

"HIGH JINKS AT ST. FRANK'S!"

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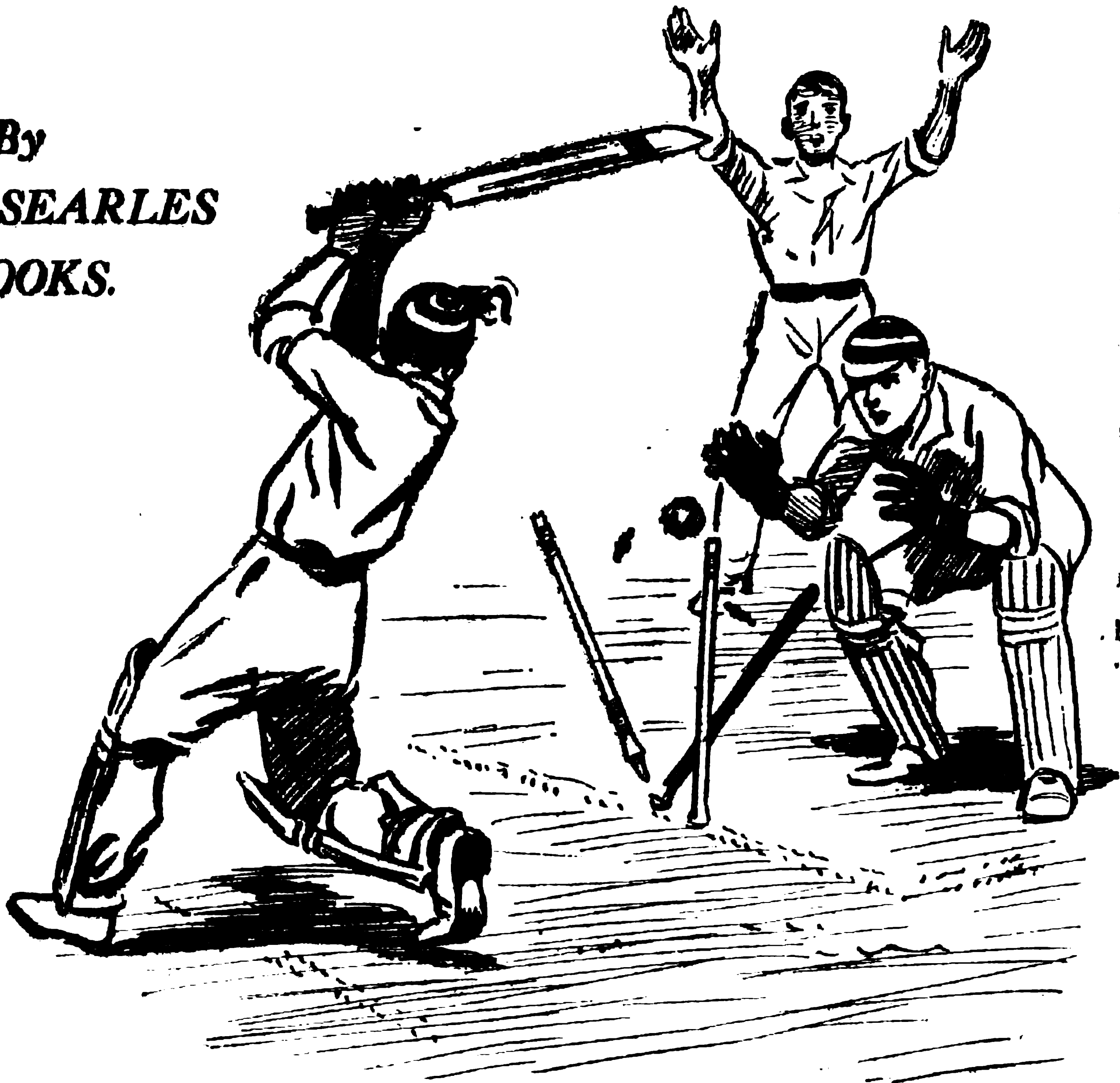
OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

May 30th, 1931.

Meet "Scatty" Scattlebury, The New Headmaster of St. Frank's!

HIGH JINKS at

By
**EDWY SEARLES
BROOKS.**



CHAPTER 1.

The Amiable Stranger!

"**G**OOD old Bannington!" said Handforth warmly.

He drove his little Morris Minor slowly, so that he and his chums could feast their eyes on the scene. Bannington High Street, this afternoon, was looking its best. The wide road and the familiar buildings, some quaintly old-fashioned, some ultra-modern, were bathed in the hot sunshine of the early summer's day.

"Looks good—eh?" went on Handforth as he glanced at Church, who sat next to him. "By George! Old England takes a bit of beating, you chaps!"

"We're jolly glad to be back, anyway," remarked Church. "I say, how about stopping at the Japanese Café for an ice-cream?"

"Not likely!" replied Handforth. "I want to push on—I want to get to St. Frank's. We can have all the ice-cream we want there."

"I'll need about a dozen," said McClure, from the rear. "Phew! I'm baking!"

McClure was sitting in the confined rear space at the back of the little saloon; he was almost hidden by the piles of suit-cases and other baggage which the juniors had brought with them.

The celebrated chums of Study D were not always so enthusiastic about the architectural beauties of Bannington. This was a very special occasion. It was the first day of the half-term, immediately following the Whitsun holidays, and Handforth & Co. were returning to St. Frank's after a somewhat long absence.

With a crowd of other St. Frank's fellows, they had only just got back from their astonishing and exciting adventures in the Arctic—in that queer little country called Northestria, where time had stood still for many centuries.

It was good to be back in these old familiar scenes. Lord Dorrimore's super-submarine had reached home at the tag-end

of the Whitsun holidays, and all the St. Frank's fellows and the Moor View girls had been able to spend a few days at home before the half-term commencement.

A number of fellows were returning to school by road; Handforth & Co. in the Morris Minor, Nipper, Travers, Reggie Pitt and several others on their motor-bikes; William Napoleon Browne and a few other Fifth-Formers in Browne's Morris-Oxford. But the majority of course, had to be content with the railway.

"Buck up, Handy!" said Church, with some impatience. "We were late in starting, and everybody else will be there when

we arrive. There won't be an ice-cream left!"

Handforth needed no urging. As soon as the little car had got clear of the busy High Street, Handforth opened the throttle and the Minor was soon humming sturdily along the open country road at a brisk thirty.

"Be there in five minutes now!" said Handforth gaily. "Cricket this term, my sons! I've made up my mind to knock up a century in the very first match!"

His chums grinned.

"Perhaps the bowlers will make up their minds to send you out for a duck," suggested Church. "Pity we can't have a game to-day. We're badly out of practice, and it's perfect cricket weather."

The Head said "NOT OUT!"

And that was a KNOCK OUT!



"Of course we can have a game to-day—a practice game, anyway," replied Handforth. "The giddy season's nearly a month old, and we haven't touched a bat or a ball this year! That's one of the drawbacks to going off on these adventure trips. Still, we'll soon make up for lost time."

"We'll be pretty stale in our studies, too," said Mac, from the rear. "Old Crowell will probably tear his hair, and we shall be booked for extra lessons so often that we shan't have much time for cricket."

"Rats!" retorted Handforth. "If Crowell tries on that sort of game—and in the summer term, too—we'll——"

He broke off, for no apparent reason, and at the same time he eased his foot on the throttle pedal. The Morris Minor reduced speed, now gliding along slowly.

"What's up?" asked Church curiously.

"Look there!" replied Handforth.

His voice was charged with wonderment, and Church, following the direction of his leader's gaze, uttered a surprised ejaculation. The little car had turned a bend in the quiet country road, and was gliding into a dip.

On one side there was a belt of woodland, and on the other a stretch of green meadows, with the River Stowe just beyond. Down in this dip there was a shallow, sparkling brook which ran parallel with the road for twenty or thirty yards, after which it cut off across the meadows to empty itself into the Stowe.

But it wasn't the scenery which caused Handforth and Church to stare so hard. It was the figure of a man in that dip. He was a highly respectable-looking, elderly gentleman, dressed in sober black. And the elderly gentleman, with his trousers turned up to his knees, was contentedly paddling in the brook. Over his head, to protect him from the hot sun, he held an open umbrella.

The spectacle was such an unusual one that the schoolboys were more bewildered than amused. Handforth even stopped the car so that he could obtain a better look. McClure, shifting some of the luggage, had a look, too.

"The old boy's got the right idea," said Mac, grinning. "There couldn't be a better day for paddling."

Handforth and Church were still too astonished to make any comment. At close quarters they saw that the stranger was apparently a gentleman. His clothes were of the finest quality; a platinum watch-chain adorned his waistcoat: his hair was tinged with grey, and his scholarly face was full of character.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" murmured Handforth, at last.

The scene was so utterly incongruous. A boy paddling would have been fitting enough on this hot afternoon; or even a passing tramp might have cooled his feet in this way. But to come upon this eminently re-

spectable gentleman thus engaged, left Handforth & Co. somewhat breathless.

The gentleman in question was aware that the boys were taking a great interest in him. Indeed, he could not fail to be so, for the car had stopped right opposite, and the three juniors were staring at him with frank curiosity. But he evidently misunderstood their motive in stopping the car.

"Can I be of any help, boys?" he asked genially. "If you have lost your way, I'm afraid you won't find me of much use. I am a complete stranger in this district myself. However, I am quite willing to do the best I can."

He spoke charmingly, and he gazed upon Handforth & Co. with such a friendly eye that the boys were immediately at their ease.

"Nunno, sir, we haven't lost our way," said Handforth hastily. "We—we were wondering if you would like a lift."

They weren't actually wondering anything of the sort, but Handforth was rather at a loss for words, and he said the first thing which came into his head. The genial stranger laughed amusedly.

"A lift?" he repeated. "It's very kind of you, but I am quite happy where I am. Quite happy. A charming spot, this. My feet haven't been so comfortable for weeks. Besides, I don't need a lift. My own car will be back presently."

"Your own car?" repeated Handforth blankly.

He had opened the door of the Morris Minor by now, and he climbed out. Church and McClure did the same. They were intrigued by this remarkable stranger. And when they stood on the grassy verge of the road and eyed him at closer quarters, they were even more surprised. The old boy was splashing about in the brook and positively chirruping to himself with glee.

"Why don't you come in?" he asked gaily. "I can give you my personal assurance that the water is fine."

"Oh, rather, sir," said Handforth helplessly. "But—but did I understand you to say that you have a car of your own?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"Eh?"

"Why shouldn't I have a car of my own?" asked the stranger.

"No reason at all, sir," said Handforth hastily. "I—I was only thinking——"

"I quite understand, my boy," interrupted the stranger. "You were thinking that you could give me a lift? A very charming thought, and one which I fully appreciate. But I can assure you that I am thoroughly enjoying myself, and I am in no need of a lift. Hackett will be back presently with the towel."

"Hackett?" breathed Handforth, looking helplessly at his chums. "Towel?"

"Well, my dear boy, I must have something to dry my feet with," said the stranger. "Good gracious! That's very bad grammar, is it not? As a schoolmaster, I should certainly do better than that. I must have

something with which to dry my feet. Ah, an improvement, eh? A decided improvement!"

Handforth & Co. had only heard one word—"schoolmaster"—and they regarded the friendly stranger with more interest than ever.

"Hackett is my chauffeur," continued the old boy chattily. "A splendid fellow in every way, and most obliging. I simply could not resist the lure of this sparkling brook. It called to me as we were passing. That's the worst of new shoes."

"New shoes, sir?" put in Church, staring. "I don't see——"

"My new shoes pinched me quite badly to-day, and my feet became hot and ached," explained the stranger. "I could not resist the temptation to cool them. So I told Hackett to stop the car, and he has gone back into the town to buy a towel."

Handforth & Co. exchanged glances again. This stranger was an amiable old bird, a charming personality in every way, but it certainly seemed that he was a bit "loopy."

"Well, we'll be getting along, sir," said Handforth, grinning. "Glad to see that you're enjoying yourself so much. You said something just now about being a schoolmaster——"

"Did I?" interrupted the old boy, with a slightly-puzzled look on his face. "Why, yes, to be sure! I am a schoolmaster——"

He paused, and a startled look came into his eyes.

"I am a schoolmaster," he repeated, as though to himself. "But for the life of me I cannot remember the name of the school to which I belong! H'm! Most remarkable! In fact, most disturbing! It is no exaggeration to say that the situation is extraordinary. A school, after all, is not a thing which one can easily mislay. Yet I am certain that I belong to some school or other."

"We're from St. Frank's ourselves, sir," said Handforth. "The only other school about here is the River House——"

"Ah, to be sure!" interrupted the stranger, his face breaking into a beaming smile. "St. Frank's! Of course—of course." He looked at the boys with renewed interest. "And you are St. Frank's boys? Splendid! How do you do? I cannot say how delighted I am to meet you."

He advanced towards the edge of the brook, and extended a dripping-wet hand, having been running his hands through the water a minute ago, evidently desiring to cool them, too.

He shook hands all round, and his grip was both wet and hearty.

"This is indeed well met, boys," he said. "We shall be seeing a great deal of each other in future."

"Shall we, sir?" asked Handforth dubiously.

"To be sure," said the old boy. "At least, I sincerely hope so. There is nothing I like better than to be on intimate friendly terms with my schoolboys."

"Your schoolboys?" gasped the three, in one voice.

"Ah, that's surprised you, eh?" chuckled the stranger, evidently enjoying himself immensely. "We haven't introduced ourselves, have we? You must tell me your names, but first of all I will tell you mine. I am Dr. Scattlebury, the new headmaster of St. Frank's College—Dr. Inigo Scattlebury!"

CHAPTER 2.

Dr. Inigo Scattlebury!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH stood with his jaw agape for a second or two, and then he burst into a roar of laughter.

"Oh, rather!" he grinned. "I say, sir, cheese it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Church and McClure yelled with amusement, too. The very idea of this extraordinary stranger being the headmaster of St. Frank's tickled them tremendously. He was an amiable old bird, but he was clearly irresponsible. Besides, his statement was obviously wide of the mark. Mr. Nelson Lee, the celebrated schoolmaster-detective, was the Head of St. Frank's, as everybody knew.

For a moment Dr. Inigo Scattlebury, as he called himself, gazed at the three juniors in some surprise, and then he chuckled, his eyes twinkling.

"You find it amusing?" he asked.

"Rather, sir!" yelled Handforth. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dr. Scattlebury.

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Church and McClure.

They all laughed uproariously, the genial stranger joining in with extreme gusto. Handforth & Co. were so tickled, in fact, that they completely forgot to introduce themselves.

"Well, we'll be getting along," chuckled Handforth, at length. "I hope your chauffeur won't be too long with that giddy towel."

"Oh, yes, the towel!" beamed the old fellow. "And that reminds me! The rascal went off with my shoes and socks. I left them in the car. So there's no help for it but to paddle until Hackett comes back."

Handforth & Co. climbed into the Morris Minor.

"If I were you, sir, I'd cool your head as well as your feet," advised Handforth cheerfully. "Well, so long, sir!"

"Hope we see you again, sir!" chimed in Church and McClure, grinning.

"You will—you certainly will," promised the old chap. "Oh, yes, you'll see me again!"

Handforth touched the electric starter, and a moment later the Morris Minor was gliding away.

"Genial old bird, but a bit loopy," commented Handforth. "Head of St. Frank's, eh? My only Sunday topper!"

"He must have escaped from somewhere," said Church. "The rummy thing is he looks so brainy! I wonder whether we ought to do something about him? I mean, it's a bit funny leaving him there paddling in that brook."

"If he likes to paddle, let him paddle," said Handforth. "Who cares? We offered him a lift, and he didn't seem to want it."

"His own car is coming for him," grinned McClure. "And Hackett is bringing a towel."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of Study D, laughing at the recollection of that amusing meeting with the queer stranger, drove on towards St. Frank's.

'HALLO, Handy!"

"Welcome back, you chaps!"

"Good old Study D!"

Handforth & Co. had just climbed out of the Minor in the sunny Triangle at St. Frank's. Their faces were glowing. It was good to be back again, and better still to be welcomed in this boisterous fashion by the crowd of Removites and Fourth-Formers which pressed round.

"Lucky bargees!" said Dick Goodwin. "It's about time you came back to school. You had some pretty hot adventures up in the Arctic, we hear."

"Bother the Arctic!" said Handforth gaily. "By George! Good old St. Frank's! Within a couple of days we shall never realise that we've been away. Everything's just the same—not a giddy blade of grass different."

He and his chums were looking round eagerly. It was, indeed, good to be back at the old school. They had an affection for those stately buildings of grey stone, and they were intent enough upon getting into the Ancient House to renew acquaintance with their cosy den—Study D.

But for some time they were kept busy shaking hands with such fellows as Solomon Levi, Clarence Fellowe, Timothy Tucker, Alan Castleton, Doyle, Scott, Owen major, Hart, and others. Handforth had never quite realised his popularity, and he expanded like a flower under all this enthusiasm.

"Jolly nice of you chaps to give us this welcome," he said happily. "Hallo, Nipper! You've got here all right, then? And you, Travers! And you, Archie!"

"We've been here for nearly an hour, Handy," said Nipper, the genial skipper of the Remove.

"More than an hour, dear old fellow," added Travers. "Our motor-bikes are so much faster than your car, you know."

"Rats!" grinned Handforth. "I'll give you a race any day. My Morris can do fifty-five—"

"We won't go into any arguments on that point," chuckled Nipper. "By Jove, it's topping to be back again! I'm all in favour of a change now and again, but give me St. Frank's at this time of the year! By

the way, Handy, I shall want you for cricket practice this evening."

"Fathead! You neen't tell me!" retorted Handforth. "I'm going to change into flannels at once. I've been dreaming about cricket ever since we left London."

He looked round amongst the crowds of Removites and Fourth-Formers.

"Where's our old pal, K.K.?" he asked. "Where are all the other Red-Hots? I haven't seen one of 'em."

"And you won't," said Nipper. "K.K. & Co. have left."

"Left!"

"The whole lot of them," said Nipper. "They've all gone back to Carlton."

"Well I'm jiggered!" said Handforth, with regret. "I say, that's a pity, you know. K.K. was a sport!"

He felt genuinely sorry to hear that Kirby Keeble Parkington and Harvey Deeks and Conway Baines and all the other members of that stalwart crowd known as the "Red-Hots" had left St. Frank's. There were twelve altogether, and they had created very keen rivalry in the Remove.

"I think old K.K. got a bit fed up with things while we were away," said Nipper. "Anyhow, he and the others have now gone back to Carlton in a body. So they're the Carlton Gang once again."

"Well, it's a pity," insisted Handforth. "Things'll be awfully quiet without those chaps."

"Don't you believe it!" replied Nipper. "They were all very well, but they caused a lot of disruption in the Remove. We shall now be able to concentrate upon dishing the Fourth. Up, Remove! We'll let the Fourth see that it's only an imitation Form!"

"Go it!" grinned Lionel Corcoran, the breezy Fourth Form skipper. "Do you hear these fatheaded Removites, Buster?"

"I'm not deaf," said Buster Boots, with a sniff. "We'll soon show them what's what!"

"I'm rather glad that K.K. & Co. have gone," continued "Corky." "In future it'll be a straight scrap between the Fourth and the Remove—as it used to be in the old days. Good old days!"

"We haven't seen the last of K.K. & Co., either," put in Nipper. "We're fixing up regular matches against Carlton, so K.K. & Co. will come over here occasionally—and we'll go over there. It'll be nice to renew old friendship now and again. Things are changed at St. Frank's—and yet, in a way, they've really only gone back to the old order."

MR. ALINGTON WILKES, the House-master of the Ancient House, came along to greet Handforth and the other newcomers. He did so with all his customary geniality.

"We've got to work hard this half, you fellows," said Old Wilkey, with that familiarity the boys liked so much.



Handforth & Co stared at the dignified-looking man who was paddling about in the stream. "Why don't you come in?" he invited gaily.

"Cheese it, sir!" protested Travers. "Is it really necessary to talk about work to-day?"

"You bet it is," replied Mr. Wilkes. "We've got to make up for lost time." So we must work at our studies, and we must work at our play. We're all stale when it comes to cricket and other sports. I understand that the Head is particularly keen upon the school making a big hit with cricket this season."

"By George! That reminds me," grinned Handforth. "I've got to tell you fellows about a loopy old boy we met on the Bannington Road."

Mr. Wilkes drifted away to greet some freshly-arrived seniors, and the crowd of juniors round Handforth yelled with laughter as he told of the encounter with the paddling gentleman of the brook.

"Said he was the headmaster of St. Frank's," grinned Handforth. "Did you ever hear such a giddy joke? And he told us his name was Dr. Indigo Scatty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not Indigo Scatty, you chump!" said Church, with a grin. "Mr. Inigo Scattlebury."

"What's the difference?" retorted Handforth. "Scatty is a much better name for a man like that! And the rummy thing is, he was such a chirpy old boy. He was enjoying himself like a kid in that brook, and he prattled away quite merrily."

"Said he was waiting for his chauffeur to turn up with a towel," chuckled McClure. "Some new shoes had made his feet hot, so he was cooling them off. No mistake about it; the old fellow was properly loopy. What I can't understand is how the dickens he got there. I expect he's paddling still, and he'll keep on paddling until his keepers come along and persuade him to walk into their nice, padded ambulance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a funny thing that you chaps should tell us this," said the Hon. Douglas Singleton. "I've heard rumours that we are going to have a new Head this half."

"What!" ejaculated Handforth, staring.

"I say, that's rot!" protested Church. "Everybody knows that Mr. Lee is our Head——"

"The gov'nor's not coming back this term," put in Nipper, joining the crowd. "Didn't you fellows know?"

"Mr. Lee not returning?" asked Handforth, with wide-open eyes. "Who told you that silly yarn?"

