

NELSON LEE

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A "BULL" IN A CHINA SHOP

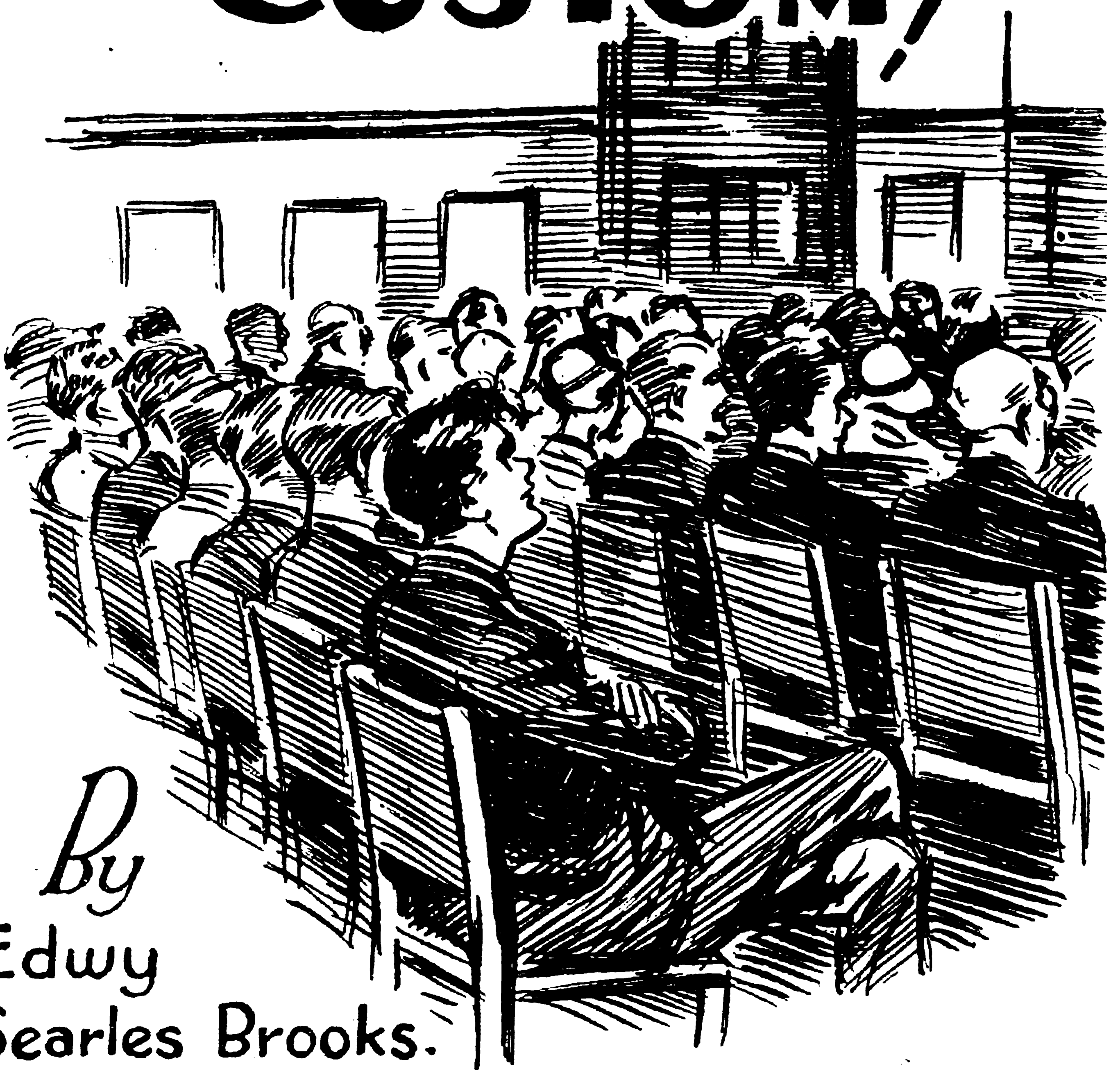
E. O. Handforth on the warpath—only one of the many striking incidents in this week's rollicking, extra-long complete school yarn featuring the famous Chums of St. Frank's!

New Series No. 34.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

September 13th, 1930.

"IT'S AN OLD SPANISH CUSTOM!"



By
Edwy
Searles Brooks.

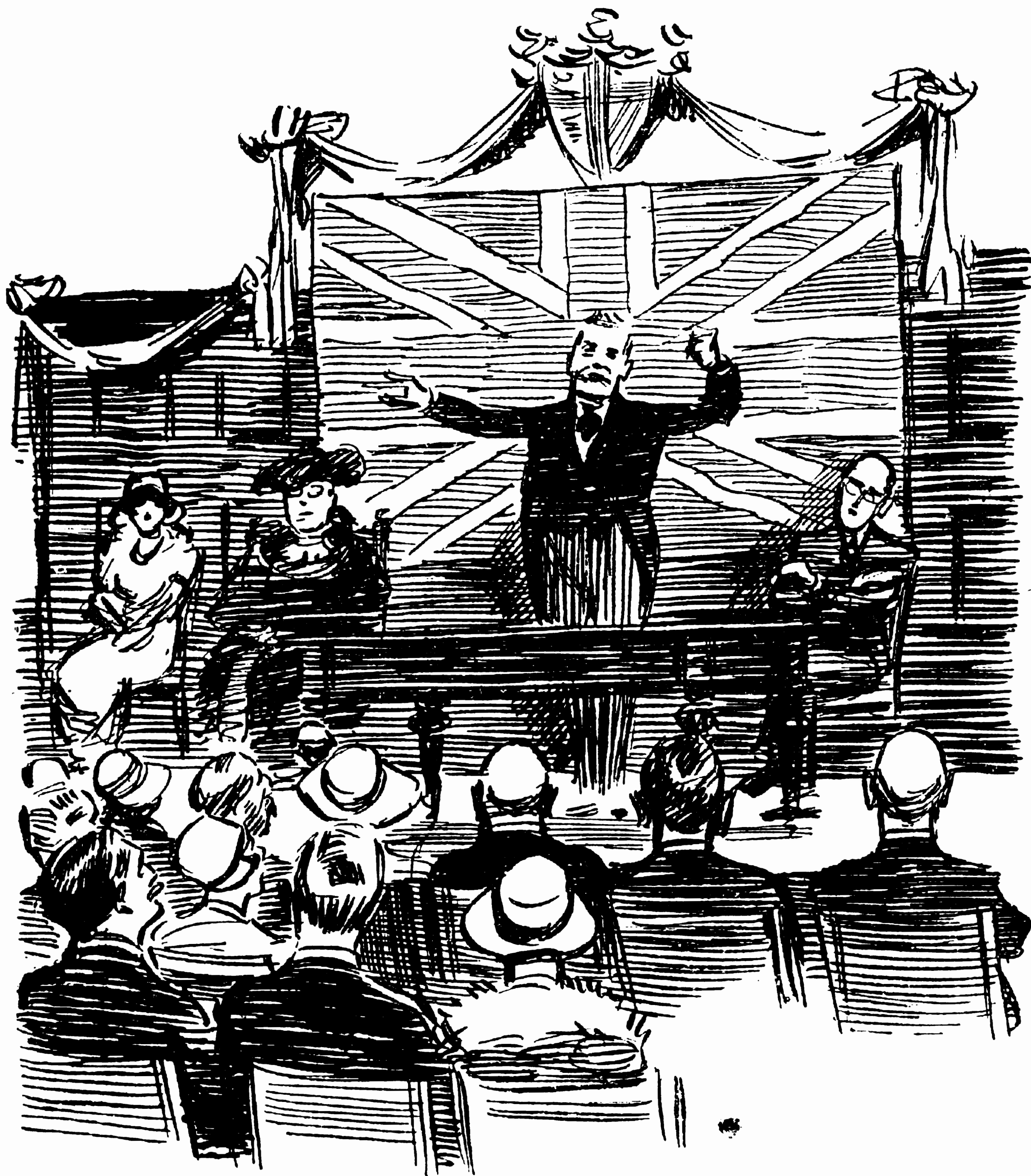
CHAPTER 1.

Nothing Doing!

"ANY luck, Handy, old man?"

Arnold McClure spoke with more than usual cordiality. The great Edward Oswald had just opened a letter and was peering into the envelope.

It was, therefore, an auspicious occasion. Study D happened to be completely broke, and Church and McClure had been hoping that something would turn up by this morning's post. A promising-looking letter, addressed to Handforth, augured well, particularly as it was in the well-known handwriting of Handforth's pater.



"Well? Any luck?" repeated Mac anxiously.

"Plenty!" replied Handforth.

He pulled out some green currency notes, and the eyes of his chums opened wide when they counted five. It was by no means uncommon for Sir Edward to send a pound tip to his hopeful son, but a fiver was almost unprecedented. So much so, in fact, that Handforth did not share his chums' glee.

"Your pater's a brick!" said Church enthusiastically. "Five quid! All in one whack! This is a red letter day!"

"Don't be so jolly excited," said Handforth as he took out the

letter. "My pater's a business man. There's something behind this, my sons! He wouldn't send me a fiver unless he expected me to do something in return. I'll bet it's a bribe!"

"Oh!" said his chums.

"He wants me to go in for some rotten exam., perhaps, or he'll make me promise to spend this money on books, or some such rot as that," went on Handforth. "Don't

crow too soon, my lads. I know the pater!"

"Well, why not read the letter and make sure?" asked Church tartly.

They had the lobby to themselves at the moment, and Hand-

"British goods only!" says Handforth senior in a lecture. E. O. takes it literally—with worrying times for Nipper & Co., and troublous times for himself!

forth unfolded the letter and commenced reading it. His chums strolled off to the doorway and stood looking out into the wet Triangle.

The September morning was chilly and unfriendly, with more than a suggestion of autumn in the air. A fine drizzle was being blown on a stiffish northerly wind, and the sky was leaden. Brown leaves were chasing one another across the wet gravel.

"Half-holiday, too," grunted Church disgustedly. "I wonder why the dickens it must turn out wet on a Wednesday or a Saturday?"

An ejaculation of satisfaction sounded from the rear.

"It's all right, my sons," said Handforth contentedly as he joined them. "The pater's a brick. No stipulations—no restrictions at all. The fiver's mine—on condition that I give a quid to Willy. What the dickens that young ass wants with a quid is more than I can imagine."

"Well, it's not so bad," said Mac, grinning. "Four quid for you and a quid for your minor is a pretty good division. Better not show Willy the letter, or he'll think he ought to have two."

Handforth was not listening.

"There's something else," he said in a satisfied tone. "It's a good thing it's a Wednesday, my lads. The pater's coming to Bannington this afternoon—to give a speech at the town hall—and he wants me to be there. Says he won't have time to come to the school, as he'll have to rush straight back to London."

"I suppose you'll go, then?" asked Church politely.

"We'll all go," retorted Handforth. "And we'll take a crowd of other chaps with us. That's why the pater has enclosed that cash. He suggests that afterwards I should stand them all a tea."

Church and McClure were not impressed.

"I thought you said there weren't any strings tied to that money?" asked the Scottish junior sarcastically. "Why, you ass, it is a bribe, after all! You've got to take a gang to hear your pater's speech, and treat them to tea afterwards so that they can recover. I suppose he wants to make sure of an audience!"

"You silly ass!" snorted Handforth. "The place will be packed! Unless we're there early, we shan't be able to get in!"

"Let's get there late, then," suggested Church hopefully.

"My pater's a great speaker," went on Handforth, scornfully ignoring Church's base suggestion. "You ought to hear him in the House of Commons! Why, the other night he spoke solidly for four hours, and kept the House sitting till two o'clock in the morning!"

"Sitting?" said McClure. "I'll bet the House was lying down by then."

"The pater's going to make a big speech on buying British-made goods," continued Handforth. "It ought to be jolly interesting."

"I suppose there's no way of getting out of it?" asked Church gloomily.

"What do you mean—getting out of it?" demanded his leader, staring. "You silly ass! Have you ever heard my pater giving a speech?"

"Once!" said Church, with feeling.

"Well, weren't you entranced?"

"I suppose I was," admitted Church reluctantly. "In fact, I must have been, because I went into the trance about three minutes after he started, and I didn't wake up until he'd finished. I suppose you can truthfully say that I was spellbound."

"There you are, then!" said Handforth triumphantly, without noticing McClure's grin. "I'll go round to the chaps, and I'll take the best part of the Remove with me."

"Just we three," said McClure, nodding.

"What the dickens do you mean—we three?"

"Well, you said 'the best part of the Remove,' didn't you?" asked Mac blandly. "And you ought to admit that Study D is the best part of it."

"If you're trying to be funny, Arnold McClure, you'd better understand that humour doesn't suit you," frowned Handforth.

He stalked off before McClure could think of a suitable reply. In the Remove passage he barged into Study C, and found Nipper and Tregellis-West and Watson packing a picnic basket.

"Don't bother now, Handy," said the Junior skipper briskly. "The bell goes in five minutes and we're in a hurry. Want to get this basket packed before lessons. There's no footer this afternoon, so we're going up the river."

"You fathead! It's raining!"

"Rain before seven, fine by eleven," retorted Nipper solemnly. "It was pouring at six o'clock, so it's bound to clear up by midday. Anyhow, we're getting ready, just in case."

"Well, you can forget all about your silly picnic," said Handforth. "You're coming with me to Bannington this afternoon. Something special. Something you can't afford to miss."

"Begad!" said Sir Montie mildly. "What is it, old boy?"

"My pater's making a speech at the town hall," replied Edward Oswald. "Two-thirty sharp—admission free."

Nipper and his chums looked sadly at their visitor.

"And is this what you call 'something special'?" asked Nipper politely. "Something which we can't afford to miss?"

"Of course!"

"Even the inducement of 'admission free' doesn't tempt us," said Nipper. "Sorry, Handy, but we're not attracted. In other words, rats! Blow your pater! And blow his giddy speech! There's a bit of a draught from that door!" he added pointedly.

"Do you mean to say that you don't want to come?" asked Handforth in amazement.

"Yes!" roared Study C in one voice.

"Why, you—you——"

"We heard your pater making a speech once—and once is enough!" interrupted Nipper. "I'm saying nothing against him personally—he's one of the best. But we draw the line at speeches. So long, Handy!"

Handforth retired, fuming. It must not be supposed that he did this willingly; Nipper and Tregellis-West and Watson were obliged to give him some gentle assistance, this taking the form of picking him up and hurling him out of the study.

"A speech from him is worse than a speech from his pater," remarked Nipper as he locked the door. "Let's get on with this basket."

They heard Handforth roaring outside, but he soon went off. He charged into Study H. Vivian Travers and Sir Jimmy Potts were discussing football with De Valerie and Gresham. They listened politely whilst Handforth invited them to come and hear his pater's speech.

"I'm getting up a whole crowd," concluded Handforth. "Church and McClure are coming——"

"Poor chaps! I suppose they're more or less compelled to," interrupted Travers sympathetically. "But you can count us out, dear old fellow. We can think of a much better way of spending a wet half-holiday."

"Any other way is better," said Gresham bluntly. "You'd have the dickens of a job to think of a worse. It's bad enough to have to listen to speeches, but we're not mad enough to walk tamely to the slaughter."

"Slaughter?" gasped Handforth. "My pater's speech! You howling idiots! It's all about buying things—groceries and vegetables and toys, and all sorts of things."

"Chuck him out!" suggested Potts impatiently. "Why should we listen to this drivel?"

Handforth was seized, hustled to the door and ejected. Church and McClure, who were waiting outside, caught him deftly. They had been expecting something of the sort.

"It's no good, old man," said Church gently. "None of the chaps wants to hear your pater's rot. I—I mean, you can't expect the chaps to listen to a lot of gas-sing—— That is to say——"

"My pater tells me to bring a crowd to that speech—and a crowd's going!" interrupted Handforth ferociously. "Here's K. K. ! If the Old-Timers won't support me, the Red-Hots will!"

Kirby Keeble Parkington and Harvey Decks and Clement Goffin were coming along the passage arm-in-arm. They represented the rival faction in the Remove, and they instinctively closed their fists at the sight of Handforth.

"Pax!" said Edward Oswald hastily. "There's a treat for you chaps this afternoon. The Old-Timers have turned me down, so I'm going to be generous. We'll bury the hatchet for once, and I'll take you out."

"I don't mind being taken out," said K. K., "but I don't want to be taken in."

"It's the biggest treat of the term!" said Handforth enthusiastically. "My pater's coming to the Bannington Town Hall this afternoon to give a speech, and I'm taking you fellows over—— Hi! Wait a minute! What's the idea of walking off?"

"We've heard enough, sweetheart," said K. K., over his shoulder.

"You grinning dummies! You don't understand——"

He broke off as the Red-Hots turned the corner. Church and McClure took him gently by the arms and led him away.

"Why waste your breath, old man?" asked Church mildly. "These chaps aren't worth it. You couldn't expect them to appreciate your pater's speech, anyhow. If it comes to that, Mac and I wouldn't be interested, either. Let's go over to Bannington, by all means—but let's concentrate on the feed."

"By George! I'd forgotten the feed!" ejaculated Handforth with a start.

Fullwood and Russell were passing at the moment, and Handforth barred their way.

"Just a minute!" he said grimly. "How about coming over to Bannington this afternoon with me? My pater's giving a speech at the town hall."

"We shan't be there," said Fullwood promptly.

"He's sent me four quid to spend as I like—mainly to give the crowd a feed after the speech," continued Handforth. "Something special, you know—a ripping tea at the Japanese Café."

Fullwood and Russell looked at one another.

"Why not?" asked Fullwood magnanimously. "On seconds thoughts, Handy, this speech of your pater's may be a corker. Yes, thanks awfully! We'll join the party, and come along to hear him spout."

"Good men!" said Handforth, failing to realise that it was the mention of a feed that had worked the oracle. "What did I tell you?" he added, glaring triumphantly at his chums. "I knew the chaps would be keen on hearing my pater!"

"Keen isn't the word!" said Russell feelingly. "How long will the speech last? I mean, when do we get to the tea?"

"Well, there's no telling," replied Handforth, stroking his chin. "When my pater gets fairly going he needs a bit of stopping."

"Then how shall we stop him?" asked Fullwood.

"You silly ass! It's impossible!" retorted Handforth. "Didn't they try to stop him in the House the other day? And didn't he keep 'em there until the small hours of the morning?"

"Couldn't they have used a gag?" asked Russell with interest.

"There isn't a gag in existence that could stop my pater," said Handforth scornfully.

"Well, that's fixed, then? You'll come along? Good!"

He marched off to collect other victims, and as the bell for morning lessons was beginning to ring, the lobby filled with juniors.

"With luck, we can live through the speech," Fullwood was saying. "We can take some books in there and stuff our ears with cotton-wool. A feed at the Japanese Café is worth a bit of suffering. We can't expect to get something for nothing in this world."

"What's that about a feed?" asked Watson, pricking up his ears.

"Feed?" went up the general query.

"Handy's taking us over to hear his pater this afternoon—but he doesn't know that we're really going over for the feed," explained Fullwood, grinning.

He gave the details, and Nipper and Parkinson and Travers and the rest suddenly changed their views about speeches. When Handforth came back into the lobby with two more willing disciples, he found everybody brimming with enthusiasm.

"You'd better forget that we chucked you out of our study, Handy," said Nipper cheerfully. "All joking aside, this wheeze of yours seems to be a good one."

"Joking?" repeated Handforth, staring. "Was that a joke when you chucked me out of Study C?"

"Just our fun," replied Nipper blandly. "As for your pater's speech, we can't afford to miss it. Thanks for the invite, old man; we'll all be there."

"On the spot," said K. K., nodding. "But it wouldn't be a bad idea to reserve a few tables at the Japanese Café before the speech starts," he added thoughtfully. "There's a League match on in Bannington this afternoon, and it might be crowded. We don't want to go over there for nothing, do we?"

"Perish the thought!" said Travers in horror. "Why not ring up the café at once, and make absolutely certain?"

CHAPTER 2.

Handy, the Convert!

ALTHOUGH the Removites were frankly and openly accepting Handforth's invitation because of the feed—a fact which he never for a moment suspected—the occasion was really a big one.

It was Hospital Week in Bannington, and the town was in a gala mood. There was an end-of-the-season cricket match, racing, and a big League football fixture. Pretty girls were going about the town with flags and collecting-boxes, and bunting was much in evidence.

The mayor, Mr. Horace Gribble, J.P., had achieved a minor triumph in persuading Sir Edward Handforth, M.P., to come down on the Wednesday afternoon to make a speech. Admission would be free, but there would be a collection for the hospital.

Sir Edward was, in his way, a very big man. And it was characteristic of him to write to his son, urging the latter to bring his schoolfellows along. Sir Edward had a shrewd idea that the St. Frank's fellows would give him a rousing cheer as soon as

he appeared on the platform—a cheer he might not get in the ordinary way—and it was more than likely that the rest of the audience would follow suit. There could be no denying that a hearty cheer at the beginning of a speech is most encouraging. A cheer at the end is, after all, a doubtful quantity, as it might easily be an expression of the audience's relief.

So in his letter to Handy, Sir Edward had proved his shrewdness—particularly by the inclusion of currency notes and the suggestion of a feed. The feed, indeed, was a master stroke.

At 2.30 the town hall was crowded. Drizzle was still descending, and as the afternoon was messed up, anyhow, the town hall offered a good haven of refuge. The Palladium was open, but one had to pay to get into the Palladium. A free show, no matter how doubtful, generally attracts a crowd on a wet afternoon.

The mayor, of course, was much in evidence. His introductory speech dragged on so interminably that Sir Edward began to get restive. He was very much like his son; he hated to be a spectator. He wanted to be up and doing. The audience showed signs of restiveness, too.

"This is a bit thick!" murmured Travers, after about ten minutes of it. "We were prepared to listen to Handy's pater, but old Gribble always gives me a pain. Goodness only knows what he's been drivelling about."

