

"ST. FRANK'S AT THE DERBY!" Grand Topical, Book-Length
School Yarn Inside.

THE NELSON LEE

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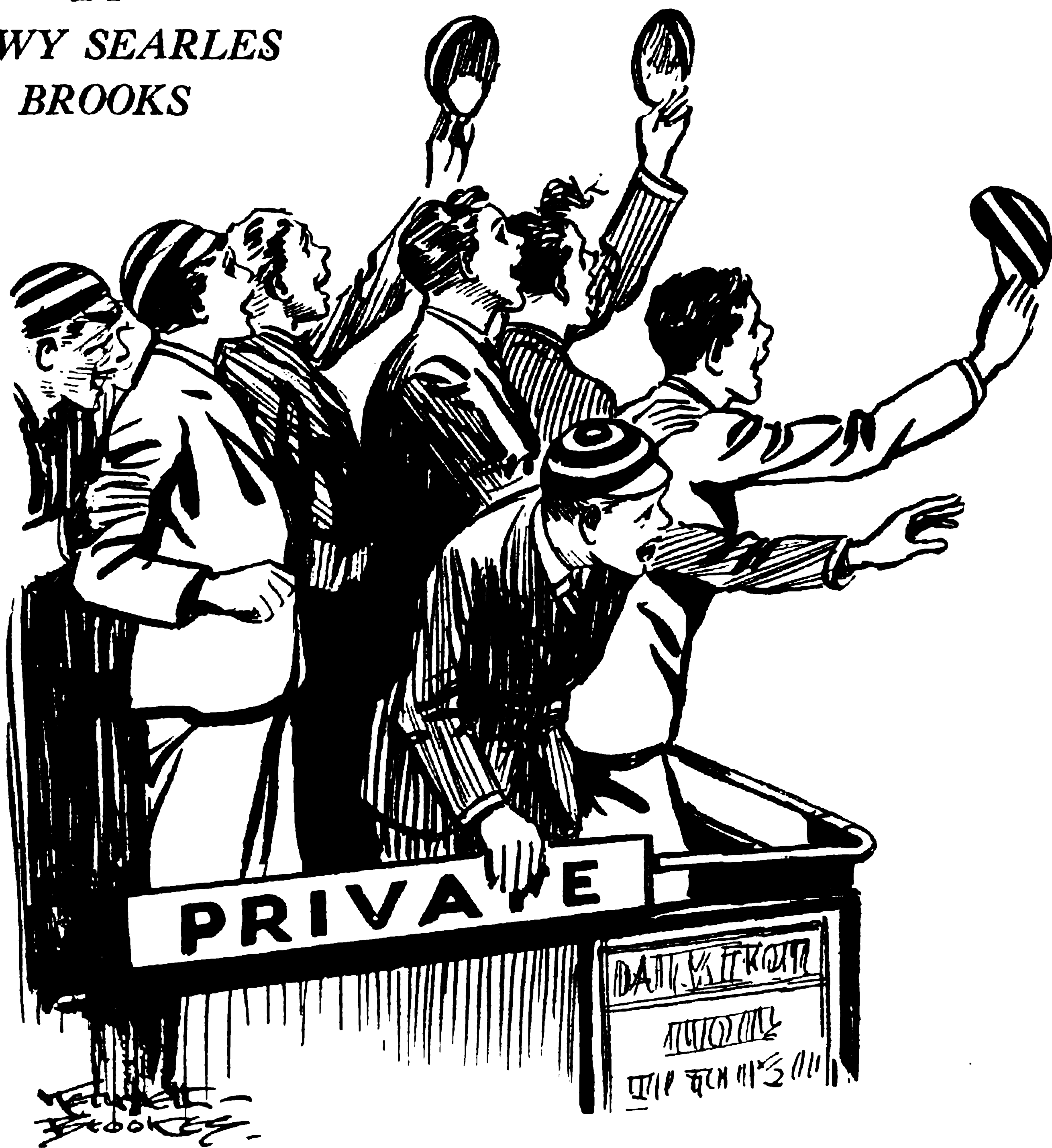


The **SCOOTER SCARE!**

The Head takes up scootering! Read this week's side-splitting extra-long complete school yarn featuring the cheery Chums of St. Frank's.
New Series No. 72. OUT ON WEDNESDAY, June 6th, 1931.

St. FRANK'S at the

BY
EDWY SEARLES
BROOKS



CHAPTER 1.

A Cat and Dog Life!

"SOME people say that money is a nuisance," remarked Willy Handforth, of the Third Form, at St. Frank's. "They're dotty! It's the lack of money which is a nuisance!"

"Well, it's no good arguing," said Chubby Heath practically. "What are we going to do about tea?"

"What are we going to use instead of money?" demanded Juicy Lemon.

It was an important point. The three fags were looking unusually serious, and they were strolling on Little Side. Lightning, Willy's

pet greyhound, was frisking about, enjoying his exercise.

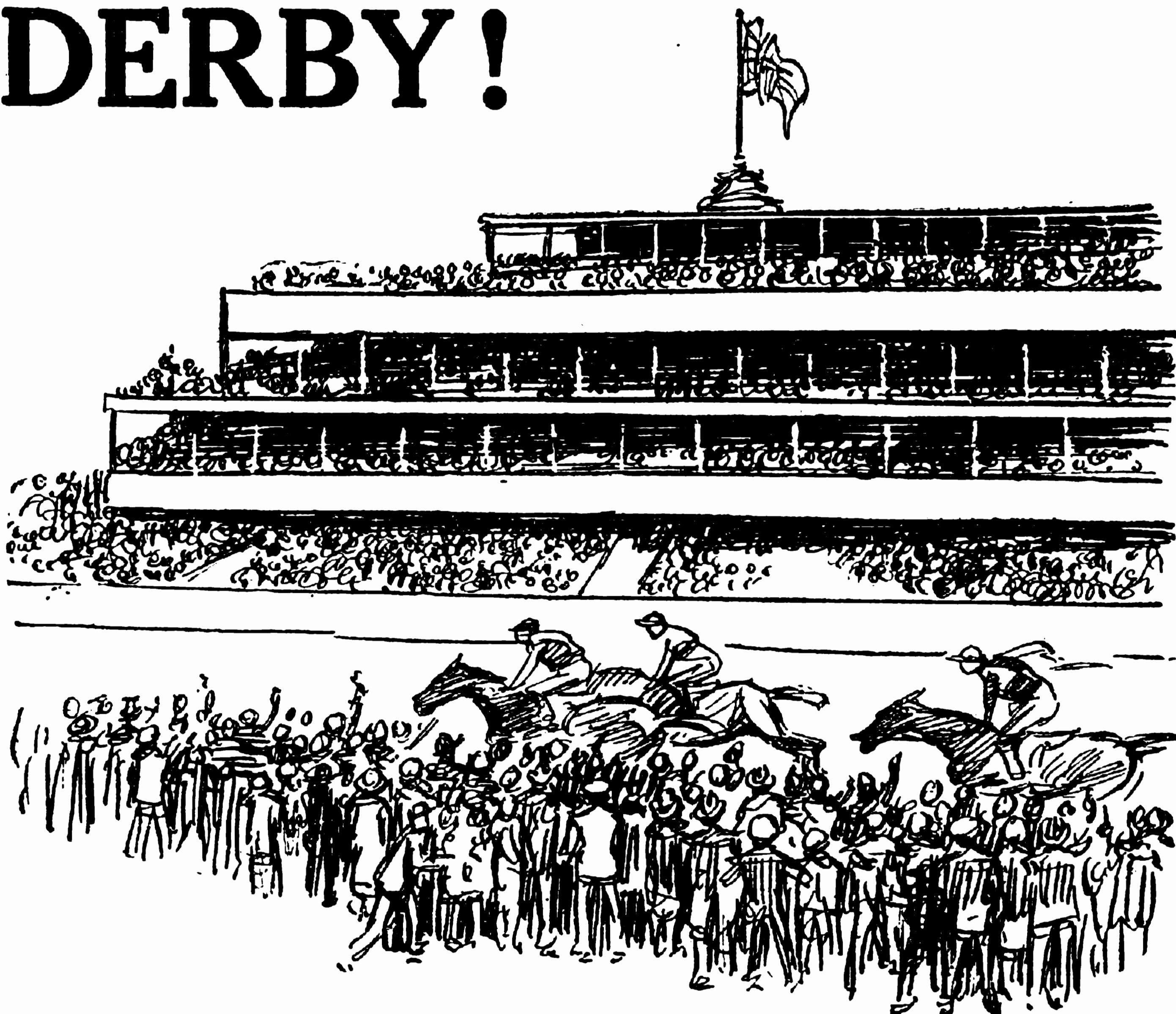
It was tea-time, and Willy & Co. did not possess a penny between the three of them. They were hungry, and they wanted tea. Of course, they could have tea in hall, and, as a last resort, that was what they would have to do.

"What about your major?" asked Chubby. "Can't you get some cash off him?"

"Of course I could, but he's out," growled Willy. "Didn't I tell you so before? If Ted was here I'd buttonhole him in a moment, and I'd soon have five bob out of him! But he's gone off in his Morris Minor."

—Lives Up To His Reputation in this Week's Breezy Complete School Yarn.

DERBY!



Willy brooded. It was just his luck that his celebrated brother, Edward Oswald, should be away this afternoon. Willy made a point of never borrowing money from anybody. He didn't borrow it from his major; he demanded it, and generally got it.

If it hadn't been for the rain, Handforth wouldn't have gone out. There would have been cricket this afternoon, but rain had been pouring down in sheets from 2.30 till 4.0 solid. The skies had cleared now, however, and the sun was even shining. Little Side looked fresh and green after its bath.

"Listen!" said Willy suddenly.

His chums stood still and listened. They could hear a soft purring hum from the direction of Bellton Lane.

"Can't mistake the sound of a Morris Minor!" said Willy briskly. "That's my major for a cert. Here, Chubby, you look after Lightning while I'm away. I'll grab Ted before he can get out of his giddy car, and I'll have five bob out of him before he can catch his breath."

"Good man!" grinned Chubby. "Make it snappy!"

"And you look after Lightning," warned Willy. "If he gets away, like he did the other night when I left him in your charge, I'll biff you in the eye!"

"Keep your hair on!" retorted Chubby. "I won't let him go!"

Willy vanished, and the other two fags grinned.

"The way he worries over his giddy pets is a caution," said Juicy Lemon. "What the dickens could happen to Lightning out here? And what does he take us for? Does he think we're incapable of looking after a dog for five minutes?"

"Willy's all right—one of the best; but where his pets are concerned he's a bit dotty," said Chubby Heath with a grin. "He thinks he's the only one who can look after them."

Lightning, the greyhound, was frisking about some way ahead, enjoying his liberty. And the two fags, who were supposed to be

"THEY'RE OFF!"

The "loopy" St. Frank's Head is "Off"

And YOU'RE off on a tophole school yarn that will keep you in fits of laughter!

looking after him, became interested in a new form of amusement. They suddenly discovered that there was a lot of fun to be obtained from chasing worms.

Worms were coming up everywhere after the rain, and it was most exciting to see them shoot back into their holes upon being approached. Meanwhile, Lightning, usually such a gentle, placid dog, had assumed a sinister aspect.

Instead of gaily trotting about, he now advanced in the direction of the wall after the fashion of an Indian on the warpath. He crouched. He moved forward slowly, one foot at a time, his long, lean body quivering with the intensity of the emotion which surged through him. His head was down, his tail low, his ears back.

Lightning's eyes were sharp, and he had spotted something on the top of the wall. That something was Montgomery, the Head's cat. Montgomery was enjoying a nap in the sun, but, after the fashion of his kind, he slept with one eye half open.

Actually he was neither Montgomery by name nor the Head's cat. But Willy, in Lightning's hearing, had once referred to him as "Montgomery," and Lightning accepted it without question as the correct name. He certainly belonged to the Head's household—owned, perhaps, by the housekeeper—but the Head himself, as likely as not, had never seen the animal, and did not care two straws whether it existed or not.

But there was Montgomery, stretched luxuriously on the wall, and there was Lightning, stalking him with the most evil of intentions.

Suddenly, with the speed of an arrow shot from a bow, Lightning leapt. He soared upwards, and at the same second Montgomery sprang to his feet, and his back arose in an arch which must have severely strained his spine.

The wall was pretty high, but Lightning reached the top of it with ease. However, his enthusiasm was dampened by the fearsome appearance of Montgomery, who looked as if he could do more than a bit of damage. Lightning fell back, a ridge now standing up all along his backbone, and he barked valiantly.

"Hey!" yelled Chubby Heath, glancing round. "What's up with you, Lightning, you fathead? Stop that! Come here! Hey, boy! Here!"

"My hat! He's after the Head's cat!" said Juicy.

Chubby whistled urgently, but Lightning treated that whistle with supreme indifference. He glanced round, noted that Willy was not in sight, and then he gave his full attention to Montgomery again.

Lightning was well trained. If Willy had whistled him or had called him, he would have obeyed on the instant. Willy had an extraordinary power over all animals, and Lightning was no exception. They obeyed him without question. But neither Chubby Heath nor Juicy Lemon possessed this power. They whistled in just the same way; they

called in the same kind of voice, but nothing happened.

"Hey!" roared Chubby. "Come here, Lightning!"

Lightning ignored the command disdainfully, and gave his attention again to Montgomery. But Montgomery had vanished—had jumped to the ground on the other side of the wall.

The greyhound promptly gave chase. Like a streak he leapt from the wall, landing in the lane on the other side just in time to see his quarry leaping over the opposite wall into Inner Court.

With boisterous enthusiasm, Lightning jumped at that second wall. Over he went. As he landed he spotted Montgomery streaking across the open space, and, with a hoarse bark of excited joy, Lightning gave chase.

CHUBBY and Juicy were pretty quick, too. They needed to be. Willy would be back any moment, and if Lightning wasn't on hand, Willy would want to know the reason why. The two fags dashed to the gate which led out of the playing-fields; they leapt across the lane, sprang at the wall, and hauled themselves up. Gazing across Inner Court, which was forbidden ground, they were startled to see Lightning taking a flying leap through an open window of the Head's house.

Montgomery had taken a flying leap first, but the fags were just too late to see that. Montgomery believed in the principle of "any port in a storm."

"My only aunt!" gasped Chubby. "Did—did you see that, Juicy?"

"Yes, rather!"

"That's the window of the Head's study."

"Don't I know it?" said Juicy. "You're in a mess now!"

"I'm in a mess!" snapped Chubby. "What about you?"

"Don't try to drag me into this!" retorted Juicy. "Willy left you in charge of Lightning, and I wash my hands of the whole affair. What are you going to do about it?"

Chubby did all he could. He whistled, he called cautiously; but there was no response. Chubby was no coward, but he hadn't the nerve to climb over the wall and make closer investigations. Inner Court was strictly out of bounds.

Neither Montgomery nor Lightning shared this view. The Head's study had no terrors for them. They found it empty, and they proceeded to make hay of it, so to speak.

Montgomery laboured under no delusion; he knew perfectly well that Lightning was merely half a length behind him. There wouldn't be much sense, therefore, in taking refuge on the desk or in one of the chairs. Montgomery put in some good work. He fairly flew through the window, landed in the middle of the Head's desk, leapt upwards again, and arrived securely on the top of a big bookcase.

Here he turned at bay, and he had a pretty good idea that he was the master of the situation.

Lightning was momentarily baffled. He stood on the desk—where he had landed a second too late—and he looked upwards at the top of the bookcase with excited eyes. He barked fiercely for a second or two, but, finding this had no effect, he tried something else. Montgomery, in the meantime, was spitting and snarling ferociously.

All this skirmishing was not doing much good to the headmaster's desk. The great mahogany desk had been a model of neatness and tidiness. It was one of those big, flat-topped affairs, standing in the centre of the room. There were neat piles of papers here, books there, pens, pencils, ink-stand, and so forth.

At the moment, Lightning was standing in the centre of the blotting-pad. He wasn't improving its appearance. There had been a lot of rain during the afternoon, and Inner Court, for the most part, was covered with soft gravel. Lightning had collected large quantities of this gravel on his way across. It was wet and clinging.

Finding himself robbed of his prey, Lightning gave one or two exasperated leaps. The headmaster's papers were distributed in all directions, and everywhere Lightning went he left a trail of muddy, brownish footprints. The desk, so orderly a minute before, was now a scene of the uttermost havoc.

To make matters worse, Lightning backed into the ink-stand, and both inkpots went rolling over, sending streams of red and blue-black all over the top of the desk. Papers and books got mixed up with it.

Lightning refused to admit himself beaten, and Montgomery came to the conclusion that the top of the bookcase was not so very secure, after all. Montgomery suddenly took a flying leap from the bookcase top to the mantelpiece. Three ornaments went flying, to crash to fragments in the fender. Lightning, with a bark of triumph, took a running jump at the mantelpiece, too. He was a fraction of a second too late. Montgomery had gone—streaking for the window again. Lightning followed, and the chase was resumed in the open.

Altogether they had not been in the Head's study for more than one minute, but that sedate apartment now looked as though a cyclone had passed through it.

CHAPTER 2.

A Spot of Trouble!

"WHAT the giddy dickens——"

Willy Handforth paused. Coming along the lane, on the way to the playing fields, he beheld Chubby Heath and Juicy Lemon in a somewhat remarkable position. They were clinging to the top of the wall which overlooked Inner Court, their heads just over the edge, and their feet dangling. And Lightning, Willy grimly noted, was conspicuous by his absence.

"What's the trouble here?" demanded Willy, running up at top speed. "Where's Lightning?"

"He—he escaped!" gasped Chubby, glancing down. "It wasn't our fault, Willy! Did you pull your major's ear for that tin?"

"Never mind about the tin!" roared Willy. "Where's Lightning?"

As a matter of fact, he had secured five shillings from Edward Oswald Handforth without much difficulty. Handy, of course, had objected, as he always did; but in the end he had produced the necessary cash, and the two half-crowns were now reposing restfully in Willy's pocket, cheek by jowl with a chunk of twice-used chewing-gum, a pocket-knife with half a blade, and a couple of odd bicycle nuts.

"It wasn't our fault, Willy!" insisted Chubby desperately. "That blessed dog of yours spotted the Head's cat, and he chased him."

"Couldn't you have called him back?" demanded Willy with scorn. "Let's have a look!"

He jumped to the top of the wall, and was just in time to see Lightning streak out of the window of the Head's study. Montgomery had emerged first, and he had a short lead. Lightning was now gaining, and the chase was hot.

"Yes," muttered Chubby, as he saw Willy's eye on him, "they've—they've been in the Head's study! Goodness only knows what they've been doing in there! I'll bet they've chewed the place to pieces!"

Willy ignored the comment. He gave voice to a peculiarly shrill, distinctive whistle. The effect upon Lightning was magical. The greyhound seemed to lose all enthusiasm for the chase. His speed slackened, he looked round, and there was guilt in every line of his sleek body.

Willy whistled again, and this time Lightning abandoned the hunt altogether. With his tail drooping dismally, he trotted across Inner Court, leapt at the wall, and a moment later he was sitting at Willy's feet, looking up with pleading eyes into Willy's face.

"That's all right, old chap—I don't blame you!" said Willy gruffly, as he patted the dog's head. "It was these fatheads who let you go!"

Lightning gave a sidelong glance at the "fatheads," and his ears arose with relief.

Chubby and Juicy looked guilty enough, but they did not feel guilty. They were amazed at Willy's uncanny power; they were startled by the way in which Lightning had so obediently come to heel.

"Look here, Willy, you can't expect us to perform miracles!" protested Chubby in self-defence. "We did the best we could—we whistled to him, we called, but he took no notice!"

"All right—we'll deal with that later," said Willy gruffly. "You take Lightning and put him back in his kennel. Understand? You'd better grab him this time so that he doesn't escape again."

"What are you going to do?" asked Chubby, staring.

"I'm going to see what's been happening in the Head's study," replied Willy. "The Head isn't there, that's a cert, or we should have seen something of him. The room must be empty."

"That's all the more reason for us to clear off while the clearing's good!" urged Juicy. "You silly ass! If you go to the Head's study you'll probably be caught——"

"I can't help that," interrupted Willy. "I've got to see if Lightning has done any damage. What do you take me for? If there is any damage in that room the Head will start making inquiries, and it'll only take him a couple of ticks to find out that I was out with Lightning. Do you think I want my dog taken away from me?"

"But it's risky——"

"A chap who never takes risks never gets anywhere," said Willy tartly. "Go ahead, you two! Put Lightning back in his kennel, and then wait for me in the pets' house. I don't suppose I shall be more than a couple of minutes."

Adroitly he leapt to the top of the wall, lowered himself down the other side, and streaked across Inner Court. There were no masters or prefects in sight, and Willy reckoned that he would be safe. The chances were that the Head was indulging in an afternoon nap.

Willy reached the window, gave a quick look round, saw that he was unobserved, and then leapt in.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" he gurgled, aghast.

He had expected to find a few muddy footprints on the polished floor. They were there all right—and the rest of the room looked as though a blizzard had struck it.

Papers, crumpled and muddy, were all over the floor; ornaments were shattered to bits in the fender and on the hearthrug; ink was flowing all over the desk and dripping in ominous pools on the carpet. Willy, remembering this was the Head's sanctum, suddenly felt very wobbly about the knees.

He stepped forward into the room, with half an idea of attempting to clear up the mess. At the same moment the door opened, and the tall, dignified figure of the headmaster appeared. Willy stood stock-still, stunned. Dr. Inigo Scattlebury also stood stock-still, equally stunned.

For a tense second or two the pair looked at one another. Then the headmaster's gaze roved round the room, and incredulous amazement was mingled with anger.

"Good-afternoon, sir," said Willy, feeling that it was up to him to open the conversation.

He had recovered himself rapidly. There was no sense in being scared. He had been caught red-handed, and he would have to make the best of it. And after all, he had done nothing wrong. He eyed the Head with a keen, contemplative eye. Dr. Scattlebury was a newcomer to St. Frank's this half-term, and this was the first time

Willy had been "on the carpet" before him.

"Upon my soul!" ejaculated the Head, when he could find his voice. "What—what's been happening here?"

"There's been a bit of bother, sir," said Willy.

His coolness, his calm manner, caused the Head to give him a straight, hard look. It wasn't usual for junior boys to be so composed in his presence.

"What is your name, young man?" asked Dr. Scattlebury, as he closed the door. "What are you doing in this study?"

"I'm Handforth minor, sir, of the Third," explained Willy. "Sorry about all this, but I didn't do it, sir."

The Head advanced into the room, and he grew more and more grim as he saw the havoc on his desk and the litter in the fireplace.

"So, Handforth minor, you know nothing whatever about this?" he asked ominously.

"I didn't say that, sir," replied Willy. "I know how it happened, but I didn't do it."

