dashed good mind to go to Helmford, and to face him."

"What would be the good?" asked Bell.

"Every good!" retorted Gore-Pearce. "He won't expect us, and when we face him he'll be flabbergasted. We'll make him pay up that money, too!"

Gulliver grunted.

"You might as well try to get money out of a brick wall!" he said. "Brice won't pay anything. We haven't got any evidence—and the dog is legally his. What the dickens can we do? He'll laugh in our faces."

Gore-Pearce cooled down.

"Well, perhaps you're right," he admitted. "I don't suppose we should get anything out of the beast."

"And you escaped that ten quid you owed him, anyhow," Bell pointed out. "That was worth something, wasn't it?"

"I'd like to get even with the blighter!" said Gore-Pearce savagely. "He played a dirty trick on us, and— By gad!"

He broke off, and his eyes were gleaming with a new light.

"Thought of something?" asked Gulliver.

"Yes, I have!" said Gore-Pearce. "I know how we can get our own back on Brice!"

"How?" asked his chums.

"Well, young Handforth would like to get hold of this information, wouldn't he?" said Gore-Pearce cunningly. "He'd like to know that Brice is at Helmford with the dog."

"Hang it, you're not going to help that miserable kid, are you?" asked Bell, staring.

"I'm not thinking of Handforth minor," grunted Gore-Pearce. "I'm thinking of Brice. Young Handforth is a determined little beggar, and if he finds out that Brice is to be found at Helmford, he'll soon get that dog back. And that'll put us even, won't it?"

"You're mad!" said Gulliver, sneering. "If we say anything to young Handforth, he'll jolly well know that we've been associated with Brice, and then he might get guessing things and—"

"Leave it to me!" interrupted Gore-Pearce. "I'm not such a fool as that, Gully! There are other ways and means."

Gore-Pearce meant what he said, too.

The very instant he got back to St. Frank's he casually made his way to the Third Form passage. It only took him a moment to discover that Willy's little study was empty. Gore-Pearce dodged in, and he was out again in a flash. And there was an expression of gloating satisfaction in his eyes.

"Well, that's done it!" he murmured, as he joined Gulliver and Bell in the lobby. "I think we can leave the rest to Handforth minor. And if that kid doesn't bring his dog back this evening, I'm a Dutchman!"

"Well, I must say you're very kind to Handforth minor!" said Gulliver, with a sniff.

"Rot! My idea is to be unkind to Brice."

Gore-Pearce did not consider Willy at all. He was merely to be a means to an end, as it were. Gore-Pearce saw that he could get his own back on Brice without laying himself open to any risk.

He had performed his little manoeuvre only just in time, as it turned out. For less than three minutes afterwards, Willy Handforth wandered aimlessly into his study. Willy was moody and depressed.

It was a most unusual condition for him to be in. Most of the other Third-Formers avoided him, since he was liable to be touchy and irritable. They hardly knew how to take him nowadays.

"If I could only think of something!" muttered Willy, as he sat down on the edge of the table. "But I suppose it's no good. By this time, Brice is up in Durham, or somewhere—Lancashire, perhaps. There isn't the faintest chance—"

He broke off, and picked up an unfamiliar card which had been lying on the table, propped against the inkwell.

"Hallo!" he muttered. "What's this? How the dickens did this get— Eh? Why, what the— Great Scott!"

He slid off the table, and stood there, staring at the card in a fascinated way. His face had become flushed, and his eyes were agleam.

Willy knew very little about race-cards—particularly of this type—but he knew at once that it was connected with a greyhound racing meeting at the Helmford Stadium; and the date on it was that very day's date.

And there, in black and white, were the names—"William Brice"—"Domino." And each one of these names had a tick against it in red ink. Gore-Pearce had made certain that Willy would spot those names at the first glance.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Willy.

He felt electrified. Domino—in other words, his dog, Lightning—was entered for a race at the Helmford Stadium that evening! There couldn't be any mistake about it; it couldn't be another dog, bearing the same name, because Brice was the owner.

So Brice hadn't gone out of the district. He was comparatively near at hand—merely in Helmford.

Curiously enough, Willy didn't wonder how that card had got into his study. That point didn't interest him at all. In a dim kind of way, he was grateful to the unknown friend who had supplied him with this information. He would have been considerably astonished if he had known that he had to thank Claude Gore-Pearce for this item of news!

No; Willy was thinking of something else quite different.

"The brute!" he ejaculated breathlessly. "The inhuman rotter! He's entered my dog for a race—and Lightning isn't fit! He's only just got over his convalescence! If he runs, he'll probably strain himself internally, and re-open the old wounds! Oh, the cad! It's a shame!"

Willy's thoughts were all for the dog.

Domino—or Lightning, as he preferred to call him—wasn't well enough to take part in any chase after the electric hare. If he was made to race it would be cruelty.

"It's got to be stopped!" panted Willy, as he glanced at his watch. "Oh, my hat! There's only about an hour before the race, too! What the dickens can I do? I shall have to rush over to Helmford—"

He broke off, freshly startled. He knew there was no train.

Then another idea came to him, and he dashed out of his study and sped like the wind towards the Remove passage.

CHAPTER 12.

The Handforths on the Job!



EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH was alone in Study D when Willy burst in. Church and McClure

had gone to the school shop to get some supplies.

"Hallo!" said Handforth, staring. "What's the matter, you young ass? What's the idea of bursting in like a hurricane?"

"Ted!" gasped Willy. "I want you to help me!"

"Help you?" said Edward Oswald. "What's the matter? You look excited."

"I want you to drive me over to Helmford in your Austin Seven—now!" said Willy.

"What rot!"

"But it's important—"

"Rats!" said Handforth. "Do you think I'm going to take my car out just because you want to go for a spin? And why Helmford? Helmford's only twenty miles away!" he added sarcastically. "Why not suggest that we should go to the north of Scotland?"

Willy remained calm.

"Look here, Ted—I'm not rotting!" he said steadily. "I've just found out that Brice is going to be at the Helmford Greyhound Stadium this evening."



Mr. Pagett, passing the greyhound racing stadium on top of a 'bus, happened to look through one of the main entrances. And then he started. For he could see two boys wearing Ancient House 'caps among the crowds. "Handforth!" he ejaculated, scandalised. "And, bless my soul, his younger brother!"

"What!"

"And my dog, Lightning, is entered for one of the early races!" continued Willy. "If possible, I want to get there before the race starts, so that I can prevent him from running. He's not fit! He hasn't recovered from his injuries yet, and it'll be a brutal thing——"

"Here, hold on!" interrupted Edward Oswald. "How do you know that your dog is entered for one of the races at Helmford?"

Willy thrust the card into his major's hands. Handforth looked at it, whistled, and then he became flushed.

"How did you get hold of this?" he asked.

"I found it in my study."

"You found it?" echoed Handforth. "But who put it there?"

Willy groaned.

"Oh, why waste time on needless questions?" he asked. "What does it matter who put it there? We can find it out afterwards. Don't you realise that we've hardly got time to reach Helmford?"

"All right!" said Edward Oswald. "I'm game, Willy. We'll buzz right off."

"Good man!" said Willy. "I knew I could rely on you."

"Well, it would be a pity if you couldn't!" said his major. "We'll do it in well under the hour."

"There's no train," said Willy. "If there was, I wouldn't have come to you——"

"Blow the trains!" said Handforth, as he strode to the door. "My little Austin can beat the train any day."

They hurried out, ran towards the rear door, and in a very few minutes they were climbing into the little Austin, and driving away.

Church and McClure, arriving back in Study D, were somewhat astonished to find Handforth missing. They were still more astonished when, on making inquiries, nobody seemed to know anything about their leader.

Willy was missing, too. Extraordinarily enough, the two brothers had gone off somewhere, and nobody knew where or why. Rather thoughtlessly, they had failed to tell anybody of their plans.

Handforth did not spare the trusty little engine. He sent the car bowling along at about thirty-five miles an hour, and in Bannington, where there was a speed limit, he received severe looks from a couple of constables, but Handforth didn't care. Besides, the case was urgent, and speed was necessary.

Between Bannington and Helmford, it was time to switch the headlights on, and when Helmford was finally reached, darkness had fallen. The October evening was fine, but cloudy.

"I'm afraid we shan't do it, Ted!" said Willy anxiously. "There's only about five minutes before the race."

"Don't you worry!" said Handforth. "We're nearly there."

But the Stadium proved to be well on the outskirts, almost on the other side of the town, and when the pair had jumped out of their car, near the enclosure, the race was just due to start.

"We're too late!" panted Willy.

Handforth dashed towards the main entrance, and he planked down some loose silver at the first pay-box he could see.



Mr. Pagett, passing the greyhound racing stadium entrances. And then he started. For he could see Handforth!

"Two!" he ejaculated.

The money-taker glanced at the silver, which amounted to four shillings.

"This is the best enclosure," he said.

"Five and ninepence each."

Handforth made an impatient gesture.

"All right—I don't care!" he retorted. "Blow the expense!"

He pulled out a ten-shilling note, and a moment later he and Willy were passed into the "swell" enclosure. They were immediately impressed. There was something rather fascinating about the whole scene, with the brilliant electrically-lit track. In the centre was the judge's stand, with electric lights gleaming everywhere.

There were thousands of people present. The whole place was well patronised. Incidentally, it was splendidly managed and

race was just on the point of starting, and they clung to the rails, staring over the track.

"There he is!" said Willy suddenly.

He pointed, and Handforth stared. At the starting-post, the greyhounds had just been released; the electric hare was already humming on its rapid course. Even in that second, and at that distance, Willy had recognised his dog, Lightning.

A roar went up from the crowds. The greyhounds were running well, and the hare was shooting along like something alive.

"Rats!" said Handforth disgustedly. "We're just too late!"

"Look!" muttered Willy, his voice full of anguish. "Didn't I tell you, Ted? Look! The poor old chap can't do it! He's only a passenger!"

Lightning was far behind—completely out of the running. He wasn't racing at all, but loping along with a stiff sort of gait, obviously in pain. This violent exercise was bad for him. Those internal injuries, which he had received so recently, were not yet fully healed.

And Mr. Brice must have known this! Yet the man had deliberately entered the dog for this race, and had callously disregarded his unfitness.

"Poor old Lightning!" said Willy tensely.

The electric hare flashed past them, with the greyhounds in full pursuit. Then came Lightning, with the crowds, failing to understand the situation, laughing merrily.

"Lightning, old man!" shouted Willy, leaping up and clinging to the top of the rails. "Here, old boy!"

There was something remarkable in the event that happened next.

Lightning, swerving, pricked up his ears. He had heard his young master's voice! And during that same second he saw Willy, at the rails.

"Good old boy!" shouted Willy. "Come on, Lightning! It's all right, old pal—I'm here!"