"He's been talking for a quarter of an hour, and he's said nothing!" growled Nipper. "Good egg! He's winding up now."

It was really rather fortunate that Mr. Alderman Gribble should have taken so long over his introductory remarks; for when Sir Edward rose to his feet the audience was so pleased that the "good example" cheer from the St. Frank's fellows was hardly necessary. The audience, to a man, let out a whoop of relief, and Sir Edward fondly imagined that this was a cheer of welcome for himself.

It must be stated at once that Sir Edward was in tip-top form this afternoon. He had had an excellent luncheon at the Grapes Hotel, and he was feeling at peace with the world. At times he was brilliant. Even the St. Frank's juniors forgot to read their half-hidden books, and they became quite interested.

Sir Edward dealt very wittily with the subject of British goods as compared with foreign. It was a clever policy on his part to intersperse his actual speech with a variety of entertaining anecdotes, all more or less bearing upon the subject.

"I remember, some years ago, when I was on holiday in a remote Spanish village," said Sir Edward reminiscently, "I was particularly attracted towards a quaint old inn-keeper, at whose hostelry I was lodging. He was a man of very pronounced views—a regular character in the village. And I was highly amused because it was a recognised custom of his to destroy everything of



Handforth seized Irene's handbag, tore it to shreds and then tossed it contemptuously into the gutter.

foreign manufacture that happened to come into his household."

"An old Spanish custom, what?" asked Travers, amid laughter.

"Very apt, young man—very apt, indeed!" replied Sir Edward. "As you say—'an old Spanish custom.' Now, I am not proposing for a moment that all you good ladies and gentlemen should follow the example of this quaint old Spanish innkeeper. We cannot all be as drastic as that. Yet, in principle, the policy is sound. Away with foreign-made goods! That is my cry! We, in this country, have sufficient resources and sufficient industrial ability to supply all our needs. Let us concentrate upon British-made articles! Let us follow the example of this Spaniard to whom I have referred, and thrust out the interloper. Let this Spanish custom become our own custom!"

And Sir Edward waxed so enthusiastic and so eloquent that not a single member of his audience even thought of going to sleep. The St. Frank's fellows were very impressed. Their thoughts were not drifting so continuously towards the Japanese Café.

Handforth, of course, was converted completely. If that speech had been made by a

perfect stranger, he would have been influenced; but as it was his father who spoke so forcefully he was naturally carried away. And Handforth had a habit of going the whole hog in anything he took up. He had never had any use for half-measures. With him it was all or nothing.

"JOILY good speech!" said Nipper heartily. "Handy, old man, we owe you an apology."

"An apology?" asked Handforth, staring. "What for?"

"Well, we really came—— Not that it matters," added Nipper thoughtfully. "I don't suppose you'd understand, even if I explained. We've heard the speech, and now we'll carry out the rest of the programme."

"What programme?" demanded Handforth impatiently.

"Wasn't there a feed to come?"

"Oh, the feed!" said Handforth, remembering. "Blow the feed!"

"You can blow it, if you like—but a bargain's a bargain," said Church tartly. "You're coming along to the Japanese Café with us, you're going to act as host, and

you're going to whack out when the bill comes along."

Handforth grunted.

"It's a pity your minds can't rise above feeds!" he said sternly. "I'd forgotten all about that giddy tea! Don't forget my pater's speech! Down with foreign goods! We've got to help in this campaign, my sons!"

"Down with tea!" said Travers heartily. "Down with chocolate eclairs and sponge sandwich! You lead the way, Handy, and we'll show you how to put 'em down!"

Handforth suddenly started.

"If it comes to that, why go to the Japanese Café at all?" he asked indignantly. "By George! Why not go to an English café?"

"You silly ass!" snorted McClure. "It's only called the Japanese Café. It's not run by Japs!"

"Then why can't they call it English?" demanded Handforth scornfully. "There's too much of this foreign piffle about our restaurants. Look at the menus!"

"We'll look at 'em when we get there," said Church pointedly.

"Look at the way they print everything in French!" continued Handforth, waxing eloquent. "Why French?"

"My poor innocent, you don't understand," said Nipper gently. "Printing the menu in French is merely a wheeze. A hash-up of old stew, with a bit of curry mixed in, wouldn't sound very grand in English. But in French it looks a high-class dish. It's just a stunt to fool the public."

"Well, I'm not fooled!" said Handforth darkly. "And look here—if anybody orders China tea, I'll tip it on the floor! Why should we drink Chinese tea when there's plenty of British?"

"You're a good scout, Handy, but you're too wholesale," said Nipper, shaking his head. "China tea is a special leaf, with a flavour of its own, and it can't be grown anywhere else."

"It's a rotten flavour, anyhow," said Handforth tartly. "Why can't the Chinese keep their giddy tea? We don't want it! My pater distinctly said that we can grow all our own food, and manufacture all our own goods——"

"Wait a minute!" interrupted K. K. "Your pater's speech was a good one—I'm admitting that freely—but don't you put words into his mouth that he never uttered, dear one! He advised his audience to buy British goods on general principle, particularly where the prices compare favourably with the foreigner. But there are some things that Britain can't produce at all. China tea is one of 'em. Therefore there's no harm in buying China tea."

"Rats!" retorted Handforth. "We can do without China tea!"

"Don't argue with him," said Church, appealing to K. K. "You might just as well stand and talk to a brick wall! He's got this bee in his bonnet, and nothing will clear it out—until he learns by experience.

He'll be saying we mustn't eat oranges next, because they come from Spain."

"We get plenty of oranges from South Africa," said Handforth promptly.

"Yes—in summer-time," said Nipper. "But the Spanish crop starts coming in just before Christmas, when we haven't any British oranges at all. For goodness' sake, Handy, be reasonable! And what about that feed?"

Handforth sniffed.

"I suppose we'd better go along and see about it," he said gruffly. "You won't be satisfied until you've had your blow-out. Why can't you all join me in this great campaign against foreign goods?"

"We'll join you in the feed first, and we'll decide about the campaign afterwards," said K. K. genially. "Come on!"

At last they got Handforth going. Not that they got him as far as the Japanese Café. For as they were passing one of the big fancy shops they spotted Irene Manners and a few other Moor View girls examining the contents of the windows.

"Hallo, you girls!" said Handforth eagerly. "I didn't know you were in the town this afternoon. Why didn't you come to my pater's speech at the town hall?"

"We haven't been here long, Ted," replied Irene, smiling.

"We came to do a bit of shopping," explained Doris Berkeley. "Irene's on the lookout for a new handbag, and she can't decide which of these three to get," she added, indicating some choice examples in the window. "Which would you choose, Ted?"

"I don't know anything about handbags," replied Handforth guardedly. "I'll tell you what, though, Renie. You choose the one you want, and I'll stand treat. How's that?"

"Just a minute," said K. K. firmly. "Excuse us, girls! You can have this back after we've done with it!"

They seized Handforth firmly, and whirled him along the pavement until they were out of earshot. He resisted every inch of the way, but it was a case of one against a dozen, and he had no chance.

"Now, you beauty, what about it?" asked K. K. "Buying bags for those girls with our feed money, eh? You've got four quid, sweetheart, and out of that you've got to pay for our tea at the Japanese Café!"

"You silly ass——"

"If there's anything left over after you've settled the bill, you can buy as many bags as you like," went on Parkington. "You're a fine kind of host, I must say! Are you coming willingly, or shall we carry you?"

"There's only one thing to do," put in Church practically. "At a liberal estimate, we can all get a good tea for two quid. Burgle his pockets, get that two quid, and turn him loose."

"It's a brain-wave," approved Nipper. "We get our feed, and we shan't be bothered with Handy! Tip him up, you chaps!"

And Edward Oswald Handforth, to his indignation and fury, was turned upside down, and his pockets were ruthlessly rifled. The two currency notes were seized, and the rest

of his money was replaced. Then he was allowed to go free.

His guests, grinning contentedly, marched into the Japanese Café. They'd got their host's money, and that was the main thing. The absence of the host himself would not worry them in the slightest degree.

CHAPTER 3.

On the Warpath!

DUSTY and dishevelled, Handforth hurried back to the girls; and it was tactful on their part to make no mention of the incident they had just witnessed.

"You mustn't think of buying that bag for me, Ted," said Irene determinedly. "It was silly of Doris to mention it at all."

"Silly?" repeated Handforth. "I'm jolly grateful to her for telling me. Now, which is the one?"

"But, Ted, I simply won't——"

"The green one, with the silver clasp," said Doris calmly.

"Good egg!" grinned Handforth. "Let's go inside."

Irene was really upset. She had enough of her own pocket-money to buy that bag, and she did not want to impose upon her boy chum. But the other girls thought it was rather a joke, especially as Handforth was so eager to foot the bill. Besides, Doris had heard that Handy had had a big tip from his father that morning.

"Fifteen shillings?" said Handforth, when they were in the shop and the bag was being examined. "That's pretty cheap, isn't it? You ought to have a better handbag than that, Renie."

"Why, it's a beauty," declared Irene. "Silk-lined and real leather and everything. It's awfully nice of you, Ted, to buy me this."

"I wish you'd pick one for thirty bob," replied Handforth promptly.

He had recovered his composure by now. He had expected to spend the whole of the four pounds on that feed, so it was really to the good that the fellows had rifled his pockets to pay for the bill. He was left with three pounds intact. One belonged to Willy, but, for the moment, Handforth had forgotten this all-important point. The purchase was made, and the girls emerged triumphantly into the sunlight. Irene shot a glance of appreciation at Handforth.

"Thanks again, Ted," she said. "I'll use it straight away. Might we well take this out, though?"

She had opened the bag and had noticed a tiny slip of pasteboard attached to the inner purse-clasp with a piece of cotton. Irene unhooked it, and gave it a careless glance.

"Made in Austria," she commented. "Well, I must say that they know how to make bags——"

"Austria!" broke in Handforth, aghast. He had come to a dead halt in the centre

of the pavement, thereby causing a lady with a perambulator to butt him in the rear. But he took no notice. He seized the slip of pasteboard, and read it with rising indignation. Irene and the other girls looked at him in open astonishment.

"Austria!" he breathed thickly.

"But, Ted, I don't understand——" began Irene.

"Give me that bag!" said Handforth fiercely. "By George! Made in Austria, is it? I'll show you what I do to Austrian handbags!"

"Ted!" cried all the girls, in one voice, as Handforth seized the bag with both hands. There was something in his manner which boded ill.

"What are you going to do, Ted?" asked Irene frantically. "Oh, wait! If you don't like this one——"

She broke off with a little scream as a horrid rending sound came from the bag. Handforth had opened it out, and now, with all his strength, he tore it apart. He pulled the lining out, he smashed the hinge, and he tore the whole bag into shreds. Then he contemptuously tossed the remnants into the gutter.

"That's what I do to Austrian-made hand-bags!" he said grimly.

The girls were nearly speechless.

"You—you lunatic!" panted Irene, at last. "What did you do that for, Ted? Have you gone dotty? You've just paid fifteen shillings for that bag——"

"That's not the point," interrupted Marjorie Temple warmly. "Never mind who paid for it—that bag's yours, Renie."

"You don't understand," said Handforth. "You didn't hear my pater's speech—so I don't expect you to understand. Down with foreign-made goods! I'm not going to have you walking about with a foreign handbag, Renie! I'm going to buy you an English one!"

And then the girls understood.

"Oh, Ted, but you are foolish!" said Irene. "If you didn't want me to have that bag, we could have taken it back and the shopkeeper would have changed it."

Handforth started.

"By George! I hadn't thought of that!" he said blankly.

"It might have only cost a shilling or two extra for an English-made bag—perhaps nothing extra at all," went on Irene. "Now you've torn it up—and simply thrown fifteen shillings into the gutter! Why are you so impulsive?"

"I don't care!" said Handforth recklessly. "I've still got some money, and I'll buy you an English bag. And I'm glad I tore it up—it's one foreign bag the less, anyhow!"

"A drop in the ocean, Ted," said Doris sadly. "You can't go through life doing things like that—unless you want to ruin yourself. And what's the good of one person doing it?"

"That's just the point," said Handforth, remembering one of his father's shafts. "We all ought to do our bit, and unless there's

somebody to start the ball rolling, how can the thing get going? I'm a pioneer!"

They all went back into the shop, and the unfortunate shopkeeper was obliged to turn out the greater part of his stock before an English-made bag was discovered which pleased Irene's eye. She wanted to pay for it herself, but Handforth refused. While he had money, he was willing enough to spend it on her.

He was so fired with his new purpose that he was in no way upset when the girls got on their bicycles and rode off. In a way, he was glad to be rid of them. Girls were all very well in their way, but when there was something important to be done, they were rather a hindrance.

With a set, determined expression, Handforth marched into the Japanese Café. The St. Frank's party was occupying an entire corner, and the feed was almost at an end.

"Better late than never, Handy," said K. K. cheerfully. "There's not much left,

but you can order some more if you're feeling hungry."

"I'm not hungry," replied Handforth coldly. "There's something more important to be done than fill myself with grub."

"Rats!" said Church. "Sit down and have some tea. This cake's first-class," he added, helping himself to another slab. "Try a bit, old man."

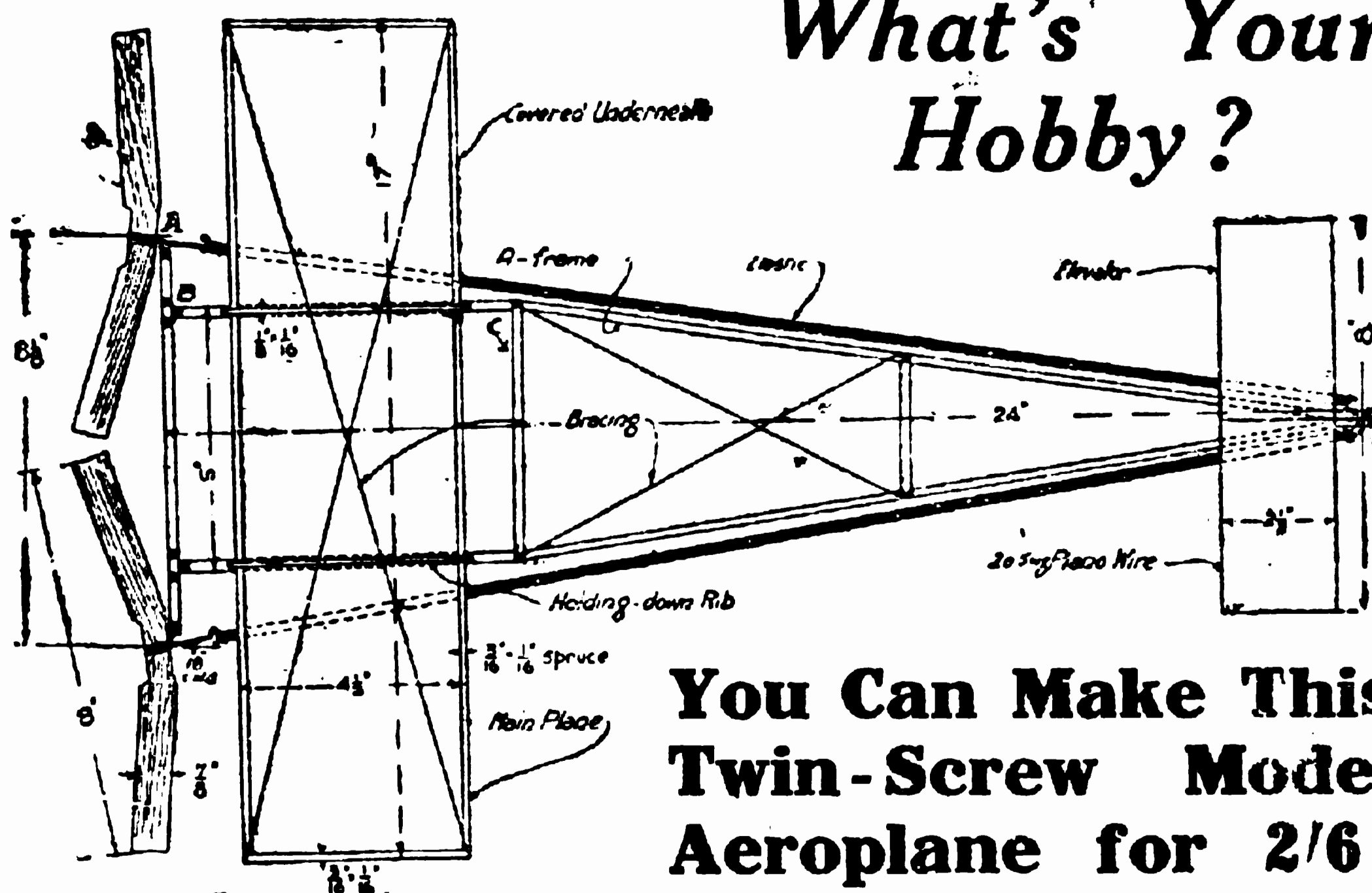
"It's Russian cake," observed Travers mildly.

"Russian!" roared Handforth.

He grabbed at Church's cake before the latter could get it to his mouth, and hurled it to the floor.

"By George!" he said warmly. "Do you think I'm going to stand here and see my own study-mates eating Russian cake? You—you traitor! If you must eat cake, why can't you eat English cake?"

"You hopeless dummy!" snorted Church. "It's only called Russian cake. It was made here, in Bannington—and probably



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made with British flour and eggs and things. You're hopeless!"

"It's about time somebody put a stop to all this piffle!" said Handforth sourly. "It it's English cake, why can't they call it English cake? Down with these foreign names! I'm making a dead set against everything foreign from this minute onwards! If I see anything foreign I'll smash it up! Understand?"

"We'd better look out for ourselves," grinned Nipper. "Handy's on the warpath. I hope we haven't anything foreign in our studies. If so, we'd better hide it, or Handy'll do some damage!"

"Damage isn't the word," retorted Handforth grimly. "If I see any foreign stuff at St. Frank's I'll collect it all together and dump it in the river! Do you hear that, my sons? I'll collect the whole giddy lot and fill the Stowe with it!"

"Can we rely upon that?" asked K. K. musingly.

"Yes, you can," said Handy. "Do you want me to do it?"

"My dear old darling, you're at liberty to choke the river with foreign-made stuff, for all I care," replied Parkington. "All I'm thinking is that you'll have your hands pretty full—and the various owners might have something to say about it."

"People shouldn't buy foreign goods!" observed Handforth accusingly. "I've taken my pater's speech to heart, and I'm sorry you fellows aren't with me."

"You haven't taken it to heart, old man—it's gone to your head," said Nipper sadly. "Don't forget that your pater urged his audience to be moderate, and to apply commonsense. You're not moderate, and you can't use commonsense because you haven't got any. Perhaps we'd better be getting out of here. You'll be smashing up these bamboo chairs next. I believe they were made in Japan."

"Oh, were they!" said Handforth fiercely. He seized one of the chairs, but before he could do any damage the juniors seized him. He was fairly whirled out of the café, and the bulk of his guests cleared off. Church and McClure felt that it was their duty to stick to their leader, and their main object, now, was to get him to the garage.

"Let's go home," urged Church. "Thank goodness your Morris Minor is English—or you'd start smashing it up! Why the dickens can't you be sensible, Handy? It's a pity you ever went to your father's giddy speech."

"Wait a minute!" said McClure, as they were passing a china shop. "Might as well get some cups and saucers for our study while we're here. I had to have my tea out of a condensed milk tin yesterday—and I've still got a cut lip!"

Some days earlier there had been a spot of bother in Study D. The tea table had been tipped over, and all the crockery smashed to bits. Handforth had been to blame, and he had promised to buy some fresh stuff.

"Come on, then," he said. "But, don't forget, it's got to be British!"

"Who ever heard of any crockery that wasn't British?" asked Church scornfully. "All that kind of stuff is made in Staffordshire."

They went in, and Handforth was much struck by a tea-set for six in green and gold, with mauve and pink ornamentations. The design was really artistic, and the price was low. Handforth plumped for it at once.

"But we don't need a giddy tea-set!" objected Church. "Let's just get some odd cups and saucers. These things are too good to smash. You know what you are, Handy—always barging about and knocking the table over."

"Why not get some enamel things?" asked McClure, who was Scotch.

"I want this tea-set, and I'm going to have it!" replied Handforth. "Wrap it up!" he added, turning to the assistant. "What about when the girls come, you asses? Don't we want something smart and good-looking? We've never had any really decent crockery in Study D, and it's about time we did. This is the best looking tea-set in the shop."

"For the price, it is really wonderful, sir," remarked the assistant. "I hardly like to say it, but it is difficult to beat these Bavarian goods—especially for price."

"Bavarian?" ejaculated Handforth, with a jump.

"Why, yes, sir."

"But Bavaria isn't in Staffordshire!" roared Handforth.

"I—I think it must be," gasped Church. "It's a small village, just beyond Walsall. It's all right—wrap it up!"

"You can't fool me!" said Handforth ferociously. "Bavaria is in Germany! By George!"

He made one grab, and swept the whole tea-set off the counter. There was a terrific crash as it splintered into fragments on the stone floor.

"Bavarian, indeed!" growled Handforth. "That's what I do to Bavarian crockery!"

He stalked towards the door, and on his way he picked up a big vase which rested on a pedestal. He glanced at the base.

"Huh! Made in Saxony!" he said sourly. Crash!

The vase shared the fate of the tea-set; and Handforth, feeling that he had taught the shopkeeper a sharp lesson, passed out.

CHAPTER 4.

A Red-hot Idea!

"H I! Just a minute, young man!" The proprietor, appearing from nowhere, rushed excitedly to the door. The sinister sound of smashing crockery had brought him out of his lair like a rabbit from a burrow. He needed no information from his assistant, for he had actually seen Handforth tossing the vase to the stone floor.

"Don't make a fuss!" gasped Church. "The poor chap's dotty!"

"Better not bring him back in the shop!" urged McClure. "He'll make you bankrupt if you do!"

