

A SCHOOLBOY KING AT ST. FRANK'S!



New Series No. 78.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY

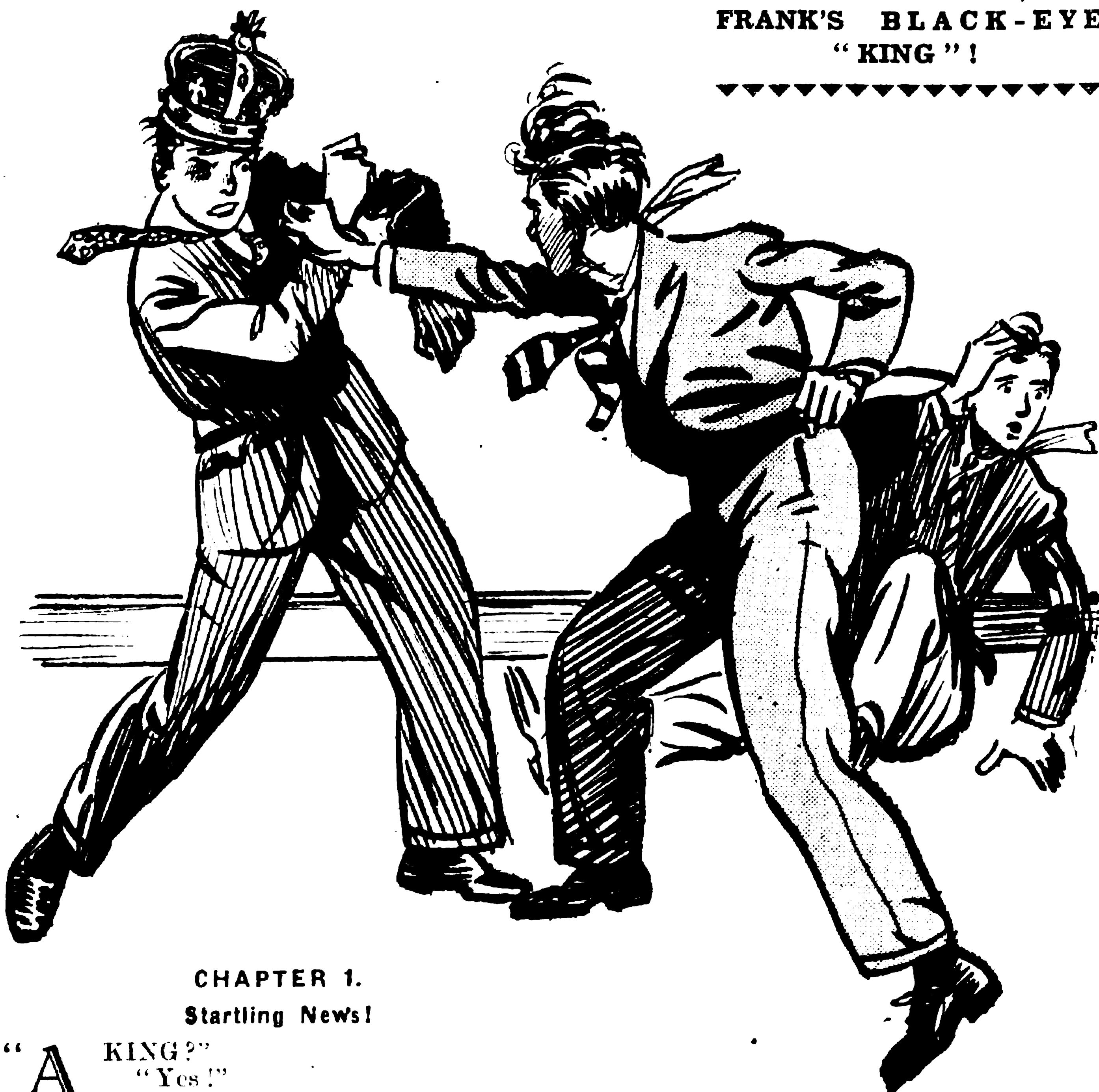
July 18th, 1931

Tara-ra-ra-ra-ra! Get ready to welcome the Schoolboy King.

HIS MAJESTY of the

By *EDWY SEARLES*
BROOKS

▲▲▲▲▲
VICTOR ORLANDO, KING
OF CARONIA, MEETS
E. O. HANDFORTH, ST.
FRANK'S BLACK-EYE
"KING"!
▼▼▼▼▼



CHAPTER 1.

Startling News!

"A KING?"
"Yes!"
"A real, genuine, honest-to-goodness king coming into the Remove?"
"Yes!"
"Rot!"
"But it's here, in the paper——"
"Piffle!"

Fullwood, of the Remove, who had the evening paper in his hand, looked round indignantly. He had burst excitedly into the Junior Common-room, in the Ancient House at St. Frank's, a minute earlier. But the Removites were not at all im-

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REMOVE!



pressed with his startling news. In fact, they didn't believe it.

It was a dull, rainy evening, and cricket was definitely "off." So the fellows were either in their studies or in the Common-rooms. Fullwood found a fairly large gathering, including such prominent stalwarts as Nipper, the Remove skipper, Tommy Watson, Tregellis-West, Handforth, Gresham, Travers, and Potts. They

were all regarding him with mild amusement.

Fullwood began to look exasperated.

"You must have read it wrong, old man," said Sir Jimmy Potts kindly. "How could a king come into the Remove? There isn't one young enough, to start with. Of course, there are plenty of kings who have lost their thrones—but they're men. There's ex-King Manuel, of Portugal, and

ex-King Alfonso, of Spain, and ex-King —"

"I'm not talking about ex-kings," interrupted Fullwood tartly. "This chap is a real king. He's just about fifteen years old, and he's entering the St. Frank's Remove as an ordinary pupil."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites laughed ironically. They just wanted to show Ralph Leslie Fullwood that this joke of his was not at all funny. Fullwood waxed wrathful.

"You—you disbelieving fatheads!" he roared. "I tell you it's here, in the evening paper, in black and white! King Victor of Caronia is coming——"

"By Jove!" said Nipper abruptly.

"Oh!" said Fullwood. "You've changed your tone, haven't you?"

"Sorry, Fully, old man," said Nipper. "I remember reading something about King Victor of Caronia a week or two ago. It's quite true that he is a boy of fifteen."

"What!" went up a general shout.

The St. Frank's fellows were not particularly interested in kings—at least, modern kings. They were far better acquainted with the histories of long-deceased monarchs than they were of Europe's current Royal Houses.

"King Victor of Caronia," said Edward Oswald Handforth, with a start. "By George! I seem to have read something about him, too! Let's have a look at that paper, Fully."

"Rats!" retorted Fullwood. "This is my paper, and I'm sticking to it. I'll read out the paragraph, if you like."

He had gained the attention of the crowd at last, and he recovered some of his good humour. Everybody was eager to hear his news now.

"There's a big headline," he said. "This is what it says: '**A KING FOR AN ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOL**'; and another smaller headline under that—'How Will St. Frank's Greet Its New Pupil?' That's plain enough, isn't it?"

"My only hat! Rather!"

"A giddy king for St. Frank's!"

"Well I'm jiggered!"

"Now listen to the paragraph itself," said Fullwood, referring to the newspaper. "'The boys of St. Frank's College, the famous old Public School in Sussex, will, no doubt, feel honoured when a distinguished new pupil arrives to-morrow. This distinguished new pupil is none other than the young King Victor of Caronia. We understand that his majesty will enter the Remove Form in just the same way as an ordinary scholar.'"

"Great Scott!"

"So he's coming down to-morrow!"

"And he's booked for the Remove!"

"Well, I'm blessed!"

"Let me finish, you fatheads!" said Fullwood. "There's a lot more yet. Listen to this: 'It has always been the wish of the king's uncle—the Grand Duke Rudolph, who is the present Regent of Caronia—that Victor should be educated in England. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to say that no better British Public School than St. Frank's could have been chosen——'"

"Quite unnecessary," murmured Travers.

"——and the young king himself is equally enthusiastic regarding the plan. He is very anxious to enter St. Frank's as an ordinary boy, and to be treated in exactly the same way as his schoolfellows. However, in order to be sure of having at least one staunch friend constantly by his side, he has insisted upon taking with him his boon companion, Paul Maddox. Paul, who is about the same age as the king, and a compatriot, is the son of a prominent Caronian tradesman. Thus we have the interesting spectacle of king and subject joining the same school on the same day as staunch friends."

"It has been arranged that these two young Caronians shall travel down into Sussex by the ordinary train, arriving at the little station of Bellton by mid-afternoon; but they will travel, of course, in a special Pullman coach of their own, accompanied by a number of high officials from the Caronian Embassy. We wish the young king the best of luck, and we hope that his new life at this great English Public School will fulfil all his expectations. It is rather interesting to conjecture how the boys of the Remove Form at St. Frank's will regard this notable entry of European Royalty into their midst."

Fullwood finished speaking, and as he put the paper aside, Handforth, of Study D, gave vent to a characteristic grunt.

"These giddy newspaper men make me tired!" he said. "What does he think we're going to do with this King of Caronia when he arrives? If he's coming into the Remove as a Remove chap, he'll be a Remove chap. Just that, and nothing more."

"Good for you, Handforth, old man! Well said!"

Everybody turned and looked at the doorway, where Mr. Alington Wilkes, the Housemaster of the Ancient House, was standing. He was dressed, as usual, in his baggy flannel trousers and shabby

Norfolk jacket. He advanced into the crowded Common-room, twirling at his untidy moustache.

"I hope you other chaps are thinking just the same as Handforth," he said, glancing round through his glasses. "A new boy is a new boy—and nothing else."

"I say, sir, is it true—really?" asked Forrest eagerly. "I mean, about the King of Caronia?"

Mr. Wilkes sighed.

"I am very much afraid, Forrest, that you're going to be snobbish about this," he said. "But you mustn't be snobbish—neither must anybody else. There are two new boys coming to-morrow, and they are both Caronians. One is exalted, and the other lowly. But they will both be your schoolfellows, and it is up to you to treat them both exactly the same."

"Then it is true about that young king coming, sir?" asked Hubbard excitedly. "The newspaper's right!"

Mr. Wilkes sighed again.

"I came in here purposely to talk to you about this," he said. "I guessed that you would have seen that wretched newspaper. No, Hubbard, it is not right that the King of Caronia is coming to St. Frank's."

"Not right, sir?" went up a general shout.

"The two boys who are coming into this Form are Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox."

"Victor Orlando being the king, sir?" asked Forrest, grinning.

"You must forget that he's a king," said Old Wilkey patiently. "At the present moment I can see a duke, a viscount, and a baronet. But to us they are merely Somerton, Rossiter, and Tregellis-West. We don't use their titles here."

"Quite right, too, sir!" said Handforth heartily. "Whoever would think of looking upon that scarecrow of a Sommy as a blue-blooded duke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The young Duke of Somerton, shabby, ink-stained and untidy, laughed with the rest.

