

GRAND RE-OPENING OF ST. FRANK'S THIS WEEK!

NELSON LEE

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One of the many amusing incidents contained in the magnificent extra-long school yarn, featuring Nipper and his cheery chums, complete in this issue.

"As You Were" at St. Frank's

Cheer, boys, Cheer !
Re-opening day at St.
Frank's—and it will go
down as the most
memorable day in the
history of the famous
old school.



The
St. Frank's
Big Parade!

CHAPTER 1.

The Old Order!

THE train did not merely discharge its passengers; it disgorged them. They swarmed out of every compartment, and Bellton Station, usually so quiet and sleepy, was converted into a very fair imitation of Babel.

In a word, the St. Frank's Remove had arrived.

It had arrived several hours before its time, and the station-master and the solitary porter were caught unawares. They were highly indignant. This was ridiculous. None of the

St. Frank's fellows was expected until mid-day, at least; yet here was this yelling, laughing, bustling mob, and the hour was only just 10 a.m.!

"Cheerio, Mr. Spence!" sang out Nipper, as he spotted the stationmaster. "Don't look so startled. You'll soon be rid of us!"

"Why Master Hamilton, I didn't expect to see you again!" ejaculated Mr. Spence,



less flustered. "I thought you'd left St. Frank's for good."

"So I had, but it seems that St. Frank's can't get on without me!" grinned Dick Hamilton, otherwise "Nipper." "Or, to be more exact, it can't get on without the guv'nor, so, of course, it's got to put up with me, too. Things are to be 'as you were' at St. Frank's from now on."

"Well, I'm mighty glad to hear it, young gentleman," said the stationmaster heartily. "It's a rare treat to see the old school looking itself again. You youngsters give me a few more grey hairs every term, but I'm glad to have you here, all the same."

At last the crowd found itself in the station yard, all tickets having been surrendered, and all luggage having been disposed of.

"Not so much noise, you chaps!" sang out Edward Oswald Handforth, who had been making more noise than anybody else. "Silence for the skipper!"

"Rats!" yelled K. K. Parkington. "Who said that you were skipper?"

"Fathead!" retorted Handforth. "I mean silence for Nipper! I've been skipper for a bit, but now that Nipper's back I'm glad enough to let him have his old job. It's a pretty thankless one, anyhow."

The great Handforth had surprised everybody by cheerfully accepting the situation. It had been generally anticipated that he would kick up a fuss, and refuse to relinquish the reins. Secretly, however, Handforth had found those same reins difficult to control, and when it became a certainty that Nipper was returning, he resigned from the captaincy on the spot. Nipper was the man for the job.

This was a very special occasion.

St. Frank's had been closed for a few days whilst final preparations for the great cere-

monial re-opening were made. For a few months the great school had been carrying on in a temporary sort of way, with half the boys still absent—distributed amongst other schools.

But now the Modern House and the East House were completed. The last workman had gone; the final piece of scaffolding had been taken down. Those absent boys were returning. In every sense St. Frank's was "as you were." It was difficult to realise that the famous old school had so recently been devastated by fire.

And to-day hosts of important people were coming down to make the opening ceremony of the rebuilt school a big success.

IT had been Nipper's idea for the entire Remove to arrive on the scene early. As Nipper had said, this was an occasion which would never occur again, and it was too good an opportunity to be missed.

"Listen to me, you chaps," he said, as he faced the crowd. "We don't want any squabbles among ourselves to-day. We want to start this new term properly—and the only way to do that is to prove to the Fourth that the Remove is top dog."

"Hear, hear!"

"Down with the Fourth!"

"Good old Nipper!" sang out Reggie Pitt. "He's the kind of skipper we need! A chap with ideas—a chap who starts the term by doing something!"

"Is that meant as a jab at me?" demanded Handforth, glaring.

"Take it as you like, old man," replied Reggie blandly.

"What did I say about squabbling?" asked Nipper. "For goodness' sake, let's pull together! Now, most of you Remove chaps have been here for months past, so there's nothing particularly exciting in the occasion for you. But the Fourth-Formers haven't been near St. Frank's since it was wiped out. They're coming back to-day—and the only way to make them realise their inferiority is to jape them as soon as they arrive. That's why we're here early—so that we can make our preparations."

"Hear, hear!"

"Let's get up to the school!"

"Hurrah!"

They went crowding out into the village High Street, and at least three of those Removites were gladdened by the sight of the quaint little shops and the picturesque taverns and cottages. Nipper and Tregellis-West and Watson, the famous trio of Study C, were in the same position as the Fourth-Formers; they were coming back to St. Frank's for the first time since that now almost-forgotten disaster.

Their life as Nelson Lee's cub detectives was over; they were once again schoolboys.

Not that the Detective Academy had failed. Nelson Lee himself was coming back to St.

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

Frank's, so it was inevitable that they should return, too. And they were glad. For, notwithstanding their adventures and excitements as "cubs," they had remained St. Frank's Removites at heart all the time.

It was good to see the old familiar scenes, and better still to know that they were now to remain here for good. The Detective Academy was a mere phase—now over—and in a very short time it would be completely forgotten.

"By Jove! The old school looks just the same!" said Nipper, as the crowd marched up Bellton lane. "These builders have done their work well. There's not even an appearance of newness. You'd never believe that St. Frank's had been rebuilt."

"Wait until you get indoors," said Handforth. "Everything's better than ever; they've improved the studies and Common-rooms. By George! Look at all these flags flying!"

St. Frank's was certainly a gay sight. The boys were eager and excited as they drew nearer. Flags were flying in abundance; bunting was much in evidence; and the playing fields were adorned with several marquees.

"It's a real gala day," remarked Harry Gresham. "Speech-making—tea on the grass—fireworks—and all that sort of thing."

"Irene and all the other Moor View girls have promised to be here later on," said Handforth enthusiastically. "By what I can see, it's going to be a ripping day. Weather's glorious, too."

Nobody challenged them in the Triangle, or in the various Houses. They wandered about freely, and except for the usual household staffs St. Frank's was empty. Not even a prefect had arrived. The masters were still absent. The Remove had the place to themselves.

"Well, it's just what we expected," said Nipper keenly. "But there's no time for idling about, and we can look through the school later. Some of those Fourth-Formers might come by road, and we've got to get our job done—"

"Nobody will be here before noon, at the earliest," put in Handforth.

"We can't take anything for granted," replied Nipper. "Buster Boots told me that he's coming down on his new motor-bike. And, for all we know, these Fourth-Formers might be as keen as we are on preparing a jape."

"I dare say you're right," admitted Handforth.

Nipper's personality was already making itself felt. Before ten minutes had elapsed the juniors were hurrying into the East House and Modern House, all intent upon the same task. Without giving any instructions, without so much as issuing a direct order, Nipper had got the fellows to follow his lead.

Even Kirby Keeble Parkington and his eleven supporters—known at St. Frank's as the Carlton Gang—were ready enough to fall

into line. Not that the great K. K. was satisfied to accept Nipper's lead as a permanency.

"We'll give him his head to-day, sweethearts," he confided to his own special chums. "They say he's the best skipper that the Remove ever had."

"But you weren't here then, old man," said Harvey Deeks suggestively.

"We'll give him a chance," continued Parkington. "If he doesn't make things hum, we'll jolly well boot him out and show the Remove that we Red-Hots are the real Vital Force in the Form."

"Pity we can't show 'em to-day," murmured Clement Goffin.

"My dear child, the longer we wait, the better," grinned K. K. "This Nipper merchant appears to be a bit of a hero, and the Remove is ready to back him up solid. We're outnumbered. Far better remain meek, let them think that we're subdued, and then, when our times comes, we'll have the advantage. There are two generals in this camp now—and one of them is a master strategist."

"Meaning yourself, eh?" chuckled Baines.

"Exactly," said K. K. coolly. "And one day, honey, I'll prove it!"

Nipper, of course, had heard all about the Carlton Gang from Handforth & Co., and from the others. Parkington and his men were notorious japers, and they had a greatly exaggerated idea of their own importance. But they were thorough sportsmen; reckless, perhaps, but true blue.

During the recent weeks, with the school only half present at St. Frank's, a keen feud had developed between these self-styled Red-Hots and the Old-Timers. It spoke well for Edward Oswald Handforth, who wasn't really a leader at all, that he had not only grabbed the Form captaincy—and held it—but he had also kept Kirby Keeble Parkington in check.

Things were likely to be different now. The Fourth was coming back—and the Fourth was the rightful, recognised prey of the Remove. Why have internal strife when there was another Form to jape? There were indications that K.K.'s great dream would never come true. With Nipper once again at the helm, the Red-Hots looked like becoming just average Removites.

Nipper was full of wheezes this morning.

They weren't particularly new wheezes, but that didn't matter. As he truthfully said, a good thing is worth repeating. Thus a pail of soot was precariously balanced on the top of Buster Boots' study door—and balanced in such a way that while the pail itself would not fall when the door opened, its contents would.

Treacle, engine-oil, ditch-mud, potato-peelings and similar "treats" were largely utilised up and down the Fourth Form passages of the Modern House and the East House. Having the field clear, the Removites fairly let themselves go. Never before in the history of St. Frank's had so many booby-traps been prepared in the space of a single hour.

When the juniors cheerfully emerged they bore many signs of their labour. They were sooty, sticky, greasy, but happy. Incidentally, the Fourth Form passages revealed absolutely no sign of the sinister traps which were set.

"Now we'll go and clean up," said Nipper cheerfully. "After that, my sons, we'd better distribute ourselves. We don't want the Fourth-Formers to get suspicious as soon as they arrive. So, whatever you do, greet them in the ordinary way. And don't grin! They'll suspect a jape in a tick if you do."

"It was worth coming by that early train," said Reggie Pitt, grinning.

CHAPTER 2.

Educating the Minister of Education!

THE Right Hon. Lord Pottlebury frowned severely as his car bumped over an inequality of the road. He made a mental note that he would say something very severe to the Minister of Transport next time he met him.

"If I had anything to do with the roads, I would see that they were properly made," muttered Lord Pottlebury, as he flung his paper aside in disgust. "This highway is a disgrace! Travelling with any degree of comfort is impossible!"

The big limousine went over another inequality, and Lord Pottlebury nearly touched the roof. He made no allowance for the fact that the car was travelling at well over forty miles an hour.

Lord Pottlebury was a middle-aged gentleman. He was long and lean, and looked as though he held a permanent grudge against humanity. His face was of that type which is generally described as "acid." It was even forbidding, and it was set into a fixed expression of smug self-importance and pomposity. All these things combined, Lord Pottlebury was not exactly a genial individual.

The great man was on his way to St. Frank's; and when he thought of the famous public school, he fell back among the cushions and dreamed dreams. If Lord Pottlebury had one soft spot—which is doubtful—it was for St. Frank's. Not only had he been educated there, but in the dim ages of the past (so dim that Lord Pottlebury was always striving to forget it) he had actually been the master of the Third Form.

He had risen since those days. Schoolmastering had not appealed to his ambitious nature, so he had taken to politics. Now he was Lord Pottlebury of Pottlebury, Minister of Education. And in all probability meek little Suncliffe, who now presided over the Third, knew at least twice as much about education as the Great Man. In Lord Pottlebury's sphere of life brains were not essential. It was, indeed, because of his failure as a schoolmaster that he had entered politics.

"Well, well," murmured Lord Pottlebury complacently.

His thoughts were pleasant, and for a moment his expression looked almost human. He was returning to St. Frank's, not as a master, but as the Big Pot who was to preside over the re-opening ceremony.

Before graciously consenting to undertake the job, he had made certain that none of his old colleagues was still at St. Frank's. It wasn't that he was ashamed of his past, but he thought it better, in the circumstances, to forget that he had ever been a mere Form-master. It wouldn't have been so bad if he had been the Head—he could have admitted that with pride.

His speech was already prepared, and he took it out of his pocket now and glanced over it to refresh his memory. There were several anecdotes dealing with his schooldays incorporated in that speech. They weren't even remotely associated with the truth; but Lord Pottlebury's long association with politics had effectively dulled his susceptibilities in this respect. Those anecdotes would probably raise a laugh or two, and his lordship was very fond of having his jokes laughed at.

He didn't know that his audiences generally laughed at him instead of with him. He was that kind of man. He was so wrapped in his own importance that his outlook upon life in general was more or less distorted. People fawned upon him so much that he actually believed he was a genius.

He intended to make it quite clear that he was conferring a high honour upon St. Frank's to-day—upon the masters, the boys, and the school in general. Never for a moment would he allow the fact to escape notice.

The big limousine seemed to pause in its stride. The smooth-running of the engine faltered, hesitated, and picked up again. Lord Pottlebury stared at his chauffeur over the top of his glasses, and it was rather a wonder that the unfortunate man's hair did not sizzle. But, then, Bates was so accustomed to that glare that it had long since lost its terrors. He knew it for what it was worth. There was no more respectful chauffeur in the country, for Bates knew a good job when he had one; but deep down in his heart Bates had about as much respect for Lord Pottlebury as he had for his small son's white rabbit. In fact, less; for, at least, the white rabbit had its uses. Bates had long since come to the conclusion that Lord Pottlebury's one and only virtue was that he paid him his salary.

The engine faltered again, and then, finally, gave up the ghost altogether. Gradually, the limousine slowed down. Bates' foot was on the accelerator, but this made no difference. The car stopped. Bates was in no way concerned. He took these things philosophically. Cars, after all, are apt to have their off moments.

"What's the matter, Bates?" came a petulant inquiry from the rear. "What are you stopping for?"

"It isn't me, my lord—it's the engine."

"Then what's the matter with the engine?"

"Just conked out, my lord."

"What do you mean by 'conked out'?" demanded Lord Pottlebury sourly. "Haven't I told you, Bates, that I don't understand these ridiculous terms? The engine has no right to conk out! What do I pay you for?"

Bates thought it better not to argue. He climbed out, lifted the bonnet, and investigated the carburetter. His first surmise proved incorrect. The petrol supply was ample. Further investigations followed, and in the end Bates was forced to the conclusion that the ignition had completely failed. Bates was not entirely displeased.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Lord Pottlebury, approaching the engine and bending over it delicately. "I can't see anything wrong."

"It's the magneto, my lord," replied Bates, pointing. "This thing, 'ere."

"What's the good of showing it to me?" asked his master impatiently. "I don't know the difference between a magneto and a gear-box! Every man to his job, Bates. I pay you to see that this car runs perfectly."

"Yes, my lord; but if the magneto peters out, it ain't my fault."

"What do you mean—'peters out'?"

"Why, the mag's busted, my lord—gone west," said Bates pleasantly. "There's no more juice in that mag than there is in a July orange. Looks bad, my lord. Couldn't have 'appened in a worse spot, either," he added reflectively, as he glanced up and down the road. "Not a village for three miles, at least, and Helmford's over five miles away."

Lord Pottlebury became excited.

"But this is absurd!" he protested. "You must get the engine going at once, Bates. I'm due at St. Frank's at twelve-thirty, and I cannot possibly be late."

"Looks to me as if you will be, my lord," replied Bates mournfully. "I'd like to remind you, my lord, that I told you last week that the mag was getting a bit off colour. I've been expectin' her to give up the ghost ever since. Doesn't surprise me at all."

He spoke with melancholy relief. His august master's cheese-paring policy with regard to the car had been one of Bates' grievances. It was as difficult to get new tyres and spare parts out of Lord Pottlebury as it was to find jam in a doughnut. It served him right. Bates had always hoped something serious would go wrong on a lonely stretch of road like this and on an occasion when time was precious.

"Are you telling me, Bates, that the—er—magneto is completely out of commission?" asked Lord Pottlebury anxiously.

"I told you last week, my lord——"

"Never mind last week!" snapped his lordship.

"Yes, my lord, but if you'd let me fit a new mag last week this wouldn't 'ave happened," explained Bates. "I reckon it's a fault in the winding. Can't do anything, my lord. We need a new mag before we can move a yard."

"Good heavens!" said Lord Pottlebury, aghast.

He looked up and down the road as though expecting to find new magnetos in the hedge-rows. But he saw nothing but long stretches of deserted highway, without a house in sight.

"There's an A.A. box two miles back, my lord," said Bates hopefully.

"What is the good of that?" snapped his lordship. "They don't keep magnetos in A.A. boxes, do they?"

"No, my lord, but I can telephone to Helmford Garage——"

"I know that, you dolt!" interrupted Lord Pottlebury excitedly. "What do you think I am—a fool?"

Bates, being a truthful man, dared not answer.

"Delay—delay!" went on his lordship frantically. "It'll take you at least five minutes to get to that box, and then there's the trouble of getting through, and the sending of a new magneto. Why, it'll be half an hour before we can get going again."

Bates looked at his master, and sighed.

"Beggin' your pardon, my lord, but I ain't no marathon runner," he said respectfully. "I can't do two miles in five minutes, especially on a hot mornin' like this. It'll take me nigh on half an hour, my lord, and that's good walkin', too. If we get movin' within an hour an' a-half it's more than we've a right to expect. New magnetos can't be fitted like magic, my lord. And there's always the chance that the garage won't have one that'll fit."

"You're a fool, Bates—a hopeless fool!" declared Lord Pottlebury. "Go to that telephone box at once. Have a new magneto sent immediately, return here as soon as you possibly can. But don't be surprised if you find me gone when you return."

"I shan't be surprised, my lord—I shall be pleased."

"Pleased?" repeated Lord Pottlebury suspiciously.

"Meanin' that you'll be on your way, my lord," said Bates, with haste.

"Exactly," nodded his lordship. "There is always the chance that a passing motorist will—er—give me a lift. In fact, it is a certainty that some car will be along soon. This is a main road. Now go."

Bates went, and Lord Pottlebury glared at the dead engine, paced up and down, and anathematised Bates for walking so slowly. The infernal idiot remained in sight for ages.

But at last Bates turned a bend, and Lord Pottlebury had the scene entirely to himself. After a while he came to the conclusion that it was foolish to pace about in the hot sunshine, and he got into the car and sat down. Cars came with monotonous regularity from the direction of Helmford, but not one came the other way.

Before long even traffic going in that direction ceased. There came a spell when Lord Pottlebury had the entire countryside to himself. At least, so it appeared. There were two individuals, however, who had been wait-

ing for this lull. They were ragged tramps—"won't works"—rascals who earned a dishonest living on the road.

It so happened that the car had petered out almost exactly opposite the spot where these two tramps had lingered for breakfast. But they were on the other side of the hedge, invisible, and Lord Pottlebury and his chauffeur had had no knowledge that every word of their conversation was overheard by these two rascals.

"A blinkin' lord, is 'e?" murmured one of them, his little eyes full of greedy anticipation. "'Struth! Looks like we're lucky, 'Arry."

"Wait until that shover's gorn," whispered the other.

They waited even longer—until the road

"I daresay—I daresay," broke in Lord Pottlebury curtly. "But if you expect me to believe that lie you have mistaken your man. However, I will give you a shilling if you'll leave me alone and go away. There!"

He produced a shilling, and both the tramps laughed raucously.

"Nice, kindhearted gent, ain't he?" said Harry. "Gives us a bob to go away, 'Erb! 'Ere, guv'nor, it ain't good enough! What about a quid each?"