The proprietor took no notice. He dashed out, seized Handforth by the arm and pulled him round.

"What do you think you're doing, smashing up my stock?" he demanded angrily.

"Rats! I only smashed some of that foreign rubbish," said Handforth.

"Rubbish? Yet you chose that tea-set, didn't you?" retorted the proprietor. "You'll have to pay for it, too! And you'll have to pay for the vase! If you don't, I'll call a policeman."

"I don't care if you call the fire brigade!" said Handforth coolly. "My motto is 'Down with Foreign Goods'—and down they go! If they break, it's all the better!"

The proprietor fairly danced with fury. He hardly knew what to do with this aggressive schoolboy. As it happened, Kirby Keeble Parkington and Deeks and Goffin were strolling by at the moment, and they paused interestedly.

"A bit of trouble here?" asked K. K. politely.

Church explained.

"You mustn't take any notice of him," said K. K., turning to the shopkeeper. "It's just one of his little habits."

"By George, you're right!" roared Handforth. "It's an old Spanish custom! I'm doing what that Spanish innkeeper did—and I'm going to keep it up."

He reached out towards the door and took a jug from a hook. One glance at the bottom assured him that that jug had originated from the same place as the vase. He threw it blithely into the gutter, where it splintered to fragments.

"Just an old Spanish custom," he repeated defiantly.

The shopkeeper nearly foamed at the mouth.

"It may be Spanish, but you can't do that sort of thing here!" he panted. "Here, Jones!" he added, turning to his startled assistant. "Fetch that policeman from the corner! I'm going to give this young fool in charge!"

"Easy does it," said K. K. smoothly. "Keep your hair on, sweetheart! What's the damage? How much do all these things come to?"

"Are you going to pay?" asked the proprietor suspiciously.

"Cash on the nail," replied K. K.

"Then pay—and take this young maniac away with you," said the man desperately. "If this goes on much longer I shall have a nervous breakdown. Come along! Pay!"

He named a price, after a swift mental calculation. Handforth regarded K. K. with open astonishment.

"You mean to say that you're going to pay?" he asked incredulously.

"Certainly I am—with your money," replied Parkington coolly. "You smashed the things, and you've got to foot the bill. We can't allow a St. Frank's fellow to get him-

self arrested without extending a helping hand."

"I don't want a helping hand!" bellowed Handforth. "Hi! Keep your paws away! What the—— Here, let go——"

The Red-Hots took no notice of him. They seized him firmly, and they were enthusiastically assisted by Church and McClure. With five of them against him, Handforth was helpless. For the second time that afternoon he was tipped up and his pockets were rifled. Sufficient money was extracted from him to pay the bill; the rest—not much—was put back, and he was escorted to the garage where his Morris Minor car was parked. K. K. & Co. did not release him until they had dumped him into the driving-seat.

"Wouldn't be a bad idea to rope him in," said Deeks.

"We've done our duty, and we'll let him get on with it," replied K. K. "Handy, old trout, the best thing you can do is to drive home. Did you mean what you said about chucking all foreign goods into the River Stowe?"

"I did!" fumed Handforth.

"A capital idea, darling," approved K. K. "This old Spanish custom is on the right lines. Go ahead with the good work! But don't wander into these Bannington shops and smash up the stock. There's a limit, you know."

The Red-Hot trio walked off, leaving Handforth furious, but considerably chastened. Being compelled to pay for everything he smashed, rather knocked the gilt off the gingerbread.

"THE very thing!" said K. K. calmly.

He had led Deeks and Goffin towards a big shop in the High Street. It was a stationer's, and the window was full of fancy goods and books. K. K. was looking at a cheap but effective printing-set. The apparatus consisted of a rubber-stamp holder, an inking-pad, and several rows of rubber type in varying sizes.

"But what do we want it for?" asked Deeks politely.

"You'll see later on," replied Parkington. "It's about time we japed those Old-Timers—and this old Spanish custom of Handy's has given me an idea. I can see possibilities, darlings." He went into the shop, bought the printing-set, and came out grinning. "Money well spent," he commented.

"What's the game?" asked Goffin impatiently. "You don't think that Handy will keep up that rot for long, do you? And where does that printing-set come in?"

"That's just the point," replied K. K. "By this time to-morrow, Handy will have changed his views—so we've got to strike while the iron's hot. He meant what he said about chucking things into the River Stowe. Good old Handy! He may be impulsive, and he may be drastic—but he's consistent while the mood is on him. We can take it as an absolute cert. that he's

all out on a campaign of destruction for the next twenty-four hours."

"Even now I can't understand," said Deeks plaintively. "You don't *want* Handy to destroy things, do you? And that printing-set—"

"Your brain wasn't made to think with, Deeks, dear one," interrupted K. K. "Nature merely put it into your head to fill an otherwise vacant space—and, to all intents and purposes, it's still vacant. Why try to think at all?"

"Fathead!" said Deeks wrathfully.

They went home without any further delay, and K. K. said nothing to enlighten his chums. His wheeze, whatever it was, was a secret. K. K. was by way of being brilliant, and one sign of his brilliance was that he kept a still tongue in his head. Even his own chums were not to be trusted when a jape against the Old-Timers was on the board. An unwary word might put the enemy on guard.

There was a lecture that evening, delivered by Mr. Alington Wilkes, the House-master of the Ancient House, and the headmaster himself—Mr. Nelson Lee—had promised to come along and make a few introductory remarks. As Nelson Lee and "Old Wilkey" were both exceedingly popular, the attendance was a big one. The great Lecture Hall was packed. There were three members of the Junior School, however, who stayed away. Kirby Keeble Parkington, Harvey Deeks and Clement Goffin deliberately "cut" the lecture.

"Jiggered if I can see the idea of this!" said Deeks complainingly. "I particularly wanted to hear Old Wilkey to-night. He's a corker!"



Handforth staggered out of the Ancient House with a load of foreign-made goods—taken from the Removites' studies and now destined for a watery grave in the River Stowe!

"When there's work to be done, we've got to sacrifice our amusements," replied Parkington smoothly. "Where's that printing-set? I see there are two type-holders with it. All the better."

He rapidly set one up—"Made in England." Armed with this and the inking-pad, he went through all the studies occupied by the Red-Hots—his own particular "gang." Chairs, tables, wireless sets, and all manner of articles were duly stamped "Made in England." The fact that many of them had really been made abroad was of no importance.

"Just a safeguard, darlings," said K. K. genially. "Handy's on the warpath, and we don't want any of our stuff messed about with. We'll ring the changes now."

They went down the Remove passage systematically. They had the entire ring to themselves, for everybody else was at the lecture. Study after study was visited, and those rubber stamps were kept busy. Deeks and Goffin were now beginning to twig the idea, and they were grinning happily. Later on they sidled unostentatiously into the Lecture Hall, and heard the tail-end of Mr. Wilkes' entertaining "jaw." None of the Old-Timers even knew that K. K. & Co. had been absent.

Parkington did nothing further until twenty minutes before bed-time, when a considerable crowd of fellows had collected in the Junior Common-room. Handforth was arguing warmly with Harry Gresham and Travers about the respective merits of British and foreign goods. As K. K. had anticipated, Handy had still got that bee in his bonnet.

"It's all very well to have an ideal, Handy," said K. K., casually butting in, "but you've got to be practical in this world. Good luck to British goods! But, dash it, there's no need to run down everything foreign as rubbish!"

"Oh, leave him alone, for goodness' sake!" said Church. "He had this craze once before, terms ago, and he ought to know better. If you chaps would only dry up instead of encouraging him, he'd simmer down."

"I don't want to simmer down," said Handforth coldly.

"I'm only trying to point out that your policy is all wrong, Handy," said K. K. "Take our studies, for example. Have you examined them thoroughly? I mean, the things in them? Desks, book-cases, footballs, and those sort of things?"

"Examined them?" repeated Handforth, staring. "Of course not!"

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter," said K. K. carelessly. "But if you did go round, you'd probably get a surprise. On the whole, you'd better not try it—or you'll want to clear lots of stuff out and dump it in the river."

"He'd better not dump our stuff in the river!" said De Valerie. "He wouldn't dare!"

"Oh, wouldn't he?" retorted Handforth warmly.

"Better not dare him," advised K. K., mentally thanking De Valerie for unconsciously carrying on the good work. "Handy's the kind of chap to accept a dare, you know. And I rather believe he means what he says about throwing foreign goods into the river. Unless we're careful he'll get up at dawn, before the rest of us are awake, and make a clean sweep of the studies."

"That's not a bad idea," said Handforth, nodding.

"It's a rotten idea," snorted Gresham. "You'll oblige me, you ass, by keeping out of my study, anyhow. If you want to start somewhere, why not start with your own?"

"There's no foreign rubbish in my study!" said Handforth promptly.

"No?" murmured K. K. "I wonder?"

It was enough. Nothing would please Handforth but to proceed at once to Study D and look round. A grinning crowd accompanied him. The shock he received was stupendous. He picked up the first thing that came to his hand—a flat boxwood ruler. Clearly stamped upon it were the fatal words "Made in Germany."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he ejaculated. "I never saw that before. It's my ruler, too!"

"It only shows you, old man, that these sort of things pass unnoticed until you deliberately look for them," said K. K. innocently. "Now, there's this picture frame. I'll bet it's foreign. Yes, by Jove! Made in France! What did I tell you?"

"My desk!" gasped Handforth, as he examined the back. "I'm blessed if it wasn't made in Norway! And this portable gramophone was made in Denmark! I always thought it was English!"

"It is!" said Church warmly. "There's some trickery about this, Handy! These Red-Hots are having a game with you!"

"Rot!" retorted Handforth. "It's marked here as clear as you like—'Made in Denmark.' Is there anything in this study made in England?"

"I dare say all the other studies are the same—so why bother?" asked K. K. "Don't you see, Handy, that the game isn't worth the candle? It may be an old Spanish custom to smash everything up, but——"

"I'm going to have a look round," said Handforth ferociously.

His look round was enlightening. He barged into study after study, and he made the awful discovery that a large percentage of the smaller stuff was made in foreign parts. At least, so it appeared from the stamped legends. Not that Handforth was able to put his "old Spanish custom" into effect. He was unceremoniously bundled out of the studies by their rightful owners, and he was told in the plainest of plain terms that if he started any of his rot he would be slaughtered.

Fortunately, the hour was late, and bed-time was at hand. This was another proof of K. K.'s cunning. He had already sown the seed in Handforth's mind, and he was convinced that the game would work.

"Everything's going sweetly," he said to Deeks and Goffin, as they undressed. "The other chaps suspect that we've been pulling Handy's leg, but Handy himself hasn't the faintest idea. And it's Handy we're after."

"You're dotty!" said Deeks, with a sniff. "The Old-Timers will never let Handy interfere with those faked marked goods."

"They won't be able to stop him," said Parkington cheerfully. "Unless I'm a dud prophet, he'll be up soon after dawn, and he'll be well on the warpath before anybody else is awake. Don't you remember how I put the idea into his head?"

"And you think he'll actually do it?" asked Goffin breathlessly.

"I do!" replied K. K. "What's more, he's so unconscious of having that wheeze suggested to him that he'll think it's his own

idea. In the morning, sweethearts, there's going to be some fun. We can sleep peacefully."

CHAPTER 5.

Swallowing the Bait!

KIRBY KEEBLE PARKINGTON was right.

Dawn had only just broken when Handforth stirred in his sleep, sat up in bed with a jump, and dived a hand under his pillow. He turned the catch of the alarm clock which was concealed there.

All through the night he had been uncomfortable, for that clock formed a decided lump under the pillow; but it had certainly proved effective. The buzz when the alarm went off was terrific. That was just the beauty of it—for while it was terrific to

Handforth, it was practically inaudible to Church and McClure, who were the other occupants of the dormitory. Handforth wanted to be a lone worker this morning.

He looked out of the window. It was cold and rather grey. His bed seemed very comfortable. His resolve of the previous night was not quite so strong now. Perhaps, after all, it would be just as well to— No! He wasn't going to be weak! He was going to show these fatheads that his campaign was genuine! He'd teach them not to have foreign stuff in their studies!

He resolutely got out of bed and commenced dressing. His chums were sleeping peacefully, and he had no intention of disturbing them. He could force them to help, of course, but he had an idea that they would be more of a hindrance. Better let them sleep. He was capable of doing this job single-handed.

He reached for his shoes, and was about to put them on, when he gave a violent start. Just inside, clearly marked, were the words "Made in U.S.A." Actually, those shoes had been made in Northampton, but Handforth wasn't to know that K. K. had been at work with his box of tricks.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated, horrified.

It was unfortunate that he should have uttered this expression of his feelings aloud, for Church sat up and blinked.

"Hallo! We're not late, are we?" he asked, looking at the window. "What's the time?"

"Go to sleep," growled Handforth, annoyed. "Who told you to wake up? It's hours before rising-bell. I don't want to be bothered with you!"

He spoke as though he were addressing a naughty child, and Church rather resented it.

"I want to know what you're doing—all dressed at this hour!" he said suspiciously.

"Well, I'm not going to tell you," replied Handforth. "If I choose to clear all that foreign rubbish out of the chaps' studies, and chuck it into the river, it's my own business, and not yours! So you needn't ask what I'm doing, because I shan't tell you!"

"You crazy idiot!" said Church. "You've just told me!"

"Eh? Well, I didn't mean to!" snapped Handforth. "Forget it! Go to sleep! Your face worries me!"

It worried him so much, in fact, that he

put his shoes on, forgetful of the fact that they had apparently been made in the United States. By this time McClure was awake, too. McClure was a sound sleeper, and an average thunders to r m would not disturb him in the least; but Handforth's voice was in a class by itself.

"I'm glad you're awake, Mac," said Church darkly. "Have we got any rope? We shall have to tie Handy in bed. The silly ass is getting up so that he can go through the studies and destroy half the things in 'em."

"Destroy them be blowed!" said Handforth. "I'm going to pack them into my

car, carry them to the river, and throw them in!"

"Don't you call that destroying them?" asked Church. "Or do you only want to give them a wash? You hopeless ass! Somebody's been fooling you. Most of those marks were faked, and I'm suspicious of K. K. He was only pulling your leg last night."

"Don't you believe it!" replied Handforth. "What object could K. K. have in doing a thing like that? Besides, I know jolly well that this country is overloaded with foreign stuff. We, in the Remove, ought to make a stand against it—and I'm going to set an example. I'm a pioneer. I'm one of those chaps who blazes the trail!"

"You're a lunatic!" retorted McClure sourly. "You and your old Spanish customs! Get back to bed like a sensible human being!"

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Always on the target—that's Bull's-Eye Bill! He thinks nothing of popping on half a dozen goals. Some lad, Bill! A real fine fellow. As cheery as they make 'em, too. You'll like Bill. You'll pal up to him immediately. Meet Bull's-Eye Bill in the first of a grand new series of footer yarns which is starting in the Old Paper NEXT WEDNESDAY.

But both he and Church knew that they were beating the air. They might as well have told the wind not to blow. Handforth had made up his mind, and he was determined to put his idea into execution.

Five minutes later the chums of Study D sallied forth. A door, softly opening farther down the corridor, revealed the face of K. K. Parkington. The leader of the Red-Hots was grinning cheerfully as he turned back to Deeks and Goffin.

"Didn't I say so?" he murmured. "It's worked like a dream! They've gone downstairs to collect the stuff. My only sainted aunt! What a jape on the Old-Timers! This is going to be the joke of the term!"

CHURCH and McClure argued until they were hoarse; they even threatened to awaken everybody in the Remove. Yet they hardly liked to carry out this project. Handforth, after all, was their chum, and they didn't want to get him into trouble.

"He'll be slaughtered if we wake the other chaps," said Church, in despair. "Perhaps it'll be just as well to let him carry on. We'll pretend to help him. It's safer—and I dare say it'll pan out all right in the end."

"Not if he's going to chuck lots of things in the river!" whispered Mac.

"We won't let him go as far as that," replied Church. "If necessary, we'll biff him on the head and rope him up. But we'd

better let him carry on now, or he'll start a fight."

Handforth looked at them suspiciously.

"What are you fatheads muttering about?" he demanded. "If you think you're going to stop me——"

"Not at all," said Church hastily. "Let's—let's go ahead, Handy! We're going to help you all we can."

They knew what the result would be if they precipitated a scrap. Handforth was in a war-like mood, and once he got busy with his fists he would blacken their eyes and create havoc generally with their features. Long association with this burly junior had taught them that it was always profitable to take the path of least resistance. They generally got their own way in the end by so doing. In other words, Handforth had to be treated tactfully. And the tactful thing, at the moment, was to help him with assumed enthusiasm in this orgy of destruction.

The faithful Morris Minor was brought round to the front of the Ancient House. Then he commenced a round of the studies. Wireless sets, portable gramophones, football boots, footballs, pictures, kettles, crockery, and all manner of goods and chattels came out. Everything was dumped into the waiting car—until there was room for no more.

Church tried once to point out the folly of all this.

"Can't you see, Handy, that it's a stunt?" he asked wearily. "You went into K. K.'s



Jokes from readers wanted for this feature! If you know of a good rib tickler send 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.

SOLD !

An ancient-looking car clattered slowly to the gates of the car park. Car-parker collecting the usual taxes :

"Five shillings for the car, sir."

The owner of the car looked round joyfully.

"Sold !" he said.

(*E. Hill, 12, Regent Street, Oxford, has been awarded a handsome watch.*)

CARRYING OUT ORDERS !

A lady was going out for the day, and she pinned this notice on the door :

"Leave nothing."

On coming home she found the house bare and, on the open door, this notice :

"Thanks, we haven't."

(*D. Armitage, 28, Armitage Road, Birkly, Huddersfield, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE !

Jones : "How long can a man live without brains ?"

Bones : "I'm sure I don't know—but how old are you ?"

(*G. Word, 490, Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

BOW-WOW !

Sailor : "What are you staring at ?"

Small Boy : "Dad says you're an old sea-dog, and I'm waiting to hear you bark."

(*A. Marshall, 62, Barlow Street, Walworth, S.E.17, has been awarded a penknife.*)

VERY LUCKY !

Father (to his son, as a black cat passes by) : "Tommy, do you know that black cats are lucky ?"

Tommy : "Yes, dad. That one was—it just stole your dinner."

(*A. Pomeroy, 69, Whiston Street, Haggerston, E.2, has been awarded a penknife.*)

study, and everything is marked 'Made in England.' Why be fooled? K. K. doesn't want you to interfere with his goods, so he has marked them accordingly. What about the other Red-Hots' studies? It's as clear as daylight! The whole thing is a Red-Hot jape, and you're falling headlong into the trap!"

"All these things are marked clearly enough," replied Handforth obstinately. "They're foreign. Don't forget what my pater said about that giddy old innkeeper! These things are going to be destroyed—it's an old Spanish custom!"

"Oh, go ahead!" said Church, breathing hard. "But you'll have a nice little bill to pay."

"I shan't pay any bill," said Handforth with a sniff. "I warned all these chaps, and they'll have to take the consequences."

His chums were really alarmed when Handforth squeezed himself into the driving-seat and started the engine. They had overlooked something. The car was full, and there wasn't room for them. Their last minute idea of grabbing him by force couldn't be done—for he would reach the river long before them.

"Here, wait a minute!" ejaculated McClure aghast. "What about us?"

"You can run after me!" replied Handforth coolly. "I'm driving straight down the lane to the bridge—it's the easiest place. I shan't have unloaded half of this stuff by the time you get there, and then you can give me a hand."

"Here, but——"

Mac broke off in dismay. Handforth had started the car, and was off.

"Better get our bikes!" gasped Church. "What idiots we were not to think of this before! He'll dump half the stuff in the river before we can get there."

They darted off to the bicycle shed, only to find that it was locked, and this meant a precious waste of time while they went to Cuttle, the head porter, for the key. In the meantime, Handforth had reached the bridge.

At such an early hour there wasn't a soul about. At least, so it appeared at first sight. Handforth noticed nobody at all; he was too busy with his thoughts. For now that the actual moment had come to pitch his car-load of stuff into the river, he was assailed by uneasy doubts.

After all, these goods were pretty useful. They were foreign made, and because of that they deserved to be chucked into the river; but it was impossible to get away from the fact that there would be an awful row when the fellows found out.

"Blow 'em!" muttered Handforth obstinately. "What do I care? I warned them, and I told them what to expect! If I destroy these things they'll buy new ones—and they'll buy British! All pioneers have to be iron-willed if they're going to make their mark!"

He resolutely seized a portable gramophone, pulled it out of the car, and moved across to the parapet of the bridge. Then, for the first time, he realised that his move-

SO-MEAN!

A commercial traveller, who represented an Aberdeen firm, was travelling in a train when it got completely snowed up. So he sent a wire to his firm as follows: "Your traveller snowed up and cannot get forward or backward. Am obliged to stay here. Send instructions."

An hour later he received the following reply: "Commence annual holiday from to-day"

(*T. Harding, 17, Meadow Road, Alcombe, Minehead, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

FISHY!

"What is a gorilla?" asked the teacher.

"The thing mother fries kippers on!" answered one bright pupil.

(*C. Wilkinson, 15, St. Catherine's Terrace, Hove, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

THE REASON WHY!

Teacher: "Tommy, why haven't you brought your brother Willie to school this afternoon?"

Tommy: "We were trying to see who could eat the most pudding at dinner, and he won!"

(*R. Ennett, 6, Kingswood Grove, Douglas, Isle of Man, has been awarded a penknife.*)



BEYOND HIM!

Policeman (opening his pocket book): "Wot's yer name?"

Culprit: "Eustace Algernon Montmorency Clarence Fitz——"

Policeman (after many attempts to write): "Phew! 'Ere, you just hop it, and don't let me catch you 'ere again."

(*N. Grice, 24b, Married Qls., R.A.F., Cranwell, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

HIS BID!

The steed was led into the ring and the auctioneer looked at it and hoped for the best.