"And so it must be with young King Victor," said Old Wilkey. "Orlando is the family name of the Caronian dynasty. And simply as Orlando this young monarch will enter the Remove. I don't want you to treat him any differently than you will treat his companion, Maddox. And I'm thinking just as much of the boy himself as I am of you. It isn't fair that he should be embarrassed and worried. He is coming to St. Frank's unostentatiously, and I am relying upon you fellows to help me—and to help him."

"Leave it to us, sir!" said Nipper.

"As a matter of fact, that report should never have been published at all," continued Mr. Wilkes. "But you know what these journalists are—they get their noses into everything. The whole affair was all planned and settled. It had been arranged that King Victor should come to the school incognito—merely using the name of Victor Orlando. It is a great pity that this over-zealous newspaper-man should have let the cat out of the bag. I'm really sorry about it, and all I can do now is to rely upon you boys to forget that you ever saw the paragraph."

"But we should have known, sir," said Bernard Forrest. "A thing like that couldn't be kept secret for long. It's just as well that we should be prepared."

Old Wilkey looked at him very straightly.

"Be prepared for what, Forrest?" he asked.

"Well, to give his majesty a fitting welcome, sir."

"Forrest, haven't I just been telling you that Orlando is to be treated the same as any other Removite?" demanded Mr. Wilkes. "What's all this nonsense about a fitting welcome? You don't get up special celebrations for other new boys, do you?"

"It's all right, sir—leave it to us," said Handforth gruffly. "We won't let Forrest do anything silly!"

"May we have—er—Orlando in our study, sir?" asked Forrest boldly. "Gulliver and Bell and I would be only too glad——"

"I have already decided that Orlando shall go into Study E with Glenthorne and Brent," interrupted Old Wilkey gently. "Most of the other studies have three occupants already, so I think the arrangement will be quite satisfactory. You have no objection, Glenthorne? Or you, Brent?"

"Good gad, no, sir!" said Archie. "Of course, it's frightfully alarming, having a dashed king knocking about the place——"

"Forget that he's a king!" growled Mr. Wilkes. "What on earth's the good of my telling you?"

"Oh, rather, sir! Frightfully sorry!" said Archie. "What I mean to say is——"

"And Maddox will go into Study G with De Valerie and Somerton," continued Mr. Wilkes. "Of course, these two young Caronians could have a study to themselves, but I think it is better that they should mix freely with you other chaps. Now, for goodness' sake forget what you've read in the newspaper. Forget that Orlando is really a king. Treat him as

you would treat any other new boy. He'll like it all the better, I can assure you."

And Mr. Wilkes, with a friendly nod, departed from the Common-room. But if he really expected the Remove to take him literally, he was very much of an optimist.

CHAPTER 2.

Getting Ready for Royalty!

"**O**LD WILKEY didn't mean it, really," said Nipper thoughtfully.

"Didn't mean what?"

"Why, asking us to forget that this Victor Orlando chap is a king," said Nipper. "Still, he knows that he can rely upon us to act sensibly. And by 'us' I mean the crowd on this side of the room."

The Remove skipper glanced significantly across to Bernard Forrest, who was on the other side of the room, surrounded by Gulliver, Bell, Hubbard, Teddy Long, Gore-Pearce, and a few kindred spirits.

"By George, you're right!" said Handforth gruffly. "Old Wilkey wasn't speaking to us at all, but to those fatheaded snobs! He was just giving them a word of warning! And look at 'em! There they are, as excited as the dickens, already making plans to bow and scrape to this giddy young king!"

"There'll be no bowing and scraping if I can help it," said Nipper.

Forrest looked across the room with a sneer.

"I should advise you to mind your own business," he said sourly. "Wilkey is a fool. We know this new man is a king, and it's rot to tell us to forget it. We don't often get kings in the Remove, so we're going to make a fuss of him! Why not?"

"What kind of a fuss?" asked Nipper. "He may not like it if you fawn round him just because he's a king——"

"We shan't do any fawning," interrupted Forrest. "But a king, even when he's a Remove chap, deserves some special attention."

"He probably won't understand a giddy word of English," grinned Handforth. "Or, if he does, it'll be such broken English that none of us will be able to understand. These two new chaps will speak Caronian."

Nipper grinned.

"No need to show your ignorance, Handy, old son," he said gently. "There's no such language as Caronian."

"Eh?"

"Caronia is a little kingdom in Central Europe," said Nipper. "Two or three

languages are spoken—Slav, German and Italian. Even English, I believe. We haven't heard much about it, although I believe some remarkable changes have been taking place in Caronia under the rule of Grand Duke Rudolph."

"Who the dickens is he?"

"The Grand Duke Rudolph is the king's uncle—and the regent," replied Nipper. "Caronia has been progressing marvellously under Rudolph's administration. But there's no need for us to look up any of the facts—these two new chaps will tell use all we need to know about Caronia."

"They're coming down by the afternoon train," said Forrest thoughtfully. "That means they'll get into Bellton at about four o'clock. How about meeting the train with a special car?"

"Rats!"

"Well, why not?" demanded Forrest. "Hang it, it would only be doing the decent thing. King Victor and his pal are coming with a lot of high officials from the Caronian Embassy. Well, let's show them that we can do things properly. Let's meet them——"

"With all sorts of pomp and splendour?" interrupted Nipper. "Nothing doing, Forrest! We've got to respect Old Wilkey's wishes. He doesn't want us to make a fuss like that."

"Blow Old Wilkey!" said Forrest sourly.

"Still, there's no reason why we shouldn't do something a little out of the common," went on Nipper, a twinkle coming into his eyes. "What about a gigantic spoof, you chaps? Why not kid these new fellows?"

"Kid them? How?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"That must be discussed, and settled upon," replied Nipper. "Victor may be a king in his own country, but at St. Frank's he's nothing but a new kid! And new kids are always liable to have their legs pulled!"

"By George!" chuckled Handforth. "Let's think of something!"

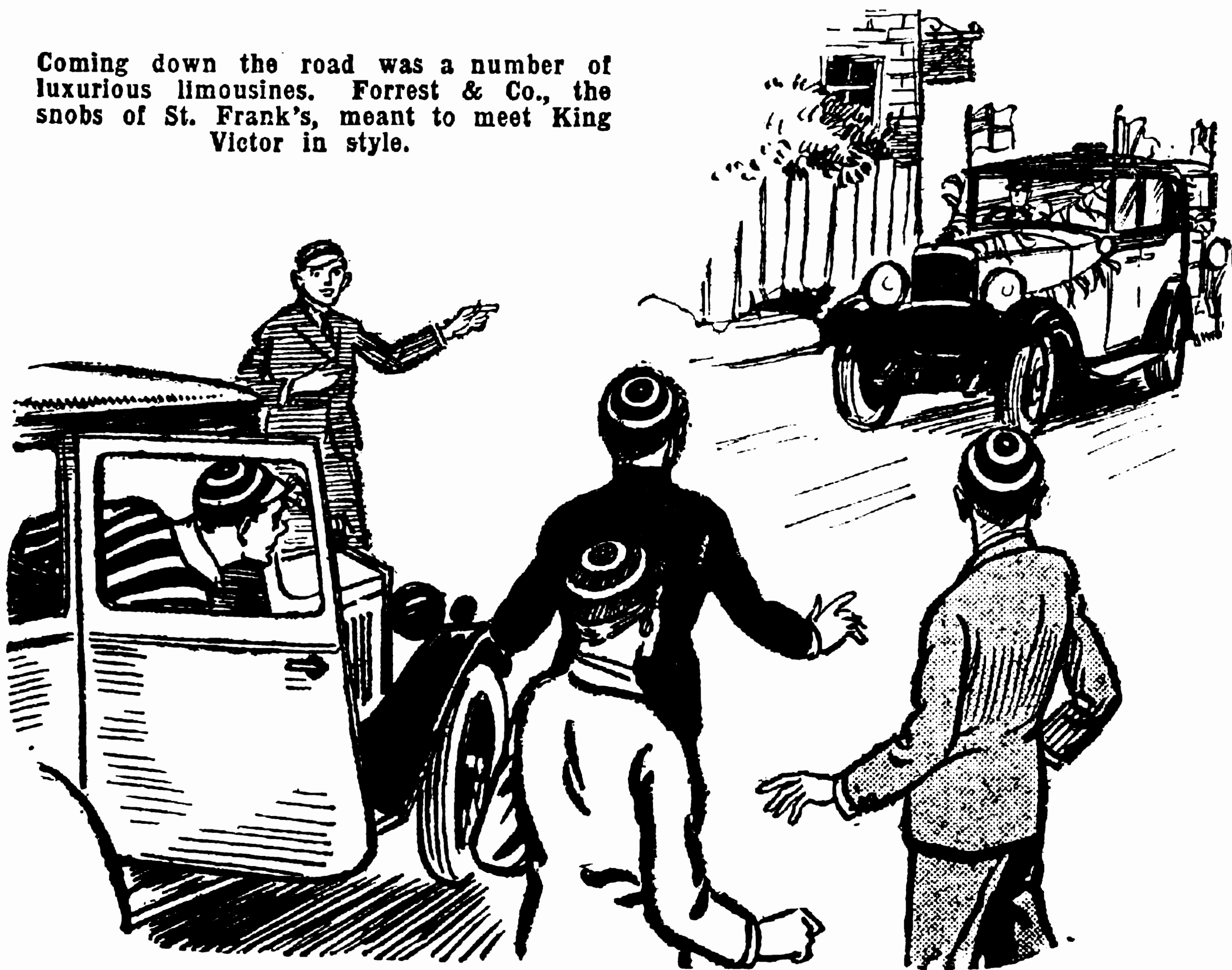
Thereafter the Removites put their heads together, and ways and means were discussed.

VICTOR ORLANDO chuckled gleefully as the train steamed out of the great London terminus.

"Well, how about that for a piece of bright work, Paul, my son?" he asked, with a grin. "Aren't you going to congratulate me?"

"Rather!" said Paul Maddox cheerfully. "Great work, Vic! After all, what's the good of being a king unless you can give your orders? Poor old Colonel Rutz was

Coming down the road was a number of luxurious limousines. Forrest & Co., the snobs of St. Frank's, meant to meet King Victor in style.



properly fed up to the teeth, but I dare say he'll get over it in time."

They both chuckled, and settled themselves down comfortably in the third-class compartment they occupied. It was the following afternoon, and the two new boys for the St. Frank's Remove were on their way down to the old school, according to schedule.

But there was a difference.

They were not travelling in a special Pullman coach, accompanied by a host of officials from the Caronian Embassy. Young King Victor had dismissed the officials on the London platform—and he had insisted upon the Pullman coach being dispensed with, too.

As he had explained to the scandalised officials, he and Paul were entering St. Frank's as two ordinary boys. Then why all this pomp during the journey down? Far better for them to travel as ordinary schoolboys, and to arrive unostentatiously. Besides, the third-class fare was so much less. And Victor Orlando, like any other schoolboy, was keen enough on having a good supply of spare pocket-money.

"It's heaps better for us to go down like this, Paul," said the young king, as the train gathered speed. "By Jove!

Those fellows at St. Frank's will probably be expecting all sorts of nonsense, and we shall turn up without a giddy escort of any kind! They're bound to have read those silly reports in last night's newspapers."