With a husky bark of joy, Lightning spun round, and then, with one bound, he leapt the rails, and landed fairly and squarely in Willy's arms!



us, happened to look through one of the main earring Ancient House 'caps among the crowds. "Ess my soul, his younger brother!"

very capably run. A very different proposition from the tawdry Bannington Arena.

Edward Oswald and Willy found themselves in a kind of promenade, right near the white rails. They didn't trouble about finding any seats. They could tell that a



CHAPTER 13.

A Surprise!

LIGHTNING'S action had been as unexpected as it was dramatic. Willy, perhaps, was the only one who had anticipated the move.

But, then, Willy understood his new pet. This was his dog—and they were pals. At the first sound of his young master's voice, Lightning had come. He had forgotten the

race, and the elusive hare; he had answered the call.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth blankly.

But Willy took no notice.

"Good old Lightning!" he said, fondling the greyhound. "I've got you again now, old boy, and I won't let you go. You're mine—aren't you?"

Lightning, breathing hard, and with difficulty, licked Willy's face. His contentment and his joy were written in his expressive eyes.

Then Willy and Edward Oswald became aware of a commotion. Down at the finishing-post men were waving their hands and shouting. All the spectators were looking in this direction, too.

"Stop him! Get that dog back!"

"Stop those boys!"

All sorts of shouts were coming, and Willy recognised the voice of Bill Brice. Brice was at the finishing-post, and he was shouting madly.

"Come on, Ted!" ejaculated Willy suddenly. "We've got to get out of this! Now's our only chance!"

"By George!" said Handforth. "You—you mean——"

"The Austin's outside!" interrupted Willy tensely. "If we can only get to the exit, and buzz out, we'll be away before anybody can grab us. Come on!"

"I'm with you!" roared Handforth enthusiastically.

They dashed away, Willy still keeping the greyhound in his arms. All the people near them stared, but nobody made any attempt to interfere. Such a thing as this had never happened before in the Stadium, and nobody knew exactly what to do.

The commotion became more pronounced.

"Hi! Stop them—stop them!"

"Grab those kids!"

"Don't let them get away with that dog!"

The shouts were becoming frantic. One or two men made a half-hearted attempt to interfere, but Handforth, who was leading, lashed out to right and left.

Biff! Thud!

His fists landed with effective results, and the men went reeling back, startled and angered. But before they do anything the two juniors had sped past.

It was a race, and it seemed as though Handforth and his minor would win. If only they could reach the exit, and get out into the road, all would be well. It would only take them a moment to dash to the

little car, leap in, and drive off into the darkness.

Willy's only thought was that he had got his dog back. His dog! He refused to consider it in any other light. He had saved Lightning from death, and so the dog belonged to him.

Handforth never gave these matters a thought at all. He concentrated on the task of getting away.

But their luck was out.

Just when they seemed within an ace of winning, when they were within sight of the exit, a stern-looking gentleman barred their path. There were two men in uniform with him, and before Handforth and Willy could get past they were seized and held.

"Leggo!" roared Handforth, panting. "We're not going to be stopped——"

"Chuck it, Ted!" said Willy. "We're whacked. No sense in struggling now. We can't get away."

A glance had told him the bitter truth. In their excitement, they had penetrated a section of the ground which was not available for the public. It was really Handforth's fault, for he had been leading the way. And they now found themselves amongst a number of officials. Handforth had seen the word "Exit" painted on some doors, and he had rushed towards them. Too late, he now realised that he and Willy had left the public enclosures behind.

This was just as well, in a way, for the crowds were unable to press round them. But hundreds of people were on their feet, staring, talking excitedly. They could not understand what this all meant.

The tall gentleman was regarding the two boys with curious intensity.

"What is this—one of your school rags?" he inquired sternly.

"No, sir," replied Willy. "This dog is mine."

"Yours!"

"Yes, sir."

"I do not think you quite realise what you are saying, young man," said the stern gentleman. "I have had my eye on this particular dog for some minutes—ever since the race started—and I have discovered that he was entered by a man named William Brice——"

"I don't care about that, sir—he's mine!" insisted Willy stubbornly. "I found him in a ditch—dying. I took him home, and nursed him, and brought him back to life. So he's mine."

Willy's statement was quite simple—and very much to the point.

"You boys have come from St. Frank's College, have you not?" asked the gentleman.

"Yes, sir."

"H'm! There's something rather strange about this," said the other. "It's all right, men—you can leave these boys to me. I shall have to inquire into all the circumstances."

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"What's it got to do with you, sir?" asked Handforth truculently. "Why can't you let us go? Brice is a scoundrel——"

"I do not doubt your word," interrupted the gentleman. "I am quite prepared to believe that Brice is a scoundrel. My own name is Sir Herbert Rodney, and I am one of the directors of this stadium."

"Oh!" said Handforth. "Sorry, sir."

He seemed to be familiar with the name. Then he remembered that Sir Herbert Rodney was a famous greyhound enthusiast.

"Please let us go, sir!" urged Willy. "I want to get out of this place! This dog is mine——"

"I am sorry, but I must contradict you," said Sir Herbert. "This dog is not yours, neither is it Brice's. Surprisingly enough, it belongs to me!"

Handforth and his minor stared.

"To—to you, sir?" ejaculated Willy.

"To me!" said Sir Herbert quietly.

"Then you've bought him from Brice, sir?"

"This greyhound has belonged to me ever since he was a puppy," replied Sir Herbert, giving Lightning a very close scrutiny. "Yes, I recognise the dog quite easily. He has grown into a fine animal. But he is undoubtedly mine."

"I don't understand, sir," said Willy.

"This greyhound was stolen from my kennels—as a puppy," replied Sir Herbert Rodney. "So, young gentlemen, I rather think that I have a claim to inquire further into this interesting matter."

Willy's jaw became firmly set.

"Well, it's a relief to know that he doesn't belong to Brice, sir," he said. "I'm not a bit surprised to hear that Brice stole him. The man's a rotter—a ruffian. But Lightning is my dog. Look at him, sir! Can't you see that he recognises me as his owner?"

There was, indeed, something very touching in Lightning's affection for Willy.

"This dog's name is Domino," said Sir Herbert.

"After I had found him, sir, I called him Lightning," explained Willy.

"I understand," said Sir Herbert, nodding. "But, my boy, I cannot let you take the dog away—especially in this manner. I must make further inquiries. I am particularly anxious to have a chat with Mr. William Brice."

He reached forward to take Lightning from Willy's arms, but Willy drew away.

"You're not going to have him!" he said fiercely. "He's mine!"

affection for the dog," he said dryly. "And if your statement is true—and I do not doubt its veracity—there may be something in your case. But I must take the dog now. It is necessary that he should be medically examined."

Willy looked at the baronet with steady eyes.

"You won't play a trick on me, sir, will you?" he asked. "You won't take the dog, and then refuse to let me see him again?"

"I promise you that you will see the dog again," said Sir Herbert. "But his running in this race was exceedingly bad, and I have an idea that the dog is sadly out of condition. He should never have been entered."

"I can tell you that, sir—without Lightning being medically examined," replied Willy. "He was nearly dead only about a fortnight ago. Even now, I don't understand how I pulled him round. And it's a monstrous thing that he should have been put into a race this evening. Look at him, sir. He's all in."

"I will take him away and have him examined by an expert," said Sir Herbert. "You two boys had better remain here. I will come back to you after I have seen Brice."

He took the dog and hurried away. Willy watched him go with anxious, concerned eyes. Edward Oswald was inclined to be suspicious.

"We ought to have gone with him!" he said gruffly. "Goodness knows what they're going to do now!"

"Well, we shall have to trust them," said Willy. "Somehow, I don't think that Sir Herbert will double-cross us."

"If we had only been a minute earlier, we could have got out," said Edward Oswald regretfully. "And by this time we should have been well away."

Willy was looking thoughtful.

"Perhaps it's just as well that things have turned out like this," he remarked, after a pause. "By Jingo! It's a bit of a surprise to know that the dog never belonged to Brice. No wonder he was afraid to bring an action! No wonder he broke into the school at dead of night!"

"I'll bet he didn't know that Sir Herbert Rodney was a director of this Stadium!" said Handforth, with a grin. "He came into the lion's den when he came here!"

An official approached them.

"I think you young gentlemen had better get into the public enclosure," he suggested. "Just on the other side of these railings, if you don't mind."

"But Sir Herbert told us to stay here!" objected Handforth.

"It makes no difference," said the official. "You'll be in full sight, and I'll tell Sir Herbert where he can find you—although, if it comes to that, he won't need any telling."

"But why can't we stay here?" argued Handforth.

"They'll be bringing some dogs along soon, and no members of the public are allowed to remain on this part of the ground."

CHAPTER 14.

An Unforeseen Development!



SIR HERBERT RODNEY smiled.

"Well, young man, I am certainly impressed by your

replied the official. "Some along, young gentlemen. You've only got to get to the other side of these railings."

Handforth was suspicious, but Willy didn't mind much. He was quite satisfied that no trickery was intended. They walked through a little gate, and now found themselves in the public enclosure, comparatively near to the main entrance.

And, as it happened, nothing could have been more unfortunate.

If they had only remained in their original position for another two or three minutes, everything would have been well. But, by returning to the public enclosure just then, they rushed headlong into a new and unexpected danger.

It was an extraordinarily unlucky chance.

For it so happened that they were standing in the full glare of one of the big electric lights, and their school caps were like beacons, standing out clearly. Just beyond, on the other side of the wall, was the main road.

There was nothing particularly unlucky about this—nor was it unlucky that an important bus route should pass the Stadium.

But it was certainly the height of misfortune that Mr. William Pagett, the master of the Fifth Form at St. Frank's, should

have been visiting friends in Helmford that Saturday afternoon. Mr. Pagett was now on his way to the station, with the idea of returning to St. Frank's. Finding the inside of the bus full, he had gone on the top.

Handforth and his minor were in a place that was strictly out of bounds—and, of course, a St. Frank's master had to go by on the top of a bus!

Mr. Pagett frowned with disapproval as the bus skirted past the Stadium, with its brilliant electric lights, its crowds, and its shouting bookmakers.

"Disgraceful!" said Mr. Pagett sternly.

"Beg pardon, sir?" said the conductor, who had just come on the top deck.

"Er—nothing," replied Mr. Pagett hastily. "Nothing! This place, I take it, is the Greyhound Racing Enclosure?"

"Yes, sir."

"I do not approve of such amusements," said Mr. Pagett coldly. "I am greatly afraid that they tend to corrupt the young people of our country. Greyhound racing, as a sport, is all very well, but no betting should be allowed in these enclosures."

"Might as well shut 'em all up then, sir," said the conductor.