"Well, what is bid for this handsome creature?" he asked.

A pound was bid. Then two, three, four, five, six pounds. The auctioneer waxed eloquent and more bids followed:

"Seven!"

"Eight!"

"Nine!"

"Ten!"

And then a farmer at the back woko up.

"Ten and sixpence!" he shouted.

(*F. Oates, 58, Christine Street, Oldham, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

ments were being watched. He started—almost guiltily.

The man who watched him was leaning against the parapet at the other end of the bridge. He was a shabby-looking fellow, with an untidy, straggling moustache and an ancient, moth-eaten hat. Near by stood a barrow, hitched to a docile-looking donkey. Just on the roadside, half-hidden by a clump of bushes, a thin coil of smoke arose.

"Mornin', young gent!" said the man.

"Er—good-morning!" replied Handforth awkwardly. "Camping here? You're just going off, I suppose? Well, good-bye!"

The man came nearer.

"Yes, I'm goin' off soon," he said, shooting an inquisitive look at the car. "Had me breakfast, an' I'll soon be on the road again. Looks like you've got a fair load o' stuff here, young gent. From the big school, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Now I wonder what you're goin' to do with all this 'ere," went on the man thoughtfully.

"Then you can keep on wondering!" growled Handforth.

He resented this interruption. It was a bit too thick. He had got up early so that he could do this job peacefully and without interference. Yet the man could not be blamed for his curiosity. He was naturally surprised to see a schoolboy drive up to a bridge with a car-load of miscellaneous goods with the evident intention of unloading the whole lot into the river. There had been no mistaking Handforth's purpose as he moved towards the parapet with that portable gramophone. He had, indeed, almost thrown it over before he saw the man.

And then, at this interesting point, Church and McClure hove in sight round the bend, pedalling furiously. They were in time! This delay had saved the situation.

CHAPTER 6.

The Bargain!

HANDFORTH gave his chums one look, then he turned back to the man with the battered hat and glared.

"Well, aren't you going?" he asked fiercely. "Don't think I'm keeping you here! Why the dickens can't you go ahead with your own business, and let me attend to mine? How do you think I'm going to dump all these things in the river if you stand there looking at me?"

"Oh! So that's your game, is it?" said the man, slowly removing a blackened clay pipe from his mouth. "Goin' to dump it all in the river, are you? Never 'eard o' such a thing!"

"I don't care what you've heard of," said Handforth impatiently. "All this stuff is foreign junk, and it's going into the river—whether you've heard of it or not! I don't suppose you would, in any case, as it's an old Spanish custom."

"Spanish, is it?" nodded the man. "Well, I don't think much of it."

Church gave the fellow a grateful look.

"Handy, old man, let's go back," he urged.

"This joke's gone far enough."

"Joke?" repeated Handforth coldly. "What joke?"

"Why, this river-dumping wheeze," said Church. "You've got a lot of good things in the car, and they don't belong to you, anyhow—"

"I'm fed up with being interrupted!" roared Handforth, becoming violent. "Clear off—both of you! And as for you, whatever your name is—"

"Baggs—Sam Baggs," said the man. "By profession a rag-and-bone merchant."

"I don't want to know your beastly name, and I don't care what you are!" snorted Handforth. "Why don't you get on your way? I'm not keeping you, am I?"

"I was thinking," said Mr. Baggs slowly.

"Well, think somewhere else!"

"Seems to me you've brought all this stuff down here to throw it into the river," continued the rag-and-bone man, who evidently had an eye to business. "Now, why waste all that good property? I could make it worth your while—"

"Not likely!" interrupted Handforth. "It isn't mine to sell, anyhow."

"If it ain't yours to sell, it ain't yours to chuck in the river," reasoned Mr. Baggs. "Now be sensible, young gent."

Handforth fumed. Nothing was going right. It was bad enough for Church and McClure to turn up before he could dump any of the goods; but it was twice as bad for this wretched Mr. Baggs to shove his spoke in.

"Look here, there's going to be no bargaining or throwing things into the river or anything else!" said Church grimly, glaring at Mr. Baggs.

"We're taking this lot back to St. Frank's," added McClure determinedly.

Handforth snorted.

"Don't I have a say in this?" he asked thickly. "Blow you! When I start a thing I finish it, and you can go and eat coke!"

He hurled the gramophone over the parapet, and it fell with a plop into the river. Handforth's expression was grim. All his doubts were settled. Only one thing had been needed to complete his resolution—opposition. His one aim in life at the present moment was to unload the contents of his car into the river. Every scruple had been forgotten.

Church dashed across the bridge, ran down the bank, and managed to rescue the gramophone as it floated on the current towards the rushes. In the meantime, McClure was grabbing at Handy's arm.

"You can't do it!" he panted. "You're mad, Handy!"

"Just a minute, young gents," said Mr. Baggs, his eyes gleaming. "Now, let's be calm and cool. What's the good of destroyin' all these things? It's 'ospital week in Ban-nin'ton, ain't it?"

"Supposing it is?" demanded Handforth aggressively.

"Well, if you don't want to take money for these things, why not give it to the Fund?" argued the man. "I get the goods, you 'ave the satisfaction of knowin' that they've been chucked out o' your school, an' the 'ospital gets an extra bit of cash. We're all satisfied like that, ain't we? What about it?"

Handforth lost some of his anger.

"Well, it's not so bad, perhaps," he admitted. "I'd forgotten Hospital Week."

Inwardly, he was relieved. It had been one thing to talk so big about destroying other fellows' property; but it was quite another when it came to the point. Here was an honourable way out. In fact, a jolly good way out. He'd make the chaps contribute to the Hospital Fund whether they wanted to or not. Apart from all this, time was getting short—Bellton was astir, and soon an inquisitive crowd would collect.

"I'll buy the whole lot," said Mr. Baggs eagerly, as he cast an appraising eye over the spoils. "Then you can send the money to the hospital. What do you say, young gent?"

"It's a go!" replied Handforth. "How much?"

"Fifteen bob," said Mr. Baggs promptly.

"Done!" agreed Handforth.

"Here, wait a minute!" gasped Church desperately. "You—you howling idiot! Are you off your rocker? Fifteen bob for all these things?"

"They're not worth any more!" replied Handforth contemptuously. "They're foreign!"

"The young gent's right," said Mr. Baggs solemnly.

"You—you twister!" roared Church. "You know jolly well these things are worth quids and quids! You know you've got a mug to deal with, and you're taking advantage of him!"

Handforth started.

"A mug?" he repeated. "Where?"

"You can't see him—until you look in a mirror!" snapped Church. "Fifteen bob! Why—why, it's outrageous!"

"You young gents had best clear out o' this," said the rag-and-bone man darkly. "Who told you to interfere, anyhow?"

"Yes, who told you to interfere?" asked Handforth. "A bargain's a bargain. Fifteen bob! Strictly speaking, this foreign rubbish isn't worth a penny, but as the hospital's going to get it I don't mind."

Mr. Baggs, who knew a good thing when he was on it, slapped fifteen shillings into Handforth's hand.

"Sold!" he said eagerly. "O.K., sir?"

"O.K.," agreed Handforth with a defiant look at his chums.

He coolly assisted Mr. Baggs in unloading the Morris Minor, and Church and McClure stood by, nearly speechless with indignation and alarm. They talked of going to the police—of having this rascal arrested; but

they realised that they had no charge to proffer. If Handy was idiot enough to sell, the man was doing no wrong in buying. He was simply getting the better of the bargain.

"Well, that's the lot," said Handforth at last. "And the sooner you take it away, the better!"

"That's the spirit, young gent," said Mr. Baggs, grinning. "Well, so long!"

He fairly ran to his donkey, jogged him up, and was off. He probably had a suspicion that some trouble might arise if he remained in the neighbourhood too long. His policy was to get as far away as possible.

"A pretty good morning's work," said Handforth contentedly. "Good riddance to bad rubbish—and the hospital benefits by fifteen bob. What's the matter with you fatheads? What are you goggling at?"

"Fifteen bob!" breathed Church. "Oh, Handy, I'm sorry for you!"

"Sorry for me?"

"I'm thinking what the chaps will do when they find out."

"Yes, I dare say they'll be a bit sick," grinned Handforth. "But when you come to think of it, it's rather a good wheeze, making them contribute towards the Hospital Fund like this."

"A good wheeze?" howled Church. "Why, you—you self-satisfied pumpkin, don't you realise that you've sold about thirty quids' worth of stuff for thirty sixpences?"

"Thirty sixpences be blowed!" replied Handforth. "Fifteen bob was the price."

Church and McClure found further speech impossible. They felt too dizzy!

CHAPTER 7.

Mr. Baggs' "Bag"!

"SOMEbody's borrowed our wireless set!" said Nipper warmly. "It was here last night, because I remember turning it off. This is a bit of a nerve, you chaps!"

"Can't understand it," said Tommy Watson, frowning.

"Begad! Where's my camera?" asked Sir Montie Tregellis-West, looking round. "It was on the mantelpiece last night!"

"Some funny fathead's been having a game," said Nipper.

Various shouts sounded out in the passage, and Nipper & Co. went out to find the source of the trouble. Doors were opening, and juniors were emerging. Everybody, it seemed, had the same tale. Something was missing.

"Burglars!" said De Valerie excitedly. "That's the explanation. We've had burglars during the night!"

"My new football has been pinched!"

"Somebody's taken my gramophone!"

"I can't find my alarm-clock anywhere!"

The passage rang with indignant and excited shouts. Most of the fellows had only just got down, and the discoveries were made

simultaneously. The whole passage was in an uproar.

At that moment Handforth entered from the Triangle. Church and McClure were with him, and they looked exhausted. They were breathing heavily, and their faces were haggard. Their faces, indeed, were more than haggard—they were battered. Handforth, exasperated by their persistent denunciation, had been letting fly.

"Hallo! What's all the excitement?" he asked, staring.

"We've had burglars!" yelled Jimmy Potts. "Thieves have been going through our studies and pinching everything!"

Church and McClure turned pale. Edward Oswald started.

"Thieves?" he repeated, his face breaking into a grin. "Why, you silly asses, there haven't been any thieves here. Ha, ha, ha! I'm the chap who took all your things!"

"You!" went up a roar.

"Keep your hair on," said Handforth coolly.

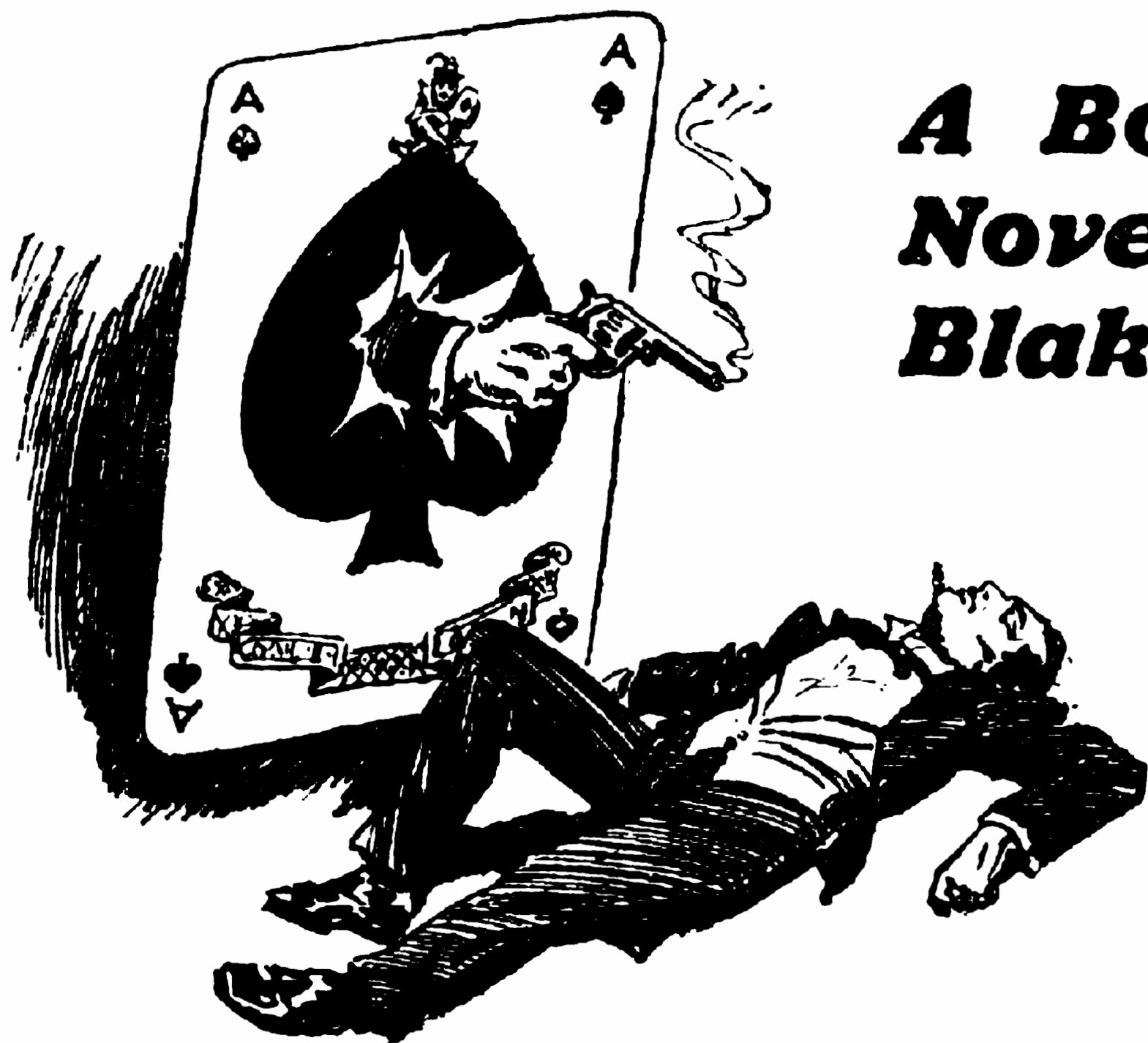
Nipper dashed at him and grabbed him. "What have you done with our things, Handy?" he demanded, a horrible suspicion crossing his mind. "Here, you chaps! Hold him! Shove him against the wall! This is worse than it looks."

The other fellows were beginning to suspect, too. They grabbed Handforth, whirled him across the lobby, and slammed him against the wall with such force that half the breath was knocked out of his body. They held him there.

"Last night you said something about collecting all foreign-made goods and dumping them in the river!" exclaimed Nipper grimly. "No, don't slaughter him yet, you chaps! Let's discover the worst! Handy, have you chucked our things into the river?"

"He was going to, but, thank goodness, we stopped him!" shouted Church from the outskirts. "We wash our hands of the whole giddy affair! Mac and I did our best, but we're only human, after all—and we can't be expected to tame a wild rhinoceros!"

"Does he mean me?" gurgled Handforth.



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"Never mind what he means," retorted Nipper. "You've admitted that you took our goods. What have you done with 'em?"

"Sold 'em!" replied Handforth defiantly.

"What!"

"Foreign rubbish!" said Handforth contemptuously.

"Why, you—you——"

"I was going to chuck it all into the river, but a rag-and-bone man came along, and I sold him the whole lot for fifteen bob," replied Handforth coolly. "They weren't worth any more, being foreign. But you needn't worry—I'm sending the money to the hospital in your names. It's Hospital Week, you know."

"Needn't worry?" shrieked Gresham.

"Why, you madman, that microscope of mine was worth three quid alone!"

"Made in Germany!" said Handforth sourly.

"It wasn't—it was English!" yelled Gresham.

"And my camera was English!" shouted somebody else. "Oh, my only sainted aunt! And he sold the whole lot for fifteen bob!"

"Keep back, you chaps—give him air!" said Nipper. "He deserves to be hanged, drawn and quartered, I know, but we'll postpone the execution until we've got the full truth out of him. Handy, you double-barrelled lunatic, three parts of the things you sold are English!"

"Rot! They were all stamped——"

"Somebody's been fooling you!" interrupted Nipper. "Where are those Red-Hots? They haven't been complaining about things being missed. It's a jape! Where's K. K.?"

"Asking for me?" came Kirby Keeble Parkington's voice, from the outskirts. "What's all the noise about?"

"Look here, K. K., a jape's a jape, and I'm not accusing you of doing anything off-side—but Handy has taken your fun too literally," said Nipper. "Did you, or did not, put a lot of fake marks on our gramophones and cameras and things?"

"Must I answer that question?" asked K. K. coolly.

"Perhaps you'll answer it when I tell you that Handy collected all our goods this morning, and sold the lot for fifteen bob!" said Nipper, breathing hard. "You didn't mean him to do that, did you?"

K. K. looked considerably startled.

"But—but that wasn't the programme at all," he stammered. "Handy said he was going to dump the things into the river, and I took it for granted that Church and McClure would stop him."

"Did you put those fake marks on?" went up a roar.

"Yes," admitted K. K. "But, look here, you chaps, something must have mis-fired! We thought it would be a good lark——"

"Did you hear?" demanded Nipper, glaring at Handforth. "K. K.'s confessed! Those marks were faked. You and your precious campaign! You've taken about thirty quids' worth of stuff and practically given it away!"

Handforth had gone almost green.

"Faked!" he said faintly. "Oh, my hat! Then it was a jape of those Red-Hots? They were just trying to fool me?"

"Trying to?" shouted Gresham. "They did it!"

"This is what comes of listening to your pater's beastly speeches!" said De Valerie. "Where's that rag-and-bone merchant? Which way did he go? The swindler! He knew he was dealing with a half-wit!"

Handforth was too flabbergasted to be indignant.

"I—I think he went through the village!" he panted. "Oh, my hat! I believe I've been an ass! I'm awfully sorry, you chaps——"

"Listen to him!" groaned Nipper. "He believes he's been an ass! Don't slaughter him, you chaps—he doesn't know any better! We're only wasting time here—we'd better get out and scour the countryside. That rag-and-bone man has got to be found."

"His name's Baggs," said Handforth eagerly. "The awful swindler! Making a mug of me like that! Come on! My car's outside!"

Within two minutes half the Remove was dashing off—some in Handforth's little car, others on motor-cycles, and the majority on ordinary push-bikes. Such trifles as breakfast and lessons were forgotten.

MR. SAM BAGGS had not got far. Cunningly enough, he had turned off the main road after passing through the village, and had taken to the little lane which wandered round the meadows and woods towards Edgemoor. Unfortunately for him, at least two people had seen him turning into that lane, and when the St. Frank's fellows inquired they were quickly put on the right trail. Mr. Baggs' donkey appeared to be a sturdy, hard-working animal, but in no circumstances could he be called swift. His average speed was about one mile in two hours, with an occasional halt for nibbling the grass.

Presumably Mr. Baggs heard the hue-and-cry from a distance, for he tried his hardest to hide. He turned out of the lane, and when the leaders of the St. Frank's pack came within sight of him he was urging his donkey to drag the barrow into a thick clump of willows, near a brook. He was just a little too late. Mr. Baggs, looking defiant and stubborn, was soon surrounded.

So quickly had he been discovered that even the push cyclists were on the scene a minute or two after the others. The excitement was great.

"Now then, young gents, now then!" protested Mr. Baggs reprovingly. "What's all this 'ere about? Can't a poor man earn an honest livin'——"

"Honest?" broke in Handforth fiercely. "You—you twister! You only paid me fifteen bob for these things, and you knew jolly well that they were worth twenty times as much!"

"Supposin' I did?" retorted Mr. Baggs. "A bargain's a bargain, ain't it? You was satisfied with the price, wasn't you? You said so!"

Handforth winced.

"Perhaps I did," he said feebly. "All the same, you weren't playing the game."

"We can't blame this man for buying all the stuff, you fellows," said Nipper. "Handy's the one we've got to thank—and fair's fair. As this man says, a bargain's a bargain. All we can do is to buy these things back from him."

"Now you're talkin'," said Mr. Baggs, looking relieved.

"We needn't go into the cires, because you know them as well as we do," said Nipper. "It wasn't a proper sale, and you needn't pretend it was. We don't want to be unpleasant, and we know that you've got a right to make a profit. So we'll give you thirty bob."

Mr. Baggs laughed.

"Ho, you'll give me thirty bob, will you?" he repeated sarcastically. "What do you take me for, me lad? Buyin' an' sellin' are two diff'rent things. I bought these goods for fifteen bob—but when I come to sell 'em, it's a 'orse of another colour. It was a lawful deal, an' I'm within my right if I only sell at my own price. See?"

Nipper did see.

"Well, what is your price?" he asked grimly.

"Twenty quid!" replied Mr. Baggs without hesitation.

"Wha-a-a-at!"

"This gramophone's worth a quid, ain't it?" asked Mr. Baggs. "And what about this microscope? I'll take sixteen bob, cash down, for it. A bargain if ever there was one. An' here's a new football for five bob! You can buy 'em back separated, if you like—I don't mind."

Nipper felt helpless. This rag-and-bone man was strictly within his rights.

"I've priced all the articles up, an' I know pretty well what they're worth," continued Mr. Baggs. "I bought 'em fairly, an' I'll sell 'em fairly. Take the lot as it stands, an' I'll accept twenty quid. Buy 'em separate, an' it'll come to more."

"It's a swindle!" roared De Valerie.

"Let's bowl him over and grab our things!"

"Hear, hear!"

"On him!"

Nipper, with difficulty, restrained them. He managed to drag them all aside, and they held a brief conference.

"If we take our things by force we shall be doing wrong," said Nipper. "And don't be so wild with this man—he's up to busi-



ness, and we can't blame him. We'd better pay out cheerfully and make the best of a bad bargain. Anyhow, it's a lot better than letting the stuff go."

"But how can we raise the money?" asked Gresham desperately. "I've only got five and threepence."

"We shall have to have a whip round and

do the best we can," replied Nipper. "Archie, old man, you're generally rolling in wealth. How do you stand now? Let's have all you've got, and we'll square up out of our pocket-money later."