Paul Maddox grunted.

"That's the worst of it," he said. "They'll be buzzing round you like flies—and they'll ignore me completely."

"The worst of it, from my point of view—yes," admitted Victor. "Do you think I want them buzzing round me like flies? It's a beastly nuisance, my son. I didn't want anybody to know my real name."

Paul Maddox sighed.

"It's a rummy world," he said. "You're a king, and you don't want to be a king—at least, not until you're older. I'm a mere nobody, and I'd give a term's pocket-money just to have a go at your job for a few days!"

"You're welcome to it!" said Victor. "You're the luckier of the two of us. Fellows make friends with you for yourself alone. But I'm never sure of the fellows who make friends with me!"

The two Caronian boys were speaking perfect English—the ordinary English of native-born schoolboys. Even in appear-

ance they were English. Young King Victor, with his wavy chestnut hair and his permanent expression of mischief, was a typical schoolboy. Paul, in fact, was much more kingly-looking than Victor. He was fair and handsome, and he carried himself with a fine air of distinction. Any stranger, looking at the two, would unerringly pick out Paul Maddox as the young king.

They were staunch lovers of England, and everything English—and with excellent reason. From early childhood they had been close friends, and had had an English tutor; on the top of that, they had spent two years in a select preparatory school in Bedfordshire. They really knew far more about England than they did of their own native country. And although they were being taught French and Latin, in the same way as other schoolboys of their age, they had no knowledge of the Slav, or German, or Italian languages. This was not so remarkable as it might have seemed. For the Grand Duke Rudolph, who was to all intents and purposes ruler of Caronia, was himself a great lover of England.

He was the strong man of Caronia—very much of a dictator in his own way. Under his régime, that little country, formerly so backward, was progressing by leaps and bounds.

The Grand Duke, Victor's uncle, was a man of originality—a man with such strength of character, and so beloved by the majority of the Caronian populace that his edicts were not difficult to enforce.

To an extent the Grand Duke Rudolph closely resembled in his methods that famous man, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, of Turkey.

Kemal Pasha has introduced European dress and the European alphabet into Turkey, and he has done marvellous things in Europeanising the habits of his countrymen.

The Grand Duke Rudolph had gone even a step further. Perhaps his ideas were slightly too advanced, for he was not without his opponents and enemies. But the Grand Duke, believing that the English language would one day become the universal language of the world, had passed an edict that English was to become the one and only language of Caronia.

By taking this step, the Grand Duke had shown his perspicacity in a marked degree. Caronia, tucked away in Central Europe, and bordered on every side by peoples speaking Slav, German, and Italian, had for centuries used all these three languages. Those Caronians near the Italian border spoke Italian; those

near the other borders spoke the languages of the people with whom they mostly came in contact.

By making Slav the only language of Caronia, the Grand Duke would have pleased the Slavonic element of the Caronian population; but the others would have been antagonised. By ruling that Italian should be the language, he would have displeased the Slavs; and if he had decided upon German as the national language he would have been up against the same problem.

So he had acted drastically. English, the coming language of the world, was proclaimed as the national language of Caronia. Thus, at one master stroke, Rudolph had silenced all his critics, since all the people were treated alike, with favours to none.

By this one move the Grand Duke had solved a long-standing Caronian problem. The newspapers of the capital, Galvarad, hitherto printed in three languages, were now printed in the one. Notices on railway trains, sign-posts, along the road, Government proclamations, and so forth, benefited in the same way. And once the transition period was over—and that had, indeed, been a trying period—the rest was simple.

For some years now this law had been in force. Caronian children, in all the schools throughout that little kingdom, were taught nothing but English. The original languages of the country were forbidden; to speak them, after a certain fixed date, was against the law; and so rigidly had this been enforced that by now young and old were all using English.

But, like most great men, Rudolph had his enemies. In some parts of the kingdom people secretly gathered in order to have the pleasure of using their old language. There were agitators who spread discontent, and these secret societies, harmless enough at present, might well become dangerous later on.

Thus, by these radical changes, the Grand Duke Rudolph was making a new country of Caronia. The army, the police force, and so forth, were all modelled on the British pattern; factories were run in the same way as British factories; street cars, motor omnibuses, and railways, were patterned on those of England.

It had been a bold move on the part of the Grand Duke—and already it was bringing wondrous prosperity to the formerly impoverished Caronia. English and American tourists, finding the language problem so easily solved for them, were pouring into the country on holiday. Business transactions were the more easily

dealt with; for even the currency and the postage stamps, by order of the Grand Duke Rudolph, had been changed. It was an audacious experiment—and it was succeeding. The influential people of the country were solidly behind the Regent, for they knew that his policy was wise and sound. Caronia was being put on the map as a rapidly-growing industrial community with ever-increasing prosperity.

Yet very little mention of it had been made in the English newspapers; for Caronia was a small, insignificant country. At the time the Grand Duke Rudolph had made those drastic changes—some years ago—a good deal had been written on the subject; but, more recently, Caronia, and all matters Caronian, had dropped out of the news.

So the St. Frank's boys knew very little about the young king who was destined to come into their midst. To them he was a foreigner, and they were picturing him as such.

BUT there was very little foreign-looking about the cheery, curly-haired youngster who sat in that third-class compartment of the fast train from London.

"I don't mind telling you, Paul, old son, that I'm worried," remarked King Victor, after a somewhat lengthy silence.

"Affairs of State weighing on your kingly brow?" inquired Paul blandly.

"Don't be an ass!" retorted Victor. "What the dickens do you think I care about affairs of State? My uncle's big enough and old enough to look after that end of the giddy business! No; I'm worried about that silly newspaper report."

"You're a queer fellow, Vic," said his friend. "You're a king, and the St. Frank's chaps know that you are a king. The prospect, in my opinion, is jolly interesting! At our other school you were simply 'Victor Orlando,' and nobody ever guessed your real identity. But at St. Frank's it'll be different."

"It will!" agreed Victor gruffly. "Everybody will be staring at me as though I were a freak!"

"Merely because you're a king?"

"Yes," said Victor. "I want to make my way freely—independently. I don't want all sorts of privileges and advantages just because I happen to be a king. It's not my fault I'm a king, is it?"

"Well, don't blame me," said Paul defensively.

"It's not all honey being a king," said the other. "There's nothing I loathe more than those occasions when I have to

appear in public, and to go to big functions, and appear before everybody as the 'boy king.' It's all rot! Things would have been topping at St. Frank's if that beastly journalist hadn't let the cat out of the bag."

"The news is in lots of other papers this morning," said Paul. "There's no hope of your hiding your light under a bushel now, old man."

"They've ruined everything!" grunted Victor. "I don't believe I'm going to be happy at St. Frank's."

"I only wish I could be in your shoes!" retorted Paul Maddox enviously. "It must be great fun, being a king!"

"You haven't tried it—so you don't know!"

"But I've always been with you," argued Paul. "And you've always had the limelight, whilst I've been left more or less in the dark."

"Lucky beggar!" said Victor. "There'll be too much limelight for me at St. Frank's!"

"Some people are never satisfied!" commented Paul with a sniff. "Even when a chap's a king, he doesn't want to be a king! I've never heard such——"

He broke off, an excited light coming into his eyes.

"Well?" asked Victor, turning away from the window and looking at him.

"By Jove!" breathed Paul Maddox. "I've got an idea, Vic! A really white-hot, sizzling idea!"

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CHAPTER 3.

Under False Colours!

KING VICTOR OF CARONIA was not particularly impressed.

"I've heard some of your ideas before," he commented tartly.

"But this one is a real corker!" urged Paul Maddox excitedly. "Do you remember that we went to a pantomime in London at Christmas time? That show called 'Cinderella'! Remember it?"

"Of course," said Victor. "There was a screamingly-funny comedian——"

"Never mind the comedian!" interrupted Paul. "Do you remember the girl who played the principal boy—'Prince Charming'?"

"You bet! She was great!"

"And do you remember that other girl—the dark one, who played 'Dandini'?"

"She was pretty good, too," smiled Victor. "But what the dickens——"

"In that pantomime, 'Dandini' changed places with 'Prince Charming,'" said Paul impressively.

King Victor stared.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated. "You don't mean——"

"Why not?" asked Paul eagerly. "Nobody knows us at St. Frank's! We're going down alone—so there'll be nobody to introduce us. I look just as much like a king as you do, don't I? Why not change places? You say that you're fed up with the idea—and I'd like to know how it feels to be a king! The wheeze ought to suit us both."

"Here, steady!" said Victor breathlessly. "Give me a chance to think!"

He did not think for long. Soon his mischievous eyes were twinkling, and on his good-natured face there was a broad grin.

"Yes, I can see some possibilities," he said dreamily. "We'll get to St. Frank's, and you'll be the king, and I'll be the subject. I say, what a lark! What a glorious spoof on the St. Frank's fellows!"

"You're on, then?" asked Paul breathlessly.

"Here's my hand on it," grinned Victor. "From this minute onwards I'm Paul Maddox, and you are Victor Orlando, King of Caronia!"

AT St. Frank's that afternoon there was considerable activity—particularly in the Junior quarters of the Ancient House.

It was a glorious summer's day, and, strictly speaking, cricket practice was on the schedule. But for once cricket was side-tracked.

By about three o'clock a number of Removites, looking hot and dusty, drifted upstairs to wash and change.

"Well, everything's all set, my sons," commented Nipper cheerily. "And we're a good hour before time."

"All the better!" said Fullwood. "I hate doing things in a last-minute rush. By Jove! There ought to be some fun this afternoon!"

"There will be!" chuckled Nipper.

Handforth's face, red and gleaming, emerged from a towel.

"How about going down to the train to meet these Caronian chaps?" he asked.

"Better not," said Nipper. "The less fuss we make, the better. Besides, my guv'nor has made arrangements to meet the train."

"Your guv'nor?" repeated Handforth, staring. "The Head's going to meet the train?"

"Not the Head himself," said Nipper. "But he's sending two big cars down."

Handforth looked indignant.

"Well, that's a bit thick!" he commented. "Old Wilkey comes along and warns us not to make any fuss; and Mr. Lee sends two cars down to the station to meet a couple of raw new kids!"

"One of those same raw kids, dear old fellow, being a king," murmured Vivian Travers.

"That's not the point!" said Handforth. "We were told that these chaps were to be treated in the same way as ordinary new kids. The Head doesn't send his car down to meet trains——"

"Hold on!" interrupted Nipper. "Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox are ordinary new kids. But you seem to have forgotten that some high officials from the Caronian Embassy are coming, too. It's only common courtesy for the Head to have the train met in an appropriate way. There'll be no fuss or ostentation. Those cars will just bring the party to St. Frank's, and, after the usual formalities, the new chaps will be brought over to the Ancient House and left to our mercy."

Handforth grinned.

"That's when the fun will start!" he said with relish. "Oh, well, perhaps you're right, Nipper. We can't do much until those fatheaded officials from the embassy have got through the giddy formalities. But, by George, we'll be watching—and we'll be ready!"