"Young man, I am keeping my temper with difficulty," said Dr. Scattlebury. "I come into my study, and I find this appalling disorder, and I find you. There has been a dog in this room," he added, as he pointed to the footprints on his blotting-pad. "What do you know about it?"

"It was my dog, sir."

"Oh! Go on!"

"My dog Lightning, sir," explained Willy. "He was chasing your cat, sir."

"Chasing my cat!" repeated the Head angrily. "Nonsense! I have no cat."

"Yes, sir—Montgomery."

"What on earth——"

"He's always been in your house, sir," said Willy. "Anyway, he dashed through your study window, Lightning followed him, and this is what happened."

"And you?"

"I didn't know anything about it at the time, sir. But as soon as I heard that my dog had been in here I came along to have a look," said Willy. "You see, I was giving Lightning his evening run, and I left him with two of my chums. It wasn't their fault; they tried to call him back; but when a dog starts chasing a cat——"

"I see," interrupted Dr. Scattlebury, his anger subsiding somewhat. "You have a dog then, and the dog escaped from your chums, who were supposed to look after it."

"I'm dreadfully sorry about all this, sir," said Willy earnestly. "I wouldn't have had it happen for worlds. And I hope you'll let me clear up the mess, sir. I'll do everything. I'll tidy the papers and wipe the desk down, and clear up this ink, and—and everything. If you'll give me half an hour, sir, you won't even know that anything ever happened."

The Head was impressed by the fag's obvious sincerity.



Willy Handforth found the Head's study looking as if it had been struck by a cyclone. And then, at that moment, the door opened and in stalked the Head himself !

"All this is very unfortunate, Handforth minor," he said quietly. "No, I don't want you to clear up this—er—mess. The servants can do that. But I blame you for allowing your dog to get out of hand."

"He would have been all right, sir, if I had stayed with him," said Willy quickly. "But my chums—"

"That is no excuse," interrupted the Head, pursing his lips. "Your chums are in no way to blame. The fault is entirely yours. Knowing that the dog would not obey any person but his master, you should not have left him. I sympathise with you, my boy, for you could not possibly have foreseen this disastrous outcome of your carelessness. I am afraid I shall have to give you five hundred lines."

"Yes, sir," said Willy meekly.

He edged towards the door, hoping that the interview was over. But it wasn't.

"No, Handforth minor," said Dr. Scattlebury. "This dog of yours. You keep him as a pet, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am sorry, but I cannot allow you to keep the dog at the school any longer," said the Head. "Such an animal is obviously a menace to the peaceful routine

of the school. We cannot have an animal here which is liable to jump through people's windows after cats."

"But—but he's never done anything like that before, sir!" protested Willy, in deep concern. "I'll promise to keep him—"

"Silence!" ordered Dr. Scattlebury. "One catastrophe of this sort is enough, Handforth minor. There shall be no repetition. You can tell me, no doubt, if there is a dog fancier's establishment in Bannington?"

"Yes, sir—Bletcher's, in the High Street."

"Very well. I shall telephone to Bletcher's at once, and instruct them to send a man over so that this dog may be taken away," said the Head. "No, I cannot listen to your pleadings. That dog will be removed within the hour; and it will be for you to make whatever arrangements you please regarding its future welfare. But such an animal cannot possibly remain in this school."

There was something so stern, so quietly authoritative about Dr. Scattlebury's voice that Willy Handforth knew it would be useless to protest. However, he made one last appeal.

"If you say so, sir, it's settled then," said Willy unhappily. "But Lightning's one of the most harmless dogs in the world, sir. A

thing like this is not likely to happen again all the time I'm at St. Frank's. If it's any good, sir, I'll promise never to take Lightning out without keeping with him——"

"It is no good whatsoever," interrupted the headmaster, shaking his head. "The dog must go."

"Well, you're a fair man, aren't you, sir?" asked Willy boldly.

"I hope so," replied Dr. Scattlebury, looking at the junior in some surprise.

"Will you come and have a look at Lightning then, sir—in the pets' quarters?" asked Willy eagerly. "Before he's banished, I'd like you just to have one look. I'd like you to see that he's not a savage dog. It's only fair, sir. You're sending him away, and you've never even seen him. Be a sport, sir."

The Head, thus appealed to, was rather touched by this refreshing plea.

"Very well, Handforth minor," he said, without hesitation. "I will come over and see this dog of yours within twenty minutes. But don't allow yourself to have any false hopes. I am ringing up Bletcher's at once, and I shall instruct them to send a man over without delay. That dog must go."

And Willy Handforth was dismissed.

CHAPTER 3.

A Trifling Change!

"HALLO, hallo!" said Nipper, the cheery captain of the Remove. "Something's wrong with young Willy!"

"Who cares?" asked Tommy Watson briskly. "Let's get indoors to tea!"

But Nipper and Tregellis-West paused in the Ancient House doorway. Willy Handforth was walking across the Triangle with none of his usual light-heartedness. His hands were thrust deeply into his trousers pockets, his head was sunk on his chest, and his face was expressive of black depression.

"Looks like something unusually serious," said Nipper, as Edward Oswald Handforth appeared at the doorway with Church and McClure, his chums of Study D. "Hallo, Handy! Any bad news in the family?"

"Yes," said Handforth promptly. "Young Willy has wangled five bob out of me!"

"That's nothing new," replied Nipper. "But look at him now. I've never seen him so utterly down."

"H'm! He does look a bit miserable," said Handforth with sudden interest.

Edward Oswald was a great bluffer; he always professed to be utterly indifferent regarding his minor's affairs. Nobody took any notice of him, for they knew that Handforth was just the opposite. Now, for example, he went over to the fag and clapped him on the shoulder.

"What's up, kid?" he asked kindly. "Anything I can do?"

Willy looked up and grunted.

"Afraid not, 'Ted," he said gloomily.

"But what's the matter? Why this long face?"

"It's about Lightning. He's banished."

"What do you mean—banished?"

"The Head's having him sent away—won't allow him to remain at the school any longer," said Willy, his eyes suddenly blazing. "Did you ever hear of anything more unreasonable? You know my greyhound, 'Ted? One of the gentlest, most docile dogs under the sun!"

"It isn't like the Head to be harsh, either," said Nipper, as he joined them. "He hasn't been at St. Frank's long, and we don't know a great deal about him, but he's always seemed a fair-minded man."

"It isn't as if Lightning had done anything seriously wrong," went on Willy indignantly. "He hasn't bitten anybody. All he did was to chase Montgomery into the Head's study and walk on the desk a bit and upset the ink-pots and distribute a lot of papers and smash a few ornaments."

"Is that all?" asked Nipper politely.

"Yes," growled Willy. "And now he's having Lightning taken away from the school. What do you think of him?"

"I think you've got off lightly," replied Nipper promptly.

"Hear, hear!" said Handforth warmly. "You let your dog make mincemeat of the Head's study, and then you expect us to sympathise!"

"Rats! You don't understand," said Willy coldly. "It wasn't Lightning's fault, was it? Why doesn't the Head have his beastly cat taken away? That cat was the cause of all the damage!"

Willy stalked off, fuming. There was a certain amount of reason in his argument, for it was quite true that Lightning would not have created that havoc in the Head's study if Montgomery had sought refuge in some other spot.

However, as Willy knew, headmasters were not to be argued with. Their word was law. So he went to the pets' house, found Chubby Heath and Juicy Lemon there, and he fondled Lightning affectionately.

"It's all right, old man," he murmured. "Bletcher's won't have you for more than an hour! I'll get you back!"

"Bletcher's?" said Chubby, staring. "Isn't that the dog shop in Bannington?"

"The Head's sent for a man from Bletcher's to come and fetch Lightning away," growled Willy. "I did the best I could, but——"

"Great Scott! Do you mean to say that the Head caught you in his study?" asked Juicy, aghast. "Had Lightning done much damage?"

"Hardly anything at all," replied Willy, whose views on such matters were somewhat prejudiced. "But I don't care! If I can't keep Lightning here, I'll make arrangements with somebody in the village. I'll have him near St. Frank's, anyhow."

"What about tea?" asked Chubby Heath.

"Tea?" roared Willy, glaring. "Do you think I care— Oh, well! Perhaps you're right!" he added, cooling down. "He's my dog—not yours. Here, take this five bob, get some stuff, and see about tea."

"Aren't you coming?"

"Not yet," replied Willy. "You buzz off—both of you."

They buzzed—gladly enough. Alone with Lightning, Willy brooded. After a while he strolled out of the pets' house, and mooched up and down in the West Square. It was time for the Head to come—past time, in fact. Willy continued to wait, and his feelings become more and more bitter. Perhaps the Head had only fooled him.

"Oh, well, there's no telling with these masters!" muttered Willy glumly. "You never know what they'll get up to. I've a dashed good mind to smuggle Lightning away and hide him somewhere—so that that beast from Bletcher's won't find him!"

He wandered back to the pets' quarters, turning this idea over in his mind. He drifted through West Gate, and found himself in the private lane which ran completely round the St. Frank's property.

This lane ran past the playing fields on one side and the school buildings on the other; it went right on to the Head's garden, made a circuit there, and continued down the other side, joining the road further on.

The pets' quarters were part of a long building, situated just inside the West Paddock, which also served as a bicycle shed for the boys of the Ancient House and the West House. A similar shed, identical in every detail, stood on the other side of the school, for the benefit of the Modern House and East House.

But Willy did not reach the gate which led into the paddock. He stared down that private lane. A figure was in full view, coming along from the direction of the headmaster's garden.

"My only sainted aunt!" murmured Willy, his eyes opening wider.

He instantly recognised the figure as that of Dr. Inigo Scattlebury. But there was a difference in the Head. Gone was his erstwhile dignity. He was, to Willy's amazement, tripping blithely along, and using a skipping-rope with considerable skill.

Even when he saw Willy he did not seem in any way disturbed. He approached, still skipping, and finally he put the rope aside, tipped his mortar-board on to the back of his head, and chuckled with breathless glee.

"Excellent!" he grinned. "A most invigorating exercise."

"Ye-ye-yes, sir!" ejaculated Willy, even his calm momentarily shattered.

He looked at the Head closely. Since Dr. Scattlebury's arrival he had more than once acted in a strange manner; he had amused the entire school by umpiring a junior cricket match, and appearing on the field dressed as a football referee. His umpiring had been farcical, too, and the game, as a serious match, had had to be abandoned.

The Head had only "broken out" like this once or twice. Normally, he was a grave,

kindly, dignified scholar—as Willy had found him during that interview in the disordered study. But now Dr. Inigo Scattlebury was a totally changed man. He was bubbling with good-humour; his eyes were twinkling with merriment.

"Skipping, young man, is not the child's pastime I have hitherto believed," he said, patting Willy confidentially on the shoulder. "Famous boxers always indulge in skipping as an essential part of their training. Therefore I decided to try it, and I have come to the conclusion that it is a first-class idea. I shall institute skipping classes in this school."

"I say, sir!"

"Well, what do you say?" asked the Head genially. "You don't object, do you? By the way, what is your name?"

"Handforth minor, sir," said Willy, eyeing the Head cautiously. "I thought you'd come about my dog, sir."

"Your dog?"

"Lightning, sir."

"Lightning?" repeated the Head, puckering his brow. "An unusual name for a dog, my boy."

"But—but didn't you say you'd have a look at Lightning, sir?"

"Did I?" beamed the Head. "Perhaps I did. What kind of a dog is he? I'm fond of dogs—all dogs. Let's have a look at this animal of yours."

"He's in the shed, sir," said Willy, moving towards it. "This way, sir."

Strangely enough, Dr. Scattlebury had apparently forgotten all about his previous encounter with Willy, for he was acting as though he had never seen the fag in his life before. He accompanied Willy into the pets' quarters, and he was frankly delighted when he was introduced to Lightning—now docile, soft-eyed, and affectionate.

"So this is your pet dog, eh?" he asked as he sat down on a box and took Lightning's front paws upon his knee. "Splendid! Good boy—good boy!" he added, patting Lightning and rubbing his ears. "A beautiful animal, this. Does he do any tricks?"

"Rather, sir!" said Willy promptly.

"Splendid! Let's see them!"

Lightning was an accomplished dog. Willy had taught him all sorts of clever little tricks, and he now went through them cheerfully enough. Dr. Scattlebury sat on the box, watching amusedly. Not a word had he said regarding Lightning's fate. And Willy, being a wise youngster, had not reminded him.

"You deserve great credit, Handforth minor, for your patience and intelligence in teaching this dog so many excellent tricks," said the Head approvingly at length. "He is a dog to be proud of."

"Thank you, sir," said Willy gladly.

The Head proceeded to make a tremendous fuss of Lightning, stroking him, playing with him, and rapidly gaining Lightning's affection. Willy watched happily, but for the life of him he could not understand the reason for the Head's sudden change.

CHAPTER 4.

Scatty Scoots!

"WHY doesn't the ass come?" asked Chubby Heath plaintively. "Oh, rats! Let's begin without him!" said Juicy.

They were in their little study in the Third Form passage. Tea was all ready. The bread-and-butter was cut, the sardines were opened, the tea was made, and the table looked thoroughly inviting.

"Better give him a chance!" said Chubby. "Poor chap! He's miserable about poor old Lightning, you know. Let's buzz out and see if that man from Bletcher's has been yet. We shan't do much with Willy until this rotten affair is over."

"We shan't get any tea this evening," grumbled Juicy, absent-mindedly pronging a sardine with a mapping-pen and transferring it to his mouth. "All right, then. Let's see what he's doing!"

He deftly bagged a round of bread-and-butter on his way out, and the two fags hastened to the pets' quarters. They were rather puzzled by the sound of high-spirited laughter as they approached. When they entered the building they stood stock-still, staring in bewilderment.

For there was Dr. Inigo Scattlebury, sitting on an upturned box, with Marmaduke the Monkey on one shoulder and Priscilla the Parrot on the other. Marmaduke was chattering, and Priscilla was providing an extraordinarily good imitation.

"That's nothing, sir," Willy was saying. "You ought to hear Priscilla when she really gets going!"

"Let her get going!" said the Head gaily. "Come along, Priscilla, old girl!"

Priscilla obliged with a remarkably fine impersonation of Edward Oswald Handforth saying "By George!" Dr. Scattlebury roared with laughter.

"Well, I'm blessed!" murmured Chubby Heath, with a sidelong glance at Juicy. "Willy's done it again! Never knew such a chap!"

Juicy Lemon nodded. The fags imagined that Willy had won the headmaster over. In a measure this was true, but Dr. Scattlebury had not needed much winning. He was in one of his irresponsible moods.

Willy had been showing off all his pets—Rupert the Rat, Sebastian the Snake, Septimus the Squirrel, Ferdinand the Ferret, and the others. Dr. Scattlebury had grown more and more enthusiastic, and he was taking a tremendous interest in the pets.

"Come in, you chaps!" sang out Willy as he saw his chums in the doorway. "My two pals, sir—Heath and Lemon."

"Any friends of yours, young man, are friends of mine," said the Head boisterously. "Come in—come in! Well, well! Quite a family party now, eh?"

Chubby and Juicy had temporarily lost the use of their tongues. Masters weren't usually so cordial, and headmaster hardly ever took

any notice of them at all. Dr. Scattlebury was a novelty.

However, a diversion occurred just then, much to their relief. Biggleswade, of the Sixth, came into the building with a strange young man dressed in breeches and leggings.

"You'll probably find the dog in here," Biggleswade was saying, "but I don't think you'd better take it until you've seen the Head. You say you can't find him?"

"Nobody seems to know where he is," said the young man in breeches and leggings. "My boss had a telephone message—Hullo!"

He stared at the scene in the shed. Until that moment the pair had not seen that the building was occupied.

"Just a minute!" said Willy, coming forward. "I think I know who this chap is, Biggy. He's from Bletcher's, in Bannington."

"That's right," said the prefect. "He's been looking for you, you young sweep! Do you think I've got nothing better to do than chase round—"

"Oh, cheese it, Biggy!" protested Willy. "I think there must have been a mistake. Dr. Scattlebury is here now, if you want him."

"What!" ejaculated Biggleswade, staring into the interior of the shed. "By Jove, yes! Sorry, sir!" he added, hastily removing his cap.

"That's all right," said the Head, coming forward with Marmaduke still on his shoulder. "Is there something wrong?"

The young man in breeches touched his forelock.

"I'm from Bletcher's, sir," he said.

"Very interesting," nodded the Head. "But why tell me?"

"You telephoned to Mr. Bletcher, sir."

"I did? Nonsense!"

"Well, somebody did, sir," said the man. "Somebody who said he was Dr. Scattlebury, of St. Frank's. Asked my guv'nor to send over at once to take charge of a dog."

Willy, his heart beating rapidly, was watching the Head's face; and he was comforted, for the Head had apparently completely forgotten. He was smiling amiably and shaking his head.

"Oh, no!" he said, quite firmly. "I didn't telephone to Bletcher's, and I don't want you. Why, indeed, should this splendid dog be taken away from the school? The very idea is ridiculous!"

"There you are, Biggy!" said Willy.

"Oh, all right!" said Biggleswade. "But it looks a funny sort of business to me."

"I believe you are a prefect, Biggy?" asked the Head, turning his gaze upon Biggleswade.

"Yes, sir, and my name is Biggleswade," growled the Sixth-Former, turning red.

"I prefer the shortened version of your name," said Dr. Scattlebury cheerfully. "Biggleswade is such a mouthful. Be good enough to go away, and take your friend with you, Biggy."



"My only sainted aunt!" gurgled Willy Handforth. For coming down the path was the Head, skipping along merrily.

"He's not my friend, sir," protested the prefect.

"Well, take him away, just the same."

"All right, sir."

Biggleswade, rather fed up, departed with the man from Bletcher's. And Willy Handforth, with a wink at his two chums, adroitly led the conversation back to his pets. Dr. Scattlebury was an uncertain quantity. It was quite on the cards that he would remember his former decision about Lightning unless his mind was fully occupied in another direction.

"You haven't seen half of Rupert's tricks yet, sir," said Willy briskly. "And when Septimus really gets going, he's a caution."

"Much as I am interested in Rupert and Septimus, I must nevertheless be getting along," said the Head. "Another time, Handforth minor. There is something of far greater importance to be attended to! This thing!" he added suddenly. "What is it, and how does it go?"

He was pointing to a scooter. It belonged to Tommy Hobbs, of the West House Third. Willy and many other fags had scoffed at Hobbs for possessing a scooter, calling him a big kid, but Hobbs didn't mind.

"That, sir?" asked Willy, staring. "Oh, that's only a scooter!"

Dr. Scattlebury's eyes were gleaming with bovish enthusiasm.

"A scooter?" he repeated. "And how do you—er—scoot? Somehow, I feel that scooting must be a most exhilarating sport."

"Oh, it's all right, sir," replied Willy cautiously. "A bit rough on a chap's shoes, perhaps. But about my pets——"

"We'll leave your pets," interrupted Dr. Scattlebury. "Here, take this pound-note."

He thrust the crisp note into Willy's hand.

"What's it for, sir?" asked Willy, astonished.

"You deserve it, young man," replied Dr. Scattlebury. "Spend it on food for your pets, or on food for yourself. I don't care. A boy who can interest himself in dumb animals so admirably is deserving of the highest praise."

"It's awfully good of you, sir."

"Not at all," interrupted the Head. "Don't mention the matter again. Although if it comes to that, there is a great deal I want to ask you about your snake and about your other strange pets. You'll have to come to dinner one evening, and then we can spend an interesting hour or two."

"Thanks awfully, sir," said Willy, looking at the Head rather queerly. "But you don't mean it, do you? You don't really mean that I'm to come to dinner with you?"

"Of course I mean it," said Dr. Scattlebury. "Why not? Come to dinner with this evening. That's it. Seven-thirty sharp."

"Really, sir?" asked Willy eagerly. "Say, this is topping of you, sir. I—I mean the honour of it. We're terribly pleased—aren't we, you chaps?"

"Eh?" gasped Chubby, as Willy turned upon him. "Oh, rather!"

"Th-thanks awfully, sir!" stuttered Juicy Lemon.

"We'll be at your house at half-past seven, sir—all three of us," said Willy coolly.

Dr. Scattlebury beamed upon the other two fags.

"Why, certainly," he said. "Of course, the three of you must come. That's settled. Meanwhile, this scooter——"

Nothing would satisfy the Head but a demonstration of Tommy Hobbs' scooter. He had lost all interest in Willy's pets. It was a case of off with the old love and on with the new. The Head, in these irresponsible moods of his, was always springing little surprises.

"Loopy—that's what's the matter with him," whispered Chubby into Juicy's ear. "Some of those Remove chaps were saying it days ago, and this proves it. My hat!

Look at him now! I'm jiggered if he isn't going to have a go on that scooter!"

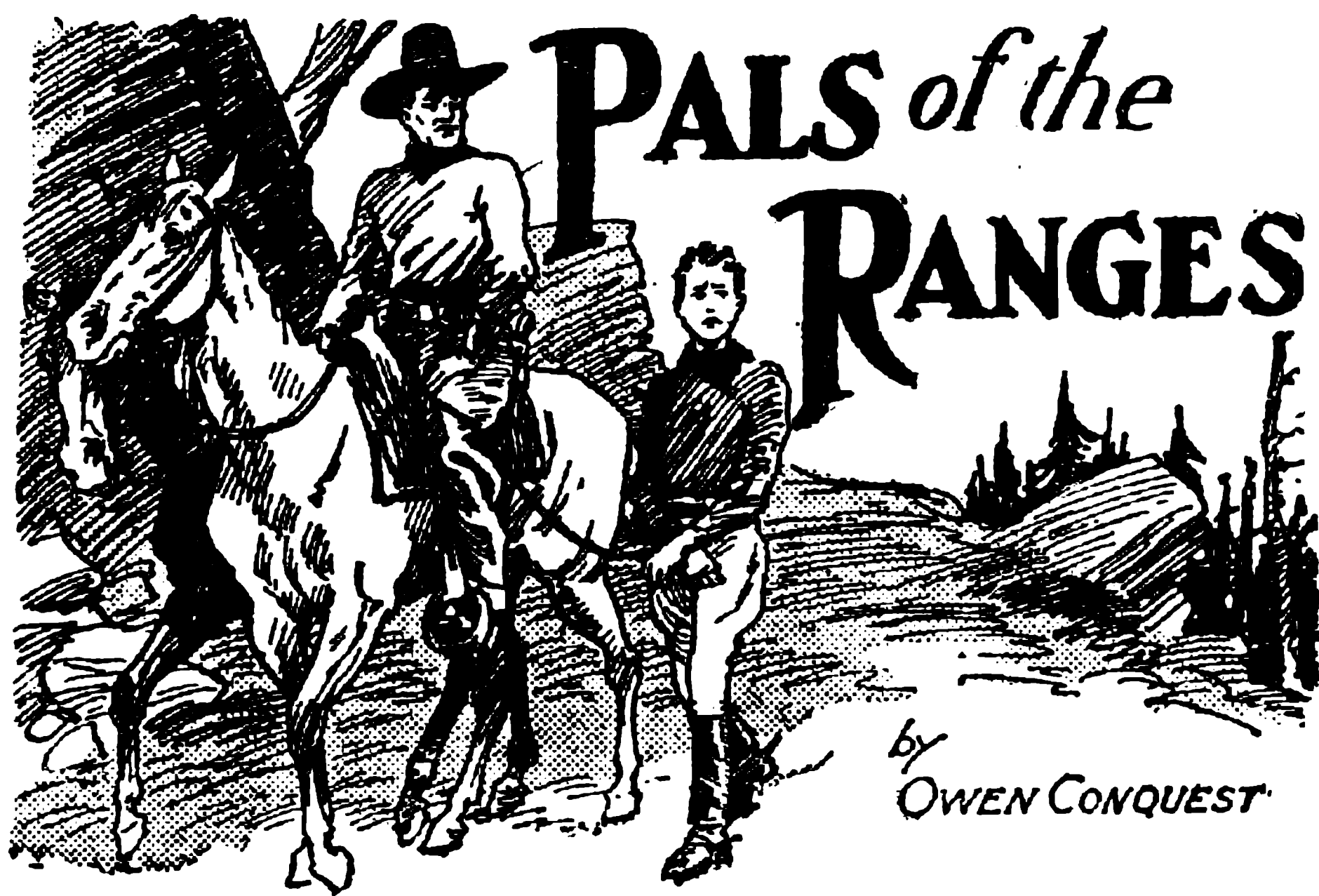
Willy and the headmaster had gone out into the lane, and Willy had given a very expert demonstration of the scooter's possibilities.