"Oh, absolutely," said Archie Glenthorne, looking distressed. "But the fact is, old kipper, funds are dashed low at the moment."

"They would be!" groaned Nipper. "We were relying on you!"

of being hard up was different from other peoples'. If he had anything less than a tenner on him he considered himself practically broke. Many fellows were able to spring ten shillings, one or two a pound each, and, by dint of scraping up odd half-crowns, shillings and sixpences, the requisite amount was raised.

"There you are—twenty quid," said Nipper, as he handed the money over. "Now we can have our goods, I suppose?"

"They're yours, young gent," grinned Mr. Baggs. "There's nothing I like better than a clean, pleasant business deal. Nothin' nasty on either side. I'm perfectly satisfied, young gents."

"And so you ought to be," said Gresham tartly.

All the satisfaction, however, was on one side. The Removites had got their goods back, but by no stretch of imagination did they feel satisfied.

CHAPTER 8.

Old "Wilkey" Takes a Hand!

BY hurrying, the juniors just managed to get back to St. Frank's in time for breakfast, so no awkward questions were asked. Later they restored their goods and chattels to their customary places.

Kirby Keeble Parkington was inclined to grin at the whole affair.

"Well, it was only a jape," he said defensively. "Hard luck on you chaps, having to shell out twenty quid—but how were we to know?"

"We're not blaming you so much as we blame Handy," retorted Nipper. "You may think it was a good jape, K. K. but you're lucky to have got out of it so easily. We'll trouble you not to interfere with our property any more."

K. K. shrugged.

"How the dickens could we guess that Handy would be so wholesale?" he asked coolly. "You can look at it any way you like—but we Red-Hots have got in one against you Old-Timers."

"And a good one, too!" grinned the other Red-Hots.

"I'm most frightfully sorry!" said Archie. "In fact, I'm dashed frightfully sorry, dear old boy. I'll do all I can, of course. Only too dashed willing. Let's have a look in the old wallet."

"Why, you fraud, you've got seven or eight quid there!" yelled Nipper.

There was general relief. Archie's idea

"Foreign rubbish!" quoth E. O. Handforth indignantly, and tossed the portable gramophone into the river.



"Rats!" said the Old-Timers.

Yet they realised that their rivals had unquestionably "put one over." It was all the more exasperating because it was one of their own number who had made the whole thing possible. Handforth was the goat.

Curiously enough, Handforth appeared to think that the whole affair was over, and he very airily voiced the opinion that the Red-Hots should be made to suffer.

"Never mind the Red-Hots!" said Travers. "You've cost us twenty quid, Handy, and you've got to pay up!"

"Ass! I haven't got twenty quid!"

"Then we'll take it out of you by instalments," said Gresham. "We'll grab your pocket-money for the rest of the term, and we'll commandeer any extra tips that you happen to get. And, just to be going on with, we'll give you a bumping."

"Hear, hear!"

Handforth was surrounded by a determined crowd.

"Wait a minute!" he said coldly. "You can't bump me, you asses! You seem to have forgotten that K. K.'s to blame! I was only acting up to my principles. I bagged all those things because I thought they were foreign. Down with foreign goods! Destroy the lot! It's an old Spanish custom!"

"We're fed up with you and your Spanish customs!" howled De Valerie. "That's just the trouble! If you hadn't had that bee in your bonnet you wouldn't have taken our things at all."

"Well, don't make a fuss—it's over now," said Handforth. "Perhaps I was a bit too drastic, and after this I'll leave your things alone. I'm fed up with the whole business," he added disgustedly. "This is what happens when a chap tries to stick up for British goods! What's the use of being a pioneer?"

"Why argue with him?" asked Church wearily. "Why not grab him and bump him? Give him the biggest bumping on record, too! He needs it! You couldn't knock sense into his head if you used a steam-hammer!"

"Hi, hold on!" yelled Handforth in alarm. "If anybody's to blame, it's my pater! It was he who made me do it!"

"Grab him!" yelled the exasperated Old-Timers.

They had reached the point when all further talking was useless. Action was required. Handforth's rot had cost them twenty pounds, and although they couldn't possibly get their money's worth out of him they would at least have the satisfaction of bumping him. He was grabbed from all sides, whirled into the air, and he struck the hard ground with a force which jarred every bone in his body.

"Just an old Spanish custom," said Nipper coolly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth was seized again, and the good work proceeded. Before three minutes had elapsed he was a wreck. But the juniors hadn't half-finished with him yet. They were just warming to their task, and Edward Oswald was beginning to regret having taken

that crowd of fellows to listen to his pater's speech.

Nobody noticed the arrival of Mr. Alington Wilkes on the scene. The juniors thought that they were safe in this secluded corner of the Triangle. The Housemaster's discreet cough, therefore, took them unawares.

"My hat! Old Wilkey!"

"Cave!"

Handforth, who was being tossed for the next bump, was promptly released. He hit the ground with a dull thud. Mr. Wilkes regarded him gravely.

"Can I be of any assistance?" he asked, casting a sweeping glance round the crowd of juniors. "This, I take it, is a new form of amusement?"

"Not new, sir," said Nipper. "In fact, it's quite an old custom."

"Not Spanish, by any chance?" asked Mr. Wilkes mildly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shouldn't be at all surprised, sir," replied Nipper. "In any case, Handforth is rather an expert on old Spanish customs—so perhaps you'd better ask him."

Handforth had struggled to his feet, and was looking very wrecked.

"It's all right, sir," he said sheepishly. "Only—only their fun. I'm not complaining, sir, so please don't take any notice."

"You like this form of amusement, then, Handforth?"

"It's not so bad, sir," replied Handforth with an effort.

The culprits inwardly commended him. This was the spirit. If only Wilkey could be put off, all well and good. But the Housemaster was not so green as they supposed.

"Let me understand the position," he said genially. "Come along, Handy, old man. Out with it! You have apparently forgotten that I was at school myself once—and this form of entertainment was as much in vogue then as now. I have an idea that I can help in this little problem."

"But there's no problem, sir," said Handforth. "It's all over now."

"I don't happen to be deaf and blind," continued Mr. Wilkes. "You have just been—er—bumped because of your commendable preference for British-made goods. Isn't that right? I should hate to butt in where I'm not wanted, but I have half an idea that I can be of some help here. We all want to settle this matter satisfactorily, don't we?"

"But it's settled, sir," said Nipper.

"I don't think so," demurred Mr. Wilkes. "You boys have had to shell out twenty pounds, haven't you? You mustn't accuse me of eavesdropping, or anything unpleasant like that, but if you will talk so loudly near my study window—which, incidentally, is half-open—you mustn't blame me for over-hearing. Now let's hear the whole story."

The juniors were very reluctant.

"We'd much rather have the whole thing dropped, sir," said Nipper.

"But I wouldn't, and I'll tell you why," said Mr. Wilkes. "You want to get that money back—and from the man who deserves to lose it, too. As for Handforth, I'm not

sure that he ought to be dropped on for having patriotic views. After all, he only took his father's speech to heart. I was there, and I thought it was a good speech. The more British goods we can use, the better."

"Yes, rather, sir!" said Handforth eagerly.

"But that doesn't imply that you should destroy all foreign things, old man," said Mr. Wilkes gently.

"It was your father who put that wheeze into your head—by telling that story of the old Spanish inn-keeper. I'm afraid you took him literally. What you ought to do is to get that twenty pounds from him."

"You don't know my pater, sir," said Handforth, shaking his head. "If he heard about this he'd call me a silly young ass and button up his pockets."

"He would be justified in calling you a silly young ass, but as for the rest, I think we ought to put it to the test," said Mr. Wilkes, smiling. "You boys can't afford to lose that money. You'll be hard up for the rest of the term. Sir Edward, however, won't even miss it. Supposing I call him into the conference?"

"But he isn't here, sir," said Handforth, staring.

"Not here—but he's staying with the Head."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" ejaculated Handforth. "I didn't know that, sir!"

"It was surprisingly neglectful of your father to leave you in ignorance of the fact," said Mr. Wilkes dryly. "It so happens that Sir Edward stayed with Mr. Lee overnight."

"I thought he was going straight back to London after that speech, sir."

"I believe he was, but Sir Edward, like other men, is privileged to change his plans," replied the Housemaster. "I'll tell him that you boys want him, and then I'll fade out

of the picture. If you can't manage him between the lot of you—well, I'll give you up! Twenty pounds, don't forget, is twenty pounds."

Mr. Wilkes went off, and the juniors drew deep breaths.

"He's a caution!" said Nipper at length. "And it's a great wheeze, too! When you come to think of it, Sir Edward is to blame, and he ought to pay up. Getting that money will be a lot better than bumping Handy."

"If we do get it, we'll let Handy off the bumping," said Travers kindly.

"Let me off?" howled the wreck. "What do you think you've done to me already, then?"

"That was only just a taster," replied Travers. "You'd be surprised if you knew what we really meant to give you, dear old fellow."

SIR EDWARD HANDFORTH, sublimely unconscious of what was awaiting him, approached the big group of Removites in the Triangle. Handy, by this time, had managed to tidy himself up, and he was looking fairly presentable.

"Well, boys, I'm glad you came over to hear my speech yesterday," said Sir Edward in his loud, boisterous voice. "I hope you took it to heart, too."

"I did, pater," replied Handforth promptly. "I took it too much to heart."

"Nonsense! That's impossible!"

"That speech of yours cost me twenty pounds, pater!"

"Twenty pounds?" repeated Sir Edward, raising his eyebrows. "Considering that you had no more than four, which I sent you as a special gift, I can't very well see how you can have spent twenty."

"I've spent the four—and I owe the twenty," replied Handforth sadly.

A Taste Of Next Week's Full-Length St. Frank's Yarn!



A "COOLER" FOR THE "RED-HOT" LEADER!

K. K. Parkington needs it—and more—just ask Busterfield Boots of the Fourth! K. K.'s latest wheeze is to form a Limited Liability Company: anything done, moderate fees, etc. Boots is the first client—and the last! A howling success; a ghastly failure! K. K.'s stunt is both. And a perfect scream! You'll think so when you read this uproariously funny yarn. Coming next Wednesday; entitled:

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"Good gracious me!" ejaculated Sir Edward. "You don't mean to tell me that you spent twenty-four pounds on food? I've never heard of such outrageous extravagance in my life! You needn't think you'll get any help—"

"Wait a minute, Sir Edward," interrupted Nipper. "Your son only spent two pounds on the food—and enough, too. The twenty is a separate item. He was so filled with your speech that he wanted to destroy everything foreign in the school!"

"Ridiculous!" said Sir Edward. "Why destroy?"

"It's an old Spanish custom," murmured Travers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sir Edward started as a titter went round.

"Yes, it was all your fault, pater!" said Handforth indignantly. "Don't you remember telling us about that Spanish inn-keeper?"

"You silly young donkey, I didn't mean anybody to put it into literal practice!" snorted his father. "Good gracious! Do you mean that you've been smashing up peoples' property just because I told that anecdote?"

"Anecdote?" repeated Handforth, staring. "But you said that the incident happened while you were travelling in Spain!"

"Speaker's licence, my boy—speaker's licence," replied Sir Edward with a wave of his hand. "I've never stayed at a Spanish inn in my life."

"Well, you awful fibber! I—I mean, wasn't that a bit thick, pater?" gasped Handforth. "I thought you meant it! You're more to blame than ever!"

"And for what am I to blame, pray?" asked his father coldly.

"Some of our chaps fooled him into believing that lots of our things were foreign, Sir Edward," said Nipper. "So he collected them together this morning and sold them to a rag-and-bone man for fifteen bob—and there must have been between thirty and fifty pounds' worth of stuff."

Sir Edward was startled, but he controlled himself.

"I am not surprised," he said acidly. "I'm not surprised at anything that Edward does! Naturally, you got those goods back from this rascally hawker?"

"We got them back, sir—for twenty pounds," said Nipper.

"And I've got that fifteen bob to give to the Hospital Fund," added Handforth in a thin voice.

Sir Edward did not hear him.

"Twenty pounds!" he repeated. "This fellow ought to have the police put on to him! An outrageous affair. It was foolish of you to pay."

"The man was within his rights, sir," said Nipper. "He made a bargain with your son, and he paid his money, and legally those goods were his. It was up to him to charge his own price—and twenty pounds wasn't very thick, considering."

"The rough part of it is, Sir Edward, we had to pay for our own things," added Travers. "And all through your son's fat-headedness. We rather thought that you'd fill the breach and handsomely whack out."

"In other words, pater—twenty quid!" said Handforth, extending a palm.

CHAPTER 9.

K. K. Makes a Suggestion!

SIR EDWARD HANDFORTH went positively red.

"What!" he ejaculated noisily.

"You expect me to pay you this twenty pounds? Certainly not! Absolutely not! I won't hear of it! If you boys are foolish enough to part with your money so rashly to the first trickster who comes along, it's entirely your own fault. You deserve to suffer for your folly."

"But it was you who started it, pater," argued Handforth. "If it hadn't been for your speech, I shouldn't have had the idea at all."

This was an undeniable fact, and Sir Edward became calmer.

"There was nothing in my speech, Edward, to cause you to behave like a half-wit," he replied coldly. "It is my misfortune that one of my sons should be so lacking in common sense. I sometimes think, Edward, that you should be in a home rather than at St. Frank's."

Edward Oswald turned red.

"Chuck it, pater!" he protested. "I'm not dotty!"

"Many of your actions lead me to believe that you are not only—er—dotty, but positively imbecile," said Sir Edward mournfully. "In these circumstances I must, in justice, uphold these boys. It was your crass stupidity which forced them to buy their own goods back for twenty pounds, and as you are my son, it is my duty to repay them. Edward, Edward, I despair of you!"

Handforth brightened up.

"Never mind about despairing of me, pater—let's see that twenty quid," he said briskly.

Sir Edward didn't relish paying this money, but, like his hopeful son, he was as straight as a die.

Out came his wallet.

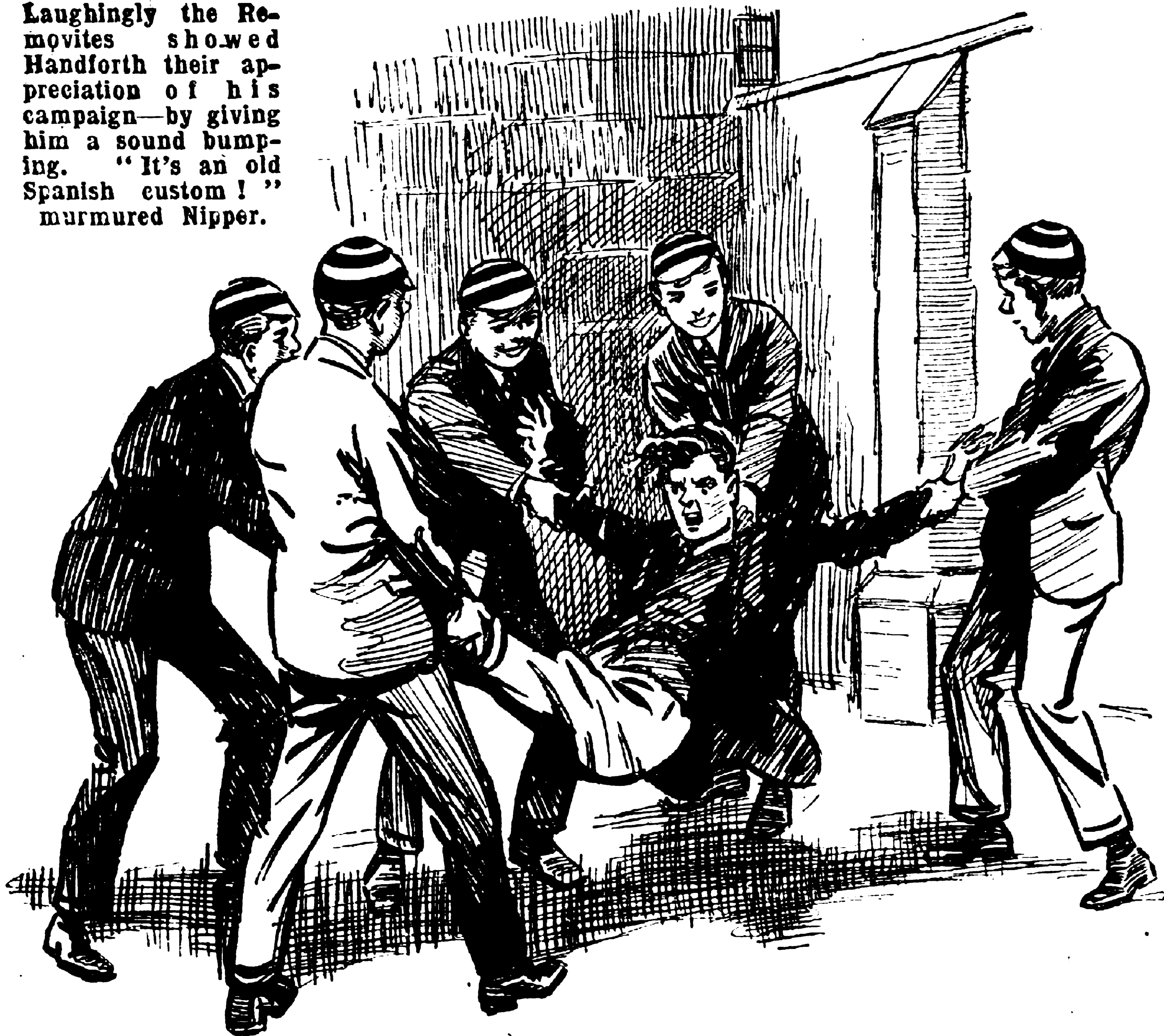
"May I interrupt, sir?" asked Kirby Keeble Parkington gently.

"Why not?" retorted Sir Edward. "Since all these other boys have been constantly interrupting, I see no reason why you should be debarred from that privilege. What is it you want?"

"Merely a suggestion, Sir Edward," replied K. K. urbanely.

The Old-Timers eyed him uneasily. There was something sinister in K. K.'s smooth politeness. And it was significant that he should butt in at the very moment when Sir Edward was in the act of shelling out.

Laughingly the Removites showed Handforth their appreciation of his campaign—by giving him a sound bumping. "It's an old Spanish custom!" murmured Nipper.



"You can jolly well clear out of this, K. K.!" growled Nipper under his breath. "We don't want any help from you Red-Hets! You've done enough damage——"

"My dear old darling, you misjudge me," said K. K. reproachfully. "The suggestion I am about to make is bound to meet with hearty approval from all. It's about this money, sir," he added brightly, turning to Sir Edward. "It's very sporting of you to pay it up, but don't you think you ought to make a condition?"

"Condition? I don't understand," said Sir Edward.

"It's Hospital Week in Bannington, sir," replied K. K. "You've done your bit for the town, so why shouldn't the Remove do their bit, too? I propose that you should pay that money over on condition that the fellows contribute it to the Hospital Fund!"

"Wha-a-at?" gurgled the victims.

To their dismay, Sir Edward brightened considerably.

"Upon my word, an excellent idea," he declared. "As you say, why should not the hospital benefit? It will make the paying of this money much more pleasant—and I can even find it in my heart to forgive my own son. Certainly! That condition stands.

I will give you this money, my boys, upon your solemn promise that you will pay it over to the Hospital Fund."

"Yes, sir," said Nipper in a thin, small voice.

"We don't mind doing our bit for the hospital, sir," said Travers mournfully. "Poor old Archie will suffer the most—it was nearly all his money."

"Absolute rot!" protested Archie Glen-thorne stoutly. "I mean, seven quid! Or was it eight—or nine? Only too dashed glad. I mean, hospitals are fairly handy things to have lurking about, what?"

"That's the spirit, young man!" said Sir Edward, beaming. "Very smart, my boy," he added, smiling at K. K. "And, let me say, very generous."

"It's jolly easy to be generous with somebody else's money," remarked Gresham with a sniff.

"Ideas, sweetheart, are worth more than money," said K. K. genially.

Nipper acted as treasurer, and took charge of the twenty pounds. Handforth suddenly remembered the fifteen shillings he had received from Mr. Baggs, and he handed it over. He had promised to send it to the hospital, so it had to go.

"Then we can regard the whole thing as settled," said Sir Edward pleasantly. "I know I can trust you to——"

He broke off, frowning. From the lane near by had come a raucous cry. A hawker, apparently, shouting his wares.

"That's funny!" said Handforth with a start. "Men don't come past St. Frank's yelling like that! This chap must be a stranger."

"Isn't there something familiar about that voice?" asked Church. "My hat! I believe it's Sam Baggs, the rag-and-bone man! What a nerve to come here!"

"He probably thinks he'll get hold of some more goods on the cheap," grinned Travers. "By all that I've seen of Mr. Baggs, he's a man of business."

"A rogue—a scoundrel!" said Sir Edward hotly. "Upon my word! Where is he? I'll give this fellow a piece of my mind!"

There was no need to go in search of Mr. Baggs, for that keen business man had just turned into the Triangle with his donkey and cart, and he was looking hopefully towards the school buildings. He was somewhat startled when a sudden rush of feet brought the crowd round him, and he discovered himself to be hemmed in. Sir Edward was borne along with the crush. When he managed to pull to a halt, he found himself face to face with Mr. Baggs.

"You rascal!" he said breathlessly.

"Meanin' me, guv'nor?" asked Mr. Baggs, staring.

"Yes, you!" roared Sir Edward. "Look at me, my man!"

"I've looked once—an' that's enough for anybody," retorted Mr. Baggs sourly.

"I am the father of this boy!" continued Sir Edward, pointing an accusing finger at Handforth. "Now perhaps you understand?"

Mr. Baggs nodded.

"I can understand why the young gent acted so queer, if that's what you mean, guv'nor?" he said. "Must run in the family, I s'pose. Poor kid!"

"Are you daring to insult me, you infernal rogue?" asked Sir Edward warmly. "I am very glad indeed that I am provided with this opportunity of giving you a piece of my mind."