"Well, Mr. Lee's my guardian, so I'm the fellow who ought to know," replied Nipper. "As a matter of fact, the gov'nor has been commissioned by the Home Office, or the Foreign Office, or one of those big Government departments, to undertake a delicate detective mission, and he'll be abroad for some weeks."

"Oh!" ejaculated Handforth. "Then—then who's the new head?"

"Don't know," replied Nipper. "I thought perhaps that old Wilkey would deputise, but——"

"Let's ask old Wilkey himself," broke in Traversa. "I say, Mr. Wilkes! Can we speak to you, sir?"

"No reason why you shouldn't, old chap," said Mr. Wilkes, joining them. "What's the trouble?"

"Is it a fact that we've got a new Head this term, sir?"

"Yes."

"Do you know anything about him, sir?" asked Handforth.

"I've never met him, if that's what you mean," replied old Wilkey. "However, he is a gentleman of very distinguished reputation—an eminent scholar, and, I believe, a man who is convinced of the importance of school sports. It's rather a wonder that he hasn't arrived; we've been expecting him for the past hour. Oh, yes, Dr. Inigo Scattlebury is a great man."

Handforth's jaw sagged, and he seemed to find some difficulty in swallowing something which had suddenly come into his throat.

"What—what name did you say, sir?" he asked hoarsely.

"Dr. Inigo Scattlebury," replied Mr. Wilkes. "A curious name, but you can't judge a man by—— What on earth's the matter with you, Handforth? And you, Church? And you, McClure?"

"Nun-nothing, sir!" gasped Handforth feebly. "I—I mean—— Oh, my hat! It's impossible! There must be some mistake!"

"There's no mistake about Dr. Scattlebury, if that's what you mean," said Mr. Wilkes. "We Housemasters have all received official intimation from the governors—— Ah! Perhaps this is Dr. Scattlebury now?"

He broke off, and moved away briskly. Handforth & Co. and the other juniors, gazing at him, saw that he was walking towards the gates. A splendid limousine had just glided through.

And the man who emerged, after Mr. Wilkes had politely opened the door, was the remarkable stranger who had amused himself by paddling in the brook!

CHAPTER 3.

Extraordinary!

H ANDFORTH & CO. stood like chunks of stone.

"My only sainted aunt!" breathed Handforth, at length. "I say, Churchy, can you see what I see?"

"I—I believe so," muttered Church, brushing a hand over his eyes.

"It's *him*!" breathed McClure hoarsely.

"But the whole thing's mad! It's impossible!" exclaimed Handforth. "I've never felt so bowled over in all my giddy life! What the dickens can it mean?"

His chums were unable to answer. In any case, there was no opportunity of answering. For the new arrival, having talked with Mr. Wilkes for some moments, was now moving forward towards the big group of juniors, who, remembering what Handforth had been telling them, were all looking politely interested.

"Certainly! Certainly, Mr. Wilkes!" the newcomer was saying. "I shall be only too delighted to meet some of your boys. As you say, there is no time like the present."

Handforth, Church, and McClure almost goggled as they beheld Dr. Inigo Scattlebury. He was the same—and yet he was not the same! For this quietly-spoken, dignified, scholarly gentleman was complete master of himself. He was the exact type of man one would take for the headmaster of a great Public school. His figure was tall, straight, and he carried himself with a dignity and an assurance which stamped him as a man of strong personality. His clean-shaven face was eloquent of strength and kindliness. In every inch of him he looked an ideal headmaster—a scholar to his finger-tips.

"These are some of my youngsters, sir," said Mr. Wilkes cheerfully. "You fellows, let me introduce you to Dr. Scattlebury, our new Head."

There was an epidemic of cap removing and shuffling. The juniors were not only impressed by the fact that this elderly gentleman was their headmaster, but they instinctively respected him. His very bearing demanded respect.

"Welcome to St. Frank's, sir!" said Traversa, with his usual easy assurance.

"Thank you, my boy—thank you all!" said Dr. Scattlebury, smiling. "I am very pleased to meet you in this informal way. I am a newcomer to this great school, and the sooner I can get acquainted with its scholars the better. I like to be on friendly terms with my boys."

He had a kindly word for this fellow, a smile for that, and he chatted in the most friendly way, always maintaining his quiet dignity, however. The Removites and the Fourth-Formers were much impressed; they felt that they were going to like their new Head. He was just the sort of man, they felt, who would be able to control the destinies of the great school.

Handforth and Church and McClure, who were longing to escape, were afraid to move. Presently Dr. Scattlebury came opposite to Handforth, and he seemed a trifle puzzled, for a frown flitted across his face for a second.

"Come, come!" he said gently. "You need not be so nervous, young man! You mustn't be afraid of me!"

"Nun-no, sir!" gasped Handforth. "I—I didn't expect to meet you again so soon, sir."

"Meet me again?" repeated Dr. Scattlebury, lifting his eyebrows. "I don't think I quite understand. We have never met before, have we?"

"I—I thought we had, sir," said Handforth, with a gulp.

"Surely not," smiled the Head. "You must have made a mistake, my boy."

He passed on, and it was obvious to all the other fellows that Dr. Scattlebury had never set eyes on Handforth before. Or, if he had, he had completely forgotten it.

As for Handforth & Co., they were more bewildered than ever. This man was totally different!

"GIVE me air!" babbled Handforth feebly.

Accompanied by Mr. Wilkes, Dr. Scattlebury had just got into his limousine, and the car was gliding off through Big Arch into Inner Court, en route for the Head's house. A crowd of Removites and Fourth-Formers pressed round the chums of Study D.

"You giddy spoofer!" said Tommy Watson, with some warmth. "What the dickens do you mean by telling us that dotty yarn about Dr. Scattlebury?"

"Yes. What was the idea of telling us that you saw him paddling in a brook?" demanded De Valerie.

Handforth was trying to recover himself.

"We did!" he said fiercely. "He was paddling!"

"Rats!"

"Cheese it, you ass!"

"Draw it mild, Handy!"

"But it's true!" insisted Handforth. "I—I can't understand it, you chaps, but it's true! And the rummy thing is he didn't even remember me—or Churchy or Mac either!"

"What's the idea of keeping it up, you chump?" asked Travers, staring. "A joke's a joke, but——"

"Handy isn't joking!" interrupted Church. "I don't pretend to understand it, but when we saw Dr. Scattlebury for the first time he was paddling in that brook, with his trousers turned up to his knees, and with an umbrella over him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not good enough," said Nipper, grinning. "You can't fool us with——"

"But it's true!" shouted McClure. "We all saw him!"

"Rot!"

"But look here——"

"Tell it to the Marines!"

The juniors frankly discredited the story, and even Handforth & Co. were beginning to wonder if they had dreamed that incident.

"The only thing I can think is that the Head must have a double—or a twin brother," said Handforth breathlessly. "By George, that's the truth of it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The very idea of that dignified man paddling in a brook is ridiculous," said Nipper, shaking his head. "I mean, you can't possibly picture it. It's absurd!"

"Absurd or not, we saw him," said Handforth defiantly. "By George! I wonder if he was doing it deliberately? I mean, perhaps he tried to catch us, you chaps," he added, looking at his chums. "Some of these headmasters have rummy notions——"

"But not as rummy as that," interrupted Church. "Didn't we say at the time that the old boy was loopy? Hang it, no headmaster under the sun would do such a dotty thing! I'm beginning to think that somebody must have been playing a trick on us."

"One of those River House chaps, perhaps!" suggested Handforth, with a start. "Perhaps they knew that Dr. Scattlebury was coming! Perhaps they knew what he looked like, and they got up an impersonation—— Oh, rot! It's too thick!"

"Either you chaps are still trying to pull our legs, or you're all dotty!" said Corcoran frankly. "Anyhow, we don't believe that silly yarn of yours. We've seen the new Head, and he promises well."

"I entirely agree," said Timothy Tucker, the learned junior of Study U, blinking round through his horn-rimmed spectacles. "Yes, I entirely agree. The new headmaster is obviously a man of strength and dignity, and this story of yours, my dear Handforth, is not only unconvincing, but verging on the peurile. Yes, I regret to say it, verging on the peurile."

"If you're asking for a punch on the nose, T. T.——"

"Dear, dear! Certainly not!" said T. T. hastily. "Really, Handforth, I hope you are not going to get violent."

"Leave him alone, Handy!" interrupted Church. "You can't blame the chaps for disbelieving us. I'm in a maze myself. The whole thing is so queer——"

"Hold on!" interrupted Handforth tensely. "Look at this! Look what's coming!"

His voice was so charged with significance that the other fellows turned, and saw the Head's limousine gliding through Big Arch.

"What's the matter, ass?" asked Buster Boots. "That car's empty."

"No, it isn't. There's the chauffeur," said Handforth breathlessly. "I'll show you chaps whether I've been pulling your legs or not!"

"But how the dickens——"

"Didn't we tell you that Dr. Scattlebury was by himself when we found him?" asked Handforth. "He said that he had sent his

chauffeur into Bannington to buy a towel."

"My only hat, yes!" grinned Bob Christine. "But you don't mean to say you're going to ask this man——"

"I am!"

Handforth ran forward, whilst the other fellows yelled with laughter. They gathered round amusedly as the limousine came to a halt in response to Handforth's frantic signals. Edward Oswald was now clinging to the coachwork on the driver's side.

"What's the idea, young gent?" asked the chauffeur. "If you're after a lift, I'm sorry——"

"Is your name Hackett?" asked Handforth bluntly.

"Why, yes."

"There you are!" roared Handforth, looking round. "His name's Hackett!"

"What of it?" asked Travers mildly. "Hackett's as good a name as any other."

The chauffeur, obviously puzzled, was looking from one junior to another. He was a quiet, respectable-looking man, and it was noticeable that he was in a disturbed frame of mind. He seemed nervous and worried.

"Look here, Hackett," said Handforth quickly. "I want to ask you a straight question. Did you bring that towel back for Dr. Scattlebury?"

"Towel?" ejaculated Hackett, with a violent start.

He looked at Handforth very hard, and Handforth looked back harder. The other fellows, sensing that this was a dramatic moment, gathered round, silent.

"Just a minute, sir," said Hackett, forcing himself to speak quietly. "What do you know about any towel?"

"I want you to prove one thing to these chaps," said Handforth. "They think I've been pulling their legs; but I haven't. I met Dr. Scattlebury on the road, as I was coming here. He was paddling in that little brook, beside the road, and he told me that he had sent you back into Bannington to buy a towel."

Hackett removed his peaked cap, and scratched his head.

"Well, I wasn't going to say anything about it, young gents," he exclaimed dubiously. "But as you seem to know as much as I do, there can't be any harm, can there?"

"What do you mean?" asked Nipper, staring.

"Well, it's a rum go, that's all I can say," replied Hackett. "The rummiest go I've ever heard of! I've been in Dr. Scattlebury's employ as chauffeur for ten years, but it's the first time I've ever known him to do anything funny like that."

"Like what?" yelled the crowd.

"Why, to make me stop the car, and paddle in a wayside brook," said Hackett, with feeling. "Fair shook me up, it did! He calmly sent me back into Bannington to buy a towel, and when I came back, there he was, paddling, as happy as a kid! I never saw anything like it! Yet no sooner

had he got his shoes and socks on again than he was just the same as ever."

There was a silence whilst the juniors listened to this astonishing corroboration of Handforth's extraordinary tale.

"But he doesn't usually do things like that?" asked Handforth quickly.

"Never known him do anything like it before," replied the chauffeur, taking a deep breath. "All I could put it down to was the heat. Anyhow, it fair shook me up. Thank goodness he's all right again!"

And Hackett drove on.

CHAPTER 4.

Something New in Heads!

"WELL?" asked Handforth, looking round triumphantly.

"You've proved your case, Handy, old man," said Nipper, grinning. "Hackett's evidence is conclusive. And what are you going to do now?"

"Eh?"

"After all, it is a hot day, and there's really no earthly reason why Dr. Scattlebury shouldn't cool his feet in a rippling brook if he wants to," said Nipper. "A bit unusual, perhaps, but that's all. There's certainly no need to go about the school telling people that our new Head is loopy."

"But you didn't see him!" protested Handforth. "You didn't hear him, either. Why, he even forgot the name of St. Frank's!"

"Oh, let's go in to tea," said Travers, yawning.

Although Handforth & Co. were proved right, nobody took much notice of them. All the fellows who had seen Dr. Inigo Scattlebury were quite satisfied that the new Head was a man worthy of their respect. In fact, everybody accepted Handforth's yarn with a pinch of salt. As usual, they concluded, Handy had indulged in a lot of exaggeration.

So the matter was allowed to drop.

Even Handforth and Church and McClure, in the satisfaction of getting back into Study D, soon forgot the new Head.

Then there was cricket after tea, too. The evening was glorious, and, dressed in airy flannels, the juniors thoroughly enjoyed themselves on Little Side.

But there were other people who began to notice slight eccentricities in Dr. Scattlebury's conduct—people who knew nothing whatever about that paddling incident, and who were therefore unprepared.

There was Mr. Pagett, for example. Mr. William Pagett was the master of the Fifth Form, and he was a man with a somewhat pompous and overbearing disposition; he had an immense idea of his own importance. Therefore, upon hearing that Dr. Scattlebury had arrived, Mr. Pagett made it his business to hasten forthwith to the Head's house so that he could present his compliments and introduce himself.

Pompous Mr. Pagett, very red and embarrassed, entered the tuckshop and ordered two ice-cream cornets.



As it was so warm, the front door was standing wide open, and Mr. Pagett walked in unannounced. He tapped at the door of the Head's study, and was somewhat startled to hear a boisterous voice from within.

"Come in—come in!" it sang out.

Mr. Pagett adjusted his glasses on his nose, set his gown straight, and entered. He took one look into the study, and he started so violently that his glasses dropped with a clatter to the floor.

"Good gracious me!" ejaculated Mr. Pagett, aghast.

Dr. Inigo Scattlebury was in the middle of the floor, performing an extraordinary balancing feat. He had, in fact, removed a large model of the world from its stand, and was using it as a kind of balancing ball—and was performing the feat with great credit.

The sight so startled Mr. Pagett that the Fifth Form master, after that first exclamation, could only stand and goggle. And the Head, losing his balance as he glanced

round, slithered to the floor and nearly overbalanced.

"A pity, my dear sir—a pity," he said regretfully. "You might, at least, have permitted me to complete my walk across the Pacific."

"I—I beg your pardon, sir?"

"I was walking round the world," explained Dr. Scattlebury, with a wave of his hand towards the globe. "A most tricky undertaking, I find."

"Walking round the world?" asked Mr. Pagett feebly. "Oh, I see, sir! I must confess I did not at first gather—I am Mr. Pagett, sir. Mr. William Pagett, of the Fifth Form. I thought, perhaps—"

"Splendid, Mr. Pagett!" beamed Dr. Scattlebury, extending his hand. "I am delighted to meet you. Perhaps you would care to walk round the world?"

Mr. Pagett's hand was flabby as it entered the Head's firm grip.

"If you don't mind, sir, I would prefer not to," said the Form-master hastily. "The—or-beat is somewhat oppressive."

"You are quite right, Mr. Pagett," agreed the Head, nodding. "It is warm to-day, isn't it? An ice-cream wouldn't come amiss, would it? How would you like an ice-cream, my dear sir?"

"Thank you very much, Dr. Scattlebury —"

"We'll have two ice-creams," declared the Head serenely. "One each, Mr. Pagett. I understand that ice-creams are to be obtained at the school shop. Here's a shilling. Perhaps you'll be good enough to run along and obtain two of those fine-looking ice-cream cornets which I have seen the boys consuming?"

"But, really, sir, you don't mean——"

"Say no more," interrupted the Head, with another wave of his hand. "This is my treat."

"Good heavens!"

"Ice-cream is an excellent food," continued Dr. Scattlebury. "While you are gone, my dear sir, I will resume my walking tour. But don't be long."

Mr. Pagett escaped in a state of utter bewilderment. And many juniors were startled, some minutes later, to behold the pompous master of the Fifth Form sidling into the school shop, and edging up to the counter. When he asked for a couple of ice-cream cornets, there was a mild sensation.

"Jiggered if it isn't old Pagett now!" murmured De Valerie. "All the masters seem to be going scatty!"

"Rats! Good luck to him!" said Fullwood. "Where's the harm in buying ice-cream cornets, anyway?"

"But Pagett!" said De Valerie blankly.

Mr. Pagett, having obtained the ice-cream cornets, slinked away across the Triangle as though he had just committed a crime. But if he expected to get back into Inner Court unnoticed, he was a sadly-disappointed man. In fact, it seemed to him that everybody in the entire school came out to watch him. He wanted to drop through the ground. His dignity was in tatters.



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That he—William Pagett of the Fifth—should be seen going about in the open with an ice-cream cornet in each hand was beyond belief. But the Head had requested it, and the Head was a man to be humoured.

His mind still in a whirl, Mr. Pagett arrived back at the Head's study. He transferred the two ice-cream cornets into one precarious hand, and tapped on the door.

"Come in!" said a quiet, dignified voice.

Mr. Pagett opened the door and went in. He goggled. Dr. Inigo Scattlebury was seated at his desk, a figure of scholarly gravity. He stared at Mr. Pagett, plainly indicating that he had never seen Mr. Pagett before in his life. He was astonished, too.

"May I inquire, sir, who you are and what this means?" asked the Head coldly.

In his agitation, Mr. Pagett's hand shook, and one of the ice-creams dropped out of its cornet and fell with a blob to the polished floor.

"Really," protested the Head, rising to his feet, "you will please explain the meaning of this extraordinary conduct, sir!"

Mr. Pagett gulped. The Head was looking at him as if he were a madman.

"But, sir, you requested me to purchase these ice-creams!" panted the Form-master in self-defence.

"I? I requested you to——" The Head paused, momentarily at a loss for words. "Upon my soul, sir, have you taken leave of your senses?" he asked. "I don't even know who you are."

"But—but I introduced myself before," gasped Mr. Pagett. "Don't you remember, sir? You were walking round the world——"

"Walking round the world!" thundered Dr. Scattlebury.

"I—I mean——"

"Are you ill, sir?" asked the Head, with sudden concern. "The heat, perhaps——"

"I am not ill!" almost shouted Mr. Pagett. "We met not ten minutes ago. I am Mr. Pagett, the master of the Fifth Form. You requested me to buy these ice-creams——"

"You are dreaming, Mr. Pagett," cut in the Head sternly. "It is quite unnecessary to shout at me. I haven't the faintest idea of what you are talking about, and I can only conclude that you are the victim of some foolish practical joke."

The Head's tone was curt, and his whole bearing was one of severe dignity. Mr. Pagett's own dignity was shattered into a thousand fragments—and completely pulverised a moment later, when, taking an impulsive step forward, he trod upon that fallen ice-cream.

His foot slithered from under him, he uttered a wild howl of alarm, and sat down on the rest of the ice-cream with a squelching, crashing thud.

To make matters worse—if this were possible—the other ice-cream jerked from its cornet, leapt into the air, and dropped neatly down the back of Mr. Pagett's neck.

"Oooooooh!" shrieked the unfortunate Form-master.

Dr. Scattlebury, much concerned, came round his desk, and he assisted Mr. Pagett to his feet.

"My dear sir, are you hurt?" he asked anxiously. "Really, Mr. Pagett, I do not think you can be quite yourself. This behaviour of yours, to say the least, is peculiar. Perhaps you had better lie down for an hour."

He was fairly close to Mr. Pagett's face, and he sniffed suspiciously. Mr. Pagett, who was a teetotaler, turned red with indignation.

"Are you hinting, sir, that I am intoxicated?" he asked hoarsely.

"No, no; not at all," replied the Head. "But when a Form-master comes into my study carrying two ice-cream cornets, I naturally look for some logical explanation, since such behaviour, in itself, is incomprehensible."

"But you sent me—I mean, you requested me——"

"Come, sir," said Dr. Scattlebury soothingly, "I really must insist upon your lying down for an hour. I think you said that you are Mr. Pagett, of the Fifth Form? I shall be glad to interview you later, Mr. Pagett, when you are more yourself."

He gently led Mr. Pagett out of the study, and Mr. Pagett, returning to the West House, where he resided, felt that his brain was on the point of bursting. What could it all mean? Had he dreamed that he had seen the Head balancing on a globe of the world? Had he dreamed that the Head had requested him to buy two ice-cream cornets? Judging by Dr. Scattlebury's attitude when Mr. Pagett had arrived with the cornets, it certainly seemed that he *had* been dreaming.

Mr. Pagett was in such a confused state of mind about it all that he decided to keep the incident completely to himself. At first he had decided to go to Mr. Stokes, the Housemaster of the West House, and tell him all about it. But he came to the conclusion that it would be far better to let the unfortunate affair drop.

And a little later, when he met Dr. Scattlebury on the playing-fields, the Head greeted him with kindly geniality.

"A fine school, Mr. Pagett," said the Head enthusiastically. "I am proud to be its head-master."

"Oh, quite!" said Mr. Pagett, with a suspicious look.

"I am holding a conference of masters this evening," continued the Head. "I hope you will be there, Mr. Pagett. I like to get on friendly terms with my masters at the earliest possible moment. I have a feeling that we shall all pull together very splendidly at St. Frank's."

"Oh, quite!" said Mr. Pagett, plucking up his courage. "By the way, sir, have you ever—er—walked round the world?"

Dr. Scattlebury raised his eyebrows.

"What a remarkable question, Mr. Pagett," he said, smiling. "No, walking is not one of my accomplishments—at least, not that kind of walking. Shall we go across to watch the cricketers?"

Mr. Pagett gave it up.

CHAPTER 5.

High Jinks!

TUBBS, the Ancient House page-boy, was the next one to notice something peculiar about Dr. Inigo Scattlebury.

He happened to pass the Head in Inner Court as the great man was returning to his house. Tubbs had been delivering some papers from Mr. Wilkes, and he touched his cap as he was passing.