"Splendid!" the Head was saying. "Now let me have a try."

A moment later Dr. Inigo Scattlebury, pushing off on the scooter, went sailing down the lane in fine style. But not for long. When he wanted to stop he didn't quite know what to do. The lane sloped a trifle, too, as it neared the road. There was no brake on the scooter, and its speed increased.

Dr. Scattlebury went shooting along, his gown billowing out behind him.

Everything might have been all right had it not been for the fact that Handforth and Church and McClure and two or three other Removites were coming along the private lane at that very moment. Somebody uttered a yell and, too late, they beheld the



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Head rushing at them. They scattered madly.

However, the Head swerved at the same second, and there was a roar from Handforth as the scooter butted him fairly and squarely in the middle. Edward Oswald went flying, the Head went flying, and a second later they were both sprawling helplessly.

"Oh, corks!" groaned Handforth, as he sat up. "I'm killed!"

Church and McClure and the other Removites took no notice of him. They were assisting Dr. Scattlebury to his feet. The Head had a bewildered, startled expression in his eyes.

"Are you hurt, sir?" asked Fullwood concernedly.

"Yes, I am hurt!" replied the Head sternly. "What do you expect?"

"Sorry, sir."

"You will be sorrier, young men, in a moment!" interrupted the Head, as he looked round and surveyed the Removites. "How dare you come flying down this private lane on your—your preposterous velocipede, or whatever it is?"

He pointed accusingly at the scooter, and the fellows gazed at him in amazement.

"But we didn't run into you, sir!" protested Church. "It was you who—"

"I have no intention of arguing with you," interrupted the Head curtly. "Not another word! Every boy here will take an imposition of two hundred lines, and report to me later."

He nodded and walked off, leaving the Removites dazed.

CHAPTER 5.

The Dinner Party!

"WELL, I'm jiggered!"

"My only hat!"

"Accusing us!"

"The cool nerve of it!" said Fullwood, grinning. "He charges us on that giddy scooter, sends old Handy flying, and then turns round and says that we're the culprits."

"Well, it only proves what we've been saying for the last week," said Church, shaking his head. "The old boy is loopy. But it's a peculiar kind of loopiness, for you never know when he's going 'off.' And even when he is 'off' he's still perfectly sane in the ordinary way; only he's like a great big kid—happy and jolly. And he forgets everything that's happened just before."

Willy & Co. came up.

"He's gone, has he?" asked Willy, after he had heard. "Well, it's a good thing. And you say he seemed to recover himself? Thank goodness he didn't spot me, or he might have remembered Lightning."

"Hasn't he sent Lightning away, as he threatened?" asked Handforth, who had picked himself up, considerably bruised.

"No," grinned Willy. "He'd forgotten all about that. He's given me a quid, and he's invited me to dinner this evening."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Fact!" chuckled Willy. "Here's the quid to prove it."

He displayed the note triumphantly, and his major gazed upon it indignantly.

"Well, that's a bit thick!" he said. "The Head never gave me any quids. You can pay me that five bob back now, my lad."

"Rats! I don't owe you five bob," said Willy. "I never borrow money from anybody."

"You had five bob from me less than an hour ago."

"Yes, but that wasn't borrowed," explained Willy blandly. "Well, so-long, you chaps; our tea's getting cold. And we shall have to buck up, too, because we must get properly dressed. Dinner is at seven-thirty sharp."

"You're not really going?" asked McClure, staring.

"Why not?"

"Well, you know jolly well that the Head was in one of his funny moods when he invited you."

"Who cares?" interrupted Willy. "We've been invited, and we're going. We're not going to miss a treat like that."

"Treat?" asked Chubby Heath with a glare. "I don't call it a treat to sit at the Head's table! I'll be jolly glad to get out of the ordeal!"

But Willy was set upon it. Perhaps he could foresee some fun; and he insisted upon his two chums accompanying him.

Tea was a scrappy sort of meal, and after that the fags went up to their dormitory to prepare.

Meanwhile, the story had gone round the Junior quarters, and there were many chuckles. Some of the fellows, in fact, were inclined to be jealous. It was a bit thick that three cheeky fags should be so favoured.

When Willy & Co. came down, dressed in their best and shining with unusual cleanliness, they were chipped a good deal. But Willy took no notice; at least, he was in no way put out of countenance.

"You're envious—that's what's the matter with you," he said cheerfully. "It isn't anybody who can have dinner with the Head!"

"I've a jolly good mind to come with you!" said Handforth gruffly. "I'm your elder brother, aren't I?"

"That's not the Head's fault," replied Willy sadly. "It's not mine, either. We all have our troubles."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky young fathead!" roared Handforth. "Are you calling me a trouble?"

"I could call you lots of other things, Ted, old man, only there isn't time," said Willy with a kindly smile. "So-long, everybody! We'll let you know all about it when we get back."

THE fags presented themselves at the Head's front door at exactly twenty-eight minutes past seven—for Willy believed in being two minutes early rather than a minute late.

The butler, a staid and portly individual, regarded the visitors with frank curiosity—even suspicion.

"You shouldn't come here at this time in the evening, me lads," he said. "You ought to know that you can't see Dr. Scattlebury—"

"But we're invited," interrupted Willy. "We're here for dinner."

"Oh, are you?" asked the butler, his expression becoming more suspicious. "Here for dinner, eh? That's a good one!"

"Don't you believe us, Mr. Waters?" asked Willy. "We're not trying to pull your leg. The Head invited all three of us, and we're staying. So the sooner you ask us in, the better."

Waters considered. There was something very determined and resolute about Willy. He wasn't at all like an ordinary junior schoolboy. And Waters, who had been the headmaster's butler for years, and who had come to St. Frank's with him, was very uneasy these days. He was no fool; and he had noticed certain peculiarities in his master. On more than one occasion Dr. Scattlebury had acted with unaccountable levity in Waters' presence; he had become forgetful and absent-minded.

"Wait here, me lads," said the butler gruffly. "I'll see what the master says. You're not trying to fool me? He really did invite you to dinner?"

"Honest Injun!" chorused the fags.

Waters retired to the Head's study; and Willy & Co., seeing the dining-room door wide open, strolled in. It was very inviting. Willy pointed to the spotless table and at the gleaming silver and glassware.

"There you are!" he said. "There are four places set—one for the Head, and the other three for us. Old Waters doesn't know what he's talking about!"

Waters was with Dr. Scattlebury, and that gentleman elevated his eyebrows in considerable astonishment when he heard that three unusually clean-looking fags had presented themselves for dinner.

"But this is nonsense, Waters," said the Head. "I invited no boys to dinner!"

"You're quite sure, sir?" asked the butler earnestly.

"How dare you, Waters!" said Dr. Scattlebury. "Don't you think I know whom I invite to dinner? Tell these boys to go away. They're evidently attempting some foolish joke."

The Head had completely forgotten! Waters, uneasy, returned to the hall—only to find that Willy & Co. had vanished. He found them sitting at the table in the dining-room.

"Well!" exclaimed Waters angrily. "Out you get, you young rascals! What do you mean by coming here and telling fibs? Dr.

Scattlebury says that he didn't invite you, and that you've got to go!"

The fags exchanged quick glances.

"Perhaps we'd better hop it!" muttered Chubby.

Willy looked at Waters steadily.

"Sorry, Mr. Waters, but we're all dressed up now, and if we left here we'd have no place to go," he said coolly. "So we're staying! The Head invited us, and here we are!"

All Waters' threats were useless. The fags sat there, and he could not shift them. In desperation he returned to the Head.

"I will attend to them, Waters," said Dr. Scattlebury angrily, when he heard. "I will show these boys that they cannot come to my house with their audacious jokes!"

He was a kindly man by nature, but there was a stern, hard frown on his brow as he entered the dining-room. Yet when he found Willy's cheerful, disarming gaze upon him, he almost faltered. There was something exceedingly likable about Willy Handforth.

"Er—what does this mean, boys?" asked the Head. "What are you doing here in my private dining-room?"

"We're waiting for dinner, sir," replied Willy cheerfully. "You invited us to dinner, sir. Don't you remember?"

"I certainly do not," replied the Head. "The very idea is ridiculous. It is not my custom to invite junior boys—"

He hesitated and paused. There was that "something" about Willy which robbed him of all his anger. Moreover, something was vaguely stirring in his mind. He knew that he had seen these boys before—and quite recently, too.

"Really!" he muttered, passing a hand over his brow. "This is most extraordinary! Now that I have seen you, my boys, I do seem to remember something about you."

"That's right, sir," nodded Willy. "You invited us to dinner. Honest Injun, sir! We wouldn't dream of taking an awful liberty like this, sir! You really did invite us. Honour bright, sir."

"Yes, sir—honour bright!" chorused Chubby and Juicy anxiously.

Dr. Scattlebury suddenly laughed—a pleasant, good-tempered laugh.

"Since you have said 'honour bright,' I will not doubt you any longer," he said kindly. "I think I must have invited you in an absent-minded moment. But never mind. You're here, so you can stay. You really deserve to stay for your audacity in coming at all."

"But, sir—" began Waters in agitation.

"Yes, Waters?" asked the Head, turning.

"The table, sir!"

"I have already observed the table, Waters," nodded the Head. "It is set for four. That proves that I must have been expecting three guests, otherwise I would not have given instructions for the three extra places to be laid."

"But your other guests, sir!" said Waters. "Those places are laid for them!"

Dr. Scattlebury started.

"Other guests?" he asked sharply. "What other guests?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Smiles and Miss Smiles, sir."

The expression on Dr. Scattlebury's face proved, as clearly as daylight, that he had never even heard the names before. For one second he looked blank. Then, with admirable self-possession, he recovered.

"Dear me, yes," he said gently. "Mr. and Mrs. Smiles and Miss Smiles! Of course, Waters! Well, never mind—set three extra places for these boys."

The butler opened his mouth as if to protest, but closed it again. What was the use? To make the position more difficult, the front door bell was ringing.

THUS it came about that Willy Handforth & Co. of the Third sat down to dinner that evening with Dr. Inigo Scattlebury and his three distinguished guests. Mr. Augustus Smiles, Mrs. Augustus Smiles, and Miss Angela Smiles were singularly contradictory people. For, although they were all Smiles, in a manner of speaking, there wasn't a smile amongst the three of them. Willy had never seen a sourer trio in all his life.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Smiles were thin, irritable people with a jaundiced outlook on life. Miss Smiles, who appeared to be Mr. Smiles' sister, was a middle-aged lady with an angular frame and a still more angular countenance. Her eyes were hard and penetrating, and her tongue was evidently made of toughened leather, judging by the work it put in. Of the three, Miss Smiles was unquestionably the worst.

The looks they gave Willy & Co. when they found that they were to sit at the same table, were freezing.

"We were not aware, Dr. Scattlebury, that you had invited other—er—guests," said Miss Smiles, in a voice which reminded the fags of a nor'-nor'-easter. "Such young boys, too! I hope they will not forget their manners."

The headmaster's smile was disarming.

"One of my little pleasures," he explained cheerfully. "It is good for me to mix with the youngsters. I believe in being on intimate terms with my boys. Their presence at this dinner-table will be good for all of us, I am sure."

"If they know how to hold their tongues, I, for one, will be charmed with their company," said Miss Smiles, gazing across at the fags with a look which belied her words. "Little boys should be seen and not heard, you know."

Willy & Co. managed to smile politely; but they were wondering, at the back of their minds, how in the name of all that was mysterious had Dr. Scattlebury invited these unpleasant people to dinner.

If it came to that, Dr. Scattlebury was wondering precisely the same thing.

CHAPTER 6.

The Anti-Gambling Fiends!

FOR it was perfectly true that the Head had no recollection whatsoever of inviting the Smiles' to his house.

As he sat at that dinner-table, the smiling host, he racked his brain fruitlessly. He was inwardly perturbed. He had never even seen these people before. They were absolute strangers to him! Yet their very conversation proved that he must have met them somewhere, and quite recently, too. Furthermore, he had invited them to dinner.

It was all very disturbing—particularly as it came right on top of the incident of the fags. The Head's absent-mindedness and forgetfulness had become serious.

It was not long before he learned that the Smiles' were prominent Bannington residents, and as the meal progressed the three revealed themselves in another light—one which surprised neither Dr. Scattlebury nor Willy Handforth.

For it appeared that Mr. Smiles was the President of the Bannington & District Anti-Gambling League. Mrs. Smiles was the honorary secretary; and Miss Smiles was the organiser.

They all looked it.

The Head, although he remained most charming and attentive, again asked himself why he had invited these people to his table.

He decided that the best thing to do, in the circumstances, was to agree with them. In that way, perhaps, he would avoid all arguments—since Miss Smiles, in particular, revealed herself as an argumentative woman. The Head had no desire to cross swords with her. His main anxiety was to get rid of these soured individuals as quickly as possible.

But as the dinner progressed—particularly when it arrived at the dessert stage, when the nuts and wine were in evidence—a subtle change came over Dr. Inigo Scattlebury.

The conversation was now mainly on the subject of gambling; the Smiles' were waxing eloquent. And the Head, instead of being merely polite, became boisterously enthusiastic on the question.

Willy & Co. were in a unique position. They could watch and they could listen; and they were not expected to take part in the discussion. They had all the advantage. And Willy, at least, could easily tell that the Head was being carried away by the arguments of his guests.

Willy had time to think things over. It seemed to him that the Head "went off" for no particular reason, except that he was influenced by the affairs of the moment. Any little shock, such as a fall, was calculated to bring him back to the normal. Not even a fall was necessary; a sudden commotion, engineered at the right moment, would probably do the trick. It was just as well to bear these things in mind.

"The league is doing a great work, Dr. Scattlebury," Mr. Smiles was saying. "In

Bannington, and in the villages round and about, we are gaining a great deal of strength. Our anti-gambling crusade is going ahead splendidly. We are securing converts daily—dozens of them."

"It must be very interesting work," said the Head politely.

"The gambling spirit is latent in all of us," said Miss Smiles, with an icy glance at Willy & Co. "Even schoolboys—as you should know, doctor—will wager peg-tops and marbles."

"I doubt if you will find either peg-tops or marbles at St. Frank's," said the Head gently.

"But the principle is the same," declared the lady. "Gambling is gambling. Tomorrow, for example, there will be an appalling orgy of betting at Epsom. I need not remind you, Dr. Scattlebury, that tomorrow is Derby Day."

"Why, so it is," said the Head. "I must confess that I had momentarily forgotten. You see, Miss Smiles, I am not personally interested in gambling. These race-days do not interest me."

"In that case, sir, you will be all the more enthusiastic for our cause," said Mr. Smiles eagerly. "Indeed, we were hoping that you might help us in a more concrete way. With the Derby so near at hand, when such gambling will be rife, we thought that it would be a most fitting moment for you to honour our League."

"Of course, if there is anything I can do, I shall be most happy," said Dr. Scattlebury. "I am not a rich man, but if you desire a small donation—"

"No, no, not at all!" interrupted Miss Smiles, in horror. "Good gracious! We would not eat at your table, sir, and then bother you for a donation! We leave that entirely to your own generosity. But what we did hope for was this: We want you to honour us by becoming the vice-president of our League."

"Your name, Dr. Scattlebury, will be of great value to us," put in Mr. Smiles earnestly. "You are a very important man in this part of the county, as you will know, and if we are at liberty to print your name on our literature as vice-president—well, you will easily realise how we shall benefit. The more prominent names we can obtain, the better."

Dr. Scattlebury chuckled.

"Go ahead," he said cheerfully. "If you want me to become vice-president, I am all for it. Down with gambling! Down with the Derby! Certainly, I will be your vice-president—and proud of it, too!"

Miss Smiles managed, somehow, to smile—although, if anything, it made her face worse than before.

"This is most charming and delightful of you, Dr. Scattlebury!" she cried. "Thank you—thank you a thousand times! We are more honoured than we can possibly express!"

Willy and Chubby and Juicy felt just a bit ill. It couldn't have been the dinner, be-

cause the dinner had been excellent. But they badly wanted some fresh air. Willy took the bull by the horns.

"Please, sir, may I speak?" he asked meekly.

The Smiles family focused their gaze upon him in one concentrated stare, but Dr. Scattlebury smiled genially.

"Of course, my boy," he said. "You are my guests, too, and I should be most entertained to hear your views."

"Thanks all the same, sir, but we're not old enough to understand the conversation," said Willy, with a tired, sad glance at Miss Smiles. "We're only children, you know, sir! We were wondering if you'd excuse us now."

"By all means," beamed the Head. "Run along! And thank you for coming, boys."

"We're a bit late for prep, sir, so perhaps you'll make that all right with old Wilkey—I mean, with our Housemaster, sir?" asked Willy.

"Of course," promised the Head. "Don't worry about your prep at all."

And Willy & Co. escaped.

"It wasn't worth it!" said Chubby Heath flatly. "The dinner was all right—jolly good, in fact—but those awful people took all my appetite away."

"You scoffed everything that was put in front of you, anyway," said Willy.

"Yes, but if those people hadn't been there I'd have asked for a second helping," retorted Chubby. "My only hat! Did you ever see such mouldy specimens? Why are they allowed to walk about?"

"Goodness only knows," replied Willy gruffly. "They ought to be put into a museum."

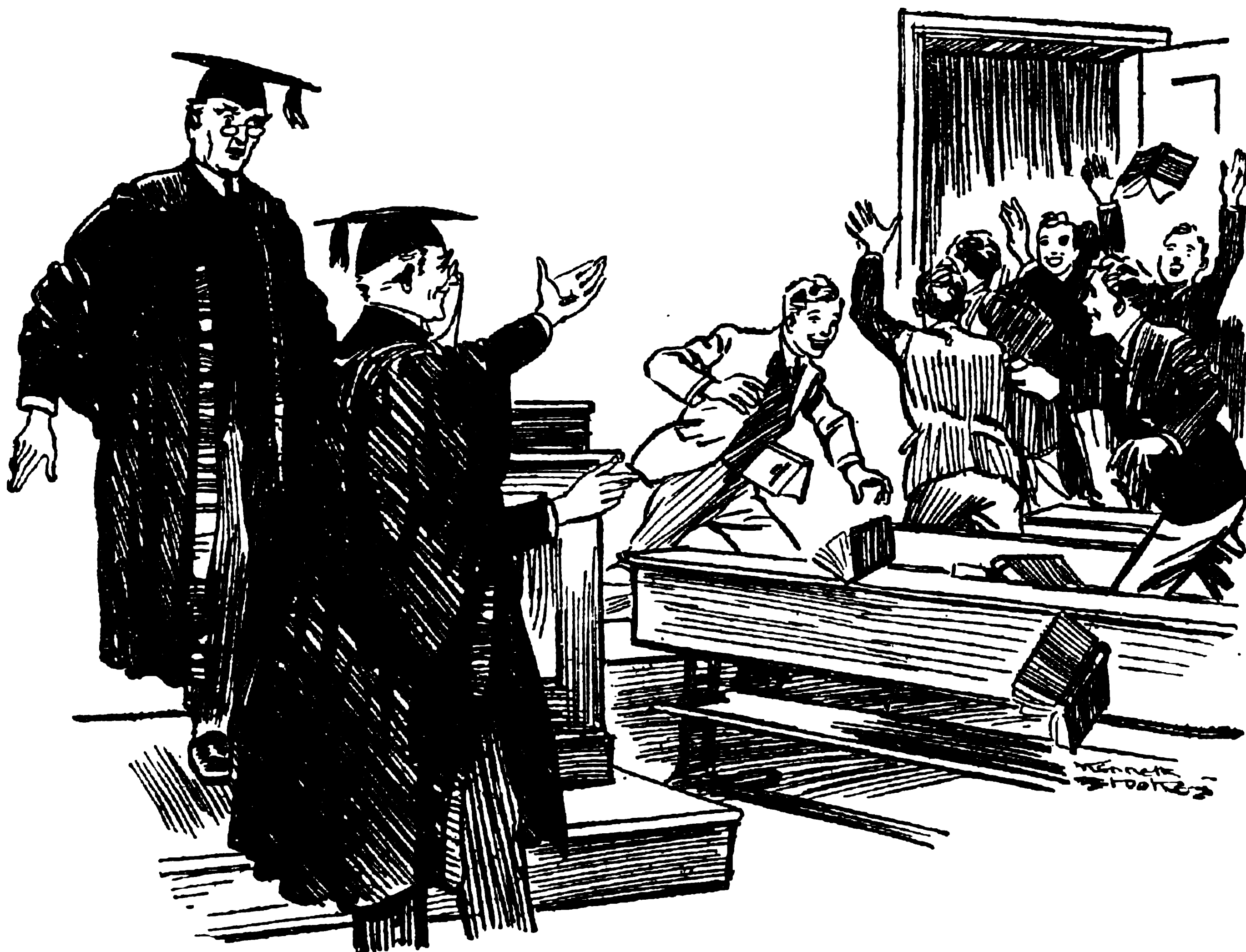
The fags were surrounded by a grinning crowd when they showed themselves in the Ancient House. And the crowd was vastly entertained when the fags explained what had been happening at the Head's table.

Bernard Forrest and his pals of Study A were not particularly cheered. They had been trying to wangle excuses for "cutting" lessons on the morrow. They badly wanted to go to the Derby. But if the Head was getting a lot of anti-gambling notions, he would probably tighten up the school regulations.