"Best keep it, guv'nor—you can't spare any."

"You took an unfair advantage of these boys!" fumed Handforth's pater. "You bought a whole lot of goods from my son for the absurd price of fifteen shillings, and you sold them back to their rightful owners for twenty pounds! Do you dare to deny it?"

"Not me!" said Mr. Baggs promptly. "Why should I deny it? And don't you be so free with your 'rogues' an' 'scoundrels,' guv'nor. I did a fair stroke of business—a profitable deal. It ain't often a big chance comes along, an' if a man don't seize 'is chances, 'e ain't much good."

The fellows listened uncomfortably. They couldn't help feeling that Mr. Baggs was right.

"You call it fair dealing to make a profit of over nineteen pounds on a fifteen shilling deal?" asked Sir Edward sternly.

"You bet I do, guv'nor."

"The whole thing is outrageous——"

"Just a minute, sir," said Mr. Baggs. "You're in business, ain't you?"

"What of it?" asked Sir Edward haughtily.

"You're one o' these big city men, I s'pose?" went on Mr. Baggs. "You do big deals up at the Stock Exchange, most like?"

"Sometimes I do," admitted Sir Edward, startled.

"Well, be honest, guv'nor," said Mr. Baggs. "Ain't you ever bought somebody's bankrupt stock, or shares or somethin' like that, for next to nothin'—an' sold for big money? Go easy, guv'nor—don't answer too quick. Ain't you ever made a profit of nineteen quid to fifteen bob on one o' your big deals?"

Sir Edward nearly choked.

"This—this is rank impertinence," he protested feebly.

"Afraid to answer, sir?" asked Mr. Baggs scornfully. "Oh, you can be very indignant, and free with your 'rogues' when you're dealin' with a rag-and-bone man, but up in the City, on the Stock Exchange, it's a different thing, ain't it? You big pots can buy somethin' for a thousand quid an' sell for twenty-five thousand, an' call it a smart stroke o' business!"

Sir Edward somehow seemed to have grown smaller.

"My friend, you have put it very bluntly—but very truthfully," he said frankly. "I apologise for calling you a rogue and a scoundrel. What you did was no different, when analysed, from the average high finance of the City. You seized your opportunity, and you made a hand someprofit. Let us say no more."

Mr. Baggs beamed.

"Well, that was spoke like a gent, sir," he said delightedly. "It ain't often we come across a City financier who 'as the courage to admit a thing like that. Guv'nor, I takes off my 'at to yer! You're a sportsman, sir!"

"Nonsense!" growled Sir Edward. "You have made me understand that I was mistaken, and there the matter ends."

"No, guv'nor, it ain't ended yet," said the rag-and-bone merchant. "I ain't feelin' so comfortable about this money. You've done the sportin' thing, an' I don't see why I shouldn't foller your good example."

"I don't understand," said Sir Edward, puzzled.

Mr. Baggs searched his pockets.

"'Ere's twenty quid," he said. "It's the money I made on that deal with your son. Well, not exac'ly twenty quid," he added. "Nineteen pounds five, to put it correctly. That's my profit."

"Why are you showin' it to me?" asked Sir Edward wonderingly.

"I ain't deaf, sir, an' I understan' that you've given twenty quid to these young gents on condition that they 'and it over to the 'Ospital Fund," said Mr. Baggs. "Well, just to show you that I ain't a bloke to make an unfair profit, I'll do the same!" Sir Edward fairly goggled.

"You—you mean that you are giving this money to the Hospital Fund?" he asked blankly.

"That's it, guv'nor, an' welcome," replied Mr. Baggs.

CHAPTER 10.

Rough on the Old-Timers!

THE man's offer was so extraordinary that Sir Edward Handforth could be forgiven for doubting the genuineness of it. The crowd of Removites, too, had become silent; Mr. Baggs found himself stared at like some queer zoological specimen.

"Ain't struck dumb, are you?" he asked pointedly.

"Upon my soul!" ejaculated Sir Edward. "Do you really mean this, my man?"

"Well, 'ere's the money," said Mr. Baggs. "You've given twenty quid, an' with your son's fifteen bob this makes another twenty quid. That's forty for the 'Ospital—an' good luck to it. It ain't costin' me nothin', because this money really comes from these young gents!"

"But—but this is magnificent!" said Sir Edward breathlessly. "My good fellow, I misjudged you very grossly. Again I apologise. Even if you give half this amount it will be handsome——"

"No 'arf an' 'arf measures wi' me, guv'nor," said Mr. Baggs, grinning. "You're the young gent what's takin' charge o' the cash, ain't you?" he added, turning to Nipper. "Best take it, an' I'll be gettin' on my way."

Nipper took it dizzily.

"You're a caution!" he said frankly.

"I shouldn't be at all surprised if you're right," replied Mr. Baggs. "Well, so long, young gents, an' you, too, sir! I've got to get along!"

He nodded all round, and wheeled his donkey-cart out of the Triangle, followed by a cheer.

"The most remarkable rag-and-bone man I've seen or heard of," declared Sir Edward emphatically. "Extraordinary! That a thing like this can happen in real life is almost beyond belief. Well, well! I am amazed!"

K. K. grinned.

"Makes you feel a bit small, I suppose, sir?" he asked calmly. "I mean, this rag-and-bone man giving practically the same amount as you gave. Wouldn't it be a good idea if you sprang another tenner, sir—just to make it a round figure for the hospital?"

"I certainly will," replied Sir Edward promptly. "Good gracious me! If this man can give his all, I can at least give another ten."

He brought out his wallet, and hesitated. He was in a generous mood. Mr. Baggs' action not only made his own twenty pounds look paltry, but even the addition of another ten seemed totally inadequate. This was the moment to do the big thing—and Sir Edward, like his son, was a man of impulse. Furthermore, he was rich, and he was generous to a degree.

"Ten pounds?" he said boisterously. "Ridiculous! I'm hanged if I don't quadruple that man's contribution! If he can give twenty, I can give eighty! I'll make the sum a round hundred."

"Pater!" gasped Handforth.

"Jolly good, Sir Edward!" said K. K. serenely.

Parkington seemed to be more delighted than anybody else, and he was justified, for it was his opportune word which had worked the oracle.

"There, there! I'll leave this to you, young man," said Sir Edward, piling fivers into Nipper's hand. "Send this money to the hospital in the name of your Form. No need to mention me at all. Splendid!"

He was about to close his wallet, when he whacked out another fiver.

"And this is for you, Edward," he said, still in the same generous mood. "Don't forget to give William a pound or two. I am pleased with you, Edward. You may be a dolt, but I am pleased with you, nevertheless. I am feeling quite happy this morning."

He bustled off hurriedly, embarrassed by the rousing cheers which the juniors sent up.

"WELL, that's that!" said Kirby Keeble Parkington coolly.

The first bell was ringing, and the juniors were thinking about going in for first lesson. The majority of them were still a bit dazed. After Mr. Baggs' earlier behaviour, his latest effort had staggered them.

"Conscience, I suppose," said De Valerie, shaking his head.

"My poor, innocent child," said K. K. pityingly. "You don't even begin to realise the truth of all this. One day, perhaps, you will understand."

He walked off, shaking his head.

"What the dickens did he mean?" asked Val, staring.

"Blessed if I know—but I'm beginning to suspect things," said Nipper, frowning. "When you come to trace all this, K. K. is pretty deeply involved."

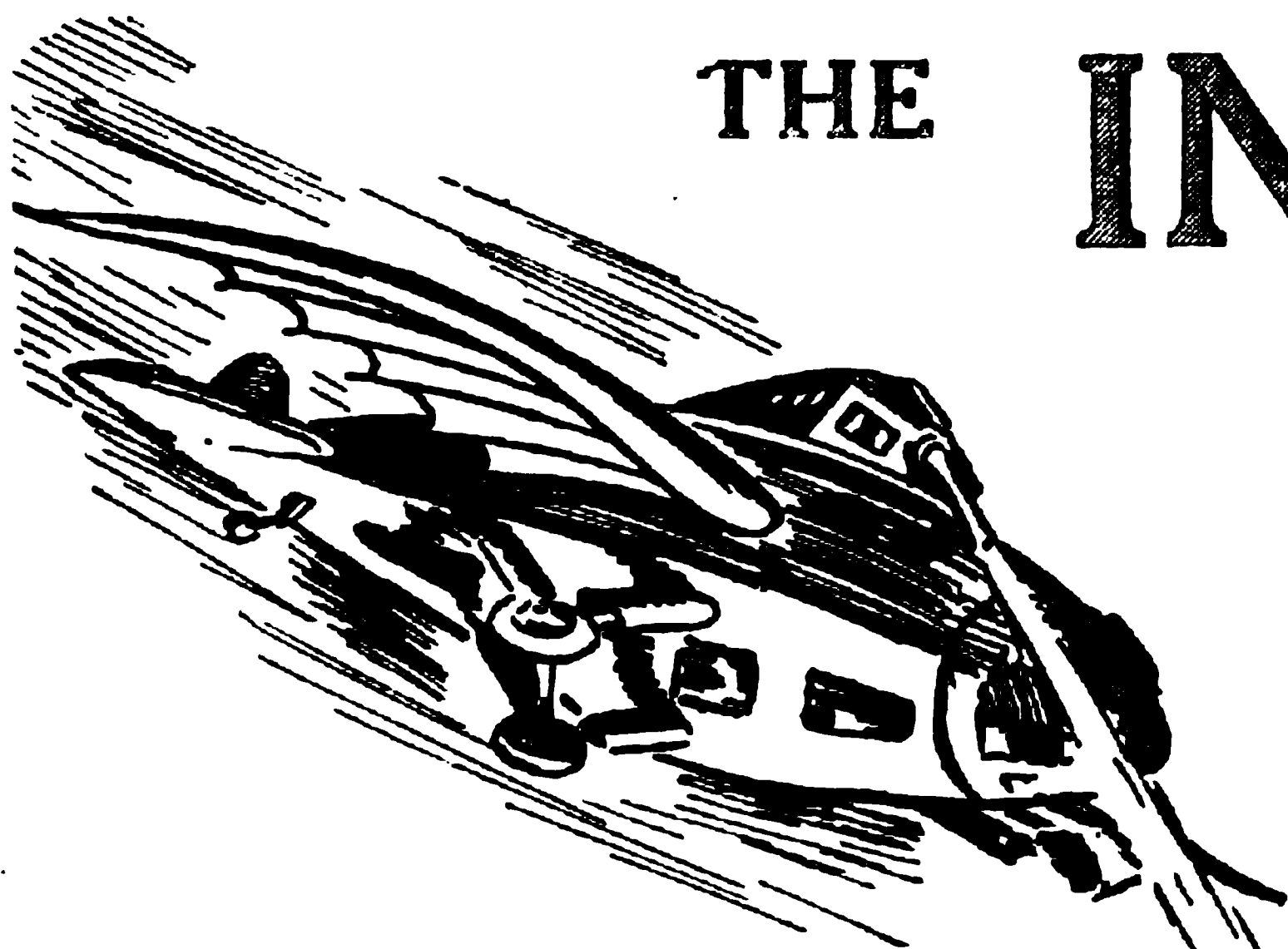
"How is he?" asked Watson.

"It was K. K. who put those faked marks on our goods," said Nipper. "It was K. K. who gave Handforth the idea of dumping the things into the river. It was K. K. who arrived at the moment when Sir Edward was shelling out."

"By George, yes!" said Handforth, with a start. "And it was K. K. who suggested that the money should be sent to the hospital, wasn't it?"

(Continued on page 43.)

THE INVISIBLE



The Fifth Adventure : Into The Burning Mountains !

The Blazing Claws!

"TOM! Tom, wake up!"

I opened my eyes with a start. A midnight stillness, heavy and profound, brooded over the Invisible World, whither I had been whirled through Space in the Meteor, that amazing craft which my pal, Mark Whitaker, had invented. And weird and amazing had been the many adventures we had experienced since leaving Earth. We had found the Invisible World; we had discovered here a nation of pygmy people known as the Lebanunes, who lived in the ruined city of Xemos, where the Meteor was now parked.

Hearing my name called, I looked about me, but the darkness of the Lebanune night was so intense that I could see nothing, not even the bunk rail above my head. The voice that had called me was shaky with fear; and I tried hard to get my brain into action quickly.

A flood of vague impressions poured in on me as I lay in my bunk, striving to collect my sleep-fuddled thoughts. There was a faint tang of burning wood drifting through the open scuttle that I knew came from the miles of dense jungle Mark and I had burnt that day; there was the moan of the night wind through the broken palaces and temples around us. But there was something else, too; a feeling of stifled terror and helplessness, as though I had just awakened from a nightmare. To my astonishment, my fists were tightly clenched, and from head to toe I was in a bath of cold sweat.

The whisper came again, frightened, insistent:

"Tom! Oh, Tom, wake up!"

It was Mark, calling me from the other bunk. I was out of bed in a flash.



"Yes, what is it?"

"I—I don't know!" he murmured.

"There's—something—near us!"

Reaching down, I felt his body trembling.

"Rats! You've been dreaming!" I whispered.

But I knew he hadn't. I could feel it, too. Something or someone was near us—outside in the decayed city or in the narrow strip of red trees which was all that remained of the Lebanune jungle. And I knew, too, that we were in terrible danger.

Reaching for my Colt, I tiptoed to a window and looked out. I could see nothing.

—And This Week's Yarn The Most Exciting Yet!

WORLD!

By
JOHN BREARLEY,

for there is no moon or starlight in the Invisible World, and the night covered the land like a black velvet pall. Yet the feeling of horror grew with every second.

Mark's light touch on my shoulder made me spin round like a cat, gun raised to shoot. A spasm of sharp disgust swept over me. If the little Lebanunes, the pygmies who had installed us as their mighty gods, could see us now, I thought, we should look pretty cheap!

"Come on!" I snapped roughly. "What's up with us—we're like a couple of kids?"

"There's something wrong!" he insisted. "Can it be a raid by the Fire People—Oh, heavens above, Tom! Look! Look!"

His voice broke horribly, and he recoiled instinctively, covering his face with his hands. No sooner had he yelled than a mad scream ripped from the throat of every hidden sentry; little feet stampeded in all directions. Frozen with horror, I saw four blood-red claws sweep through the inky night, with flames spurting from every pointed talon!

Death was upon us. One of the groping



"There's nothing there; and, besides, I posted twenty sentries myself before turning in, just in case of danger!"

Mark gripped my arm. I knew what he was thinking. After our destruction of the jungle and the brutes that lived in it, we had opened fire daringly on the terrible Burning Mountains that dominated this strange world, with disastrous results to them. A mysterious and hostile race called the Fire People lived up there, and—

Suddenly the faint twitter of thin Lebanune voices drifted out of the darkness. Our sentries were alarmed.

Mark's grip on my arm grew tighter.

hands reached out swiftly, a livid flame flickered within the city square, dancing and leaping. And in the midst of the flame, a pygmy sentry writhed, screamed—and vanished!

Even before he had gone, two other fountains of fire shot up, two other human beings twisted in mortal pain. The fiery claws were everywhere, darting and stabbing amid the flying Lebanunes with a speed that was appalling.

A cold clutch fastened round my heart. Since leaving Earth to explore this land of terror, Mark and I had gazed on some fearful sights and met with perils that had

stamped our jaws and brows with deep, grim lines. But these murderous, blazing claws were too much.

Nothing else could we see, not even an arm or a face. Only the talons and the poor sentries roasting to death. Then the talons, too, disappeared. Darkness returned.

Somehow—I scarcely know how—I found myself at the Meteor's door with a torch in one hand, my gun dangling from the other, and Mark clinging to me like a leech.

"You fool, Tom!" he was roaring. "Stay here! It's death to go outside!"

I threw him off fiercely.

"Switch on the lights!" I blazed; and, as he fell back, I jumped through the door, torch and gun ready.

The white beam of my torch leapt forth, sending a tongue of clear light across the square. It shone on the glittering quartz pillars of Xemos temple, from the darkness of which came the shrill wail of terrified men and women.

It shone, too, on the forms of two foul devils prowling in stealthy silence towards the temple.

As my light switched on, their hideous figures seemed to spring from the darkness. They crouched in their tracks, but turned their faces slowly towards me. Such was the horror of that sight that the torch dropped from my nerveless fingers, and, but for the cord around my wrist, the gun would have gone as well.

The torch went out; but the four red claws suddenly flamed again. And now they came weaving towards me—slowly through the gloom—opening and closing as they came. I tried to run, to scream, to do anything to break that spell; wondered where Mark was; prayed that I should die before the claws reached me. Then someone—it must have been I, of course, but I can't remember doing it—jerked up my gun and fired at the nearest.

The bullet hit it square in the centre. A low hiss of pain followed—the hand flew off. Bits of fiery substance flew about the square like glowing embers scattered by a boot. The other three claws vanished at once, and a moment later the Meteor's lights flooded the ancient city with radiance.

Events after that moved with the whirl and frenzy of delirium. Right before me, less than six yards away, stood two beings, the full sight of whom nearly turned my brain with horror. Caught in the bright, merciless glare of our searchlights, they sidled, shoulder to shoulder, swaying backwards and forwards, as though uncertain whether to attack or to flee.

Their lean faces were like horrible wrinkled masks, entirely featureless save for two oblique eyes which fixed me with stares of fiery inhuman cruelty and cunning. They had long legless bodies, so transparent that I remember seeing the temple pillars through them dimly, and, like the evil mountains in which they were spawned, these fiends had the same trick of changing colour. As we eyed each other for what seemed an eternity, their bodies changed from fierce

crimson to palest orange and back again. And I noticed that one hugged a shattered arm to his breast.

Unable to endure the ghastly suspense any longer, I broke ground with a quick backward leap, gun ready on my hip. My retreat, encouraging them, brought them flowing towards me at uncanny speed, moving over the ground like living flames. The moment they attacked, the colour faded from their bodies entirely, leaving them dead black; but their awful claws blazed brighter still.

Whether by reason of its wound or something else, the one I had shot was slower off the mark, and its mate closed with me swiftly, covering the last two yards in a high, bounding leap. I saw it rise towards me, throwing its skinny arms wide, with two streaks of searing fire darting from its claws. Then I was down on the ground at full length, ducking desperately, and the roar of my Colt shattered the silence of the night.

As fast as I could pull the trigger, I fired at the ghoul, almost on top of me. Two heavy, man-stopping bullets crashed into its middle at less than a yard's range; a crackling sheet of light burst forth, dimming the Meteor's searchlights—and in a flash, the square was full of the familiar brown poison-gas that was thrown at us constantly from the Burning Mountains.

Sick and retching with the vile odour of it, I rolled sideways, firing with frantic determination until my gun was empty. I heard other shots ringing out, turning the hushed city into a bedlam of rolling echoes; the faint squeaks of the Lebanunes, and—joyous sound!—Mark's piercing yell of triumph.

The poison-gas slowly drifted away; the Fire People seemed to have vanished. Deaf to Mark's anxious questions, I staggered to my feet, thrust him aside, and never stopped running until I fell face down on my bunk inside the Meteor.

For the first time in my life I knew what it was to be utterly unnerved!

Preparations for War!

I SANK at last into a heavy stupor, drifting off into troubled sleep. When I awoke, the violet sunlight of Lebanu was streaming in through the windows, and the cheerful smell of cooking filled the cabin. Mark greeted me with a wan smile when I lurched off the bunk, but neither of us spoke much until the meal was over and cleared away. I felt better after that, and was able to look around.

A glance at the chronometer told me I had slept some hours. During that time it was obvious my friend had been working hard. His face had a pinched, hard look about it, and once or twice I noticed that his eyes were diamond bright as they turned towards the deserted city square.

His work-bench had been swept clear of the usual apparatus with which he was always tinkering, and in its place he had rigged a set of his largest retorts. A huge



"I was attacked by one of the terrible Fire People—desperately I shot at its flaming body!"

jar of sulphuric acid in a wicker basket stood beside them, and on the floor lay one of our empty oxygen-containers and a Steinlitz air pump. Evidently there was something doing; but I knew better than to ask questions until he was ready to talk.

He came to me at length, placing in my hand a fragment of hide. It was made up of shiny scales, like the skin of a fish, and was as tough and as pliant as leather. I frowned over it for some time, but finally gave it up.

"Great gophers! What's this, Mark?"

"All—or nearly all—that remains of our late lamented friends last night," he replied. "Our bullets simply tore them to bits!"

"Great Scott!"

"I've been hunting round for them in the square!" Mark explained quietly, while I sat rigid. "And except for two brown stains on the ground and this, there's nothing to see. It's enough, though!"

"Oh!" Something that had been puzzling me came into my mind. "I say, Mark, why didn't you turn the electric fire on 'em last night?" I asked.

"And burn you and the city down as well, you chump!" he retorted scornfully. "Besides"—his voice sank—"what's the good of trying to burn creatures with fire when they're made of it?"

"Made of fire?" I gasped, bewildered. "Why, what—"

"That's right—made of fire!" he nodded. "In the same way that we're made of flesh and blood. See that skin—well, that's their outer covering. Inside I found traces of tough fibrous tubes corresponding to human arteries. Only, instead of blood, those arteries were full of heated gas—once!"

"Oh, but—" I protested, whereat Mark's chin went up.

"It sounds rot, but it isn't!" he snapped coldly. "I tell you the Fire people are just as much a race of beings as Britons—only they belong to Lebanu and not to Earth, and live in a different element. From what old Onada has told me, they're a well organised race, too, with a highly developed intellect. The only difference between us, apart from shape, is that our life-springs are good red blood and air, and theirs is a

mixture of gas and heat. And besides the evidence of our own eyes, the fact is scientifically possible!"

I could only sit and goggle at him in amazement. Mark's voice, keen as a sword, cut through my thoughts.

"How're you feeling, Tom? Fit?"

"All right!" I mumbled.

"Well, look here; the other day, when you were chopping back the overgrown jungle from this city, you broke down some old buildings that were past repair, didn't you?"