"One moment, young man," said Dr. Scattlebury, beaming upon Tubbs. "You are employed in this establishment, I take it?"

"Yessir."

"Excellent! Take this telegram to the post-office for me," said the Head, pulling out a scrap of paper and scribbling upon it. "Here's two shillings—a shilling for the telegram and a shilling for yourself."

"Yessir," grinned Tubbs. "Thank you, sir."

He glanced at the words on the paper, knowing that he would have to re-write them on an official form. Then he gave a sudden start.

"I say, sir, this is a mistake, isn't it, sir?" he asked.

"I think not," said the Head. "The message is quite brief: 'Will be with you at 8.30 to-night.—SCATTLEBURY.' Isn't that what I have written?"

"Yes, sir. But you've addressed it to yourself!" said Tubbs. "You've put the address as 'Dr. Scattlebury, St. Frank's College.'"

"Exactly," said the Head amiably.

"Eh?"

"I'm most awfully fond of receiving telegrams," explained Dr. Scattlebury, with a charming smile. "Whenever I receive a telegram, young man, I get a thrill."

He nodded and walked on, leaving Tubbs bewildered. Tubbs couldn't make head or tail of it, and, after scratching his head and taking a good look at the two-shilling-piece, he gave it up as a bad job.

As he was passing through Big Arch he nearly bumped into Mr. Wilkes.

"I say, sir, can I speak to you, sir?" asked Tubbs eagerly.

"You can," said Old Wilkey. "What's the trouble?"

"This telegram, sir," explained Tubbs. "The Head just gave it to me, and told me to send it off."

Mr. Wilkes read it.

"But this is a mistake," he said. "Dr. Scattlebury has given you the wrong address."

"That's what I told 'im, sir, but he said he liked receiving telegrams."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Wilkes, giving Tubbs a sharp look. "No man in his right senses sends telegrams to himself. Let me have this, Tubbs. I'm just going to Dr. Scattlebury, and I'll get the right address for you."

A few minutes later, when Mr. Wilkes was in the Head's study, he produced the scrap of paper. Dr. Scattlebury looked at it in a puzzled way.

"But I don't know what the boy means," he said. "I gave him no telegram, or instructions to dispatch it. I don't even know the boy. As for his assertion that I enjoy receiving telegrams, it is palpably ridiculous."

"The young rascal," said Mr. Wilkes, frowning. "If he has dared to play a joke on me, I'll give him a severe talking to."

The Head was looking at the piece of paper in a puzzled way. When he noticed that Mr. Wilkes was watching him closely, he crumpled the paper up and hastily threw it into the waste-paper basket.

"The boy says you wrote the telegram on that scrap of paper you have just thrown away, sir," said Mr. Wilkes gently.

"I never saw the paper before in all my life," declared the Head. "At least, I have no recollection of it. That was why I examined it so closely just now. The scribble does seem to resemble my own handwriting, and for that reason I am puzzled. However, the matter is of no importance, Mr. Wilkes. The boy ought to be reprimanded for playing such a foolish trick."

Five minutes later, when Mr. Wilkes departed, he found Tubbs awaiting him.

"Look here, young man, what are you trying to do?" asked old Wilkey. "Dr. Scattlebury gave you no telegram."

"But he did, sir!"

"He doesn't even know you."

"Why, he stopped me not ten yards from this spot, sir——"

"Look here, Tubbs, you'd better tell me the absolute truth," interrupted Mr. Wilkes. "The Head gave you that telegram and a two-shilling piece—eh? You pointed out the peculiarity of the address, and he said that it was quite in order?"

"Yessir! Here's the money, sir."

Tubbs was so much in earnest, he was so obviously telling the truth, that Mr. Wilkes believed him.

"Here's another two shillings, Tubbs," said the Housemaster. "Now, don't imagine that I am bribing you. Don't think I'm buying your silence. But it'll be much better if we keep this little matter entirely to ourselves. I think the headmaster must be a little absent-minded at times. I don't want you to go amongst the boys with such an absurd story."

"I catch on, sir," said Tubbs promptly. "Thanks, sir! I know 'ow to keep my mouth shut, sir."

He saluted and went off—puzzled but happy. He was four shillings the better off, and the more incidents of this sort, in his opinion, the better!

Mr. Wilkes returned to his House, worried. He had heard about the Pagett incident, and this fresh example of Dr. Scattlebury's eccentric behaviour gave him food for thought. He was quite certain of one thing. The Head himself had no recollection of scribbling that peculiar telegram—and yet he had recognised his own scrawl! Hence his hasty crumpling of the paper and throwing it away.

"Most disturbing," murmured Mr. Wilkes. "A likable man, a famous man; but if he plays tricks of this sort we shall have to do something about it. Quite an extraordinary situation."

The more he thought of it, the more extraordinary it seemed. Dr. Inigo Scattlebury was one of the most learned schoolmasters in the country; he had only recently concluded fifteen years headmastership at Hedingham College, in the West, and he was a man with a brilliant record.

Mr. Wilkes liked him; he could understand why Dr. Scattlebury had been so popular at Hedingham, and why that school had bemoaned his loss. He seemed to be the ideal headmaster.

"Oh, well," murmured Mr. Wilkes, with a shrug. "Frankly, I can't understand it. We shall have to await further developments."

BY mid-evening the school had more or less shaken down.

All the boys who had been away on that adventure trip in the first half of the term were already feeling that they had never been away. It was surprising how quickly and how easily they got back into the old habits.

"There goes the bell for Big Hall," said Church, as he lounged in the Ancient House doorway with Handforth and McClure. "What a fag! On a lovely evening like this we've got to listen to a lot of silly speech-making by the Head!"

"First day of term is always rotten!" growled Handforth. "I'm jolly glad we're going in, you chaps. It'll give us another chance of having a look at the Head. There's something fishy about him, if you ask me."

McClure grunted.

"I'm beginning to think that we imagined that giddy incident on the road," he said bluntly. "The more I think of it, the more dotty it seems. Perhaps it was some silly practical joker—somebody made-up to look like the Head."

"That's what I thought," said Handforth. "But it's a bit too thick. By George, though! I wonder if K.K. is behind it?"

"K.K.'s gone, you ass!"

"I know that; but I've just heard that the half-term at Carlton doesn't start until tomorrow," said Handforth eagerly. "It would be just like K.K. to work off a jape on us—as a kind of parting shot. And you know jolly well that Baines is hot stuff at impersonations."

Church looked at his chums pityingly.

"Have you forgotten Hackett?" he asked with a sniff.

"Eh?"

"The Head's own chauffeur proves that the man in the brook was the Head himself," said Church. "Don't be a chump, Handy! What did Hackett say when you asked him those questions? The man was the Head. And it's no good trying to think of any explanation. Let's get indoors."

They trooped into Big Hall with the others, reluctant to leave the delightful freshness of the evening twilight. In Big Hall it was hot and stuffy, and everybody hoped that the new Head would not keep them long.

As a matter of fact, the school soon forgot the stuffiness, for Dr. Inigo Scattlebury made a speech which impressed everybody, from the smallest fag to the most dignified senior.

Everybody had been expecting a dry discourse; instead, the Head delivered a witty, friendly, masterly speech. There was something in his personality, too, which gripped his listeners. Here was a man who could be well trusted with the control of St. Frank's; a man in whom the boys could believe. He made a very deep impression.

He expressed the hope that the whole school would pull together with a will, and, for his own part, he promised to throw all his energies into the task of making St. Frank's even greater.

"I am at present a stranger within the gates," said Dr. Scattlebury quietly. "It is my earnest wish—indeed, my intention—that we shall soon know one another better. I don't want the school to look upon me as a fussy old codger who sits in the splendid seclusion of his study, lecturing fellows on their misdemeanours and delivering thrashings at regular intervals. We're living in different times. If you have any troubles, I want you to bring them to me. Your House-masters, of course, will deal with all your minor troubles. But now and again there is something bigger—something very special. Don't forget that I'm on the spot, and that I shall be ever ready to help. Above all, don't be afraid of me. We all know of the traditional schoolboy who enters his headmaster's study in a state of trembling fear. Now, that's all wrong. I want you to respect me, but not to fear me."

And so he went on, entertaining the school by his friendly attitude. Yet he lost no atom of prestige by his friendliness.

At length he gave the order for dismissal, and the cheers which went up for him were not formal cheers, but a genuine expression of the school's satisfaction. St. Frank's liked its new Head so much that the absence of Mr. Nelson Lee was not likely to be greatly felt.

Mr. Alington Wilkes, who was on the platform, felt rather relieved as the school prepared to file out of Big Hall. Old Wilkey,

in fact, had been rather worried about the Head. Mr. Pagett, of the Fifth, was still feeling bewildered. He couldn't get that picture of the Head out of his mind—that picture of Dr. Scattlebury balancing on a globe.

And then, at that point, something happened.

"One moment, you fellows!" sang out Dr. Scattlebury boisterously. "Hold on, there! Just a word!"

The school halted. Everybody noticed a subtle difference in Dr. Scattlebury's voice. And when the school looked at him, it was clear that he had changed his mood. He was smiling so gerially, so amiably, that it almost amounted to a wide grin. His eyes twinkled with friendly gaiety.

He was the same man—and yet he was totally different. Gone was that scholarly dignity. In a flash he was almost like a great, overgrown schoolboy.

"I rather think we ought to have a little celebration—eh?" said the Head cheerfully. "Something to brighten us up on the first day of term—eh?"

The school waited wonderingly.

"I'll tell you what," continued the Head. "It's a glorious evening, and it seems pretty rough on you fellows to keep you bottled up indoors. So, for the rest of the day, you can forget the school regulations."

"Ye gods!" murmured Mr. Wilkes.

He and the other Housemasters exchanged glances. They all noted the sudden change in Dr. Inigo Scattlebury. And this wholesale permission for the boys to ignore the school regulations was startling.

The prefects were looking worried, too. There was always a certain amount of laxity on the first evening of the term, and this generally meant a lot of extra work for the prefects. The Head wasn't making things any the easier for them.

"Yes, that's it," continued Dr. Scattlebury amiably. "Just for once we'll let the regulations go to pot. The whole school can do as it pleases. You can bathe in the river, or play tag, or do any old thing you like. Let's all make whoopee!"

"My only hat!"

"Great Scott!"

The fellows were so surprised that they could not even laugh or cheer.

"Never mind about bedtime!" shouted the Head gaily. "Forget the clock altogether. Go out and come in just when you like. For to-night you're free—and jolly good luck to you!"

He waved a cheery hand in dismissal, chuckled hugely, and vanished through the doorway at the back of the platform.

"Hurrah!"

"We're free, you chaps—free for the rest of the giddy evening!"

"Three cheers for the Head!"

The school went crowding out of Big Hall, eager, excited and enthusiastic. At last St. Frank's was provided with a headmaster of the right sort!

CHAPTER 6.

Making Whoopee!

"WELL, what did I tell you?" shouted Handforth excitedly.

He and a mob of other Removites were in the Triangle, and all round them Fourth-Formers and Third-Formers were yelling and cheering. Seniors stood in groups, discussing the extraordinary situation.

"What did I tell you?" demanded Handforth again. "Didn't I say that the Head was scatty?"

"Scatty be blowed!" retorted Travers. "In my opinion, dear old fellow, the Head is the most sensible man under the sun!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yes, but no Head in his right senses would tell the whole school to buzz out and ignore the regulations!" protested Handforth. "I'm all for him, of course—he's a corker!—but he must have got a screw loose somewhere. I vote we make hay while the sun shines!"

"Rather!"

"Let's go to the pictures in Bannington!" suggested somebody. "We shall just be in time for the last house!"

"Good egg!"

"But we shouldn't get back until after eleven," said somebody else.

"Who cares?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We needn't get back until midnight!"

It was a case of High Jinks. The juniors in particular immediately took full advantage of this unparalleled liberty. Permission had come from the headmaster himself, and therefore it was official. Housemasters, Form-masters and prefects could do nothing.

They didn't even get the chance, for the boys dashed away immediately. Parties went off to the river to bathe; others got out their bicycles and went off light-heartedly into Bannington; still others decided to go for a long ramble across country.

There was still plenty of daylight left, and the sky was cloudless, with the warm glow of the evening sun in the west. It was a perfect evening for being out of doors—as the Head himself had said.

Prefects and Form-masters, of course, were in despair. They had to stand by whilst the school enjoyed itself.

Everything was at sixes and sevens. At this hour the gates should have been locked, but now they stood wide open. Most of the fellows wisely left the school premises—in case the Head should change his mind.

Bedtime came, and there weren't a dozen fellows on the spot to answer the bell. Prefects hung about in the Triangle at a complete loss.

"What are we going to do about it, sir?" asked Fenton of the Sixth as he encountered Mr. Wilkes. "The Third and the Fourth and the Remove ought to be in bed by now, but there's nobody here. Goodness only knows when they'll turn up!"



The St. Frank's playing fields presented an amazing sight. Everywhere were juniors playing cricket—anyhow and with anything—by the Head's orders!

Old Wilkey sighed.

"It seems to me, Fenton, that we must make the best of a bad job," he said. "We can't punish any of the boys for being out, that's certain. We can only hope that they'll have sense enough to return at a reasonable hour."

"Have you seen the Head, sir?"

"Not since he gave the school this unusual liberty," replied old Wilkey, shaking his head. "What would be the good, Fenton? After all, the headmaster of a great school like St. Frank's is the—er—Big Noise."

"What on earth made him do it, sir?" asked Biggleswade helplessly. "It's all very well to give the fellows a bit of a spree on the first day of the term—but there's a limit."

"I don't pretend to understand," replied Mr. Wilkes gruffly. "In any case, it's no good going to the Head this evening. Even if he had changed his mind the boys aren't here. All we can do is to wait until they come back, and get them to bed as quickly as possible."

But the time passed, and only a few of the fellows trickled in. By ten o'clock, when the dusk had deepened almost into night, over half of the Remove and Fourth still remained absent.

Ordinarily, the Triangle would have been empty at this hour; but now prefects were grouped about, and other seniors were still

talking over the the strangeness of the situation.

A hush fell as a figure was seen striding through Big Arch. Dr. Inigo Scattlebury was coming. He was not wearing his gown, but was attired in a comfortable tweed coat, a cloth cap, and he wielded a stout stick. Clearly the Head was off for a brisk walk.

He seemed puzzled as he came into the Triangle; he glanced at the Houses, at the many lights in the lower windows, at the wide-open doors. He looked with particular interest at the groups of seniors who were standing about so idly.

Dr. Scattlebury approached one of the groups of seniors. His bearing was quietly dignified.

"Is something wrong?" he asked, with concern.

"How do you mean, sir—wrong?" said Biggleswade.

"Why are the Houses still open?" demanded the headmaster. "At this hour—ten o'clock—I fully expected to find the school in bed. I did not know that you senior boys were allowed to stay up so late."

"It wouldn't matter much if it was only the seniors, sir," put in Fenton. "But over half the juniors are still out—even the fags. They ought to have been in bed ages ago."

"Indeed?" said Dr. Scattlebury. "Then what is the meaning of this amazing laxity? I take it that you are a prefect?"

"Yes, sir—Fenton."

"Fenton?" repeated the Head. "I think you are the captain of the school, are you not?"

"That's right, sir."

"Then what are you doing here, Fenton, standing about in this idle fashion—knowing, as you do, that so many junior boys are defying the regulations?" asked Dr. Scattlebury sternly. "What are the Housemasters thinking about?"

"But, sir——"

"I am fully aware that a certain amount of laxity is allowed on the first evening of term, but this is beyond all reason," continued the Head. "I've never heard of such nonsense!"

The prefects stared at him hard.

"But it was you who gave the chaps permission to be out, sir!" said Biggleswade bluntly.

"I? I gave them permission?" ejaculated the Head, startled.

"Of course you did, sir!"

"Nothing of the sort!" said Dr. Scattlebury sharply. "Don't talk such nonsense, young man!"

"Oh, well, sir——"

"What is your name?"

"Biggleswade, sir."

"Well, Biggleswade, I am an easy-going man generally; but I don't want you to make any further jokes of that kind," said the Head. "They are not funny, Biggles-

wade. When you tell me that I gave permission to the boys to remain out after the regulation hours, you are talking rubbish!"

Biggy gave Fenton a helpless, appealing look.

"You are not quite fair to Biggleswade, sir," said Fenton quietly. "The whole school was present in Big Hall when you said that everybody could—er—make whoopee for the rest of the evening."

Dr. Scattlebury looked at Fenton in amazement.

"I said that the school could—could—er—make whoopee?" he repeated, aghast. "Have you taken leave of your senses, young man?"

"But everybody heard you——"

"I don't know what you are trying to do, Fenton, but I refuse to listen to another word of this nonsense!" interrupted Dr. Scattlebury angrily. "See that all the boys are rounded up at once and sent to bed. This is a perfectly scandalous situation—on my very first day in the school, too! Upon my word!"

The prefects, Fenton included, felt somewhat weak at the knees. It was as obvious as daylight that the Head remembered nothing of what he had said in Big Hall. He was thoroughly annoyed.

"We'll do the best we can, sir," said Fenton. "But it may be an hour or more before the boys come in."



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"They must be very severely punished for this insubordination," said the Head.

"That wouldn't be fair, sir," replied Fenton. "The boys all believe that they have your personal permission to be out as late as they like, and any punishment would be an injustice."

The Head was impressed by the school captain's tone.

"Well, frankly, I don't understand," he said. "I can only assume that there has been a misunderstanding. In these circumstances, perhaps, it would be unfair, as you say, to punish the offenders."

Dr. Scattlebury walked off, leaving the prefects breathless.

"Well, it's a rum go," said Biggleswade in a low voice. "And the rummiest part of it is, he doesn't even know he gave those orders. The old boy isn't pretending. He just doesn't know."

"We're going to have a high old time this term, then," commented one of the prefects. "We shall never know where we stand. Come on! Let's see if we can round up some of these kids."

A noisy crowd of juniors had just entered the gateway. They were led by Viscount Bellton, and they included Clive Russell, Fullwood, Gresham, Duncan and Adams.

"No need to hit the hay yet, fellers!" Skeets Rossiter was saying. "I guess it's not much after ten, and we're at liberty to do as we please—"

"One moment, young men!"

Dr. Scattlebury came out of the dusk, and he faced the group of Removites. The Head, in fact, was puzzled. He could not see how there had been a misunderstanding about bedtime. By questioning these juniors he might gain some enlightenment.

"Why, hallo, sir!" said Skeets cheerily. "I guess it was sure swell of you to let us celebrate to-night!"

"Oh?" said the Head, compressing his lips. "Now, let me see. You belong to a Junior Form, do you not?"

"Yes, sir—Remove."

"And your name?"

"Skeets, sir—Skeets Rossiter."

"Indeed! Is that your real name, my boy?"

"Well, strictly speaking, I'm Viscount Bellton, sir," replied Skeets uncomfortably. "You see, my dad is the Earl of Edgemore. I've just been over to Edgemore with these fellers. Dad thought there must be some sort of misunderstanding, and he sent us back."

"Your father was undoubtedly right," said the Head promptly. "Of course there has been a misunderstanding."

"Gee!" ejaculated the young viscount. "But you told us, sir, that we could spend the rest of the evening just as we liked—and that we could go to bed when we pleased."

"H'm! Well, perhaps it would be as well if you went to bed without any further delay," said the Head hastily. "After all,

there is nothing to be gained by remaining up. Off you go, my boys—and good-night."

"Good-night, sir!"

They crowded off, and Dr. Inigo Scattlebury paced back to his own House frowning deeply. One fact was very clear: he was just as puzzled as any of the other masters or any of the prefects. When he indulged in those little fits of levity he was another personality altogether, and upon coming to himself he remembered nothing.

It wasn't until nearly midnight that the rest of the fellows turned up.

Many had gone to the second house of the pictures; others had attended a big circus in Caistowe; Bernard Forrest, Gulliver, Bell and a crowd of other "blades" had been to a dance.

But they all turned up sooner or later, and the masters and prefects were heartily glad when the last boy had been accounted for, and the doors were closed and locked. And everybody in authority fervently hoped that Dr. Scattlebury would not indulge in any more of his peculiar pranks!

CHAPTER 7.

Another Surprise for the School!

THE chief subject of conversation in the morning, of course, was the previous night's "orgy." Everybody was chuckling about it now, and it seemed all the more humorous because the rumour was getting round that the new Head had denied giving the permission.

Not that it made any difference. Nobody had received any punishments, and the masters and prefects, by tacit consent, were saying nothing further on the subject. It was allowed to drop.

However, those in authority saw that the regulations were strictly adhered to this morning. All the boys who came down late—reluctant to get out of bed owing to their late retirement—were sharply punished. The school was made to understand that there would be no more laxity.

Prayers in Big Hall were conducted admirably by Dr. Inigo Scattlebury. He was a figure of reverend dignity.

So if the school had expected any fresh "excitement," the school was disappointed. In fact, the normal routine of St. Frank's was now going smoothly.

It was a blazingly hot day again, and when the boys got into their class-rooms they found that work, after the holidays, was going to be irksome.

"We wouldn't have cared if it had been pouring with rain to-day," said Nipper, with a grin. "But this cricket weather—just when we're so out of practice—is too exasperating for words!"

"Thank goodness it's a half-holiday," said Reggie Pitt, of the West House. "By Jove! We're lucky to have a half-holiday so early! You've fixed it up with the Fourth, haven't you, Nipper?"

"Rather," replied Nipper. "We're having a Form match this afternoon—only a sort of practice affair, of course, but it'll knock us into ship-shape a bit."

"Yes, and there'll be sheets of rain this afternoon!" grunted Handforth. "It generally happens like that! Fine in the morning, while we're stewing in the class-rooms—and wet in the afternoon!"

"I thought you were an optimist?" grinned Church. "Why, you ass, there's not a sign of rain!"

The Removites were not the only ones who were thinking of cricket at that moment.