"I am afraid you are right," said Mr. Pagett regretfully. "The gambling spirit is

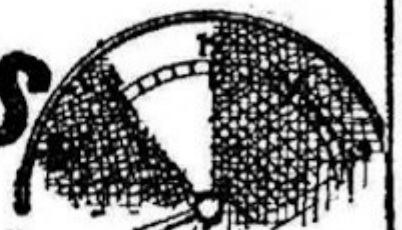


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very deeply rooted in— Upon my soul! Surely it cannot be— Good gracious!"

Mr. Pagett gripped the side rail of the 'bus, and stared over the wall of the Stadium. He had just caught sight of two caps—down there, in the enclosure, near the main entrance.

And Mr. Pagett was startled. They were distinctive red and blue caps. Ancient House caps! Of course, there were other schoolboys who wore red and blue caps, but the design—

"Handforth!" ejaculated Mr. Pagett, scandalised. "Yes! And, bless my soul—his younger brother! The two Handforths! Here, in this greyhound racing enclosure!"

Mr. Pagett lost sight of the two juniors as the 'bus turned the corner at the end of the ground. It drew to a standstill, to take on a few more passengers. Mr. Pagett leapt to his feet, and hastened down the steps.

"We haven't got to the station yet, sir!" called the conductor.

"Never mind—never mind!" said Mr. Pagett hastily. "I prefer to alight here."

"Another of 'em!" murmured the conductor, with a wink at another passenger. "Pretends to be all against greyhound racing and yet he gets off as soon as he spots the old Stadium!"

Mr. Pagett collected himself as soon as he reached the pavement. He moved a few yards, hesitated, and then his jaw became grimly set.

Without question, he had seen Handforth, of the Remove, and his minor in that enclosure. There they were, standing near the rails—watching all the proceedings. Two juniors of St. Frank's! Here, in Helmsford, on a Saturday evening, attending the greyhound races!

Mr. Pagett boiled with anger. He was righteously indignant. Not that Mr. Pagett was in the habit of going out of his way to make himself unpleasant. He was a master of a somewhat acid temperament, but, as a rule, he was quite fair. He could generally be relied upon to have a blind eye, so to speak, if something was going on that was slightly against the rules. He wasn't like Mr. Pycraft, of the Fourth, who was everlastingly butting in.

But this was a different thing. Two St. Frank's juniors were here, in this greyhound racing enclosure. And Mr. Pagett, who had strict ideas on greyhound racing, was very angry. It seemed obvious to him that the Handforth brothers had slipped away from St. Frank's, and had attended the races on the "q.t."

Mr. Pagett felt that he would be lacking in his duty if he allowed himself to be blind to this flagrant violation of the school rules. Every boy in his senses knew that such places were strictly and absolutely out of bounds.

Mr. Pagett, with a purposeful stride, made his way to the main entrance of the Stadium!



CHAPTER 15.

Rather Awkward!

FIVE and ninepence, please, sir!" said the money-taker.

Mr. Pagett waved his hand.

"Nonsense!" he said. "I do not wish to be entertained in this place."

"Then you can't go in, sir."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Pagett. "I beg your pardon, but I am going in. I am a master of St. Frank's College, and two St. Frank's pupils are in this enclosure. It is my intention to bring them away, since they are not allowed in here."

A uniformed attendant came up, and, after a short consultation with the money-taker, he turned to Mr. Pagett.

"Sorry, sir," he said, "but we can't do anything without the manager's consent—"

"Rubbish!" said Mr. Pagett curtly. "These two boys are only just inside, and I am certainly not going to wait while you approach the manager. Ridiculous!"

He swung through the turnstile and was inside before the uniformed attendant could stop him. And there, in full sight, not more than fifteen yards away, were Edward Oswald Handforth and Willy Handforth.

"I knew it!" muttered Mr. Pagett angrily.

He strode up rapidly.

In one sense he was satisfied, and in another sense he was shocked. He had been hoping against hope that he had made a mistake; that these two boys would prove to be strangers. Yet, in his heart, he had known that he had made no blunder. It was very difficult to make a mistake where Edward Oswald Handforth was concerned, for Handforth was so easily recognisable.

And here were these two juniors, standing near the rails, watching the electrically-lit track. A race was just about to commence, and the whole great crowd was becoming tense with expectancy.

Handforth and his minor were watching as keenly as anybody else, apparently, but Mr. Pagett did not know that they were on the look-out for Sir Herbert Rodney's return. They were not interested in the race.

"Handforth!" snapped Mr. Pagett curtly.

Edward Oswald jumped into the air, and leapt round.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "Old Pagett! I—I mean, Mr. Pagett!"

"All right, don't get excited!" said Willy coolly. "We're not doing any harm."

Mr. Pagett pointed sternly to the exit.

"Leave this place!" he commanded. "It is unnecessary for me to say that I am shocked. I am amazed to find you two boys here."

"But—but—"

"Silence, Handforth!" said Mr. Pagett sternly. "If you wish to make any excuses,

you must make them to your headmaster!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"You know perfectly well that all such places as these are strictly out of bounds!" continued the master of the Fifth. "Come! You will accompany me outside."

"Just a minute, sir!" said Willy. "We aren't in here looking at the races. We came for quite another reason——"

"The less you say, Handforth minor, the better!" interrupted Mr. Pagett coldly. "I do not blame you so much as I blame your brother. He is the elder, and he should know better than to lead you into these—these forbidden places."

"You've got it wrong, sir," said Willy. "It was I who led my major here."

"How dare you?" snapped Mr. Pagett. "Handforth minor, I am very startled to hear you make such an admission. Come with me!"

"Yes, sir, but——"

"Not another word! Come!"

"We're waiting for somebody, sir——"

"Are you daring to argue with me?" shouted Mr. Pagett hotly. "I do not care whether you are waiting for somebody or not! I command you to come with me out of this place. And, unless you come at once, I will drag you out by force!"

Willy began to get alarmed.

"We don't want to have any unpleasantness, sir," he urged. "If you will let me explain——"

"I shall do nothing of the sort!" broke in Mr. Pagett harshly. "Here, men! Help me to remove these two boys! They have no right in this place, and unless you assist me at once, I shall make a strong complaint to your directors!"

Two uniformed men had come up, and they took in the situation at a glance. It was clear to them that these schoolboys were in trouble with a master, and it was plainly their duty to assist him to get them out. They would have been quite in the wrong if they had refused to comply with Mr. Pagett's request.

"Come on, young gents!" said one of the men gruffly.

Handforth flared up.

"You mind your own business!" he roared. "You don't think we came into this place to watch the racing, do you? I should hope we've got more sense!"

"This air of injured innocence will do you no good, Handforth," said Mr. Pagett acidly. "I tell you quite plainly that unless you come out with me now, I shall have you removed by force."

Mr. Pagett was anxious to have this scene over, but he was a determined man. He was certainly not going to let these two junior boys over-ride him. He had given his orders, and they must be obeyed.

"I can explain in two ticks, sir!" said Willy quickly. "Don't take any notice of Ted! He's excited."

"Handforth minor, I refuse to listen——"

"You remember that dog of mine, sir?" said Willy. "Well, you know he was stolen

on Wednesday night. I heard that he was to be found here. So Ted and I came along——"

"I have already told you, Handforth minor, that you can give your explanations to the headmaster!" broke in Mr. Pagett stubbornly. "I can well believe that you two boys, being surprised in this place, will have some excuse ready to your lips. You know perfectly well that this—er—race-course is quite out of bounds. Therefore, you can have no excuse—no excuse whatever!"

"But, sir——"

Mr. Pagett lost his temper. He seized Willy grimly by the scruff of the neck, and commenced walking him towards the exit. At the same moment the two uniformed attendants grabbed Handforth, and hustled him out. Handforth, in spite of his size and aggressiveness, was quite helpless in their grip. These attendants were specially large men, for in a place of this sort there was no telling what rough customers they would be called upon to handle.

While Handforth grew more and more excited, Willy became very calm. He kept his head. If only he could induce Mr. Pagett to remain, the situation might yet be saved. And there was Sir Herbert Rodney, too. Willy did not want to go until he had received some definite promise from Sir Herbert regarding the dog.

Handforth, as usual, blundered. Also—as usual—he did so quite unconsciously. To tell the truth, Mr. Pagett was rather at a loss after he had got his captives outside. He hardly knew what to do with them. Certainly he could not march them through the streets of Helmford, holding each of them by the scruff of the neck. Neither could he compel them to enter the railway train. They were in such a mood that they might easily defy him. This, however, was not very likely, since it would possibly lead to expulsion.

"Now!" he panted, as they all stood on the pavement. "I will show you, young men, whether I am to be defied or not!"

Handforth suddenly wrenched himself free.

"Quick!" he gasped recklessly. "Come on, Willy! Let's jump into my Austin, and buzz off!"

Mr. Pagett started.

"Indeed!" he snapped. "So you have your car here, have you, Handforth? That is very convenient!"

"Oh, you ass!" groaned Willy, looking at his major.

Handforth was gazing across the road to where the Austin Seven was parked. Mr. Pagett spotted it at once.

"Come!" he said triumphantly. "Handforth, I order you to get into this car of yours. Yes, and you, too, Handforth minor! We will all drive back to St. Frank's."

Mr. Pagett was feeling quite relieved. He knew that he had lost his train, and there was not another one for an hour or two; and he was by no means averse to a motor ride.



Mr. Pagett lost his temper. He seized Willy grimly by the scruff of his neck, and commenced walking him towards the exit. At the same moment the two uniformed attendants seized Edward Oswald Handforth and hustled him out, too. Handforth struggled violently, but he found himself helpless in their grip.

It had the excellent advantage of assuring him that he could keep a close hold on his two prisoners. Handforth would be too busily engaged in driving to attempt any escape, and Mr. Pagett could easily look after Willy.

car, perhaps Mr. Pagett would listen to him, and then there was always the chance that the master would be convinced, and would allow the car to drive back. Anyhow, it was a lot better than standing here, wasting time and arguing all to no purpose.

"All right, sir," said Willy quietly. "We'll go with you."

Handforth was seething like a volcano as he started up the engine.

"Look here, sir!" he burst out, as Mr. Pagett took his seat beside him. "Things aren't what they seem. I made a bloomer like this only this afternoon. I took something for granted, without making any inquiries—"

"How many more times, Handforth, must I tell you to reserve your defence until you are facing the headmaster?" broke in Mr. Pagett tartly. "I do not want to hear your explanations. I am not your Form-master, and I am only taking you back to St. Frank's because it is my duty to do so. You must answer to Dr. Stafford—not to me."

"Yes, let's get away, Ted," said Willy. "Lots of people are looking at us. There'll be a crowd soon."