The Removites attired themselves in free-and-easy white flannels, and, as there was nothing much doing during the next hour, Handforth took it into his head to get out his little Morris Minor, and to run down to the village. Church and McClure, of course, went with him.

"You're not thinking of meeting that train, Handy?" asked Church suspiciously, as they drove down.

"Of course not, ass!"

"I mean, it wouldn't be quite the thing," said Church. "The Head's arranged everything——"

"Keep your hair on!" said Handforth. "If you want to know the truth, I'm doing a bit of detective work."

"Oh!"

"Yes, rather!" continued Handforth. "Didn't you twig Forrest and those other snobs going out of gates about ten minutes ago? All dressed up to the nines, if you please! There was something fishy about it, to my mind!"

"Nothing in that," said McClure. "I expect they're going to the station, to stand round and stare when the train arrives."

"Well, we're going to clear them off!" said Handforth firmly. "It has been definitely agreed that no Remove chaps shall be at the station. It's just like



Handforth's efforts to greet the schoolboy king in French and German were screamingly funny. "Somehow, I believe this fellow wants to speak to us!" grinned King Victor at last in perfect English.

those snobs to try to steal a march on us. Anyhow, I'm going to round them up, and ask them what the dickens they're up to!"

Rounding up Forrest & Co. was not a difficult matter. For they were all found at the end of the village, on the Bannington road. There was quite a crowd: Forrest and Gulliver and Bell of Study A, Gore-Pearce and Hubbard and Long of Study B, Owen major, Doyle, Tucker and a few others from the West House, and Merrell and Marriott and Snipe and a whole crowd of Fourth-Formers. All of them were in their "Sunday best."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Handforth, as he brought the Morris Minor to a halt opposite this gathering of dandies.

"If you've come here to start any of your rot, Handforth, you'd better think twice!" said Bernard Forrest, striding up to the car. "Take my advice, and clear off while you're safe!"

"Why, you silly idiot——"

"Easy, dear boy!" interrupted Forrest coolly. "You and your pals are hopelessly outnumbered. You don't want us to start anything unpleasant, do you?"

Handforth swallowed hard.

"What's your game?" he asked darkly. "What are you doing here, dressed up like tailors' dummies?"

Before Forrest could reply, a shout went up from the others. Handforth, gazing down the Bannington road, beheld no less than six magnificent limousine cars approaching. They were all gaily decorated, and each car was driven by a gorgeously liveried chauffeur, and each chauffeur had another liveried man by his side.

"What's—what's all this?" asked Handforth blankly.

"Nothing much," grinned Forrest. "We're meeting the London train, that's all. We're giving the King of Caronia the welcome he deserves. It's costing us a good bit, one way and another, but I reckon we shall get our money's worth. Anyhow, King Victor will get in touch with the right chaps as soon as he sets foot on the Bellton platform."

Handforth fairly gulped for breath.

"The right chaps?" he yelled. "You and your mouldy set! Why, it was distinctly agreed by everybody in the Remove——"

"We didn't agree to anything," broke in Forrest sourly. "If the Remove skipper and all you other fellows choose to ignore a king when he arrives at the school, it's your own funeral! But we're different! We believe in doing the thing in the right way."

Forrest turned aside, and a moment later he and his snobbish companions were swarming round the expensive limousines.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" ejaculated Handforth thickly. "We've got to do something, you chaps."

"But what can we do?" asked Church. "There are only three of us——"

"Perhaps you're right!" agreed Handforth, a gleam coming into his eyes. "We'll let 'em carry on with it! What do we care?"

BERNARD FORREST, in spite of his threats, was rather relieved when he saw the Morris Minor departing.

He proceeded to get very busy. The limousines drove up to the station yard, and they were arrayed in all their splendour outside the booking-office.

When the two cars came down from the school, Forrest lounged up to them and nodded coolly to the drivers.

"It's all right, you men," he said. "No need for you to wait. We're meeting these nobs from the Caronian Embassy."

"But the headmaster told us——" began one of the drivers.

"We've arranged it with him since then," interrupted Forrest glibly. "It's

a little special celebration of our own—you see? King Victor and his pal are coming into the Remove, and we're Remove chaps. The best thing you can do is to pop along to the George Tavern."

Forrest deftly slipped a pound note into each man's hand. They grinned and nodded.

"Good egg!" chuckled Gulliver, after the two school cars had gone. "You did that in a masterly way, Forrest, old bean. We've got the field to ourselves now."

"Didn't I tell you it could be worked easily enough?" grinned Bernard Forrest. "Now for King Victor of Caronia!"

"It's costing an awful lot of money——" began Bell.

"Who cares?" laughed Forrest. "We'll get it all back—with interest. We'll get pally with this ~~timpot~~ king in no time, and within a few days we'll be pretty thick with him. He and this fellow Maddox are simply rolling in money. Don't worry! It's a good investment."

There was plenty of time before the train came in, and Forrest proceeded to hold a little rehearsal. He lined up the liveried chauffeurs, making them stand at attention just outside the station, in front of the cars. The whole scene looked very imposing.

"As soon as you men hear the train coming in, you take up your positions and stand smartly to attention, as I've shown you," said Forrest cheerfully. "We chaps will go on the platform and meet the party as it leaves the pullman coach. Understand? And as soon as these Caronian johnnies appear, salute them and open the doors of the cars."

"Easy enough, young gent," said one of the chauffeurs.

The juniors passed on to the platform, and Ulysses Spencer Adams, the American boy, who was one of the party, looked a little sceptical.

"Gee! I just can't believe that this Orlando guy is a real, live, honest-to-goodness king," he said. "Seems kinda phoney to me. I'm sure tickled pink, fellers. This racket is costing me twenty-five frog-skins, but I don't give a whoop!"

"Twenty-five what?" asked Hubbard, staring.

"Twenty-five frog-skins," said Adams. "Green-backs!"

"Green-backs?"

"Bucks!" explained Adams.

"Bucks?"

"Dollars!" said the American boy.

"Gee! Ain't you guys dumb! Five pounds in your funny currency comes to twenty-five frog-skins in real money."

Some of the other Removites grinned.

Adams, being a one hundred per cent American, was very keen to be one of the first to greet the schoolboy king, and he had eagerly contributed a fiver towards the expenses.

It seemed an interminable wait before the signal was lowered; then followed a period of tenseness. At last the train itself came into sight down the line, and with a roar and a rush it entered the little station and pulled up against the platform.

Bernard Forrest and his cronies watched eagerly. The first and most startling thing they noticed was that the train consisted only of three ordinary coaches. There was no pullman at all!

This train was a part of the express from London. It was the custom, at Bannington, to detach three or four coaches from the express, hook a local engine on to them, and passengers for Bellton and Caistowe were thus carried straight through without changing.

The only people who alighted were Mr. Sharpe, the ironmonger, three of the lesser lights of the Moor View School—whom the St. Frank's fellows hardly knew—the landlord of the White Harp, and an old lady with a shopping-basket.

Forrest & Co. were frantic.

"By gad! They're not here!" breathed Claude Gore-Pearce, the millionaire's son.

"But they must be here!" snapped Bernard Forrest. "We saw the report in the papers, and—and the Head sent his own cars to meet the train, didn't he? Hi, guard!"

He ran up to the guard, and grabbed at that official's arm.

"Where's the king?" asked Forrest breathlessly.

"Now then, young man—now then!" said the guard admonishingly. "None of your games!"

"But isn't the King of Caronia on this train?"

"No, and the King of China, neither," said the guard sarcastically. "Trying to pull my leg?"

He waved his flag. This guard had only come on duty at Bannington, and he knew nothing of his passenger list—although he was quite certain that the train carried no king.

So it steamed out of the little station, leaving Forrest & Co. stranded on the platform, and outside, in the yard, the gaily decorated limousines and the smartly liveried chauffeurs remained unwanted.

Bernard Forrest had never felt so "done" in all his life.

CHAPTER 4.

Meeting His Majesty!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH was not entirely unconnected with that little fiasco at Bellton Station.

Upon leaving Forrest & Co., earlier, Handforth had driven like the wind towards Bannington. In fact, he had "trodden on the gas" so vigorously that Church and McClure had protested.

"What's the idea, Handy?" asked Church, as they sailed along. "Great Scott! We're doing nearly forty!"

"Pity it isn't nearly fifty!" snapped Handforth.

"But what's the hurry?"

"Use your brains!" Handforth had retorted. "Do you think we're going to let King Victor and his pal fall into the hands of that crowd of snobs? There's only one thing to do, my sons—and that is to intercept the train at Bannington."

"Oh, my only aunt!" said McClure.

"We'll just be able to do it," continued Handforth. "Unless we're held up by a traffic block in Bannington, we ought to get to the station a minute before the express."

Church and McClure were all in favour of the idea. If they could "dish" Forrest's elaborate plan by "stealing" the young king and his friend from the train at Bannington, it would be a distinct triumph.

Nipper and Travers and all the other prominent Removites had decided not to meet the train, but to await the moment when Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox would be brought over to the Ancient House, probably by the Head. Nipper and the other fellows knew nothing of Forrest's ingenious plan.

But Handforth did—and Handforth was doing his best to put a kink in it.

There were no traffic delays in Bannington, and the three Removites tumbled out of the Morris Minor and dashed upon the arrival platform just as the London express was drawing in. Handforth was looking flushed and triumphant.

"Well, we've done it, my sons!" he exclaimed. "Good egg!"

"But what are we going to do now?" asked Church.

"Get hold of those two new chaps, of course!"

"What about all the officials from the embassy?"

"Well, we can't take the whole crowd in my Minor, that's certain," replied Handforth. "But we can hire some other cars, can't we? Anyhow, we've got to diddle Forrest!"

They had no difficulty in spotting the special pullman coach which the railway company had attached to the train—but which had not been used. The three Removites were rather startled when they discovered that the coach was empty.

"What's the idea?" asked Handforth, as he appealed to the guard. "Where's the King of Caronia and his giddy suite? We thought they were coming down from London in this pullman!"

The guard smiled. He was not the guard who took charge of the "local" section of this train; Bannington was the end of his run.

"There seems to have been a last-minute change, young gents," he said. "That Pullman coach was to have been tacked on to the local—but it won't be. It's empty. We had fresh instructions just before we started out from London."

"Then the King of Caronia isn't on

the train at all?" ejaculated Handforth blankly.

The guard looked at the three school-boys with amusement.

"You're from St. Frank's, aren't you?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And that young king is for St. Frank's, isn't he?" went on the guard. "Well, maybe I can help you. If you look closely in those three carriages which have just been unhitched, you might find somebody you're looking for."

"Eh?" ejaculated Handforth.

"None of my business, of course," continued the guard, with a wink, "but by what I saw on the London platform, I seem to have an idea that them two boys did travel down on this train, after all. But the officials were left behind. See? I don't blame that young king for avoiding the publicity. Good luck to them!"



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"I say, thanks awfully!" said Handforth breathlessly.

They dashed along to the "local" section, and almost the first persons they saw were two sturdy-looking schoolboys who were on the platform, stretching their legs, just outside the open doorway of a third-class compartment.