Mr. Austin Suncliffe, the master of the Third Form, was wandering dreamily across the Triangle from the East House to the School House. He was a bit late, although he did not realise it; his Form was waiting.

"Good-morning!" said a pleasant voice.

"Eh? Oh, I beg your pardon, sir!" said Mr. Suncliffe, with a start. "Good-morning, sir!"

He was rather flustered, and he regarded Dr. Inigo Scattlebury in confusion for a moment. But the Head's manner was quite charming.

"I hope you will forgive me, sir, but I don't think I know your name," said the Head, smiling. "I am so new here——"

"Suncliffe, sir—Mr. Austin Suncliffe," said the master of the Third. "It is my—er—dubious privilege to rule the destinies of the Third Form. A wonderful morning, sir."

"Perfect, Mr. Suncliffe—perfect," agreed the Head, glancing up at the blue sky. "We are having summer early this year."

"Too early, I'm afraid," said Mr. Suncliffe, shaking his head. "We shall have to pay for this later, sir. In all probability, we shall get a wet July, and a still wetter August. The two best cricket months, too!"

"Well, we must hope for the best," smiled Dr. Scattlebury.

Mr. Suncliffe sighed.

"I sometimes regret, sir, that we cannot have our holidays earlier," he said dreamily. "Now, think of the great match at Lord's which is about to take place—the match between Middlesex and New Zealand. If this weather lasts—— However, I must be getting along to my class, sir."

"You appear to be interested very greatly in cricket, Mr. Suncliffe," smiled the Head.

"Interested, sir?" repeated the Form-master. "Good gracious! I am more than interested. Cricket is the greatest game on earth! Cricket, Dr. Scattlebury, is the cleanest, most sporting, most delightful game ever invented! By the way, sir, did you happen to notice Sinclair yesterday?"

"Sinclair? I am afraid I don't know the boys by name yet—if Sinclair is a boy."

"I had forgotten, sir—I apologise," said Mr. Suncliffe. "Of course, you wouldn't know, would you? Sinclair is in the Sixth, and I watched him at the nets last evening. I'm not sure that I altogether approve of

Sinclair in the ordinary way, but as a cricketer he is wonderful. Quite wonderful! His batting promises to be better than ever this season—and Sinclair has always been a brilliant bat."

Dr. Scattlebury was amused. A glow had come into Mr. Suncliffe's face, and his eyes were shining. Cricket, it seemed was his god. As a matter of fact, Mr. Suncliffe lived for nothing else.

His life, during the winter months, was a sort of human hibernation; he only sprang into full activity when the cricket season commenced, and throughout the summer he did nothing else but talk cricket. It was an obsession with him—as the Third-Formers well knew.

The fags took full advantage of Mr. Suncliffe's little weakness; at any and every opportunity they got him going on the subject of cricket, and a half-hour was wasted in the class-room whilst Mr. Suncliffe discoursed on batting or bowling or fielding.

"Yes, Sinclair promises well," continued the Form-master, glancing up at the sky. "A pity, sir—a pity!"

"What is a pity, Mr. Suncliffe?"

"That the boys should be bottled up in the class-rooms on such a morning as this," replied Mr. Suncliffe, almost indignantly. "Look at the sky, Dr. Scattlebury! Look at the sunshine! Feel the soft, delightful breeze! Could there be any better weather for cricket? And here are our boys, many of them bursting with enthusiasm for the great game, stewing away at lessons in the class-rooms! It always seems to me a crime that full advantage is not taken of such weather."

Dr. Scattlebury laughed, and as he laughed his manner changed. He became affable, genial, and merry. His eyes twinkled and danced.

"A splendid idea, Mr.—Mr.——" He paused, and laughed more merrily than ever. "I'm bothered if I haven't forgotten your name! Or did you ever tell me?"

"My name is Mr. Suncliffe," said the Form-master, staring.

"Ah, then you didn't tell me, for I have certainly never heard the name before," grinned the Head. "That idea of yours, Mr. Suncliffe, is a corker."

"A—a what, sir?" gasped Mr. Suncliffe.

"A top-notcher, my dear sir," said Dr. Scattlebury, with enthusiasm. "Why shouldn't the boys play cricket?"

"But, really, sir——"

"Why should they stew in the class-rooms?"

"I didn't quite mean——"

"It is a great shame," said the Head firmly. "Boys are outdoor animals, Mr. Suncliffe. And cricket, as you say, is the king of outdoor sports. By all means let the boys play."

Mr. Suncliffe sagged at the knees.

"But—but lessons, sir?" he asked feebly. "I was only speaking figuratively——"

(Continued on page 24.)

LINE UP HERE FOR A GOOD LAUGH, LADS!



HANDFORTH'S Weekly

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Chief Sub-Editor E. O. Handforth
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MAY 30th, 1931.

THE EDITOR'S CHIN-WAG

OUR GREAT NOVELISTS

By DR. RUYTERS KRAMP.

(The Famous Dutch Novelist
and Bulb-grower.)

HALLO, everybody!

I'm just going to start off this week with a grouse. I'm just about fed up with the Remove. And not only the Remove, but all the rest of the giddy school. In fact, I think St. Frank's has gone potty. Every one of them. Bar me. It's rather awful, don't you think, to be the only sane fellow in a school of loonies?

It's this WEEKLY of mine, you know. Everybody says it's piffle. I did what I could to point out that it wasn't piffle. After I had finished pointing it out, Churchy had a black eye, Mac had a swollen nose, Tommy Watson had a thick ear, and Travers had a large bruise on his lunch-trap. But, after all, a man can't thrash the whole school.

Yesterday Nipper came into Study D. He said:

"It's rather rotten, Handy, to write all the paper yourself. You can write the Editorial, if you like; but, dash it all, you ought to let somebody else have a hand in the rest of the paper."

After he had gone, I sat down and had a long think, and I came to the conclusion that Nipper was right. So in this issue you will find contributions—not by St. Frank's juniors—but by some of the greatest writers who have ever written.

If you say you have never heard of these famous writers, it merely shows your ignorance. If you would like to send a letter to any of them, address it c/o ME, Study D, St. Frank's. I'll answer it in due course. I mean, I'll send it on to the writer concerned.

E. O. HANDFORTH.

CONSIDERING the world as a whole, it is remarkable how few truly great novelists we have. I suppose that, in all the world, there are only four who stand head and shoulders above the common crowd. There are only four writers whose names will live forever.

These four are: Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, Edwy Searles Brooks, and Edward Oswald Handforth. And you can bet your boots that Handforth is the best of the bunch.

I'm not saying, mind you, that Mr. Brooks is bad. I merely say that he's not quite my class—I mean, Handforth's class. After all, what does he do? He merely puts our adventures at St. Frank's into stories, and makes 'em interesting. (He tells a few whoppers at times, too. Especially when he writes about me.)

But Handy has to think out his own plots for those great Trackett Grim stories.

One letter, which was sent to Handforth by a reader, is worth quoting:

"Dear Handforth,—
Kindly re-name your stories 'The Adventures of Splinter,' instead of 'The Adventures of Trackett Grim.' Grim is the poor fish who is always getting kidnapped. Splinter is the hero who rescues him.

Yours truly,
"BORED-STIFF."

"P.S.—When you've re-named your stories, put 'em in the dust-can."

This reader was wise enough not to put his name and address on his letter, but Handforth has a black eye waiting for him when he finds out.

PICTURED PROVERBS



"Barking dogs seldom bite."
George Fullerton, looking at the dog,
didn't believe it!



Running from the Runners!

ON the village green at Bethnal, Hawk the Highwayman pulled up to give his horse a drink. Hawk was a fearsome and awe-inspiring figure. The sun shone malignantly on his bald head, and his eyes gleamed fiercely through his horn-rimmed glasses. When he opened his mouth, he revealed an expensive set of terrible teeth.

In the holsters at his saddle were a pair of pistols, and when he was mad with rage Hawk often grabbed up the pistols, and, on one occasion, nearly went so far as to pull the trigger. Had he done so, the buckshot would almost certainly have slightly wounded his opponent.

His horse dipped his nose in the horse-pond, and drained it dry. Hawk's eyes roved over the countryside, and he noted a distant cloud of dust on the high-road.

"'Sdeath! 'Slife 'Swounds! Ods bodikins! Adslidikins! Beshrew me!" he muttered. "I recognise that dust. It is the Bow Street Runners, or I am much mistook. Well, I will first plunder the village, and I will then show them a clean pair of heels. Ha, ha!"

"Hee haw!" laughed his horse, for the intelligent animal always understood its master.

A village yokel came by. Hawk glared at him.

"Your money or your life!" he snarled.

"Rats!" said the yokel.

The fiendish highwayman clipped his ear.

By this time the dust was so near that Hawk could easily distinguish the presence of the Bow Street Runners. They were running hard. There were three of them, and they were pelting along the road for all they were worth.

The Bow Street Runners were famous

athletes who could run for days without feeling tired.

"Drat and bother them!" howled Hawk fiercely. "I shan't have time to plunder the village. I must away. Kim up, Haricot, old bean."

Haricot, the horse, reared up and galloped furiously down the street. So fast did the horse tear that it nearly overtook an old lady who was carrying a basket. Hawk chung to the saddle, panting dizzily!

Out of Bethnal Green they tore, and, ignoring a "Trespassers will be prosecuted" board, they galloped across the wide London Fields towards the distant Hackney Downs.

On the top of the downs, Hawk paused and panted hard. Though it was the horse who had been doing all the running, Hawk did his fair share of panting. He glanced back, and frowned as he saw the Runners toiling up the hill behind him.

"Zounds!" he cried. "The hounds are after me, beshrew them. I intended

to go to Cambridge Heath and hold up the night coach to Birmingham. But I suppose I shall have to spend the night dodging these mongrels from Bow Street. Kim up, Haricot!"

"Hoy!" yelled the Bow Street Runners, from the rear. "Stop! Ease off! Let up, will ye! Come back!"

Hawk threw an acorn at them, and jerked the reins of his horse. The intelligent animal judged by this that Hawk wished him to start moving, and he trotted swiftly across Hackney Downs, towards the distant Cambridge Heath.

The Runners yelled furiously and followed hard upon his track. Hawk groaned to himself as he saw them catching him up.

"Buck up, Haricot!" he gasped. "If they get much nearer, I'll have to dismount and walk. I can't stay and be caught."



"Hide me from the Bow Street Runners!" snarled Hawk.

The faithful animal, obedient to his voice and a dozen blows of his fist, accelerated promptly, and the speedometer on the horse's collar registered 80 m.p.h.

At Forest Gate there was a small inn. Hawk the Highwayman galloped up to the inn and dismounted. Then he went inside and interviewed the landlord.

"I will shoot you dead unless you hide me from the Bow Street Runners," snarled Hawk.

The landlord trembled. But before he could reply, there was a terrible noise from outside.

"They're here!" snarled Hawk. "They're here!"

He strode to the door. What a sight met his seen—I mean, what a scene met his sight. The inn was completely surrounded by Bow Street Runners. They were everywhere. They simply swarmed. There were at least three of them.

"Well," demanded Hawk proudly, "what do you want?"

The leading Runner advanced and took off his hat. He then felt in his pocket and produced a cigarette case.

"Excuse me, sir," he said politely, "but do you happen to have dropped this case? We found it on the road, and have been running after you to return it."

"Thanks awfully, old bean!" smiled Hawk, taking the case.

It was a nice case—gold, with a diamond initial. Hawk felt that it was as good a bit of plunder as he had ever bagged.

"Not at all," said the Bow Street man, bowing. "Glad to have been of service. By the way, have you, by any chance, come across Hawk the Highwayman in these parts? We're looking for him."

"He rode into the forest an hour ago," nodded Hawk.

"Thanks most frightfully. Come on, boys! Let's get after him. Chin, chin, sir!"

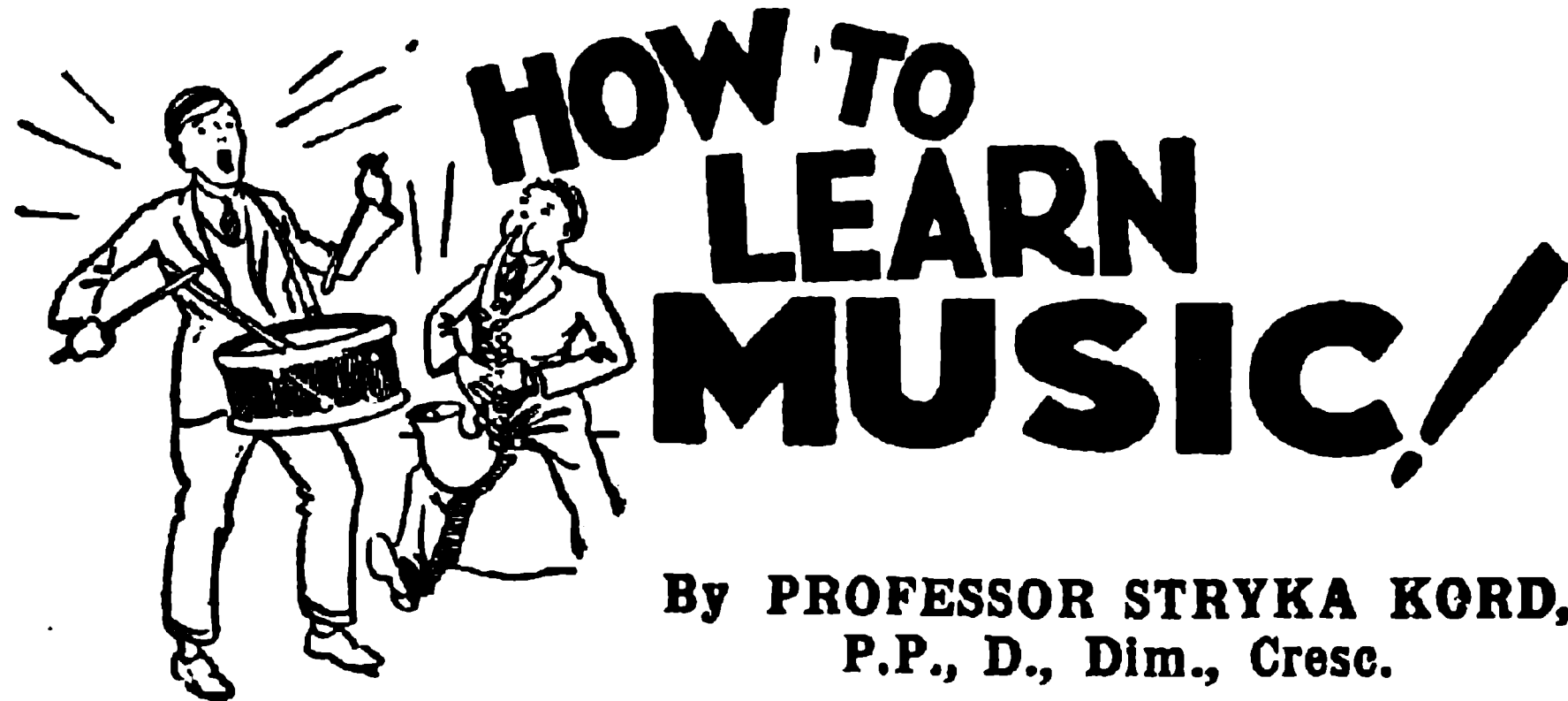
"Toodle-oo!" cried Hawk genially, and the Bow Street men trotted away.

Hawk went back to the inn.

"Har, har!" he snarled to the landlord. "I soon sent 'em running away. They dared not touch me. Bring me two eggs at once. I'll show you the kind of man I am."

And the landlord, trembling fearfully, obeyed.

THE END.



By PROFESSOR STRYKA KORD,
P.P., D., Dim., Cresc.

(Professor Stryka Kord is a Cheko-Siberian Music Expert, who won the Gold Cup at the Royal Agricultural Show last year, and fairly took the biscuit at the Crystal Palace.)

IN the first place, you've jolly well got to know what music looks like. It looks like a lot of silly blobs and lines on a lot of other lines, and more lines in between the other lines. And that, in fact, is what it is.

I can't play myself—except on Churchy's mouth-organ. But music is quite easy to learn if you take tips from an expert.

Music is played upon instruments. Of these, the hardest is the organ and the easiest is the drum. Starting with the easiest first, I shall now teach you how to play the drum.

You take two sticks with fairly hefty knobs on. These sticks you keep whacking on the drum, until somebody tells you

to cheese it. When this happens you can either (a) cheese it or (b) go on banging.

There are four sorts of drums : Bass drum, trap drum, kettle drum, and ear drum. The first three are damaged by the drum-sticks. The fourth is damaged by the first three.

After the drum, you should learn the organ.

The main thing is to get the time right. If you turn the handle too fast, you will jazz up the music. If you turn too slow, you'll make a funeral march of it. You want to turn it medium. Some people, I notice, think a monkey is a help to playing the organ ; but it is not essential.

Having mastered the drum

and the organ, you should try the saxophone. The object in playing the saxophone is to produce a noise like the groan of a dying snipe, and in this most amateurs are remarkably successful.

You are now well on the road to being a fine musician. The next instrument to master is the bell. All that is necessary in playing the bell is to grasp the machine and waggle it from side to side. Really first-class bell-sters can also waggle it backwards and forwards.

But, talking of bells, I can hear the dinner bell ringing, so I must cheese it now.

Doh, ray, me, fah, soh, lah, te, doh ! (This is Siberian for "Good-bye, everybody !")

WHAT A NERVE!

WELL, chums, what do you think of Handy's latest ? Not only has he tried to kid me that Professor Stryka Kord, Dodge Quickley, Fuller Thrills, etc., are all real writers he has engaged to write for his WEEKLY ; but he has actually had the nerve to ask me for a "fiver" to pay these fictitious gentlemen.

He writes :

"You can't get articles from these famous men for nothing, you know, and I reckon a fiver is jolly cheap, when you consider that they are usually paid hundreds of quids for writing stories. So please send the fiver by return of post, as I am practically broke."

Needless to say, Brother Handforth will continue to be broke as far as I'm concerned.

Editor, NELSON LEE.

RIGHT IS MIGHT By DODGE QUICKLEY

(the famous boxer, who won the Lonsdale belt and the Holdfast braces at the Bannington Flower Show.)

MR. CROWELL, in class the other day, said some awful bunk. He said : "Never forget that Right is Might." Or it might have been the other way round. I forget.

But the point is, all these fatheads keep on about Right being Might, and I'm fed-up with it. None of 'em seems to understand the first principles of boxing.

Old Crowsfeet, for instance, talks about Right being Might, and entirely ignores the Left. I know a lot of boxers who specialise on right hooks and right jabs ; but I maintain that you can't beat a good left-handed clout. I felled McClure

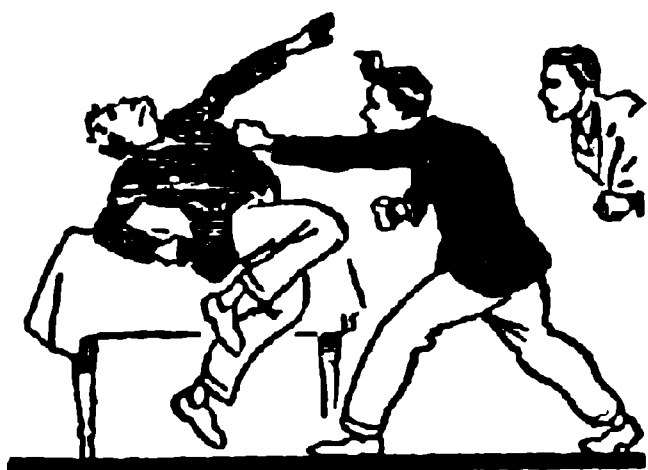
this morning with a perfect left. I'm quite sure I couldn't have got more vim into a right. So is McClure.

The fact is, the popular stunt is to use the left for defence and the right for attack. But that is all bosh. There's no trick so good as feinting with the right and bringing over the left in a cruel hook.

I'm all for a straight left. I won a fight in the village with a straight left. My

opponent was about the size of Carnera, and everybody said he would eat me alive. Instead of that, I let him have a straight left in the first minute, and he had to be carried off.

(Continued at foot of next col.)



High Jinks at St. Frank's!

(Continued from page 20.)

"Lessons can wait until later—until it rains," said the Head genially. "Pouf! Who cares about lessons on a glorious morning like this? Do you think for one moment that the boys will do any work in the class-rooms? They will pretend to, perhaps, but that's all. Let them out. Let them enjoy the glories of this hot summer's day."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Mr. Suncliffe. "Of course, I quite see your point, sir, and I only expressed a doubt because it is so unusual——"

"I am an unusual man, Mr. Suncliffe," said the Head, digging Mr. Suncliffe briskly in the ribs. "With our uncertain weather, the best thing for the boys to do is to grab the chance while the grabbing is good."

"Of course—to be sure!" gasped Mr. Suncliffe, dodging adroitly as the Head prepared to make another jab. "I am all in favour of your decision. But I must confess that it has come as a surprise."

"I'll tell you what," said the Head briskly. "I'll go round to the Form-rooms in person, and tell the boys that they can down tools."

He patted Mr. Suncliffe on the back.

"You are a genius, sir," he added, beaming. "Without the slightest exaggeration, you are a genius! Why should the boys stew in their class-rooms on such a morning? Why, indeed?"

And Dr. Scattlebury dashed off with a chuckle of glee, leaving Mr. Suncliffe fighting for breath. There was something volcanic about the Head when he was in these moods. He was the living embodiment of joviality and boisterous fun.

The first class-room Dr. Scattlebury dashed into happened to be that of the Remove. Mr. Crowell, the Form-master, was just getting his boys to settle down and it had been no easy task. Mr. Crowell was a stickler for discipline, and even on the first morning of work he would not allow any liberties. He considered it excellent training that the boys should be rigidly disciplined.

"Ah!" sang out the Head, as he strode into the room, his gown flying. "As I supposed! Stewing! Positively stewing!"