Forrest & Co. were the ringleaders in a big sweepstake, too, for the Derby was a big subject of conversation all over St. Frank's. Not that Nipper or Handforth or any of their chums took the slightest interest in betting or gambling. But they discussed the Derby as cheerfully and as eagerly as any of the others.

Then came an unexpected development.

The school was ordered to collect in Big Hall; the word went round, and masters and prefects had a busy time. When the whole school had collected, Dr. Inigo Scattlebury appeared on the platform with Mr. and Mrs. Augustus Smiles and Miss



“We’re all going to the Derby!” announced Dr. Scattlebury. Cheering excitedly, the Removites flung their books into the air and then dashed from the class-room.

Angela Smiles. He introduced them almost boisterously.

Mr. Smiles, as the President of the Anti-Gambling League, made a speech. The school stood it well. They listened with ever-growing impatience as Mr. Smiles enlarged upon the evils of gambling.

To make matters worse, the headmaster himself took up the subject after Mr. Smiles had finished. He seemed very enthusiastic about it.

“To-morrow, I am told, is Derby Day,” he said impressively. “And Derby Day, as you all know, is a day on which people in all walks of life insist upon having their ‘little bit’ on their own particular fancy. Some, who know nothing whatever about horse-racing, resort to the time-honoured practice of sticking pins in a list of the runners. Now, all this is to be deplored.”

He paused and looked at the school with a calculating eye.

“There must be none of that business in St. Frank’s,” he went on sternly. “To-morrow is Derby Day. Very well. I have decided that there shall be no betting here, so in order to be on the safe side, the entire school will be confined to gates for the whole day!”

A rustle seemed to pass through Big Hall, swelling until it was a murmur of consterna-

tion and even indignation. Here was an unexpected blow. Mr. Wilkes, the House-master of the Ancient House, moved a little nearer to the Head.

“Eh? Why, yes, of course,” said Dr. Scattlebury, nodding. “Thank you, Mr. Wilkes!” He turned to the school again. “I have just been reminded that to-morrow is a half-holiday. Very well, my decision stands good. The school will take its half-holiday on Thursday, instead of to-morrow. A very simple solution, I think.”

The school thought quite differently—and the school seethed.

“I might mention that I am now vice-chairman of the Bannington and District Anti-Gambling League,” continued the Head. “I am proud to hold that position, and I shall do everything in my power to discourage and discountenance betting. I advise you all to forget that to-morrow is Derby Day. Any boy who breaks bounds will be most severely punished. Kindly remember that the whole school is confined to gates for the day.”

The school was dismissed, Dr. Scattlebury beaming genially upon all and sundry, hardly realising perhaps that he had made himself extremely unpopular by his action. Even the fellows who took no interest in gambling at all—those who did not care twopence about the Derby—were indignant.

It was a bit too thick to have their half-holiday messed about with like this.

The masters, too, were aghast; and so were lots of the prefects. Quite a few of the masters had made plans to dash off to Epsom immediately after morning lessons. They would be able to get there in plenty of time for the great classic race.

Now they were forbidden to go, and this messing about with the school routine was certain to make hopeless confusion. Everybody in St. Frank's, from the smallest fag to the most dignified Housemaster, was bubbling with discontent.

But the Head was so tremendously enthusiastic in his new rôle that there was no arguing with him. One or two of the masters attempted it, but he brushed them aside.

Unconscious of the storm he had aroused, he plunged into a lot of hard work, and within an hour he had forgotten the Smiles', he had forgotten Derby Day, and he had forgotten that he had gated the school for the whole of the morrow.

CHAPTER 7.

Off to the Derby!

NEXT morning the weather was gloriously fine, and to the school this was very much like adding insult to injury. What was the good of fine weather now that the half-holiday was cancelled?

Dr. Scattlebury, going for his morning stroll, encountered black looks everywhere. The Head was mystified, and disturbed. He was in a particularly tranquil mood this morning; he felt like smiling at people, and he expected them to smile back at him.

Having forgotten the previous evening's events, Dr. Scattlebury was naturally worried by the great difference in the various people he encountered. Hitherto, he had beamed upon them, and they had raised their caps, beaming back.

They still raised their caps, but the beaming part of the programme was conspicuous by its absence. He met prefects who were respectful but curtly sharp in tone; he met Fifth-Formers who saluted him stiffly; he met juniors who glared quite frankly, and who raised their caps with evident reluctance. And not a smile on any face; hostility everywhere.

It was most disquieting. The Head was always a kindly man, and this morning he wanted to be more than usually chatty with the boys he encountered. He felt like it. The weather was in tune with his feelings. But his efforts were bitterly disappointing; he engaged one or two fellows in conversation, but it can hardly be said that they were chatty.

At prayers, in Big Hall, Dr. Scattlebury saw further evidences of the school's hostility. He could not help observing that

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POPULAR WIRELESS

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the masters were equally forbidding. Dr. Scattlebury felt wounded.

"Have you any idea what is the matter with everybody, Mr. Pagett?" he asked, after prayers, when he happened to meet the Fifth Form master.

Mr. Pagett eyed the Head with a cold, ash-like eye.

"Surely, sir, you ought to know what is the matter?" he replied curtly.

He rather frightened himself, in fact. It wasn't good policy for a Form-master to speak to the Head in that tone of voice. He watched Dr. Scattlebury with some trepidation, regretting his impulsive utterance.

"Mr dear Mr. Pagett, you seem to have caught the prevailing fever," said the Head mildly. "In what way have I personally offended you?"

"The school as a whole, sir, resents your—er—unfortunate order regarding to-day," said Mr. Pagett stiffly.

"Order?" repeated the Head. "What order?"

"Surely, sir, you remember that you confined the entire school to gates for the whole of to-day?" asked the Fifth Form master, staring. "And not only is it Derby Day, but a half-holiday. Between ourselves, sir, I think that many of the boys regard your action as a slight. It implies that you mistrust them—and boys don't like that sort of thing."

"I see—I see," murmured the Head, nodding. "Thank you, Mr. Pagett. I will think about this."

He moved away, uncomfortable. Vague memories were stirring. Yet he could not definitely recall the events of the previous evening. However, the mystery was solved. He now knew why the boys and the masters were so unfriendly towards him.

He worried over it a lot—even to the extent of forgetting that he had arranged to deliver a lecture to the Sixth Form.

Right in the middle of morning lessons, when he should have been on his way to the Sixth, he went for a walk in the sunshine. This absent-mindedness of his was disturbing him more than he cared to admit—even to himself. It was most awkward, too. He could hardly question the masters, asking them what orders he had given the previous day. He had ventured to question Mr. Pagett, but he could not do that sort of thing very often.

The fresh morning air and the bright sunshine restored a good deal of his serenity. He expanded almost visibly as he walked down the quiet country lane towards Bellton. The birds were singing, the insects were humming, and everything was cheerful on this bright summer's day. The Head quickly responded to Nature's mood.

He walked through the village abstractedly, and he did not realise that he was on the Bannington road until he became aware of a peculiar sound which proceeded from round the next bend.

A cornet soloist, evidently in a contented frame of mind, was playing "Happy Days Are Here Again," and the fact that his execution was considerably faulty and his wind scanty, did not deter him from putting a world of breeziness into the tuneful melody.

The cornet soloist was not alone in this outburst. Judging by the volume of sound, at least five hundred men were singing the chorus.

Dr. Scattlebury walked round the bend, full of wonder. He beheld a large motor-coach, packed with happy-looking men. They were all singing, and most of them broke off to give a great cheer when the driver, who had been investigating the engine, lowered the great bonnet and fixed it in position.

The headmaster walked up, smiling. He liked to see people happy. The coach was gaily decorated with bunting, and this party was clearly out for a spree.

"All right now, Bill?" asked one of the men.

"Yes; it was only a cracked plug," replied the driver. "We shan't have any more trouble this trip."

There were more cheers, and the driver climbed into his seat. Dr. Scattlebury stood looking on with growing amiability. Such happiness and contentment as this had an immediate effect upon him.

"Coming with us, guv'nor?" shouted one of the trippers, grinning.

The Head moved nearer, and he laughed.

"Thank you all the same, but I'm not so interested in football as all that," he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A roar of laughter went up.

"You will have your little joke, mister!" sang out the man who had first addressed the Head. "Of course, you don't know that we're going to the Derby, do you?"

Dr. Scattlebury started slightly. The Derby! Again that vague stirring of memory—and the remembrance of Mr. Pagett's words.

"Why, of course!" he said, smiling. "The Derby! You appear to have made up your minds to enjoy yourselves."

"You bet we have, guv'nor!" shouted one of the men. "Take a tip from me, and put your money on Roysterer!"

A roar of derisive laughter went up.

"Don't take no notice of him, mister!" shouted one of the other trippers. "Roysterer will be so far behind that he'll think he's in the next race! I'm backing Twinkle for the big race."

"It's chucking your money away, Jim," said another man. "Twinkle ain't a horse—he's a caterpillar!"

"Cheerio, guv'nor!" chorused the men.

"Good-bye—and I hope you'll have a thoroughly good time," said the Head genially.

"Derby Day only comes once a year, sir—and we're out for a bit o' sport," said Jim.

"Plenty of excitement and plenty of fresh air on the downs—there ain't a healthier place in England."

"'Ear, 'ear!"

"Good luck to the good old Derby!"

The motor-coach moved off, the man with the cornet bursting forth into a fresh melody. Dr. Inigo Scattlebury watched as the coach vanished into the distance.

"The healthy downs—the excitement of the great race," he murmured. "Splendid!"

IN the Triangle at St. Frank's, Mr. Alington Wilkes watched the Head as the latter came in from the lane at such a brisk walk that it was almost a trot. Dr. Scattlebury was looking flushed and happy.

"Ah, Mr. Wilkes!" he exclaimed with a wave of his hand. "One moment, sir!"

Mr. Wilkes waited.

"I have an idea!" continued the Head as he came up. "On such a glorious day as this, Mr. Wilkes, it is shameful for the boys to be kept in. So we're all going to the Derby."

"I beg your pardon?" said Mr. Wilkes with a start.

"The Derby," beamed the Head. "At Epsom, you know."

"But, really, sir——"

"I am going along now to the telephone," went on the headmaster briskly. "I'm going to order a number of motor-buses, and if we start within the hour we ought to reach Epsom Downs in plenty of time for all the fun. How does this strike you, Mr. Wilkes?"

"Of course, you're joking, sir," said the Housemaster, eyeing Dr. Scattlebury with caution.

"Joking!" echoed the Head, grinning with glee. "You'll soon see whether I'm joking or not, my dear fellow! Why shouldn't the school go to the Derby? If hundreds of other people can go, so can St. Frank's! Can you suggest a healthier method of spending the day? No, you can't!"

The Head bustled off, and within a few minutes he was talking to a great garage in Bannington—not a private garage, but the local headquarters of a big bus company. The Head was lavish. He ordered twenty double-decker buses, and it was only by a stroke of good fortune that he got them. They had been held in reserve for a big party of Bannington townspeople, but the negotiations had fallen through at the last moment, and the people had gone by train. However, the Head did not enter into these details, since it was no concern of his. The buses were available, and that was all he cared.

His next move was to dash to the Sixth Form room, where he was received with cold looks. A change very soon came about, however.

"You'll pardon me, sir, for interrupting like this," said the Head, smiling at Mr. Langton, the Sixth Form master. "but I

have decided that the school shall go to the Derby for the day!"

Mr. Langton's jaw sagged.

"You—you have decided what, sir!" he gasped.

"Out you go—all of you!" continued the Head, beaming upon the Form. "You'll just have time to change. The buses will be here in about half an hour. Get a move on, everybody! We're going to the Derby!"

The Head strode out, went into the Fifth Form room, and staggered Mr. Pagett with the same story—to say nothing of staggering the Fifth.

And so on to the Remove, the Fourth, and the Third.

There was great excitement in the Remove class-room when Dr. Scattlebury delivered the good news. At the word of "dismiss," a number of the boys grabbed hold of their books and papers and flung them into the air in their enthusiasm. The Head just beamed.

"That's right, boys," he said affably. "I like to see you happy. I like to see such enthusiasm."

More books and papers were hurled into the air for the Head's benefit, while Mr. Crowell, the Form-master, looked on in scandalised horror.

Within ten minutes the entire school was dismissed from lessons, and the masters were in a state of bewilderment and mystification.

However, the boys didn't care. The Head himself had issued this amazing edict, and it really sounded too good to be true.

However, when the great procession of motor-buses rolled up, the last doubt faded away. Dr. Inigo Scattlebury had come up to the scratch, after all! St. Frank's was off to the Derby!

CHAPTER 8.

An Unhappy Mr. Smiles!

"**H**URRAH!"

"Good old Head!"

The Triangle was packed with cheering, excited fellows. This thing was all the more startling, in view of Dr. Scattlebury's recent decision. The previous evening he had decided to "gate" the school because of the Derby; and this morning he had made a complete right-about-face, and was taking the whole school to Epsom Downs!

It was almost fantastic, and nobody would have believed it, but for the fact that the motor-buses were filling the Triangle and overflowing right into the lane.

"Beats me hollow!" said Handforth as he surveyed the scene. "We're going to the giddy Derby, whether we want to or not!"

"The Head's all right!" grinned McClure.

"Yes, but he's so dashed wholesale!" protested Handforth. "He doesn't give us a chance to get our breath! How do we know that we really are going to the Derby?"

(Continued on page 24.)

LINE UP HERE FOR A GOOD LAUGH, LADS!



HANDFORTH'S Weekly

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EDITORIAL STAFF.

June 6th, 1931.

THE EDITOR'S CHIN-WAG

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E. O. Handforth
Editor E. O. Handforth
Chief Sub-Editor
E. O. Handforth
Literary Editor
E. O. Handforth
Art Editor E. O. Handforth
Rest of Staff E. O. Handforth

A BALLY CHAT ABOUT DRESS!

By that chump,
Archie Glenthorne.

THERE'S been such a row in the Remove about my WEEKLY that I have given way at last. I have let Nipper and the other fatheads write some articles for my marvellous paper.

But I didn't give in without a lot of argument. Don't you think it.

"It's rotten," I said bitterly. "The readers want sensible stuff. They don't want to read a lot of silly rot."

"That's why we suggest that you give 'em some," said Churchy. "They haven't seen anything sensible in the paper yet, and it will be a change for them." And then he added: "Yaroooooooooh!"

"Dash it all," I said, "there's no reason why I shouldn't write the whole of the paper myself, that I can see. I'm easily the best author at St. Frank's."

"Easily the best boaster," chimed in McClure.

When McClure had picked himself up from under the table, I turned to Nipper and the others.

"All right," I said proudly, "I yield! You can write your mouldy articles and give 'em to me, and if they're all right, I'll put 'em in my WEEKLY. But, all the same," I said, "I reserve the right to alter them if I think them unsuitable."

"And we reserve the right to bump you if you do," grinned Nipper. "You'd best decide that they are suitable, I think, old bean."

And so I've put in their silly rot for once. But, as I expected, I've had to alter it a good deal, and I've also made one or two remarks in brackets in each article. But, apart from the stuff in the brackets, all the tripe has been written by the other fellows. Except for this editorial, I am left right out of my own WEEKLY. And I hope the fellows are satisfied now.

E. O. HANDFORTH.

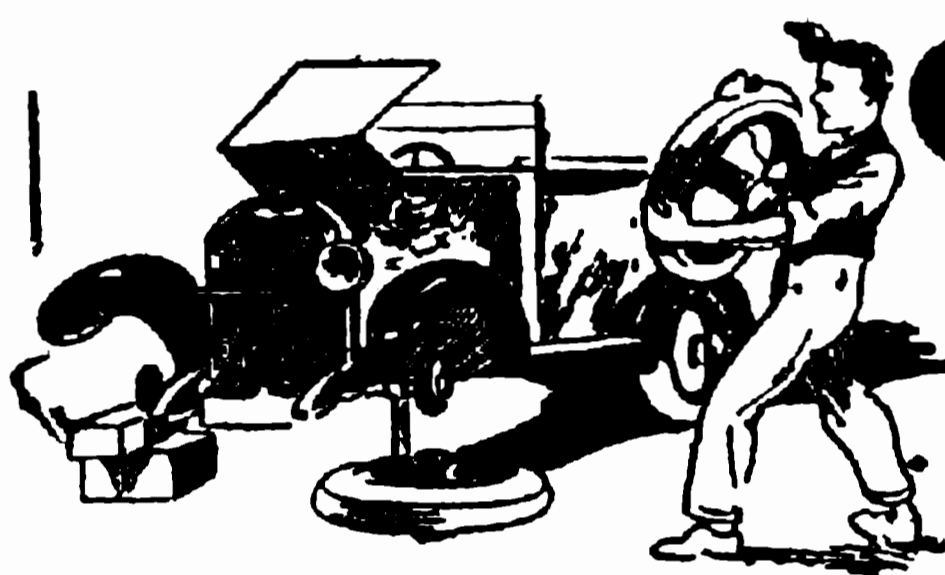
WELL, pip-pip, old lads! I mean, how-de-do, and so forth! What I want to say about dress is just this—(What the fathead wants to say about dress is that some silly tailor's dummies spend a lot too much time on dress and not enough on their lessons. Why, by George! some asses seem to live for silly clobber. Look at me! Don't I always look well-dressed? And yet I don't spend every half-holiday trying on a new waistcoat, or choosing silly ties. I mean to say, what's it matter what sort of ties you've got on—especially when you've got a face like a bladder of lard in a swoon, same as that chump Glen-thorne.—E.O.H.)

You know, a chappie can't be too careful in selecting his chassis-coverings. Dear old Handforth, for instance, was out in the Triangle this morning with a perfectly foul pair of flannel bags—(By George! Can you beat that! The absolute fathead! Why, those bags were perfectly new a year ago last Whitsun. I paid 16/11½d. for 'em. At least, I bought 'em, but my pater footed the bill. What's wrong with them? I admit that the crease has gone out of them, but apart from that they are as good as new. Certainly I spilt some red ink down them about a year ago, and there's a patch on one knee, a small hole at the back, and a blackberry stain on the leg; but that's nothing.

The fact is, a chump like Glenthorne doesn't know anything about dressing properly, and it would only waste your time to read his silly rot. You take your tip from me. Get a good suit and make it last. There's no need to get a dozen different suits; you can only wear one at a time.

And what's the good of having about fifty shirts and five thousand ties? Think of the worry and brain-fag deciding which shirt to wear on a certain day, and which tie will match it.

I suppose, actually, that's why old Archie is such a brainless specimen. He's used up what little brain power he had on this clobber business, with the result that he's got none now.—E. O. H.



CHATS ON WIRELESS

By that brainless idiot,
SIR MONTIE TREGELLIS-WEST.

YOU know, dear old boys, wireless is a wonderful invention——. (Go hon!

Did you find that out all yourself, or did somebody tell you? If you've got any more original remarks like that to make, by George! you can make 'em in a different magazine.——E.O.H.)

I mean to say, by turning on a little knob and flooding the carburettor, you can hear voices trickling about from all over the world. It takes some imagining, doesn't it? (Only to a silly ass. And what's all this rot about flooding carburettors? There are no carburettors in wireless—only in Morris Minors.

By the way, did I ever tell you about that accident I had with my Morris minor. It was this way. Something went wrong with the engine. Spider's web in the differential sprocket,

or something. And I took the car to pieces.

Well, I put her together again, but somebody must have done something to the gear-box while I wasn't looking, because the beastly car would go only in reverse. I could shift the gear-lever about as much as I liked; but directly I started the engine the car went backwards like a lobster. And I couldn't find what was wrong—that was the worst of it.

In the end, I had to put the driving seat on the bonnet and the windscreen across the front partition and drive backwards. Finally, however, my pater came down handsome with a remittance, and I took it to the garage and had it repaired.

But this is quite enough about wireless, anyway. Who wants to read a lot of rot about wireless? Everybody knows about that.——E.O.H.)

DON'TS FOR CRICKETERS

By that howling mugwump,
JERRY DODD.

DON'T run a bye unless called by your partner at the wicket.

(If I was wicket-keeper, there wouldn't be any byes. And, in any case, every fool knows this. Does Jerry Dodd think he is the only fellow who understands cricket? I admit that, after me, he is one of the best cricketers in the Remove, but I hate a fellow who boasts about it. What I always say about running byes is this: Never start out of your crease until your partner calls you. I'm sure that's a much more valuable tip than Jerry Dodd's—E.O.H.)

DON'T, as a general rule, return the ball to the bowling wicket. Except in the case of a very late start by the playing batsman, the wicket-keeper should take the throw-in.

(If I was the wicket-keeper, I'd punch the head of any fat-head who threw the ball to the bowler. But I'm not a wicket-keeper, so I advise you to do just as you like.—E.O.H.)

DON'T take any notice of——(Jerry Dodd. That's how this sentence should finish, though the chump himself put "advice from bystanders. Play your own game." That's all right if you play like me; but most fellows don't, and they need advice.

Now I'll give you a few tips. They're more sensible than Jerry Dodd's. I play long off in the St. Frank's Junior XI. and know what I'm talking about.

DON'T hesitate to stand the long off a ginger-pop after each innings. He needs it.

DON'T neglect to let the long off open the innings.—E.O.H.)

HOW TO BE A

By that shrieking

FANCY the blithering chump thinking that he knows more than I do about this subject. What if he was Nelson Lee's assistant? Does that make him a good detective? The fact is, I can give him points about a detective's job, and he knows it. If there's one thing I pride myself on, it's my detective ability. I'm easily the best detective at St. Frank's, and if anybody gives instruction in the art, it's going to be me.

I will now tell you exactly how you can—if you have brains—be a detective.

We will suppose that a mystery has been committed. You are sitting in your study, and an Inspector from Scotland Yard comes in and asks your help. First of all you look at him kind of casually, and then you say:

"Do you usually travel first-class on the train, Inspector? And why didn't you take a cab from the station instead of walking?"

You'll see him gape like a fish when you say this, and he'll gasp out: "Wonderful!"

"Simple!" you answer, with a careless laugh—being careful to suggest by your tone that it jolly well isn't simple. "There's a first-class ticket sticking out of your coat pocket, and a spot of mud on your trousers."

This always impresses him with your brilliant deductive powers. But, you may say, suppose there isn't a ticket in his pocket or a spot of mud on his trousers? My dear chap, there's bound to be. Inspectors always have tickets poking out of their pockets. They do it on purpose. And as for the mud—that's quite all right. Inspectors never have



Rotten, Fatheaded, Silly-ass

"SMUGGLER"

By CECIL DEV

ROGER WICKHAM was a good man; but he was a smuggler——

(There's a fatheaded way to start a story. Just as if a smuggler could be a good man. They're all rotters, and I know what I'm talking about. I've met a few.

As a matter of fact, I could tell this story better than de Valerie.