Handforth glanced round, and found that quite a number of people had gathered and were looking on with great interest. So Handforth grunted, engaged the gear, and let in the clutch with a jerk.

CHAPTER 16.

On the Carpet!



ONLY for a moment or two did Edward Oswald Handforth hesitate.

Then, with a grunt, he walked across the road towards his Austin. He had received a nudge from Willy, and this had brought him to his senses.

Until that second, Handforth had had a wild idea of escaping—thinking only of the moment. But Willy knew better. It would be a very grave thing if they defied the Fifth Form-master. Indeed, they would not have a leg to stand on when they were ultimately hauled before the Head.

Willy always knew when he was beaten—and, although he was inwardly angry and chagrined, he showed no outward sign of it.

In his cool way, he decided that it would be better to humour Mr. Pagett. Once in the

"I trust, Handforth, that you will drive cautiously," said Mr. Pagett, suddenly realising that he had placed himself entirely in the Removite's care.

"Don't worry, sir," growled Handforth. "I'm not reckless."

"I am very much afraid, Handforth, that your ideas of recklessness are not synonymous with mine," said Mr. Pagett tartly. "However, there is a speedometer in the front of me, I see, and I forbid you to exceed twenty miles an hour."

"But that's a crawl, sir!" protested Handforth.

"Then we will crawl!" said Mr. Pagett promptly.

"I wish you'd listen to me, sir!" said Willy, leaning over from the rear seat. "I particularly want to see Sir Herbert Rodney before I leave Helmford."

"Oh, indeed! And who, may I ask, is Sir Herbert Rodney?"

"One of the directors of the Stadium, sir," replied Willy. "We were waiting for him when you dragged us out. You see, he's the owner of the dog that I had at St. Frank's, and we only went to the Stadium to—"

"I have already told you, young man, that I want to hear no explanations!" said Mr. Pagett, with exasperating stubbornness. "Quite by accident, I pass this Greyhound Stadium, and what do I see? I see you two junior boys in that enclosure—an enclosure which you know to be strictly out of bounds. Whatever excuses you may have, they are not adequate. I am prepared to believe that you went to that place to inquire after a dog; but I am not prepared to believe that you were justified in going there. Quite openly, quite blatantly, you were wearing your school caps—advertising to all and sundry that you were St. Frank's boys. No, Handforth minor, I will not listen."

In vain Willy tried. Mr. Pagett was like rock. He turned a deaf ear to every entreaty. He positively refused to listen.

So, at last, the little Austin arrived back at St. Frank's—with Handforth still boiling, and with his minor quietly angry. It was no good getting wild now, anyhow. They were back at the school, and it was quite certain that they would not be allowed to return to Helmford.

"Shall I drive straight through Big Arch, sir?" asked Handforth.

"No; you had better stop here, in the Triangle," replied Mr. Pagett. "We will walk across Inner Court."

They got out of the car close to the Ancient House, and several figures appeared in the doorway.

"Well, well!" remarked Vivian Travers. "The return of the prodigals, what? For the love of Samson! Handy is in trouble again!"

"What's happened, Handy, old man?" inquired Nipper.

Mr. Pagett frowned upon the Removites.

"Go indoors!" he said sternly. "These two boys are coming with me to the head-

master. I do not want any of you bothering round."

"My goodness!" muttered Church. "Just what Mac and I thought! Handy's been getting himself into a hole!"

"He always does get into one—when we're not with him!" said McClure, with a sniff.

"But this must be something special," said Nipper. "Willy was with him—and Willy isn't the kind of chap to look for trouble."

"They probably found it without looking," murmured Travers.

Mr. Pagett marched his captors through Big Arch, and then they went across Inner

NEXT WEDNESDAY!



Court, until they arrived at the headmaster's house. There was a brief wait in the hall while a message was taken to Dr. Stafford; then they were ushered into the Head's library.

"I trust you will forgive this intrusion, sir," said Mr. Pagett stiffly, "but I felt impelled to bring these two boys straight to you to be dealt with."

Dr. Malcolm Stafford adjusted his glasses, and regarded the pair in some surprise.

"Really, Mr. Pagett, is it so bad as all that?" he inquired. "Would it not have been better if you had allowed the boys' Housemaster to deal with them?"

"When you hear how I found them, sir, I think you will agree with me that I have taken the only course," said Mr. Pagett. "This afternoon I visited some friends in Helmford, and on my way back to the

station I happened to pass the Greyhound Stadium. I was, I must explain, on the top of a motor-omnibus."

"Oh, I see!" nodded the Head.

"From that elevated position I was enabled to look over the wall of the Stadium, right into the place," said Mr. Pagett. "You may judge of my surprise, sir, when I saw these two boys within the enclosure."

"They were inside the Greyhound Stadium?" asked the Head sharply.

"Yes, sir; inside," replied Mr. Pagett. "Needless to say, I at once entered the place, and ordered them out."

CORCORAN OF THE BLUE CRUSADERS!

Who's Corcoran? And what are the Blue Crusaders?

Lionel Corcoran is a new-comer to the St. Frank's Junior School. He's a go-ahead, full-of-pep, cheery young sportsman who is always ready for a joke. Why, he's only been at St. Frank's a few minutes when he gets the cane for pulling off a stunt which leaves even Vivian Travers gasping at its audaciousness! Oh, yes, Corcoran's going to be a useful acquisition to the Junior School!

And the Blue Crusaders? That's a football team—a famous football team in the Second Division of the English League; a club which is owned by Lionel Corcoran's uncle. Nipper and Handforth and the other juniors vote the players to be the best set of sportsmen they've ever met.

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"You were quite right in doing so, Mr. Pagett," said the Head, nodding. "Handforth major, you are the elder. What explanation have you to offer? You must surely know that any greyhound-racing enclosure is strictly out of bounds."

"We didn't go there for the racing, sir," said Handforth bluntly. "And neither of us is ashamed of what we've done."

"Can I speak, sir?" asked Willy. The Head nodded.

"Perhaps you know, sir, that I found a greyhound in a ditch, a week or two ago," said Willy. "I brought it to St. Frank's, and nursed it back to life."

"I have heard the story," said Dr. Stafford. "And, indeed, Handforth minor, I was quite pleased with you. Your love of animals is very creditable. I cannot help admiring

any boy who takes such an interest in dumb creatures."

"My dog was stolen on Wednesday night, sir," said Willy. "Somebody broke into the pets' quarters, and took Lightning away. And I was very fond of him, sir. We had become great pals."

"I am prepared to believe that," said the Head. "Well?"

"This evening, sir, I heard that my dog was entered for a race at the Helmford Stadium," said Willy, his voice hard and fierce. "Entered for a race, sir! And he hadn't recovered from his injuries! It was cruelty, sir—absolute cruelty!"

"But was this dog yours, Handforth minor?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are quite sure?" pressed the headmaster.

"Well, I reckoned he was mine, sir," said Willy steadily. "I saved his life, and brought him back to health—"

"I am afraid that your treatment of the dog does not necessarily give you the right to claim him as your own," interrupted the Head gently. "Since you saved his life, you may think—and not unreasonably—that he belongs to you. But, as a point of law, I doubt much whether you can actually claim the animal as your own."

"Why talk about the law, sir?" asked Willy, his voice quivering. "He's my dog! But for me he would have died in that ditch. And he's mine, sir. I don't care what anybody says—I don't care what the law says—he's mine!"

"Yes, yes, but—"

"And when I heard that he was being run in a race this evening, I was furious, sir," said Willy. "It was enough to kill him. So I went to Ted, and I asked him to take me over to Helmford in his car. We rushed over and went into the Stadium. We went there, sir, to save that dog from being cruelly treated. Are you going to punish us for that, sir?"

Willy gazed defiantly at the Head; and the Head felt that the position was a delicate one.



CHAPTER 17.

Good News!

MR. PAGETT felt very uncomfortable.

Now that he had passed on the responsibility to Dr. Stafford, he realised, with a dawning sense of embarrassment, that he had been unnecessarily hasty.

Perhaps it would have been as well, after all, if he had dealt with this case himself.

"Ahem!" coughed the Head, drumming his desk with his finger-tips. "And what happened after you entered the—er—Stadium, Handforth minor?" he asked.

"We were just too late, sir," replied Willy. "The race had practically begun. And poor old Lightning was last. He was unfit—he was dragging himself along in agony. I whistled to him and called him, and he jumped the rails and landed in my arms."

"Dear me!" said Dr. Stafford, in surprise. "Is this literally true, my boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"He jumped into your arms?"

"Yes, sir."

"That, indeed, is an indication of the dog's affection for you," said the Head. "I have never heard of such an extraordinary case. In the middle of a race, Mr. Pagett, this dog leaves the track, and obeys Handforth minor's whistle. Very singular! Indeed, very touching!"

"I was not aware of this, sir," said Mr. Pagett, feeling more uncomfortable than ever.

"And then a tall gentleman came up to us, sir," said Willy. "He told us his name was Sir Herbert Rodney, and that the dog really belonged to him. It was stolen, or something, as a puppy. And Ted and I were just waiting for Sir Herbert to come back, when Mr. Pagett collared us and dragged us out."

"I naturally assumed that the boys were in the Stadium for the purpose of watching the greyhound racing," said Mr. Pagett defensively.

Handforth sniffed.

"A fat lot we care about greyhound racing, sir!" he said, with disdain. "We don't believe in it—because it means betting."

"You both give me your assurance, do you not, that you entered this Stadium solely for the purpose of making inquiries concerning the unhappy dog?" asked the Head.

"Yes, sir," they answered.

Dr. Stafford glanced at the master of the Fifth.

"Really, Mr. Pagett, I do not think that we need be severe," he said. "The offence, after all, is only a technical one. These boys deliberately entered the Stadium, knowing that such a place was out of bounds."

"We hardly gave that a thought, sir," said Handforth gruffly. "And, in any case, what does it matter?"

"It matters a good deal, Handforth," replied the Head. "I do not like any of my boys to be seen in such an enclosure. You should have gone to your Housemaster, and left the matter in his hands. It was quite wrong of you to deal with it yourselves. However, I think that a formal caning will be sufficient punishment for you."

At that moment the telephone bell rang, and the Head, with a murmured apology, lifted the receiver.

"Yes?" he said. "Oh, Mr. Lee! Indeed? Really, you surprise me, Mr. Lee. Yes, yes, by all means. The two boys are here now. Certainly!"

The Head hung up the receiver, and glanced at Mr. Pagett.

"I think we will delay the—er—caning for a few moments, Mr. Pagett," he said dryly. "Mr. Lee is coming here—with a visitor."

Handforth and his minor were rather surprised. They wondered what was in the wind now.

But it was not necessary for them to wonder for long. A minute later, the door opened, and Nelson Lee appeared. With him was Sir Herbert Rodney.