"That can't be them," breathed Church. "They wouldn't travel third, Handy. Besides, they're English!"

Handforth paused uncertainly. He happened to glance back and he caught the eye of the friendly guard. The guard nodded significantly towards the two strangers.

"By George!" breathed Handforth.

He strode up to the two boys, followed by Church and McClure, who were quite certain that there was some blunder here. The two strangers were eying them with polite interest. Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox were vastly intrigued by the activities of Handforth & Co.—for they had spotted, at once, that these three boys wore the St. Frank's colours.

"Which of you chaps is the King of Caronia?" demanded Handforth, looking from Paul to Victor, and from Victor to Paul.

The leader of Study D was not celebrated for his tact; and in the present instance he made his inquiry with all his usual bluntness. The two young Caronians were momentarily startled, and they only stared blankly.

"By George! I'd forgotten!" muttered Handforth, glancing round at Church and McClure. "They're foreign, aren't they?"

"But look here, Handy——"

"What's their language?" hissed Handforth. "Slav, isn't it? My hat! How the dickens do you speak Slav?"

"Perhaps they don't use Slav at all!" whispered McClure. "Perhaps they speak German—or Italian. In any case, I'm not certain that these are the right——"

"Well, we'll soon find out," interrupted Handforth, turning back to the two strangers. "Now, lemme see! Ahem! Er—*bon jour!* Er—*comment allez-vous?*"

The two strangers only stared, and Church tugged hastily at Handforth's sleeve.

"Shut up!" muttered Handforth. "*Messieurs les voyageurs, je suis bien a votre disposition!*"

"You—you hopeless chump!" breathed Church. "You're speaking French—or what you think is French! What's the good of telling these chaps that you're at their service—in French?"

"Great Scott! I'd forgotten!" gasped

Handforth. "Perhaps I'd better try German, or Italian!"

"But you can't speak German or Italian, you idiot!"

"H'm! Not much, anyhow," admitted Handforth, scratching his head. "That's awkward!" He turned back to the two strangers. "Er—er—*guten morgen.*"

The two strangers still stared, and Church and McClure grinned.

"That means 'Good morning,' fat-head!" whispered Mac. "And it's afternoon!"

"I don't know how to say 'Good afternoon,' but they ought to know what I'm driving at," said Handforth, beginning to feel helpless. "Er—*es freut mich sie kennen zu lernen.* Well, how's that? Can you understand? *Stets gern zu ihren——*"

"Oh, dry up!" said Church impatiently. "It's all very well to say that you are pleased to meet these chaps, and to tell them that you are at their service—but you might at least speak properly. That German of yours is so awful that I can hardly recognise it myself. And these two chaps can't understand a giddy word."

"Then it's pretty clear that they can only understand Slav," said Handforth, with a sigh. "We're done!" He looked at the two, and shrugged his shoulders. "Sorry, it's no good. Na poo! *Nicht gut!*"

The stranger with the curly chestnut hair turned to his fair companion.

"It seems to me, Vic," he said, "that these chaps are trying to get in touch with us."

Handforth's jaw sagged.

"They're English!" he gurgled. "They're not those Caronian——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two strangers yelled with laughter. For some minutes they had been keeping their faces straight only with the greatest difficulty. Now the effort was beyond them, and they fairly yelled with merriment.

"I say, look here——" began Handforth wrathfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you think you can stand there, howling like a couple of Cheshire cats, you're jolly well mistaken!" roared Handforth.

"Very funny, isn't it?"

"Oh, it's a scream!" gasped one of the strangers.

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

Handforth fairly danced with anger.

"Are you chaps laughing at me, too?" he demanded, turning on his chums. "Are

you going to let these idiot's score over us? I'll bet they're new chaps for the Grammar School—or the River House!"

"No, no!" gurgled one of the strangers. "Frightfully sorry, old chap—forgive us for laughing, but we just couldn't help it. Your efforts to get into conversation with us were too funny for words."

"Oh, were they?" asked Handforth, glaring.

"I'm afraid we shall have to be going now—our train will be starting in a minute," said the curly-haired boy. "We're booked for St. Frank's College, you know. I think Bellton is our station —"

"St. Frank's?" broke in Handforth excitedly. "Here, I say, what's your name?"

"Paul Maddox."

"What!"

"Paul Maddox."

"But—but you can't be Paul Maddox!" said Handforth suspiciously. "You're English."

"No, I'm not—I'm Caronian."

"But you speak English as good as I do!"

"That's because English is the language of my country," explained the curly-haired boy blandly. "I'm afraid we've had a bit of a joke at your expense. Never mind. I hope we can be friends, just the same. This is my chum, Victor Orlando."

It was Victor himself who was speaking, of course, and it was Paul Maddox who was introduced as "Victor Orlando." But Handforth & Co. knew no different. The great substitution was definitely "on."

CHAPTER 5.

Pulling Handy's Leg!

HANDFORTH & Co. stared at the two boys with greater interest than ever.

"You're Paul Maddox—and this other chap is Victor Orlando?" asked Handforth breathlessly. "Then—then it's a fact? You're the two Caronian chaps for the St. Frank's Remove?"

"Yes, that is so," said Paul haughtily.

It was the first time he had spoken, and he did so with unconscious importance. He was acting the part of the king now, and he told himself that he was going to revel in the whole business.

"Look here, I'm a bit mixed," said Handforth suspiciously. "You say that you two chaps are Caronians? Is that really true? Honour bright?"

"Honour bright!" said the two in one voice.

"Oh, well, I've got to believe you, then," said Handforth, relieved. "But I thought you were being escorted down by a lot of officials from the Caronian Embassy? I thought you were coming in a Pullman coach?"

"His majesty dismissed the officials in London," explained Victor smoothly. "His majesty dislikes all pomp and splendour. He thought it better that we should travel alone."

"Come, Paul, we must get into the train," said Maddox.

"No, wait a minute!" urged Handforth. "We came here to intercept you. A lot of our chaps—snobs, most of them—have gone to Bellton Station with some whacking great limousines. Their wheeze is to meet you there, and welcome you with a lot of bunkum and display. So we thought we'd run along and haul you out of the train here. I've got my little car outside, and we can run along to the school in next to no time. So we shall diddle those snobs nicely!"

Victor considered for a moment and glanced at Paul.

"Does your majesty approve?" he asked respectfully. "Would your majesty care to continue by train, or go with these friendly fellows in their car?"

"Perhaps it would be as well to accept the offer which has been so kindly tendered," said Paul graciously.

"His majesty will accompany you," said Victor, facing Handforth & Co. again.

Paul turned to the open railway carriage door, and waved an imperious hand.

"You may fetch out my attache-case, Paul," he said in a voice of command.

"As your majesty desires," murmured Victor.

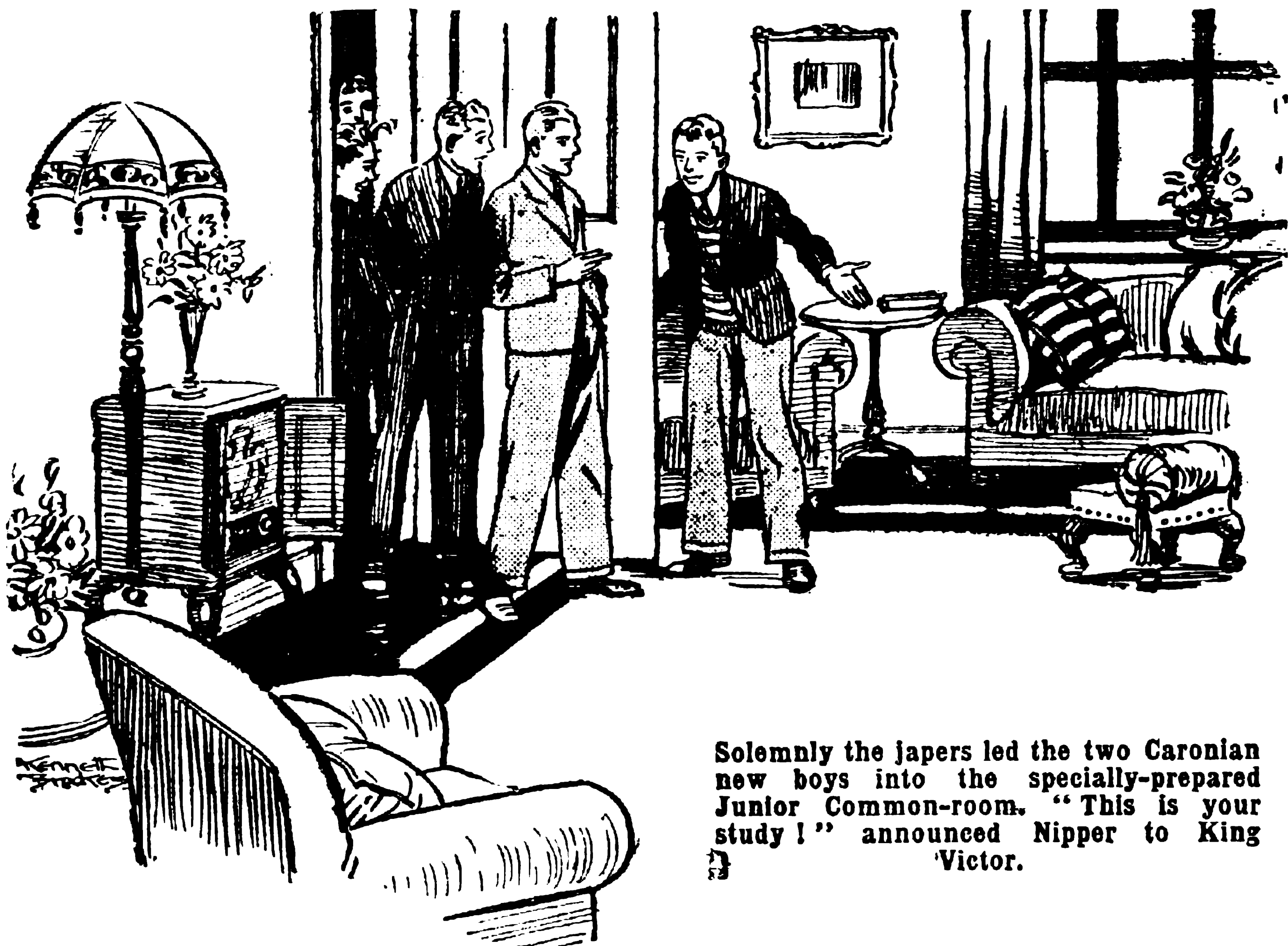
Handforth & Co. looked on in astonishment. Even Church and McClure, usually so alert, had not the faintest idea that they were being japed.

Victor emerged from the railway carriage with two attache-cases.

"One moment, my friend," he murmured, drawing Handforth aside, and lowering his voice. "You wish to be on good terms, I take it, with King Victor?"

"Well, of course!" replied Handforth. "By the way, I haven't introduced myself yet. My name's Handforth—Edward Oswald Handforth, of Study D. These two chaps, Church and McClure, are my chums."