"Um!" I answered in surprise. "What about 'em?"

"This: I want you to go out and lug back as much of the broken quartz as you can carry. Say about two hundredweight. And then I want you to take your axe and pound it into powder for me! Got that?"

"Yes; but what——"

"Then seat and do it!" he ordered. "I'll tell you why later!"

Obediently I strode through the old city. If Mark wanted quartz dust, I knew he must have a reason, so I wasted no time. There were no signs of any pigmies—they were still hiding in the temple, I reckon—and I went through the silent crumbling streets into the outskirts of the jungle, where a few days back I had knocked down a pillared mansion. Dragging out two of the columns, I yoked them round my shoulders with tough forest vines, and dragged them back to the ship. There, for the next hour, I enjoyed myself with the butt end of the axe, smashing them into shingle.

As fast as I made a heap, Mark came down and carried it inside. At last he called to me that he had enough, and, straightening my back, I went inside to find him bending over his bench. He had a heap of the stone near at hand, and was dribbling it into the large retorts by handfuls.

When each one was half-filled, he uncorked his bottle of sulphuric acid carefully and poured a measured quantity into each. Presently, in every vessel, a thin cloud of gas began to form—the action of the acid on the quartz—and closing them down, he gave a sigh of satisfaction. Catching my puzzled eye, he grinned.

"That's carbon-dioxide gas brewing in there!" he explained; at which I grunted.

"Go hon! It smells like rotten eggs. And what's it for, anyway?"

He wheeled to look at me, his face turning so cold and bitter that I gave back a pace or two.

"Tom," he said quietly, "what's the best way to put out fire?"

"Eh? Why—why chuck water or sand on it, I suppose!" I gurgled, wondering what he meant.

"Suppose we haven't either sand or water?"

"Why then——" Understanding dawned on me swiftly. "D'you mean——"

"Yes! I'm going to quench a fire—a big fire; and without water or sand!" he cried. "Tom, those devils last night frightened me so much that I nearly played the coward and

ran away. Now I'm going after revenge!"

He pushed me gently towards the door.

"You get out now. Go for a stroll or something. Come back in two hours' time—and then, Tom, we'll be ready to wipe out the Burning Mountains, the Fire People, and anything else we find there. Or die ourselves!" he finished softly.

I went without a word.

The Valley of Flame!

TWO hours later, almost to the second, the Meteor shot smoothly into the violet sky, straight from her moorings in Xemos City; and Mark and I were on our way to what promised to be the most desperate venture of our careers, so far.

During all the time I had been away, Mark had been busy; but although I looked round, the only change I saw was that the great oxygen-container had been clamped to the control-platform and a long, flexible steel tube with a quarter-inch nozzle had been fixed to its mouth. Of retorts, acid and crumpled quartz there was no sign. And Mark had "war" written all over his quiet face.

I had no time for questions. If trouble was the order of the day, I had some preparations to make myself, and while the Meteor swung at half-speed across the fire-blackened plain that had been Lebanu's jungle, I was up in the gun turret, busy with our spiteful little gun.

Another thing I noticed was that the ship had suddenly become icy cold, and there was a faint smell of ammonia about. But when I mentioned it to Mark, he only smiled twistedly and abruptly pulled the control-lever over.

Like a silver torpedo, the Meteor swung round and whistled straight towards the great mountain wall, towering above us. Ever since yesterday, when I had slammed a shell into them, the Burning Mountains had remained cold and black, instead of their usual fiery hue. Now, as we got closer and closer, the old colour returned. From end to end, they burst into a violent crimson, angry and hot, and colour spreading like a flood. Only one remained dull and lifeless—the biggest of all, whose top our gun had smashed in like an egg-shell.

Once again the bright lights, which always heralded a gas attack, sparkled on the peaks, and in a moment the air was full of whirling rings, melting into a cloud which barred our path. I heard Mark laugh harshly; the Meteor tilted, and in a second we were climbing up and up, the mountain tops sinking to meet us, our speed increasing at every yard.

It was wonderfully thrilling. What awaited us among those glaring cliffs we neither knew nor cared. The exhilaration of our pace and the danger of our mission had gone to our heads. Almost in front of us, not half a mile away, a great light slashed towards us, dissolving into an avalanche of

gas, and as the Meteor swerved aside dizzily, I heard Mark's voice:

"Sock it to 'em, Tom!"

It was enough. In a matter of seconds I had the gun sights right on that brilliant light, and the turret rocked.

Spang! A volcano seemed to spurt from the mountain, a splash of orange flame filled the skies. Through the air came the back-blast of a terrific internal explosion, the Meteor bobbed like a cork in water, and flying fragments and clouds of smoke whirled past us. With a reckless whoop, Mark slammed his Light-engines into their fullest power, and, before the echoes of that colossal crash had died away, we were in the heart of the Burning Mountains, and the Fire People were on us with all the venom of their devilish spleen.

Snatching a hasty look through the floor window, I saw we were sailing above a giant crater, like an enormous trough, miles in length. Somehow it reminded me of a gigantic hollow tooth—a wall of crags on either side, and in between a deep, ugly valley.

Along its whole length ran a foaming river of sparkling flame, while from every seam and nook sulphur fires, like serpents' tongues, spat at us—jets of gas and shrieking steam flicked past our hull. The mountains were *alive*—of that I'm sure—and using their mightiest efforts to drag us down into the seething furnace below.

Among the pinnacles and minarets of glowing white-hot rock, the Fire People clustered in hundreds, every one as hideous as the pair we had destroyed, and even as I stared, a flowing column of flame reached from the heart of the valley, gathered the fiends from their stations and flung them through the air—to meet us!

They hit our aluminium hull and triplex windows like so many hissing coals, hung there for a moment in a blaze of their own fire, and as swiftly crumpled up and fell away.

Then we started our own attack.

As fast as I could ram the shells into the breach, I poured down gas and lyddite until the turret was shaking with the constant recoils. Every time I hit the fragile mountains—which, as Mark said, were nothing but husks of thinnest volcanic rock wherein rivers of fire and gas were stored—they crumpled up like paper, the gaping wound spreading rapidly as torrents of stone thundered down into the flaming valley. Steadily we forged along the hissing, roaring valley, smashing out our challenges to right and left, working gradually towards the end where we could see the fire was greatest. Again and again the mountains hurled their ghastly children at us, to grind and screech round the hull and glare in at us with their slit-like eyes before we hurled them off.

The interior of the cabin grew hotter and hotter until the metal work burnt us when we touched it. The smell of ammonia grew stronger as Mark adjusted a switch from

time to time in an effort to cool down, but nothing could combat that heat. It was a wonder we did not burst into flames and sink. And still Mark held back his new weapon—whatever it was.

The time came at last when I dared no longer use the gun for fear she burst in my face. Staggering down the heated ladder, I croaked the news to Mark, although my blistered tongue almost refused to act.

By this time, the terrific raids of the Fire People were dropping off slowly—even though at any minute I feared our windows would break in the sizzling heat and let a flood of them into the cabin. In which case—good-night. But they held, like every other part of the wonderful Meteor, and still we struggled beneath those flame-spitting peaks towards the main pool of fire.

Sliding from his driving-seat, Mark motioned me to take the engines. I did so, and watched him crawl to the oxygen container, more dead than alive. Seizing the steel tube, he took it astern and thrust it through a tiny hole above our discharge-tubes. Then, reeling back, he turned on the tap. Glancing through the stern window, I saw a yellow fog leap forth above our tail, spreading through the air at lightning speed. Mark was capering like a madman, snarling in hoarse joy.

"That'll stop 'em!" he screeched. "That'll freeze 'em; drench 'em; kill 'em!" He was almost delirious with excitement. "Carbon dioxide; lap it up, you fiends! It'll cool you down a lot!"

I thought he'd gone slightly mad; I know the heat, the maddening whirl of fire and gas, the thunder of falling mountains was turning my head and brain.

Yet we hung on, and now I could see the effect of Mark's gas—the coldest known to science. Straight into the craters it dropped, swamping them, quenching their fires, blotting out the sulphur jets—and wiping out the gibbering Fire People in scores. Bursting them; dissolving them into columns of thick brown fumes.

Ye gods! May I never see such a sight again. They died in nooks and crannies, on hillsides and amid pools of fierce blue flames into which they scrambled for shelter. But it was useless; our gas lapped them up and left the rocks bare and bleak.

At last I scrambled back into the gun turret—to find we had one shell left of all the hefty arsenal we had brought from Earth. It was a bad shock, and Mark's flushed, dripping face twitched when I told him. He looked ahead to where the fiercest inferno of all still burned; the headquarters—no, the very heart and soul—of this terrible land of flame; and his cracked lips quivered. Beyond the sea of staring red, we could see an opening in the mountain wall leading to freedom.

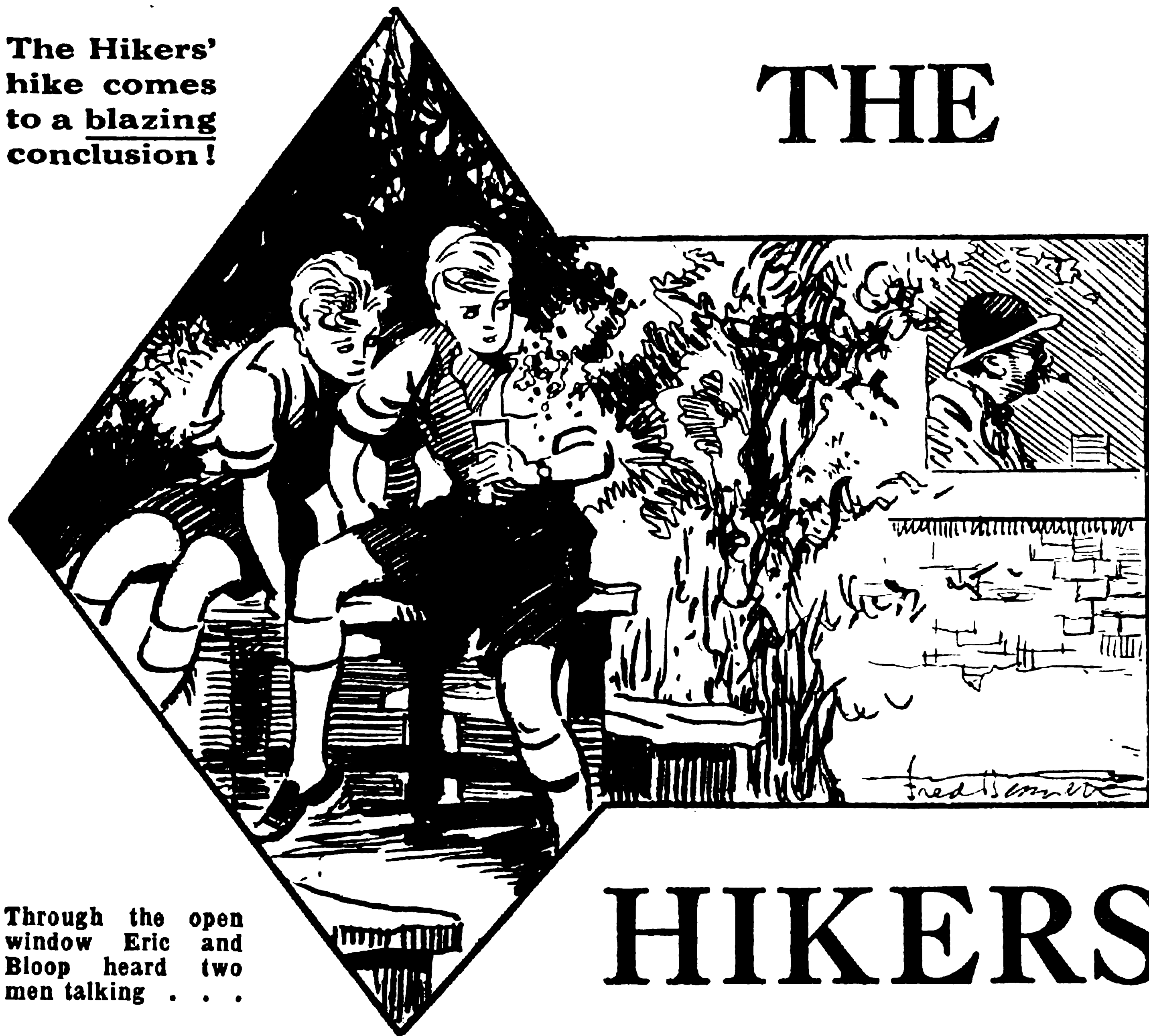
"We're going over that pool!" I heard him gasp. "Slam your last shell into its heart, Tom—and leave the rest to me!"

(Continued on page 43.)

A Rollicking Yarn To Make You Keep That Cheery Complexion!

The Hikers' hike comes to a blazing conclusion!

THE



Through the open window Eric and Bloop heard two men talking . . .

HIKERS

Bloop Cooks a Special Dish!

TONY RIDGERS looked cautiously over the low hedge, and again saw the plump young rabbit sitting up on its hind legs with its back towards him. He fitted a pebble into the leather loop, took careful aim, and the catapult twanged.

Making sure that nobody had witnessed the act, he jumped the hedge and picked up the dead rabbit. Ten minutes later he had skinned and cut up the rabbit and buried the skin; and bunny, with an onion and carrot to give it a flavour, was simmering in a pot on the primus stove.

Tony's two chums, Bloop and Eric Gale, had gone foraging for eggs, milk, and butter, and were still absent. A fat man with a basket climbed the adjacent stile, and smiled an oily smile at Tony.

"Any collar-studs, shoe-laces, suspenders, or pocket-combs to-day, guv'nor?" he inquired.

"No thanks," said Tony. "We've got bags of shoe-laces and pocket-combs, and we've got no use for the other things you mention, for we don't wear 'em."

"Soap, safety-razors, boot-polish, sewing-

cotton, needles, scissors, shampoo-powders, 'air-oil, mouse-traps, matches, socks, handkerchiefs, fountain-pens, 'air-pins, chewing-gum, and corn cure?" continued the fat man, who appeared to carry a large and mixed stock.

As Tony intended to do some washing later in the day, he purchased a bar of inferior soap to get rid of the cunning-looking peddler.

"Nice smell that," said the fat man, lingering and sniffing the air. "It smells like rabbit, and I reckon he crawled into the sasspan and drowned himself when you wasn't lookin'. I 'ope Bloggins, the keeper, won't sniff it, for he's a terror, and he might think you'd pinched it."

The fat man winked knowingly at Tony, picked up his basket, and waddled off towards the village, where, in the pretty garden attached to the village inn, Bloop and Eric Gale were refreshing themselves with ginger-beer. A hedge of rambler roses screened them from the bar-parlour, but the windows were wide open, and suddenly a husky voice reached them.

"'Ello, Bloggins!" said the voice. "If I

was Sir Charles, I'd boot you out. You allus seems to be 'ere instead of 'tending to your job as keeper. If Sir Charles knowed as some kids was campin' in Jenner's Croft cookin' one of his rabbits for lunch, he'd fire you for neglect o' dooty."

"You mean that?" said another voice. "Just wait till I've finished this 'ere drink, and, if it's true wot you say, I'll twist their necks off 'em!"

"Oh, drat Tony!" sighed Bloop, for, being fully conversant with the ways of his fellow-liker, he was certain that Tony was the culprit. "Anything with fur, feathers, or fins on it, he can't let alone, the beastly little poacher!"

"Bit of luck we heard it," grinned Eric. "Having one's neck twisted by Bloggins must be a nasty sticky business. Sprint, chum—sprint!"

They reached the camp well ahead of Mr. Bloggins. To the astonishment of Tony, Bloop whisked the saucepan off the stove, ran across the meadow with it, and dumped the contents into the brook.

"What's got him now?" asked Tony, staring.

"If you must poach, you ass, don't let anybody see you do it," said Eric. "By an amazing bit of luck, we heard a chap telling the keeper you were cooking a rabbit, and that's why we barged home—to save your bacon."

Bloop did not hurry back. He said nothing to Tony, but replaced the closed saucepan on the stove. They had not long to wait for Mr. Bloggins and the ungrateful fat man who had betrayed Tony.

Bloggins, who wore pig-skin leggings and carried a thick ash-plant, scowled at the saucepan, which was just beginning to boil.

"What 'ave you got in there?" he demanded.

"Now what on earth has that to do with you?" said Bloop. "Some folks are so jolly curious and inquisitive. We don't like your looks or your style, and we don't want your acquaintance, so kindly clear off!"

Two or three other men of the yokel class who had heard about it at the inn came hurrying up.

"My name's Bloggins, and I'm gamekeeper to the owner of this 'ere land, and I insists on lookin' in that pot, believin' you've got a rabbit in it as was poached."

Bloop yawned.

"It are a rabbit," said the fat man. "The smell's gone off a bit now, but it sniffed strong when I come past a while ago. They always sniffs when they fust starts to boil. Shouldn't wonder if they 'aven't some young partridges 'idden somewheres, too."

"Bloggins," said Bloop, "I wish you'd fade away. You have no right to touch our property, and I warn you not to make a bigger fool of yourself than nature made you! You say there's a rabbit in our saucepan, and I'm too much of a gentleman to contradict you. And if you find a rabbit, what do you intend to do about it?"

"You'll jolly well know in a minute," said the gamekeeper viciously.

He took off the saucepan and lifted the lid. A cloud of steam arose, but there was none of the savoury aroma usually associated with stewed rabbit; only a thin smell of hot water. Bloggins peered in and his eyes goggled.

Instead of a rabbit he saw a flat white stone, taken from the nearby brook. And on it Bloop had pencilled in bold black letters:

"BLOGGINS IS THE WORLD'S
SILLIEST ASS."

The flabbergasted gamekeeper dropped both saucepan and lid, and the stone fell out and lay on the grass with the inscription uppermost. The spectators craned forward to read it, and a roar of laughter followed.

One of the spectators did not laugh, and that was the fat man who had given Tony away, hoping to receive a few free drinks as a reward. Unfortunately, instead of selling Tony he had sold Bloggins—and Bloggins had a wicked temper.

"Where's Scuff?" roared the gamekeeper, almost boiling with rage and discomfiture. "Where are you, you fat liar?"

Scuff was legging it for cover, prancing along like a terrified elephant. He had secured a good long start, but the gamekeeper went after him, and the grinning audience followed. All but one man, who came up to the Hikers and touched his cap civilly.

"Begging your pardon, but if I was you I'd shift off," he said. "When Sir Charles is away that keeper chap gets a swelled 'ead, fancies he owns the whole show, and acts like it. That smart trick of yours will make all the village laugh at him for months, and he won't forget it. If you stops he's sure to try and get his revenge on you."

"Much obliged to you," said Eric, then he turned and grinned at Bloop. "You're a real good cook, old scout, but that was one of your best efforts. It was a jolly sight too hard and tough for old Bloggins to bite or swallow. Ha, ha, ha!"

Bloop answered Eric's grin and then shook his head mournfully at Tony.

"I keep telling you not to do it, Tony, but I might just as well talk to a chunk of rock," he said. "Some day you'll get yourself into a sticky mess, and when you do, don't ask me to pull you out."

"I shan't—not in these shorts," grinned Tony. "But what are we going to do about tuck for lunch now the rabbit has gone west?"

"Fill up on breed and cheese," said Bloop. "The landlady of the inn is boiling a chicken for us to eat cold for supper. We'll go and collect it later."

"And what about the terrible Bloggins and what that guy warned us he'd do?" asked Eric.

"Oh, blow Bloggins to Birmingham and back!" said Bloop. "Bloggins is a wash-out!"

A Flaming Finish!

IN the afternoon, gathering clouds threatened a sharp shower, so Tony put off his washing. At last Eric, who had been nodding over a book, threw it aside and looked at his watch.

"When are we going to fetch that old hen you told 'em to boil for us, Bloop?"

"Whenever you like," said Bloop. "We might as well have tea down there, for there's a summer-house to shelter in if we get a spot of rain, and I think there's some of that stuff about."

Expecting a downpour before they returned, the push-cart in which the Hikers carried all their luggage was put inside the tent, and Tony laced up the tent flaps. On the top of the last stile they had to cross sat Chuffy, the village idiot, a bony, pale-faced lad of seventeen. He had a huge mouth that was always grinning, and wore a crownless straw hat decorated with feathers.

Chuffy greeted the Hikers with a grin, and with a wooden spoon he beat a tattoo on a drum he carried, accompanying the drumming with shrill imitations of a bugle.

"Very nice indeed, old man," said Eric; "but we want to climb over that bit of wood you're perched on, so do you mind shifting over a bit."

Chuffy grinned more broadly than ever and jumped down. Evidently he intended to escort them into the village triumphantly to the sound of drum and bugle, for he marched in front of them.

"I'm fed up with this," said Eric. "Whoa, band! Please put a cork in it! What's your name, old son?"

"Chuffy," replied the village idiot, grinning from ear to ear.

"Your music is great stuff, Chuffy, but we don't want any to-day," said Eric. "Take your band somewhere else and I'll give you tuppence!"

"A tanner," said the village idiot.

"He knows a bit more than you think he does, Eric," said Bloop. "For the love of Mike give him a tanner before we all get headaches."

"You'll go clean away for a tanner?" said Eric. "Honest injun you'll barge off and not chuck any of that noise at us?"

Chuffy nodded eagerly, seized the coin, peered at it, bit it, and then danced away whooping joyously.

"They're never too potty not to know what money means," said Tony.

Bloop went into the village post office to buy stamps, and as Eric and Tony waited outside for him the gamekeeper passed them, wheeling a bicycle.

"How did you like the rabbit?" asked Eric.

"Did you catch the fat boy, Bloggins?" inquired Tony.

The gamekeeper gave them a savage stare, mumbled something under his breath and went on.

"Hi!" shouted Tony. "You forgot the rabbit we boiled for you. Come up and fetch it. I'll bore a hole in it, and find you

a bit of pretty ribbon, and then you can wear it round your neck."