Willy gave him one glance, and then he leapt forward.

"How's Lightning, sir?" he asked eagerly. "Oh, my hat! I didn't expect to see you, sir! How's my dog, sir? I—I mean—your dog?"

Sir Herbert patted Willy on the shoulder.

"I rather like this concern of yours, young man," he said kindly. "But you need not worry. The dog has come to no real harm."

"Thank you, sir," said Willy. "That's all I wanted to know."

Nelson Lee introduced Sir Herbert, and the Head made him welcome.

"I felt impelled to come over to St. Frank's without delay," said the baronet. "I was told that a St. Frank's master had taken these two boys away, and I was rather disappointed. For I had wanted to see them again."

"I am afraid it is my fault," said Mr. Pagett, quite apologetically. "I—er—was under a slight misapprehension, I am afraid. I thought that these two boys were patronising that disreputable Stadium—"

"I am one of the directors of the Stadium, sir," said Sir Herbert dryly.

"Eh? Really, sir, I had no intention of giving offence," said Mr. Pagett hastily. "But I hold rather strong views on greyhound racing—"

"We are all entitled to our own opinions, sir," smiled Sir Herbert. "However, I do not think you would find much to complain of in the Helmford Stadium. It is not a sport, perhaps, in which schoolboys should indulge—although, I think, we need not enter into any discussion on that point just now."

"No, no—of course not," murmured Mr. Pagett.

Sir Herbert turned to Dr. Stafford again.

"In consequence of what these boys told me, I lost no time in making inquiries," he said. "I found that a man named Brice—a disreputable rascal—was the fellow who had entered the dog for the race. It was he who stole the greyhound in the first place. I believe that Brice was a kennel hand in my employ at one time."

"Did you find him, sir?" asked Willy.

"Brice was sensible enough to make himself scarce," replied Sir Herbert. "When I tried to get hold of him, he bolted. Possibly he recognised me—or it is feasible that somebody gave him a warning. At all events, the man had disappeared, and I did not trouble to go after him. My main

concern was for the dog, and I was present when the animal was medically examined by an expert."

"The race didn't harm him, sir?" asked Willy eagerly.

"Not greatly," said the visitor. "The examination, however, was conclusive on one point. The dog has recently received some rather severe injuries, and has been very carefully and cleverly tended. He was in no fit condition to be raced." Sir Herbert patted Willy on the shoulder again. "I am grateful to you, young man, for your devotion and love for this dog."

"I didn't do anything, sir," said Willy uncomfortably.

"You did a great deal," said Sir Rodney. "As soon as I heard that you had gone, I rang up St. Frank's, and I was fortunate enough to get into conversation with Mr. Lee. He did not hesitate to tell me all the details regarding the dog, and I think it was splendid of you, young man, to take the poor old chap into your care, and to devote such pains to assure his recovery."

"I would have done the same for any animal, sir," said Willy. "I found him dying in a ditch. What else could I do but bring him home, and help him, sir?"

"And sit up all night, eh?" said Sir Herbert. "Sit up all night, and then spend every available moment of your spare time for days on end? That was true devotion, young man, and I do not mind confessing that I am touched by the story. Furthermore, your claim is a perfectly just one."

"My claim, sir?" said Willy, with a start.

"You saved this dog's life, and he is therefore yours," replied the baronet. "By all moral rights, he is your dog."

Willy flushed, and when he spoke he tried to steady his voice.

"Does—does this mean, sir, that you're going to let me have him?" he asked quietly.

"It certainly does," smiled Sir Herbert. "And, what is more, I have brought Lightning with me, so that you two can be reunited!"



CHAPTER 18.

All Serene!

WILLY HANDFORTH

uttered a glad exclamation.

"You've brought him, sir?" he said happily. "Oh, thank you, sir! You're a brick!"

"There you are!" said Edward Oswald triumphantly. "I knew jolly well that it was a good thing for us to go to Helmford! As for getting a caning, who cares?"

"Ahem! Please be silent, Handforth," said the Head hastily.

Sir Herbert turned to him.

"I hope you will not object, sir?" he asked. "You will not mind me making a present of this dog to the boy?"

"You may do as you please, Sir Herbert," replied the Head. "Since the dog is yours, you can, of course, do just as you like with him. I must confess that I do not understand much about greyhounds, but I have

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always had an idea that they are quite valuable."

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"Good gracious!" said the Head, startled. "As much as that? Really, Sir Herbert, I hardly know what to say. I do not think it would be advisable for this junior boy to have such an animal as a pet. The responsibility——"

"However, Domino's value is now nil," said Sir Herbert quietly.

"Not to me, sir!" put in Willy.

"As a pet, he is, perhaps, more valuable than ever," said Sir Herbert. "But as a money-making racer, his days are over. The medical examination proved that very conclusively. Lightning will never be able to race again."

"Does that mean that he's very badly injured, sir?" asked Willy anxiously.

"It means that he is physically unfit to withstand the great strain of racing," said the sporting baronet. "As a pet—as a companion—he is quite all right. Within a few weeks he will be as sound as a bell. There is no reason why he should not live to a ripe old age, and nobody will ever guess that he has ever been injured. It simply means that he is unfit for track work, and, therefore, from that aspect he is of no value."

"And you're going to let me keep him as a pet, sir?" said Willy contentedly. "By jingo, that's fine! Ever since we became such pals, I've regarded him as mine. And if we hadn't gone over to Helmford this evening I might never have got him back."

Willy turned to the Head, his face cheerful, his eyes aglow.

"All right, sir!" he said briskly. "Ted and I admit that we were in the wrong. Do you mind caning us, sir, and letting us go?"

"Really, Handforth minor——"

"I want to see my dog again, sir," explained Willy. "So if you'll get the swishing over, I'll be grateful."

The Head's eyes twinkled.

"You seem very anxious to be caned, young man!" he remarked.

"No, sir: I'm anxious to see Lightning."

"Well, you can both go," smiled the Head. "In the circumstances, I don't think I shall cane you. Sir Herbert has definitely satisfied me that you only entered the Stadium because of your love for animals. I do not think it would be an act of justice if I punished you for that. As for the technical offence, we will say no more about it."

"Thanks awfully, sir," grinned Willy. "And thank you, too, sir!" he added, turning to Sir Herbert. "You've brought my dog back, and everything's all serene!"

He and Edward Oswald hastily made their exit from the Head's study. When they got outside, they were both grinning. They shook hands firmly.

"Good egg!" said Handforth. "Everything in the garden is lovely, Willy, my son!"

But Willy did not reply. He ran across the hall and met Lightning, who had been making himself at home on a lounge. The dog gave a joyous bark, and jumped at his young master.

"Good old Lightning!" chuckled Willy. "You're mine now—really mine!"

"Chuck it!" said Handforth, as he looked on. "No need to let the dog slobber all over you like that, you young ass!"

"Fathead!" said Willy.

Willy went out into the darkness of Inner Court, Lightning trotting contentedly by his side. Edward Oswald followed. When they got to Big Arch, a figure loomed up and faced them.

"Just a minute, you fellows!" said a voice.

The figure belonged to Claude Gore-Pearce.

"What do you want, hanging about here?" asked Handforth suspiciously.

"Well, I thought you'd like to know that it was I who put that race-card in your study, Handforth minor," said Gore-Pearce.

"Was it, by jingo!" said Willy. "That was jolly good of you, Gore-Pearce."

"Oh, was it?" growled Handforth. "I'll bet Gore-Pearce had an axe of his own to grind!"

"Well, I'll admit that I had a grudge against Brice," said Gore-Pearce coolly. "And I thought if I sent you after the dog, Handforth minor, you'd give Brice a bit of a turn. Do you know what's happened to him?"

"He's bolted!" said Willy briefly. "This dog didn't belong to Brice at all. The rotter stole him from Sir Herbert Rodney. And when Ted and I arrived at Helmford, it was the signal for Brice to do a bunk."

Gore-Pearce was perfectly satisfied.

"Good enough!" he said contentedly. "That's all I wanted to know."

And he strolled off.

"Vindictive rotter!" said Handforth gruffly. "He did you a good turn, Willy, but he had a rotten sort of motive behind it. He's as pleased as Punch because Brice had to bolt."

"If it comes to that, I'm as pleased as Punch, too," said Willy. "Brice was a rascal, and he got off too lightly. But why bother about him? For once, I'm inclined to believe that Gore-Pearce is of some use in this world."

In the Ancient House lobby, Handforth ran into a crowd of Removites. Willy had gone to the pets' quarters with Lightning.

"Oh, so here you are!" said Church, as he looked searchingly at his leader. "You don't seem to be in much pain."

"Pain?" said Handforth. "Why should I be in pain?"

"Why, indeed?" asked Travers. "We all know, dear old fellow, that you're tough."

"Did the Head lay it on thick?" asked McClure sympathetically.

Handforth sniffed.

(Concluded on page 42.)



E. S. BROOKS.

BETWEEN OURSELVES!

OUR AUTHOR CHATS WITH OUR READERS

NOTE.—If any reader writes to me, I shall be pleased to comment upon such remarks as are likely to interest the majority. All letters should be addressed: EDWY SEARLES BROOKS, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE SCHOOL STORY LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.



DORA BRIGHAM.

NOW, look here—just a special word to all of you in general. A good many hundreds of you have written to me, times without number, asking for the Old Paper to be made larger; or for a companion paper to be started with more St. Frank's stories; or for the Old Paper to come out twice weekly. (In fact, the cheery young gentleman suggested that it should come out every day, apparently forgetting that there's a limit to my energy!). A good many of you have given me strict instructions to write more 4d. books. Anyhow, it's pretty evident a great many of you want more of my stories. I don't pretend to understand this strange desire, but we all have our own peculiarities.

Well, here's the point. At last you've got an opportunity of proving whether you were in earnest, or whether you were just pulling my leg. For some weeks now I have been writing the stories of the "Blue Crusaders" in "The Boys' Realm." No need for me to tell you that the Blue Crusaders are footballers, and that these yarns have a strong football interest. Like my St. Frank's tales, they deal with the same characters every week. Fatty Fowkes and his fellow players are a cheery crowd, and although they're not schoolboys, like my St. Frank's characters, I think you'll like them just as much.

Yes, and there's something else, too! This week the Blue Crusaders are in a bit of a mess, as you'll find if you buy to-day's issue of "The Boys' Realm." But as you are St. Frank's enthusiasts, I don't mind whispering something in your ears:

The Blue Crusaders are coming right down to St. Frank's, and they're going to make their permanent home in Bannington, and so the St. Frank's chaps will frequently figure in "The Boys' Realm" stories. Did you get that all right? Good! Well, now it's up to you, and you can't say that the Editor or I have ignored your many requests. You've been having a go at me for years, and now I'm absolutely driven to doing a lot more work. Which is pretty serious, because I'm lazy by nature. Nevertheless, it is an honour that I greatly appreciate to be asked to take

over these Crusader stories. I don't mind the extra work, but I mean to make a success of it! And that depends upon YOU. For if you don't rally round, and show that you're in earnest, I shall probably get biffed out of "The Boys' Realm," and somebody else's stories will take the place of mine.