"Good heavens! Are you daring to threaten me?" exclaimed Lord Pottlebury furiously. "This is highway robbery! If you don't go away at once—"

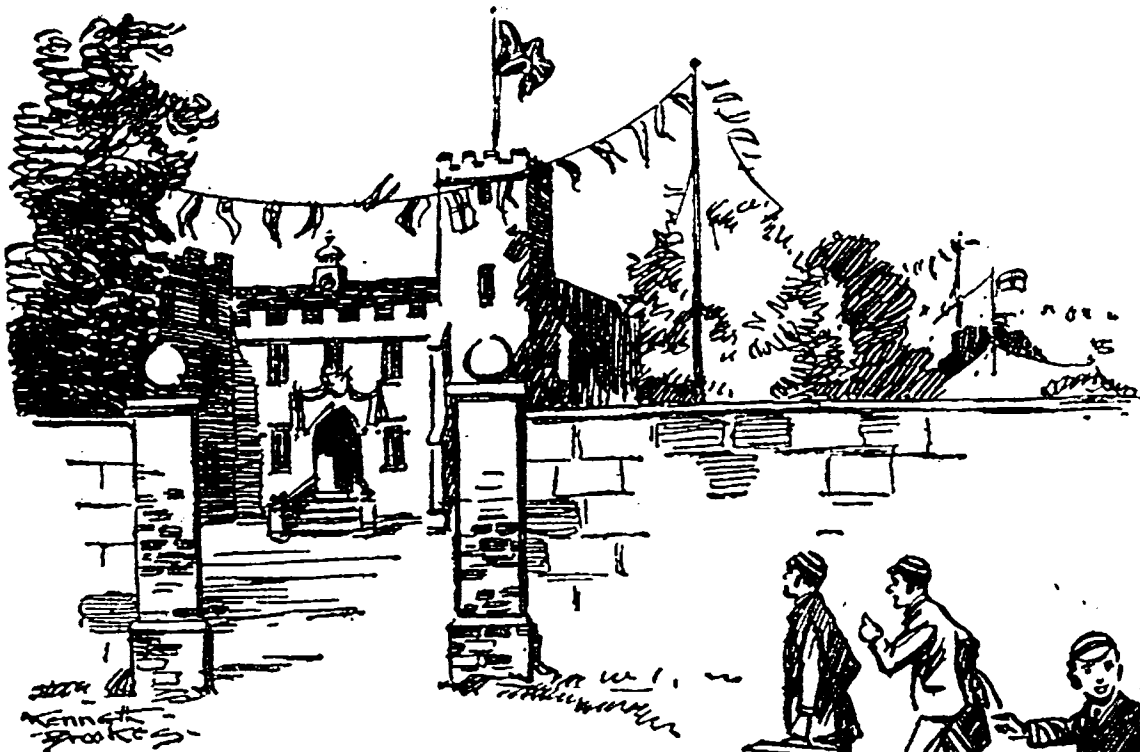
"Cheese it!" snapped Harry. "A quid each, or we'll take it."

"Yus, an' we'll take more, too!" said 'Erb aggressively.

His lordship breathed hard. He was badly frightened; but his dignity forbade him to show it. He sat up very straight, and pointed imperiously.

"Enough!" he said, with disdain. "Leave me at once."

Thereupon the two tramps, exasperated



Eagerly Nipper & Co. approached St. Frank's. The famous old school was looking a gay sight. Flags and bunting were flying, and the playing fields were adorned with marquees.

was completely clear. Lord Pottlebury had the surprise of his life when he suddenly beheld two evil faces peering in at him from either side of the car.

"Go away!" said Lord Pottlebury sharply, using the same tone as he invariably employed with success with his subordinates at the Ministry of Education.

"In trouble, guv'nor?" asked one of the tramps, opening the door.

"A slight delay—something wrong with the engine," explained Lord Pottlebury coldly. "I'm afraid you cannot do anything to help."

He looked anxiously up and down the road, but no other vehicle was in sight. The other door was opened, and the two tramps entered the car.

"What about the price of dinner, guv'nor?" asked the bigger of the two men, in a persuasive voice. "Me an' my mate 'ere are walkin' to Southampton. We've 'ad a promise of work at the docks—"



into action, and deeming themselves safe, seized his lordship and dragged him out of the car. It was not unlike a scene one witnesses in a comic film—only there was nothing comic about this, from Lord Pottlebury's point of view.

Bleating with terror, all his pomposity gone, he was whirled across the road, swept through a gap in the hedge, and smothered cries followed. Two tense minutes elapsed. Then 'Arry and 'Erb, one of them donning the last of Lord Pottlebury's morning suit, appeared. They hastened off down the road, gloating.

They had done well. For not only had they secured an excellent suit, but a gold watch,

a gold cigarette case, and a notecase which bulged with notes. It was their lucky day.

They struck off across a footpath into a distant wood; and as they did so a tottering, ragged figure burst through the gap in the hedge and stared wildly up and down the road. The Minister of Education had received more education in that five minutes than he himself had given to an ungrateful country during his whole term of office.

CHAPTER 3.

Browne's Brainwave!

"A FELLOW feeling, Brother Horace, as the poet has said, makes us wondrous kind," remarked William Napoleon Browne calmly. "Unless my eyes deceive me, I behold a motorist in distress. And having been in distress myself on occasion, it behoves me to offer assistance."

"It may only be a picnic party," said Stevens.

The two leading lights of the Fifth Form at St. Frank's regarded with interest the big limousine which was drawn up at the side of the road some distance ahead. They were sailing along serenely in Browne's new Morris-Oxford Six fabric saloon.

"You may be right, of course," went on Stevens. "If so, I hope we're not delayed too long, or we shall be late for the opening ceremony and the specchifying."

"A lateness, brother, which will not distress me in the least," retorted Browne. "I suggest that we can easily dispense with those sleep-provoking formalities. I have it on the best authority that no less a person than Lord Pottlebury is to re-open the school. Need I say more?"

"Isn't he a good speaker?" asked Stevens.

"To my sorrow, alas, I was at one function where Lord Pottlebury presided," replied Browne. "In a misguided moment I accepted my father's offer to accompany him; and I can truthfully say that a sleeping draught would have had less effect upon me than Lord Pottlebury."

He took his toe off the accelerator as they came near to the limousine. It was Browne's intention to glide slowly past, and if no appeal for assistance was made he would accelerate and drive straight on. So far, no human figure had appeared. The limousine seemed to be deserted.

Then, suddenly, a door opened, and a figure popped out like a rabbit. It resolved itself into a tall, lanky man dressed like a scarecrow. He came running towards Browne's car, waving his hands wildly.

"Stop!" he shouted. "Help. Stop!"

"Good lord!" ejaculated Stevens.

"I am not sure that he is a good lord, Brother Horace—for, unless my eyes deceive me, this is Lord Pottlebury himself," said Browne.

"Then your eyes must deceive you, you ass! This man's a tramp!"

They pulled up, and Browne's door was immediately flung open and the scarecrow figure clutched at William Napoleon's arm.

"I have been robbed!" gasped Lord Pottlebury. "I have been assaulted and robbed! Be good enough to take me to Helmford—"

"One moment, my lord," interrupted Browne smoothly.

"You—you know me?" panted the unfortunate man.

"Who does not know Lord Pottlebury?" replied Browne. "At this very moment there is a newspaper on the back seat with your photograph on the front page—or it may be on the front seat, with your photograph on the back page. I take it, my lord, that a spot of trouble has hit you in the midriff?"

"I tell you I've been robbed!" panted his lordship. "My car went wrong—my chauffeur left me to go for help. And two ruffianly tramps attacked me, stripped me of my clothing, and left me in this—this condition!"

"A scaly condition at that," remarked Browne, with sympathy. "The highways of our fair country are becoming positively dangerous. It is fortunate that I recognised you, sir, or Brother Horace and myself would have mistaken you for a tramp. If there is anything that we can do—"

"There is much that you can do—that you must do," interrupted his lordship, becoming calmer. "Upon my word! Are you not wearing St. Frank's caps?"

"We are, sir."

"Then you are St. Frank's boys?"

"Such," said Browne, "is the natural inference."

"I am fortunate, indeed," declared Lord Pottlebury. "You will drive me at once into Helmford. It is useless searching for those tramps, for they have been gone for nearly ten minutes. Boy!" he added, waving an imperious hand to Stevens. "Remove this baggage so that there is space for me to sit."

Stevens grunted. He didn't like Lord Pottlebury's pompous tone. It was a bit thick of the man to order him about, especially considering that he and Browne were acting the part of good Samaritans. But it was quite true that the back of the car was littered with odd suitcases and bags.

"One moment before you disturb yourself, Brother Horace," said Browne gently. "Leave this entirely to me."

He gave his companion a wink—which implied to Stevens that Browne, too, was fed up with Lord Pottlebury's high-handed manner.

"I should suggest, sir, that you refrain from driving into Helmford in your present condition," said William Napoleon smoothly. "I need hardly point out that you resemble, at the moment, that famous 'Chips' character, Weary Willy—and you resemble him to an extraordinary degree."

"I must get to Helmford!" insisted Lord Pottlebury curtly. "How dare you argue with me?"

"Much as I should like to help you in these distressing circumstances, I must point out that Helmford is a thriving town," said Browne. "I must also point out that at this hour of the day, and on such a fair morning, Helmford streets will be thronged. Do you really wish to appear in public—before the searching eyes of the multitude—in your present rôle of an animated rag-bag?"

"Good heavens! I hadn't thought of that!" said Lord Pottlebury, aghast.

"You must realise, sir, that you are a very distinguished man," went on Browne gravely. "The Minister of Education must not allow himself to be seen in this condition, or the newspapers will unquestionably feature him in picture and prose in the early evening editions. I can hear the cameras clicking already, and the typewriters tapping. I take it, sir, that you have no desire to be the laughing-stock of London?"

His lordship clung feebly to the door.

"Then what am I to do?" he asked, in a husky voice. "Can you not think of any way out of this appalling difficulty? I am due at St. Frank's—"

"Let me suggest a way out," interrupted Browne kindly. "Brother Horace and myself are now on our way to the school. We will inform the distinguished gathering that you have been unfortunately delayed, and will be an hour or two late. It will not be necessary to go into any details—and thus your dignity will be preserved. The ceremonial speech can be made later, at your convenience."

A gleam of hope came into his lordship's eyes.

"Excellent—excellent!" he said breathlessly.

"On our way through Helmford I will call at an outfitter's, and, taking the proprietor into my confidence, I will tell him of your plight," continued Browne. "A new outfit will be immediately dispatched to you. In the meantime, brother, I suggest that you draw all the blinds, and remain discreetly hidden from the world."

Lord Pottlebury, whose dignity was dear to him, saw the force of this argument.

"Yes, yes, you are right!" he declared.

He ran back to his own car, jumped in, and pulled all the blinds. One minute later, Browne and Stevens continued on their way.

"**P**OMPOUS old blighter!" commented Stevens, as the Morris-Oxford purred onwards.

"There is much truth in the saying, 'Talk of the Devil and he appears,' Brother Horace," said Browne thoughtfully. "It is remarkable that we should have met Lord Pottlebury in such distressing circumstances while actually speaking of him. I entirely agree with you in your description."

He allowed the car to come to a standstill.

"What's the idea?" asked Stevens wonderingly.

"There is no immediate hurry, and I desire to have a little heart-to-heart chat," replied Browne. "You, Brother Horace, in your simplicity of mind, fail to detect the possibilities. But I can assure you that this is a chance in a thousand."

"A chance? A chance for what?"

"To make history," replied Browne firmly. "Do not forget that this is a great day at St. Frank's—the reopening of the school with pomp and splendour. We can safely assume that Lord Pottlebury, if he gets there, will render the proceedings as dull and as uninteresting as possible. I hold that we have the chance to enliven the function in a way which will make us go down in history as famous men."

Stevens, who knew his friend so well, stared with a kind of fascinated horror.

"You're not thinking of a practical joke?" he asked, aghast.

"It is already thought of—and planned to the last detail," replied Browne. "I am not one to lose a golden chance when it is pushed into my lap. Here, Brother Horace, we have the opening for the Hoax of the Century."

"But—but—"

"I would remind you that Lord Pottlebury and myself are very much of the same build," proceeded Browne. "I would further remark that there is not one chance in a hundred that anybody at St. Frank's has ever seen his lordship in person. Do not the possibilities hit you squarely in the beezer, Brother Horace?"

"You're mad—as mad as a hatter!" gasped Stevens.

"Talking of hatters reminds me that we must not fail to fulfil our promise," said Browne. "In all things, brother, we must be dutiful."

Upon reaching Helmford, Browne entered the largest outfitter's, and arranged about sending a complete rig-out to Lord Pottlebury. It was unfortunate that he should absentmindedly hint that his lordship was a short, stout man.

"What's the big idea, Browne?" asked Stevens, when they were once more on their way. "Why did you give that wrong description of old Pottlebury?"

"When one's brain is seething with big ideas, one is apt to become careless of trifles," replied Browne.

"Trifles be blown!" said Stevens. "And you weren't careless, either. You deliberately told those outfitter's to take the wrong clothing to Lord Pottlebury. That stuff they're sending out will only fit where it touches."

"And, knowing Lord Pottlebury as we do, we can come to the safe conclusion that he will not venture to appear in public thus attired. In short, Brother Horace, it will mean another delay. And delay, from our point of view, is essential."

Somewhere between Helmsford and Bannington a great change came over William Napoleon Browne. Stevens was now at the wheel, and the car glided smoothly along at reduced speed. In the rear Browne had opened his attaché-case, and was busy with make-up. In front of him was an open newspaper, with Lord Pottlebury's photograph much in evidence.

As the Fifth-Form skipper had truly remarked, there was very little chance that anybody at St. Frank's had met Lord Pottlebury in person. It would be quite enough for Browne to make himself look like Lord Pottlebury's photograph. His long friendship with Stevens had taught him the difficult art of make-up—for Stevens himself was the cleverest amateur actor in the school. Had he possessed Browne's nerve and audacity he would have been the ideal one to carry off the present stunt.

But Browne was no mean actor, either, and it was an additional advantage, in this par-

ticular case, that his figure should be tall and lanky. Stevens was almost speechless with awed admiration when, at length, Browne suggested that he should stop the car and inspect the masterpiece.

"It's—it's uncanny," said Stevens faintly. "You're Lord Pottlebury to the life! You only need a little more darkening over the left eye, and a little less grease-paint on the cheeks, and you'll be perfect. No need for those fake wrinkles, Browne. They're a bit too obvious. Let me have a go."

"Impudent young jackanapes," said Browne, in a lifelike imitation of Lord Pottlebury's pompous voice. "Perhaps you're right, though, by gad! I'll admit that you know what you're talking about."

Stevens chuckled, and with a few deft touches he made all the difference to that clever make-up. He rendered it as perfect as it could possibly be.

And then—on to St. Frank's!

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CHAPTER 4.

Trouble Brewing!

SIR JOHN BRENT, Chairman of the St Frank's Board of Governors, frowned thoughtfully as he looked out across Inner Court in the hot morning sunshine.

"Strange that a number of the younger boys should already have arrived," he commented, half to himself. "We did not expect any of the boys until the noon train, at the earliest."

"No doubt they are keen, Sir John," said another member of the august Governing Body. "And keenness is what I love to see in boys. They are proud of their school—eager to be back."

Sir John smiled.

"I wonder if their keenness is solely concentrated upon their love of school?" he said sceptically. "I hate to be suspicious, but I have an idea that this early arrival means trouble—for somebody."

He could see the Removites in the distance. Some of them were strolling about the Triangle, others were inspecting the playing-fields, reverently gazing upon the cricket pitch on Big Side. The pitch was, of course, roped off, and the groundsman hovered about like some guardian angel.

"I understand that our First XI. is playing an M.C.C. team next week, Sir John?" asked one of the other gentlemen. "It ought to be a good game."

"Oh, quite," agreed the chairman. "But the better game, in my opinion, will be the match between St. Frank's and the County Gentlemen. The Gentlemen will be hard put to it to win."

They were gathered in the headmaster's study. In addition to Sir John Brent there were two or three other governors, and some local celebrities, including the Mayor of Bannington. They were awaiting the arrival of Lord Pottlebury, the guest of honour.

"It'll be good to have the school running in full swing again," said the mayor. "Good for trade, Sir John. These schoolboys spend a lot of money in Bannington, and I can assure you that the partial closing of the school has made a big difference."

"Within a few weeks you will have forgotten that St. Frank's was ever closed, Mr. Gribble," commented Sir John. "There will be one or two changes and this is a good opportunity for telling you of them."

Mr. Horace Gribble, of Gribble's Hardware Stores, looked curious.

"Changes, Sir John?" he repeated. "What sort of changes?"

"In the first place, Dr. Morrison Nicholls has definitely retired from St. Frank's," said Sir John, and his words attracted the attention of them all. "In some ways, this is a pity, for Dr. Nicholls is a very able scholar,

and his headmastership of this school was very successful."

"Then why has he left?" asked the mayor.

"The governors felt that they could not very well stand in his way, Dr. Nicholls having received a very tempting offer from Canada," replied Sir John. "He has accepted the post of Principal of one of Canada's newest and greatest universities."

"And what of St. Frank's?"

"Mr. Nelson Lee has filled the vacancy," replied Sir John.

There was general surprise.

"Mr. Nelson Lee?" repeated the mayor. "Well, well! I knew that Mr. Lee used to be a Housemaster here, and I believe he's a very capable man. But I thought he had gone back to his detective work."

"He has, and he hasn't," replied Sir John Brent thoughtfully. "I am not quite sure that the arrangement will work out satisfactorily, but I have very great faith in Mr. Lee's abilities. You see, gentlemen, he only accepted the headmastership of St. Frank's on the condition that he should have a free hand."

"A free hand for what?" asked somebody.

"For devoting himself to detective work when the fit takes him—or when a case of sufficient importance is brought to his notice," replied the chairman. "The duties of a Housemaster are arduous and exacting, and in such a position Mr. Lee would have been tied to the school. As Head, however, he will have greater freedom."

"I am not altogether sure that the plan will prove effective," said one of the other governors dubiously. "I have been against it from the first, Sir John. A headmaster, to be successful, must devote all his energies and time to the school. A man with divided interests cannot possibly succeed."

"There are exceptions to every rule, Lord Walberry," replied Sir John. "I have every confidence in Mr. Nelson Lee. He is a man of extraordinary capabilities—a man of brilliant attainments—a man of fascinating personality. I believe that he will conduct this school with complete and lasting success. And if he is absent for a few days now and then, what does it matter? Such jaunts will serve as an outlet for his surplus energies."

"H'm! Most unusual—most!" said the mayor, pursing his lips. "I have never before heard of a detective accepting a post as headmaster of a great Public school. Are you sure that he possesses the necessary qualifications?"

"My dear Mr. Gribble!" protested Sir John, rather annoyed. "You surely don't imagine that we, the governors, would appoint a man without the necessary qualifications?"

"Mr. Nelson Lee could put at least a dozen letters after his name if he chose," supported one of the other governors. "Added to these great accomplishments of his, he has that flair for leadership, and for managing

boys, which is even more important than scholastic knowledge."

"In a word, gentlemen, Mr. Lee is the ideal man for this post," declared Sir John. "He is brilliant in every sphere. His judgment is sounder than that of any man I know, his tact is magical, and his sense of humour is, perhaps, his greatest qualification. A headmaster without a sense of humour is doomed to certain and absolute failure."

"By gad, you're right, sir—you're right!" said Lord Walberry, with a chuckle. "I can well imagine that one needs a sense of humour when dealing with such a pack of youngsters."

His lordship would need to exercise his own sense of humour before long—only he didn't know it! Sir John looked at his watch.

"Yes," he went on, "after to-day St. Frank's will be 'as you were.' There is still a little time before Lord Pottlebury is due, so I suggest that we should take a look over the new buildings."

"An excellent idea," declared the mayor, nodding.

They all prepared to move.

"Oh, by the way," said the vicar, who was present. "If Mr. Lee is to become headmaster, who will take charge of the Ancient House? Will it still be presided over by Mr. Crowell?"

"No, Mr. Goodchild," replied Sir John. "Mr. Crowell was only acting as temporary Housemaster during what we might term the transition period. I am afraid he was not a very great success. As a Form-master, he is all that could be desired, but the responsibilities of conducting a House are a little beyond him. You may remember that he was compelled to take a holiday a short while ago, owing to the strain."

"He will resume his former duties, then?" asked the Rev. Ethelbert Goodchild.

"Exactly," said Sir John, as he opened the door. "Mr. Crowell will once more preside over the Remove, leaving Mr. Pycraft free to take his own Form, the Fourth. We have appointed a new Housemaster for the Ancient House, and he should be a success. Mr. Alington Wilkes comes to St. Frank's with the finest credentials, and with a splendid

record. At Rendell School he was exceedingly popular."

"FUNNY!" said Nipper, frowning. "Eh? What's funny?" asked Handforth.

Six or seven of the Removites were lounging round the Ancient House steps. Church and McClure were deeply interested in ice-cream cornets which they had just procured from the school shop. Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West were more partial to ice-creams wafers.