Roger Wickham was a rotter and a smuggler. He smuggled tobacco and

A DETECTIVE.

duffer, NIPPER.

Time to brush their trousers, and, besides, even if it isn't there, he won't know. And you can bet he walked from the station. Inspectors can't afford taxis.

Having impressed him in this way, you go to the scene of the crime. You will find the body on the ground with bloodstains and tobacco-ash near by. You then look for the weapon.

This will be hidden in a ditch or in the bowl of a hollow oak tree. Having photographed the revolver, you examine the body with a high-powered microscope and deduce that the man has been strangled. You then turn your attention to the tobacco-ash. Never neglect tobacco-ash. It is a most important clue.

The tobacco-ash will be of a particular brand of Turkish cigarette, which murderers always smoke. By telephoning to the maker, you can get the name of the brute. You then arrest him—or, rather, get the police to arrest him.

Next morning all the newspapers will have large headlines telling a marvellous world

of the great capture—with the police getting all the praise. But don't let them worry you. We detectives are used to that. We just guffaw and say "Bah!" or "Bah! Bah!" Make sure you don't utter this remark anywhere near a nanny-goat. The said goat might think you're its long-lost brother and butt you.

Now that you have read this article, you have a chance of being a full-blown detective. But the credit goes to me—not to Nipper.

When I come to think of it, I haven't printed Nipper's article at all. Well, you haven't missed much. My article is much better than his silly rot.—E.O.H.)

Short Story!

VALERIE'S COVE!"

VALERIE.

Wines and all sorts of beastly things; but the police found out and gave him five hundred lines, and fifteen years in chokey. He's still in clink, and jolly good luck to him.—E.O.H.)

THE END.

(NOTE.—"Short Story" is certainly a good description of this masterpiece. I wonder what de Valerie will say when he reads it?—Editor, NELSON LEE.)

TUCKSHOP TOPICS



By that gormandising ostrich,
FATTY LITTLE.

I ADVISE you chaps to go carefully when buying grub at the tuckshop. I fancy Mrs. Hake is selling inferior stuff, so that she can retire more quickly. She must be worth nearly a million now; I've spent about £10,000 at her shop since I've been at St. Frank's.

I've been ill. It was her custard trifles that did it. I'm sure those trifles weren't pure. I know I didn't have too many of them. Merely a dozen—or it might have been fourteen. At any rate, I know I didn't have more than eighteen—or, at least, not many more—

(The guzzling cormorant!

And yet he wonders that he's ill. If he takes my advice, he won't worry about trifles. Ha, ha! I've got a wonderful sense of humour when I like.

I remember once when Archie Glenthorne said he was not feeling well. He came drooping up to us with a silly monocle stuck in his eye and said that he'd got a pain.

"I know where your pain is," I grinned.

"Where?" asked the aes.

"In your eye!" I roared.

"A pane—see!"

I simply yelled at my clever joke; but Nipper, Travers, Pitt and the others stood like a lot of stuffed owls, and didn't even grin.

The fact is, some fellows haven't got a sense of humour, and it's no use trying to make 'em laugh. They grin only when a chap falls over in the Triangle, or gets a football on his nose.

Now I'm not like that. I can see the funny side of everything. When Churchy upset an ink-pot down his sleeve the other day, I roared. And yet I couldn't make him see that it was funny.)

There's a difference, of course, between fun and nasty accidents—Churchy and Mac laugh only at accidents. They shrieked when I got myself smothered with red ink a little while ago—and yet, surely, there's nothing funny in that.

That's all from Fatty Little this week.—E.O.H.)

ADVERTISEMENTS

WANTED.—A youth with courage, brains, tact and resource, willing to undertake a difficult and dangerous task for a large reward. Only first-class fellows need apply. Lord Dorrimore, Hotel Grand, London. (NOTE: You chaps need not trouble to answer this advertisement—I've already done so.—E.O.H.)

MISSING FROM SCHOOL.—An object named Teddy Long. Of no value to anybody except the owner. Is believed to have been frightened away by a large and vicious moth. Will the finder please disinfect and return the youth to this school.

"BLANCHO" FOR BLACK EYES. GONE IN A MINUTE. Testimonial: "We always keep a large supply of 'Blanco' in Study D, and we find a great deal of use for it."—Walter Church.

ORDER "HANDFORTH'S WEEKLY" EVERY WEEK. It makes dashed good blotting paper.

STOP PRESS

RECORD RAGGING FOR HANDFORTH.

Poor old Handy has gone through a record ragging from Nipper, de Valerie and the Remove this evening. It is not known officially what all the trouble was about, but we have an idea that we can guess.

ST. FRANK'S AT THE DERBY!

(Continued from page 20.)

He's liable to change his mind again as soon as we get started—and then we shall all come back!"

Meanwhile, Dr. Scattlebury was bustling about here, there, and everywhere; he was obviously in one of his happiest moods and enjoying himself hugely.

"Sir! One moment, if you can spare the time!" said Mr. Barnaby Goole, the House-master of the East House, as he buttonholed the Head. "May I have a word with you?"

"A dozen, my dear fellow," said the Head genially. "As many as you like, in fact. Help yourself!"

Mr. Goole, who was an austere man and a strict disciplinarian, looked at the Head with mingled consternation and anger.

"Is this some—er—joke, sir?" he asked.

"Not at all, Mr. Goole."

"But last night you confined the school to gates on account of the Derby—and rightly, too—and to-day you spring this astounding surprise!" said Mr. Goole. "Really Dr. Scattlebury, I cannot believe that you are serious!"

"But I am," smiled Dr. Scattlebury. "I think it will do the school good to get out for a day."

"And is the school to be taken out willy-nilly—whether it wants to go or not?" asked Mr. Goole. "I, for one, have no desire whatever to witness the—er—Derby."

"My dear sir, you may remain at home," retorted the Head, with a wave of his hand. "Nobody is forced to go, remember."

"Then I shall certainly remain," said Mr. Goole, with some relief. "I object, sir, to these wild excursions. And what of the expense?"

"The school, of course, will pay all expenses," replied the Head blandly. "So you're not coming with us, Mr. Goole? I'm sorry. I was hoping that we should form one big, happy family. Well, well! A pity!"

The Head bustled off again, leaving Mr. Goole more dissatisfied than ever. Mr. Pycraft, the master of the Fourth, joined Mr. Goole.

"This is madness, Mr. Goole," said Mr. Pycraft.

"Arrant madness, Mr. Pycraft," said Mr. Goole, nodding.

"What are we going to do about it?"

"How should I know?" growled Mr. Goole. "Dr. Scattlebury is the headmaster, and his authority is complete. We can only stand by and watch—and disapprove."

"I think he is mad—absolutely insane," said Mr. Pycraft, lowering his voice. "In fact, sir, if this state of affairs is allowed to continue, St. Frank's will become the laughing-stock of the entire country. I think it is our duty—our plain duty—to inform Sir John Brent, the chairman of the Governors."

Mr. Goole looked at Mr. Pycraft keenly, and he nodded.

"Yes, it might be a good idea, Mr. Pycraft," he said slowly. "When the headmaster of a great public school like St. Frank's decides to take all the boys to the Derby, it is high time for some drastic action to be taken."

THE boys, of course, entered heartily into the spirit of the thing.

Even the seniors, after their first shock of surprise, grinned amiably and fell into line. They found that a number of the big double-decked buses were set aside for their use. They were glad enough to leave their worries behind and to go off on this spree. The juniors, of course, being naturally carefree, were wholeheartedly gleeful.

The masters found that one bus was reserved especially for their use—with Dr. Scattlebury himself in charge. After one or two hurried consultations the masters agreed to go. Even Mr. Goole, in the end, climbed on to that bus. Nobody quite knew what would happen when Epsom was reached, and it was just as well that all the masters should be on the spot to keep the boys in order. Clearly, Dr. Scattlebury himself could not be relied upon to bring the boys safely back to St. Frank's. His irresponsibility was growing more pronounced than ever.

It was a serious offence for any boy to venture upon a racecourse—yet here was the headmaster himself taking the boys to the Derby!

"He's a caution!" grinned Nipper. "He's too good to lose, you chaps!"

"He can't last long, though," said Travers, shaking his head. "In fact, this'll probably be the finish of him. When the Governors hear of it they'll pitch him out."

"Well, we're all right for to-day, I guess," said Russell cheerfully. "We can let to-morrow look after itself! Whoopee for the Derby!"

Bernard Forrest, Gulliver, Bell, and their kindred spirits were naturally in high feather. They had all been hoping to have a little flutter on the Derby; but never in their wildest moments had they dreamed that it would be possible for them to back their fancies on the actual racecourse; to see the race itself—and all openly, with the full sanction of the headmaster!

BANNINGTON stood watching with something very akin to bewilderment as the great procession of motor-buses passed through the town, each one filled with cheering, boisterous St. Frank's boys. There wasn't the slightest doubt as to where this great party was bound for; for the buses were gaily decorated, and in front of each vehicle was the legend, "Derby Special—Private."

It so happened that the Bannington and District Anti-Gambling League was holding a vigorous meeting in the market-place at the moment. The market-place was, actually, a part of the High Street.

The road widened out into an imposing open space. The town hall arose on one side, there were big shops on the other, ornamental gardens in the centre, with a big fountain near by.

The league was holding its meeting round the fountain—which was a favourite spot for such gatherings. Not that there was really a gathering, as gatherings go. Miss Angela Smiles was giving a speech, and her audience, at the moment, consisted mostly of small children who had been attracted by her voice. Mr. Augustus Smiles and Mrs. Augustus Smiles were giving their full support, aided by sundry gaudy placards.

"The evils of betting cannot be overstated!" Miss Smiles was saying. "How many homes have been wrecked by this appalling tragedy of betting? Hundreds? No, thousands—tens of thousands!"

"My dad's got ten bob on Twinkle, lady," remarked a member of the audience.

The lady took no notice.

"It is well that we have a number of responsible citizens in our midst who are giving us their wholehearted support," she continued. "I am glad to say that our latest recruit is Dr. Inigo Scattlebury, the learned gentleman who recently has been appointed to the headmastership of St. Frank's. In his enthusiasm he has kept all the St. Frank's boys in their school to-day. It is a shining example of what can be done——"

"Angela — Angela!" interrupted Mrs. Smiles in an agitated voice. "Good gracious! Cannot you see——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the audience—now supplemented by a number of loungers.

"Look at St. Frank's—kept in school because of the Derby!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It certainly was an amusing situation. For while Miss Smiles was proudly pointing out St. Frank's as an example, St. Frank's was coming along in the merriest mood imaginable. The meeting of the Anti-Gambling League collapsed utterly.

The Smiles family was thunderstruck.

"This—this is unbelievable!" panted Mr. Augustus Smiles, adjusting his glasses and staring. "Good heavens! Can it be possible that these 'buses are actually taking all the St. Frank's boys to the Derby?"

"And masters, too, dear!" his wife pointed out. "How dreadful! After what Dr. Scattlebury said last night——"

"There is Dr. Scattlebury himself!" gasped Mr. Smiles in horror. "Look! He is actually wearing a piece of gaily-coloured bunting round his hat!"

"Disgraceful!" breathed Miss Angela. "In fact, disgusting!"

Her brother, pushing through the crowd, ran into the road, and in his excitement he nearly got himself run over.

"Doctor—Doctor!" he shouted urgently. "Doctor Scattlebury!"

"Hallo, hallo! Who wants me?" asked the Head, as he heard his name. "Just a

moment, driver! This gentleman appears to be somewhat agitated. Do you mind slowing down?"

The driver obliged. The Head was sitting next to him, and it was a fact that he had a piece of bunting tied around his hat, and that he carried a miniature flag in one hand. Mr. Smiles was running alongside the 'bus, puffing and blowing.

"What—what does this mean, Doctor Scattlebury?" he asked breathlessly.

"I don't know who you are, my dear sir, but surely you can see?" replied the Head gaily. "We're off to the Derby!"

"Good heavens!"

"We're out for a spree!" declared the Head. "Fresh air—sunshine—healthy excitement! Come with us, my dear fellow! You're perfectly welcome!"

Mr. Smiles fell back, too horrified to speak; besides, his wind was getting short. He stood like a stunned man as the procession went past. He was joined by his wife and sister.

"The whole school—going to the Derby!" breathed Miss Angela with a shudder. "I cannot believe it, Augustus! And after last night, too! Is Dr. Scattlebury mad?"

"He must be!" said Mr. Smiles fiercely. "There is only one thing for me to do—and that is to go to the Derby myself!"

"Augustus!" protested his wife, aghast.

"Much as I hate all racecourses, it is my duty!" said her husband firmly. "I must go there—I must see Dr. Scattlebury—and I must reason with him. I will make him take all his boys back to St. Frank's! An immediate stop must be made to this terrible scandal!"

The terrible scandal continued, however.

Now thoroughly entering into the spirit of the thing, the boys of St. Frank's were enjoying themselves hugely. They were off to the Derby, and they meant to have the time of their lives.

CHAPTER 9.

Shouting the Odds!

EPSOM on Derby Day! -

The scene was more than usually glamorous, for the crowds were greater than ever before. The Downs, as far as the eye could reach, were packed with joyous humanity. The grand stand and the exclusive enclosures were completely filled. The air was charged with the babel of human voices, the sounding of motor-horns, the blowing of trumpets, the ringing of bells. It was a vivid picture which, once seen, could not easily be forgotten.

The St. Frank's motor-buses, of course, were obliged to park on the open Downs—that is to say, on that ground which is placed at the disposal of the general public. It was the popular side—where people could enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. Dr. Scattlebury had no use for such famous enclosures as Tattersall's. He had brought the boys here for an outing, and only for an outing.

Before the buses had finally parked, the Head made a little speech to the masters who were with him in the leading bus.

"Now, gentlemen, I have a last word to say," declared the Head. "I want you to go amongst the boys—before they scatter—and to instruct them that they must be back at the rendezvous no later than five o'clock."

"Don't you think four would be better, sir?" asked Mr. Wilkes, who was relieved to find that the Head retained some slight measure of responsibility. "Even then we shall not get back until nearly seven."

"Five o'clock!" said the Head firmly. "Let the boys have their fling! But warn them that they must all be here on time—or the buses will leave without them. And all those who fail to turn up will be required to give an account of themselves when they get back to the school. I think that will do, gentlemen. For the rest, the day can take care of itself."

And so the buses were parked, the boys were told, and in less than fifteen minutes they had distributed themselves over a large area of the Downs.

Nipper, Handforth, Travers, and a number of others kept in one crowd.

"The Head's all right, but he's forgotten one thing—grub!" Handforth was saying. "Thank goodness we can get plenty to eat here. What about some of these sandwiches, you chaps?" he added, as he spotted a likely-looking stall.

"There'll be grub at the buses at half-past two," said Nipper. "Didn't you know, Handy? The Head says that he's going to buy up a lot of sandwiches and things, and have them sent to the buses. Any chaps who want grub can go there and help themselves."

"By George! I must have missed it in all the excitement," said Handforth, grinning. "I say, the Head's a proper lad, isn't he?"

Dr. Scattlebury was certainly doing the thing properly. He was now strolling about, watching the roundabouts and the swings and the coconut shies, and those other delights which are so part and parcel of Derby Day at Epsom.

Most of the fellows were content to amuse themselves in this harmless fashion. The "blades" of the school, however, were taking full advantage of the situation, and they were approaching the shouting lines of book-makers, eager to place their modest bets.

"We're as safe as houses," grinned Bernard Forrest. "Even if the Head spots us, he can't do anything. He brought us here, and he didn't say that we weren't to have our little flutters!"

"All the same, we'd better go easy!" advised Gulliver. "Might as well make our bets while the masters aren't about."

Handforth & Co. were on one of the roundabouts, enjoying themselves. Everybody had caught the gay spirit of the great race meeting, and as they wandered here, there, and everywhere, fascinated by the ever-changing panorama, they felt grateful towards their novel headmaster.

Coming off the roundabouts, Handforth & Co. found Nipper and some others shying at the coconuts. Handforth joined in enthusiastically, and he proved so skilful at the sport that he retired with no less than a dozen coconuts to his credit, which he distributed amongst all and sundry.

And so the boys spent their time—the great majority of them in perfectly harmless amusement.

MR. AUGUSTUS SMILES, hot, dishevelled and breathless, was at the Derby.

As he forced his way through the crowds he was alarmed to find St. Frank's fellows everywhere he went. He was appalled. This was much worse than he had anticipated. Not only had Dr. Scattlebury brought the boys here, but he was allowing them to do just as they pleased!

Mr. Smiles nearly had a fit when he saw a group of seniors handing currency notes to a grinning bookie.

"Outrageous!" gasped Mr. Smiles.

"Talking to me, mate?" asked a man near by.

"No, I am not!" retorted the President of the Anti-Gambling League. "But since you have spoken, I would call your attention to those schoolboys. They are actually betting!"

"And what do you expect 'em to do on Derby Day?" asked the man, staring.

"Their moral senso is being perverted—and all because this amazing headmaster has brought the school here!" said Mr. Smiles. "Where is Dr. Scattlebury? Can anybody tell me where he is?"

"Barmy!" said the man, touching his head. "That's what's the matter with you, mate—barmy!"

Mr. Smiles moved on, and he seized the arm of a St. Frank's junior who was watching a man extricate himself from chains and handcuffs. Quite a crowd of other people stood watching, too.

"One moment, young man!" said Mr. Smiles fiercely.

"Eh, I beg your pardon?" said the junior, turning and blinking at the excited man. "Really, my dear sir—"

"You are a St. Frank's boy?"

"I am," said the junior. "Tucker, sir—Timothy Tucker, of the Remove. Dear me! This is really most astounding! If you will observe this man, sir—"

"I do not wish to observe the man!" interrupted Mr. Smiles. "I want to know if you can tell me where to find Dr. Scattlebury. I must find him! I must compel him to call all you boys together, and take you back to St. Frank's at once! This tragic farce has gone far enough!"

T.T. looked at Mr. Smiles coldly.

"If you want Dr. Scattlebury, you'd better find him," he suggested. "But don't you think it's rather like looking for a needle in a haystack? I wish you luck, my dear sir! I think you'll need it."



Handforth was well on the mark, and in a short while he had bagged a pile of coconuts.

"Are you trying to be impertinent?" asked Mr. Smiles, glaring.

But T. T. was walking away; and it only took him a minute to pass on the information to some other Remove fellows. It spread rapidly. Mr. Smiles—who had made that speech at St. Frank's the previous night—was on the course, looking for the Head—so that he could persuade the Head to ruin the school's day!

The story got round to Nipper and Handforth and the others of their crowd just as they were investigating something which appeared to be a particularly funny side-show. Crowds of people had gathered round, and there was a great amount of laughter going on.

The boys pushed their way through, and within a minute they had good reason to forget all about Mr. Augustus Smiles and his precious Anti-Gambling League.

"Great Scott!" gurgled Handforth, blinking. "Am I seeing things?"

"It's the Head!" panted Church. "Oh, my only sainted aunt! It's the Head himself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The boys could be forgiven for doubting the evidence of their own eyes. There were numbers of bookmakers here—an everlasting line of them, it seemed, stretching into the far distance. The air was throbbing with their shouts.

And on this particular stand, where the crowd had gathered, Dr. Inigo Scattlebury

was head and shoulders above his audience. On his head reposed a white top hat, and slung over his shoulder, in the approved style, he wore the conventional bookie's bag. Behind him, at the back of the stand, a legend proclaimed to all the world that he was "Hammersmith Harry."

He appeared to be enjoying himself immensely.

"Walk up, ladies and gentlemen!" he invited boisterously. "Don't forget the old firm! Place your bets with Hammersmith Harry and you'll be safe!"

"Ye gods and little fishes!" murmured Nipper faintly. "The Head himself! Shouting the giddy odds! I say, he's as mad as a hatter!"

"The old firm!" roared the Head. "Ten to one Starlight! Any advance on ten to one? That is to say, walk up, ladies and gentlemen! Here I am, ready to take your money—and just as ready to pay you out if you win! Always trust the old firm!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth, staring. "You might think he had been born to it!"

If the fellows had been surprised at the Head's previous activities, they were now dumbfounded. It was beyond belief. Dr. Inigo Scattlebury, the headmaster of St. Frank's School—standing on a bookmaker's platform, shouting the odds!

It was so extraordinary that the boys plainly revealed their consternation.

"Do you know the old gent?" asked a bystander, glancing curiously at Nipper and the other juniors.

"Why, yes," replied Nipper cautiously.

"Know him?" said Handforth, who wasn't so cautious. "We ought to! He's our headmaster!"

"Shush, you ass!" warned Church. "No need to give the old boy away!"

"Eh?" gasped Handforth. "Oh, well——"

"Whoever he is, he's a good 'un!" said the bystander. "Didn't hesitate a minute! A regular sportsman, I call him!"

"What do you mean—he didn't hesitate?" asked Nipper.

"Why, didn't you see?" asked the man. "The old gent happened to be here when poor old Harry Hyams was took ill."

"Took ill?" repeated Handforth, in wonder.

"Hammersmith Harry—the bookie," said the man. "Poor chap, he collapsed all of a sudden, and some of them ambulance men had to carry him away. And I'm blowed if this old gent didn't come forward and offer to carry on."

"Oh!" said the Removites.

"You ought to have seen his cheery smile," continued the bystander warmly. "There wasn't any denying him. Harry's clerk protested a bit, but the old boy wouldn't listen. Up he jumps on the stand, and in another minute he was shouting the odds at the top of his voice. Hark at him now! That's what I call a sport! He sees

a bloke took ill, and like a shot he lends a hand! Good luck to him!"

The little mystery was explained.

The Head had not turned bookmaker, as the startled juniors had at first believed. He was merely "carrying on" for an unfortunate man who had been taken ill—and he was carrying on magnificently!

"I suppose we'd better let him go ahead with it," said Nipper dubiously. "I was going to suggest surrounding him and hustling him away—until he cooled down. But if he's doing somebody a good turn, we can't interfere."

"Why the dickens should we interfere?" asked Handforth. "This is worth quids! I wish I had my camera here—I'd take a snap of him!"

Even Handforth, who had always spoken contemptuously of racecourses, was enjoying himself. For two pins he would have whacked out five bob and backed one of the horses. The spirit of the famous race meeting had got hold of him. And, after all, there would have been little enough harm in it.

But Church and McClure and the other fellows kept their heads well. They were here for a spree—not to gamble. It would never do to lose their sense of proportion merely because the Head was inviting them to back their fancy.

So the Removites contented themselves, by standing round in an admiring and grinning half-circle. Others were coming up



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 House, London, E.C.4.

TROUBLE AHEAD.

Mother: "How did father's new book get in this condition?"

Bobby: "Why, ma, I heard pa say last night that the book was too dry for him, so I put it in the bath-tub and let the water run."

(J. Brodie, Togston East Farm, Broomhill, Morpeth, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

NOT LOST.