"I am very delighted to meet you," replied Victor gravely. "My name, as you know, is Paul Maddox. You may have read in the newspapers that King Victor desires to be known at St. Frank's merely



Solemnly the japers led the two Caronian new boys into the specially-prepared Junior Common-room. "This is your study!" announced Nipper to King Victor.

as 'Victor Orlando.' But you must not take too much notice of that."

"No?" asked Handforth in surprise.

"No," said Victor firmly. "His majesty is an exceedingly nice young fellow, and as long as you treat him with the deference that is his due, he will be graciously pleased to smile upon you."

"My only hat!"

"He is inclined, however, to get huffy and upset unless he is treated in a manner which is fitting to his station," continued Victor coolly. "His majesty is not a snob, but you will easily understand that he has a great pride in his position. He is haughty, too. Unless you address him as 'your majesty' every time you speak to him, he will be greatly offended."

"Oh!" said Handforth blankly.

"Just a friendly little word of warning—that's all!" murmured Victor. "I thought you'd like to know."

Inwardly, he was chuckling. This was a little joke of his own—on Paul. Paul wanted to be the king—so Paul should have a good old dose of it!

The extraordinary thing was that Handforth "fell" for it so easily. At St. Frank's, he had been loud in his declarations that King Victor was merely a "new kid," and that he should be treated as such. But now, under the influence of

Victor's personality, he completely succumbed.

There was a little interruption as the local train pulled out, leaving the five boys on the platform. Victor seized the opportunity to take Church and McClure aside, and to whisper the same warning to them. Paul was totally unconscious of this little by-play.

"Well, we'd better be going, I suppose," said Handforth, taking a deep breath. "Are you ready, Maddox? Will—er—your majesty follow me?" he added, glancing at Paul. "I hope your majesty won't mind being a bit squashed in my little car? I dare say it is smaller than the cars your majesty has been accustomed to."

Paul looked at him hard.

"I shall be all right, thank you," he said stiffly.

"Your majesty has relieved me," said Handforth.

"Well, let's get on," nodded Paul.

"This way, your majesty," said Handforth, waving a hand.

Victor inwardly grinned as he saw Paul's discomfiture. Clearly, Paul didn't like being addressed as "your majesty" so frequently. The wheeze was working well.

They all went down the platform and passed out through the booking-office.

Handforth, who never troubled to lower his voice, talked loudly with Paul, and people turned to stare. The frequent use of the words "your majesty" naturally attracted attention.

Before a couple of minutes had elapsed people were crowding round. Everybody had seen the reports in the newspapers about the young King of Caronia; all Bannington knew that Victor was coming to St. Frank's. And here he was—in the flesh! In an extraordinarily short space of time the crowds had increased to something like a mob.

"Welcome to Bannington, King Victor!" went up a shout.

"Hurrah!"

"It's the king!"

"Where? Which is King Victor? Where's the boy king?"

People crowded round more closely than ever, and the excitement grew intense. Handforth & Co., quite startled, were obliged to fight their way to the little Morris Minor.

"Here, go easy!" roared Handforth, glaring round. "What's all the fuss about?"

"Which one of 'em is the king, mate?" asked somebody, pushing forward.

"Rats!" replied Handforth. "These two chaps are St. Frank's chaps! We don't recognise kings, or dukes, or princes in the Remove!" He managed to open the door of the car. "This way, your majesty!" he added loudly. "I think your majesty had better sit in the back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Everybody laughed at Handforth's contradictory behaviour. His deference to the schoolboy king did not look very much as though he regarded Victor as an ordinary Remove chap.

Paul, who wasn't at all certain that this little Morris suited his new dignity, nevertheless climbed in. Victor scrambled in after him, and Handforth got into the driving-seat.

"One of you chaps can get in," he said to Church and McClure. "I don't care which it is. The other will have to come by bus."

"Oh, will he?" said Mac, glaring. "You'd better think again, Handy! Come on, Church, old man—plenty of room on my lap."

"Good egg!" grinned Church.

They managed to squash in and close the door. Handforth, who was too busy getting out of the crowd, had no time to



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object. He was glad enough to get away. "Phew!" he ejaculated, as the car glided past the outskirts of the crowd. "All that giddy fuss, you know. Did you ever see a crowd gather more quickly?"

"Perhaps kings do not often come to Bannington?" asked Victor mildly, from the rear.

"Great Scott, no!" said Handforth. "We've never had a king here before—at least, not a schoolboy."

"Well, there was no need to make such a fuss," grumbled Paul. "It was your fault, Handforth. I think your name is Handforth, is it not?"

"My fault?" gasped Handforth, glancing round.

"Certainly it was!" replied Paul with cold dignity. "Was it necessary for you to shout 'your majesty' at me as you were coming through the booking-office? Kindly remember, in future, to be more careful."

"But look here——"

"Enough!" said Paul sternly.

"Yes, but hang it——"

"His majesty has spoken!" said Victor in a tone of reproach. "My friend, please do not forget yourself again."

Handforth swallowed hard.

"All right," he said thickly. "We won't argue here. But wait until we get to St. Frank's!"

He drove on, his brain in very much of a whirl. And as he drove a sudden idea flashed into his head. King Victor was very obviously aware of his own importance; he evidently desired his kingly person to be treated with due deference. Then it was only right that St. Frank's should welcome his majesty in a fitting way. Handforth decided that St. Frank's would oblige!

CHAPTER 6.

SpooF and CounterspooF!

"**N**OT come!" said Nipper, in astonishment.

"That's what I said—they've not come!" repeated Bernard Forrest sourly.

"But you must be wrong," said Nipper. "The school cars were sent down to meet the train——"

"I can't help that!" interrupted Forrest. "We were there to meet the train, too. And the train came in, and those confounded Caronians weren't on it! It's cost us quids and quids—and all for nothing!"

"Well, that's your funeral," said Nipper cheerfully. "Nobody asked you to hire special limousines and meet the train—just for the sake of giving a big show. But I'm jiggered if I can understand the thing. It was definitely arranged that Victor Orlando and

Paul Maddox should come down by that train."

There was quite a crowd in the St. Frank's Triangle. Bernard Forrest and his fellow dandies had arrived some minutes earlier—in the hope of getting some news. But nothing was known at the school. The two Caronians had not arrived.

"Well, it's a beastly fraud!" said Forrest bitterly. "We spend all this money, and we get nothing for it!"

"I suppose they changed their minds at the last minute, dear old fellow," suggested Travers. "Kings, don't forget, are privileged to change their minds. His youthful majesty is probably coming down by car, instead of by train. Well, well! It serves you dashed well right."

"Oh, go and fry your face!" snapped Forrest, turning away.

There was nothing else for it but to dismiss the limousines, and the snobs were thoroughly fed-up with the whole affair.

Still, as they had paid for the cars, they decided to ride to Bannington in them—just to get a little of their money's worth. There was just a chance that they might encounter the young king on the way—or learn something about him in Bannington.

They certainly did not suspect, when a modest Morris Minor hummed past them, that it contained the schoolboy king. They did not even recognise it as Handforth's "bus." Morris Minors were beneath their dignity.

Meanwhile, back at St. Frank's the Triangle was a scene of great activity. This activity had commenced immediately following a telephone call for Nipper. The call had come through just as Forrest & Co. were departing in the limousines. Nipper was grinning hugely, and he bustled about giving orders to the Removites, who, all smiles, readily carried them out.

Thus, when Handforth's Morris Minor shot through the gates of St. Frank's, a great crowd of Removites and Fourth-Formers had assembled in the Triangle. They were waiting to greet his majesty, King Victor of Caronia—in the way as suggested by Handforth over the 'phone to Nipper.

A red carpet—which had seen better days, and which had been scrounged from an old store-cupboard—led down the Ancient House steps. At the foot of them, standing to attention, was a band; a very extraordinary band, for the instruments seemed to consist mostly of saucepan lids, an iron bath-tub, tin whistles and mouth-organs.

The Morris Minor came to a stop.

"Here we are, your majesty!" said Handforth loudly from inside the vehicle. "This is St. Frank's, your majesty!"

With great dignity his majesty stepped out of the car. On his head was a crown, and cloaked about his person was a robe of red and white ermine. These had been hired at a costumier's in Bannington. Handforth had kidded the Caronian boys that the king should appear at St. Frank's in a manner representative of his rank. Victor and Paul had been

suspicious, but Handforth was so insistent that they had at last agreed.

The appearance of his majesty was the signal for the "band" to commence operations.

Clatter, bang, crash, bang!

Saucepan lids clanged, tin whistles shrilled and mouth-organs blared. A hideous cacophony shattered the serenity of St. Frank's.

Removites and Fourth-Formers swarmed round.

"Stand back, stand back!" roared Handforth. "Allow me to introduce Victor, King of Caronia!"

Paul Maddox, in the rôle of King Victor, was looking startled. The noise perpetrated by the band was enough to startle anybody, of course, but that was not the only reason for Paul's consternation. He could see that this comic welcome was a spoof. He did not know whether to feel amused or indignant.

However, he was not allowed to give the matter much thought. The band had desisted. Juniors were swarming round him, and his arm was soon aching as he shook hand after hand. The real Victor, elbowed roughly aside, was enjoying himself hugely. What a relief it was to be ignored!

But he misjudged the St. Frank's boys if he thought that they were ignoring him because of his supposed lesser importance. It was merely curiosity which impelled them to crowd round the "king." After they had nearly wrung Paul's hand off, they give their full attention to Victor. They greeted him almost as heartily—if, perhaps, a little more casually.

"Well, we're awfully pleased to have you two fellows in the Remove," said Nipper. "I'm the Form captain, that's why I'm doing the jawing. Good luck to you both! We hope you'll soon settle down and become real, genuine Removites."

Victor nudged him.

"Better be careful when you're talking to King Victor!" he murmured. "Your comic welcome hasn't pleased him, and he's very particular. You've got to say 'your majesty,' or he'll get huffy."

"Then I'm very much afraid that he'll get huffy," replied Nipper smoothly. "We're not using 'your majesty' or any other ceremonial form of address here."

"Hush!" panted Victor, in horror. "You'll offend him!"

"Just a minute," said Nipper steadily. "You're Maddox, aren't you? Well, old man, that's all right. You're Maddox of the Remove. And this other chap is Orlando of the Remove."

Paul was somewhat taken aback.

"Are you referring to me?" he asked haughtily.

"Let's have a thorough understanding," said Nipper cheerfully. "No, Handy, leave this to me." He turned to Paul. "There's nothing like having things straight at the very beginning. You are Victor Orlando, King of Caronia?"

"Well?" said Paul, pulling himself up to his full height.

"Well, old man, you'll have to forget the last bit at St. Frank's," said Nipper gently. "You're Victor Orlando. That King of Caronia stuff doesn't apply here. That's why we arranged the welcome stunt just now—to show you that even kings are spoofed as much as anybody else. In the Remove, we're all just schoolboys—see?"

Paul, in his heart, was relieved. He was getting a bit fed-up with the fuss, anyhow.

"I am glad that you have been so frank with me," he said graciously. "It is, as you say, just as well that we should have a thorough understanding at the beginning. Very well! I am Orlando of the Remove. Splendid!"