"I don't want to be pessimistic, but it seems to me, my sons, that we're soon to be attacked by heart failure," said Nipper steadily. "Look over there! Look what the August sun's brought out!"

Edward Oswald Handforth stared. Through Big Arch came a large group of gentlemen, mostly elderly. In their correct morning coats and top hats they looked extremely dignified. Sir John Brent led the way with the portly Mr. Gribble by his side.

"What about it?" asked Handforth. "These old fogies don't give me heart failure. I see the mayor's here complete with corporation. As for these others, there's nobody in particular."

"Not at all," grinned Nipper. "Only the chairman of the governors, a few other governors, the vicar, and some more local celebrities. Don't you realise, you chump, that they're strolling towards the Modern House?"

Handforth started.

"You—you don't think——" he began, aghast.

K. K. Parkington came running up with Deeks and Goffin, his bosom chums. All three were looking anxious and excited.

"We've got to do something!" ejaculated the red-headed leader of the Carlton Gang. "These old jossers are going into the Modern House! And it's a penny to a pound that they'll twig what we've been doing!"

"Keep your hair on," said Nipper. "They'll twig nothing unless they go into the Junior passage."

"But that's just where they'll go!" gasped Handforth. "They're looking over the new buildings! You know what these old asses are—they always stick their noses where they're not wanted!"

"Yes, we shall have to do something or they'll ruin all our plans," said Nipper. "The Fourth isn't due for another half-hour yet—and it would be a pity for them to miss the welcome we've arranged."

"Never mind that," said Parkington. "What about this other danger? What's going to happen to us if these governors walk into those booby traps? We're the only fellows in the school, so we're bound to be suspected."

"Come on!" said Nipper crisply. "We'll see what we can do!"

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CHAPTER 5.

Trouble Arrives!

"GOOD MORNING, sir!"

"Nice day, sir!"

"Looks like keeping fine for the celebrations, sir!"

The crowd of Removites, swarming round Sir John Brent and his party, raised their caps and made themselves respectfully affable. By a strategic move, Nipper and several others wedged themselves into the Modern House entrance, effectually blocking it.

"You boys were here remarkably early, weren't you?" asked Sir John, with a smile. "I didn't know that you cared for school so much. Was there any special reason for this premature arrival?"

"Rather, sir!" said Handforth, grinning. "You see, those silly Fourth-Formers—Hi! What the— Eh? I—I mean—"

He broke off in confusion and pain. Somebody had jabbed a hard knee into his back, and as Church was just in Handforth's rear the mystery was not a difficult one to solve. The jab, however, had its intended effect; for Handforth was suddenly brought to a realisation of the folly of his words.

"Yes?" asked Sir John good-naturedly. "You were saying something about the Fourth-Formers."

"No, sir! I—I mean, yes, sir!" gasped Handforth. "How about coming to have a look through our House, sir?"

"We have already decided to inspect the new buildings, thank you, my boy," said Sir John. "I must ask you to stand aside from these steps. You really mustn't block the way like this."

"Our House is a lot better than these new ones, sir," urged Nipper.

"Really?" growled Lord Walberry. "I always understood that the Houses were identical? In any case, we are familiar with the school. Surely, Sir John, we cannot allow these boys to hinder us like this. Move aside, young men—move aside at once! We wish to inspect the new system of interior decoration."

Not daring to disobey, the juniors reluctantly moved aside from the doorway. Their hearts were almost in their mouths as Sir John and his party wandered on through the lobby.

"They've made a fine job of the dormitories, sir!" sang out Nipper.

"Extraordinary!" came a mild comment from the vicar. "Why are these boys so intent upon telling us these things?"

Sir John frowned.

"I'm very much afraid, Mr. Goodchild, that they've been up to some mischief," he replied, his eyes twinkling in spite of his puckered brow. "Perhaps it would be as well not to make any inquiries?"

"To be sure!" beamed the vicar. "Boys will be boys, eh?"

In the entrance the juniors saw, with horror, the distinguished party turn into the Fourth Form passage.

"Of all the places they could inspect, they must inspect the Junior studies!" said Vivian Travers, with a sigh. "For the love of Samson! The balloon will go up, dear old fellows, within thirty seconds."

"They could have gone upstairs, or into the senior quarters, or the dining-hall—yet they've got to turn into the Fourth Form passage!" groaned K. K. "What the dickens are we going to do?"

"We'll try something, anyhow," said Nipper desperately.

He ran out into the Triangle, and a crowd of others followed. Nobody could think clearly in this dire emergency. But Nipper, at least, was not entirely devoid of ideas.

"Hi! Look!" he roared, at the top of his voice. "Oh, my only hat! Look what's happened! Quick, you chaps! Great Scott!"

He was pointing and gesticulating wildly.

"What's up?" gasped Watson. "I can't see anything!"

"Yell, you chumps—yell!" hissed Nipper. "Make as much noise as you can—anything to bring them out!"

"Brains!" said Travers admiringly.

Within a second a dozen of the Removites had "caught on," and were making a tremendous noise. Others quickly jumped to the idea, and the Triangle became filled with noisy shouting. Nipper was still pointing across towards the playing-fields, as though he had seen something startling.

"They're coming!" gasped Handforth. "What shall we do now?"

"Nothing, ass—except follow me!" retorted Nipper.

It was a valiant effort, but it failed. Sir John and the other members of the party, startled by the shouts, hurried across the lobby and stared out into the sunlight. Nipper and two or three others were running across the Triangle, pointing and yelling.

"Dear me!" said the vicar. "What ever can have happened?"

"Hadn't we better go and see?" suggested Mr. Gribble. "Perhaps there's been an accident."

"I hardly think so," said Sir John. "Boys are inclined to get excited upon the slightest provocation. We don't want to make ourselves look ridiculous; we don't want to follow like a flock of sheep."

And they all went back into the Modern House. K. K. Parkington, doing a bit of scouting, caught up with the other juniors and made an expressive gesture.

"N.G.!" he said dismally. "The old buffers didn't fall for it!"

Nipper sighed.

"Well, we did our best—and no man could do more than that," he said philosophically. "I rather think, my sons, we'd better go and explore the woods, or take a look at the scenic beauties of the River Stowe."

"It wouldn't be a bad idea if the earth opened up and swallowed us!" said Reggie Pitt.

SIR JOHN BRENT waved a hand. "These, I believe, are the studies especially provided for the junior boys," he said. "Upon my word! In my young days I never had a study of my own at school. The rising generation is far better off than it believes."

He reached for one of the door-handles as he spoke, and, at the same moment, the Mayor of Bannington walked into the next-door study; and the vicar and Lord Walberry tried a third. Two other gentlemen walked into a fourth.

Crash! Swocoosh! Plop! Crash! Zing!

The catastrophe was as swift as it was unexpected. It all happened within a few seconds, and those elegantly-attired gentlemen had the shock of their lives. Expecting to find neat, tidy studies, fresh with new paint and polish, they found—disaster.

Sir John Brent vanished amid a smother of soot. As he opened the study door, a zinc bath tipped up and shot its entire contents over his head. He was practically obliterated, and the rest of the soot, falling to the floor, caused a dense black fog to sweep down the entire Junior passage like vapour from a smoke-bomb.

"Good heavens!" came a wild cry from Sir John. "What—Gug-gug—Help! What has happened?"

His voice was drowned in the wails of anguish which arose from close at hand. The portly Mr. Gribble staggered through the black fog like a barge in a heavy sea. From head to foot he was smothered in sticky, messy, smelly motor-oil, which dripped and plopped dully to the floor. The mayor tried to speak, but his mouth was so full of oil that he only succeeded in making a sound like the gurgle of a dying duck.

Mr. Goodchild, by a miracle, had escaped, but Lord Walberry had received the entire contents of a pail of whitewash on his chest. Staggering backwards through the black fog, he looked like some horrid ghost.

"Good heavens! Is the school coming down?" gasped the vicar, reeling down the passage. "What in the world has happened? I cannot see! I—I—Whoa! Dear me!"

Unfortunately, the Rev. Ethelbert trod on a blob of motor-oil, and his foot shot from under him. If there is anything more slippery than motor-oil on a parquet flooring, it has yet to be discovered. The luckless vicar, shooting forward like an out-of-control roller-skater, sat down in the biggest oil pool of all. There was an awful "plonk". Then the reverend gentleman slid forward once more, to cannon against the back of the mayor's legs. The mayor flung out his arms, clutched at two groping gentlemen, and all four of them sprawled on the floor in helpless confusion.

A BIG Rolls-Royce limousine glided noiselessly into the gateway of St. Frank's. It was a smart turn-out. The chauffeur was in spotless livery, and the car itself gleamed and shimmered. In the rear, in solitary state, sat a tall, lean, distinguished-looking gentleman.

In a word, Lord Pottlebury, alias William Napoleon Browne, had arrived.

It had been easy enough to garage his car in Bannington, to hire this Rolls-Royce, and to leave Stevens to come along at leisure. Browne didn't mind spending a pound or two if it meant some fun. In fact, he was prepared to lavish the entire contents of his wallet—close upon twenty pounds—if all went well.

He could not have arrived at a more exciting moment.

For as the Rolls-Royce glided across the Triangle, en route towards the Head's house, a strange collection of figures emerged from the Modern House. They were grotesque and weird. Most of them were black from head to foot, but one appeared to be mottled. Their faces were indistinguishable; the whites of their eyes stared out of black surrounds; the red of their mouths formed a striking contrast to the inkiness of their countenances.

"Wait, my good fellow—wait!" said Browne pompously, as the chauffeur half-turned and caught his eye. "I cannot conceive that such a scene as this is commonplace at St. Frank's."

"Looks as if there's been an accident, sir," remarked the chauffeur. "Or maybe some of the youngsters have been playing one of their jokes. Young terrors, they are! I wouldn't take a job at this school, not if I was paid ten quid a week!"

From various vantage points, Removites were on the watch. They hadn't fled, as first planned; for Nipper knew that flight would be a positive admission of guilt. Besides, if this disaster *had* to happen, why not stand by and see the result?

"It might be worth looking at!" said Nipper.

It was!

In their wildest dreams, the Removites had never hoped to see the Fourth-Formers in such a condition as this. Not one of that distinguished party had escaped. Some were worse than others, but all were covered with soot from head to foot.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" breathed Nipper, as he peered out of West Arch. "Look at 'em! Somebody's going to be sacked over this—and I've got a feeling that it'll be me."

"Not likely!" panted Handforth. "If they sack you, they've got to sack me, too! All of us, in fact! We all helped."

"And look who's here!" breathed Travers. "If that's not Lord Pottlebury, I'm the King of Siam!"

"Lord Pottle-who?" asked Handforth.

"Pottlebury—the Minister of Education!" groaned Travers. "He's come down to



Elated with their good haul, the two tramps made off down the road—leaving a very angry Lord Pottlebury roaring frantically behind the hedge.

reopen the school! By Samson! What a mess-up!"

Browne was "on" in less than a second. He could not, of course, fathom the details, but he guessed at once that these gentlemen had caught a "packet" which had not been really intended for them. Browne knew the juniors to be daring, but he was convinced they wouldn't play such an outrageous jape upon the powers that were.

His luck was in. Nothing could have suited him better. Inwardly, he thanked the juniors for this situation. It would be so much easier for him to "put it over" with the reception committee in this imbroglio.

"Gentlemen—gentlemen!" exclaimed Browne, hurrying across. "Whatever has happened? Pray let me be of some assistance! In case you do not know who I am, I had better introduce myself. No doubt you have heard of Lord Pottlebury——"

"Be good enough to keep away, sir," panted Sir John Brent. "I am distressed beyond measure that you should arrive at such an inopportune moment. I am delighted to meet you, Lord Pottlebury, but I wish that the circumstances——"

"My dear sir, pray calm yourself," said Browne. "I believe I am talking to Sir John Brent, am I not? You must forgive me for being doubtful on the point. But for the culture of your voice, I might easily have mistaken you for the chimney sweep. I take it that there has been a slight mishap?"

"Slight!" bellowed the Mayor of Bannington. "Where are the young 'ounds who

played this trick on us? Wait till I catch 'em! I'll tan their hides until they're half raw! I ain't been treated as bad as this since the election!"

Mr. Horace Gribble had a perfect mastery of English under normal conditions; but when labouring under great excitement he was apt to forget himself.

"Dear me!" said Browne, in astonishment. "Am I to understand that the boys have commenced their capers so early? I cannot credit, however, that they would be so lost to respect for their elders that they would deliberately play such a trick. It is quite obvious, gentlemen, that you have unwittingly blundered upon a booby trap which was not intended for you."

Sir John, much calmer now that he was in the open air, started.

"Upon my word! I think you must be right, Lord Pottlebury," he said. "Such a thing hadn't occurred to me."

"Then let it occur to you now, my dear sir—and let it sink in," advised Browne. "Boys are daring creatures—not to say reckless, irresponsible fry—but, at the same time, there is a limit to their audacity. Unquestionably, this joke was prepared for some of their own kind. I have been a boy myself, and I can assure you that I am one who knows. Take this, gentlemen, as you would take a tip from the horse's mouth."

Notwithstanding Browne's smoothness of tone, these first moments were anxious ones. But he was soon satisfied that not one of these gentlemen had previously met Lord Pottlebury face to face.

"Let us take a generous view of this appalling catastrophe," said the Vicar gently. "Lord Pottlebury is quite right. Do you not recall, Sir John, how those boys tried their hardest to keep us out of this House?"

"By gad! So they did!" said Sir John. "But why didn't they warn us of the danger?" he added darkly. "There'll be a reckoning for this, gentlemen!"

"Come, come, Sir John!" urged Browne. "Is that quite the right tone to adopt upon such a happy occasion as this?"

"Happy!" snapped Sir John. "Happy be hanged, sir! I would remind you that we are the ones who have suffered—not yourself."

"But since it is agreed that the affair was more or less an accident, would it not be more generous, more kindly, to take the broad view? Surely you must realise that if these boys had warned you they would have given themselves away? And doubtless they were hoping that you would not, like the fly, walk into the spider's parlour."

"Well, we will see—we will see," growled the Chairman of the Governors. "It will be my duty, of course, to report this disgraceful affair to the headmaster when he arrives. I shall reply upon his discretion to punish the boys as they deserve."

Browne shrugged his shoulders.

"I have not suffered, as you say," he replied, "and for that very reason I am

perhaps clearer in mind. Let me hint to you, Sir John, that none of the guests except yourselves has yet arrived, and only a very small percentage of the school. Surely it is better to let such a matter as this sink into oblivion? We may be sure that the culprits will keep their own counsel—if only for the safety of their own skins—and by letting this matter drop you are thus avoiding the risk of being laughed at by the multitude."

"There's something in that, by gad," said Lord Walberry. "Well, aren't we going indoors? Perhaps you can help us, Sir John? We need fresh clothes—a bath—and a small stimulant wouldn't come amiss."

"Leave it to me," said Browne smoothly. "You have a telephone here, I take it? I will at once see to it that fresh clothing is procured. The sooner you get indoors, the better."

He marshalled them towards the Head's house adroitly and with the utmost sang froid. After they had all vanished the scared Removites came out of their hiding-places like rabbits popping out of their holes.

"And they say that these Government officials are no good!" ejaculated Nipper, taking a deep breath. "Old Potty is worth his weight in gold! The way he smoothed those old buffers down was a caution!"

"I can't believe it!" said K. K. dizzily. "A pompous old blighter like that—and yet he took our part and made excuses for us! Why, by the look of things, the whole giddy affair will be hushed up!"

"And now's our chance!" said Nipper briskly. "Roughly, we've got about twenty minutes. Come on, you chaps! We've got to clean up all this mess before the other chaps arrive—and before Sir John and Co. have changed."

"You don't think it's worth while setting those booby traps again, then?" asked Pitt regretfully.

"After what's happened?" retorted Nipper. "That's not only asking for trouble, but yelling for it through a megaphone." The sooner we can destroy all traces of our efforts, the better."

CHAPTER 6.

Making Things Hum!

"**T**HEN you agree, Mr. Gribble?" asked Browne, beaming.

"Anything you ask for, my lord, is yours!" replied the Mayor of Bannington, beaming in return. "Why, bless your heart, I take it as an honour. The town will take it as an honour, too, Lord Pottlebury."

"Splendid!" said Browne, with a kindly gesture.

They were just strolling on to the platform in Big Hall, and William Napoleon Browne, now securely entrenched in the guise of Lord Pottlebury, was having the time of his life.

TWO THOUSAND MILES PER HOUR!

Two boys in the most amazing craft ever invented—hurtling through the air at two thousand miles an hour. Up, up, up, leaving the earth far behind; still higher, travelling faster than a meteor—and so into space, there to meet with hair-raising adventures beyond imagination!

You'll revel in this amazing series of yarns, chums; you'll vote them the most thrilling you've ever read—and the first is coming in the NELSON LEE next week. Look out for the title:

"THE INVISIBLE WORLD!"

(By the author of "The Night Hawk" series.)



Over an hour had elapsed, and during this time a great change had come over St. Frank's. Endless numbers of fellows had arrived—most of them by train, but quite a few by road.

Guests had poured in by the score, too. Like a West End theatre just before the curtain goes up, everybody was arriving at the last minute. Parents, uncles, brothers, sisters, cousins and distant relatives were pouring in. The festivities were on the point of commencing.

It had been Lord Pottlebury's suggestion that the entire company should collect in Big Hall. Nobody knew why, but, on the other hand, nobody thought of questioning the great man's word. He was the guest of honour—and, as such, his merest suggestion was a command.

Sir John Brent, as Chairman of the Governors, was acting as host. Nelson Lee had not yet arrived, but this was all in Browne's favour. As Sir John told his colleagues, Lee was not the kind of man who enjoyed publicity, and he had asked to be excused until the afternoon—when most of the speech-making would be over.

Browne had breathed a deep sigh of relief when he heard this. Nelson Lee was the one man he had feared—the one man who would penetrate his disguise as easily as a hot knife penetrates a pat of butter.

There was a great luncheon arranged; but Browne, while being as hungry as the next fellow, decided that the luncheon could go by the board. If he was to put this hoax over properly, speed was necessary. He had not overlooked the fact that the real Lord Pottlebury was on his way. His lordship was delayed, and was likely to be delayed for some little time; but he was unquestionably on his way. Those in charge of the luncheon arrangements were puzzled and worried. Lord Pottlebury was rather messing things up. But nobody dared to say so.

The school was a bit fed up, too. It was lunch time, and grub was calling. Mouths watered as the boys thought of the many tables which groaned under the weight

of delicious tuck. The one important thing at functions of this sort was to "cut the cackle, and get to the horses." Yet here was Lord Pottlebury, ignoring the luncheon arrangements completely, and preparing to cackle until further orders.

Sir John Brent, the vicar, Mr. Gribble, and the others, had now cleaned themselves and had changed. They were once again presentable—uncomfortable in strange attire, but at least respectable. And all of them, Sir John in particular, fretted with impatience over Lord Pottlebury's wilfulness. More than once Sir John had attempted to protest, but his lordship had waved him into silence with that irresistible kingliness for which William Napoleon Browne was famous. There was simply no arguing with him.

"When I say that this occasion gives me pleasure, I am saying nothing," declared Browne, as he thrust his hands behind his coat tails and faced the multitude which packed Big Hall to overflowing. "Sir John Brent has very kindly suggested that I should say a few words to you, and it is therefore my duty to say them. We are here, first and foremost, to celebrate the triumphal re-opening of this great school."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old St. Frank's!"

"Exactly," said the imitation Lord Pottlebury. "Good old St. Frank's! These are words which I heartily endorse. They can burn St. Frank's down, but a greater and better school arises from the ashes! By this time to-morrow I have no doubt the entire curriculum will again be in full blast, as though nothing whatever had happened. Incidentally, the high-spirited activities of the junior section will doubtless also be in full blast. Indeed, I can truthfully say that we have already had a hint of what some of the Junior School can do when they put their minds to it."

The Remove inwardly trembled.