Cabin-boy: "Is a thing lost when you know where it is?"

Skipper: "No, you chump!"

Cabin-boy: "Well, your silver tea-pot is at the bottom of the sea."

(E. Wright, Southgate, Cawston, Norwich, has been awarded a penknife.)

A GOOD MEAL.

Boy (pushing up to counter in crowded shop): "Will you serve me next, mister? Father's waiting for his dinner."

Assistant: "All right. What do you want?"

Boy: "A pound of carbolic soap, a box of starch, and six candles."

(H. Harrison, 3, Nobles' Yard, Woodhouse Street, Leicester, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORSE.

"Doctor! Quick, do something! I was playing a mouth-organ, and I've swallowed it."

"Keep calm, sir, and be thankful that you weren't playing the piano."

(P. Mortis, 123, Rectory Street, London, Ontario, Canada, has been awarded a book.)

HARDLY SUITABLE.

Tourist (who has just met with slight accident): "Do you stock sticking-plaster?"

Village shopkeeper: "No, sir, but we have some very good fly-paper."

(J. Orchard, Penrith, Grove Road, Sandown, I.O.W., has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

HUSTLE.

A traveller waiting for his train at a local station, noticed the porters lining up on the platform. Immediately afterwards an express thundered through, and he observed a man

now, for the rumours were spreading—fags, Fifth-Formers, and even Sixth-Formers. This remarkable headmaster was the giddy limit!

CHAPTER 10.

Exit Mr. Smiles!

JOLLY good!" said Willy Handforth, grinning.

"First class!" agreed Chubby Heath and Juicy Lemon.

They had just stepped out of one of the swings. In fact, they had been ordered out by the owner; for, in their enthusiasm, they had been attempting to loop the loop. They had swung their "boat" so high that the owner had got the wind up.

"Pity we couldn't go right over, though," said Willy, as they strolled away. "Just when we were getting to the point, that fathead shoved the brake on. How about some ice-cream, you chaps?"

They patronised one of the stalls.

"Heard about old Smiles?" asked Juicy, as he licked his cornet. "Some of the chaps say that the old rotter is on the warpath."

"Rats!" said Chubby Heath. "We left him in Bannington, holding that potty meeting of his."

"But he's here now," said Willy. "He's dashing about the course, looking for the Head. Trying to spoil our fun, the old

rotter! Smiles, eh? What a name! About the biggest killjoy I've ever set eyes on!"

"He might do the trick, too," said Juicy, with a frown. "Don't forget how he influenced the Head last night, Willy."

"I'm not forgetting, you ass!"

"And if he finds the Head now, he might influence him again," continued Juicy. "And if the Head gave the orders to the other masters and prefects, we should soon be rounded up and shoved back in those buses. There wouldn't be any sense in trying to dodge. The man's a menace."

"Blow him!" said Willy. "Let's have a go at these coconuts."

Their "go" was so successful that they soon decamped with a coconut each. Breaking the nuts was a simple matter, and presently the heroes of the Third were strolling along, looking for fresh worlds to conquer, munching slabs of coconut.

They were not particularly interested in the long line of bookies. Even when a shout went up—a shout which echoed throughout the entire multitude—they were not attracted. But they knew that the great race itself was about to start.

The Derby!

The horses were at the starting-line. The bookmakers were yelling themselves hoarse in a last-minute effort to induce punters to place their bets.

"It's the big race, you chaps!" said Willy. "I suppose we ought to see it."

leaning out of one of the windows with a notebook in his hand. With a nod after the fast disappearing train, the traveller said to one of the mer :

"One of the directors, I presume ?"

"No," replied the porter, "that was a tailor measuring us for our new uniforms."

(Miss Ina Sommerville, 185, Firhill Road, Glasgow, has been awarded a book.)

TIT FOR TAT.

Thin Man : "Lucky for you, sir, that they don't charge by weight on these 'buses.'"

Fat Man : "Yes, my friend, they wouldn't even bother to pick you up if they did."

(W. Jenkins, Lethlean Lane, Phillack, Cornwall, has been awarded a penknife.)

WILLIAM'S WOE.

William : "Father, can I have sixpence to look at the snakes ?"

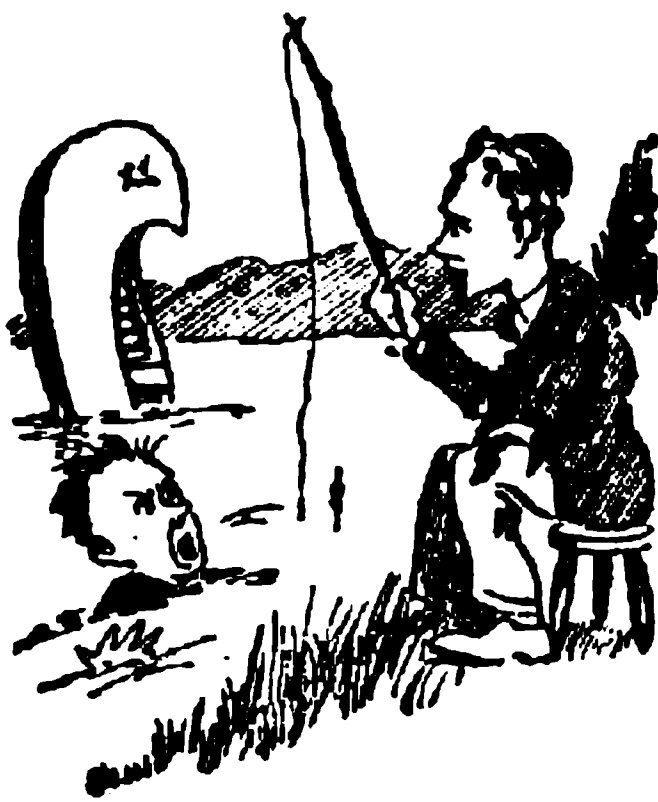
Father : "No. Take my magnifying glass and look at a worm."

(C. Giles, 75, Lincoln Street, Leytonstone, E.11, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

OPPORTUNE.

Rude boy fishing on bank (to upset canoeist) : "While you're there, mister, you might just take a look and see if the worm's come off my line."

(C. H. Light, Northam,



Southwick Road, Bournemouth, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

NOT SO GOOD.

Bob : "How's that for a boundary ?"

Ted : "Rotten."

Bob : "Why ?"

Ted : "It's smashed Mr. Jones' greenhouse window."

(C. Ware, Rosstrevor, 394, Blundel Road, Leagrave, Nr. Luton, has been awarded a book.)

HARD LUCK.

Husband : "You can't go to the theatre in your old cloak, can you, dear ?"

Wife (hopefully) : "Not likely, Harry."

Husband : "Um ! That's what I thought, so I only bought one ticket."

(F. Chilton, School House, Ewloe, Nr. Chester, has been awarded a penknife.)

A DIFFERENT STORY.

Tommy : "I've broken a window, pa."

Pa : "Well, don't cry. Here's half-a-crown to pay for it. But whose window was it ?"

Tommy : "Yours !"

(S. Siggs, 4, Mawson Road, Cambridge, has been awarded a book.)

"Why bother about the race?" asked Chubby. "What's the matter with buying some of these squirters and squirting water down the necks of some of the Remove chaps?"

"Not a bad idea," agreed Willy, grinning. "But squirters cost money, and funds are pretty low. Let's watch the race."

"We'll see a fat lot from here!" growled Juicy Lemon. "We can't even see the giddy course."

"We shall be all right if we move higher up on the Downs," said Willy. "We shall be able to spot the horses as they come round Tattenham Corner, and——"

He broke off, a sudden gleam coming into his eyes.

"What were you saying about Tattenham Corner?" asked Chubby.

"Look!" said Willy, his voice throbbing with scorn. "My only Sunday topper! Just look there!"

His chums turned and looked, but they only saw a jostling crowd round one of the most prominent bookies.

"Nothing special there," said Chubby.

"Isn't there? Look at that man with a quid note in his hand—that one to the left," said Willy. "Can't you see him? He's handing the note to the bookie now, and getting his ticket."

"Great Scott!" gasped Juicy. "It's—it's old Smiles!"

"Smiles himself!" agreed Willy contemptuously. "Behold the great anti-gambler."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Take a good look at the president of the Anti-Gambling League!" continued Willy, with a sniff. "But I'm not surprised. Didn't I tell you chaps that Smiles would turn out to be a beastly humbug?"

"The—the awful bounder!" gasped Chubby. "And he had the nerve to stand on our platform in Big Hall and lecture us about the evils of betting!"

They watched Mr. Augustus Smiles with open scorn; and now a new gleam had come into Willy Handforth's eyes. The enterprising leader of the Third Form was always quick to get ideas.

Mr. Smiles was clearly uneasy. Having paid his pound, and having received his ticket, he looked round furtively. There was a guilty expression on his face. Clearly, he was fearful lest he had been spotted by somebody who knew him. The three fags noted the unmistakable look of relief which passed over Mr. Smiles' countenance when he saw only strangers about him. He had not observed the fags in the crowd.

"Come on," said Willy, with a grin.

"Eh? What are you going to do?" asked Chubby, staring.

"You'll see," replied Willy. "So Mr. Smiles is looking for the Head, is he? Mr. Smiles is trying to spoil our day, is he? We'll soon settle his giddy hash!"

They moved in the direction of Mr. Augustus Smiles, and just at that moment

Willy's major appeared, accompanied by Church, McClure, Nipper, Travers, Archie, Glenthorne, and others. There was quite a crowd of the Removites.

"Hold on, you chaps!" said Willy. "I want you!"

"Then you can't have us, you cheeky young ass!" said Handforth promptly.

"But it's important!"

"Rats! We've heard that that blighter Smiles is about," said Edward Oswald. "We want to head him off. The Head's not far away, and Smiles is trying to find him. If he spots the Head——"

"Smiles won't do anything," interrupted Willy. "If you want him, he's here. Leave this to me, you Remove chaps. We've got Smiles on toast!"

"What the——"

"Don't argue! Lend a hand here."

The Removites, impressed by Willy's tone, offered no further remonstrance. In fact, they had spotted Mr. Smiles, who was obviously doing his best to sidle off into the crowd. But at a sign from Willy the entire party of juniors surrounded the president of the Bannington and District Anti-Gambling League.

Mr. Smiles was trapped. He looked at the circle of boys fearfully at first, then gaining confidence he became frigidly cold.

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked angrily. "How dare you surround me in this fashion?"

"I'll do the talking, you chaps," said Willy. "Sorry to inconvenience you, Mr. Smiles, particularly as the Derby is just starting, but we'd like to have a word with you."

All the fellows had forgotten the race now—this was much more important than the Derby. Yet at that very moment the race was on, and a hush had fallen over the great multitude. All eyes were on the course. It was an ideal moment for the business Willy had in mind. Nobody was taking any notice of this little knot of schoolboys.

"Let me go!" said Mr. Smiles hotly. "How dare you——"

"I think you're looking for the Head, aren't you, Mr. Smiles?" asked Willy sweetly.

"I am!" retorted Mr. Smiles. "Not that I expect you boys to tell me where I can find him."

"Oh, we'll tell you, if you particularly want to know," replied Willy. "But somehow, Mr. Smiles, I don't think you *will* want to know by the time I've done."

"How dare you?"

"Your idea is to see our headmaster and induce him to pack us all back to school, isn't it?"

"I refuse to answer your impertinent questions."

"Well, Mr. Smiles, I don't think you'll say anything like that to the Head," continued Willy cheerfully. "As a matter of fact, I don't think you'll remain president

of the Bannington Anti-Gambling League, either. You're really not fit for the job."

"You—you insolent young hound!" shouted Mr. Smiles furiously.

"Your resignation will really be necessary, Mr. Smiles," said Willy coolly. "As for finding Dr. Scattlebury, we'll leave that to you. If you really want to find him, these chaps can tell you where he is."

"You silly young ass——" began Handforth.

"Still, Mr. Smiles, I shouldn't try to find the Head if I were you," said Willy, shaking his head. "If you do, we might find it necessary—in sheer self-defence, of course—to tell the Head about your little flutter."

"About—about my what?" gasped Mr. Smiles.

"We'll tell him that you're nothing but an old hypocrite."

"You—you——"

"A humbug," said Willy contemptuously. "Yes, Mr. Smiles, that's what you are—a beastly humbug! Do you think we didn't see you backing a horse just now?"

"What!" went up a chorus from the Removites.

"Yes, rather!" said Willy. "The man who preaches about the evils of gambling and betting, if you please! And we spotted him putting a quid on a horse! He's got the ticket in his pocket now."

"Great Scott!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

"The old fraud!"

Mr. Augustus Smiles was pale in spite of the heat. Perspiration streamed down his face. He looked round like a trapped animal, but there was no way of escape from that circle of schoolboys.

"How dare you?" he panted. "Let me go! You don't know what you are talking about! You—you have made a mistake!"

"We're not blind, Mr. Smiles," said Willy with a sniff. "We saw you right enough—and we dare you to turn your pockets out! But don't worry—we won't give you away."

A flash of relief came into Mr. Smiles' eyes.

"We don't sneak," continued Willy. "We'll keep your rotten secret. It's not much of a secret, anyhow. You've as much right to back a horse as anybody else. That's not the point. But when you stand up as a preacher on the evils of betting, it's a bit too thick."

"I—I don't understand——"

"Yes, you do, Mr. Smiles," said Willy. "If you try to find the Head, so that you can induce him to send us all back to school, we'll probably have something to say. But the best thing you can do is to clear off this course and go home. If you do that, we'll forget all about what we just saw."

Mr. Smiles gulped.

"I—I never had any intention of finding your headmaster," he said feebly.

"No?" retorted Willy. "Well, sir, we'll let it go at that. But there's something else. When you get back to Bannington, you had better resign your position as president of

the Anti-Gambling League. Don't you think it would be advisable?"

"It—it was my intention to resign," panted Mr. Smiles. "I have—er—come to the conclusion that the movement is unnecessary."

"Good enough, Mr. Smiles," said Willy, nodding. "I'm glad you have come to this decision. Good afternoon, sir! Let him go, you chaps!"

The boys opened their ranks, and Mr. Augustus Smiles tottered away.

— —

CHAPTER 11.

The End of a Perfect Day!

"GOOD work, Willy!" said Nipper heartily.

"Rather!"

"Well done, young Handforth!"

"It's a pity my minor handled it, all the same," said Edward Oswald. "If he had told me about the old rotter, I could have ticked him off a lot better."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We didn't want to be too hard on him," grinned Willy. "He's got a perfect right to risk his money if he wants to. But he'd better not do any more preaching against betting! I rather fancy that there'll be no more Anti-Gambling League in Bannington."

And the fellows, satisfied that they had neatly "polished off" Mr. Smiles, continued their afternoon's enjoyment.

There was no fear of the Head being "got at" now. They had until five o'clock. Mr. Smiles having been disposed of, the boys made the discovery that the race for the Derby Stakes was over.

There was plenty for them to see—plenty for them to do. All round them people were either bemoaning their fate or congratulating themselves upon their luck. There were the usual scenes after the Derby. Excitement ran high.

"Let's go and see what the Head's doing," suggested somebody.

They went along to Hammersmith Harry's stand. They couldn't get near it for some time—or near any of the other bookies—for crowds of people were pressing round, and the bookies were settling up.

Hammersmith Harry's clerk had a busy time for some minutes, but the rush was soon over. When the crowds thinned the Removites saw that another man was at the stand now—a big, florid, happy-looking man in a well-cut light grey suit.

"So the gent has done well, has he, Sam?" the big man was saying.

"You couldn't have done better yourself, Harry," replied the clerk. "I couldn't write fast enough! Never knew such a rush! And we've come out pretty good, too!"

The big man was Hammersmith Harry himself. Mr. Harry Hyams had evidently recovered from his sudden illness.

"You're a gent, sir," he said, as he turned to Dr. Scattlebury and wrung his hand. "Only once before in my life have I been

took like that—and that was at Newmarket. Cost me two or three hundred quid, it did. And it would have cost me more to-day if you hadn't carried on for me."

"My dear fellow, I was only too pleased," beamed the headmaster.

"Well, you're a sport, sir!" said Hammersmith Harry. "Just before the big race, too! Why, it was the worry which brought me to, and which set me on my feet again. And here I find that you've done bigger business than I could have done myself!"

"Nonsense!" laughed Dr. Scattlebury. "I am delighted to see, my dear sir, that you have now fully recovered. So I will bid you good-day. As a schoolmaster, it is my duty to set a good example, and to do a fellow-being a good turn if the opportunity arises."

"Just a minute, mister," said Harry Hyams. "There's a little matter of commission."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Sure thing!" said the bookmaker. "I'm Hammersmith Harry, ain't I? As straight as a die! That's my motto—always has been, and always will be! Reckon it up, Sam. See what we owe the gent."

"Really, this is absurd," said the Head. "I cannot, of course, accept payment for what I did, Mr.—er—Hammersmith Harry! I am only too glad to have been of assistance —"

"You're a real gent all right, sir," said the bookmaker, grinning. "Well, we won't go into any figures. But I've come out pretty good on the big race, and I won't be happy unless you take this money—just as a sort of gift. Be a pal, sir, and take it."

"But, really——"

"I shan't sleep a wink if you don't," said Mr. Hyams. "I'm a straight man, sir."

"Well, of course—— But, really, I cannot take all this!" protested Dr. Scattlebury. "There is a great deal of money here."

"A hundred quid exact," nodded Mr. Hyams.

"Good heavens! An absurd sum, considering the trifling favour."

"It's worth it to me, gu'nor, and Hammersmith Harry pays his debts!" said the bookmaker. "If you don't want it, you can give it to a hospital. It's easy enough to get rid of money, ain't it?"

"By Jove, quite a good idea!" said Dr. Scattlebury, nodding. "A hospital, I am sure, would be only too glad of the money. In those circumstances, my dear sir, I will accept. Thank you!"

"And thank you, sir—proud to have known you!" said Mr. Hyams, shaking hands.

The Head, as pleased as Punch, drifted away. The St. Frank's fellows were grinning hugely.

"Good luck to the old chap!" said Nipper. "He does a good turn to this bookie, and he bags a hundred quid!"

"But he wouldn't have accepted it if the bookie hadn't mentioned something about a hospital," said Tommy Watson. "Well, I must say that Derby Day is a corker! I haven't enjoyed an afternoon like this for months!"

And most of the other fellows were of the same opinion.

"We shall have to be at the buses at five sharp," said Nipper warningly. "We don't want to give the Head any trouble, you know. He has trusted us, and we've got to keep faith."

"Yes, rather!"

"Good old Head!"

"He's too good to lose!" went on Nipper. "But if we always obey his instructions to the letter we shall be on the safe side. So don't forget, you chaps—five o'clock sharp."

The others were eager enough to keep to the arrangement. In fact, quite apart from a desire to please their remarkable headmaster, they were keen enough to be at the rendezvous at the appointed hour. They did not want to be left behind—for that would have meant getting home at their own expense.

THUS, as five o'clock drew near, as thousands upon thousands of people were departing from the Downs, the St. Frank's crowd collected round the buses. They were all turning up—seniors and juniors alike. The masters were here well in advance to look after things. And the masters, incidentally, were much relieved. The boys, they found, were behaving splendidly. They were taking this thing in the right spirit, and were in no way troublesome.

"I am relieved, Mr. Wilkes," said Mr. Stockdale, the Housemaster of the Modern House, as he joined his colleague. "The adventure has not turned out so disastrously as I had feared."

Mr. Wilkes grinned.

"The Head is a man of original ideas—but you've got to admit that they work out well," he chuckled. "I don't think we need be worried."

"I only hope that the boys have kept their heads," said Mr. Stockdale. "There are so many temptations on a racecourse —"

"My dear fellow, you're old-fashioned," interrupted old Wilkey. "There's not a ha'porth of harm here. If a boy wants to gamble, he can find a bookmaker anywhere to take his money, and that hole-and-corner method is far worse than the open method of the racecourse. This trip to the Derby can have done nothing but good. The Head is eccentric—we know it—but his eccentricities are perfectly harmless."

"I am wondering what the governors will say when they hear," murmured Mr. Stockdale.

"H'm! They'll probably kick up a bit of a fuss," said Mr. Wilkes, frowning. "They're too conventional — too old-fashioned."

"There's the cost of this trip, too," went on the other Housemaster. "The school authorities will have something serious to say when they get the bill."

"Yes, that's the one point they'll seize upon," said old Wilkey. "However, the



Handforth & Co. stared in amazement. The shouting bookmaker was none other than Dr. Scattlebury, the headmaster of St. Frank's.

Head will probably make things right. He possesses a remarkable facility for smoothing over things."

The buses were filling, and Dr. Scattlebury, bustling round, was smiling upon everybody. As a matter of fact, he had "recovered." He was himself again—dignified, but genial.

And inwardly he was startled. He had only vague memories of the past few hours. He knew that he had brought the school to the Derby, and when he had first realised it he had been thunderstruck.

But now he was getting used to the idea—and when he saw that the boys were behaving so well he came to the conclusion that he had done no harm. In any case, it was better to assume that he had known precisely what he was doing from the very first.

"We shall soon be able to start now, sir," said Mr. Beverley Stokes, of the West House, as he joined the Head.

"Yes. I think so, Mr. Stokes," agreed Dr. Scattlebury. "The boys seem to have had quite a good time."

"They won't forget it in a hurry, either, sir," said Mr. Stokes. "We all thought it was a startling idea when you first suggested it, but it has worked out famously."

"I'm glad of that," said the Head fervently.

"The roll-call is going on now," said Mr. Wilkes, as he joined them. "You'll look after your boys, won't you, Mr. Stokes? I don't think there'll be many absentees."

"By the look of it, there won't be any at all," said Barry Stokes, smiling. "The boys are behaving splendidly."

"We shall have to delay for a few minutes on our way through Bannington," said Dr. Scattlebury slowly. "I have—er—a little commission to execute at the hospital. I desire to make a donation."

"That hundred pounds, sir?" smiled Mr. Stokes. "We heard all about that, you know. Rather good of that bookmaker to recognise your services."

The Head coughed.

"It was nothing—nothing at all," he said hastily. "Most embarrassing of the man to give me that money."

"I'd like to make a suggestion, if I may," said Mr. Wilkes. "The Bannington Hospital has been doing pretty well of late—its funds are ample."

"You think the money had better go to some other charity?"

"No, sir," replied Mr. Wilkes. "I think you had better keep that hundred pounds for the school."

"The school!" said the Head, staring. "Really, Mr. Wilkes—"

"This—er—jaunt can hardly be called a part of the usual school routine," explained old Wilkey, "and I rather fancy that the governors will object to the expense bill when it is presented, sir. It's not for me to say, of course, but that money will go a long way towards covering the cost of the trip. You see the idea, sir?"