"That got his goat," chuckled Eric. "His ears are absolutely wagging with rage. If there had been a rabbit in that pot, I'll bet he'd have raised no end of a shindy."

"He looks just the sort," Tony agreed. "But I hope he larruped that fat chap who charged me about fourpence too much for some rotten soap that won't wash, and then went and gave me away, the rotter!"

The rain held off, so they had tea in the garden of the inn, where the smiling landlady made them very welcome.

"Everybody's laughing about that joke you played on Bloggins the keeper," she said. "He ain't liked, and they'll be tellin' that for years to come and cracking their sides over it. They've christened him Boiled Rabbit already, and the name'll stick. My 'usband fairly 'ates Bloggins, and he nearly busted when he was told. He says he'd like you to accept a dozen new-laid eggs as a little present."

Tony inquired if Bloggins had caught the fat man, for he was rather anxious that such a mean rogue should not have escaped scot-free.

"You mean Scuff, the hawker chap, sir?" said the landlady. "Scuff came dashing into the bar all panting and blowing, collared his basket and dashed out again, so I expect he got on the motor-'bus in time to dodge the keeper. I don't think Bloggins will come 'ere for a long time—and jolly good rid-dance, for we don't want his custom."

Promising to come back for the fowl, which the landlady was to pack up for them with some salad and the new laid eggs, Bloop, Eric and Tony went to look at the local sights. These were not very numerous or thrilling, for they seemed to consist of a dozen cottages, a locked church, the village inn, a petrol station and a duck pond.

It seemed to be a happy little place, however, for every villager they met grinned broadly as if he had just heard the joke of his life, said "Rabbit," and touched his hat to them.

"We seem to have cheered these yokels up a bit," said Eric. "And look out, for I can spy our musical friend Chuffy, in the offing, and I'm not keen an hearing any more of his music, or parting with another hard-earned sixpence to keep him off."

Luckily, the village idiot was going in the opposite direction.

Time passed, and the Hikers were on the way back to the inn to collect their parcel when they were hailed by a woman who was leaning out of an upper window of her cottage.

"There's summat afire up yonder," she cried, pointing. "Looks like a 'aystack ablaze up Jenner's Croft way, but I don't remember no 'aystack thereabouts."

"Jenner's Croft," said Eric with a start. "Why, that's where the fat chap told Bloggins our camp was."

"It's a big fire, too, by the smoke," said the woman.



With mingled feelings the Hikers watched the tent and all their belongings burnt to ashes.

Bloop, Tony and Eric sprinted. There was no haystack in Jenner's Croft or anywhere near Jenner's Croft that they could recall. They saw black smoke rising above the trees and ran still faster, dreading a calamity.

By this time others were running in the same direction, but the three boys were well ahead of them. Vaulting the stiles, Tony and Bloop outdistanced Eric, who was hampered by having to carry a bulky parcel. Their noses soon detected a smell of paraffin, and strains of martial music greeted their ears.

Rub-a-dub-dub,
Ta-ra-ra,
Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub,
Ta-ra-ra.

A last vault and Bloop and Tony were back again in Jenner's Croft. Bloop put his hands in the pockets of his shorts and looked at the scene of devastation lazily. The Hikers' tent was a mere heap of blackened ashes, with tongues of flame shooting up here and there and sparks still glowing. The metal portion of the push-cart—wheels, springs and axles—were just visible through the dense smoke that reeked of paraffin.

And round the ruins marched Chuffy at a quick step, beating his drum and giving shrill imitations of a bugle.

"Well, Eric old thing," said Bloop, as his chum came up panting, "our hiking-outfit looks a bit moth-eaten, what?"

"Dirty work," said Tony grimly. "The stink of paraffin's enough to choke you. The tin was nearly full, and it couldn't have leaked, for I'd jammed the cork hard in.

That crazy chap must have fired the shack on us."

Some men had dragged Chuffy away and silenced his music. Bloop, shrugging his shoulders, went over to the village idiot.

"Why did you burn our tent down and destroy our cart and all our stuff, Chuffy?"

"Never did." Chuffy wagged his head from side to side and grinned. "It was all smoke and fire when I come. Never did. Only make music to make him burn faster."

"I never knowed him do a wicked thing like that afore, master," said one of the villagers, "but I've found a box of matches in his pocket."

Bloop laughed. Everything had been in the tent and there was nothing worth taking out of it. Tony and Eric looked rather dismal, and Bloop gave each of them a dig in the ribs.

"This hike has gone bust and come to a sudden and sticky end," he said, "so it's home boys, home, either by train or motor-coach. And don't worry about the lost dunnage, for if I bleat about our bitter hard luck to my guv'nor, I dare say we'll squeeze a new outfit from him if we're ever such asses as to go hiking again."

It was whispered in the village that Bloggins had bribed Chuffy to burn down the tent. But as the keeper was several miles away at the time of the fire and could bring witnesses to prove it, it remained at that.

THE END.

(The first of a corking new series of footer yarns coming next week. Look out for Bull's-Eye Bill—he's some lad!)

Continuing DAVID GOODWIN'S *Enthralling Adventure Serial—*

Knights of the Road!



The Tables Turned!

RALPH was led away and flung down on the bed in the damp cell that had been his on the first night in Duncansby. The door was bolted on him, and he lay there more dead than alive, till the light of another dawning day began to peep through the narrow window near the ceiling.

He was roused soon afterwards by Alick, who dealt him a kick or two to ascertain his condition. He was able to stand now, and even to walk slowly, and Alick hustled him into the big school-room.

All the boys were there, hungry and woe-begone as ever. Some stared with pity at the prisoner, others looked dumbly indifferent, and one or two showed signs of pleasure at what they were going to see, for cruelty hardens mean natures and makes them cruel in turn.

"Bring him out into the middle of the room!" said Callard harshly, and it was done.

"This," went on the schoolmaster to the boys, with a wave of his hand towards Ralph, "this may be an example to one or two of you. You are going to see what happens to a boy that runs away in base ingratitude from the comforts and advantages he enjoys under my roof. Strip him to the buff, Alick, my boy!"

Helped by the two toadies, Brown and Simpson, Alick stripped off Ralph's tattered garments to the waist.

A rascally schoolmaster receives a strong dose of his own medicine!

Ralph was beyond knowing or caring what happened to him, but he felt himself seized, on an order from Callard, forced

down across the bench that was clamped to the floor in the centre of the room, and bound tight to it with ropes, his face towards the door.

The schoolmaster strode forward, grasping a long, pliant ash-plant, bound with a ribbing of fine steel wire. He swished the cane through the air with a whistling sound.

"Watch, boys—watch!" he said grimly.

"This is the reward of any boy who runs away from this school!"

He bent his slit-like eyes on Ralph, raised the ash-plant, and the first cut struck home. The boy's frame quivered, but he made no sound.

"One!" counted Callard, and paused. Then he raised the thing again, and poised his body for the stroke, while dead silence fell on the whole room.

Before the next blow could fall, the loud neigh of a horse was heard outside, followed by the sound of hurrying feet in the passage. Then came the voice of one trying to keep some intruder out; a blow, and a fall.

Callard paused angrily, with the cruel ash-plant held aloft. A tremendous blow sounded on the big school-room door, it was flung open, and a tall, richly-dressed Cavalier in a black mask burst into the room, crying:

"Put down that whip, you dog!"

It was Dick Forrester, pistol in hand!

Erect and commanding, mud-spattered from his gallop to the north in search of his brother, Dick cast a rapid glance round the room at every soul within it. He had not recognised that the victim on the bench was what he had come to seek.

"Dick!" cried Ralph, twisting his body and scarce able to speak for joy, for, despite the velvet mask, he recognised his brother on the instant. "Dick, you've come in time!"

"Ralph!" cried Dick, springing forward in amazement and wrath. "Is it you? I feared the worst, but I did not dream of this! Who bound you there? Loose him!"

"I did!" shouted Stephen Callard, stamping with anger. "I did! What brings you into my house, you swashbuckler, with a pistol in your fist?"

"Ah!" said Dick, between his teeth, wheeling upon the schoolmaster. "You, was it? Stand you there, and we will settle matters in full shortly! Come forward, one of you boys, and set loose my brother, hear you? I am Richard Forrester—and this is my warrant!"

He held his pistol to Stephen Callard's head. The schoolmaster turned as white as ashes. The boys hesitated. Then out stepped Ben Garret, the starved and beaten household drudge, and in a few moments he had freed Ralph from his bonds.

"I am blithe to serve you, though they kill

me for it!" cried Ben, his wan cheeks flushing. "For you are the first that ever spoke to me kindly."

"They shall not kill you, boy," said Dick. "None who befriends the Forresters shall come to harm. Stand steady, you dog, there, or I will school you to the purpose. Keep those hands down! Come here, Ralph, lad, and tell me what has befallen!"

Ralph staggered to his brother, who put his arm round the boy's bare shoulders, and stood facing the rest.

In as few words as possible, Ralph told his tale, not as a complaint, but as a soldier who reports to his senior officer, never whining or calling for vengeance, but putting the matter in plain speech. Dick's brow grew black as thunder as he listened, and when the end came he turned slowly on the schoolmaster.

"You have heard," he said in a voice that shook with suppressed wrath. "You have a long reckoning to pay!"

Despite his fear of the pistol, Callard's rage at being mastered in his own house and deprived of his victim drove him to frenzy.

"What is it to you, ye beggarly cadger?" he shrieked. "You'll be the gallows-bird who that boy's uncle said had taken to the road!"

Dick plucked off his mask and looked at the schoolmaster grimly.

"I am Ralph Forrester's brother," he said, "and it were ill that a lad of gentle blood should be stained by the touch of such as you; but that you should dare to ill-treat him, you and your cur of a son, that is a fault you are about to pay for in full!"

"I am not to be scared by your pistol!" shouted Callard. "I'm master in my own house, in spite of fifty such as you!"

He rushed at Dick and tried to grab the pistol, receiving for his pains a buffet that sent him spinning into the corner. The boys, who had been staring in scared silence, now became roused from their fear, and the whole class-room was in a buzz of excitement.

"You knave!" cried Dick. "Let that teach you to keep your hands down! Move but another inch, and I will rid the world of you!"

"Hurree!" cried Ben Garret, jumping up on a bench and dancing with delight.

"And now to our lesson!" cried Dick. "Boys, I am going to take this class for 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. Travelling 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. They have many stirring adventures together until Dick leaves his companion and rides north to see how his brother is faring. In the meantime, Ralph has reached Duncansby School, a dreary, desolate place on the wild moorlands. Unknown to him, Vane has arranged with the headmaster that the boy shall "not live long." Ralph escapes, but is recaptured. "And now you shall pay the penalty!" threatens the cruel schoolmaster, who is named Callard.

(Now read on.)

morning. Seize that cowering ruffian there, four of you, strip the coat off his back, and strap him down where he binds his victims! He shall taste the physic he has dealt out to so many younger than he! Quick, I say!"

"No, no!" shrieked Callard as, after a moment's hesitation, four or five of the bigger boys seized him and obeyed Dick's command.

"You hired murderer!" retorted Dick. "If you resist I will come and handle you myself! Bring him to the bench and strap him down tight, you young rips!"

The schoolmaster, shouting and protesting, was forced down by willing hands and tied fast in the same position he had given to Ralph.

"Let me up, sir!" he shrieked, kicking and twisting frantically. "I will give you all the money in the house—I will set your brother free!"

"There are those you have flogged into their graves, whose blood cries out on you!" retorted Dick. "Line up there, you boys! Pick up that wired ash-plant I see on the floor, and do each of you in turn give this ruffian half a dozen stripes with all the strength of his arm. The boy who fails I will thrash with my own hands! Number one, begin!"

The Scoundrel Gets His Deserts!

NEVER was such a lesson taught since schools began. The starved, beaten boys felt themselves free once more, and raised a cheer for the young highwayman, who promised them they should not lose by what they did. The first boy took the ash-plant and laid it across the cruel schoolmaster's back with such hearty good will that Callard kicked and roared like a bull. When the six blows were spent, the next boy took the stick and did the same, and the next after him, till the whole house echoed with the scoundrel's bellowings.

"Stop that fellow sneaking out there!" ordered Dick suddenly as he saw an evil-eyed boy making for the window.

"That's Alexander, Callard's son," said Ralph, who had put his torn clothes on painfully and was sitting on a bench, surveying the scene. "Let him be brought back, Dick. He is his father's deputy, and as cruel a bully as Callard himself."

"Like father, like son," said Dick. "A worthy pair. Here, you youngster yonder, you are of the size of the schoolmaster's son, and less wasted-looking than some. Take the worthy Alexander aside, and let him put his fists up. Give him a sound thrashing in fair fight. You'll find he has little stomach for honest fisticuffs, if I know aught of bullies!"

The excellent Alick cried for mercy, but he soon proved the truth of Dick's words, for the boy whom Dick singled out to meet him, though an inch or two shorter, showed himself more than a match for the bully. Alick tried to escape, but the boy made him fight, and soon the deputy torturer of Duncansby was getting his puffy face pummelled into a jelly by good sound fist-play, while his father

was still making the room echo with his cries under the blows of the schoolboys.

"That will do," said Dick as the last boy dealt out his portion. "Untie him, and let him get up."

The schoolmaster staggered up, gasping, his cruel face blue and white with emotion, and sat down on the bench in a huddled heap. His son was in much the same condition, and both of them looked as if they could scarce believe their senses, but sat rocking themselves and nursing their bruises, groaning dolorously. There was not an ounce of resistance left in either of them.

"So!" said Dick, looking at them coolly. "You have inflicted this, and worse, on many scores of helpless youngsters, who had nobody to save them from your cruelty! Now you know how it tastes!"

"But there is other work towards. These lads look as though they have never had a decent meal in their lives, and I doubt you pocket their fees and starve them on pig's wash! We will remedy that for once, for by the look of you, you do not starve yourselves."

"Sour skilly and mouldy bread is the fare for the boys," said Ralph. "But I doubt if there's a better stocked larder in Yorkshire than the Callards keep for themselves."

"Ah!" said Dick. "Come along, boys, and we will sample it!"

They trooped out joyously. Dick locking the door on the two Callards. Little Ben Garret led the way to the larders.

"Faugh!" said Dick as he opened the first one and saw the mildewed bread and bowls of sickly gruel. "This is not fit for dogs! Fling it out into the yard, boys! Stay! Take a couple of bowls and the mouldiest loaf you can find to the school-room, and give it to the schoolmaster and his son. Here is the key. Carry them my word that if they have not eaten it to the last crumb when I return, or if they attempt to throw it away, I will lead them into the yard and cram the rest down their throats!"

Away went the boys on their errand. The larder next door was opened, and showed a very different stock.

"Od's bodikins!" exclaimed Dick. "The curs keep a fat table! Set the finest cloth on the dining-table, boys, and spread out the feast! A boar's head—pink me!—and four cold roast capons! Bring out those hams and the baron of beef. There is a pannier full of fruit-tarts besides, and four plum-puddings! Do those two hogs stuff themselves upon all this?"

"They were to hold a big feast to-night, Mr. Forrester," said little Ben Garret, laughing delightedly as he carried out the rich fare, while the others set the table. "A dozen guests are bidden to arrive."

"Then, by the rood, we'll leave them the bread and skilly!" cried Dick. "And I hope they'll enjoy it. Now, boys, set to!"

(Another absorbing instalment of David Goodwin's magnificent serial next Wednesday.)

"It's An Old Spanish Custom!"*(Continued from page 29.)*

"And K. K. who told Sir Edward that he ought to spring some more cash," said Travers, taking up the chorus.

"Then there's that chap, Sam Baggs!" went on Nipper. "He's too miraculous to be a real man! Rag-and-bone men don't do such things!"

"You don't think that Baggs was put up to it by K. K.?" gasped Handforth.

"Who is Baggs?" retorted Nipper, one suspicion crowding hard upon the other. "Think, you chaps! Isn't it a bit rummy that Sam Baggs should have been down at the bridge just when Handy arrived there to throw those things into the river? Was it a coincidence—or was it all part of a plot?"

"A pup-plot?" gurgled Handforth.

"My sons, get ready for a ghastly shock," said Nipper. "I can feel it in my bones! We, the Old-Timers of the Remove, have been dished and diddled and done by the Red-Hots! The only thing for us to do is to go to K. K. and force the truth out of him."

"Well, he's not far off," said Travers, glancing round. "He's talking to Vera Wilkes on the Ancient House steps."

"And, by the same token, he's evidently ready for trouble," said Nipper grimly. "The whole Red-Hot gang is there—as a bodyguard. No, there's one missing—Baines."

The Old-Timers marched over in a body. The red-headed Parkington was chatting very amiably with the Housemaster's daughter, who was looking unusually pretty this morning—accountable by the fact that she was brimming with delight.

"It's wonderful of you, K. K.," she was saying as the Old-Timers got into earshot. "One hundred pounds! I can hardly believe it!"

"Nipper's got the money, and it's going off to the hospital to-day," said K. K. serenely.

"It's—it's like a miracle," went on the girl. "When I suggested that you should collect some money for the hospital, I was only thinking of a few pounds. And when you definitely promised twenty-five pounds, I laughed at you."

"I said that I'd make you take that laugh back," nodded K. K. "I guaranteed twenty-five quid, and said that it would probably be fifty. When I start a thing, I don't let any grass grow under my feet, old girl."

"K. K., let us know the worst," said Nipper grimly, as he came marching up with the other Old-Timers. "First and foremost, I want to know where Baines is."

K. K. looked dreamily across the Triangle.

"At a rough guess, I should say that Baines is legging it at full speed across the paddock from the barn, hoping that he'll get here in time for first lesson," he replied coolly. "He ought to be able to do it fairly comfortably."

"But—but——" began Handforth.

"Baines is a pretty clever actor, isn't he?" went on Parkington, grinning. "Carlton lost its best amateur when Baines came to St. Frank's. He's a perfect terror with character parts."

"I knew it!" said Nipper sadly. "By Jove! That performance of Baines' was a masterpiece! Even I didn't spot it—and I've always thought I was cute at that sort of thing."

"You mean that Baines and—and Baggs——" began Travers, open-eyed.

"One and the same!" said Nipper. "All part of the plot. My dear chaps, it was a Red-Hot jape from first to last! Didn't I tell you that we'd been fooled?"

"Baines?" roared Handforth. "Do—do you mean to say that it was Baines who bought those things off me—and then charged

(Concluded on next page.)

THE INVISIBLE WORLD!*(Continued from page 35.)*

Hardly knowing what I did, I crawled to my post, loaded the gun and waited. Straight into the blinding screen of fire the Meteor hurtled; I had a sudden vision of a seething bubbling cauldron, out of which rose tempests and gas and waves of fire, while around it crouched the last of the Fire People.

At the end of my tether, too beaten and scorched to think, I depressed our gun and fired. A holocaust of light burst before me, a torrent of flame splashed against the turret and the Meteor shot from under my feet. In my ears roared the bellow as of a million cannons and down I went, seeming to sink right through the deck. Came a last crash, a last sheet of light. Then something hit me and everything was blank.

WE were out of the mountains—on a narrow strip of beach with the calm violet sea lapping peaceably a few yards away. I realised somehow that we were in new country, but I was past caring. All I knew was that I lay on my bunk, my body dripping with carron oil to soothe the burns that covered me from head to toe.

Mark lay not far away, dead to the world, but smiling in his sleep. So he had brought us through that final blaze! I managed to crane my neck towards the starboard window and saw, high above us, the Burning Mountains, cold, bleak—dead!

The soft afternoon sunlight glowed in the cabin. Our task was done. I closed my eyes and went falling, headlong, into a comfortable, bottomless pit—of slumber!

THE END.

(More excitement in the Invisible World next week—don't miss the next thrilling yarn in this amazing series.)

"It's An Old Spanish Custom!"

(Continued from previous page.)

the chaps twenty quid when they wanted to buy 'em back?"

"It was Baines who operated, but it was my idea," said K. K. modestly. "Hallo, Baines, sweetheart!" he added, as Baines came running up, breathless. "Well done! The cat's out of the bag, but it doesn't matter now."

Baines, a big, clumsy-looking youth, laughed uproariously. By his appearance, he was the last fellow in the world to be an actor, but he had proved beyond all doubt that he was as brilliant as Stevens, of the Fifth—and that was saying a lot.

"Just a little stunt of mine to raise money for the hospital," beamed K. K. "You see, I'd promised Vera that I'd get up twenty-five quid for certain—and probably fifty. I was particularly keen on the fifty, and that's why I touched Sir Edward for that extra tenner—never dreaming that he'd make it a hundred!"

"You mustn't be angry," said Vera gently.

"That's all very well," said Handforth indignantly, "but what about me? I'm the chap who's been made the donkey!"

"Nature made you a donkey years and years ago," said K. K. with a grin, "and I simply couldn't resist riding you when you took up that foreign goods' stunt—that old Spanish custom."

"And so the Remove is contributing one hundred quid to the Hospital Fund," continued K. K. proudly. "I rather think we've done pretty well, darlings."

"The Remove?" asked Handforth. "Where do you get that from? You Red-Hots haven't contributed a brass farthing! It's we Old-Timers who've whacked out all the money!"

"The money, yes," admitted K. K. gently. "But if it hadn't been for us, the hospital wouldn't have had anything from the Remove at all. You've provided the cash, and we've provided the brains—and I rather think that the brains are the more important."

Nipper clapped K. K. on the back.

"You win, old man," he said feelingly. "We Old-Timers will now proceed to crawl away and hide our diminished heads. It's a Red-Hot victory! You've put it across us beautifully!"

"I rather think we have," agreed Kirby, Keeble, Parkington sweetly. "Hallo! That's the last toll of the bell! Aren't lessons a frightful bore? There's much more fun in japing you Old-Timers!"

THE END.

(Another extra-long St. Frank's yarn next week. A real laughter-maker: one of E. S. Brooks' very best. Entitled "K. K.'s 'K'ompany!" Order your copy to-day.)

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