"However, let us gloss over this point," continued Browne, beaming. "I think I have every justification for saying that there

will be no searching inquiry over a trifling incident which took place not long ago. Certain of you, perhaps, will know just what I mean. Take heart in my assurance that I have smoothed the troubled waters. On such an auspicious occasion as this—and knowing that boys cannot be anything else but boys—we surely do not desire any trouble.”

The Remove wanted to cheer, but felt that it was wiser, in the circumstances, to remain discreetly silent. The rest of the school wondered what on earth Lord Pottlebury was drivelling about. Sir John Brent, for his part, was annoyed. Lord Pottlebury, by this announcement, had made any inquiry futile—and those wretched boys, in consequence, would get off scot-free. It would be difficult for the new headmaster to repudiate the honoured guest's promise. It was all very well for Lord Pottlebury to come down here and re-open the school, but Sir John felt that his lordship was taking rather too much upon himself.

“And now there is one other little matter which needs our attention,” continued Browne conversationally. “This great hall, noble at it undoubtedly is, is yet far too small to hold all the good people who have forgathered in the school. Many, I learn, have been unable to find accommodation here. These souls, naturally, are just as anxious to hear my opening speech as you are, and it is only fair that they should be granted this delight.”

The school felt rather weak. This, then, wasn't Lord Pottlebury's opening speech at all, only a preliminary! It was like Lord Pottlebury's nerve calmly to assume that people were delighted to listen to him! And there was that luncheon waiting, too!

“You will be glad to know, then, that I have arranged with my good friend, Mr. Councillor Dribble, to have the full use of the Bannington Town Hall for my real speech,” said Browne genially. “You will realise—Eh? I beg your pardon, sir? Oh, a thousand apologies! Mr. Gribble, our worthy mayor, has just pointed out that I made a bloomer—that is to say, an error—over his name. Let me make it quite clear that the mayor is not Mr. Dribble, but Mr. Gribble.”

A chuckle went round the school, and the portly mayor turned uncomfortably red.

“As I was saying, Mr. Dribble has loaned me the Town Hall,” said Browne coolly, now getting fully into his stride. “You will be delighted to know, also, that the Bannington brass band will soon be here in readiness to head the procession.”

Procession! What was in the wind now?

“I cannot think of a more fitting way to commemorate this re-opening than to hold a triumphal march into Bannington,” said Browne, moving nearer to the edge of the platform and looking at his audience over the top of his glasses. “A triumphal march,



Jokes from readers wanted for this feature! If you know of a good rib tickler sent it along now—and win a prize! A handsome watch will be awarded each week to the sender of the best joke; all other readers whose efforts are published will receive a pocket wallet or a penknife. Address your jokes to “Smilers,” Nelson Lee Library, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

BRIGHT LAD!

New Office Boy: “I’ve added up those figures ten times, sir.”

Employer: “Good.”

New Office Boy: “And here are the ten answers.”

(J. Ralph, 18, Benham Street, Plough Road, Battersea, S.W. 11, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

ANTICIPATION!

Shipwrecked Sailor (to only survivor on desert island): “Why does that big cannibal look at us so intently?”

Cheerful Companion: “Oh, I suppose he is the food inspector.”

(C. H. Parker, 161, Bradford Street, Bocking, Essex, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

IGNORANCE IS BLISS!

Old Lady: “I want a tie for my nephew. He’s a footballer, you know.”

Shop Assistant: “What are his club colours?”

Old Lady: “I don’t know the colours, but I think he’d like one of those semi-final ties, if you have any.”

(W. Carter, 32, Cross Street, Portsea, Portsmouth, has been awarded a penknife.)

HOT ON HIS TRACK!

The aeroplane had just crashed on the football field while a match was in progress, and the airman had just recovered consciousness.

“Oh, I’m glad you’ve recovered,” said the secretary. “I don’t think you paid your entrance money.”

(B. Richardson, 25, Holden Street, Clitheroe, Lancs, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

SARCASTIC!

Pedestrian: “Hallo! Has there been an accident, constable?”

Constable: “Yes; motor-bus ran over a cat.”

Pedestrian: “Dear me! Was the cat in the road, constable?”

Constable: “Oh, no! The ’bus chased it up a lamp-post!”

(W. Still, 108, David Street, Grimsby, has been awarded a penknife.)

boys! An epoch-making procession, headed by a brass band, into Bannington! It is my desire—my hope—that not merely the boys will join in this gathering of the clans, but the masters, the guests, and even the household staffs. And always remember that there will be my opening speech at the end. Need I say more?"

He need not. He had said enough. The hungry school was flabbergasted. It was one of the hottest days the summer had produced, and the August sun was blazing down out of a tropical sky. The very thought of marching to Bannington was weakening.

Sir John Brent was at his wits' end. Why had the Governors voted for Lord Pottlebury's presence here on this occasion? He was taking an unfair advantage of his position as guest of honour. It would be ungentlemanly and impolite to request him to cancel these plans of his; and, moreover, there was something about him which made it difficult, if not impossible, to reason with him at all.

There was one fellow, at least, in that gathering who felt so nervous that he shook as he stood. It is no exaggeration to state that Horace Stevens was almost on the point of fainting. He had expected Browne to carry this hoax a long way; but he had never imagined that the cool-headed Fifth Form skipper would go to the length of marching everybody behind a brass band into Bannington on a fools' errand!

"The hopeless idiot!" groaned Stevens. "If he's bowled out it'll mean the sack!"

"What's that?" murmured Chambers, of the Fifth, who was next to him.

"Nun-nothing!" gasped Stevens. "I didn't speak."

"Great Scott! What's the matter with you?" asked Chambers. "You're perspiring, and yet you're pale! Don't you feel well?"

"The heat," muttered Stevens vaguely. "A bit stuffy in here."

He hardly remembered getting out of Big Hall, and even the rest of that mid-day nightmare was only dim. He had a faint recollection of the whole school forming up in the Triangle; remembered vaguely the arrival of the brass band. The fake Lord Pottlebury was bustling about, marshalling people into line, and doing it all with an energy which could only be marvelled at.

Browne's dynamic personality won the battle. People who swore they wouldn't enter that procession on any account found themselves in it. It was unbelievable. The brass band played, feet tramped, and Browne, at the head of the parade, led the way.

Gradually, Stevens' wits recommenced to function. And one fact impressed itself upon him with much force. If William Napoleon Browne *wasn't* bowled out, this hoax would go down in St. Frank's history as the greatest feat ever perpetrated by one of its scholars!

HA, HA, HA!

Maid (to absent-minded professor in bed): "The doctor's here, sir."

Professor: "Tell him I can't see him now. I am ill."

(*S. Wilkins, 23, Bethune Road, Stoke Newington, N.16, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

LIKE LEAD!

The new cook had made her first dumplings, and they were so heavy that Farmer Gray had thrown them into the duck-pond. Less than ten minutes later in rushed a farm-hand, shouting:

"Farmer, your ducks are sinking in the pond!"

(*C. F. Casey, 45, Springfield Lane, Norwich Road, Ipswich, has been awarded a penknife.*)

THE DIFFERENCE!

First Pater: "My son's letters from school always send me to the dictionary."

Second Pater: "My son's letters always send me to the bank."

(*E. G. Osborne, Brooksville, Welford Road, Blaby, near Leicester, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

LUCKY FOR HIM!

Conjuror (who has been given the "bird"): "Now, if any lady or gentleman will give me an egg, I will perform a really marvellous trick."

Voice from Gallery: "Don't be silly, mate!"

Ain't you got proof there ain't a darned egg in the place?"

(*T. P. Burnie, Ingleside, 36, Wellington Road, Maidenhead, has been awarded a penknife.*)

PITY THE POOR REF.!

Onlooker: "I shall be surprised if that referee doesn't get into hot water after the match."

Another Onlooker: "Then you will be surprised. It's all arranged. The referee's going in the horse trough!"

(*H. Hookway, 29, Belmont Road, Reading, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

CORRECT!

Teacher: "Tommy, what is air?"

Tommy: "Please, miss, air is a balloon with its skin peeled off."

(*E. Murphy, 41, Reuben Street, S.C. Road, Dublin, has been awarded a penknife.*)

MORE PEACEFUL!

There was an earthquake in a South American town which badly scared the inhabitants.

An English family who lived there sent their little son to stay with an uncle in another district, for safety's sake.

Two days later the parents received the following telegram:

"Am returning your boy. Send the earthquake."

(*G. Miller, St. James' Street, Castle Hedingham, Essex, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

CHAPTER 7.

The Big Parade!

BELLTON Village rubbed its eyes in wonder.

The shopkeepers and the other local inhabitants, hearing the music from afar, wondered what was wrong. The music wasn't so bad, but for a brass band of any kind to play within earshot of Bellton was akin to a phenomenon.

Figures appeared in sight at the end of the hot High Street. There were gleams of red and gold, with an occasional glimmer of brass as the sunshine caught the instruments. Overhead the sun blazed down with a concentrated intensity.

Bellton stared.

The brass band in itself was remarkable; but what followed was astounding. First of all, the guests, even including a number of ladies. Most of the gentlemen were dressed in morning coats and topplers, and there was many a collar wilting in the heat. Then came the St. Frank's masters, their expressions grim, sinister, and forbidding.

After them, the Sixth; then the Fifth, the Remove, the Fourth, the Third, and finally the household staffs. It was the longest procession Bellton had ever seen, or even dreamed of.

Briefly it was the Big Parade.

In all that concourse there was only one individual who really seemed to be enjoying himself. Lord Pottlebury, at the head of the procession, was in his glory. He paid no attention to the hot sunshine; he ignored the stuffy waves of tarry heat which arose from the road; he beamed upon all and sundry; and his stride was as brisk and as energetic as that of a youngster. Not very surprising, this!

It was Browne's crowning triumph.

The hoax was audacious enough in conception, and even the "never-say-die" spirit of the Brownes had wavered once or twice. To think of such a stunt was daring enough, but to put it into execution was a masterpiece. Browne's dynamic personality had conquered over all.

St. Frank's and all its guests calmly marched to Bannington at the behest of this impostor—and for absolutely no reason. It was the world's greatest wild-goose chase.

WHEN YOU'RE AT THE SEASIDE

buy your copy of the NELSON LEE from one of the Old Paper's representatives who are to be seen at all the principal seaside resorts. If you do this you will receive a packet of "Chelsea" Toffees

FREE!

The news spread fast, and long before the parade reached Bannington, the town was ready. Motorists and cyclists had carried the word along. His honour, the mayor, was walking to Bannington with all the St. Frank's boys! And Bannington, after getting over the shock, turned out en masse. Police reserves were called out, and they had the greatest difficulty in keeping the roads clear. Through the cheering, gaping multitude the procession marched on its weary way to the town hall.

The distance was under three miles, but hardly a collar remained starched, and there was hardly a foot that did not limp. The heat was worse than ever. The town hall was looked upon as a haven. But worse was to come. All day long the town hall had been shut up, and the sun, beating upon the roof, had converted it into a very fair imitation of a giant oven. The victims, instead of gaining relief, were hotter than ever.

Wearily they sank down into the seats, and this, at all events, was something to be thankful for. They inwardly prayed that Lord Pottlebury's speech would not be prolonged. Afterwards, they would be free to return, and thoughts drifted towards trains, buses and taxis.

But Lord Pottlebury made no appearance. In the confusion of getting into the town hall his lordship had somehow mislaid himself. Nobody quite knew when he had last been seen. And so the minutes passed, with the platform still empty, and with the victims getting hotter and hotter.

I VENTURE to state, Brother Horace, that the wheeze has been an unqualified success," remarked William Napoleon Browne coolly, as he set down his glass. "Be good enough to order two more of these iced lemonades; I unservedly give them full marks."

"Blow the lemonades!" muttered Stevens. "Browne, you've overdone it! What's going to happen when you're bowled out?"

"Alas, that my lifelong friend should reveal such trifling faith!" sighed Browne. "Rest content, brother, in the certainty that everything will be all serene. Indeed, if there is any question of my coming a cropper, it will be entirely your fault."

"My fault?" gasped Stevens indignantly.

"It was unwise—not to say foolhardy—for you to join me," replied Browne. "However, the risk is trifling, and it need not worry us."

The two Fifth-Formers were comfortably seated in a cool corner of the Japanese Café, in Bannington High Street. Being a slack hour of the afternoon, the restaurant was more or less empty.

Stevens, watching Browne as a cat watches a mouse, had seen his friend slip through a side door in the town hall, and Stevens, in the nick of time, had backed out and had found his way to the rear in time to intercept Browne as the latter emerged into

the sunlight. Browne had removed all traces of his make-up.

Calmly they had repaired to the Japanese Café.

"The hoax is over, and we now await developments," said Browne contentedly. "Lord Pottlebury is due—in fact, overdue. I half-expected to meet him during the march, although I was prepared even for that emergency."

"But what about those people in the town hall?" asked Stevens, in a low voice. "The whole school—the governors, the guests, the best part of the staffs! They're waiting for the speech!"

"Much as I should have enjoyed entertaining them with my lighthearted chatter, I felt, on the whole, that it was wiser to withdraw," replied Browne. "The voice of caution was whispering in my ear. 'Enough,' it cried, and I was inclined to agree with it, brother. There is always a point in these affairs when it behoves one to draw the line."

"Strictly speaking, we ought to be in the town hall with the rest," remarked Stevens. "Our very absence might look suspicious."

Browne gave an eloquent shrug.

"Whilst admitting that most people are like sheep, there are always exceptions," he replied. "In every flock there are sheep which refuse to obey the bark of the dog. It is precisely the same in this case of our human sheep."

"You being the dog with the bark?" asked Stevens blandly.

"Exactly. Eh? Well, perhaps the simile could be better," admitted Browne. "I observed several brainy stalwarts drifting away from the flock as it entered the town hall. Nipper and Travers, of the Remove; Boots, of the Fourth; young Handforth, of the Third; Fenton, of the Sixth; a master or two. There were others, too, and they receive full marks for their horse-sense as opposed to sheep-sense. You and I, Brother Horace, are in no danger. We have already recovered our sturdy Morris-Oxford, and it stands outside. I, you must understand, have only just arrived. My alibi is unshakable. Not that there will ever be any necessity for me to account for my movements."

And Browne, as cool as ever, ordered more lemonades.

LORD POTTLEBURY, hot, flustered, and anxious, stepped out of his car into the Triangle at St. Frank's.

At last he had arrived. Seldom had he felt so irritated. Not only had he been robbed—and there seemed very little prospect of his recovering the stolen property—but everything else had gone wrong.

Browne had faithfully fulfilled his promise, and clothing had been sent out to him, but the fools of outfitter's had sent things which his lordship could not possibly wear. So they had been sent back to Helmsford.

Then mechanics had arrived with a new magneto, only to find that the fitting was wrong—very similar to the clothing. Lord Pottlebury had been compelled to crouch behind the blinds at the back of the car, a ragged, disreputable figure, afraid of showing himself. And with the sun beating down upon the car's roof, the heat had become intolerable.

At long last, however, after many other delays, the right clothing had turned up, and a magneto had been found which did not object to its new home. In solitary state, therefore, Lord Pottlebury now arrived at St. Frank's.

He was aware, as he looked round the school, that something was wrong. There was an air of peacefulness and quietness which struck a false note. St. Frank's basked lazily and sleepily in the afternoon sunshine. The only sound that came to Lord Pottlebury's ears was the whisper of the warm breeze through the chestnuts.

"This is extraordinary!" said his lordship, frowning.

"Doesn't seem to be anybody about, my lord," remarked Bates.

"Don't be a fool, Bates!" snapped his lordship irritably. "Do you think I am blind—and deaf? If there is one thing I hate more than another it is an obvious remark! If you can't talk sense, Bates, keep silent!"

"Yes, my lord," said Bates, crushed.

Lord Pottlebury had pictured the scene which would await him at the school—the crowds of cheering boys, the welcoming throngs of visitors. He had pictured the concern of Sir John Brent and the other governors. Everybody would be awaiting him with deep anxiety.

And now—this!

A deserted school, an absolute vista of sun-scorched barrenness. His lordship wandered into the nearest House, and, finding nobody there, wandered out again. He passed through the cool shade of Big Arch and crossed Inner Court. From here he could glimpse the playing fields. Not a human being was within sight.

"Astounding!" said his lordship, more mystified than ever.

He arrived at the Head's door and rang the bell with unnecessary force. To his surprise the door immediately opened, and he found a scared-looking maidservant staring at him.

"Oh!" said Lord Pottlebury. "Then there is somebody alive in this place?"

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir," said the girl. "I—I mean, my lord, sir! I—I didn't —"

"Tut-tut!" interrupted Lord Pottlebury impatiently. "This is no time for trifles, my girl. Perhaps you can tell me what has happened? I understood that the school was to be re-opened to-day. Where is everybody?"

"Why, you took them to Bannington, my lord!" said the maid, flustered. "I should

have gone, too, only I was upstairs doing the bed-rooms, and Mr. Phipps couldn't find me——"

"One moment—one moment!" broke in his lordship. "You're talking nonsense, girl! What do you mean by saying that I took everybody to Bannington? You apparently know who I am."

"Why, yes, sir—I mean, my lord," said the girl. "You're Lord Pottlebury, aren't you? And you marched at the head of the

The two seniors passed out of the lobby, little realising that their conversation had been overheard by Teddy Long, the sneak of the Remove.



procession to Bannington. Didn't you bring everybody else back with you, sir?"

"Bannington!" ejaculated his lordship. "Back with me! The girl's mad! What do you think you're talking about? I've only just arrived at St. Frank's, and I haven't seen anybody yet except you, and by all appearances you've been dreaming."

"Oh, but I haven't, my lord!" protested the maid indignantly.

"We won't discuss the point!" snapped Lord Pottlebury. "What I want to know is, where can I find the headmaster of this school?"

"He ain't here yet, sir."

"Then he should be here! Where is Sir John Brent?"

"He ain't here, either, sir."

"Nobody ain't here, it seems!" roared Lord Pottlebury. "I—I mean, nobody is here! Upon my word, girl, you're getting me all mixed up! Bannington, you say? They've all gone to Bannington?"

"Yes, my lord—and you went with them," insisted the maidservant.

"Tosh! Tush!" snorted Lord Pottlebury. "It seems to me that the only thing I can do is to go to Bannington at once. There, perhaps, I shall find out the truth of this astounding business."

The vicar skidded on a forward, to cannon again.

And off he went, his already frayed temper more frayed than ever.

MEANWHILE, in the Bannington Town Hall, a great restlessness was turning into suspicion and indignation. The non-appearance of Lord Pottlebury had seemed peculiar at first; then his prolonged absence became sinister. People began to think, and once they started thinking they found much in this situation to marvel at.

The secret of Browne's success had been speed. He had carried all before him; he had not given his victims the ghost of a chance to think for themselves; he had hustled them, he had hustled them, he had swept them on on the tide of his own enthusiasm.

But Browne was no longer here to carry on the good work, and brains began to function again. Not only the boys, but Sir John Brent and the mayor and all the other distinguished guests wondered uneasily what it could all mean. They even marvelled that they had come to the town hall at all.

Then a rumour was whispered about.

haps, in the circumstances, it will be better if I say nothing at all. Time will prove what this singular situation means. I suggest that we should all return at once to the school."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah!"

"Let's go, sir!"

"Lord Pottlebury may have had an excellent reason for leaving us like this, but I doubt——"

Sir John could get no further, for everybody was fighting to get out. Tired, thirsty, and hungry, the St. Frank's boys and the distinguished guests trekked back to the school. By this



of motor oil and shot
the mayor with a crash!

Willy Handforth
burst into the shed
to find the new
Housemaster seated
on an upturned
box and making
pals with all his
pets.

Somebody had seen Lord Pottlebury slipping through a side door. Incredible as it seemed, the great man must have gone off and left the packed town hall to sizzle. The more the dupes thought of it, the more this affair assumed all the points of a practical joke.

At last Sir John Brent, hot and angry, decided upon action.

"Ladies and gentlemen—boys and girls!" he said with deep feeling as he strode on to the platform. "I hardly dare put into words the suspicion which is in my mind. But per-

time they were all convinced that they had been hoaxed.