"Welcome to St. Frank's, Orlando!"

"Hurrah!"

"Spoken like a man!"

"He's all right!"

There was much laughter and cheering. The Removites and Fourth-Formers, on the whole, were very astonished to find that these two newcomers did not look at all foreign. They were even more surprised to find that they spoke the ordinary Public School English, just the same as themselves.

"However," said Nipper, "we fellows of the Remove recognise that you are not quite the same as any ordinary new boy, Orlando. So we hope you'll honour us by letting us escort you to your special study."

"Oh! Do I get a special study?" asked Paul.

"Naturally," said Nipper gravely. "Nothing can alter the fact that you are really a king. And, after all, a king must have a study suitable to his station. So we shall be honoured, Orlando, if you will accompany us."

"Just a minute," said the real Victor. "Wouldn't it be better for us to run along to see the headmaster, or somebody? I believe we're expected—"

"We will escort you to the headmaster's house immediately after you have seen your study," replied Nipper. "At least, we will escort you to the Housemaster's study. He, no doubt, will desire to take you to the Head. We wouldn't dream of robbing him of that privilege."

Even the genuine Victor was impressed now. His own spoofing wasn't going quite so well as he had hoped. It had worked all right with Handforth to begin with—but these other Removites weren't swallowing it. They weren't falling for that 'his majesty' stuff.

It was an impressive crowd which entered the Ancient House. Well over half the Remove was there, acting as an escort. It was general knowledge that another "spoof" was on, and the fellows were eager and amused. The young king of Caronia was once more having his leg pulled.

It was Nipper who led the way to Orlando's special "study." Actually, Nipper led the way to the Remove Common-room, and he

(Continued on page 24.)

Special Cinema Number—Reels and Reels of Laughs.



No. 13. Vol. 1.

Handforth Productions Ltd.
Present

"EDITOR'S CHIN-WAG"
A One-Reel News Film.

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July 18th, 1931.

Two-Reel Comedy
Thriller.

"THE MUFFIN MAN"

(This is to certify that "Editor's Chin-Wag" has been passed by the ST. FRANK'S BOARD OF FILM CENSORS for presentation to any audience)

GET ready to laugh, you fellows! What do you think of my latest stunt? A Special Film Number! Fix your blinkers on these pages, and bust your buttons.

This PROGRAMME is a continuous one—you can read this paper over as many times as you like, without extra charge. That's more than you can do at the pictures. We have an ALL STAR CAST this week. Even Our Interesting Interviewer chats to a celebrated Film Star for you.

The Price of Admission to this ripping show is TWOPENCE (paid in advance). The BOX OFFICE is now open at your nearest paper shop, and I advise you to get your ticket at once.

I'm sorry to say that our talking apparatus is not on view this week. I refer to William Napoleon Browne—the silly ass of the Fifth.

Don't forget, you chaps, that the brain that thought of this Special Cinema Number has thought of many other ripping stunts for future use. We're going to have some fine larks in this WEEKLY before long and we'll make it the brightest paper in Britain. Look out for further Special Numbers.

From the Story by
FATTY LITTLE.

Scenario by
WALTER CHURCH.

Paper and ink by
ST. FRANK'S SCHOOL.

Large imposition by
MR. CROWELL.

Titles, sub-titles, under-titles, and all other titles by
ARNOLD McCLURE

Released by:
GRUBB & GLUTTON, FILMS INC.

Controlled by:
EDWARD O. HANDFORTH.

Directed by:
EDWARD O. HANDFORTH

Thick ears by
EDWARD O. Ditto

(Sorry, Fatty. No room for the story after all this. E. O. H.)

THIS WEEK'S ATTRACTIONS

CINEMA DE LUXE,
Bannington High Street.

Showing daily at 2.30, 6.0 and 8.30. Roland Butter and Hammond Egges in "THE PICNIC BASKET," a six-reel Mirthquake. Supported by an ALL STAR CAST. Children under two not admitted. Also NEWS FILM, EDUCATIONAL PICTURE and TOPICALS.

PICTUREDROME, BELLTON.

ONE WEEK ONLY—and quite enough, too. "ALMOND BLOSSOM"—a thrilling, blood-freezing story of the Mysterious East, featuring LONG TUNG, the famous Chinese Talkie Star. Also, "CHEERY BLOSSOM," an epic film of the Polish brush, featuring KLEEN BOOTZ, the famous Polish musician.

Brainless-Babble Films Ltd., Present

Talkie Tangle

Featuring **SIR MONTIE TREGELLIS-WEST.**

I AM really lucky, dear old chaps. Some little while ago, I had an experience I wouldn't have missed for quids—at least, not for under a good number of them.

The Bellton Picturedrome had just installed their new Talking Apparatus, and I wanted to go to their first talkie—a picture entitled "The Miser's Maw." Neither Nipper nor Tommy cared about it, so I went by myself—and I'm jolly glad I did.

It so chanced that the talking apparatus broke down that night and the wrong words came in the wrong places. Or, rather—well, you know what I mean.

I assure you, dear old fellows, that I sat there and saw the hero talking to his dog. He said:

"I love you! Be mine! Let us fly together to some distant land."

And the dog answered:

"Oh, Charles, that can never

be. Do not—oh, do not tempt me thus."

Rather peculiar, what. And then, when the hero did meet his girl, he spoke to her like this:

"You think you'll crush me with your devilish cunning," he hissed. "But I tell you, Jasper Munnie-Bagge, that I will fight you to the last ditch. Aye, I'll battle until I can no longer stand."

And the girl smiled at him and answered in a coarse voice:

"Wretched fool! You do not know my power. Begone, before I lay my whip around your shoulders."

Almost uncanny. They got the apparatus right again before the film was shown for the second time, but I do know that the film was a lot more interesting while it was wrong.

If the Bellton Picturedrome will let me know by postcard when their talkie machine is due to break down again, I'll be there if I have to pay five bob for a seat.

A St. Frank's Interest Film.

IMAGINARY INTERVIEWS.

No. 4. MR. MICHAEL MOUSE.

ACTING on the instructions of our esteemed and awe-inspiring editor, I took the Graf Zeppelin to Hollywood and knocked at the door of the magnificent residence of Mr. Micky Mouse. The answer to my knock rather surprised me. The door opened and two rifles poked out. A voice cried "Hands up!"

I put my hands up—rather quickly—and two mouse footmen came out with the guns in their hands. On seeing me, they lowered their guns and apologised,

"We're awfully sorry, sir," trembled the first mouse. "We didn't know it was you."

"Why the guns?" I asked. "Are you expecting a Chicago bootlegger, or something?"

"The fact is," explained the second mouse, "there's a couple of cats snooping around here somewhere, and we have to be careful. That pest Felix called here yesterday, and snaffled my brother Maurice."

"I've called to see Mr. Micky Mouse," I said.

(Continued in column 5)

Sensational Studios Present a Puls

CANNIBAL

Story and titles by

TOM DOUGH STOOD ON THE BURNING DECK.

The sun blazed down on the great liner which was ploughing its way through tropical seas. Tom felt like a large chunk of melted butter as his feet sizzled on the scorching deck. But had he known it, his position was to become even warmer in a few moments. For creeping up behind our hero was a sinister figure, with a large penknife clutched in its upraised arm. Suddenly the bold bad villain lunged forward, the blade of his knife glittering nine hundred and ninety-nine fires in the sunlight.

"NOW I'VE GOT YOUR DOUGH, DOUGH!"

he cried triumphantly. But before he could bring the knife plunging down, the ship gave a terrific lurch, and he lost his balance, and dented the deck with his boko.

Tom's heart beat forty to the dozen when he realised what a narrow shave he had had, and he gazed coolly at the prostrate form of the villain.

"I've foiled you again, Stephen Murgatroyd!" said the boy scornfully. "I know you want to kill me so that you can bag the money left me by my father, old Lotts Dough, but you're going to be unlucky."

Murky Murgatroyd said nothing, but rose to his feet and walked away with hate in his eyes. Meanwhile, I forgot to mention that

THE SHIP WAS SINKING.

That terrific lurch had been caused by the vessel striking a lump of seaweed or something, and it was now on its last legs. Our hero found himself struggling in the sea, and as he couldn't spot a lifeboat in the offing he decided to swim round and look out for land.

For hours and hours he swam miles and miles, thoroughly enjoying his dip. He spotted one or two islands but didn't like the look of them, so he gave them a miss. However, eventually he found one which took his fancy, and with a gasp of relief he landed on the golden sands.

ating Drama of the South Seas.

ISLAND!

E. O. HANDFORTH.

"Wonderful!" breathed the boy. "Now all my troubles are over. Old Murgatroyd will never worry me again." But he was wrong. A sudden hullabaloo from behind caused him to look round.

COMING TOWARDS HIM WAS
AN ARMY OF CANNIBALS—
LED BY STEPHEN MURGA-
TROYD!

Tom was jolly annoyed to think that the villain had raced him to the island, and he showed his displeasure by knocking out about fifty of the cannibals. But superior numbers told, and our luckless hero found himself trussed up like a turkey. Murgatroyd leered at Tom.

"Now I've got you—this is your finish!" he snarled; then turned to the cannibal chief. "Do your stuff."

"Oolah boolah, walla walla!" ordered Ole King Cole, which in English meant:

"PREPARE THE COOKING
POT!"

Tom was dismayed at the thought of making a nice juicy steak for the cannibals. He struggled desperately, and niggers went flying in all directions. Murgatroyd, tearing his hair in rage, rushed up, but Tom butted him in the tummy. The villain staggered back and sat on the point of a spear.

Tom, helpless in his bonds, was subdued after half an hour's terrific scuffling, and then the blacks—all of whom had black eyes, only they didn't show—dragged him towards a stone block beside the cooking pot.

HE WAS DOOMED TO DIE.

Our plucky hero was forced to kneel, his head resting on the block. A huge cannibal raised a spear and brought it flashing down.

Bang!
Tom Jones fell out of his bed in Pimlico and hit the floor with a thud.

"Gosh, what a dream!" he exclaimed.

THE END



READY
WIT!

Collected by REGGIE PITT.

HALLO, everybody! Here we are again. Still disturbing the old ether.

This is a Special Cinema Number. You know, it has always been Handforth's ambition to be a film star. And quite right, too. He has the kind of face that always ought to be "screened."

Why is—by the way, this is an original riddle. Why is Coates, the Cotton King, like Charlie Chaplin? Because they both made their fortunes from "reels."

Talking of films, I have thought out an absolutely new and original ending for a drama. A finish that has never appeared before. It's a close-up! A large picture of the hero, with the heroine in his arms, indulging in a little osculatory exercise. (That's Latin for kissing.) Do you think, if I

sent this to one of the big film companies, they might pay me £100 for the idea?

Nipper asked me the other day if I had ever thought of what I should do if I had Douglas Fairbanks' face and figure. I haven't. But I've often wondered what he would do if he had mine.