Of course, a good many of you may not like football at all, but I don't think this need deter you from sampling the Crusader yarns. Fatty Fowkes and his fellow players are just as human as people who aren't footballers, and in these yarns they meet with all sorts of adventures independent altogether of football.

Now, do you mind spending 1½d. on me? The fact is, I want all of you who buy "The Boys' Realm"—every single, solitary one—to drop me a line after sampling these new yarns of mine. Tell me how you like them—or how you don't like them.

There's just room for two replies this week. Firstly, Dora Brigham (Norwich). It doesn't matter at all if I get two letters from you by the same post. You're one of my weekly correspondents, aren't you? At least, you told me you were. So I shall now expect about twenty-four letters, all in one envelope. You'll see your chivvy at the top of this page, so perhaps it'll make you find that lost fountain-pen.

Old readers such as yourself—G. S. Hunnabale (Mistley)—probably have the same sentiments about the cover. In your own words: "They don't care a jot what sort of a cover it is, so long as you deliver the goods inside." But new readers, who don't know anything about the paper, must have something attractive on the outside, you know.

What's Wrong with the Rovers ?



What is the mystery surrounding Northmouth Rovers, the famous club which is now doing so badly in the Football League? That's what Nelson Lee and Nipper—away from St. Frank's on holiday—set out to solve; and it's such a deep mystery that even Nelson Lee finds himself baffled!

The Man with the Frightened Eyes !

NIPPER thought the tea and toast jolly fine, that London was a jolly fine place, and that it was going to be a jolly fine holiday.

Seated beside the youngster in the vestibule of the big London hotel was Nelson Lee, and the great detective was in a holiday mood.

Like his young assistant, he was looking forward to a stay in London, and then probably a visit to the South of France before returning to St. Frank's.

And then the man with the frightened eyes came in.

A big porter, in blue and gold, had swung open a glass door, and the rumble of the ceaseless traffic in the Strand competed with the dance band in the adjoining tea-room. Nipper, who had glanced carelessly at the new-comer, suddenly became more interested, and noticed that his chief's keen eyes were also regarding the man with considerable interest. The man stood in the softly-lighted vestibule—so warm and cheerful after the grey gloom outside—speaking to the porter, who pointed out the office to him.

"Windy!" said Nipper, as the man in the heavy fleece overcoat and soft-felt hat crossed over to the window of the office, carrying a suitcase and a damp umbrella.

Nelson Lee nodded. The other people having tea in the vestibule saw only a pros-

perous, rather portly individual, apparently just arrived from some provincial city, and a little ill-at-ease in his strange surroundings; but the famous detective and his youthful assistant had noticed his eyes—rather bulging, mild blue eyes—and in those eyes was fear—stark, unmitigated fear.

The man stood for a few moments speaking to the girl at the office window, and Nipper saw her look up in surprise, and then glance in their direction. Then a smart page-boy came across to Nelson Lee.

"There's a gentleman over there, a Mr. Colton, who wishes to speak to you, sir. He says he had a letter of introduction from your cousin."

"Very well, ask him to come over here," replied the detective.

Nipper sighed.

"If I know anything at all, I'll lay this has put the kybosh on our holiday, guv'nor," he said gloomily.

"That is quite probable," was the calm reply. A few moments later, the prosperous-looking, portly man was approaching them, holding out an envelope.

"I am more than delighted to see you, Mr. Lee," he said jerkily. "I have here a letter from your cousin, which explains my presence here, and I hope you will see your way to save me!"

"Save you!" said Nelson Lee, tearing open the envelope.

"My life is in danger!" said the man with the bulging, frightened eyes, as he sank down in the chair the detective indicated, and mopped his forehead.

Nipper whistled softly, and glanced at the letter which his chief was holding so that they both might read it.

"My Dear Nel,—I'm afraid you'll regret having given me your holiday address, but the bearer of this is a friend of mine—Mr. Edward Colton, a shipowner of Northmouth, and a director of Northmouth Rovers F. C. He is greatly concerned about the disappearance of a great friend of his, and fully believes that he is in great peril. He will explain matters to you, and I shall take it as a personal favour if you can see your way to help him. He is a wealthy man, and would pay highly to have the mystery solved.

"Your affectionate cousin,
"COLIN."

The detective placed the letter in his pocket, and Nipper leant eagerly forward.

"Is your friend James Ridley, the director of the Rovers, who disappeared nearly a week ago?" asked Nipper.

"Yes," said Mr. Colton. "But how did you know? It's been scarcely mentioned in the papers."

"Oh, I'm jolly keen on football, you know, and I'm sorry to see that a great team like the Rovers has started the season so badly, especially after moving to a fine new ground. I saw in the sports news of a paper yesterday that James Ridley, the ex-chairman of the club, had disappeared, and was believed to be suffering from loss of memory as a result of worry about the team in which he had always taken a keen interest."

Mr. Colton leant forward.

"James Ridley has been murdered!" he said, in a hoarse whisper.

"Have the police come to that conclusion?" asked Nelson Lee calmly.

"The police are baffled. They incline to the loss of memory theory, though I know young Richard Ridley has been questioned pretty sharply the last two days."

"Amateur centre-forward for the Rovers," said Nipper, who was a walking football guide. "Played for England against Wales last season, toured the Continent with an English team in May this year. He's the old man's nephew, isn't he?"

Colton nodded, mopped his forehead again, then said:

"And by the disappearance of his uncle he continues to draw an allowance of five hundred pounds a year, which was to have ceased abruptly."

There was a gleam of interest in the detective's keen eyes.

"Perhaps you'll start at the beginning, Mr. Colton?" he said gently, for their visitor was all on the jump again, his stumpy pink

fingers drumming on the white wicker table at which they were sitting.

The football director was a rather trying man to listen to. He was constantly dashing off at tangents, but the detective skilfully got the story from him with a minimum of delay.

James Ridley was a comparatively wealthy man, who had spent much of his wealth on the Rovers during his long period as chairman of the club. Then, last season, Stephen Langton, a man twenty years his junior, a great football enthusiast and a man of means, had settled in Northmouth, bought a big holding in the club, been elected to the board, and acquired a controlling interest. He had decided that the old ground was too small and out of date, and despite the opposition of James Ridley, a new ground had been bought up on the high ground on the outskirts of the big seaport town.

"Ridley was forced to resign the chairmanship, and in his disgust sold a number of his shares, and further weakened his control," went on Mr. Colton. "I held on to mine, not because I thought the move a good one, but because I did not like the idea of a stranger like Langton absolutely ruling the roost, though I'll give him credit for his enthusiasm, and business sense. Poor Ridley took it badly, and when we started so disastrously this season, he certainly took it to heart."

"Then one evening, a week ago to-day, he came to see me in a very excited state of mind. He said there was something radically wrong with the Rovers. He was convinced that his nephew was mixed up in it; but that night he meant to learn what the game was, and he was going to cut off his nephew's allowance."

"Why?" interjected Nelson Lee.

"He did not say; he was strangely mysterious," replied Mr. Colton. "All he kept saying was that he was on a big thing, and that in the morning he hoped to be free to speak. Then he left the house, and has not been seen since."

Nipper whistled.

"You mean he gave you no clue?" he asked.

"He only said just what I have told you. He seemed greatly agitated, but quite sane."

"That is interesting," said Nelson Lee calmly. "But according to my cousin, you believe yourself in great peril. Why?"

"Because it is known that he and I were great friends, and that I was the last person to see him alive. I am being watched, Mr. Lee. I was followed here!"

"It would have been wiser to have told me that at first, Mr. Colton. You're sure of it?"

"Absolutely! I am, as you know, somewhat—er—nervous with regard to my safety. I deliberately hung about King's Cross Station, and I saw a tall, thin man in a trench coat and bowler hat, waiting about, too. He did not appear to take any interest in me, but when I entered a taxi, he hailed

another. I thought I had shaken him off, but as I entered this hotel I saw the man alight from a cab."

"Well, we don't want your friend to know that you have been consulting me," said Nelson Lee quickly. "I will see you to King's Cross, and we will leave by the Embankment entrance. Nipper, fix it with the hall porter. You stay here and note the description of the man. I don't suppose I shall be more than about half an hour."

The detective picked up his hat and coat from the chair beside him, and led the way along a broad corridor. Nipper strolled over to the hall porter.

"If anyone comes in and asks about Mr. Colton," he said, "you can say that he met a Mr. Jones, a man in the shipping trade, who is staying here, and that they left together by the Embankment entrance."

"Very good, sir," said the man, who knew the famous detective well.

Nipper went back to his comfortable white wicker chair, and awaited events. It was easy to see that the spy was not certain whether Colton intended staying at the hotel, or was merely calling upon someone there, but it would not be long before he grew impatient, and risked making inquiries.

An uneventful hour passed. The swing glass doors remained closed, and Nipper sat and thought over the director's story. Anything to do with football interested him greatly. He had been quite pained by the disastrous start of the famous north country team. Twice winners of the F.A. Cup, and thrice champions of the First League, Northmouth Rovers was one of the most popular clubs in the country, and its fine new ground at Bleakbridge had been the talk of the football world, though the team had yet to win a match there.

Was this mysterious affair that Colton had hinted at anything to do with the Rovers being at the wrong end of the League table?

Nipper's thoughts were interrupted by the entrance of a tall man in a trench coat and bowler hat, who stopped and spoke to the porter. Nipper noted that he had a remarkably long nose, which, with a receding chin and small, furtive eyes, gave him a decidedly rat-like appearance.

"What!" the boy heard him ejaculate sharply. "Gone!"

Nipper could not hear the porter's reply, for he spoke in the low, deliberate tone of the well-trained servant, but he was clearly repeating Nipper's little fiction. It was also clear that it upset the rat-like man, who stood frowning and stroking his chin, and then abruptly walked out into the drizzling gloom of the Strand.

"Poisonous-looking person," said Nipper to himself. It struck him that Mr. Colton had some cause to be frightened, though what on earth the rat-like man could have to do with Northmouth Rovers he could not imagine.

And then Nelson Lee came into the vestibule.

"I'm sorry, Nipper, but the holiday is off, for the time being at all events. Hurry up and get the packing done. We leave by the six-thirty dining car express. By the way, I suppose you ought to be careful what you eat."

Nipper's face fell. He had been looking forward to a complete change from the wholesome, but not exactly tempting, food of St. Frank's.