The curious thing was, nobody suspected Lord Pottlebury of not being Lord Pottlebury. True, they wondered why a man in his position should want to play such a trick. He was the Education Minister, and as such should possess intelligence above such things. But apparently he didn't possess any intelligence; only a distorted sense of humour, and so it was upon his head that the vials of the school's wrath were heaped.

CHAPTER 8.

A Novelty in New Masters!

MR. NELSON LEE, the new headmaster of St. Frank's, shook his head in smiling puzzlement.

"There can be no doubt, Sir John, that you have all been very audaciously victimised," he said. "What possible reason Lord Pottlebury could have had for playing this hoax is a mystery, however. You are quite sure, I take it, that the man *was* Lord Pottlebury?"

"Without question, he was Lord Pottlebury," replied Sir John bitterly. "I confess I have never before met him face to face, but I have seen his photograph enough times. The only conclusion I can come to is that he is mad. Perhaps the heat affected him. Thank Heaven the whole ghastly affair is over."

Nelson Lee laughed outright.

"You mustn't lose your sense of humour, Sir John," he said dryly. "I can find much to smile at in this practical joke."

"You weren't in it!" growled Sir John. "I wish to Heaven you had been here—and then, perhaps, that infernal Pottlebury wouldn't have succeeded. You really ought to have been here earlier, Mr. Lee. On such a day as this. I mean——"

He paced to the window and stared out. Fortunately, the school had recovered its good-humour, even if Sir John hadn't. The playing-fields presented a gay spectacle; and, indeed, the whole school was thronged. Boys and guests alike were now laughing—if somewhat ruefully—over their recent experience.

"Is it quite fair to turn on me?" asked Nelson Lee dryly. "It was definitely arranged that I should not get here until the afternoon, Sir John."

"Yes, yes, I apologise!" growled Sir John. "We were fools to be taken in so easily. I am glad you have decided that the speech-making shall be cut right out. There's been enough of that already."

Nelson Lee, with his usual acumen, had taken in the situation, and in his new capacity of headmaster he had cut out a good deal of the programme. Everywhere he went he was cheered. There could be no doubt that he would be the most popular Head St. Frank's had ever had.

The mystery of Lord Pottlebury remained unsolved. There was one feature of the case which only brought further mystification to Sir John Brent. It was learned that his lordship had apparently come back to the school after deserting his dupes in the town hall; and according to the maidservant he had been astounded to find everybody gone. And then Lord Pottlebury had vanished.

"I can't help thinking, Mr. Lee, that that explanation of mine is right," said Sir John, frowning. "Lord Pottlebury must have taken leave of his senses. If not, why did he come

back here and act as though he had arrived for the first time?"

"It is my belief that he *had* arrived for the first time," replied Nelson Lee smoothly. "The person who played the trick was not Lord Pottlebury at all, but an impostor. A practical joker. It seems to be the only feasible explanation, and if it turns out to be the truth I'm afraid the whole country will have a very hearty laugh when the journalists get hold of the story."

"They mustn't get hold of it!" said Sir John, in alarm. "In any case, I don't believe for a moment that there was an impostor."

IN the Ancient House lobby, Horace Stevens was strolling out of doors with Biggleswade, of the Sixth. They had just come downstairs. Stevens was grinning, and Biggleswade was looking so incredulous and startled that his eyes fairly bulged, and his ears nearly flapped as he bent nearer to his companion.

"Browne?" he said, in a whisper of blank unbelief.

"Browne!" nodded Stevens.

"But, my dear, insane chump!" said Biggleswade. "I simply don't believe it. It's too thick for words!"

"Keep it mum, of course," warned Stevens in a low voice. "I'm telling you this confidentially, old man."

"Browne—disguised!" murmured Biggleswade. "Well, I'm dithered!"

They passed out into the sunshine, and from the cloak-room emerged a short, tubby figure with a flushed face.

"Well, I'm blowed!" murmured Teddy Long excitedly.

The sneak of the Remove was the champion eavesdropper of the Junior School. He had reduced eavesdropping to a fine art. He was so accomplished, in fact, that he eavesdropped when there was really no need to do any such thing. Fellows would stroll by, chatting, and if Teddy happened to be lurking round a corner, he would instinctively remain still and unbutton his ears, so to speak.

That is what had happened in this case. He had gone into the cloak-room to fetch his cap, a prefect having recently kicked him in the rear for daring to go about without one. Following his usual practice, he had listened to the conversation between Stevens and Biggleswade as they crossed through the lobby.

Within one minute Long was in the school shop, sidling up to Hubbard and Gore-Pearce, the two juniors who shared Study B with him.

"It's no good your edging up here, you greasy sponger!" said Gore-Pearce pleasantly. "I've treated you to four ice-creams already, and I'm dashed——"

"I don't want any ice-creams!" interrupted Long. "At least, I'll have another, if you like. I mean, if you're so pressing——"

"I'm not," said Gore-Pearce. "Will you go vertically or horizontally? Hubbard, old man, lend me a hand, will you?"

"Hi, steady!" gasped Long. "I only wanted to tell you that Browne is getting up a stunt! He's going to disguise himself as somebody and fool people. I don't know the exact details——"

"I don't suppose you do," interrupted Hubbard sourly. "I dare say you overheard somebody talking, eh? Just caught a word here and there."

"I couldn't help hearing," protested Teddy. "Stevens was telling Biggleswade that Browne was going to disguise himself as somebody. That looks fishy, doesn't it? The school's been hoaxed once to-day, so I expect Browne took the tip."

"Might be something in it," admitted Gore-Pearce thoughtfully. "Browne's a perfect terror for practical jokes. It'll be just as well if we keep our eyes skinned. What price bowling him out before he can get properly going?"

"It would do him good," said Hubbard stoutly. "Take some of the rise out of him."

THE rumour spread. Not coming directly from Teddy Long, many of the other Removites believed it. Somebody had got to know that Browne was preparing a hoax, and all eyes were kept well open for the first sign of the spoofer.

It was only natural that Teddy Long should have misconstrued the drift of the few remarks he had overheard. He took it that Browne was *preparing* a practical joke, and he overlooked the possibility that the joke had already been perpetrated.

The other juniors—fellows such as Nipper and Travers and Parkington—only received the hint that Browne was preparing something. Thus the great William Napoleon, in spite of Teddy Long's eavesdropping, was not even remotely associated with the Great Hoax itself.

"Oh, bother Browne!" said Handforth, as he lounged in the shade of West Arch, with Church and McClure and a number of others. "I expect it's something against the Fifth, anyhow, so why should we worry ourselves?"

"I'm not so sure about its being against the Fifth," said Church. "Browne's a rummy chap. He's as much a junior as any of us, in spite of his lanky dignity."

"That's what I've been thinking," nodded Nipper, "and if Browne really is getting up to something you can be certain that—Hullo! Ye gods and little fishes! What's this? I ask you—what is it?"

A stranger had just entered the Triangle from the lane. He was tall, lean, loose-jointed, and his shoulders were slightly bent. His grey flannel trousers reached hardly any lower than his ankles, and their excessive bagginess was a sight that caused Archie Glenthorne to close his eyes and shudder in silent horror.

The stranger also wore a dilapidated Norfolk jacket, a soft collar which clung round his neck like a bandage, and a battered soft tweed hat. He carried a bulging suitcase.

"My only sainted aunt!" said Handforth, with deep suspicion.

Considering that they had just been talking about Browne, the sudden arrival of this stranger was significant. He was Browne's height, Browne's build! He wore horn-

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rimmed spectacles, and an untidy, straggly moustache littered his upper lip.

"I think," said Nipper, "that we'll have a word with this merchant."

His voice was grim, and the rest, without a word, followed him. At the same moment K. K. Parkington & Co. arrived from another quarter; and Reggie Pitt and Grey and some others also drifted up.

"Ah!" said the stranger, in the mildest of mild voices. Perhaps he noted something significant in this converging movement. To progress farther was impossible, since his way was barred. "This is fortunate," he went on. "No doubt you boys will be able to direct me. I want to find the Ancient House, and, being a stranger in this school, I—"

"May we know who you are, sir?" asked Nipper politely.

"My dear old chap, it's no secret," said the other. "I am Mr. Wilkes—Mr. Alington Wilkes. You may not have heard of me, but I am to take charge of the Ancient House. I trust," he added, "that there is nothing wrong with me? You boys seem to find me exceedingly interesting, at all events."

"He does it pretty well—but he can't fool me!" said Handforth, with a sniff.

"He doesn't fool any of us!" said Gore-Pearce. "My only hat! This is a bit too thin! I was expecting something better from a man like Browne! Our new Housemaster, eh? What rot!"

The stranger blinked.

"I suspect," he said, "that there is some little misunderstanding. I can only assure you that I *am* Mr. Wilkes."

"Come off it, Browne!" grinned Jack Grey. "You haven't spoofed us this time! Better give it up, old man."

"Wait a minute," said Nipper, with some concern.

But the others were not inclined to wait; they were already advancing upon Mr. Alington Wilkes in a grimly purposeful manner. Nipper, however, searching the stranger's face, could not conceive that Browne, with all his cleverness, could have so altered the shape of his features.

"Wait!" repeated Nipper. "I don't think—"

"On him!" yelled Handforth. "Let's duck him in the fountain pool! It'll cool him off, and teach him not to try these giddy tricks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Upstairs, at one of the Ancient House windows, William Napoleon Browne himself was chatting amiably with Horace Stevens.

"I confess, brother, that I cannot place the gentleman," he said, frowning out into the Triangle. "Apparently he has aroused the wrath of the youthful multitude. I deplore his taste in clothing, but in justice I am compelled to confess that he is a fine figure of a man. A splendid build—indeed, not unlike my own."

"I was just going to say what an untidy, loose-jointed figure he had," nodded Stevens.

CHAPTER 9.

Housing the Housemaster!

"HALF a minute, sweethearts," sang out K. K. "I know it's a hot afternoon, but don't you think that a ducking in the fountain pool is rather too public?"

"In with him!" yelled Handforth.

But the other juniors were inclined to take notice of the red-haired young giant. It certainly was too public. At that very moment Mr. Pycraft was strolling through Big Arch with Mr. Crowell; Fenton of the Sixth was chatting in the Modern House doorway with Mr. Stockdale. Any big commotion at the fountain would inevitably attract a good deal of unwanted attention. So the juniors paused, and while they paused K. K. gently took hold of Mr. Wilkes' arm. He winked expansively to those around him.

"This way, sir," he said, with excessive politeness. "I think you said the Ancient House, sir? No good taking any notice of these fellows—they're only trying to be funny."

The rest "caught on," and waited. Kirby Keeble Parkington could be relied upon to do something noteworthy. Not one of those juniors, with the solitary exception of Nipper, had any doubt regarding the identity of this supposed stranger. Those rumours concerning Browne had given them the direct clue. They were certain that this man was William Napoleon himself. Actually, of course, he wasn't. He really was Mr. Alington Wilkes, the new Housemaster of the Ancient House! And, according to all the signs, Mr. Wilkes was in for a rough journey.

It was K. K.'s idea to prolong this comedy. Throwing the victim into the fountain pool was crude—a typical Handforth idea. K. K. felt that the situation deserved something more original. William Napoleon Browne was asking for trouble, and he should find it. Ducking him in the pool, on a blazing afternoon like this, wouldn't be trouble at all. He would probably like it.

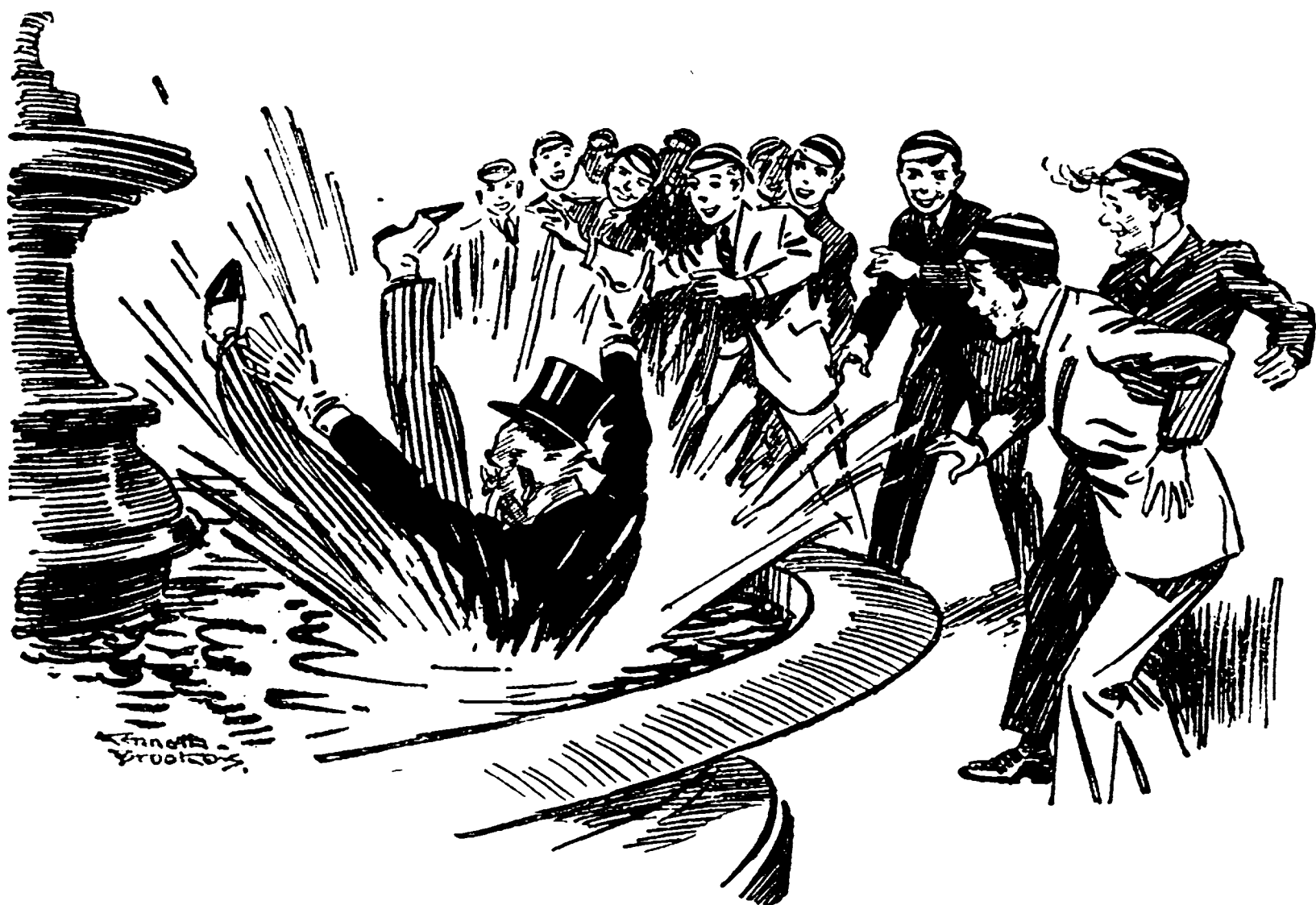
"Awfully interesting to hear, sir, that you're our new Housemaster," said K. K. genially. "We're Ancient House fellows, and, naturally, we're keen on finding out what kind of an old buffer the beaks have pushed on to us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see," said Mr. Wilkes, his eyes twinkling behind their glasses. "I can only trust, young man, that I have not disappointed you. Be quite frank. Am I the kind of old buffer you desired—or otherwise?"

"By the look of you, sir, we couldn't wish for anybody better," replied Parkington heartily. "This way, sir. You said the Ancient House, didn't you?"

He led the way round the rear of the West House, the other fellows crowding alongside. Nipper, realising the futility of attempting



In spite of his protests, Lord Pottlebury was whirled off his feet by the excited juniors and heaved into the fountain pool.

to make himself heard, had given up the thing as a bad job. He was doubtful, but he wasn't fully convinced.

"As a matter of fact, sir, you're just the kind of Housemaster we chaps dote on," continued Parkington blandly. "It's so easy to draw caricatures of you in our exercise books."

"Splendid!" beamed Mr. Wilkes. "You'll have to let me see some of these efforts. I am always interested in sketching, and some of you, perhaps, will reveal that spark of genius which is so essential in the true artist."

"Your baggy trousers are corking for comic sketches, sir," said K. K. enthusiastically. "As for that hat of yours, well, it's a gift!"

"Not at all," said Mr. Wilkes. "I paid five shillings for this hat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd was enjoying itself. Parkington was playing up to Browne and it was obvious that Browne was returning the compliment. This new Housemaster, by his very cool acceptance of the situation, was lending colour to the mistake the boys had made. They no longer had the slightest doubt regarding his identity.

"So you see, sir, what a popular Housemaster you'll make," said K. K. "No other Housemaster at St. Frank's stands a chance compared with you. The fellows in the other Houses will go green with envy when they find out what the beaks have swished on us."

Mr. Wilkes nodded.

"It is gratifying to learn that my popularity is already assured," he said genially. "And, really, old scout—you don't mind my calling you 'old scout,' do you?—I find St. Frank's the most refreshing public school I have ever entered. Such frankness—such plainness of speech is distinctly a novelty. I like it. I find it most invigorating."

"Good old Browne!" came a comment from somebody.

"Don't take any notice, Mr. Wilkes," urged Parkington. "Some of these fatheads have got an idea that you are Browne of the Fifth, dressed up and disguised. Of course, I'm not so easily fooled."

Mr. Alington Wilkes, who had hitherto been puzzled, understood exactly. However, he did not move a hair. He remained as calm and unruffled as ever. He had a mind to see this thing through.

"I imagine, old man, that it must be very difficult to fool you," he said, glancing at K. K. "I should very much like to know your name."

"Columbus—Christopher Columbus, sir," replied Parkington gravely. "You see, my people came over with the Armada. And although we're really English, they named me Christopher. It's an old Spanish custom."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can see that I am mistaken," said Mr. Wilkes solemnly. "I had half expected to hear that your name was George Washington."

Or, alternatively, Ananias. Upon reflection, the latter is the more appropriate."

"Ananias?" repeated K. K., frowning. "Where the dickens have I heard that name before? Look here, sir, I don't believe that's very nice! I'm not sure, because I can't think what the name means—but I'm suspicious."

"I can see, old chap, that I shall have to tell your Form-master to brush up your scripture," said Mr. Wilkes. "By the way, haven't we reached the Ancient House yet? Or are you showing me round the school as a preliminary? I don't mind in the least if you are, but I do like to know."

"We're just taking you to the place where you belong, sir," explained K. K. "It's a nice place, and you'll find all sorts of companions who will cheer you up and keep you from getting bored. This way, sir."

A chorus of chuckles went up as K. K.'s wheeze was sensed. He was leading Mr. Wilkes right into the Ancient House bicycle shed. It was also used as a pets' quarters; and the far end of it, indeed, was a miniature menagerie. It was here that Willy Handforth of the Third kept all his own particular pets.

"Ah, I am more convinced than ever that my second guess at your name was correct," said Mr. Alington Wilkes mildly. "I cannot possibly accept this building as the Ancient House. Oh, no! Now, young man, don't you think this little joke's gone far enough? I'm a good-natured man, and I hope that my sense of humour is elastic; but, like in all other things, there is a limit."

"And you're the limit, you spoofing bounder!" said K. K., with a sniff. "Thought you could pull our legs, didn't you? Well, you're going in here—and you're going to be locked in. See? And we won't let you out until calling-over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shove him in!"

Mr. Wilkes opened his mouth to speak, but he was caught in the avalanche of juniors who hurled themselves at him like hounds after a fox. He was bundled into the shed, and he landed with a crash, his suitcase going in one direction, his hat in another.

"Mr. Wilkes, eh?" yelled K. K. "Tell that to the Marines! You're Browne—and this time you're done brown!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Slam!

The door closed, and Parkington turned the key in the lock.

"I'll keep this key!" he said, pocketing it. "We won't let that Fifth Form chump out until after the giddy firework display! We'll make him miss the rest of the show."

"Good egg!"

"Serves him right!"

"He needn't think he can fool the Remove!"

They all went crowding back into the Triangle, chuckling heartily over the success of their little wheeze. Harvey Deeks was the

first to collapse. He suddenly gave a gurgling cry, and he clutched at his leader with feeble fingers.