"I do, and I thank you for the suggestion," said Dr. Scattlebury warmly. "A splendid idea, Mr. Wilkes! I will adopt it. The outing will have practically paid for itself—eh? In fact, I shall not bother the authorities at all in this matter. Whatever money is short, I will settle out of my own pocket."

"That's very generous of you, Dr. Scattlebury, and the governors can't very well drop on you for running the school into needless expense," smiled Mr. Wilkes. "We've all had an enjoyable day, and it has been your treat. Many thanks, sir."

"Don't mention it," replied the Head. "I—er—think that the sooner we can start, the better. Now that the outing is over, we must lose no time in getting back to the school."

It was clear to the Housemasters that he was worried about the consequences. They were worried, too. The school governors were certain to have heard of this extraordinary affair. It was just as certain that they would require an explanation; and it seemed to them that a good explanation would be difficult to find. They were feeling concerned on the Head's behalf. In the goodness of his heart, he had given the school this treat, and it was more than likely that he would be hauled over the coals for it!

Fortunately, the boys caused no trouble whatever. Everybody turned up, and the buses filled in an orderly fashion. There wasn't a single absentee. And when, at last, the journey home commenced, St. Frank's was happy and tired, and very grateful to its novel headmaster for the treat he had provided.

But—what of the reckoning?

CHAPTER 12.

The Head Does the Trick!

SIR JOHN BRENT paced up and down the headmaster's library at St. Frank's with short, nervous strides.

Sir John was a very worried man. He was the chairman of the St. Frank's Board of Governors, and he had come down

to the school in response to a telegram which had been jointly signed by Mr. Barnaby Goole and Mr. Horace Pycraft. Those two gentlemen had felt it their duty to send that telegram.

They had also felt it their duty to accompany the school to the Derby. Mr. Goole had gone, after all, not because he approved of the "treat," but because he had been anxious to keep an eye on his boys.

Both Mr. Goole and Mr. Pycraft had been full of misgivings—full of fears. At the moment they were on their way back to the school, and they were both relieved to know that the boys had taken no mean ad-

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



vantages of the situation. Perhaps Mr. Goole was disappointed. Mr. Pycraft certainly was. He had been hoping that the boys would get themselves disgraced on Epsom Downs. Mr. Pycraft, being an unpleasant man, had a liking for unpleasant things.

Sir John, arriving at St. Frank's to inquire into this amazing affair, had found St. Frank's deserted. Upon getting that telegram, he had at first decided to go to the Derby. In fact, he had already planned to go to the Derby.

But he hadn't really believed that the telegram was genuine, and he had considered it his first duty to run down to the school to make personal inquiries. He had found the school empty. So he had waited.

His mood was consequently a bitter one. He had missed the Derby, and he now realised that if he had gone to Epsom he would have found the boys there. He would have caught them red-handed, so to speak, and he would have required an explanation from Dr. Inigo Scattlebury on the spot.

It was evening now, and St. Frank's was unusually peaceful. It was quite disturbingly peaceful.

Waters, the Head's butler, glided in to inquire if Sir John thought of staying to dinner.

"Dinner?" repeated Sir John curtly. "No, certainly not! What is the time,

tinuous procession. Boys were climbing out of them happily.

But Sir John hardly glanced at the boys. Masters were descending from the first 'bus, and the figure of Dr. Inigo Scattlebury stood out from the others. Sir John strode across to him.

"Dr. Scattlebury!" he shouted.

There was an electrical silence. Everybody had heard that voice, and everybody stopped speaking. Seniors and juniors paused, listening and staring. Many of them were still on the 'buses, and they remained motionless.

"Now for it!" murmured Nipper. "It's Sir John Brent!"

"And he's in a tearing rage, too!" said Handforth gruffly. "What the dickens is the matter with him? Surely he's not going to make a scene out here, is he?"

"Looks like it," said Nipper.

There was one Removite who watched anxiously. Alf Brent, who was Archie Glen-thorne's close chum, was personally interested. He was Sir John's son, and he did not want his father to humiliate the headmaster in front of the school. Alf knew that his father was a generous, kindly man; but he was apt to be hot-tempered.

And Dr. Scattlebury was popular. Everybody in St. Frank's liked him; he was a corking Head.

"Ah, Sir John!" said Dr. Scattlebury, with smiling courtesy. "This is an unexpected pleasure. You did not inform me that you would be coming down to-day."

"But surely you are not surprised to see me?" asked Sir John.

"Well, since you ask me, I am," replied the Head quietly. "If you will come to my study, Sir John—"

"I think an explanation from you, Dr. Scattlebury, is immediately necessary," interrupted the chairman of the Governors hotly. "I am sorry, but I must insist upon it. I have been informed that you took the whole school to the Derby to-day. Is that true?"

"Perfectly true."

"Really, Dr. Scattlebury, your calmness is astounding!" said Sir John. "Do you not realise, sir, the nature of your act?"

"I realise it perfectly."

"I am sorry, but I don't think you do!" said Sir John curtly. "As the headmaster of this school, Dr. Scattlebury, you have outraged your authority. It is an unheard-of thing for the boys to be taken to a—a race meeting. It is totally opposed to all discipline. I feel very strongly on this matter, and I shall be glad if you will give me an immediate explanation."

Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Stokes and some of the other masters exchanged uncomfortable glances. This affair was rather hateful. At least, Sir John could have waited until he had Dr. Scattlebury in private. To brow-beat him like this, in front of all the boys, was embarrassing.

Yet the other masters could easily understand the chairman's feelings. In a calmer

"HANDS OFF THE HEAD!"

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Waters? No, it doesn't matter. Why in heaven's name don't the boys return?"

"They should be here at any minute, sir," said Waters smoothly. "I understand that the arrangement was to leave the course at five o'clock sharp. If I am not mistaken, sir, I can hear the motor-buses now."

"Oh!" ejaculated Sir John. "By gad, I believe you are right, Waters!"

He was so concerned, so angry, that he did not wait. It would have been better to remain here and to have demanded an explanation from the Head in private. But Sir John was altogether too worried.

He dashed out, almost ran across Inner Court, and he was in time to see the motor-buses driving into the Triangle in a con-

mood he would have waited. It was only the extraordinary character of the situation which had caused him to be so precipitate.

"Is any explanation necessary, Sir John?" asked Dr. Scattlebury smoothly. "I took the school to the Derby, as you know, and it seems to me there is nothing to be said. The school has come back, and I really think that the school has enjoyed itself."

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Thanks to you, sir!"

"But why did you do this, Dr. Scattlebury?" he asked. "The discipline of the school——"

"The discipline of the school has not suffered in the slightest degree," interrupted Dr. Scattlebury easily. "My dear sir, I was appointed headmaster of St. Frank's, and my authority is complete. I hardly think this is the time or the place to give you an explanation or to justify my conduct."

There was a quiet dignity about the Head which made Sir John Brent feel thoroughly uncomfortable. In addition, the Head was calm and urbane; his manner was charming in the extreme. It was already having a disarming effect upon Sir John.

"Perhaps I am a little unconventional in my ways," continued Dr. Scattlebury, smiling. "The day was fine, and I thought it would do the boys good to give them a little treat."

"Yes, - yes; but to take them to the Derby."

"Why not?" said the Head.

"Really, Dr. Scattlebury."

"The boys have come to no harm whatever, and the experience has probably done them a great deal of good," continued the Head. "I am sure that my action was a popular one."

"Hear, hear, sir!"

"Hurrah!"

"Three cheers for the Head!"

A storm arose at once, a veritable tumult of cheering. That the headmaster was popular was clearly evident, and Sir John, now cooling down, began to feel rather helpless.

"But—but the expense!" he protested. "You surely must realise, Dr. Scattlebury, that the school does not allow for such——"

"The school authorities will not be charged with a penny of extra expense," said the Head genially. "That is all arranged for, Sir John. Indeed, it is settled."

Sir John seemed to swallow something.

"You—you mean that you have paid for this trip out of your own pocket?" he asked blankly.

"We need not discuss the matter," replied Dr. Scattlebury. "But I venture to say that the boys of this school have lost none of their respect for me. If they have, if they no longer desire me as their headmaster, I will immediately resign."

"No, no, sir!"

"Don't resign, sir!"

"Three more cheers for Dr. Scattlebury!"

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo, sir!"

This time the tumult was not to be quietened by a gesture of Sir John's hand. The fellows let themselves go with a will. Seniors as well as juniors joined in. The cheers must have been heard a couple of miles away.

Sir John Brent stood helpless. After this demonstration he could not doubt the popularity of the Head with his pupils. All his anger faded away.

"Of course, Dr. Scattlebury, you know best," said Sir John nervously. "The—er—boys apparently respect you very much. I would not dream of interfering with your authority. I can only regret that there has been a misunderstanding."

Half an hour later he left St. Frank's.

By this time the school was back to normal—with the exception of Dr. Scattlebury. A few minutes after Sir John had left, the Head had another spasm.

Mr. Wilkes, entering the headmaster's sanctum, was startled to find Dr. Scattlebury balancing on his head, with his feet stretched against the wall.

The Housemaster blinked, then coughed discreetly.

"Oh, hallo, Mr. Wilkes!" came a cheery voice from the direction of the floor. "Come in, my dear sir! I am just in the middle of an interesting experiment. It is my desire to see what the world looks like upside down. Most interesting! Have you ever tried this, Mr. Wilkes?"

"No, Dr. Scattlebury, I must confess I have not," replied the Housemaster gravely.

"Then you don't know what you have missed," replied the Head genially. "Why don't you come and join me, Mr. Wilkes? We will view the world upside down together."

Mr. Wilkes chuckled, and his eyes twinkled. He was the most unconventional master at St. Frank's, and he had a broad sense of humour.

"Why not, sir?" he asked. And he solemnly walked across the room and just as solemnly proceeded to stand on his head alongside Dr. Scattlebury.

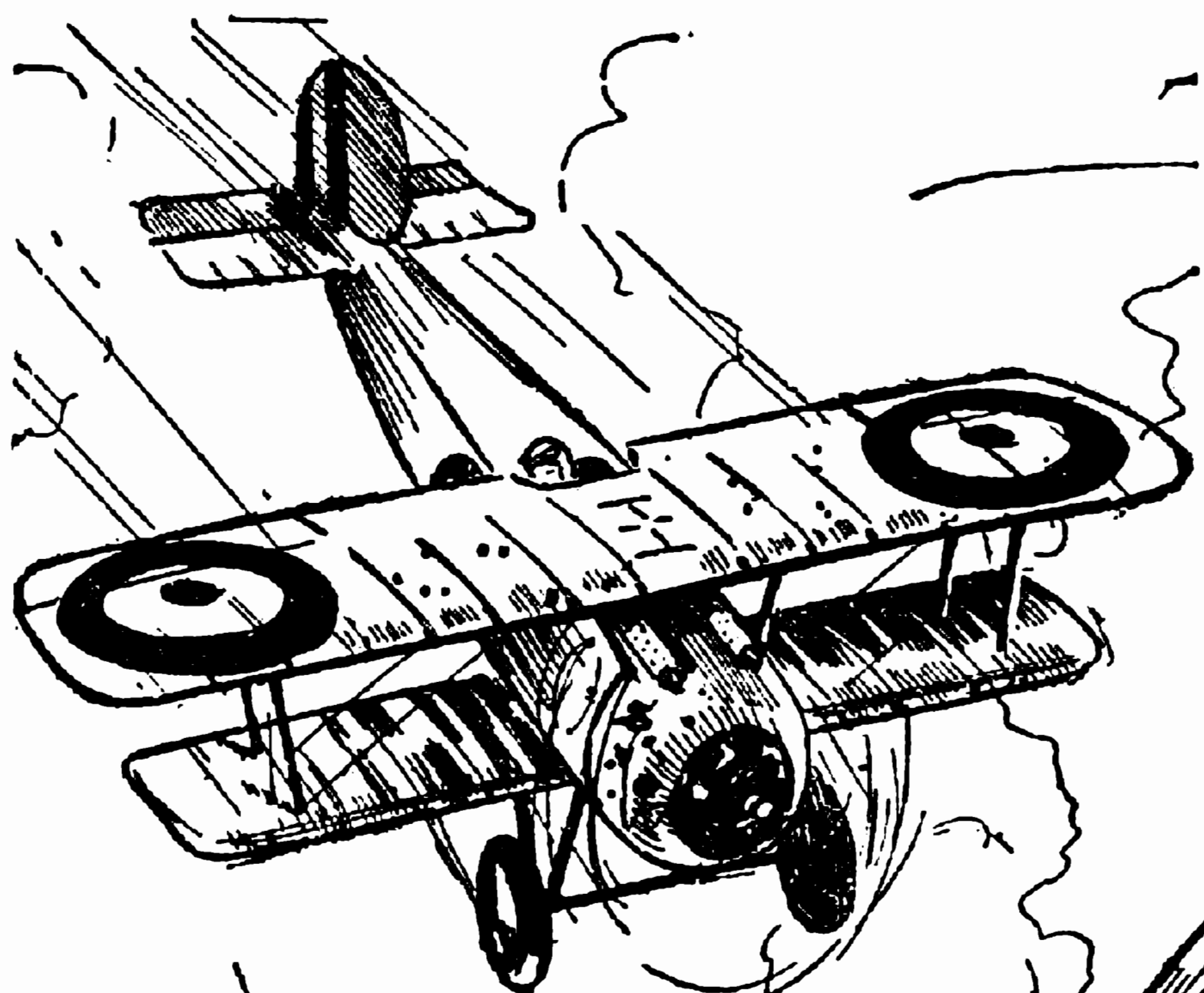
In doing so, however, he caused the Head to overbalance, and the resultant bump caused that amazing gentleman to become normal once more; whereat Mr. Wilkes, after ascertaining that the Head had come to no harm, discreetly retired.

He chuckled to himself as he made his way back to the Ancient House. Dr. Scattlebury was the most extraordinary Head he had ever encountered; and he was willing to wager his last shirt that St. Frank's was booked for many more startling surprises in the near future!

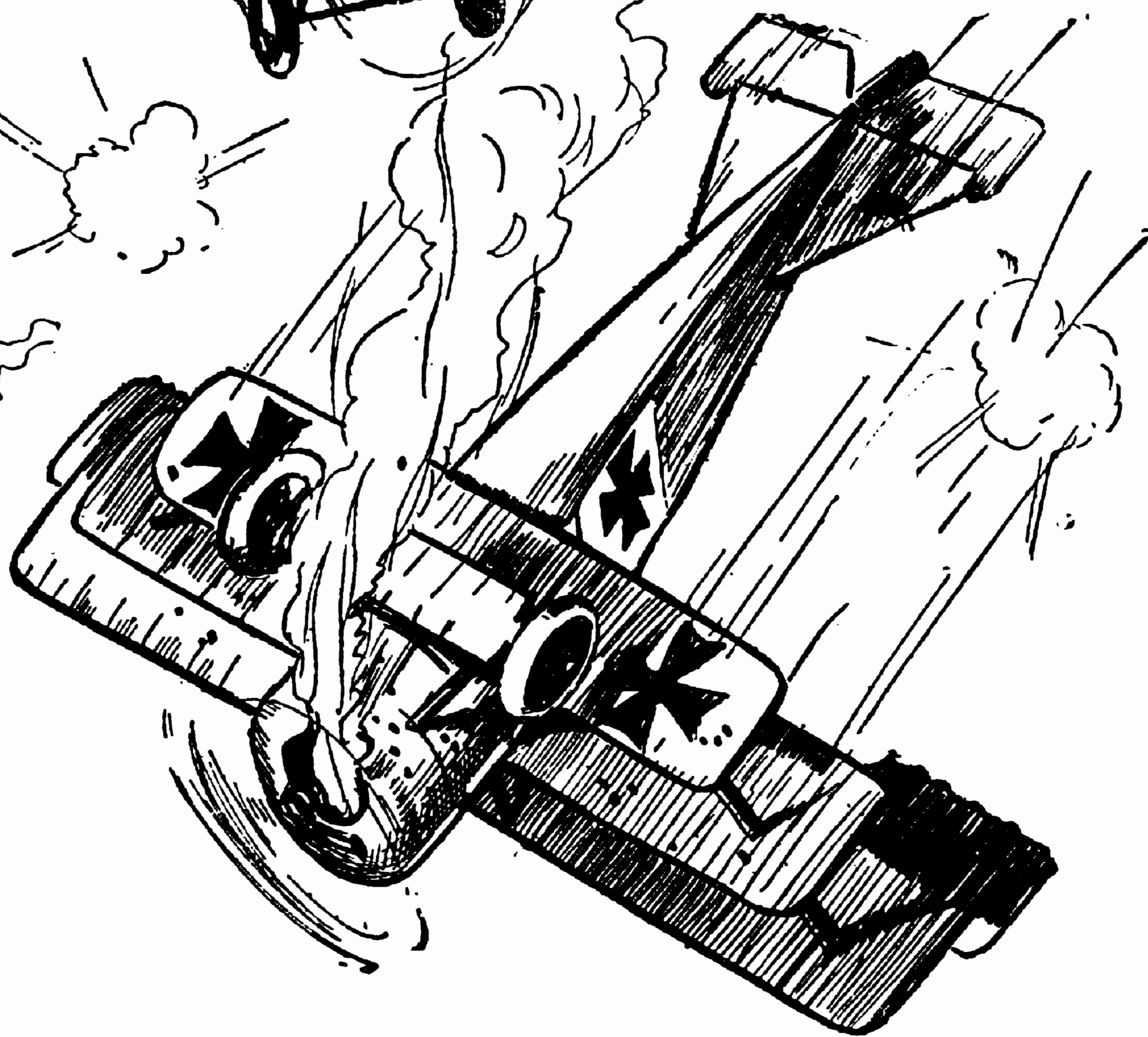
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Our ROUND TABLE TALK

A breezy chat on topics in general concerning the NELSON LEE, conducted by the Editor and Edwy Searles Brooks.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS wishes to acknowledge letters from the following readers: Reg. T. Staples (Walworth), Horace Pryke** (Walderslade), John P. Lantree (S.W.17), C. K. E. Rebbeck (Winnipeg), Bernard Harris* (S.W.9), Angus M. Grant McLean (Wadhurst), A. J. S. Hand (Stafford), Wm. G. Paris* (E.7), Rbt. Blythe (N.7), F. France (Nottingham), Ralph Scott (Bradford), Norman Pragnell (N.W.1), Norman Bateson* (Preston), Claud Trigger (Bristol), D. D. Haslam (Brooklands, Ches.), Francis H. Burrow* (S.W.17), R. Gawn (Ryde), Fred Bloomfield (N.W.10), Ivy Gates (Jersey), Herbert William Simpson (Liverpool), Ralph Clarry* (Toronto), L. Wynne Trevor (Bolton), W. K. (Folkestone), D. Bryant (Bristol), Victor Ambridge (S.W.15), E. J. Sparks (Widnes), Alfred S. Newman (Chepstow), Michael J. O'Brien (Limerick), K. Swain (Bexhill), John W. Cooper (Ilford), A. W. Tustin (Birmingham), Fred Fletcher (Stockport), E. Horton (St. Leonards), Douglas N. Ainley (Huddersfield), Kenneth C. Prickett (Barry Port), Marie Binks* (Leeds), Dennis Tams (Stone), Fred Turley (Sheffield), Joseph Robertson (N.W.4), Jack Huggett (Aldershot), Herbert B. Price (Dudley), Ernest S. Holman* (E.10), B. J. Sherring (Twickenham), George Street (Twickenham).

Here's a part of your letter, Robert C. Blythe, which is worth quoting: "Well, I had better change the subject before you begin to think that this letter consists entirely of grumbles and nothing else, and I don't want you to sling it into the waste-paper basket before you've half-read it." Every letter received in this office, old son, is read from beginning to end, whether it contains a grumble or otherwise. The w.p.b. really contains nothing but waste paper. And no reader's letter is ever classed as such. Naturally, only a few of the letters received can be replied to in these columns—those that demand answers which are likely to interest other readers.

Here are replies to three of your questions, Norman Pragnell. Study No. 1 is in the Modern House, not the East House, and echoes to the cheery voices of Bob Christine, Roddy Yorke and Charley Talmadge. Nipper's correct name is Dick Hamilton. Vivian Travers is about fifteen years of age.

In order to get to the Head's House from the Triangle, D. D. Haslam (and only really

rash fellows desire to do this), one must go straight past the fountain, and through Big Arch, and then across Inner Court. The East and West Squares are situated to the right and left respectively as you stand in the main gateway, facing the school. But they are not actually visible from there; it is necessary to pass through either East Arch or West Arch to reach them. Moat Hollow is now empty and locked up.

You are quite right, R. Gawn, about Nelson Lee. He is in the prime of life, and your chum, therefore, is all wrong. Ulysses Spencer Adams is still at St. Frank's, but we get so much American life on the talkies, and so much American slang in our modern detective stories, that Adams has purposely been given a rest. He's there—and when he's wanted he'll bob up, as full of pep and assurance as ever.

Here's a quotation from your letter, Ivy Gates, which will serve to show that you girls are just as keen on the stories as the boys. "When I first commenced to work at our factory the girls laughed at me for reading a boys' book, but I told one of the girls to just try one, so she took my advice and-read the next week's. . . . And now she orders her 'Nelson Lee' from the same shop as I get mine every week. She is not the only girl in our factory who has found a friend in the Old Paper." This sort of thing is happening everywhere and every day, Ivy. . . . Other readers should follow your example, and persuade their scoffing friends to read just one copy, and thus form a fair judgment. Let's have a "Curing the Scoffers Week," eh? And why not make it this week? Then write to the Editor and tell him how it has worked.

All readers of the NELSON LEE are invited to join in "Our Round Table Talk." Let it be a big table at which sit boys and girls from all corners of the world—and there are readers of the Old Paper in all corners of the world. The Editor will preside each week, and Edwy Searles Brooks will be present. They will talk to you on topics of general interest. Through this feature the Editor wishes to keep in intimate touch with all his readers. Send him a letter now. Here is his address: The Editor, NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Or if you have any special queries for E. S. Brooks, a letter to him at the same address will ensure you a reply.

Latest Sensation—Bullion Train Held Up and Robbed by—

The PHANTOM FOE!

**A Thrilling Mystery and
Adventure Serial**

**BY
JOHN
BREARLEY**

(Opening chapters retold in brief
on page 41.)



The Bullion Train!

THE fast train which pulled out of Euston Station at 11 a.m. was no ordinary one. It consisted of a powerful engine and two special coaches only; and it slid away from a platform whose barriers were closed and guarded, and kept closed until the train was well away.

In the rear coach, a dozen strongly built men in plain clothes smoked and lounged. Their attitudes were easy enough, but even when the train was travelling at full speed

standable, considering the way the Phantom had looted the Belhampton Bank and the great liner, Queen.

Strict and secret precautions had been taken in the send-off of the gold from London; an armoured car was waiting in Liverpool to escort it to the docks. But the men aboard the train were prepared to heave large sighs of relief once their part of the duty was over.