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mr. Crowell, nearly dropping his glasses. "I—I beg your pardon, sir?"

"And I, sir, beg yours," said the Head politely. "You are, I take it, the master of this intelligent-looking Form?"

"Why, yes, sir——"

"Then allow me to say a few words," continued Dr. Scattlebury, gazing at the Form with twinkling eyes. "Hallo, my boys! How would you like to go out and play cricket?"

The Remove sat stock-still, bewildered.

"Stunned—eh?" chuckled the Head. "Stunned by the good news! I don't wonder."

"But really, sir, you are not suggesting——" began Mr. Crowell.

"I am suggesting nothing, my dear fellow," interrupted the Head. "I am making a statement. On such a perfect morning as this, it is a mistake that the boys should be confined to this stuffy, overheated class-room. Let them play cricket."

"Hurrah!" yelled the Remove, finding its voice.

"Ah, that's what I like to hear," laughed the Head. "Healthy boyish cheering! A sure sign of enthusiasm—eh? But one moment!"

He turned upon the Form, while Mr. Crowell stood looking very much like a freshly-landed fish, opening and closing his mouth, but uttering no sound.

"All you fellows who desire to play cricket can cut off," said Dr. Scattlebury. "You are freed from lessons if you promise to play. You understand? I won't allow any of you to stand round as spectators. I regard all spectators as slackers. If they're not keen enough on the game to play it, then they're no good! So make up your minds as quickly as you like. Everybody who wants to go outside and play cricket can go. All the rest will remain here and continue their lessons."

"Hurrah!"

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

"Good old Head!"

"Bravo, sir!"

The Remove, as one man, leapt to its feet and made for the door. Most of the fellows were startled beyond measure, in addition to being delighted. But nobody questioned the order. The Head himself was "on the job," and the Head's word was good enough!

"Sir! Dr. Scattlebury!" gasped Mr. Crowell, as the boys went dashing out. "Really, I cannot allow—— I mean, this is absolute folly! I have never heard——"

"Cricket, my dear fellow, is a great game," interrupted Dr. Scattlebury, with a wave of his hand. "Mr. Suncliffe said so—and Mr. Suncliffe knows. Let the boys go! Let them have their fling! Who cares?"

And the Head, chuckling merrily, dashed off to spring his surprise on the next class-room.

CHAPTER 8.

Mass Production Cricket!

TEN minutes later the spectacle was astonishing.

The entire Junior School left the class-rooms in a body—the Third, the Fourth and the Remove. A few Fifth-Formers joined in, too; but the seniors, as a whole, felt that it was their duty to uphold the dignity of the school by remaining at lessons. The juniors, who had no truck with any such nonsense as dignity, grabbed this opportunity with both hands.

Cheering and shouting and laughing, they streamed out to the playing fields, overjoyed to be out in the warm sunshine.

"As loopy as a March hare!" grinned Handforth. "Didn't I tell you so yester-

day? Didn't Churchy and Mac and I see him paddling in that brook? Perhaps you'll believe me now!"

"We'll believe anything about the Head!" chuckled Nipper. "But, loopy or not, he's a sport!"

"Rather!"

"And while he has these little spasms we'll encourage him!" continued Nipper, with a chuckle. "That means that we mustn't overstep the mark, you chaps. Whatever he gives us permission to do, we'll do—but nothing more. Understand? Then the other masters can't drop on us."

"Good egg!" said Travers. "We're on velvet all the time, dear old fellows."

In a miraculously short space of time cricket matches were being arranged. Every available inch of Little Side was utilised. The boys did not forget that they had to *play*, or they were liable to be called back into the class-rooms.

There wasn't much fear that Dr. Scattlebury would call them back; but the masters and prefects were buzzing about like a crowd of angry hornets, and if they saw any fellows standing idly by as spectators, they would pounce upon them. Even Bernard Forrest and his languid chums fixed up a game of their own.

Any excuse served for "cutting" lessons, and playing cricket was about the best excuse of all. Thus, within a quarter of an hour, there was the extraordinary spectacle of about six or eight cricket matches going on at one and the same time. It was a sort of mass production affair.

Naturally, there wasn't sufficient ground for so many matches, so the games overflowed out of Little Side into the neighbouring meadows. No matter where one looked, cricket matches were in progress. Two or three of them were quite respectable games, but most of the others were farcical in the extreme.

However, the boys were obeying instructions—they were playing, and not watching.

There weren't enough bats and balls and stumps to go round for so many games. Tennis balls were brought into use, odd bits of stick were used as stumps, and hastily fashioned pieces of planking were used as bats.

"Mr. Wilkes—Mr. Wilkes!" panted Mr. Crowell, dashing up to the Housemaster of the Ancient House as the latter stood in the gateway of Little Side watching the remarkable scene. "I am glad that I have found you, Mr. Wilkes! What are we going to do about this?"

Mr. Wilkes, who was in no way excited, smiled at the Form-master's agitation.

"There's only one thing we can do, Mr. Crowell," he replied. "We must let these games go on."

"But the morning's work, sir?" asked Mr. Crowell, aghast.

"The morning's work, I am afraid, will have to go by the board."

"Really, sir, you don't appear to be upset in the slightest degree," said Mr. Crowell, with some asperity.

"I cannot see any reason for getting upset," replied the Housemaster, with a twinkle in his eyes. "After all, Mr. Crowell, there is a humorous side to the affair. Just have a look at this! Did you ever see anything so funny?"

"I confess," said Mr. Crowell acidly, "that my sense of humour does not permit me to find amusement in this outrageous scene."

"They wouldn't have done much work this morning," commented old Wilkey dryly.

"That is not the point," protested the Form-master. "The whole discipline of the school has been set at naught! And by whom? By the headmaster himself!"

"Exactly! And what are we going to do about it?" asked Mr. Wilkes. "We can't very well order the boys in—because it is the Head himself who has given them permission to be out. The boys have right on their side, and our best policy is to stand clear of the whole business. The headmaster started this thing, and it is up to him to take whatever action is necessary."

"I suppose that is true," admitted Mr. Crowell, cooling down somewhat. "Upon my word, Mr. Wilkes, what does it all mean? Last night the Head allowed the boys to stay out as long as they pleased, and afterwards he declared that he had given no such permission. Now, this morning, he does virtually the same thing. I'm beginning to think Dr. Scattlebury is—er—cranky!"

"A little eccentric perhaps," murmured old Wilkey.

"More than eccentric, sir!" retorted the Form-master. "He is absolutely irresponsible—more like a boy himself than a headmaster. Yet, at other times, he is the very embodiment of scholarly dignity. I confess I am bewildered by it all."

"Well, he's the Head—and I suppose we shall have to put up with his little idiosyncrasies," said Mr. Wilkes. "Far better to take the thing philosophically, old man."

However, there were other masters who were not so tranquil as old Wilkey. Mr. Stockdale of the Modern House, and Mr. Goole of the East House, came over and had a consultation with Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Stokes. This latter gentleman was of very much the same temperament as old Wilkey, and he saw the humour of the situation. Barry Stokes was a real sport.

"But what can we do, anyhow?" he asked, grinning. "The boys have received permission to play cricket—they're all playing cricket."

"Only a few of them are playing cricket—the others are playing *at* cricket," said Mr. Stockdale, worried. "The whole thing is a farce! I certainly think, gentlemen, that we, as the Housemasters of St. Frank's, should go to Dr. Scattlebury and protest."

"I am in entire agreement with that," said Mr. Goole.

"Well, perhaps you are right," admitted Mr. Wilkes. "At least, it will make our own position clear. The Head will see we are opposed to this strange conduct."

Several of the Form-masters gathered round, too—Mr. Crowell of the Remove, Mr. Pycraft of the Fourth, and even Mr. Pagett of the Fifth. Mr. Suncliffe, of course, was out of it. He was as pleased as a cat with two tails, and he was on Little Side, watching the cricket.

It was a formidable party which descended upon the headmaster's study ten minutes later. The masters of St. Frank's, after their brief conference, had decided that it was up to them to make their own position perfectly clear. Their authority had been taken out of their hands by the Head, and they wanted to know just where they stood.

It seemed significant to them that the Head should have gone back to his study after letting the Junior School run riot, as it were. It looked very much as though Dr. Scattlebury had become alarmed at his action, and had bolted for cover.

It came as a great surprise to the masters, therefore, when the Head was found busy at his study desk, and he sat back in real astonishment as the deputation filed in, ushered by the flustered butler.

"Upon my word!" said Dr. Scattlebury, adjusting his glasses and looking from one master to the other. "May I inquire, gentlemen, why I am honoured by this visit at such an hour of the morning?"

"Surely you are fully aware of our reason, sir?" said Mr. Stockdale sternly.

"I can assure you that I am completely in the dark," replied the Head. "I was under the impression that you gentlemen were taking your various Forms."

"Taking our Forms, sir?" burst out Mr. Crowell excitedly. "How can you say that—when it was you who dismissed our Forms?"

"I dismissed them?" repeated Dr. Scattlebury, in amazement. "But, really, I don't understand at all!"

The startled masters became even more startled. They could see that the Head's amazement was genuine. For a quick-change artiste, Dr. Inigo Scattlebury would have taken some beating.

"I think, gentlemen, I had better be the spokesman," said Mr. Wilkes gently. "The fact is, Dr. Scattlebury, a large number of the boys—mostly juniors—are out playing cricket."

"Not in the morning, surely?"

"It is not usual for the boys to play cricket in the morning," replied Old Wilkey, his voice still gentle. "But you may remember going from class-room to class-room, not more than half an hour ago, giving permission for the boys to leave their work and to go out into the open. I earnestly urge you, sir, to tax your memory."

Dr. Scattlebury sat back, looking bewildered.

"But the very idea is preposterous, Mr. Wilkes!" he said. "I did no such thing!"

"There, sir, you are wrong," replied Mr.

Wilkes. "There is not merely one gentleman who can corroborate this, but many. And I do not think you will accuse us all of imagining the incidents. The boys are out in the fields, playing cricket. You gave them permission to do so. We are here, sir, so that you may tell us just where we stand in the matter."

Dr. Scattlebury was no longer looking bewildered; his expression had become grave, and he wore a puzzled frown. He passed a hand over his eyes, and then stroked his chin very thoughtfully.

"You see, sir——" began Mr. Goole.

"Pardon me!" interrupted the Head. "Just one moment, gentlemen! I do seem to have a faint recollection of visiting the various class-rooms this morning. What an extraordinary thing!"

He shook himself, stood up, and paced up and down for a few moments; and when he faced the masters again he was smiling confidently.

"Yes, it is quite possible that I gave the boys permission to go out into the open and to play cricket," he said frankly. "If I have upset any of you, I am deeply sorry. Perhaps I am inclined to be impulsive—to do things on the spur of the moment. However, no great harm has been done."

"I disagree, sir," said Mr. Crowell warmly. "My boys are playing instead of working. It will be quite impossible to maintain discipline if this sort of thing is permitted to continue."

"Well, it would be hardly fair if we fetched them all in now," replied Dr. Scattlebury. "So we'd better let them continue with their games. It is a half-holiday to-day, anyhow, so it won't matter very much."

He was so genial, so affable, that most of the masters very soon forgot their indignant consternation, and they found themselves laughing with him.

"An absurd situation, of course," chuckled the Head. "I really must be more careful, gentlemen. Mind you, I don't exactly remember doing what you tell me I did, but I take your word for it. I am afraid I am inclined to be absent-minded at times. I am sure you won't bear me any ill-will."

Even Mr. Crowell was smiling now. There was something magnetic about the Head's personality. He was quite normal now, and his manner was so charming that when all the masters took their departure they were perfectly at ease. The Head had won a victory by his likable personality.

After the visitors had gone, Dr. Scattlebury sat in his chair and he pressed his fingers to his temples.

"Most singular!" he murmured. "I cannot doubt what those gentlemen have just told me. Yet I remember nothing! Upon my word, it is extraordinarily disturbing!"

He got up, walked over to the mantelpiece, and examined himself in the mirror.

"I feel well—I was never so well in my life!" he went on, puzzled. "Yet no sooner do I come to St. Frank's than I behave like an irresponsible schoolboy! At least, so they

tell me! I can't believe it—I simply can't believe it!"

However, he was compelled to believe it, and he was inwardly uneasy. It was true that he had never felt fitter in all his life, and for that reason he found it difficult to credit these strange stories.

He went outside into his garden, and he was still uneasy.

CHAPTER 9.

The Head and the Hose!

WHAT the other masters feared was that the boys would take advantage of the Head's "funny little ways," and that discipline would go by the board.

But the boys were too clever to let that happen. They knew on which side their bread was buttered, so to speak. At 12.30, when morning lessons were normally dismissed, the farce was over. The Junior School resumed its ordinary aspect.

Nipper, as captain of the Remove, made a point of having a chat with Lionel Corcoran and Willy Handforth, the skippers of the Fourth and Third respectively. He took them aside for the purpose.

"Now, look here, you chaps," he said. "We've had a good old spree this morning, and I think we've all enjoyed ourselves."

"Yes, rather!" grinned Willy. "And don't forget that you've got to thank old Sunny. It was he who put this idea into the Head's noddle."

"Never mind that," said Nipper. "The main thing is to see that everything goes on smoothly, so that the Form-masters and Housemasters can't drop on us. I dare say you've noticed, too, that the prefects have been hanging about, ready to grab if they got the chance."

"Like a pack of hungry wolves," nodded Corcoran.

"Well, it's up to us to get our Forms together, and to tell the fellows straight," continued Nipper. "I'm doing it in the Remove, and I hope you chaps will do it in your Forms."



Handforth, clambering over the wall, received a stream of water full in the face. And the culprit was the Head!

"Of course we will," promised Corky.

"If any of us kick over the traces, we'll be jumped on," said Nipper. "But as long as we stick to the Head's ruling we're safe. Nobody can touch us. The wheeze, my sons, is to encourage the Head in his good work."

"I'm afraid there won't be much more of it," said Willy, with a sigh. "One of these days he'll be taken away—in a nice padded ambulance, with a keeper on each side of him."

"Rats!" said Corky. "We know—by now—that the Head is subject to these little fits of boisterous irresponsibility, but he's as sane as I am."

"That's not saying much," commented Willy, with a grin.

"He's all there—and he's a sportsman," continued Corcoran, ignoring the fag's remark. "They can't have him locked up because he has spasms of absent-mindedness."

"Of course they can't," agreed Nipper. "And it's quite on the cards that he'll do some more rummy things. So we've got to keep the flag flying by sticking strictly to discipline."

It was a good idea—from the point of view of the juniors. They were confident that their novel headmaster would soon institute some new rules, and, judging by his performances up to date, they would be popular ones.

The boys belonging to the junior Forms did not want much telling by their skippers. They could see the truth for themselves.

"Take this morning, for example," said Nipper, when he was speaking to a crowd of Removites. "The Head told us that we could come out of doors to play cricket. Well, we came out—and we played. But if we had gone off to the river, boating, or had slacked about, reading under the trees, we should have been in the wrong. The other masters and prefects would have had a chance of piling on us. As it was, although the cricket was more or less of a farce, we stuck to the letter of the Head's permission, and we were safe. So we've got to keep it up."

"Yes, rather!"

"I'm not so sure, laddie, that the scheme is really juicy," said Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, all morning I've been dashing hither and thither, and I feel about as dithery as the dickens. In the Form-room a chappie does get the chance, now and again,

of putting in an occasional spasm of the good old dreamless."

"Rats!" said Handforth. "You can't fool us, Archie! You're just as keen on cricket as anybody, and just as keen on missing lessons, too."

"Good gad, yes," agreed Archie, with a shudder. "Lessons? The word ought to be deleted from the dictionary."

"Pheew! I'm hot!" went on Handforth. "Let's get indoors for a wash and brush-up."

They were all hot, for they had been doing a lot of violent exercise—and they were not dressed for it. For this morning's "cricket" had been played in ordinary clothes. There had been no time to change into flannels.

Handforth & Co. and two or three others walked off Little Side, skirting the wall which divided the playing-fields from the Head's garden. It was really a double wall, with a lane in between—this lane extending right round the school premises.

"By George, I am hot!" Handforth was saying, as he mopped his brow.

"Grumbling at the weather now!" sniffed Church. "If it was a cloudy day, you'd complain about being cold!"

"Don't be an ass!" said Handforth. "I like being hot. Still, a good old shower-bath would come in handy just now."

"Wait until you get indoors," said McClure. "You can't expect to have a shower-bath out in the open air."



Jokes from readers wanted for this feature! If you know a good rib-tickler, send it along now. A handsome watch will be awarded each week to the sender of the best joke; pocket wallets, penknives and bumper books are also offered as prizes. Address your jokes to "Smilers," Nelson Lee Library, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

COULDN'T BE DONE

Teacher to Billy: "If you want to learn anything properly, the only way is to start at the bottom."

Billy: "That wouldn't help me, sir."

Teacher: "And why not?"

Billy: "Because I want to learn how to swim."

(R. Taylor, 20, Framlington Place, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

OBEYING ORDERS.

Mother stood at the bottom of the stairs.

"Tommy," she called up, "come down here at once."

There was no reply. After calling once more and still receiving no reply, she mounted the stairs.

"Tommy," she said angrily, entering the boy's bedroom, "didn't you hear me calling you?"

"Yes, mother," calmly replied the boy: "but only yesterday you told me not to answer you back."

(L. Davies, Mill Street, St. Asaph, Scotland, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

THE BUSINESS INSTINCT.

Eric: "Uncle, can you change my penny?"

Uncle: "How do you want it changed?"

Eric: "I would like it changed into a shilling."

(W. Bonham, 8, Hylton Terrace, North Shields, has been awarded a book.)

ASKING FOR TROUBLE.

Passenger (to driver of car who is speeding furiously): "Hey! Why are you going so fast?"

Driver: "I've just found out we have no brakes, and I'm hurrying home before we have an accident."

(N. Croft, 28, Greystones Road, Ecclesall, Sheffield, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

SEE-SAW.

Housewife: "Did you notice that pile of wood in the yard?"

Tramp: "Yes, mum, I seen it."

Housewife: "You should mind your grammar, my man. You mean you saw it."

But whether Handforth expected it or not, he got one—and so did the other fellows. For, remarkably enough, McClure had hardly finished speaking before wetness, thick and drenching, descended in a deluge upon the party.

"Hi! What the—— Whoa!" yelled Handforth, jumping about like a kangaroo.

"What's—what's happening?" gasped Fullwood.

"Where's the water coming from?" asked Church, staring round blankly.

And then they understood. The shower, still falling thickly, was coming in a great arc over the circular lane and the two brick walls. The source of it, without question, was from within the headmaster's garden!

Somebody in the garden was using a hose—and was holding the hose at a slanting angle so that the spray sped upwards, crossed the lane, and fell on the other side of the wall.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gurgled Handforth, who was fairly drenched. "Where is he? Who's doing it? By George! I'll slaughter him!"

"And we'll help you!" said Fullwood wrathfully.

They suspected one of the gardener's boys—who probably thought that the joke was funny. He must have overheard Handforth's remark about a shower-bath, and he had turned his hose over the wall.

"Come on!" said Handforth fiercely. "I want to see the chap who's had nerve enough to drench me!"

He leapt at the wall, swarmed over, and dropped into the lane. The others were with him. But Fullwood, at least, hesitated as Handforth prepared to leap at the inner wall.

"Hold on!" he urged. "Don't forget it's the Head's garden over there, and if we're caught it'll mean a swishing!"

"Rats!" retorted Handforth. "We shan't be more than half a minute. All I want to do is to grab that hose and turn it on the fathead who soaked us!"

He waited for no further argument, but leapt up, grabbed the top of the wall, and hauled himself over.

Actually, he only got half over, for he was met by a drenching spray of water which caught him full in the neck. The other fellows, jumping to the summit of the wall at the same time, shared Handforth's fate.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared a hearty, boisterous voice.

"Great Scott!" gurgled Church. "The Head!"

"Wha-a-a-at!"

The boys had expected to find a gardener's assistant; and there, standing on the edge of the lawn, just against a flower-bed, was Dr. Inigo Scattlebury, holding a hose and roar-

Tramp: "No, mum. You saw me see it, but you won't see me saw it."

(*T. Morris, 82, Richmond Road, Bayswater, W.2, has been awarded a book.*)

GO HON!

Doctor: "Now, my little man, show me your tongue. Come along now—put it right out. No; farther than that!"

The Little Man: "Please sir, I can't. It—it's fastened in at the back."

(*H. Beewy, 74, Broadway, London Fields, Hackney, E.8, has been awarded a penknife.*)

HE HAD TO BE.

Father: "Well, my son, so you are the president of your cycling club? That's fine! And why did they choose you?"

Harry: "Well, you see, dad, at present I'm the only one in the club who's got a bicycle."

(*C. Neylon, 101, Liverpool Road, Bankstown, Sydney, Australia, has been awarded a book.*)

IMPOSSIBLE.

Father (to son whose head is jammed in a vase): "You little rascal! Don't you look me in the face and say it was an accident!"

(*G. Evans, 103, Winns Avenue, Walthamstow, E. 17, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)



ALL IN VAIN.

Teacher (after giving a lecture on honesty): "Now, Willie, if you found a shilling, would you keep it?"

Willie: "No, sir."

Teacher: "That's good. What would you do with it, Willie?"

Willie: "Spend it."

(*J. Upton, 207, Galpins Road, Thornton Heath, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

NOT VERY PROFITABLE.

Commercial Traveller: "I got two orders from a firm to-day."

Boss: "Good. What were they?"

Commercial Traveller: "Get out and stay out."

(*W. Inman, Jun., 31, North Road, Durham, has been awarded a penknife.*)

A VILLAGE THRILL.

Pedestrian (to village constable): "You're right off the beaten track here, constable. No traffic conjection in this neighbourhood."