"What's the matter, fathead?" asked K. K.

"Look!" babbled Deeks.

All the juniors looked. Standing in East Arch, coolly chatting with Stevens and Love, was—William Napoleon Browne!

CHAPTER 10.

Browne Does the Trick!

"**B**ROWNE!" gurgled K. K. Parkington dazedly. "But it can't be! We've locked him in the bicycle-shed! Oh, my only Uncle Rodolphus!"

Nipper came running up, breathless.

"What have you done to Mr. Wilkes?" he demanded. "I've just spotted Browne! I suspected all the time that you were taking too much for granted—"

"We've spotted Browne, too!" groaned Handforth. "By George, I suppose he *is* Browne?"

"Don't be an ass!" said Nipper. "Browne's here—in full sight. And that proves that the other man was really Mr. Wilkes! What the dickens have you done with him?"

"Locked him up with Willy Handforth's pets!"

"What!"

"It's a fact!" panted K. K. "And that's not the worst. What happened *before* we locked him up is the worst. I'm trying to think of the things I said to him, and I'm going hot all over!"

"This'll mean a swishing for you—if not the sack!" said Deeks. "You sauced him no end, K. K., and the funny thing is, he took it like a bird."

"He called me Ananias, too!" breathed K. K. "Who *was* Ananias, anyhow? Can't somebody tell me?"

"Wasn't he the chap who fell dead when he was rebuked by Peter for making a false declaration?" grinned Nipper. "But Ananias means the biggest liar, in ordinary conversation."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ye gods and little fishes!" said K. K., aghast. "It's staggering! I thought I was spoofing him, but he was spoofing *me*! What are we going to do about it?"

"Don't look at us!" said Handforth coldly. "You locked him in the shed, and you pocketed the key. This is your funeral, my lad!"

A small, athletic figure moved nearer.

"What's that you chaps were saying about my pets?" asked Willy Handforth suspiciously. "If you've been fooling about —"

"Just the chap!" said Parkington briskly. "Look here, Willy, my lad! Here's the key of the shed. We've locked somebody up in there, and he's not the chap we thought

he was. You pop along and let him out, and he'll probably give you half a crown."

"Or a thick ear!" said Willy tartly. "Do you think I'm blind—and deaf? You poor asses have locked up Mr. Wilkes, haven't you? And you thought he was Browne? I've always said that the Remove was full of chumps!"

He sniffed, took the key, and walked off. And the Removites were so relieved to know that something was going to be done, that they forgot to seize Willy and bump him for his cheek.

Willy, anxious about his pets, burst into the shed. He knew nothing of Mr. Alington Wilkes, and it was quite likely that Mr. Wilkes was a Tartar. He might even be ill-treating the pets. But Mr. Wilkes wasn't. Mr. Wilkes was sitting on an upturned box, with Marmaduke, the monkey, on one shoulder, and with Priscilla, the parot, on the other. Septimus, the squirrel, was in his lap, and Rupert, the rat, was crawling up one of his legs.

"My only hat!" said Willy blankly.

One glance was sufficient to tell him that his pets were very much at home with the new Housemaster. There was no mistaking Marmaduke's friendly chatter, or Priscilla's conversational squawk.

"Come in, old chap!" said Mr. Wilkes, glancing up. "I don't know to whom these animals belong, but they're a fine collection. Well cared for, excellently trained. The boy

who owns these is obviously a hard worker, and a great lover of animals."

"You've described me to a 'T,' sir," replied Willy, grinning. "My nanre's Handforth minor, sir—of the Third. Hope those silly Removites haven't upset you too much?"

"I owe them a debt of gratitude for having introduced me to so many new friends," replied Mr. Wilkes genially. "I really must congratulate you, Handforth minor, upon your hobby. A boy who obviously loves animals as you do is the kind of boy I like."

Within a minute they were chatting like old friends, and Willy proudly showed Mr. Wilkes the rest of his pets.

"One day I must come and renew their acquaintance," said Mr. Wilkes presently. "In fact, I shall make a habit of it, if you've no objection. But I really feel, at the moment, that I ought to trot along and see the headmaster."

"I'll show you the way, sir," said Willy eagerly.

As soon as they got outside they found K.K. and Handforth and all the others awaiting them. The Removites had decided, upon due consideration, that it was up to them to apologise. There was really nothing else to be done, and the sooner it was over the better.

"My dear fellows, what nonsense!" said Mr. Wilkes, interrupting them before they could blurt out their expressions of regret.

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"I realised, from the first, that you were making some kind of error. As a matter of fact, I enjoyed the joke. Say no more about it."

"Aren't you going to punish us, sir?" asked Parkington incredulously.

"Some years ago," replied Mr. Wilkes, his eyes twinkling, "I was a boy myself. I hope I have not grown so old that I can no longer appreciate a little fun. As for punishing you, I couldn't dream of commencing my duties as Housemaster of the Ancient House by borrowing a cane. For a cane is a thing I have never possessed, and I trust I shall never find need of one. However," he added whimsically, "a pointer can come in distinctly handy at times, and even a cricket-stump has other uses than that for which it was designed."

He went off, chuckling, and the Removites sent up a bit of a cheer. As yet they couldn't quite make out their new Housemaster. He was, in Handforth's words, a "coughdrop." He was a top-notch, too!

THEN, somehow, the truth got out about Browne.

It was really a perfectly logical development. The juniors remembered that rumour about Browne being disguised. He wasn't disguised now—as they had supposed—and it wasn't likely that he would try any jokes at this hour of the day. Thus it stood to reason that he must have already had his fun.

One thing leading to another, it was inevitable that Browne should at last be connected with Lord Pottlebury. Nipper asked Stevens point-blank, and Stevens was so startled that he gave himself away without actually saying anything.

The word went round like lightning, but it was only whispered. William Napoleon Browne was the fellow who had hoaxed the school! And the school forgave him on the spot. Their sufferings in the Bannington Town Hall were as nothing compared with their joy at realising how the great Browne had pulled the august legs of Sir John Brent, the mayor, the St. Frank's masters, and all the other celebrities.

"He'll be sacked, as sure as fate, if he's ever bowled out!" declared John Busterfield Boots, of the Fourth, as he stood in the big gateway with some of his Form-fellows.

"I say! Look there!" ejaculated Clapson suddenly. "I'm jiggered if he hasn't had the nerve to come back! Well I'm blessed!"

A hot, bedraggled figure was in full view, coming up the lane. Lord Pottlebury was distinctly and emphatically fed up. And it really wasn't surprising that these Fourth-Formers should immediately mistake him for Browne.

They hadn't seen Browne at all, although, as the Removites could have told them, Browne had been in full sight not ten minutes earlier. And as this figure coming up the lane was exactly like the one which had hoaxed the school, they hastily jumped

to the conclusion that Browne was out for more "blood."

It was rough on Lord Pottlebury. That exhausted Minister was fed-up to the teeth, and he felt that if anything else happened to him he would break a blood-vessel. He had gone to Bannington, only to find that the school had returned to St. Frank's. He had tried to obtain some sort of explanation, but nobody seemed to know anything about it. People only gave him suspicious looks, even hostile looks.

To cap the whole issue, that infernal magneto had petered out again. Perhaps there had been something wrong with the fitting of it. At all events, his car had stopped in Bellton. And here was his lordship, hot and tired, coming to St. Frank's on foot to find out the truth.

There was a sudden rush, swarms of boys surrounded him, and hands clutched at him.

"Grab him—hold him!" sang out the Fourth-Formers.

"Help!" bellowed Lord Pottlebury. "You—you young ruffians! Take your hands off me! How dare you!"

"Nothing doing, Browne!" snorted Buster Boots. "We're fed-up with you, and we're going to give you what you've been asking for. It's like your giddy nerve to come back expecting to spoof us again!"

The terrified Lord Pottlebury was whirled off his feet and carried swiftly into the Triangle. His yells were of no avail. With one swift, terrific plunge he sank into the depths of the fountain pool.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps that'll cool him off," grinned Boots.

Lord Pottlebury came to the surface, gasping and spluttering. Two or three juniors grabbed at his hair and pulled. Then they let go, as though it had suddenly become red-hot.

"It's real!" gasped Yorke. "It isn't a wig at all!"

"Bolt!" hissed somebody.

Even Buster Boots' nerve forsook him. He bolted with the rest. And if the Fourth-Formers had had any doubts, they were now dispelled. For William Napoleon Browne himself was making long strides towards the fountain.

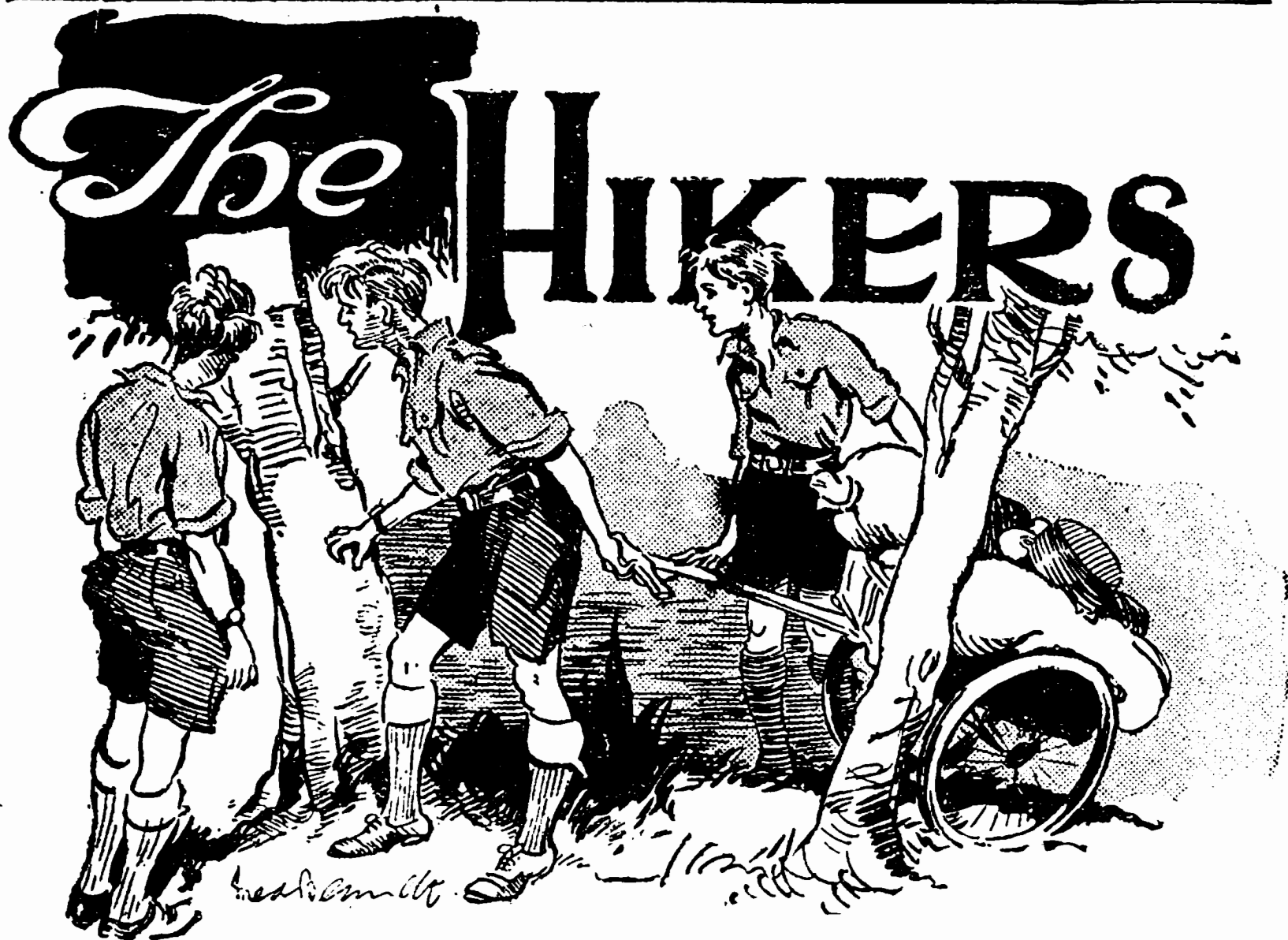
"My dear Lord Pottlebury!" he said easily, as he lent his lordship a hand. "While confessing that the afternoon is desperately hot, I hardly think that this full-dress bathing is advisable."

"I was thrown in here, sir!" bellowed his lordship. "Do you hear me—thrown in! Have I not suffered sufficient indignities to-day? Good heavens! Aren't you the young man who assisted me on the road?"

"I am gratified to find that you have not forgotten me, sir," replied Browne. "As for this present spot of trouble, you really must not blame our high-spirited youngsters. You will be pleased to hear that a daring

(Concluded on page 43.)

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The Hikers Meet Mr. Slivey!

*"Give yourself a—gurrh!—pat on the back,
Give yourself a pat on the—orrgh!
Wish yourself a jolly good health,
I've had a good—grurry-g-gurrh!—to-day."*

ERIC GALE threw back the blanket, sat up, and clutched his hair wildly.

"A guy who snores in his sleep is awful," he groaned, "but a guy who sings and snores and mixes 'em ought to be fried in tar. Where's a boot?"

The medley of snores and singing died away, and the grey dawn began to steal in through the open tent flap with a dim, ghostly light. There was no boot within easy reach, and Bloop was quiet at last, so Eric Gale snuggled down again.

In the small portable tent there was only room for two to sleep in comfort, and it was Bloop's turn to pass the night on a ground-sheet in the open. Eric Gale said it was a jolly lot better to sleep outside any old night, and in any old weather, than have Bloop dishing up snores and bits of songs just when you had settled down to play shut-eye in comfort.

Eric Gale and his two companions were on a go-as-you-please walk, which simply meant that they didn't know where they were going,

and didn't care a rap, either, how long it took them to get there, or whether they got there at all or missed the way.

Tony Ridgers was the first to awaken. He was a rosy-faced, sturdy youngster, bubbling over with health and energy. The mist was still on the grass. Tony washed in the canvas bucket, emptied it, refilled it and lighted the fire, and when Bloop yawned himself awake, the kettle had boiled and an early mug of tea was ready.

"Mornin', sir," said Tony, "and a rattlin' good 'un, too."

"Oh, cut it out—cut it out!" said Bloop, yawning. "At other times your dad may be my dad's head game-keeper, but on this silly gadget we're three insane asses together."

Eustace Giles Trevor
Radlett Tarrants,

better known as Bloop, heir to a baronetcy of long standing and many broad acres, sat up and sipped his tea.

"A johnny in my position who plays at this sort of rot ought to be shoved in a padded cell, Tony," he went on. "When that idiot, Erry Gale, suggested the crazy notion, I ought to have borrowed a heavy mallet and socked him a few hard socks over the head with it."

"That's where I'm a perfect goat, you know," continued Bloop. "I get these jolly sensible ideas too late. Just to oblige me,

**It's not "all honey" when
the Hikers come in contact
with a swarm of bees!**

Tony, jump on Gale's chest five or six times in a playful way and wake up the lazy animal."

Before Tony Ridgers could carry out these kindly instructions, Gale pitched the bed-clothes into the open and appeared.

"How about that old pond for a swim, Tony?" he asked. "Any chance?"

"Too shallow," answered Tony. "It's all duckweed and frog-spawn on the top, and mud at the bottom."

Eric had to content himself, like Bloop, with a sponge-down from the bucket. Bloop, who was tall and slight, fried the rashers and eggs and made excellent coffee.

"You were snoring and singing in your sleep again," said Eric. "I tell you what, my lad, if you weren't such a jolly good cook, we'd lay you out with a brick round your neck and another at your heels, and dump you in that pond to sing and snore to the tadpoles."

"You're always thinking of doing something nice and kind to somebody," said Bloop. "It's supposed to be a free country, and I ought to be allowed to sing and snore in my sleep if I wish to. If you think it's a sign of insanity, I jolly well agree with you. Only a lunatic would have come with you on this crazy tramp."

Half an hour later the three boys struck camp. The dunnage was carried in a two-wheeled cart, light enough to be lifted over stiles, and narrow enough for footpaths. The Hikers looked smart and businesslike in their blue shorts, khaki shirts, grey stockings and stout walking shoes, and they did not trouble about caps or hats. Just as they reached the village the church clock struck seven.

"What ghastly hours you fellows keep," said Bloop. "We shall soon be getting up before we go to bed. And where are we going now?"

For answer Eric pointed to a board nailed to a tree at the corner of a leafy lane. In time-faded and weather-worn lettering the board stated that there was a footpath to Pinger's Mill and Little Firkett. If the go-as-you-please hikers had any idea about it at all, it was to avoid roads and motor-cars as much as possible, so they turned into the lane.

It was a pretty lane, too, cool and quiet, with many windings, and on one side, almost hidden by overhanging branches and ferns, a clear stream rippled and gurgled. Tony Ridgers, who had to push the cart for the first half hour, had followed his gamekeeper father over the fine Tarrants' Estate since he could toddle, and he knew a good deal more about the wild things of the woods and fields and streams than most people.

He heard a faint splash, peered cautiously into the brook, and lingered behind. A hundred yards farther on Bloop and Eric discovered Mr. Slivey at breakfast. They knew he was Mr. Slivey because the name was painted on his old knife-grinding contraption. When not grinding knives Mr. Slivey was prepared to mend punctures in pots, pans and kettles.

"'Mornin', gents," said Mr. Slivey, who had a long grey beard, watery eyes and a red nose. "Boy Scouts, I take you to be, ain't it?"

"You are misinformed, Mr. Slivey," answered Bloop. "We are colonels in the Swiss Navy."

"I don't know much about the Swiss—only Swiss milk in tins," said Mr. Slivey, peeling an onion, "and them there Swiss rolls. And it must be a rotten navy if they promoted you so quick. Anything in my line to-day—pots mended, kettles, chairs, brollies? And don't you never get toothache in your knees walking about like that?"

"We get a bit deaf in 'em sometimes," said Eric Gale, as they waited for Tony.

Mr. Slivey's watery eyes glinted greedily as he caught sight of Bloop's gold wrist-watch, and then Tony came along with a wet landing-net hidden in the cart and several plump trout for lunch hidden there, too, wrapped in dock leaves.

"Well, good-day to you, Mr. Slivey," said Eric. "It has been quite a pleasure to meet you."

"And may your whiskers never get moth-eaten," said Bloop. "If they do, there's a splendid remedy that has never been known to fail. All you have to do is to soak your whiskers in petrol for about two minutes and then put a lighted match to them."

The boys waved their hands and continued on their way.

"Slimmy," said Mr. Slivey in a hoarse voice.

The head and shoulders of a tall gentleman, with a snub nose and a chin as spiky with bristles as a hedgehog's back, rose above the hedge.

"Did you see 'em?" asked Mr. Slivey. "Them three boys and that there varnished cart with rubber tyres. Them ain't or'nary kids 'olidaying on tramp with about eighteen-pence atween 'em. That tall, black-'aired 'un has a watch on his wrist worth twenty quid or else I'm blind."

The spiky-chinned man rubbed the back of his hand across his snub nose.

"Did I?" he growled. "No, I didn't see 'em. I'm blind, lame, deaf and dumb and parrerlised."

Then he lay down and slept again.

The Busy Bees!

THE lane ended at a stile where the footpath to Pinger's Mill and Little Firkett began. It was easy travelling on the soft grass, but there was some lifting to be done for there were plenty of stiles. The sun grew hotter and hotter, and then, after climbing a hill, the boys saw the brook that had widened into quite a broad stream gleaming below them.

"Perspiring porpoises," said Eric Gale, wiping the moisture from his face, "that looks cool and comfy. I'm going to be neck-deep in that wet stuff before I'm much older."

"And I suppose that merry old barracks there is Pinger's Mill," said Bloop.



With wild yelps Bloop and Eric dashed towards the hedge, pursued by a swarm of angry, buzzing bees.

The mill was almost a ruin, with shattered windows and ivy-green walls, and the old water-wheel, which would never turn again, hung rotting in the weed-choked sluice. The boys took a rest in the shade to cool down, and then undressed and plunged headlong into the clear depths of the pool.