At full speed the bullion train roared along the main line north, while two Air Force planes patrolled closely overhead.

with a clear line, a certain alertness dwelt in each pair of eyes, and every man was armed with a stubby Browning revolver. For, in the next coach, guarded by four more armed men in charge of an official from his Majesty's Treasury, were strong metal boxes containing one hundred thousand pounds in bar-gold, on its way to America, via the battle-cruiser, H.M.S. Majestic.

The precious cargo was an instalment of Britain's war debt to the United States, and, accordingly, no pains had been spared to guard its transport. The new gang menace that had sprung up in Britain—the strange, mysterious Phantom Foe, with his uncanny but terribly effective methods—had rendered the Government nervous in the extreme; which was under-

"An' if we don't get through," muttered one of the train-guard at last, "it won't be our fault." He put into words the thoughts that were running constantly in each man's mind, but only a chorus of uneasy growls answered him.

And at that moment the train began to slow down.

Up in the cab, fireman and driver were peering anxiously out of the windows as the wheels squealed under pressure of the brakes. Far down a bend in the line lay a little wayside station, set in the midst of the smiling fields of a farming district. Bedford lay some miles behind, Rugby was still a distance ahead. But the signal from the box guarding the wayside station was up. The line was closed.

"What th' blazes!" grunted the driver irritably. "This is a special train and all signals——"

Impatiently he whistled, shrilly demanding the right of way. The signal remained up.

Anxious faces peered from coach windows at that; two big men, right hands in their pockets, dropped out and came running to the cab, brusquely demanding explanations from the indignant and worried driver. He whistled again—still with no result. Neither he nor the train-guard could know that the signalman lay in his box with a bullet through his brain.

In fact, when the sound of that last whistle died across the fields, they were to know nothing more for several hours!

With his customary swiftness, the Phantom Foo pounced upon them. And, as usual, from an unseen source. One moment the sky was clear, save for the wheeling airplanes, the next the bullion train had become wrapped in the Phantom's Yellow Gas, gushing down streamers of evil mist. The driver, choking in the grip of stifling fumes, pitched cut on to the shoulders of the two guards below. All three went down together and stayed where they fell. As for the rest of the armed men, they blundered and struggled for a few seconds in the coaches until, one after another, they, too, fell and lay still.

Of the cruising 'planes, one was caught and, like those above Belhampton, two nights before, crashed dizzily in its last dive to earth. The other, avoiding a fresh gush of the Yellow Gas only by a steep, dazzling turn, went streaking back to Bedford for help.

When a fleet of cars, packed with tight-lipped, resolute men, raced to the scene, half an hour later, they found only a stationary train, littered with unconscious men. The precious freight, destined for America, had vanished completely.

Thurston Kyle "Aids" the Police!

THAT evening, when newsboys were shouting the latest concerning the day's sensational train robbery, a uniformed messenger tapped at the office of Sir Hugh Fletcher, the Chief Commissioner of Scotland Yard, and announced:

"Mr. Thurston Kyle, sir. By appointment."

There was a brief stir, almost of relief, among the four men in the room when the tall, immaculate figure of the celebrated scientist entered. For, in many ways, his visit there was an event!

Scotland Yard knew nothing of Kyle's association with Nelson Lee, the great detective and Head of St. Frank's School, for that was a secret both allies would guard till death. But they did know of him as a man whose scientific attainments were famous throughout the world; and in that capacity they desired his services—urgently.

They had asked him for help on occasions in the past; but for some inexplicable reason they could not guess, had always met with blunt refusals. This time, however, when the Phantom Foo brooded over Britain like a thundercloud—Sir Hugh leapt hastily to his feet as Thurston Kyle bowed.

"Good-evening, gentlemen!"

"My dear sir—delighted to see you!" jerked the Commissioner, and his voice and haggard eyes plainly showed the nervous strain under which he laboured. "I thank you sincerely for attending this conference. Er—let me introduce——"

He swung round, while Thurston Kyle hid a certain sardonic amusement behind an inscrutable face, inwardly wondering what these men would say if ever his identity as the Night Hawk was revealed. Sir Hugh indicated a spare, precise man, who eyed the visitor curiously through rimless pince-nez.

"Mr. Lucius Pelton, of the Treasury; Mr. Thurston Kyle." The Treasury official inclined his head stiffly. "My assistants, Chief Detective-inspector Lennard——"

"Evenin', Mr. Kyle!"

"And Captain Frank Arthurs."

The alert and hefty Arthurs, late of the Canadian Secret Service, held out his hand with native heartiness.

"Sure have heard plenty about you, Mr. Kyle!" he smiled pleasantly, his breezy manner in marked contrast to his sober, worried companions. "Gee, but I hope you'll help us some way in gettin' this Phantom Foo devil!"

Thurston Kyle's quiet eyes surveyed him with interest, for he had heard much concerning the brilliant Canadian career of this latest recruit to the C.I.D. And he sounded Arthurs with his first remark.

"I believe you were in charge at Belhampton two nights ago, and also at Blake Common when the Phantom collected the ransom for the Duke of Meldon's guests, were you not, Captain Arthurs?" he asked courteously, and noted the way Arthurs' resolute face hardened.

The man was a fighter to the fingertips.

"Say, don't rub those disasters in, Mr. Kyle!" was the rueful retort. "Sure, I was the goat in both places. Show me some way to get even with that crook, and——"

Thurston Kyle raised his hand slightly. It was time to come to business. Seating him-

self leisurely; he studied his hosts with a quick, baffling scrutiny. At last:

"I hardly know what you expect of me, gentlemen," he drawled. "But let me make my position clear. Please understand I do not like police work at all, no matter what the circumstances!" he added sharply as Lucius Pelton frowned. "But for the fact that my old friend Nelson Lee asked me to render assistance, I would not have come. He telephoned me, however, as a personal favour, to help; and, accordingly, I am here. At the same time, I would remind you I am a very busy man!"

He did not mention that privately he had already intended taking up the Phantom's challenge after his defeat by the invisible airship over Belhampton. Since then he had been working at top speed, and his preparations for battle were well advanced, although, owing to their intricate nature, they required time—time that had given the Phantom opportunity to strike again.

His experiences at Belhampton, and the information he had obtained that night, had thrown the Night Hawk into the fight with all the enthusiasm of his cold, resolute nature; and only the news of to-day's train robbery, followed by Nelson Lee's urgent and unexpected appeal, had caused him to stop work and come to Scotland Yard. Nelson Lee had risked his friendship with Kyle by that request; but in the end he had triumphed. The scientist thought it best, however, to make his attitude clear to Sir Hugh at the start.

At his blunt words, the Treasury official looked distinctly offended. But the anxious Yard men only nodded, and Sir Hugh spoke quickly.

"That's all right, Mr. Kyle. We'll not ask you to do anything you dislike. But we certainly want your advice!"

Propping his square jaw on his fists, he went on quietly:

"We're up against it, sir—badly. You've heard all about to-day's outrage—train stripped, signalman murdered, guards stupefied? And the other jobs—the Queen, Longhurst Towers, etc. Well, we're beaten. The Phantom's methods are the weirdest we've ever struck. His yellow gas seems to drop from the air, but no one has ever seen signs of a 'plane, an airship, or, in fact, anything. We're completely in the dark."

How much Thurston Kyle knew now of the Phantom's methods would have paralysed Sir Hugh and the others. But he said nothing. He was prepared to advise them if

he could—so long as his own plans did not suffer. He wanted the Phantom Foe for himself.

"I see. And what do you require of me?"

Sir Hugh shrugged wearily.

"Well, it's obvious we're up against one of the most highly-scientific criminals of modern days, which is saying a lot. And you're a scientist and inventor. We were wondering—can you give us any idea how this Phantom might work his ghastly tricks?" he concluded lamely.

"Why, what have I to work on yet?" asked Thurston Kyle in his blandest manner.

The Yard men exchanged glances.

"No more than we have, I admit," replied the Commissioner moodily. "I needn't go over the Phantom's jobs again; the broad details are common property. But we have two queer facts to set before you that we have so far kept secret."

"So?"

Sir Hugh proffered his cigar-case.

"Light one of these, Mr. Kyle, and I'll tell you. The first is that after the Belhampton raid we recovered the stolen gold and the five men who stole it—in very queer circumstances. And the second is that the men who looted the bullion train to-day were seen: Neither of the facts have been given to the newspapers."

Thurston Kyle lit his cigar and lay back. For the first time he was glad he had come to Scotland Yard.

The Relentless Phantom!

"SO you found the men who robbed the Belhampton Bank—eh?" he murmured, his face a complete mask.

"Have you—er—questioned them?"

"No, sir, we have not!" snapped Sir Hugh. "And we cannot question them, either, for they were found stone dead. I will tell you."

"A police car found them, ten miles out of Belhampton. They were in a powerful car, or, rather, what was left of it. Mr. Kyle, that car was smashed like an egg-shell, as though—as though it had been dropped from a great height. Oh, I know it sounds fantastic," he cried, as Kyle raised his eyebrows, "but the fact remains. The car was smashed as completely as though it had fallen over a tremendous cliff; and the country round Belhampton is—flat. Further, the interior of the car was shattered as though by very deadly grenades."

"Strange!" Thurston Kyle was secretly

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 robs a bank in Belhampton. Hovering overhead on his wings, the Night Hawk watches; he attacks the Phantom's airship, but meets with defeat—which makes him all the more determined to bring to book this criminal genius. Later, the Phantom Foe strikes again—and gets away with a colossal booty.

(Now read on.)

enjoying himself. He knew all about that car—and the grenades. "Have you identified the dead men?"

It was a natural question to ask. But its effect on Sir Hugh and his men was extraordinary. The Commissioner's face grew dark with baffled anger.

"No!" And his voice thickened with chagrin. "The men, of course, were somewhat battered by the crash. But even allowing for that we cannot identify them exactly. Because, Mr. Kyle, their faces and their finger-prints are entirely new to us!"

"When the Duke of Meldcn's safe was opened, we suspected an expert cracksman names Edwardes, one of the twelve convicts stolen from Princetown gaol same weeks ago. The manner in which the Belhampton vaults were opened pointed to the same man also. One of the men we found certainly resembled Edwardes in physique, but that was all. We had no trace of the dead man's finger-prints whatever. And prints are the best and only test of a man's identity.

"The same applies to the train robbery to-day. We found prints in plenty on the doors of the coaches. But, so far from aiding us, the discovery only makes matters worse. For again every print is new and strange. Heavens, I do not know what to think!"

Captain Arthurs struck in as soon as his chief finished.

"We ought to tell Mr. Kyle, too, that we've had a comb-out of crooks during the past week, sir," he said. "And there's at least ten of the worst—missing. We sure can't pick up their trails, either!"

Thurston Kyle had already received that information from Scrapper Huggins, but nothing in his face betrayed the fact. He was pondering Sir Hugh's statement concerning the strange faces and finger-prints, and like the Commissioner he, too, did not know what to think. That certainly was a baffling sidelight on the case.

"H'm! What with the twelve stolen convicts, the criminals who have apparently vanished, and these strange rogues you cannot identify, our friend the Phantom seems to have collected a very big gang!" he said at last. "I do not see how it helps me at present, however. What of the men who were seen to-day, when the train was robbed?"

"A bigger mystery than ever!" was the emphatic retort. "We have only a report from a patrolling A.A. man; and, for the life of me, that report is hard to believe!"

"May I hear it?" asked Thurston Kyle.

"Yes. As you know, the train was robbed about six hundred yards from Blount Station, a quiet halt in a quiet stretch of country. The A.A. man reports that he called in at the station for a parcel he was expecting, and to his amazement found the station-master and the only porter face down on the platform, unconscious. No one else was about, for no trains were expected for some time. But, on looking down the line, he saw the bullion special halted, with several

men unloading boxes from a coach and making off with them down the embankment to the road beneath. What he saw must have been the last load of loot leaving the train.

"Suspecting that something was wrong, he leapt on his motor-cycle and rushed down the road. He was just in time to see a very fast grey car moving away, and, of course, he spurred. The men in the car saw him and immediately opened fire with silenced guns. In a moment his front tyre was in rags, and he himself slightly wounded in the shoulder.

"Very pluckily, however, he carried on on foot, hoping to reach his box and give a telephone alarm. The car, naturally, was out of sight round a bend in no time. But its tracks were easy to follow until"—the Commissioner dropped his voice—"until they stopped!"

"Stopped?" echoed Kyle, as Sir Hugh breathed hard.

"Stopped—died away!" The Commissioner banged the table. "About half a mile beyond the scene of the hold-up, the road winds through a dense thicket of elm and oak-trees. The A.A. man ran on, following the tracks. But when he came to the middle of this thicket those tracks came to an abrupt stop—right in the centre of the road!"

"He searched, trying to find where the car had turned off. There was nothing to see, Mr. Kyle. It was as though the bandits in their racer had either vanished into thin air as they travelled at full speed, or had been snatched aloft with the gold!"

"Just as the Belhampton gold was snatched aloft!" murmured Thurston Kyle to himself; and more than ever looked forward to his duel with the Phantom Foe. Flicking the ash from his cigar, he looked up non-committally.

"Truly an amazing incident!" he agreed smoothly. "But, as yet, I can form no theory, naturally." Then, abruptly: "What about this gold that was stolen? It must be replaced, of course?"

For the first time, Lucius Pelton, of the Treasury, spoke.

"Most decidedly it must, sir!" he snapped pompously. "That gold was part of our debt to the United States, and we must keep faith. We are bound to send another shipment off immediately. And"—he darted a severe look round him—"it is for you gentlemen to find some means of tricking this uncanny villian, the Phantom Foe."

Sir Hugh fired up indignantly at the speech, hot words trembling on his lips. Before he could reply, however, Thurston Kyle took up the challenge.

"Perhaps I can suggest a plan?" he said suavely; and almost smiled at the sudden eagerness that glowed in every face. Sir Hugh did not reply in words, but his look was eloquent. Thurston Kyle drew his chair closer.

"We are, I presume, strictly private here?" he demanded. The others nodded.

Whereupon he launched the scheme that had just flashed through him, and for several minutes his voice was the only sound in the room. He did not tell them all in his mind, however, for it was a trap he was proposing, and that trap he intended to spring himself. When he finished at last, there was a solemn pause, broken by Captain Arthurs jumping enthusiastically to his feet.

"That's sure a dandy idea, sir; and a simple one, too. Thanks for suggesting putting me in charge. Believe me, I'll sure do all you say."

"Do you other gentlemen agree?" asked Thurston Kyle softly; and although Pelton looked down his nose, Sir Hugh and Lennard nodded violently.

"We'll do anything——" began the Commissioner. But at that moment the sharp trill of the telephone bell cut him short, and turning, he grabbed up the instrument.

"Hallo! Yes, Sir Hugh Fletcher speaking—— What! Wha-at! Good—good heavens, this is beyond all——"

Tense in their chairs, his companions waited while Sir Hugh's florid face slowly grew old and bitter. He put the receiver down eventually and looked at it for some while like a man in a daze. Pulling himself together at last, he turned.

"The Phantom has attacked again, gentlemen!" he said huskily. "An hour ago, one of our biggest prisons was overwhelmed by Yellow Gas as the inmates were at their evening meal. And six of the most dangerous homicidal maniacs were released from their cells by the Phantom's men!"

The Conference!

THURSTON KYLE left Scotland Yard fifteen minutes later, with Captain Arthurs by his side. His visit there had not been devoid of interest, although most of Sir Hugh's information was, of course, a re-hash of what he himself knew already. News of the raid on the prison had broken up the conference promptly, with Pelton looking more sour than ever and Thurston Kyle promising to do what he could in the case. There seemed nothing more to discuss for the present.

As the scientist was about to enter his car, however, Captain Arthurs laid an earnest hand on his arm.

"See here, Mr. Kyle, I'm no buttinski. But I'd sure like to chat over this scheme a bit more with you. I couldn't say all I wanted in front of that guy Pelton—he's a red-tape artist. Is there somewhere quiet we can go? Your own house, for instance?"

Thurston Kyle considered a moment, not exactly relishing the blunt request, but thinking it would seem strange to refuse. There would be nobody at Hampstead save Snub, and perhaps Scrapper Huggins. And Arthurs certainly would not see the laboratory.

"Very well, captain. Pray come along if you wish!" He held open the door.

The drive back to the old mansion was made in silence, both men busy with their thoughts. And the uppermost in Kyle's brain was: the mystery of the Phantom's dead crooks with the strange faces and fingerprints.

Instinct warned him that this was but another of the Phantom's tricks to cover his trail and plunge the police in a deeper fog of mystery. It was a diabolical ruse of some kind. But——

Thurston Kyle gave it up for the present. Half an hour later he was in his sanctum with Captain Frank Arthurs, deep in talk. While Snub and Scrapper Huggins listened—and watched, too!—from the adjoining room.

In posting Snub and Scrapper Huggins at peep-holes to his tapestry-hung room, Thurston Kyle did so merely to give them an opportunity of listening to his conversation with Captain Arthurs, and not just to spy on the Scotland Yard officer.

Arthurs seemed a distinctly trustworthy man, and if his face and manner were guides, he was a hard fighter, too.

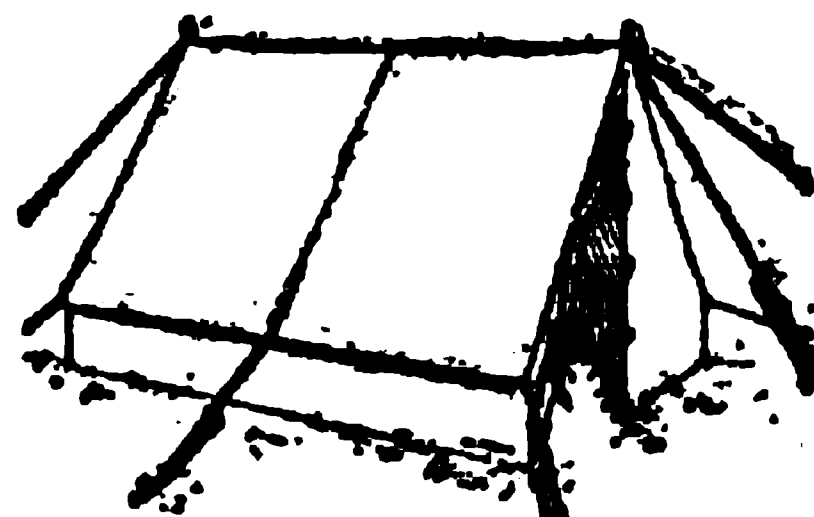
Since Thurston Kyle had half-promised to assist Scotland Yard in the battle against the Phantom Foe, he was glad the ex-Canadian Secret Service man had been placed in charge of the new scheme for beating the uncanny foe. But he wanted Snub and Scrapper to hear the plan, too.

The Night Hawk and his visitor talked at length. Thurston Kyle elaborated upon the trap he had evolved and with which he hoped the Phantom Foe would be captured. Captain Arthurs, as he listened, became more and more enthusiastic. The scheme was fully discussed save for one thing—Thurston Kyle's own part in the affair.

That much the Night Hawk kept secret. For Kyle was determined that he himself would play a lone hand when it came to a final reckoning with the Phantom Foe!

(What is the Night Hawk's plan—how does he intend to capture the wily Phantom Foe? Look out for plenty of thrills and excitement in next week's gripping chapters of this corking serial.)

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Miss Aileen Gilligan, Clovelly, Princes Highway, Sutherland, N.S.W., Australia, would like girl correspondents.
Arthur Court, 18, Murray Street, Red Hill, via Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, wishes to hear from readers interested in cricket and wireless.
Wallace Gowdey, 305, Melville Avenue, Westmount, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, wants stamp-collecting correspondents; ages 10-15.
Miss Margaret E. Graham, 17, Patterson Street, Middle Park, Victoria, Australia, would like girl correspondents, ages 18-21.
Miss Joyce H. Sullivan, 17, Patterson Street, Middle Park S.C.6, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with girl readers, ages 18-21.
Charles Sullivan, 17, Patterson Street, Middle Park, Melbourne, Australia, asks for correspondents.
S. Palmer, 22, Downham Road, Dalston, London, N.1, wants correspondents who are interested in a detective club.
John Whalley, 2, Garton Avenue, Blackpool, Lancs., wants to hear from cricketers who will fix up matches with Highfield Nomads.
A. Sissons, 59, Sneinton Road, Nottingham, would like to hear from stamp collectors in Nova Scotia, West Indies, Bahamas, etc.
Gordon Phillips, Wood Farm, Walton East, Clarboston Road, Pembrokeshire, asks readers in the Dominions to write him.
Arthur H. Page, 35, Burford Road, Nottingham, wants correspondents.

Kenneth Waring, 46, Lyndhurst Road, Hollins, Oldham, Lancs., would like a correspondent in Australia or India, also to hear from those keen on stamps and track racing.

L. J. Hawkins, 67, King Edward Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17, wants to hear from musical readers, as he is getting up a concert party.

Chas. A. Webb, 21, Heston Road, Heston, Middx., wants correspondents.

Ezra Glaser, 25, Rosmead Avenue, Oranjezicht, Cape Town, S. Africa, wishes to hear from stamp collectors.

William Burt, 23, The Downs, Altrincham, Cheshire, wants members for the Empire Philatelic Club.

William Howarth, 11, Dutton Street, Accrington, Lancs., wishes to hear from coin collectors; also from a Guernsey reader who wrote to him.

K. E. Wicks, Goldstone House, 13, Rose Hill, Brighton, wants to hear from keen cyclists about the formation of a club.

Len Page, 22, Norman Road, Newhaven, Sussex, would like to hear from stamp collectors; Gold Coast and Nigeria especially.

Arthur Blaylock, 49, Lymington Road, Wallasey, Cheshire, would like a correspondent in Spain; age about 16.

A. J. Barker, 67, Balvernie Grove, Southfields, London, S.W.18, wishes to hear from readers.

J. Hancock, 18, Brookleaze Buildings, Larkhall, Bath, would like to hear from stamp collectors overseas.

E. J. Simpkins, 13, Jersey Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11, wants correspondents.

Felix Palmer, 83, Clyde Street, Thornbury, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, and his friend, Neville Harrison, wish to contribute to amateur magazines. Neville Harrison wants members for his correspondence club.



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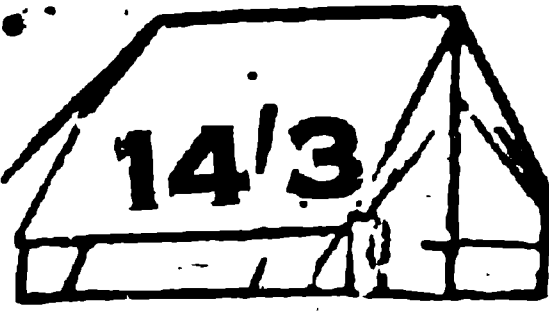
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