"Why?"

"Because to-morrow morning you will sign on as an amateur for Northmouth Rovers!" came the quiet reply of his famous chief.

Northmouth Bound!

THE long train from King's Cross, after rumbling slowly through tunnels, past sidings and suburban stations, was rapidly picking up speed as it left the outer suburbs behind, and plunged into the darkness and drizzling rain.

It was a dismal enough outlook from the window of the first-class smoking carriage, but Nipper was beaming. He did not care in the least about missing his holiday now.

To play for Northmouth Rovers, to be helping Nelson Lee in a case which the great detective admitted, frankly, completely baffled him! That was a jolly sight better than lazing about London or perambulating Paris!

Nipper had played at school and made a name for himself, he had turned out for several quite useful clubs—but to play for Northmouth! His great fear was that he would not be considered good enough.

Still, Colton had power, and had promised to arrange it.

Nelson Lee flicked the ash from a cigarette he was smoking before going along to the dining-car.

"You've got to remember that I've got you into the club in order to gain information, Nipper, that I am a surveyor carrying out an extensive ordnance survey, and that you are my assistant, a keen amateur footballer. I shall have to teach you something about the theodolite, and you will find what mathematics you have managed to learn very useful in the part you will have to play. That was Hatfield we ran through just now, so we may as well get along to the diner."

Nipper rose with alacrity, and followed his chief along the corridor. As they were passing a third-class smoker he gave an involuntary start, shot one swift glance into the compartment, and then hurriedly passed on.

There were comparatively few passengers on the train, and Nelson Lee and Nipper had the first-class dining-cars almost to themselves. The latter took good care to select a table that was well away from the rest of the diners. It was not until fish covered with a pinkish sauce had been placed before them, however, that Nipper felt he could speak confidentially.

"Guv'nor, the Rat's on the train!"

Nelson Lee broke off a piece of bread.

"The spy we put on the wrong track?"

"Yes; and he's got a pal with him—a big, burly, ginger-haired chap. They were whispering together. The Rat seemed to be snarling, and the big chap a bit scared, and——"

"Isn't your fish to your liking, sir?" asked the attentive waiter, who was evidently hoping for a handsome tip, and was anxious to please.

they've failed they would be getting back, wouldn't they? Colton never spotted the ginger chap!"

"It's the man you don't spot who is most dangerous!" said Nelson Lee, as he helped himself to some potatoes in the most casual way. "I hope your theory is right, Nipper, for although Northmouth is regarded as a health resort, I should say it would be an extremely unhealthy place for us should our business there be known!"



Nipper certainly wasn't as skilful as the Northmouth Rovers footballers, but there was no doubting his pluck and persistence, and he scored a goal with a mis-kick that hit the goalkeeper in the face.

"Oh, quite all right, thanks," said Nipper, and made a hasty start on the fish and pink sauce.

Nelson Lee glanced out into the darkness that reflected the lights of the dining-car racing northward at sixty miles an hour. When the waiter had served the chicken and vegetables, he leant across to his young assistant.

"As you know, I saw Colton off on the five o'clock train," the detective said. "It may be this rat-like person realises that he has lost him, and is going back to Northmouth to report failure, or it may be that the ginger-haired man was watching the Embankment entrance to the hotel, and that between them they've a pretty shrewd idea of the game we are going to play, and that we are being shadowed now."

Nipper was hacking away at a piece of decidedly elderly chicken.

"I don't think that's right, or the Rat wouldn't have been so taken aback when the porter gave him my bedtime story," he said keenly. "This is the last train back to Northmouth to-night, and if they know

Nipper Signs On!

NIPPER, dressing the next morning, looked upon a mass of shipping in Northmouth Harbour, and at the busy fish market. Away in the distance, the North sea tumbled, grey and white, and a dirty-looking little tug was bringing in a timber barque. Salt-laden air came in through the wide-open window, and Nipper, standing in front of it, was doing deep-breathing exercises.

On arriving at Northmouth, they had driven straight to the big rambling old Harbour Hotel, preferring it to the more palatial place just outside the Central station, which was scarcely a place where a surveyor would make an extended stay. They had caught sight of the rat-like man and his big, red-haired companion on the platform, but they had not been followed.

Nipper, having finished his exercises and donned collar and tie and coat, went down to breakfast with a healthy appetite. He was feeling a little nervous about his visit

to the Bleakridge ground that morning.

Seated at a window of the large, old-fashioned coffee-room, and waited on by an old-fashioned waiter, he and his chief ate an excellent breakfast. There was plenty to see from the window, and Nipper congratulated his chief on having found such a comfortable hotel, and wanted to know his plans for the morning.

"Oh, I shall take a stroll round whilst you're at the football ground!" said Nelson Lee. "I want you to get to know as many players as possible, and to keep your ears and eyes open."

Nipper looked a little uncomfortable.

"My big fear is that they'll tell me I'm not good enough, and bid me a polite good-morning! Fancy me playing against Broad-wich Athletic on Saturday!"

"Oh, you may never get a chance with the league team!" said Nelson Lee, with a smile.

"That depends upon yourself. But Colton holds a big interest in the club, and he's going to be at the ground this morning to see that you are signed on and have every opportunity of mixing with the players. Don't forget that my name is Nelson, a London surveyor, and that you are my assistant, Nick Parr, which really bears a close resemblance to Nipper. I'm told young Ridley still plays, though he is under a cloud. He may be a shy bird, but I particularly want you to get in with him if you can."

"You don't think he's anything to do with it, do you, guv'nor?"

Nelson Lee finished his coffee, and began to fill his pipe.

"At the moment, he is the one man I have any real reason to suspect!" was the calm reply.

Nipper, with a trench coat over his grey suit and a cap pulled down firmly on to his head, left the hotel and walked briskly along the Town Quay to the dirty, grey Customs House, where the trams stopped. A policeman, eyeing him curiously, told him that a number six would take him within a few hundred yards of the ground at Bleakridge.

Despite the chill wind from the sea, Nipper went up on to the open top. After traversing several busy streets, the car began to climb a long hill with small property and rather dreary-looking shops on either side, and came to a stop outside a small, red-brick public house on a ridge of downland, high above the big town of Northmouth. A little further along a newly-made road was a high, wooden fence, with the roof of a big stand towering above it.

Nipper walked slowly along. He felt curiously like a new boy going to school, though he told himself he was an ass to be nervous. Gaining the high wooden fence, he found a number of bills about the match on Saturday pasted up on it, and then the fence gave place to brickwork. There were two green gates for cars, a row of turnstiles protected by lattice steel gates, and then a small green door in the wall, on which was painted in

white letters: "Players and Officials Only."

Nipper tried the door, found it unlocked, and entered.

"Some ground!" he murmured to himself.

Even a casual glance was impressive. The stands, banking and terraces were of the most modern design, but what struck the youngster most was the extreme length of the playing pitch, with its well-kept turf. The marked-out pitch occupied little more than half the space available.

Of course, ground might have been cheap, and the directors anxious to be prepared to provide for extra accommodation, but it struck him as strange. Another strange thing was that two groundsmen were erecting goalposts and nets. It was a rum thing to take the posts in at night, and many clubs did not worry about the nets. No one appeared to be about but the groundsmen, and Nipper felt a little lost when he heard a voice behind him.

"You looking for someone?"

He swung round, and found himself confronting a big young man in baggy, grey flannel-trousers and sports coat. The newcomer's fair, curly head was hatless, and tumbled in the breeze that came in from the sea in the distance, his hands were in his pockets, and his blue eyes gazed at Nipper half-challengingly.

"I've come to see Mr. Colton, and sign on," replied Nipper.

The big young man whistled softly.

"Colton butting in now, eh? Well, I wish you luck, but things are a bit muddled here just now. What do you think of our new ground? Every visitor is asked that, you know!"

The big man laughed shortly, and Nipper grinned as he replied:

"Well, I reckon the chap who designed it was an optimist! I should reckon it would hold eighty thousand now, and if the spare ground at each end was taken in you'd have accommodation for another two or three thousand."

"Oh, that won't be taken in; that's for Langton's 'plane!"

"For who's who?" asked Nipper amazedly.

"Stephen Langton, our sporting chairman, is a big flying man. We call him the Bat, because he only flies at night. Says daylight flying is scarcely as exciting as driving a car, but there's some sport in flying over the sea at night. Of course, he'll break his neck one of these nights, but he's an absolute dare-devil. He gave us this ground on condition that he could use it as a private aerodrome—that's why the ground is so long and the goalposts are taken in every night. He must have a good long run, especially at night. That's his hangar over there; those doors under the terrace."

That explained things.

"Jolly good idea!" said Nipper. "But the ground hasn't been lucky so far."

"The ground's all right. It's Minter, the manager, who—I say, I don't know to whom I'm talking, and I've rather a knack of

putting my foot into things. My name's Ridley—Dick Ridley."

Out went Nipper's hand to the famous young amateur International.

"I'm proud to meet you. I've read a lot about you, and—and my name's Nick Parr."

Nipper spoke a little hurriedly, a little awkwardly. It had flashed upon him that this man he was talking to was the man whom not only Edward Colton, but Nelson Lee himself, suspected of being behind the mysterious affair that had brought them to Northmouth.

Several men in shorts and sweaters were emerging from the tunnel that led to the dressing-rooms, as Nipper and his companion reached the entrance. The boy recognised Rutherton, the veteran right-back with the almost bald head, and Sims, the clever little half, who nodded rather coldly to Ridley.

Nipper and Dick Ridley passed along a corridor, and at the door of a dressing-room were met by a short, thick-set man in shirt and trousers, who carried a pile of towels.

"Hallo! What do you want?" he asked Nipper sharply.

Nipper told him.

"Well, I'm the trainer, and I know nothing about it. But I see you've brought your togs, so you can change and come out and join the boys, if you like. There's no harm in you signing an amateur form, but I can tell you that unless you're mighty useful there's not an earthly chance of you getting a game."

He went across to the bathroom, and Nipper grinned.

"I shouldn't think that chap reads the papers or goes to see a match," he said. "Anyone would think from the way he talks that the Rovers were at the top instead of the bottom of the table!"

Ridley shrugged his broad shoulders.

"He seems to know his job. Been a pugilist in his time, and Minter got him here. Everyone is asking what's wrong with the Rovers; but I can tell you the Rovers themselves don't know, and I can only put it down to our manager. Stephen Langton is disappointed, but doesn't seem to interfere, and there you are. Good-morning, Dave!"

"Good-morning to you," said the little man with a very brown face under a mane of long black hair, who had just emerged from an inner room. "And is there any news of your uncle whatever?"

"None!" said Ridley shortly, as he took off his coat.