"Of course, I'm a jolly idiot and all that, Eric," remarked Bloop when he came up for fresh air, "but I'm not insane enough to shove a silly perambulator along in this heat. If you want to go and look at Little Firkett, push the thing yourself, and I'll bet large sums of money that Little Firkett is jolly rotten to look at."

"Oh, blow Little Firkett! What put it into your fat head that I wanted to see the hole? There's no need to fag ourselves to death, so let's squat where we are till it cools down a bit."

There was a smooth stretch of grass shaded from the heat and glare. Since they had left Mr. Slivey, they had not encountered a single human being. After his dip, Bloop lay down on the grass, resting his chin on his hands. He looked at the mill.

"There's a bees' nest in there, sir," said Tony. "Not wild bees, but hive bees—some swarm that got away, I suppose. I can see 'em going in and coming out under that window near the doorway."

"And you let 'em do it, my lad," said Eric. "I know your stunts, so don't start monkeying with any bees, wild or tame,

while I'm about. This is a rattling good pitch with a fine bathing-place, and if we could hire a boat it wouldn't be bad fun to stay a day or two."

"That'll suit me," said Bloop lazily. "We'll shove up the old rag of a tent presently, and then explore the village to see about a boat, and if there's anything doing in the ice-cream trade. You can look after our bag of tricks, Tony, and if the owner of the property comes along and wants to fire you out, tell him to wait for me."

An hour later Bloop and Eric Gale set out for the village, and Tony cleaned the trout he had poached and got them ready for the frying-pan. Having fitted up an eel-line to set in the mill-pool at dusk, he went to the doorway of the mill.

The door had gone and the gap had been boarded up, but somebody had knocked the boards away. Like the door, the millstones had vanished, and fragments of the old machinery lay about half-hidden in a growth of docks and nettles.

Very cautiously Tony climbed the rickety ladder to the corn-room, and found nothing there except a few old sacks.

"What about those bees?" he thought.

The floor looked so rotten that he crossed it on hands and knees. The nest was under the floor above the doorway, and by the steady streams of bees passing in and out, he was certain it was a big one. Honey in

the comb is saleable stuff, and Tony was generally short of cash.

"Gosh, the beggars may have been piling up honey for years," he muttered.

The gamekeeper's son knew a great deal about bees and wasps and hornets.

"If there's a chemist's shop in the village where I can get the stuff I want, I'll dope this lot to-night," he decided. "The wood's so rotten it won't take ten minutes at daylight to cut out the whole caboodle."

Happening to glance out of one of the broken windows, Tony saw Mr. Slivey. The knife-grinder, shading his eyes with his hand, was staring down the mill-lane. He turned and, still shading his eyes, looked along the footpath. Suddenly, feeling suspicious, Tony Ridgers withdrew his head.

"What's the old rubber-neck after?" he asked himself. "He might be scouting for somebody. I'd better have another dekkko."

When Tony peeped out again a second man had joined Mr. Slivey. He had arrived so quickly that it flashed into Tony's mind that the fellow must have been in their tent when he had sighted the knife-grinder, unless he had dropped out of the sky, for there was no other hiding-place.

The second man was Mr. Slivey's friend, Slimmy, the gentleman with the flattened nose and spiky chin. Seeking cover from the heat and glare, the two stepped through the doorway of the mill.

"Of course there wasn't anything worth pinching, and I didn't expect there would be!" growled Slimmy. "Most kids is a bit soppy, but you wouldn't expect 'em to barge off and leave their cash and watches in an open tent alongside a public footpath, would yer?"

Through the cracked floor Tony could hear Mr. Slivey's answer quite distinctly.

"Never mind what I expects or don't expects," said Mr. Slivey. "There's to-night, ain't there? It'll be the easiest bit of burglin' we've ever done!"

"Glad you think so!" grinned Tony to himself. "Just you wait until you come along to-night!"

Mr. Slivey and his friend stepped towards the doorway, and at that very instant Tony felt a pain at the back of his left knee, as if somebody had run a hot skewer into it.

"Wa-ooooosh! Ow!" he yelled. "Hellup!"

As he yelled he jumped, and that was too much for the rotten floor. Tony tumbled through it ankle deep, and would have gone through it completely, but luckily he managed to grip the brickwork of the window-sill.

From below came crashes and bumps, the buzzing of maddened bees and frantic human howls. Clinging to the window-ledge, his face pale beneath the sunburn, Tony realised what he had done. He had knocked five or six feet of the flooring sideways and dumped the bees-nest lock, stock and barrel into the room below.

He saw Mr. Slivey and the man with the spiky chin leave. They fled howling, brand-

ishing their arms and extending their legs, followed by swarms of angry bees. Across the flower-studded meadow they went, their howls growing fainter and fainter in the distance.

"Gee-whizz!" said Tony.

He realised the full danger. Mr. Slivey and his friend had only drawn off a few of the infuriated bees. They were swarming in and out of the doorway in vengeful clouds.

He pulled himself up to the sill and, trusting to luck, jumped the gap in the floor. Luck was with him, for he landed on one of the stout old beams that held up the decayed boards. He threw a sack out of a window on the other side and shinned down the ivy.

"Gosh," he exclaimed, "what a life!"

Tony knocked the dust out of the sack, cut a pair of peepholes in it with his knife, and slipped it over his head. It was a long sack, and came well down over his knees, and the smell of it was vile.

JUST as a couple of groaning rascals with bumps and swellings all over them limped into the chemist's shop at Little Firkett, Bloop and Eric Gale came paddling lazily downstream towards the mill-pool in a hired skiff.

"Perishing porpoises, there's our cart!" shouted Eric. "What the——"

An old sack with a couple of feet attached to it was propelling the loaded cart.

"Pull round and beat it!" yelled the sack. "Those bees have gone raving mad."

Eric and Bloop recognised Tony's voice, but it was rather muffled, so Bloop ran the nose of the boat into the rushes and sprang ashore, followed by his companion.

"What's the stunt, and what are you yapping about?" Eric demanded.

"Bees!" yelled Tony. "Look out! Here are some of 'em! Ha, ha, ha! Don't be late for lunch!"

Fairly safe in his armour, Tony could afford to laugh. It was only a flying squad of bees, not an attack in force, but they were out for blood. Uttering squeals of anguish, Bloop and Eric made for the nearest hedge at express speed.

When they ventured back to the boat and pulled upstream, they found Tony Ridgers at a new camping ground, frying trout for lunch. After listening to Tony's story, Bloop dabbed his neck with ammonia and passed the bottle to Eric.

"If there's going to be a burglary to-night, chaps," he said, "and the guys will only sneak these bumps and bee-stings I've collected, they're welcome to my watch and cash!"

"Those guys won't do any burgling for a month, sir," grinned Tony. "They got such a pasting I don't think they'll be able to see out of their eyes before then."

THE END.

(More about these three cheery chums in another breezy complete yarn next Wednesday.)

Your Old Pal Dusty the Dino up to More of His Larks!



DICK and his DINOSAUR

After Dusty's Blood!

"DUSTY, old boy, we're right in the jolly old soup—up to the giddy neck in it!"

Dick Daring looked ruefully at his prehistoric pal—Dusty the Dinosaur—as he spoke. It was early morning, and Dick had just awakened to a sense of his surroundings. On the previous day Dusty had made things so warm in the town of Skinton that the peppery mayor had decided to put paid to the dinosaur's account for good, and had ordered out the police force, the fire-brigade, and the local Territorials.

There was a price on Dusty's head—dead or alive! And, as Dusty was a remarkably slippery customer to handle when alive, it looked very much as though he would soon be in the second category. Dick had no desire to see his prehistoric pet hit in the "bread-basket" with a selection of machine-gun bullets—Dusty could stomach almost everything, but machine-gun bullets would be likely to tax even his digestion—and so the two of them had beat a hasty retreat from Skinton while the going was good.

They had slept in a ditch that night. Where they were Dick did not know, for darkness had fallen, and the dinosaur, with Dick clinging to his neck, had continued his wild rush through the countryside until at last Dick had decided they had gone far enough to throw their enemies off the scent.

But Dick knew that the telegraph-wires would soon be humming, and that everyone would be on the look-out for Dusty. He turned to the great reptile.

"Look here, you've got to pipe down and wait till I come back, understand?" he

warned. "I'm going to scout out the lie of the land. If you want anything to eat, you'd better swallow half this hedge, and don't get up to any mischief!"

Dusty gave a waggle of his head, and Dick made off across a field. He calculated that Dusty and he must have travelled at least twenty miles during the night. Dick came out from behind a clump of trees, and then immediately dropped flat on his stomach. For three figures had loomed up before him, and they all carried shot-guns. Hardly daring to breathe, Dick lay in the long grass, and listened.

"If you see that creature, shoot it at once!" said one of the men, and Dick gave a groan as he recognised the voice.

It was the voice of Colonel Chutney-Carver, a retired old Indian army officer; and Dick knew that the colonel lived only a mile or so from Skinton School.

"That's torn it!" he murmured to himself.

"Dusty must have come round in a circle last night, and he's come out again near the school. That means that everyone round about here is on the look-out for him."

He peered cautiously out from his hiding-place. The two men with Colonel Chutney-Carver were obviously gamekeepers, and as Dick looked at them they touched their caps and went off, keeping their guns ready to fire at first sight of the dinosaur who had caused so much excitement in the neighbourhood.

Dick saw more than that, however. In front of him stretched a long, level field, and in the centre of this field a tall mooring-mast towered upwards. Moored to the mast, and swinging gently in the breeze, was an air-ship, and Dick remembered that Colonel

This Week's Story:

"GOOD-BYE TO DUSTY!"

Chutney-Carver's daughter was an enthusiastic airwoman who, some time ago, had announced her intention of endeavouring to fly to Australia in an airship.

This, then, was apparently the airship. Even as Dick looked across the field, a charming young lady joined Colonel Chutney-Carver.

"It's all ready, dad!" she announced. "I'm just going up into the airship to see that everything is ready. Then, as soon as the stores are aboard, I'm setting off. The crew will be here this afternoon."

"Very well, my dear," said her father. "Sorry I can't come over with you, but I must keep an eye open for that terrible creature that is roaming around. It's disgusting! It's a scandal! I shall write to the papers about it. And as for that boy who is egging it on to do all this mischief, I'll——"

Dick was not to learn what particular fate the colonel had in store for him, for Poppy, his daughter, placed a hand over her peppery father's mouth.

"Really, dad, I think you're awfully hard both on Dick Daring and his dinosaur. I'd like to meet them—and I'd see to it that you didn't shoot Dusty. I think he's a sweet creature!"

"Good for you!" grinned Dick, still remaining in hiding.

But Miss Chutney-Carver's appreciation of Dusty was not shared by her father, who immediately went off into a tirade concerning dinosaurs and schoolboys who kept them as pets. He dismissed his daughter with a flourish of his hand, and immediately took to patrolling backwards and forwards, not far away from where Dick crouched.

So near was he that Dick did not dare to creep from his hiding-place. He was terribly anxious about Dusty. Suppose the dinosaur ambled around to have a look at things, and the gamekeepers saw it? In that case Dusty was likely to make the speedy acquaintance of the dangerous end of the shot-guns!

But, so long as the colonel was there, Dick dared not show himself. Crouching in the grass, he looked over the field towards where the airship swung from its mooring-mast. He could see Colonel Chutney-Carver's daughter, clad in her flying outfit, clambering up a rope-ladder which hung from the swaying airship.

Then suddenly Dick gave a gasp. Something had gone wrong! A strong puff of wind had tugged at the airship's prow. There came a snapping sound; the next minute the airship had torn itself loose from its moorings, and was drifting away helplessly in the breeze, with the colonel's daughter hanging perilously on to the swaying ladder.

And Dick remembered what she had said. The crew were not on board. With a shout he sprang to his feet and raced across the field, but he knew that neither he nor any of the men who were in the meadow beneath the airship could do anything.

The airship was adrift, and was carrying the colonel's daughter away to certain doom!

Dusty Becomes a Hero!

DUSTY looked up. He sniffed as he saw the black shadow drift over him. Perhaps some prehistoric instinct stirred in his brain when he saw the mighty object which hovered over him. Perhaps he imagined it to be some prehistoric bird. At any rate, it seemed to him to be a link between himself and other things of a size corresponding to himself.

In that moment Dusty forgot Dick's injunctions to "lie low." With a sudden spurt he jumped to his feet and set out after the drifting airship.

Dick saw Dusty appear. So did the colonel. Instantly the colonel levelled his shot-gun. But, even as his finger curled around the trigger, Dick dashed forward and knocked the gun out of the colonel's hand.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the colonel. "Boy, how dare you? You shall pay for this!"

"Can't you see that Dusty's trying to save your daughter?" gasped Dick. "Look, he's trying to catch that rope that's dangling from the airship!"

It was true. What Dusty thought of the airship will never be known, but he was frisking after the long rope that hung from it, in much the same manner as a kitten frisks after a dangling string.

What was more, Dusty caught hold of the rope between his powerful jaws. The airship swerved; the rope-ladder, upon which Miss Poppy Chutney-Carver was still hanging helplessly, swayed violently, but the girl kept her grip.

"Dusty!" yelled Dick. "Bring it back here, boy!"

Dusty shot a glance over his shoulders, and, seeing Dick, turned. Still keeping the rope in his jaws, he came at a loping run towards his young master. Behind him came the airship, dragged along as a boy drags a kite. The similarity was heightened by the trailing rope-ladder, which hung like the tail of a kite, with the colonel's daughter clasping it tightly.

By this time the startled ground mechanics had recovered themselves sufficiently to run towards Dusty, bringing with them the end of a steel cable which was attached to the winch at the top of the mooring mast.

No sooner had Dusty reached the little group than the mechanics hastily snatched hold of other trailing-ropes from the airship, made fast the mooring-cable and started the winch, thus hauling the airship back to its proper position at the mooring-mast.

Then the rope-ladder dropped back to its accustomed place, and the colonel's daughter, hardly able to believe the astounding escape she had experienced, slid back down the ladder and hurried over to where Dusty, very pleased with himself, was frisking around Dick.

Colonel Chutney-Carver went almost wild with delight at seeing his daughter safe and sound.

"I guess you're not going to shoot Dusty after what he's done, sir?" asked Dick.

"Shoot him?" gasped the colonel. "Whoever said anything about shooting him? Let me see anyone who would dare to harm such a magnificent creature. No, my boy, he shall have the finest meal any—er—prehistoric monster ever had. What does he eat?"

"Anything, sir, from old boots to tree-tops," said Dick with a grin. "He's rather partial to Latin primers, but I suppose you haven't got any of those, and he's eaten up all the stock at the school."

The colonel's daughter, in the meantime, had been looking at Dick, who obviously bore signs of having slept out all night.

"I don't think this boy's had any breakfast, dad," she said. "Hadn't you better take him to the house and give him something to eat? The gamekeepers can bring a load of hay along for Dusty."

"An excellent idea!" said the colonel. "Come along, my boy!"

Dick paused only long enough to give Dusty instructions that he was to remain where he was. The dinosaur showed no signs of doing otherwise. He was sitting on his hind legs, looking upwards steadily at the airship. Apparently Dusty was greatly interested in that airship.

Having learned that a load of hay would be provided for Dusty's breakfast, Dick was glad to accompany the colonel and his daughter to the house, where he was soon seated before a breakfast to which he did full justice—for he had eaten nothing since the previous morning.

"And now, my boy," said the colonel magnanimously, "your—er—dinosaur has saved my daughter, and I must repay the debt. Tell me what I can do."

"Well, sir, the Mayor of Skinton has vowed to have Dusty shot," said Dick, "and I'm to be expelled from school, I believe, just



because of Dusty. If you could square things up, sir——"

"I shall certainly not allow the animal to be shot!" declared the colonel. "As for you being expelled—nonsense! I am one of the school governors."

"But what's going to become of Dusty?" asked Dick. "You see, they won't let me keep him at school——"

"Can't we let Dusty live here, dad?" asked the colonel's daughter. "He could have the whole of the woods to ramble in, and Dick, here, could come to see him whenever he liked."

"An excellent suggestion!" declared the colonel. "I'll see to it at once." He turned to the door. "What's the matter?" he demanded the next moment, for a white-faced servant had just rushed into the room.

"It's that there dinosaur!" gasped the servant. "E thinks the airship's an egg, and 'e's trying to sit on it and 'atch it out!"

"What?" gasped Dick and, jumping to his feet, rushed from the room, followed by the colonel and his daughter.

Dusty Takes to the Air!

"DUSTY!" yelled Dick, rushing from the house on to the meadow which faced it. "Drop that, you idiot! Hi! Look out!"

The airship had intrigued Dusty. For one thing, it was bigger than Dusty was—and Dusty had never before seen anything floating in the air that was bigger than he. Also it puzzled Dusty to account for the manner in which the airship floated.

Dusty had tried to leap into the air to see if he could float as the airship did. He had failed miserably—and had shaken himself considerably as he crashed back to earth.

Little things like that annoyed Dusty. He was not going to be beaten by this strange creature. His slow-working brain told him that when he had pulled on the rope this floating creature had followed him. Therefore he seized the rope again.

Not having a pair of hands with which to pull on the rope, Dusty had been forced to swallow it bit by bit. As he chewed and swallowed the rope the nose of the airship dipped down, and there was a snapping sound as the cable which bound it to the mooring-mast parted.

The airship was now moored to Dusty. If he let go the airship would drift away again. But Dusty did not intend to let go. He wanted to examine this strange creature at close quarters, and therefore he continued to swallow the rope until, at last, the airship's nose was touching Dusty's.

Dusty's flapper-like fore-paws went out and caught the airship. Then, with a sudden heave, Dusty swung himself on top of the airship, and nipped off the rope with his powerful jaws.

It was at that very moment that Dick emerged from the house—to see the unwieldy prehistoric monster seated astride the airship. In a flash the boy saw the danger which threatened his peculiar pet.

Now that the weight of Dusty was more evenly distributed upon the top of the airship—now that he was no longer hanging on like a living anchor—the airship began to rise. Slowly it went at first, but every second saw it rising farther and farther away from the ground.

"Jump, Dusty! Jump!" yelled Dick at the top of his voice; but even as he cried out

he saw that it would be extremely dangerous for the monster to make the jump.

Dusty was nearly fully-grown, and he must have weighed about eighteen tons. If he jumped, the chances were that his neck would be broken. Dusty seemed to realise that, also.

What had happened to him he did not know. Suddenly he had been lifted off the ground and into the heavens. Far below him he could see his young master gesticulating wildly—but Dusty could not rejoin his master.

Then the airship swerved violently, and Dusty clung on like grim death. A sudden breeze caught the airship, and it swung round.

"Can't we do anything? Can't we get it down again?" cried Dick wildly. "We—we must save Dusty!"

Colonel Chutney-Carver shook his head sadly.

"I'm afraid we can't, my boy," he said. "There is no one aboard the airship, and it's drifting."

"But what's going to become of Dusty?" gasped Dick.

The colonel did not answer. Dick looked at his daughter, but she averted her eyes. Then Dick realised the worst.

Dusty's curiosity had proved too much for him. Curiosity, it is said, killed the cat. Certainly it had led to Dusty's undoing.

Smaller and smaller became the airship as

it drifted farther and farther away. Dick was almost distracted. Since Dusty had been his pal a great bond of affection had sprung up between the boy and the dinosaur.

Dick started as Colonel Chutney-Carver touched his shoulder. The airship was merely a speck in the distance now.

"It's no good, my boy," said the colonel. "He—he's gone!"

Dick turned away, feeling sadder at heart than he had ever done in his life before.

"Poor old Dusty!" he murmured, and then, without another word, he turned and walked back in the direction of Skinton School.

Poor old Dusty! What would happen to him? Would Dick ever see him again?

That was more than Dick or anyone else could say at that moment!

THE END.

(Good-bye to Dusty and Dick—but there's a wonderful new series of yarns starting next week: "The Invisible World!" Amazing and full of thrills!)

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Full particulars and entry form
on opposite page.

HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM No. 119.

SECTION

A

READER'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

I desire to become enrolled as a Member of THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE, and to qualify for all such benefits and privileges as are offered to Members of the League. I hereby declare that I have introduced "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" and THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE to one new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. Will you, therefore, kindly forward me Certificate of Enrolment with the Membership Number assigned to me, and Membership Badge.