Constable: "Oh, I dunno, sir. Only last week we 'ad a bit of a collision between old Josh Duggins' bath chair, and the post-mistress's tricycle."

(*G. E. Cook, 27, Oxford Avenue, Southampton, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

ing with laughter. He had turned the tap off now, and he was regarding the boys on the top of the wall with the keenest amusement.

"There's nothing like a cold shower when you're feeling hot!" he said affably.

"We—we didn't know it was you, sir!" said Handforth, in a feeble voice.

"You'll always find me ready to oblige," replied Dr. Scattlebury blandly. "How do you feel? Cool enough? Or would you like another shower?"

Without waiting for them to reply, he turned the tap again, and another shower hissed over them. The Head broke into a fresh peal of hearty laughter, and it was so infectious that the boys completely forgot their annoyance and joined in.

"Only my little joke, you fellows," said the Head, with a chuckle, as he laid down the hose. "When I heard you saying that you'd like a shower, I couldn't resist the temptation. No harm done, I'm sure."

"None at all, sir!" chorused the Removites bravely.

"Splendid!" beamed the Head. "How many are there of you? Six? Well, look here, by way of compensation, I'll tell you what I'll do. Come along and have lunch with me."

"Why—why—yes, sir!"

"But don't come like that," went on the Head dryly. "I don't think you'd be very comfortable—eh? Pop indoors, change your clothes, and be at my table at one o'clock. How's that?"

"Thanks awfully, sir."

"You're a sport, sir."

"Off you go, then," smiled Dr. Scattlebury. "And don't forget—one o'clock."

The boys were glad enough to lower themselves from the top of the wall. They scuttled down the lane, dodged in through the West Gate, and paused in the Square, at the back of the Ancient House.

"Well, I'm dithered!" said Handforth breathlessly.

"The old boy's a caution!" grinned Fullwood. "Soaks us with his giddy garden hose, and then invites us to lunch with him!"

"Mad as a hatter!" said Russell, shaking his head. "I'm not altogether sure that we shall be safe at his giddy table!"

They went indoors, and left a trail of wetness down the Remove passage. In the lobby at the bottom of the stairs they ran into Biggleswade of the Sixth.

"Hallo!" said Biggy, staring at them. "What's all this? What have you kids been up to?"

"We got a bit wet," said Handforth.

"I can see that, can't I?" asked the prefect. "You'll take a hundred lines each——"

"Not likely!" interrupted Handforth. "If you give lines to anybody, give them to the Head."

"The which?"

"The Head," grinned Handforth. "He did this!"

"Now look here, you young sweep——"

"Fact, Biggy," chuckled Fuliwood. "We were passing the Head's garden, and he turned the hose on us! Then he invited us to lunch."

"Honour bright!" chorused the others.

Biggleswade made a helpless gesture.

"I give it up," he said. "The Old Man's a bit too swift for me!"

Triumphantly, the juniors ascended the stairs—safe again. Biggleswade could not very well give them lines for coming indoors soaked to the skin—for it was the Head himself who had soaked them.

They changed into their best, and when they came down they were looking remarkably spick and span. They ran into a crowd of other Removites in the lobby.

"Hallo!" said Nipper. "Why this thushness, you chaps? Where's the wedding?"

"Sorry, can't stop!" said Handforth carelessly. "We're just off to have lunch with the Head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can laugh," said Fullwood. "It happens to be a fact—honest Injun! But we can't stop—it's three minutes to one, and we're due at one. Old Scatty invited us!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

"My only sainted aunt!"

The other fellows watched rather dazedly as Handforth, Church, McClure, Fullwood, Russell and Potts sauntered elegantly out into the Triangle.

Invited to lunch with the Head! Another of Dr. Scattlebury's little surprises!

There was still another when the juniors arrived at the Head's house. For it so happened that the guests ran into Dr. Scattlebury on the very doorstep. He had watched their approach with some surprise.

"I thought Inner Court was out of bounds for junior boys?" he asked, frowning.

"So it is, sir—but you invited us here," replied Handforth promptly.

"I invited you?"

"Of course you did, sir—you invited us to lunch."

"To lunch!" ejaculated the Head, startled. "Nonsense! How dare you——"

He paused, an anxious look in his eyes. He racked his brain. No, he could not remember!

"You say that I invited you to lunch?" he went on, his tone changing. "When?"

"About half an hour ago, sir—after you had turned the hose on us."

"After I had turned——" The Head paused, and seemed to gulp. "Why, yes, of course," he added hastily, "Very thoughtless of me. Well, boys, I was only having a little joke with you. Here you are—here's something to spend in the school shop. I really think you had better have your lunch in your own House."

He gave them half-a-crown each so hurriedly that they had no time to protest, and a moment later he had gone indoors and had closed the door.

CHAPTER 10.**The Cricket Referee!**

WELL, I'm blowed!" said Handforth, staring at the closed door.

"He didn't give us much chance to talk, did he?" asked Mac. "Did you ever know such a merchant? He invites us to lunch, and half an hour later he has forgotten all about it!"

"It's a bit thick, if you ask me!" said Handforth, with some warmth. "Fine asses we shall look now—when we go back to the other chaps! They'll cackle like the dickens!"

"Let 'em cackle!" said Fullwood. "Don't forget that he who laughs best laughs last—and we've got half-a-crown each."

"We didn't want his mouldy half-crowns!" said Handforth disdainfully. "We wanted to have lunch with him! By George! He's slighted us, you chaps!"

"Cheese it, you ass!" said Church. "The Head only invites people to lunch, and lets them off morning lessons, and things like that when he's under the 'fluence."

"Under which 'fluence?" asked Handforth, staring.

"I don't know, but there seems to be a 'fluence of some sort," replied Church. "Later on the Head forgets everything. But he's a sport, all the same. Let's go and dig up some ice-creams!"

There was a good deal of comment from the other fellows when the six "guests" showed themselves in the Triangle. In fact, they were chipped—until the half-crowns were heard about.

"Lucky bargees!" said Owen major enviously. "I'm nearly broke; but I don't get any invitation to lunch and a half-crown to soothe my injured feelings!"

"Well, come and share this money with us," invited Handforth. "Who wants an ice-cream? Just time before the bell goes!"

"Good old Handy!"

That money was soon spent, and most of it went on the crowd. There was a good deal of laughter over the incident, and the fellows were beginning to wonder when the headmaster would "break out" again. There was always a glorious uncertainty about him. One never knew what he was going to do next.

LITTLE SIDE that afternoon took on a really businesslike aspect.

There was no repetition of the morning's farce. There was a serious match to be played—Remove versus Fourth. It wasn't one of the official Form games, but a practice match. However, so many of the junior cricketers had had no practice at all this season that the game assumed a special importance.

"We'll knock spots off the Fourth, of course," said Handforth, as he came upon the field in spotless white. "Their team isn't worth bothering over, really."

"Don't be too jolly cock-sure, Handy," said Church. "Boots and Christine are both hot men, and don't forget that Corky has been putting in some good practice this season. He's mustard. And both Oldfield and Clapson have been doing great things in bowling."

"What about our team?" retorted Handforth. "What about Castleton and Jerry Dodd and Hussi Khan and Charley Bangs? They've been at school all the time, and they've been playing fine cricket. The rest of us will soon get into shape."

"Well, the game itself will show," said Nipper, as he joined them. "Where's Gresham? And what about Travers? Why can't some fellows learn to be punctual?"

Within a few minutes all the cricketers were on hand. Nipper won the toss, and as the wicket was in perfect condition he elected to bat first.

"Come on, let's get going," said Nipper briskly. "You and Gresham are in first, Handy. Get your pads on."

"Good egg!" said Handforth, with satisfaction. "I'll show these Fourth-Formers how to knock boundaries."

It wasn't "swank" on Handforth's part; it was merely an expression of his supreme confidence. He would not have been flattered, perhaps, if he had known the real reason why Nipper was putting him in first. Nipper expected that Handy's wicket would soon fall, and, once out, the great Edward Oswald would be subdued. If he was left until fifth or sixth man he would only kick up the dust in the pavilion until his turn came.

The Fourth-Formers went out into the field, and crowds of juniors stood round the boundaries or sprawled on the grass, bent upon enjoying themselves.

Just before the game was due to commence, Dr. Inigo Scattlebury put in an appearance.

"Ah, a match, I perceive," he said genially.

"It's only a practice game, sir," said Nipper, who happened to be nearest. "Still, it's quite an important game, really."

"All games are important, young man," said the Head amiably. "Sport is essential to the upbringing of any healthy schoolboy. All this makes me feel very young again. For two pins I'd take off my jacket and join in."

Nipper gave him a quick look. His manner was infectious merry. As Church might have put it, the 'fluence was on.

"Masters don't usually join in our practice games, sir," explained Nipper. "But we shall be awfully pleased if you'll stay and watch."

"Watch?" repeated Dr. Scattlebury. "My dear boy, I don't believe in watching. Spectators are lazy people. Surely I can be of some help? There is nothing I would like better than to join in this battle royal."

Travers and Boots and Corky and one or two others were drawing round now, and

they were looking anxious. Much as they liked the new Head, there seemed a possibility that he would seriously delay the game.

"Thanks very much, sir——" began Nipper.

"Splendid!" beamed the Head. "Then it is all settled."

"No, sir. I didn't mean——"

"Enough!" said the Head, holding up his hand and looking at Nipper with twinkling eyes. "I insist! But since you have your teams fully arranged, no doubt, I will content myself by acting as referee."

A titter went round, but it was quickly subdued.

"There's no referee at a cricket match, sir," said Nipper gently.

"No? You surprise me! I always thought that a referee was a most necessary official."

"At a football match—yes, sir," replied Nipper. "At cricket we have two umpires."

"Why, yes, to be sure," said the Head with a chuckle. "How forgetful of me! A referee for football, and umpires for cricket. Of course! Then I will be an umpire."

"That's very good of you, sir, but we've already arranged——"

"Nothing will please me but to umpire this match," interrupted the Head firmly.

"Wait for me, boys! I'll be back in two shakes!"

Bubbling with enthusiasm, the Head commenced hurrying away. Nipper glanced at the other juniors, and they were all grinning.

"Hold on, sir!" sang out Nipper. "We're all ready to start!"

"I shan't be long—I've got to change!" roared the Head, over his shoulder.

"There's no need to change, sir——"

"Oh, what's the use?" said Nipper, shrugging his shoulders. "Look at the old boy! Legging it away like a two-year-old! We've got to wait now—we can't do anything else."

"He's so jolly volcanic," grinned Boots. "He dashes here, and he dashes there, and it's impossible to be wild with him. He's always got such a cheery smile on his face, and such a hearty word for a chap. He's a caution!"

"We'll give him ten minutes, and then we'll start," said Nipper. "The chances are he'll get indoors and forget all about the match. We're getting to know him by now."

However, Nipper was wrong. Only seven minutes elapsed before Dr. Inigo Scattlebury reappeared, and his return not only caused a flutter throughout the junior cricketers, but something very akin to consternation seized them.

For the Head, remarkably enough, was attired in shorts, sweater, and cap! And as he came running on to the field the startled boys saw that he was wearing football boots, and he had a whistle in his hand!

"Ye gods and little fishes!" gurgled Handforth. "He's dressed himself as a footer referee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Head blew a shrill blast on his whistle as he ran upon the field. Juniors gathered round from all quarters, and the spectators all round the field watched with glee.

"Come along—come along!" sang out Dr. Scattlebury. "I haven't kept you waiting long, have I? Let's begin!"

"But—but you're not dressed right, sir," protested Nipper feebly.

"I will confess that I dressed in a hurry," said the Head smilingly. "The sweater is not the one I really desired——"

"I don't mean that, sir," said Nipper. "You've dressed yourself as a referee!"

"Well, isn't that right? I am a referee."

"No, sir—an umpire!"

"And what is the difference, young man, between an umpire and a referee?" demanded the Head. "You don't think for a moment that you can tell me anything about cricket, do you?"

"Nun-no, sir, but——"

"Then let us get on," said Dr. Scattlebury, waving an airy hand. "Where are the teams? Let them line up."

Nipper tried to protest again, but it was impossible. He hadn't the nerve. After all, this man was the headmaster, and to argue with him was out of the question. There seemed nothing else for it, therefore, but to get on with the game.

Other fellows were being attracted to Little Side by now, including a large number of seniors. Everybody was taking an interest in the Remove v. Fourth match.

But it was the headmaster who was the centre of attraction.

Any other man might easily have made himself ridiculous; he might have been the butt of much laughter. But Dr. Scattlebury carried himself with such boisterous good humour, and he spread such cheeriness all around him, that nobody even thought of giving him "the bird." His geniality was infectious—it spread rapidly from fellow to fellow. Although his position was, in itself, ridiculous enough, he yet managed to retain the complete respect of his boys.

And so the game started—with one umpire attired in the regulation long coat, and the other as a football referee!

CHAPTER 11.

Brighter Cricket!

CLACK!

Handforth, taking Oldfield's bowling, swiped a glorious boundary. It was the first boundary of the match, and Handforth rested on his bat contentedly.

"Run, boy—run!" urged the Head. "Good gracious! Why are you wasting time?"

"We don't need to run here, sir," said Handforth, with a grin. "That was a boundary."

"Ah, yes, I seem to remember," nodded Dr. Scattlebury. "Boundaries don't count, do they?"



"You big fellows will wait upon us!" commanded the Head. And the lordly seniors were compelled to serve the lowly fags!

"They count four runs, sir," explained the wicket-keeper.

"A lazy arrangement," commented the Head. "However, this is hardly the time or place to make any alteration, but I shall have to think about it. That was a remarkably fine hit of yours, young man," he added, beaming upon Handforth.

"Thank you, sir."

"What is your name?"

"Handforth, sir."

"Then carry on, Handforth—keep on with the good work," said this remarkable umpire. "I like that energy of yours. When you hit, you hit with vigour. That's the way to play!"

Handforth, much bucked, prepared to take the next ball. It came down—a particularly poor one. Handforth swung his bat, leapt out, and he sent the leather soaring away to the boundary again.

"Remarkable!" shouted the Head. "This boy is a second Lindrum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lindrum's a billiard player, sir," grinned Handforth. "Perhaps you mean Bradman?" he added modestly.

"I really forget the fellow's name now, but it doesn't matter," said the Head, who was

so thoroughly enjoying himself that everybody else fell into his mood. "Keep it up, Handforth! Let me see some more of that play!"

But the next ball was of a different variety. The Fourth Form bowler sent down a snorter. It broke at an awkward angle, and Handforth only tipped the ball with the edge of his bat.

"Crumbs!" he gurgled.

He started running, but he knew instinctively that it was no good. Out of the corner of his eye, as he ran down the pitch, he saw the ball dropping neatly into the hands of Lionel Corcoran, who held it securely.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

"Well caught, Corky!"

"Hard lines!" said Harry Gresham, the other Remove batsman, as he and Handforth halted in the middle of the pitch.

"Can't understand it!" said Handforth blankly. "That giddy ball was coming straight at my bat, and it twisted off at the last second! I had my eye on it all the way!"

"Well, you've knocked up sixteen—and that's pretty good."

"Good?" repeated Handforth, with a sniff. "You silly fathead, I meant to make a century!"

He started walking back towards the pavilion, but the headmaster was calling to him. He paused.

"Come back!" shouted Dr. Scattlebury. "Where on earth are you going, Handforth?"

"I'm out, sir!"

"Nonsense!"

"But I was caught, sir!" said Handforth, staring. "You're the umpire, and——"

"Exactly! I am the umpire, and I declare that you are not out!" said the Head briskly.

"Come back to the wicket!"

A gasp went round—particularly from the Fourth-Formers. They rushed up from all sides, protesting. Yet, when they drew near to the Head, they became silent. They did not dare to make a scene.

"Just a minute, sir," said Corky. "Don't think I'm cheeky or anything like that, but when a fellow is caught, he's out. And you, as the umpire——"

"I, as the umpire, give my decision that Handforth was not out," interrupted the Head calmly. "I like the boy's batting—I want to see some more of it."

"But—but——"

"Besides, why should he be out?" asked the Head, looking round. "It was quite a good hit—although, I believe, he struck the ball with the edge of his bat."

"That's not the point, sir," protested Corky. "One of our chaps caught the ball, and it's the rule of the game——"

"Just a minute!" interrupted the Head, pointing to the stumps. "What's that?"

"The wicket, sir."

"What are those things lying across the top?"

"The bails, sir."

"Of course they are the bails," said the Head, nodding. "Are you young rascals trying to teach me anything about cricket? Those bails were not disturbed—the stumps were not hit. Then why are you trying to tell me that Handforth is out? Nonsense!"

"But he was caught out, sir," went up a chorus of Fourth Form voices.

"I don't recognise catches!" said the Head crisply. "Get back to your positions, boys! Handforth, come and continue your batting. You, young man, get behind your goal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even the Fourth-Formers lost their indignation. The Head was enjoying himself so wholeheartedly that they gave him best.

"We've got to get Handy out, anyhow!" said Oldfield. "It's no good luring him into a catch, either. We've got to get his giddy wicket!"

Yells of laughter went round from all the Remove spectators when Handforth proceeded to flog the bowling for all he was worth. He was cute enough to take full advantage of the situation. He didn't care where he hit the ball. He gave catches by the dozen, and during the course of two overs

he was caught out half a dozen times. But he didn't care. He was scoring. This was a new kind of cricket!

And the Head, who was attracted by Handforth's energetic style, stood watching with the keenest delight. As an umpire he was a wash-out, but as a comic relief to the match he was an immense success.

The junior players soon gave up all idea of real cricket. Handforth's score, for example, didn't really count at all. He had made nearly fifty—but, actually, his total was only 16, for he had been legitimately caught out at that figure. And even when

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY



his stumps went flying the Head kept him in.

"How's that, umpire?" sang out the wicket-keeper triumphantly. "I—I mean, how's that, sir?"

"Not out!" replied the Head promptly.

"Eh?"

"Most certainly it's not out," replied the Head. "In fact, I won't have this boy out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but he was clean bowled, sir!" ejaculated the wicket-keeper. "You said that when his bails went flying——"

"I have changed my mind," replied Dr. Scattlebury, with an airy wave of his hand. "And, as umpire of this game, I claim the privilege to change my mind just when I like."

He changed his mind again very soon. In one over Handforth, faced by Christine's bowling, failed to make a run. It was the first time Christine had been on, and Handforth couldn't yet get his measure. When the sixth ball of the over came down, and Handforth missed it altogether, the Head raised a hand and pointed an accusing finger at Handforth.

"Out!" he said briefly.

"Eh? Did—did you say I'm out, sir?" asked Handforth, staring.

"I did!"

"But I didn't even touch that ball, sir!"

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"Handforth's Weekly!"

"BETWEEN OURSELVES!"

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"And that's why you are out," replied the Head, nodding. "I've given you six chances, young man, and you haven't done a thing! If you can't bat any better than that, you're out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clear off, Handy!" grinned the wicket-keeper. "Don't forget that you've got to abide by the umpire's decision."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth swallowed hard. The umpire's decision had been in his favour up till now, so all he could do was to accept his dismissal with a good grace. He was grinning cheerily as he walked back to the pavilion.

"Well, anyway, I had a pretty good innings," he said. "Let's hope that the Head doesn't decide to umpire when we play a real school match!"

The game was, frankly, a humorous one now. If the Head knew anything about cricket, he kept it all to himself. He continually mixed up cricket and football terms, and he gave decisions, for or against, just when it pleased him.

As a result, the match became a farce, and it was just as well that the players entered into the spirit of it. Anyhow, they were getting some practice—and that was the main thing.

Nobody knew how the game ended. The score itself had been abandoned, and when all the Remove players were out there was only a brief interval. The Removites took the field, and the Fourth-Formers went in to bat.

At this point, however, a sudden change came over Dr. Inigo Scattlebury. For some moments he had seemed to be in a sort of daze, and now he shook his head, looked round, and appeared bewildered. He was considerably startled when he saw how he was dressed.

"Ready for the Fourth innings, sir?" asked Nipper cheerily.

"Er—yes," murmured the Head, looking round. "Did you say the Fourth innings, my boy? What, exactly, am I doing here?"

"You're one of the umpires, sir."

"Good heavens!" breathed Dr. Scattlebury. "Am I really— Just a minute! Excuse me, please."

He hurried off the field, but his exit was dignified in spite of his queer attire. He went straight to his own house, reached his study, and sat down heavily at his desk.

"This is amazing—alarming!" he muttered. "Umpire—and dressed as a football referee! Good heavens! I haven't the faintest recollection of what has been happening this afternoon! Have I made myself a fool before all the boys?"

Deeply concerned, he decided to put the matter to the test. Hurrying upstairs, he changed into his normal scholarly attire, and then hurried back to Little Side. He was himself again now—the grave scholar. He found the boys regarding him somewhat curiously, but there was no lack of respect. Caps were doffed everywhere, and he was relieved.

The match was going on again—this time in the proper way. The juniors had decided to start it all over again—the Fourth-Formers now taking the first innings. That other innings wasn't to count at all.

The Head watched for some time, and then he walked off to a handy deckchair and sat down. He wanted to think. He was deeply concerned.

"I remember coming out, and then the next thing I remember was standing on that cricket pitch dressed as a football referee!" he murmured. "Amazing! What happened in the meantime? Nothing particularly serious, evidently, or the boys would treat me with ridicule. I dare not make any inquiries, for that would only make matters worse."

He was startled because nothing like this had ever happened to him before—at least, not until he had come to St. Frank's. These lapses of memory were extraordinary. It would not have been so bad if he could recall what had taken place during the periods when he was "off."

"If this goes on I shall have to take a trip to London and see a specialist," he told himself. "Yet the very thought seems ridiculous. I feel perfectly well; my brain is as clear as ever it was. H'm! Strange; very strange indeed!"

He pulled himself together, got up, and was quite certain that he would not "go off" again. He was complete master of himself.