"Ah! It is a bad business—a very bad business indeed, I tell you. We are a most unlucky team, and if we do not win on Saturday, I don't know what will happen—indeed, look you, I do not know what will happen at all!"

With a gloomy expression upon his tanned face, the little man in football-kit went out into the corridor.

"That's Williams, our goalie," said Ridley.

Nipper thought of a cartoon he had seen of a little man with a flowing mane, leaping wildly between the sticks.

"The Dancing Dervish?" he asked.

"We call him Taffy, or Dismal Dave, but he's a decent chap. I'm rather under a cloud just now, but Dave hasn't condemned me unheard, like some of them."

"What's the trouble?" asked Nipper innocently, as he pulled a sweater over his head.

"Oh, a personal matter that wouldn't interest you," replied Dick Ridley, a little shortly. Nipper, feeling snubbed, wondered what the crack international would say if he knew how much it did interest him.

They went out on to the playing-pitch together. About a score of men were engaged in a kick-about. Several of the faces were familiar to Nipper from pictures in the Press, and their marvellous control of the ball dazed him, but he joined in. He got in the way. Rutherton nearly fell over him, another man sent him flying; but he picked himself up, and went at it again. Whatever doubts there might be about Nipper's skill, there was no doubting his pluck and persistence, and he scored a goal with a miskick that hit the Welsh goalie in the face.

"Land of my fathers! That fellow's dangerous—look out!" said Williams, throwing out the ball. He tenderly stroked his aching nose, but he gave Nipper an encouraging smile that fired the boy with such enthusiasm that he tried to take the ball from Sims. This was asking for trouble. Nipper went down, with the clever left-half, Dick Ridley, and Rutherton upon him.

At football the men treated him as a joke, but in the sprint round the cinder-track the youngster from St. Frank's startled the professionals, and they admitted that he was a speed merchant. As he finished, Nipper noticed that Mr. Colton and a man with a strangely pale face were watching him from the stand.

"You'll extend Bert Barter," said Rutherton, the veteran right-back, as they left the playing-pitch.

"Which is Barter?" asked Nipper, looking round.

"Oh, he's not here this morning. He's resting, a stiff knee, but he'll be along any moment now for massage. He's our centre-half, and is wonderfully fast for a big-built man. Hallo, you're wanted!"

Mr. Colton was beckoning to him, and as Nipper went up, the director turned to the pale-faced man beside him.

"This is the young fellow I was telling you about, Minter. His employer, who is here on an ordnance survey, is a friend of mine, and as this youngster is very keen on football, I thought we might sign him on, and give him a game, if possible."

The manager rubbed his hands together as though he were washing them.

"By all means, Mr. Colton." Then, turning to Nipper, added: "But if you really

wish to play football, young man, I should advise you to join a junior club, where you would have every chance of being played pretty frequently."

"I'd sooner take my chance and stick to the Rovers," said Nipper stubbornly.

It was clear that Minter was doing his best to put him off, but Colton, in whose pale-blue bulging eyes there was still a sign of fear, irritably interrupted the manager's argument.

"I promised Mr. Nelson that his assistant should have a chance. You're not bound to play him unless he shows promise at practice. I want to see him signed on, and then get back home."

"Oh, certainly, Mr. Colton!" said the manager, dry-washing his hands again, and giving Nipper anything but a friendly glance. "No doubt Mr. Langton will approve. I understand that he has had a pleasant time in Scotland, but is worried about the strange disappearance of Mr. Ridley. It really is extraordinary, and I'm afraid that his nephew lost valuable time before going to the police."

"I don't want to talk about it," said the director sharply—so sharply that Nipper decided that the old boy's nerves must still be very jumpy, even although he had the comfort of having Nelson Lee on the spot.

The signing of the amateur form took but a few moments, and then, with the proud feeling that he was a prospective player for a world-famous club, Nipper went to the dressing-room and hastily changed.

He wondered, as he did so, if he would ever get a chance of playing for the Rovers' first eleven. By Jove, wouldn't that be grand—playing in a First Division match! Wouldn't Reggie Pitt and Tommy Watson and Fullwood and old Handforth and his other chums at St. Frank's be envious!

Having changed, Nipper hurried out of the dressing-room and nearly collided with a big red-headed man, who growled something at him, and went on towards the room where the trainer had been massaging some players.

Nipper crossed over to a man who was bearing a basket of damp towels from the steaming bath-room.

"Who's that chap?" he asked, with careful carelessness.

"Oh, that's Bert Barter, our centre-half, you know."

Nipper did not know that, but he knew that the man who had just gone in to be massaged by the Rovers' trainer was the man he had seen on the train the previous night, the man who had been talking to the rat-faced spy who had shadowed Edward Colton to the London hotel!

("Some" first instalment, eh, lads? But next week's is even better—and the mystery gets deeper and deeper and more baffling than ever. Don't miss reading next Wednesday's gripping chapters.)

WILLY'S DOG!



(Continued from page 34.)

"Oh!" he said. "So that's what you mean? You've all collected here so that you could laugh at me?"

"But we've heard a rumour that you went to the Helmford Stadium," said Nipper.

"It's not a rumour—it's a fact," said Handforth. "Old Pagett thought that he was going to get us flogged, but he was disappointed."

Handforth, with much relish, gave all the details. The other juniors listened interestedly, and, when he had finished, they chuckled heartily.

"It's just a case of your luck again, Handy," said Church. "I never knew such a fellow. Anybody else would have got the sack."

"Rats!" said Handforth. "Well, let's get along to the study. I'm jolly hungry. Any grub knocking around, Churchy?"

"Yes, I expect we can rake up a few crumbs for you," replied Church. "You'd better buck up, though, Handy. It'll soon be bedtime. Hallo, here's young Willy!"

Willy came strolling into the lobby. He was whistling cheerily and grinning happily. He was the Willy as of old. He hadn't a care in the world now.

Edward Oswald Handforth went up to his minor.

"Lightning all right now?" he asked.

"Yes, thanks," replied Willy.

"Well, now that you've got your dog back, I hope you'll jolly well look after him!" said Edward Oswald. "Don't go losing him again," he added sternly.

But Edward Oswald Handforth need not have had any doubts.

Since the greyhound was of no further use for track work, there was not much chance that men like Mr. Bill Brice would again attempt to take him away.

Willy and Lightning were friends for good, and as for Mr. Brice, nobody heard of him again. He had probably come to the conclusion that Sussex was a decidedly unhealthy county for him. And Sussex was certainly the gainer by Mr. Brice's absence.

THE END

(That's the end of that series, but there's a new one starting next week, a series of yarns introducing a newcomer to St. Frank's. Look out for the first story, entitled: "Corcoran of the Blue Crusaders!")



Our Weekly Pow-Wow

By
The Editor.

Your Editor welcomes letters from all his readers : send him one now. Address it to : The Editor, "Nelson Lee School Story Library," Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Opinions, Please!

HAVE you read the first instalment of "What's Wrong With the Rovers?" And, if you have, what's your verdict, chums? Do you think it's jolly good, or not so dusty, or—don't you like it? Somehow I don't think there can possibly be many of you who are holding the latter opinion. The fact that Nelson Lee and Nipper are the heroes of this serial—and that they're engaged on a baffling detective mystery—makes me think this yarn will be one of the most popular tales that has ever appeared in the Old Paper. Anyway, I want all my readers—every one, mark you!—to write me and tell me their opinion. Don't forget, will you? A postcard will do the trick!

Hooray for the Fifth!

An investigating chum of mine who has taken Nelson Lee, the great 'tec., as his model, says he has been patiently studying the little affair at the Houses of Parliament, Nov. 5th, 1605. He says that after full consideration he has come to the conclusion that we all owe a debt of gratitude to King Jamie for being the unconscious founder of a merry little firework junketing which comes in most handily to relieve the dull monotony of the autumn. King James was a man of the most curious likes and dislikes. He is said to have hated football like poison. He could never have played in goal, or tried to score a goal himself after a dazzling run down the field. James not only hated footer, but he had a down on tobacco. He had another down on witches. He was always hunting witches, and these gentle, soothsaying ladies had the thinnest of times in the reign of the monarch who came down from Bonnie Scotland and took charge in London after Elizabeth had gone. In spite of this, however, I really think we ought to call for three cheers for King James and the Gunpowder Plot which did not come off. He and Guy Fawkes have between them managed to liven up November—and it wanted a bit of doing!

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H. E. Glossop, 211, Carr Street, Lieder-ville, Perth, Western Australia, wants correspondents in London.

Miss Marjorie Stewart Craig, 18, Sefton Road, Wallasey, Ches., wants girl correspondents interested in Spanish.

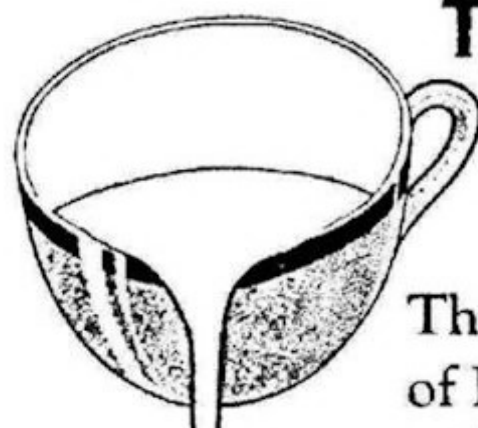
Ronald Coles, 5, Salisbury Terrace, Frome, Somerset, wants correspondents anywhere. Also members for his Reliance Club.

George Oakley, 14, Barton Street, West Bromwich, Staffs., wants complete sets of N.L.L., old series.

K. Elssam, 113, Portsmouth Rd., Woolston, Southampton, wants to hear from stamp collectors, so as to form a club.

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ATHLETES TRAIN ON IT



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(Continued from previous page.)

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Roy Ellis, c/o Mr. G. Ellis, Southport, Queensland, Australia, wants correspondents anywhere.

Patrick Joseph Roche, "Dublin," 14, Mary Street, Coburg, N.13, Melbourne, Australia, wants correspondents in England, Ireland, Australia, and U.S.A. Also wishes to hear from E. Thompson, of Shipley, and D. Steele, of Langley Mill.

James McCullough, Brensgrave Rd., Halesowen, nr. Birmingham, wants to hear from boys who are fond of cycling in Germany.

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Harry Slater, 16, Lane Street, Nelson, Lancashire, would be glad to hear from League members. He also wishes to hear from a reader in Halifax, Yorks.

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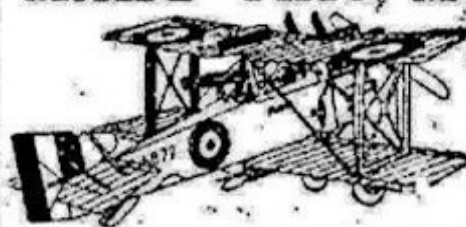
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