SECTION

B

MEMBER'S APPLICATION FOR MEDAL AWARDS.

I, Member No..... (give Membership No.), hereby declare that I have introduced one more new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. This makes me (state number of introductions up to date) introductions to my credit.

SECTION

C

NEW READER'S DECLARATION.

I hereby declare that I have been introduced by (give name of introducer) to this issue of "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY."

(FULL NAME).....

(ADDRESS).....

INSTRUCTIONS.

INSTRUCTIONS.—Reader Applying for Membership. Cut out TWO complete Application Forms from Two copies of this week's issue of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY. On one of the forms leave in Section A, crossing out Sections B and C. Then write clearly your full name and address at bottom of form. The second form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his name and address at bottom of form. Both forms are then pinned together, and sent to the Chief Officer, The St. Frank's League, c/o THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

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name and address at the bottom of the form. Now pin both forms together and send them to the Chief Officer, as above. One new reader will then be registered against your name, and when six new readers have been registered you will be sent the St. Frank's League bronze medal. There is nothing to prevent you from sending in forms for two or more new readers at once, providing that each pair of forms bears the same date and number.

Bronze medallists wishing to qualify for the silver medals can apply in the same way as for the bronze medal, filling in Section B. Every introduction they make will be credited to them, so that when they have secured the requisite number of readers they can exchange their bronze medal for a silver one.

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In the Days of Dick Turpin—a Stirring Serial by David Goodwin!

Knights of the Road!



**In the Shadow of
Death!**

SLINK grinned triumphantly as he poured the powder into the tankard.

"Let him have this forthwith. It will make him sleep like a log. I go to summon a couple of King's men. My master shall come, too, and there is a hundred guineas for each of us, landlord. Egad, we'll make a fair day of it when the whelp is hanged! Hasten, he calls again!"

"I beg pardon, sir, for the delay. The cellar is deep, and there is no light," apologised the landlord, entering the parlour.

"Put it down, man!" said Dick impatiently. "Why, odds bodikins, you are spilling it all abroad! If you served out more of your smuggled brandy instead of drinking it, your hand would be steadier."

The landlord's hand certainly quivered a good deal as he carried the ale, but it was not from indulgence in strong waters. Mine host was a man with as little nerve as he had honesty, and the sudden scheme which Samuel Slink had devised scared him. He was greedy for the guineas, but in strong

**A prisoner in a chair—but
Dick Forrester turns the
tables on his rascally uncle!**

bodily fear of the active-looking young outlaw. He put down the pot with a jar that spilled much of its contents, and, apologising

humbly, slunk out of the room.

"Plague on the fellow!" thought Dick as he drank, for he was mighty thirsty. "I hope someone with a steadier hand will bring me my supper, or I shall get little of it."

He lay back in his chair, but, in some way, the keen appetite he had had was gone.

Strange visions seemed to dance before his eyes. He saw the grass plot where he had crossed swords with Turpin. The Norwich mail, drawn by three skeleton horses, seemed to pass at a gallop before his eyes. Then the vision faded, and gave place to a great black gallows-tree against a stormy evening sky, and he knew that it was himself he saw swinging in the creaking chains.

He sat up with a start, and tried to rouse himself, but his efforts did not avail. A deadly numbing drowsiness crept over him, and after one last attempt to pull himself together, he sank back limply in his chair. Then all was blank!

"Ay, there he is! You have done well, Slink!"

Vane Forrester's big frame seemed to swell with satisfaction, and his dark features wore a very evil smile as he looked through the half-open door and saw the insensible form of his young nephew in the armchair, the half-emptied tankard beside him.

"Are you sure he's beyond resistance? The less noise we have over this, the better."

"I'll go bail for the stuff, sir," said Samuel Slink. "I gave him a heavy dose, and he won't wake for an hour, if then. Shall I call in the men?"

"Do so," said Vane briefly.

He advanced to the door and stared with a triumphant leer at the sleeping boy.

"I was wrong to curse the luck," he muttered. "Things could not have turned out better. He made his hanging certain by this exploit with the Norwich mail, and now this lucky accident has thrown him into my hands. Good! There's no safety for me while this turbulent young whelp is at large."

Vane rubbed his large white hands together. He was blithe to see the last obstacle to his plans disappear, and the subtle rascal had a strong feeling that his ill-gotten gains—the estates of Fernhall, that should have gone to Dick—were never safe while the masterful youngster lived. And the tricks of Fate had thrown the boy into his power.

"These are the men, sir."

Slink brought in with him two court bailiffs, who saluted Vane respectfully. One was a large, flabby, fleshy man, plainly no lion-heart, while the other was an active, lean-limbed fellow.

"There is the malefactor," said Vane, pointing to the sleeping form of his nephew. "Do your duty and make him prisoner."

"We'd better bind him first," said the big bailiff, who had a coil of rope on his arm.

"We haven't the irons with us. Burn me, Bob, he's a tough-lookin' lot!"

"Ecod!" exclaimed Slink, who had advanced to the table and had drawn Dick's pistol from his belt. "You'd better lose no time with that rope, or he may give you trouble! He has drunk less than half the ale, and most of the stuff is at the bottom. He may rouse at any moment."

"Oh, crimes! Let's get it on to him then!" muttered the big bailiff.

And swiftly they began to bind Dick with the rope. Even before they had him fast, the young outlaw began to revive. Soundly as the drug made its victim sleep, its effect passed off quickly, and Dick, feeling forcible hands laid upon him, began to struggle violently.

"Have a care! Hold him!" cried Slink, rushing forward to help.

Dick's knee caught him under the chin with a force that made all the rascal's teeth rattle, and for a moment it seemed as if the prisoner would break away; but the fat bailiff bore him down by sheer weight, while the lean one hung on to him like a stoat to a rabbit, and they mastered him and bound him fast, for he was still dazed with the drug.

"At last!" cried Vane Forrester, who had been dancing with anxiety lest his slippery young nephew should get away after all. "Bring him into the wooden chair with the arms. He's safe enough. Do you two go and help to horse a cart with all speed, and we will take him straight to the gaol."

The two men left the room hastily, leaving Vane and Slink alone with the boy. Dick, now in full possession of his senses, though with a throbbing head, and smarting from the cruelly tight ropes, stared at his uncle with blazing eyes.

"So it's you!" he said. "I might have known it. No other in England would be cur enough to drug his enemy and need three men to bind him. Had I use of my hands, Vane Forrester, you would be singing another tune."

Vane bowed ironically.

"You have come to the end that awaits all malefactors," he said unctuously. "I promise myself the pleasure of witnessing your last moments at the end of the hangman's rope."

"It awaits the poisoner and the forger equally with the highwayman," returned Dick scornfully.

For the first time he said what had long been growing in his mind. It was but a chance shot, but Vane winced and turned pale.

"Do I perceive the excellent Samuel Slink?" said Dick, turning his eyes on the

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

DICK FORRESTER learns upon the death of his father that all the vast estates and fortune, with the exception of a hundred guineas have passed into the hands of his rascally uncle,

VANE FORRESTER. The latter refuses to give the boy his money, and, appointing himself guardian, states his intention of sending Dick and his brother,

RALPH FORRESTER, to Duncansby School—a notorious place in the north of England, from which, once they arrive there, they are not likely to leave. Travelling north by coach, Vane and the two boys are held up by

DICK TURPIN, the famous highwayman. Dick joins forces with Turpin, and, after bidding Ralph to be of stout heart and promising to fetch him soon, the two ride away. Vane sets the King's Riders on their track, and Dick is only saved from capture by the resourcefulness of his companion.

Later they hold up the Norwich mail. Dick is horrified when Turpin robs a parson, and the two outlaws part company after a quarrel with swords. The boy calls at an inn and orders a meal and a tankard of ale. Unknown to him, he has been seen by Samuel Slink, Vane Forrester's rascally manservant. Slink tells the landlord that Dick is a wanted outlaw, and drugs the boy's ale. (Now read on.)

man. "Come forth, good and faithful servant! I presume it is to you I owe the drugging of the ale. No doubt you will also enjoy the spectacle of my hanging?"

"Why, sir, I hope to have the honour," said Slink, a leer on his ugly features as he bowed humbly. "I have my feelings, sir, humble as I am, and you have never given me cause to take any liking to you. Your treatment of me——"

"I dislike a knave, whatever his walk in life," said Dick. "But on my life there is only one bigger knave than yourself I have ever met, and that is your worthy master."

Vane Forrester flushed darkly. It roused his fury to see that, bound and helpless in the chair, with a shadow of death already over him, the boy could still make his captor wince. He stepped forward and raised his hand to strike his prisoner across the face, but Dick's eyes met his own, and helpless as the victim was, the victor paused. He feared those eyes, even though the body that owned them was bound hand and foot, and Vane drew back, muttering. Dick laughed contemptuously.

"You laugh, you young hound!" cried Vane, snatching up a heavy staff. "Keep that poisonous tongue of yours still, for if you insult me again I will lay this across your face!"

"No, you will not," said Dick, with a sneer, "for here come your precious bailiffs to take me away, and the tale would sound a sorry one in court. As for insulting you, that is impossible. A tinker's dog could not do it."

"Take him away!" shrieked Vane, livid with rage, as the bailiffs entered. "Take the young robber away to the cart. Fling him in, and away with him to the gallows!"

The two bailiffs and Samuel Slink advanced to drag Dick out of his chair, and set him on the road to a death of shame. The boy's eyes glittered, but he said no word. Then, as his gaze fell on the open door leading to the road, his face changed to a look of utter astonishment.

Before the men could lay hands upon Dick to take him away, a voice cried in tones that made the glasses jingle on the shelves: "Hold!"

Settling Differences!

"**H**EAVENS and earth!" shrieked the fat bailiff. "It's Dick Turpin!"

It was he and no other. The famous outlaw stood coolly in the open doorway, with a double horse-pistol in each hand, one covering Vane, and the other attending to the two bailiffs. Dick's heart leaped at the sight of him.

The fat bailiff leaped, too, but in quite another way. So terrified was he that, with a yell and a bound, and at the risk of getting shot, he hurled himself into the open window casement, stuck there a moment, shrieking, and then dropped outside.

"That is one the less," said Turpin coolly.

The lean bailiff was made of sterner stuff

than his comrade, and he dashed pluckily at the highwayman.

"Spare him, Turpin!" cried Dick, for terrible as his own plight had been, he dreaded to see the man shot down while bravely doing his duty, though there seemed no help for it.

But Dick need not have feared. Turpin did not draw trigger, but raised his right pistol as the man rushed at him, and dealt him a smart blow on the head with the heavy barrel. The bailiff dropped, stunned.

"No need to waste a bullet," said Turpin calmly. "Yet I shall not jar my second pistol thus, and the next who moves an inch without my command will be shot through the head. Do you hear, sir?" he concluded fiercely, levelling his weapon at Vane Forrester.

"Yes, yes!" panted Vane, his face as white as death. "I obey. I will do anything you wish. Oh, pray, sir, level that deadly thing elsewhere!"

"I'm a p-p-p-poor man!" quavered Samuel Slink, as the other pistol stared him in the face. "I have n-n-n-nothing about me, please, your honour!"

"Why, Dick," said Turpin, "it seems I've come none too soon, and that they don't mean to let you enter the Church, after all!"

"I'm sorry I abused you, Turpin," said Dick. "I've got into a pretty mess without you, you see."

"You would certainly never have entered this treacherous pothouse had I been with you," said Turpin. "It is famed for its unsafety to us gentlemen of fortune. Was it a clever capture?"

"I was drugged," said Dick. "That oily-faced polecat yonder put a powder in the ale. The white-checked animal whose knees are trembling so is my worthy uncle, of whom I spoke to you."

"Why, yes, 'tis the curmudgeon I stripped the first evening I met you!" said Turpin, glancing at Vane. "He looks all you said of him, i' faith! But drugged ale! You villainous rascal, to play such a trick!"

The highwayman turned savagely on the trembling Slink. He might have been a judge condemning a prisoner, instead of a hunted outlaw.

"Since you brought him to this, you hound, you shall set him free again! Take yonder knife from the table and cut Mr. Richard Forrester's bonds! Swiftly!"

For one moment the rascally Samuel hesitated. There was a flash and a bang, and the body-servant's hat leaped from his head, sent spinning by a bullet. Slink gave a frightened cry and rushed to obey the order.

"Let that teach you to move quicker," said Turpin sternly. "I am accustomed to be obeyed without delay. 'Twill be one of those long ears of yours next time!"

The treacherous servant's fingers shook so much that he could hardly carry out the order; but he managed to slit the ropes that bound Dick, and retreated hastily as the boy rose from his chair.

The first thing Dick did was to walk up to the highwayman and hold out his hand in silence. Turpin put the smoking pistol in his pocket, and, still holding the other, took the boy's hand in a warm grip. Then Dick took his own single pistol from the table where Slink had laid it, and advanced to Vane Forrester.

"Will you step out into the open with me?" said the boy quietly.

"I am no swordsman," Forrester said, in a weak voice, "as you well know."

"Do you prefer bullets?" said Dick. "My friend, Richard Turpin, will lend you one of his double pistols against my single one."

"No!" cried Vane, with a sudden oath. "I do not fight with a—"

"Take care!" said Dick, with a warning glint in his eyes; and Vane quailed again. "We are on level terms now. As for what you were about to say, it is a far greater concession for me to fight with you than for you to fight with me."

"Ay, indeed," muttered Turpin; "a horse-pistol would be fitter. Look you here, sir!"

"I am only what you see—a hunted outlaw, with the gallows tree for my title deeds and five hundred guineas on my head—but I would think my honour besmirched to sit down to meat with you! The turnspit dogs in the kitchen would be better company! If my

words offend you, I am willing to take the matter up, though I have never yet fought with such a knave!"

"I will not fight!" cried Vane in quavering tones. "Soon or late, you will swing at the gibbet, the pair of you!" Since you are two to one, it is simple to fling at me whatever insults you please."

"Put your pistol in your pocket, Turpin," said Dick, "and leave the fellow to me. Whatever happens, do not draw on him."

"Nay, he shall slit your throat before I turn upon him," said Turpin, pocketing his weapon and throwing himself into a chair with a laugh. "Only tell him to spare me any affronts, or I shall whip him through the streets of the village. Tackle him yourself, boy, and, take my word for it, he is best put out of the way for good and all! Here is my second pistol, if you want it."

Dick loaded the spent barrel of his friend's weapon, and placed it on the table beside Vane, who nervously picked it up. Dick held his own pistol ready.

"Fire when you please," said Dick coolly; "and we will see who shoots the quicker. It is the only way to settle the difference!"

(Will Dick and Vane Forrester fight a duel—and what happens? Don't miss next week's enthralling instalment, chums.)

AS YOU WERE AT ST. FRANK'S!"

(Continued from page 30.)

"The impostor has been making use of your name and personality to hoax the school."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Lord Pottlebury. "So that's it! Young man, are you mad? Do you think I am pleased to hear of this?"

"In your own place, Brother Pottlebury, I should be delighted," replied Browne smoothly, as he led his dripping companion away. "It is obvious that you have not yet given this matter the thought it merits."

"I distinctly requested you to inform Sir John Brent—"

"Alas! Can you not appreciate, brother, how unnecessary it was for me to give any such message?" interrupted Browne. "For when I arrived at St. Frank's I found that this impudent impersonator of yourself was here, too. Why, therefore, should I give Sir John a message which I regarded as automatically cancelled, since it was apparent that you were here yourself to deliver it?"

"The whole thing is an outrage!" said his lordship furiously, leaving a trail of water behind him as he walked, with Browne's arm hooked into his own. "Who is this scoundrelly hoaxer? And why should I be delighted, I repeat, to hear that such an impertinent rascal has been clowning upon my name?"

"Because, Brother Pottlebury, you can now prove to all and sundry that you are not the silly old buffer they have assumed you to be," replied Browne gently. "Who this youngster is remains, I fear, a mystery. But

at all events you will soon make it clear to the entire school that England's Minister of Education is a man to respect, to love, and to honour. Our tame impostor has done much to convert your name into mud; it is for you, therefore, to show everybody that your name is one to be worshipped. A cool head, brother, a forgiving nature, and a sense of humour, are indicated."

And such was Browne's eloquence that before he had marshalled Lord Pottlebury into the Head's house he had almost succeeded in making his lordship believe that what had happened had been for the best.

Lord Pottlebury's relief—after he had bathed and changed into a third suit of clothes that day—was considerable. He really felt that his troubles were over. Sir John Brent was very nice, Nelson Lee was charming, and when he made a little speech just before the firework display, he was given a great reception. In the end he forgave the unknown joker, and it was tacitly agreed that no search should be made for him.

So everybody was pleased.

The re-opening ceremonies passed off smoothly, and the day, on the whole, was counted a great success. And St. Frank's, after this initial flutter, settled back into its old life with clockwork precision.

It was, in all truth, "as you were" at St. Frank's.

THE END.

(Fine yarn, eh, chums; and just like old times at St. Frank's. Another corking extra-long story featuring Nipper and his cheery chums next week. Here's the title: "The Mystery Master!")

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

Miss Vera Mason, 9, Charrington Road, Wallasey, Cheshire, wants girl correspondents (ages 15-16) in India and Canada.

M. Peacock, 18, Darchin Street, Mile End, South Australia, would like to hear from stamp collectors.

Ray Vernon Andrew, Brill House, Grey College School, Bloemfontein, South Africa, wants to join a correspondence club.

Jack Le Mair, 157, Esplanade, Henley Beach, Adelaide, South Australia, would like to hear from readers keen on cricket.

John Edward McBride, 7, Pictoria Street, Troyville, Johannesburg, South Africa, wants correspondents.

G. Griffiths, 37, Vega Crescent, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey, wishes to hear from stamp collectors.

Eric S. Hems, 134, Strone Road, Forest Gate, London, E.7, wants an Australian correspondent.

Ernest Evans, 38, Inkerman Road, Kentish Town, London, N.W.5, wishes to correspond with readers.

G. Weaver, 62, Minster Road, Stouport, Wores, wants correspondents interested in birds' eggs.

A. Brown, 10, Miles Road, Mitcham, Surrey, desires correspondents interested in sport.

Alec Froggatt, 3, South View, Dove Holes, via Stockport, wants readers to assist him in forming a club for sending the "N. L. L." to orphan homes.

Miss Rita Williams, 78, Palmerston Road, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middx., desires girl correspondents, ages 15-17.

R. Hart, 103, Partridge Street, Glenelg, South Australia, wants to exchange match brands.

Tom Clark, 4, Dewhurst Place, Armley, Lee, would like correspondents interested in bird eggs.

Ellis Watts, 131, Homer Street, Underhill Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wants to hear from stamp collectors.

Geoffrey F. Guest, 11, Vincent Avenue, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, wishes to hear from stamp collectors in his district who would like to join his club. He also wishes to correspond with stamp collectors abroad.

Dorothy Hardy, 84, Raleigh Street, Nottingham, would like to correspond with girl readers anywhere in the British Empire. All letters answered.

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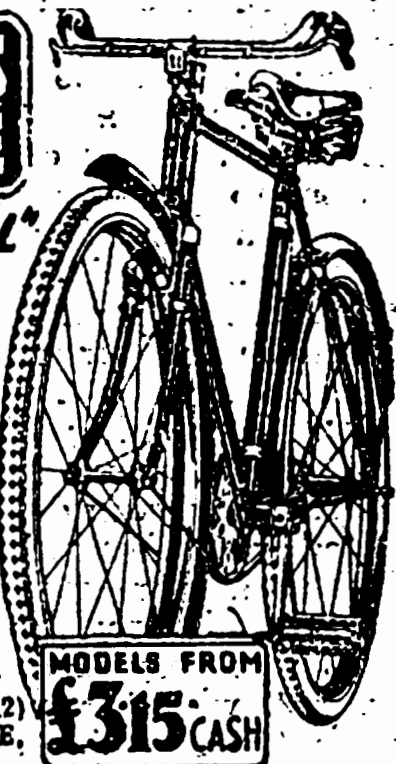
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