Yet, within half an hour, Dr. Scattlebury had another spasm!

CHAPTER 12.

Fagging for the Fags!

"WELL, well!" said the Head genially. Always a kindly man, with a keen sense of humour, his strange mental attacks—for they were nothing else—had the effect of increasing his kindness and affability. The only real difference in the Head during these spells was that he became entirely and gloriously irresponsible.

There was no question of insanity; he was every bit as sane during a spell as he was ordinarily. He knew precisely what he was doing, and he acted more or less rationally. But he was certainly irresponsible, and his gaiety bubbled up and overflowed. The world, to him, was a playground, and all his thoughts were for the enjoyment of others.

At the present moment he had wandered on to Big Side, and on the soft grass beside the pavilion he found a number of Sixth-Formers, sprawling in idleness and comfort.

They were lying on rugs, they were reading or sleeping, and they were generally taking things easy. A practice game was going on amongst the seniors, but these fellows were taking no part.

"Oh, hallo, sir!" said Biggleswade, jumping hurriedly to his feet. "Didn't see it was you, sir! Nice afternoon, sir."

"A charming afternoon, young man," nodded the Head. "These rugs look comfortable."

"We—we were having a bit of a rest, sir," said Wilson, who had also jumped up. "We didn't expect you, sir."

"Don't disturb yourselves on my account," beamed Dr. Scattlebury. "I dare say you have been working hard, and you deserve your rest."

"As a matter of fact, we're just going to have tea, sir," remarked Biggy.

"Tea?" said the Head, glancing round. "Splendid idea! I rather think I could do with a cup of tea myself."

"We'd—we'd be happy for you to join us, sir," invited Conroy major.

"That's very nice of you, I am sure," said the Head, sitting down on one of the rugs. "But where is this—er—tea?"

"Coming along now, sir," grinned Biggleswade. "The fags are bringing it. We thought it rather a good idea to have tea out of doors this afternoon."

"It is not merely a good idea," said the Head. "It is a corking idea!"

His affability was contagious, and it spread rapidly. Two or three other seniors joined the group, and they were soon all grinning to one another. The Head, however, was watching the approaching fags, and a look of sympathy had come into his eyes.

"Poor boys!" he commented. "Dear me! This is most distressing!"

He even rose to his feet, and watched the fags with greater interest. Undoubtedly, the fags were in need of sympathy, not that they got any from the seniors.

Some genius had thought of having tea out of doors, and the fags were bearing the brunt of the brainwave. Whilst the Sixth-Formers lolled in comfort, the fags were called upon to do all the hard work. And it was hard work, too—fetching the tea-things and the food out here.

It was a considerable distance from the school buildings, and the fetching and carrying was considerable. There were half a dozen fags approaching now, led by Willy Handforth. They were staggering under heavy trays, the trays themselves being piled with crockery, great dishes of bread-and-butter, cakes, fancy pastries, and so forth.

The headmaster looked at them, and then he turned and looked at the big seniors.

"This is all wrong!" he said suddenly. "In fact, it's preposterous!"

"How do you mean, sir?" asked Wilson.

"Really, I'm surprised at you hulking great fellows," continued the Head severely. "You sit here, doing nothing, and you allow these small boys to carry these great burdens! Where is your sense of proportion? You ought to be doing the carrying, instead of lazing about here on the grass."

"But—but they're our fags, sir!" protested Biggleswade.

"I don't care what they are—they are only small boys, and they are not so fitted for this task of carrying heavy trays as you are," replied Dr. Scattlebury. "Go at once—all of you! Relieve those small boys of their burdens."

The seniors were aghast.

"You can't mean that, sir," said Biggleswade quickly. "We'd never hear the last of it from the fags! They're our——"

"Come, come, don't let's argue," said the Head gently. "In fact, I don't think you would presume to argue with your headmaster, would you?"

"No, sir, of course not——"

"Then relieve those small boys of the trays."

"Ye-yes, sir."

The seniors, bubbling and boiling with inward helplessness, advanced towards Willy Handforth, and Chubby Heath and Juicy Lemon and the others. They were in a hopeless position. It was impossible to ignore the Head's orders.

"What's up, Biggy?" asked Willy, as the seniors advanced. "We're not late—so don't say we are! You told us half-past four, and it's only twenty-five past——"

"That's all right, kid," interrupted Biggleswade. "Let's have that tray."

"Eh?"

"That tray, fathead!"

"My hat! Are you going to do a bit of work?" asked Willy, in astonishment.

"Don't be cheeky!" said Biggleswade,

taking the tray. "You fags can cut off now. We've decided to do without you."

"But there are some other things——"

"Never mind them; do as you're told," said the prefect. "You cut off as quickly as you can."

Willy and the other fags were bewildered—until they noticed the figure of Dr. Inigo Scattlebury standing there. Then they began to understand. They understood still more when the Head beckoned to them.

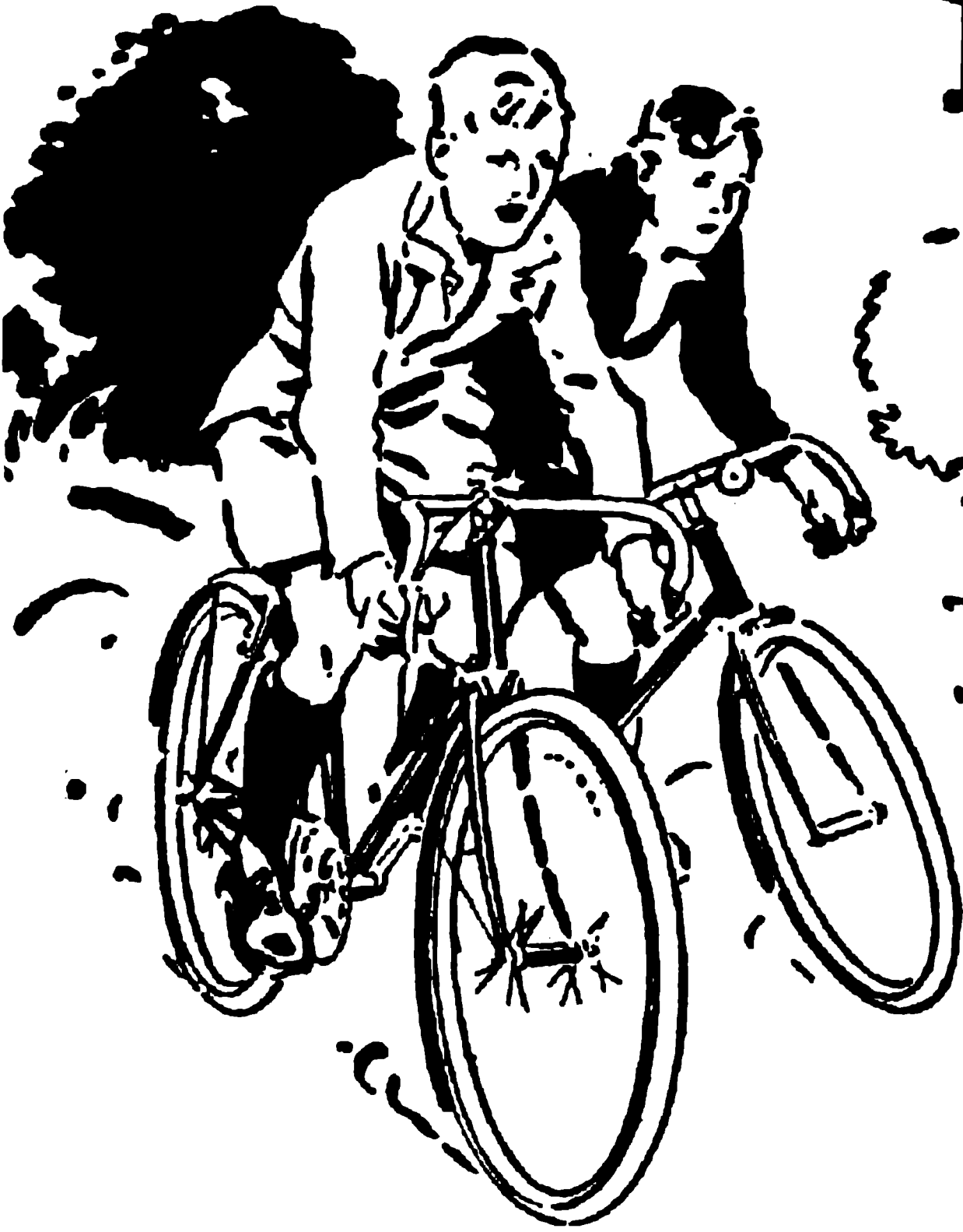
"Come on, you chaps!" murmured Willy, grinning.

"But Biggy told us to cut——"

"Who cares about Biggy?" interrupted Willy. "Are we to obey Biggy or the Head? Don't be an ass!"

The fags followed the seniors, who were
(Continued on page 43.)

A few more miles to go

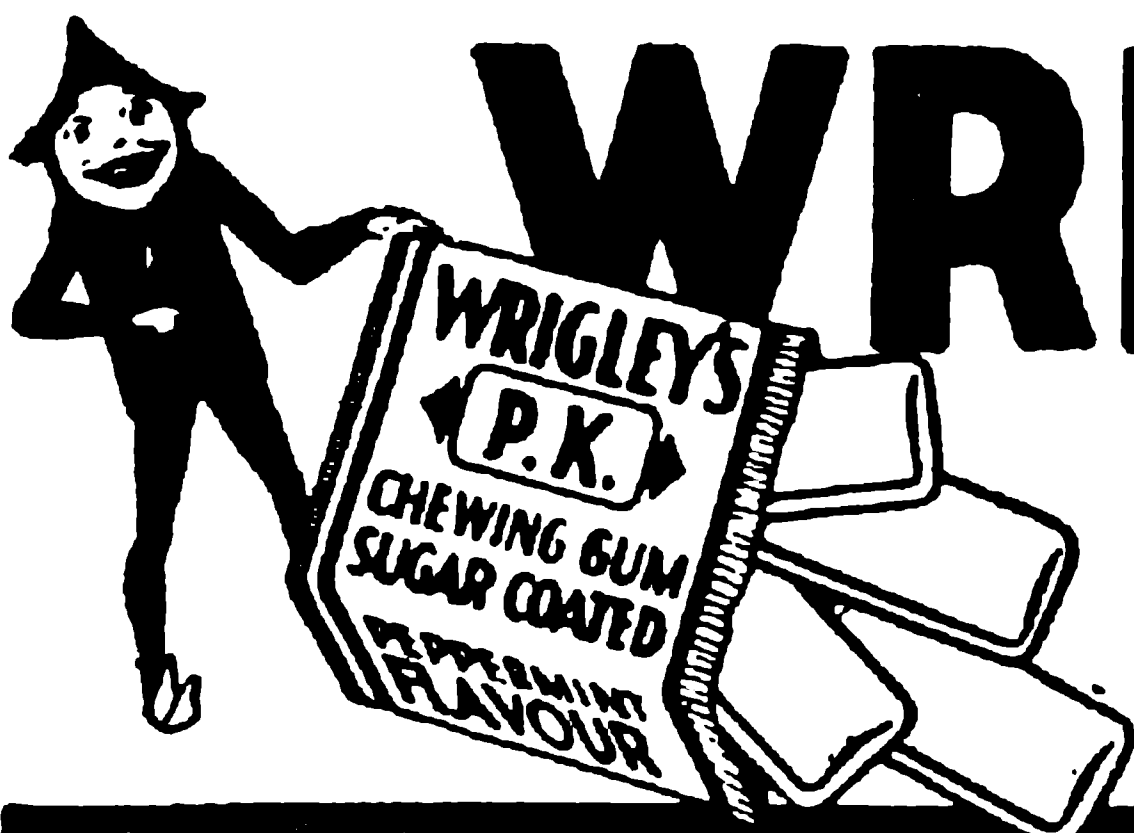


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BETWEEN OURSELVES

Edwy Searles Brooks, popular author of the St. Frank's stories, chats with readers of the "Nelson Lee."

THIS week's acknowledgments: Gordon H. Wellman (Marston Magna), F. Ambler (S.E.21), Cecil A. Barratt* (Brighton), K. Swain (Bexhill-on Sea), Frank Chamberlain (Pinchbeck), R. J. Wiltshire (Dorchester), Eric John Lester* (Harrow), Cyril Papworth (Comberton), R. F. Nichols (N.1), Walter Carter (Cambridge), H. Barnard (Catford), A. W. Dethan (Jersey), John Stock (Bristol), G. G. Yorks (Keighley), Cedric L. Woods* (Brandon), Fred Oates (Devonport), Albert Borrow (N.1), Derek M. Young (Coventry), F. A. M. Shooter* (Exeter), Kenneth Macdonald* (Barrow-in-Furness), Ronald E. Mabbatt (Fairford), Cyril Lowe (Blackpool), Charles Oliver** (Watford), W. Marchant (Stevenage), Sam Polevoy* (E.2), Norman H. Jessop (Liverpool), Robert J. Wareing (Birmingham), J. L. Houghton* (Stockport), John W. H. Coombs (W.5), Ernest S. Holman (E.10), Miss B. J. Peassy (Ponders End), Milly Hutchinson (Nottingham), Geo. Burgess (Arundel), Chas. A. Webb (Heston).

* * *

Willy Handforth's pets, Walter Carter, are quite numerous, and he possesses such an influence over animals that he can train them very quickly. Needless to say, it is all done by kindness; Willy would not hurt a dumb animal for anything. His chief pets are: Marmaduke the Monkey, Priscilla the Parrot, Lightning the Greyhound, Septimus the Squirrel, Rupert the Rat, Ferdinand the Ferret, and Sebastian the Snake. The Junior studies at St. Frank's are on the ground floor. The gym, like the rest of the school, is electrically illuminated. The swimming baths are situated in the School House.

* * *

Ralph Leslie Fullwood shares Study 1 in the Ancient House with Clive Russell and Stanley Waldo. This is in answer to your question, A. W. Dethan. Jerry Dodd is in the Ancient House, and so is Sir Jimmy Potts. Kenmore and Sinclair are both East House prefects.

* * *

There is one sentence in your letter, Kenneth Macdonald, with which I particularly agree, and I am going to repeat it here: "The question which seems to worry some chumps as to whether they should read the paper after a certain age makes me laugh. What the dickens does it matter, if they enjoy the stories? The idea is absurd." You've hit the nail on the head, old

man. The only thing that matters, as you say, is whether you enjoy the stories. Age doesn't come into it at all—it doesn't matter a toss.

* * *

Awfully sorry, Charles Oliver, that Umlosi wasn't brought into the recent adventure series. I think some other readers missed him, too, as he has always been so closely associated with Lord Dorrimore. But I don't think he would have quite fitted in with the surroundings. He is more in his element in forest adventures, and in fighting savages.

* * *

The keen rivalry between St. Frank's and the River House is going on all the time, W. Marchant, although the many "scraps" are not all recorded in the stories. You've got to take it for granted that whenever the St. Frank's fellows come across Hal Brewster & Co. there is a dust-up of some sort. But they are always friendly, and the ructions are generally trivial. If there is an extra hefty scrap it is bound to be described in the stories. Of course, there are exceptions. There were quite a few battles between the rivals while Dorrie's party was in Northestria—but as I was describing the adventures of Dorrie's party, the events round and about St. Frank's went unrecorded.

Yes, it is more than likely that Andrew Sylvanus Noggs, the travelling showman, will again appear in the stories, Robert J. Wareing. Lots of readers have written to me about the old chap, and one of these days I may have the opportunity of bringing him back.

* * *

Don't forget that I invite you all to write to me, and that my address is—Edwy Searles Brooks, care of "The Nelson Lee Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Extra good letters will receive a star upon being acknowledged, and those of exceptional merit will be awarded a double star.

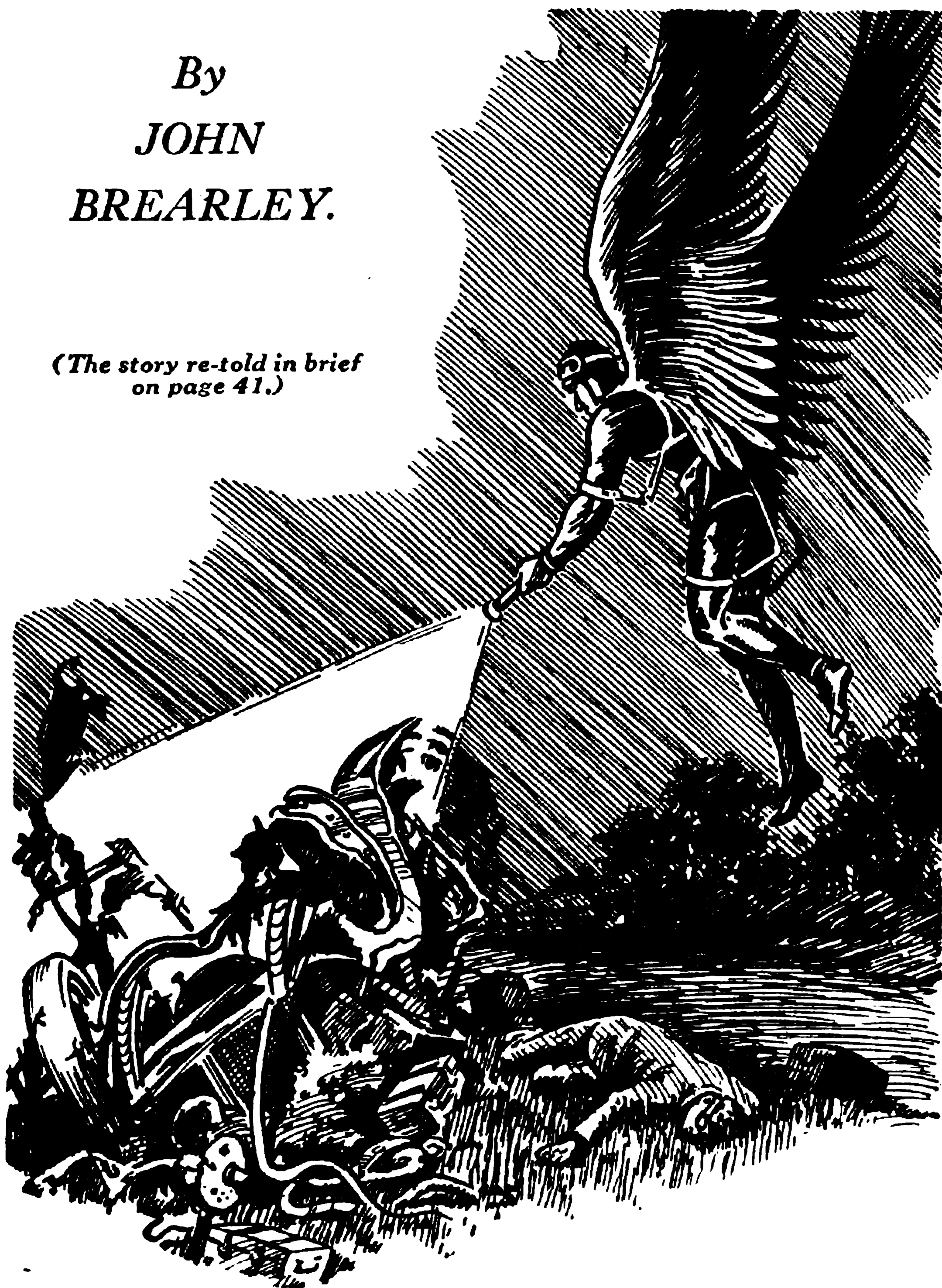
Edwy Searles Brooks

The Night Hawk Triumphs Against the Phantom Foe—and then is Defeated !

The PHANTOM FOE!

By
JOHN
BREARLEY.

(The story re-told in brief
on page 41.)



Victory—and Defeat!

AFTER that first long minute of astonishment, Thurston Kyle, the Night Hawk, recovered his usual cool poise in an instant. A forbidding smile spread over his handsome face, a smile that boded ill for someone. The Phantom Foe, with all his cleverness, was playing right into the hands of the keen night-flyer.

Twenty yards above the road the Night Hawk hovered, and before him the Phantom's car, with its crew and valuable loot stolen from the Belhampton Bank, was coming steadily up

towards him, drawn by that weird pneumatic claw. Waiting till it came abreast, the Night Hawk swirled his wings, following as it mounted to the sky. One gun was held ready in his left hand, his right had slid round to the grenades in the back of his belt. Here, by trailing the racer to its invisible source, was a chance of destroying the new menace to Britain at a single blow!

Beneath him, the dark countryside spread out, with the lights of stricken Belhampton still glittering in the distance. Other lights were racing along main and secondary roads—the headlights of police cars from other towns, tearing towards the scene of disaster. And the Phantom's car went steadily aloft into darkness.

At two hundred feet, the Night Hawk became aware for the first time of another sound mingling with the hiss of compressed air working the apparatus that hauled the car. It was the sound of a faint soft hum, as of big covered

dynamoes working close at hand. A thrill passed through the Night Hawk's tense body.

Rapidly his scientific brain reviewed the situation from the facts about him. Somewhere above him an airship must be lurking, and a big one at that, for it carried machinery capable of lifting a laden car. Also, since the load was being drawn straight into the air, the aircraft must be stationary—hovering like a seagull. Therefore it must be fitted with powerful helicopters, the only invention that had been made so far capable of keeping an airship aloft without moving.

All these deductions flashed automatically through the Night Hawk's mind while he winged slowly after the ascending car. He thought, too, of his own great airship, "Thunderer," which he had designed in the same manner. His smile grew bleaker at that, for he had to confess to unwilling admiration for the Phantom Foe. The Phantom had gone one better than himself—he had made his craft invisible, by some stroke of scientific genius. No matter how close the Night Hawk followed, nor how keenly he peered ahead, he could see—nothing!

And then—suddenly—the gangster's car stopped.

It hung in space, as though by magic. The hiss of air ceased, the humming of the unseen dynamos grew sharper, louder. Above the claw that held the car, the steel cables rose, shortened now to a few yards. Even as the Night Hawk swung closer, however, compressed air gushed viciously once more and the cables shortened until, with a soft clang, metal touched metal and the car was fixed. It had reached its destination. Its strange journey was finished and still the Night Hawk could see nothing.

But he could act. He was confronted with a weird situation—the weirdest of his career. Above him, he knew, lurked a great ship, so bulky that it blanketed the cool breeze from his face, yet completely hidden as though behind a dense wall of clouds. Well, it could wait. There was first the car, whose murderous crew had shot down a squad of policemen in their frantic efforts to escape from Belhampton.

It was their turn first. With a flick of his wrist, the Night Hawk flipped a grenade from its clip.

Swinging his wings, he darted away. Then his arm flashed over in a clean, powerful throw.

Crash! Straight into the dimly-seen car, smashing through tripex wind-screen, leapt the venomous missile, exploding with tremendous force, filling the interior with whistling, destroying fragments. The hum of the dynamos above was drowned by the sudden uproar; and drowned again by the shrieks and groans of pain, and the rending of metal that followed.

Crash! Crash! In quick succession two more grenades sped on their deadly errand. One opened a gaping hole in the side of the car, through which a limp figure slid and fell hideously into the night. The other, landing squarely on the claw above the car, completed the work. To the roar of escaping air, the whine of snapping cables, the gangsters' racer dropped; hurtling earthwards at ever-growing speed, twisting and turning like a battered can tossed from a height.

The smash as it hit the road below dinned across the quiet fields, ripped up to the sky. There was silence afterwards.

Two hundred and fifty feet above, with fierce joy thrilling his every fibre, the Night Hawk plunged into his second attack—the greatest air-fight of his life.

At the destruction of the racer, the dynamos in the hidden airship took on a sharper, more vibrant note, as though the monster had taken alarm. Almost immediately, a great current of air, pouring down on its winged enemy, told of a huge body

beginning to surge forward through the night. Snapping instantly into full speed, Thurston Kyle streaked upwards like an arrow—and ran full tilt into an invisible wall that rebuffed him, dazed and shaken.

The shock of that collision would have sent a weaker man twirling to the ground unconscious. More than that, a fierce, stinging pain, like a cut from a whip, darted through the Night Hawk's eyes, wringing from him an uncontrollable hiss of pain. For a moment he staggered on stiff wings, wondering dimly what had happened. Then, recovering, he leapt in again savagely.

This time, however, he mingled caution with dash, groping forward with outstretched hands as he flew. In a moment he had connected once more with the cold, steel-plated unseen wall, that slid away from him as he touched. Once more his eyes burned with seering pain, but he screwed them up tight, clenching his teeth against the mysterious torment. Blind but resolute, he flew higher, feeling his way along the fast-flying craft, snatching off his gloves impatiently.

Ah! He touched glass at last—the curving surface of a big window—and he opened his eyes, braving another stab of agony. It seemed impossible, even to his cool mind, that, though he was actually fluttering against the airship like a moth against a lamp-glass, his tortured eyes could still see nothing. Whoever this Phantom Foe was, he had discovered a weapon that would revolutionise future aerial warfare.

The speed with which the ship was racing ahead now made the Night Hawk set his jaw. He realised it with dismay; this hidden menace was even faster than his own wings, and soon, if he did not cripple it, his prey must escape. The fact that he could only open his eyes in lightning flickers made his task more difficult. Throwing himself back, he plucked out a grenade, steadied himself—threw it.

With an appalling report, the bomb struck home. The flame of its explosion stained the darkness for a moment; broken glass spurted in all directions. Quick as a flash, the Night Hawk hurled another bomb, opening his eyes momentarily to catch a brief glimpse of the foe. His ruthless determination was rewarded.

For the first time he saw something solid before him: the dark shape of a shattered window and a stretch of dented steel plates gliding rapidly away from him. Yet the glimpse only increased his amazement.

It was as though part of the airship had emerged for an instant from a cloud; the rest was as completely hidden as before. A sudden change in the dynamo-hum and the tilt of the broken window warned him that the wounded monster was about to climb higher, to escape from its strange attacker. Like a dark thunderbolt, he burned the air in an effort to catch it—braving the pain in his eyes again in order to reach that smashed window and hurl his last bomb through, despite all danger.

And, as his great wings brought him abreast once more, straining to their limit, the Phantom Foe hit back for the first time.

One instant the Night Hawk was speeding through air that was dark, but clean and cool. The next—

Choking, fighting for breath, he staggered sideways off his course, clawing frantically at the goggles of his flying-helmet to shut out the dense, stinging smoke that threatened to blind him. Everywhere around him rolled great billows, thickening every second, through which he blundered hopelessly. His lungs were filled to bursting-point in no time; racking convulsive coughs seemed to tear his ribs and chest. Baffled and helpless, the Night Hawk dropped like a stone for long, dizzy yards until, under his instinctive movements, the controls of his pinions worked again, and the great wings checked his fall with jarring abruptness.

Uttering a fierce exclamation of rage, he dived blindly back in search of his uncanny opponent. Then, as he hit the nethermost fringe of the smoke-screen once more and struggled vainly for a moment in its dense folds, sanity returned. In a flash he had changed from a raging fury to a calm, collected man bent on extricating himself from deadly peril. For, to venture deeper into that cloud in his condition, was madness.

Swerving aside, he held his breath, put his hands together and dived—down and down, till the tree-tops loomed up, with the night wind rustling their branches. Safe at last he threw back his helmet, filling his lungs repeatedly with the clean air till he could breathe again without coughing. After several minutes, he swung up again, staring with red-rimmed, smarting eyes.

Far above, against the dark sky, loomed a darker blur—the smoke-screen he had just left. It stretched, melting gradually, for over a hundred yards—an impenetrable fog. And of the Phantom Foe's airship there was neither sight nor sound. The Night Hawk's lips curled in a sardonic, slightly rueful smile.

"The first round goes to you, my friend," he murmured, still peering at the smoke-screen. "Well, there will be others—I hope!"

A thought striking him, he turned and fled back across the dark fields the way he had come until, close to a ditch by the roadside, he found the wreckage of the Phantom's car.

He flew down, surveying his handiwork with grim, narrowed glance. The car was just a mass of shattered wood and steel, and, after one look, he switched off his torch as quickly as he had switched it on. The men inside had paid for their crimes with their lives and, from the scattered steel boxes lying around, their efforts had been futile, for the stolen Belhampton gold was still there.

The sight of a huddled figure lying a few yards away attracted his attention. It was a burly man whose neck had been broken by the fall; and strapped over his eyes were a pair of

queer goggles—so queer that the Night Hawk took them off and knitted his brows as he examined them. One of the pebbles had been smashed, but the other was intact and made, as far as he could judge, of thick purple crystal.

"Strange!" he murmured, his thoughts going back to the bitter pain that had racked his eyes the moment he touched the airship. But he had no further chance for investigation. There came the sound of a racing car from farther along the road, followed by the flicker of headlights on hedges and trees. Stowing the goggles safely away, the Night Hawk turned quickly.

And when, a few seconds later, the police-car streaked up, halting at sight of the wreck, its crew found nothing but the Belhampton gold—and five of the Phantom's men whose criminal careers were ended for good.

Thurston Kyle Makes Discoveries!

"YE-ES!" murmured Thurston Kyle reflectively. "An old aerial trick, that smoke-screen. But very effective, Snub—very. I was completely defeated!"

The famous scientist, cigar in mouth, lounged easily in his sanctum at Hampstead. In other armchairs, Snub Hawkins, his sturdy little assistant, and Scrapper Huggins, giant leader of the Kittens, Kyle's rough but devoted followers, silently digested the thrilling tale they had just heard. Snub broke the pause eventually with a worried snort.

"Blighters! But it's that airship I don't savvy, guv'nor. I can understand that vile Yellow Gas, and the pneumatic hoists and the helicopters are easy scientific facts. But you say you found an—invisible airship?"

"The airship was there all right, lad!" replied Thurston Kyle grimly. "For I heard it and touched it. And when I threw a grenade through the window I saw part of it, too!"

"Gummy!"

"Furthermore, I can hazard a theory as to how the Phantom Foe has achieved this apparent miracle!" finished the scientist, calmly.

The staggering statement jerked his companions upright in their chairs. Snub, eager and keen; the Scrapper completely bewildered. Without a word they waited, while Thurston Kyle took from the pocket of his smock a broken pair of unusual goggles. He laid them on his knee, drawing thoughtfully at his cigar.

"These are the goggles I found on the dead gangster, as I told you," he said at last. "They are made of the anti-actinic crystal which was discovered by Dr. Hutmann, the Danish ultra-

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

THE NIGHT HAWK, known to the world as Thurston Kyle, scientist, declares war on THE PHANTOM FOE, a ruthless criminal, who has commenced a reign of terror, killing, kidnapping, looting. Always he attacks amid a cloud of yellow gas, which stupefies his victims; then disappears, literally into air, for he directs operations from an invisible airship! Nobody knows this, however; hence the world is baffled. The Phantom Foe kidnaps thirty celebrated people, but he returns them, unharmed, after being paid a huge ransom. Later, a number of his men, in a car, rob a bank in Belhampton. Hovering overhead, the Night Hawk watches them—and is amazed to see a weird contrivance suddenly descend from the sky, embrace the car in its clutches, and draw it upwards!

(Now read on.)

violet-ray expert, two years ago. Convey anything to you, Snub ? ”

After a moment's thought Snub shook his head doubtfully. He was a clever lad, and well-versed in scientific apparatus, as befitted the assistant to one of the world's most famous savants. But, though he knew the properties of anti-actinic crystal well enough, he was still in the dark.

“ Nor the fact that, as soon as I touched the airship, my unprotected eyes were blinded with pain ? ” continued Thurston Kyle quietly. At which a gleam dawned in Snub's grey-green eyes.

“ Golly ! You mean—you flew into a beam of ultra-violet light, sir—which burns ? ” His master nodded and smiled.

“ Precisely ! My theory is that the whole of that invisible airship is bathed in ultra-violet, outside as well as in. I say outside, because I could see nothing until my grenade smashed a breach in the window and steel plates. And I say inside, too, because those gangsters in the car were obviously about to enter the airship when I struck, and they had their goggles on ready. If they entered a beam of ultra-violet light without these glasses, they would see nothing. And their eyes would be damaged—as mine were ! ”

Snub lay back in his chair, thinking hard. By virtue of his training, he followed Thurston Kyle's deductions easily enough, and marvelled at the Phantom's cleverness. But the Scrapper was as bewildered as ever, and after a while he said as much, in a husky, diffident mumble.

The Night Hawk smiled at him gravely.

“ Deep waters, eh, Scrapper ? Well, I'll try to explain simply ! ” He leaned forward. “ Ultra-violet is one of the light rays that cannot be detected by the naked human eye. You can see others through a spectroscope—reds, yellows, blues, etcetera, as in a rainbow. But ultra-violet is beyond your range, just as some minute noises are beyond the range of your ears. Is that clear ? ”

“ Y-yes, sir ! ”

“ Well, then, anything bathed in ultra-violet becomes invisible to your naked eyes, and can only be seen through special crystal which reflects ultra-violet-rays ! ” Thurston Kyle turned again to Snub. “ Now, this is my theory regarding the construction of the Phantom Ship. It is a big craft indeed, and very fast, fitted with helicopters like our ‘ Thunderer,’ which enable it to hover.

“ It carries a powerful pneumatic apparatus, capable of lifting heavy loads—which, incidentally, may explain how the Duke of Meldon's guests were lifted from the roof of Longhurst

Towers, and also how those convicts were spirited away from Dartmoor without trace. And last, but not least, it is fitted with apparatus for bathing the ship inside and out with ultra-violet light, which renders the whole craft totally invisible to our naked eye. My grenade must have smashed one segment of that apparatus, and therefore a part of the airship became visible at once. By gad, Snub—I should like to meet this Phantom Foe ! ”

He sent a cloud of fragrant smoke into the air, satisfied that his deductions were correct and that he had guessed the riddle of the Phantom. And, in a moment, Snub Hawkins nodded, too, finding no loophole in the clever theory. There was a grim light in his eyes when he looked up again.

“ And now—what, sir ? ”

The answer was prompt. As though a cloak had fallen, all trace of the clever scientist, patiently explaining facts to his audience, had vanished from Thurston Kyle's personality. Instead of the professor, he became the man of action once more—resolute, ruthless.

“ Now that I have formed this theory—I shall test it ! ” he snapped, and his voice was like steel. “ I do not think the Phantom will trick me with his smoke-screen or his invisibility—next time ! ”

He crushed his cigar into an ash-tray with a fierce gesture.

“ We are in for a fight, my friends—a fight against a big and vicious gang. This Phantom is clever ; we shall see if we can match him for skill. Our first task is to find some way of detecting his unseen airship, and then to destroy it. These goggles may be of use. But I think I can find a surer way ! ” He laughed suddenly and rubbed his hands. “ Yes, a fight ; a battle of science to the finish ! ”

His dark, saturnine face grew keen with anticipation, which spread to his companions. The Scrapper, tugging one ear awkwardly, struck in with a queer remark.

“ 'S'funny you should mention a ‘ big gang,’ chief ! ” he rumbled. “ Somethin' I heard down Whitechapel last night makes me——”

“ Yes, yes ? ”

The giant pursed his lips.

“ Well, I 'eard a rumour—I 'ears 'em occasionally, yer know, sir ! ” he grinned. “ And that was that the ‘ Ace ’ had come back. I'm wonderin'——”

“ The ‘ Ace ’ ? Who is he, man ? ” rapped Thurston Kyle. Scrapper answered steadily :

“ The biggest gangster Britain ever knowed, sir ! ” His words carried an emphasis that made Kyle and Snub stiffen. “ 'Strewth, he was a clever 'un' too—edicated like yourself. He ran things hard over here about six years back, and when it got too hot, he bolted for the Continent and set 'em alight there, proper. Last I 'eard of him, though, he was a-goin' it strong in Chicago. But—I reckon he's back ! ”

Thurston Kyle studied his gigantic follower closely, well knowing that the shrewd, tight-lipped Kitten rarely spoke until he had something good to offer. Huggins' knowledge of the underworld was more complete even than that of the wildest veteran of Scotland Yard.

(Continued on page 44.)

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High Jink's at St. Frank's!

(Continued from page 37.)

making such a bad job of carrying the trays that a couple of cups had already fallen, to say nothing of a doughnut and a cream bun.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" chorused the fags, doffing their caps respectfully.

"My poor boys!" said Dr. Scattlebury, going amongst the fags and bending down towards them. "Good gracious! You are positively streaming with perspiration."

"It's a hot day, sir," said Chubby, "and those trays aren't very light."

"You are nearly exhausted after your efforts," said the Head sympathetically. "This is all wrong. I disapprove. When there is heavy work like this to be done, the older boys should do it."

"That's what we say, sir," agreed Willy, nodding. "But, somehow, the older boys don't seem to see the point."

"They will see it now," declared the Head. "We are going to have tea out here, my sons."

"We're not, sir," said Willy. "That tea's for the seniors——"

"That tea is for us," said Dr. Scattlebury. "For you junior boys and for me. You brought it here, and it is only right that you should consume it."

"I say, sir——" began Biggleswade, in alarm.

"Chairs!" broke in the Head, waving a hand vaguely towards the school buildings. "Chairs and tables."

"Chairs and tables, sir?" repeated Wilson, his jaw sagging.

"Fetch them!"

"But—but——"

"You big boys are quite capable of carrying chairs and tables," continued Dr. Scattlebury. "In with you! And look alive, too! Bring six chairs and two small tables."

"But the fags do that sort of work, sir!" burst out Conroy major. "Dash it, we're not going to fag for the fags! If we did, we should never hear the last of it!"

For a moment a cold gleam entered the Head's eyes.

"Are you daring to question my orders, young man?" he asked sternly.

"Nun-no, sir, but——"

"Then go: and, as the Americans very aptly put it, make it snappy!"

Willy & Co., taking immediate advantage of the situation, sprawled at their ease on the seniors' rugs. The Head was geniality itself now, and he kept the fags fully entertained.

Presently, other members of the Fifth and Sixth were startled to behold Biggleswade, Wilson, Conroy major and two or three others staggering along with tables and chairs. Fellows gathered round in amazement.

"Very good!" said the Head, as the chairs and tables were set down. "Now, you big fellows, you will wait upon us."

"Wha-a-at!" gurgled Conroy major.

"These little boys have been waiting on you, and it is your turn to wait upon them," said the Head blandly. "Come along! One of you will pour out the tea; another will pass round the bread-and-butter. Personally, I have my eye on those excellent-looking sardine sandwiches. Splendid!"

Even the Remove v. Fourth match was interrupted so that the players could come across and behold the edifying spectacle of Willy & Co. taking tea with the Head, and being waited upon by a number of Sixth Formers. The correct order of things was totally reversed, and the yells of laughter, which went up—at a respectful distance—were echoed and re-echoed by all.

That tea was destined to be a standing joke for weeks at St. Frank's. The seniors who acted as waiters were chipped unmercifully. The Head carried off the whole affair with all his usual wonderful geniality. He went right through tea, and then he took his departure with a friendly nod and a smile—but not before he had ordered the seniors to carry all the things indoors.

The fags were in high glee, and the whole Junior School voted that Dr. Inigo Scattlebury was a gift from the gods. The seniors were not so sure. In fact, they freely and frankly whispered that the Head's name should not be "Scattlebury," but "Scatty." Not that anybody else took much notice.

The Head was so rational, and he was so completely master of himself, that it was impossible to regard him as mentally incapable. He had those irresponsible periods perhaps, but they were a sheer joy while they lasted.

St. Frank's, as a whole, felt that this half-term had started well. They had already had High Jinks, and more were in the offing!

THE END.

("St. Frank's at the Derby!" is the title of next week's screamingly-funny yarn. Don't miss reading this treat—and tell your pals about this topping series of unique school stories.)

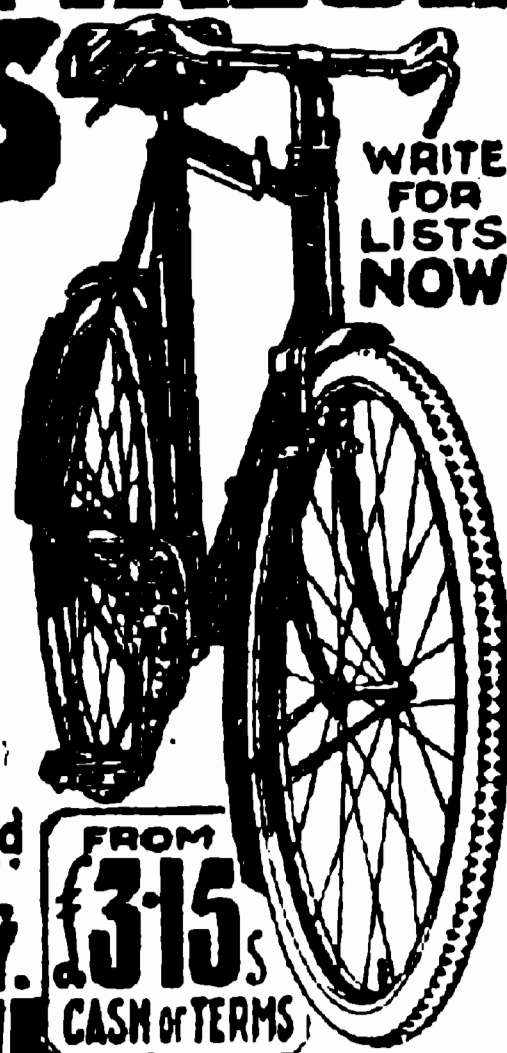
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"THE PHANTOM FOE!"*(Continued from page 42.)***"Ha!"**

"You know what crooks are, sir; they've got their hang-outs and they stick around 'em. But none of my boys have seen any of these blokes for weeks. An' believe me, sir——" Scrapper's voice was impressive—"when those birds flit into 'iding, there's something doing somewhere. An' something bloomin' big at that!"

"H'm!" Thurston Kyle lit a cigarette, his thoughts busy. He was making discoveries with a vengeance. A great international gangster was rumoured back in England—a dozen notorious criminals missing from their usual haunts. Had these facts any connection with the Phantom Foe and his gang?

"Ever seen the 'Ace,' Huggins?"

"Once, sir. Bloke pointed him out to me on the sly at Gatwick races one time—jest before the police tumbled him, too; an' he had to scoot. I—I think I'd know him again—I gotta memory for crooks."

"And the others?"

"Know 'em like the palm o' my hand, sir!"

"Good!" Thurston Kyle nodded briskly. "You may be on a false trail; but follow it up, Scraper. Make enquiries; try to find out where these men have gone. You know what to do—I leave it to you. Meanwhile——" He laughed again. "It is the Phantom Foe against us, boys. And we commence work—now!"

BUT the work of organising a defence against the wily Phantom was long and involved. Thurston Kyle had discovered much, but much had still to be done.

So much so, in fact, that when the mysterious gang struck again, which they did two nights after the Belhampton raid, they got clear away without opposition. And with an important booty that paralysed every Government official in Great Britain!

(More thrills in next week's rousing instalment of this magnificent serial, chums.)

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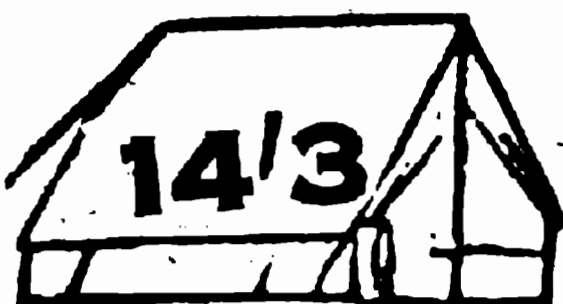
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