I've just read a pathetic story of a cinema-photographer who was taking a jungle film. The poor fish wound the camera the wrong way, and took it all upside down—from back to front—inside out—and goodness knows what. I should like to see that film. Imagine the lion eating an antelope with his tail, and then being so pleased about it that he wags his mouth. It would be funny, too, to see the lion running backwards. Of course, if it had been Teddy Long, it would have been quite natural.

IMAGINARY INTERVIEWS

(Continued from Column 2)

"Certainly, sir! Will you follow me? Mind the mouse-trap at the corner here."

I went in and found Mr. Mouse sitting at breakfast, which consisted of breadcrumbs and cheese rind. He greeted me cordially by pulling off his tail and playing the Overture to Lohengrin on my fingers and top-knot.

"Have some breakfast," he squeaked. "I know you don't like cheese rind—but what about a nice sausage?"

"Thanks awfully, Mr. Mouse"

"Come with me to my sausage-kennels," he said.

We went out to the sausage-kennels, and found a number of sausages sitting up and barking. Mr. Mouse quickly cut

some slices of bread and placed them in a row on the ground. Then he put the sausages in between the bread-slices—so that they looked like the black and white keys on a piano. With this instrument he played me The Rustle of Spring, after which the sausages each jumped on to a slice of bread and another slice jumped on top to form sandwiches. Very nice they were, too.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Mouse, for your kind interview," I said, when we had finished eating. "I'll have to be getting back now, or I shall bag lines from my Form-master."

"I'm very glad to have met you," squeaked Mr. Mouse. "Come again some time. I'll show you the way out."

And he walked with me to the door—not forgetting to play Rachmaninoff's Prelude on the mouse-trap as we went by.

HIS MAJESTY OF THE REMOVE!

(Continued from page 20.)

flung open the door with a certain amount of pomp.

"Your study, Orlando," he said smoothly.

"We do hope you'll be comfortable in it," said Travers, in an earnest voice. "Of course, it will be for you to say whether Maddox shares it with you or not."

They crowded in. Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox—who had now discarded his crown and ceremonial robes—looked about them in wonder and delight.

The Ancient House Junior Common-room, even at ordinary times, was a fine apartment. With its panelled walls, its luxurious easy-chairs and lounges, it was a popular resort of the Removites. But just at present it was completely changed.

There were gorgeous hangings of red and gold plush. There were vases with festoons of flowers. There were soft rugs on every section of the floor, and each chair contained numbers of beautiful cushions. The transformation was startling, but Orlando and Maddox knew nothing of this. To them the apartment was just a handsome, imposing room.

"Well, this is glorious!" said Paul wonderingly. "And is this really my study?"

"A king must have something special," murmured Nipper.

"Oh, rather!" said Paul hastily. "Thanks most awfully. You will, of course, share it with me, Paul?" he added, addressing Victor in a voice of command rather than a voice of invitation.

"Your majesty honours me," said Victor in a tone of awe.

The Removites were keeping their faces straight with difficulty. It had been an anxious moment at first, but these two newcomers were once again completely spoofed. They had no idea that they were the victims of a jape. All the cushions and rugs and other luxuries had been contributed by such fellows as Archie Glenthorne, Travers, and Singleton, who had partially stripped their own studies in order to add to the impressiveness of this "joke" study.

"We will leave you for a while—just for a few minutes," said Nipper kindly. "You may want to compose yourselves before meeting the Housemaster. So we will return very shortly. In the meantime, please make yourselves thoroughly comfortable."

The Removites crowded out of the Common-room, and the door was closed upon the two Caronians. The juniors only waited until they got to the lobby, and then they burst into roars of laughter.

"Ye gods and little fishes! Spoofed up to the eyes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They haven't guessed a thing!"

"We've started well, you chaps!" grinned Nipper. "We've twice japed the king in five minutes after his arrival. That'll show

him—when he gets to know the truth—that he's regarded as just as ordinary chap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I like them," said Reggie Pitt of the West House. "You'd never take 'em for foreigners, and they seem to be sports, too."

"Orlando is a bit too haughty," commented Nipper. "I suppose he can't help that, poor chap—he's a king—but we'll jolly soon make him forget it in the Remove."

"Rather!"

They crowded out into the Triangle, and were just in time to greet Bernard Forrest & Co. as they returned. Forrest gave the crowd a sour look.

"What is there to laugh at?" he asked tartly.

"Plenty!" grinned Handforth. "If we weren't laughing at King Victor and his pal we'd be laughing at you."

"What do you mean—laughing at King Victor and his pal?" said Forrest, with a start.

"They're indoors."

"What!" yelled Merrell. "But—but we thought they hadn't come!"

"They've come all right," said Handforth coolly. "I brought 'em."

"You."

"Didn't you know?" asked Handforth blandly. "I met them at Bannington, and brought them here in my Morris Minor."

Forrest took a deep breath.

"You—you poacher!" he shouted thickly. "You met us in the village, heard what we were going to do, and so you went on to Bannington!"

"Exactly!" grinned Handforth. "Pretty smart of me, wasn't it?"

"You—you—you——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The discomfiture of Forrest & Co. was complete.

"It was your own fault, Forrest," said Nipper. "And go easy with the two Caronians when you see them. They're in the Common-room now. Only they don't know it's the Common-room—they think it's their study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've japed 'em beautifully," laughed Reggie Pitt. "We've hung the Common-room with plush curtains, we've put lovely rugs on the floor and cushions on the chairs, and King Victor thinks that he's in luck's way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you chaps talk to me about pomp and splendours!" said Forrest disdainfully. "Why, I'm dashed if you haven't been doing the same thing yourselves!"

"With a difference," said Nipper. "We're spoofing these chaps. But your little affair at the station wasn't intended as a spoof, and you know it. Your idea was to impress King Victor with your own importance. Well, thanks to Handy, the whole thing has fallen flat."

Bernard Forrest, with a sneer on his lips, and a look of excitement in his eyes, turned away.

"Come on, you fellows," he said to his cronies. "We'll go indoors and introduce ourselves to King Victor."

"Rather!" went up a chorus.

"Hold on!" said Handforth, planting himself in front of them. "We can't prevent you rotters from introducing yourselves; but you'd better not tell the new chaps that the Common-room is not their study."

"Oh! And why not?" asked Forrest.

"Because, my son, if you give the spoof away we'll slaughter you!" retorted Handforth. "Understand? Those chaps are kidded, and the time hasn't arrived for them to be un-kidded. See?"

Forrest shrugged.

"Oh, all right," he grunted. "We'll keep up your childish jape, if you like."

He and the others went in, and it was quite certain that they would say nothing to upset the little game. For they knew well enough that they would indeed be "slaughtered" if they gave the show away.

However, they were not concerned with that. Their main object was to get in touch with the schoolboy king, to introduce themselves to him, and to fawn round him.

Which they proceeded to do so thoroughly that Paul Maddox, flying under false colours, began to regret his bargain. It had been rather novel, to begin with, to have so many people fussing round him; but the manner in which Forrest & Co. kow-towed to him was a bit of an eye-opener.

And the real Victor Orlando, thrust aside and ignored, looked on with inward amusement. He was very glad that Paul had suggested this little deception, for it was enabling Victor to detect, with unerring accuracy, those St. Frank's fellows who were genuine, and those who were not.

CHAPTER 7.

Mr. Wilkes' Bombshell!

BIGGLESWADE, of the Sixth, looked into the Common-room, blinked, and opened his eyes wider than ever.

"What's all this?" he asked blankly.

Bernard Forrest and Gulliver and Bell and the other members of the Smart Set thought it better on the whole to ignore the question. They were fussing round the young King of Caronia and Paul Maddox; and it was certainly not the moment to explain that the Common-room had been transformed for the especial spoofing of the young Caronians.

"Hallo, Biggy!" said Forrest coolly. "I'm glad you've come. Let me introduce the new fellow in the Remove."

He seized Paul Maddox's arm—under the impression, of course, that Paul was the young king—and he led him forward.

"This is Biggleswade, of the Sixth," he

said, by way of introduction. "A prefect, and quite a good chap. Biggy, let me present his Majesty, King Victor of Caronia."

Biggleswade, who privately regarded Forrest as an insufferable young bounder, forgot his feelings for Forrest in his curiosity concerning the new boy. He regarded Paul with interest, and even suspicion.

"Pleased to meet you," he said awkwardly, as he extended his hand. "I heard that you were coming. So you're Victor Orlando?"

"King of Caronia," said Paul with dignity.

"Are you sure?" asked Biggy doubtfully.

"What do you mean—am I sure?"

"Well, I expected to see somebody different," explained the prefect. "You don't seem very foreign to me. You're not trying to pull my leg, I suppose?" he went on, looking at the Removites with renewed suspicion. "Because, if you are——"

"Do try to be sensible, Biggy," said Forrest. "King Victor has been at school in England for some years, and he's practically as English as we are."

"Oh!" said Biggleswade. He gave Paul another scrutiny, and nodded. "All right, then," he went on. "I'm looking for you, Orlando——"

"King of Caronia," murmured Paul.

"You can forget that King of Caronia stuff," said Biggy gruffly. "You may be a king in your own country, my son, but at St. Frank's you're a new kid. See? And I'm a prefect. What's more, if I feel inclined to clip you over the ear, I'll clip you over the ear. We might as well understand one another straight away."

"Hang it, Biggy!" protested Forrest. "You can't talk like that to a king!"

"We can be friends, of course," continued Biggy, smiling upon Paul and ignoring Forrest's protest. "I'm just putting you straight about things, that's all. But isn't there another new boy here?"

"Oh, yes!" said Forrest, looking round. "You mean Maddox."

He spoke almost indifferently. Maddox was a nobody. The snobs had scarcely spoken to him once. And Victor, who had been thoroughly enjoying the humour of the situation, now stepped forward.

"Here I am, please," he said meekly.

"Good!" said Biggleswade. "You two chaps will come with me. Old Wilkey heard that you had arrived, and he's asking about you. Why didn't you go to him and report?"

Victor looked as solemn as an owl.

"His majesty is not accustomed to reporting to anybody," he replied gravely. "When he is graciously pleased to visit—er—'old Wilkey,' he will present himself."

"Oh!" said Biggleswade grimly. "Well, his majesty will be graciously pleased to present himself now. Come along—both of you!"

He marched them out brusquely, much to the indignation of the Smart Set, and he carried them off towards the Housemaster's study.

"What's the idea of you new kids mixing up with that crowd?" asked Biggy accusingly. "Forrest and his lot are a miserable set of young blighters. Still, you'll soon find out how things are. It's not my business to tip you off. And look here," he added good-naturedly. "Don't take too much notice of what I said in front of those young bounders. I was saying it more for their benefit than yours."

The two Caronians were beginning to like old Biggy.

"And, honestly, if you want to get on well at St. Frank's you'll be wise to forget that you're really a king," continued the prefect. "I'm jiggered if I can believe it," he added, staring curiously at Paul. "Still, I suppose kings are just the same as other people. Well, here we are."

He tapped on Mr. Wilkes' door, opened it, and ushered the new boys in. Mr. Alington Wilkes was sitting at his desk.

"I found them, sir," said Biggleswade. "As a matter of fact, they were just coming to report themselves. They'd been detained by some of the juniors. This one is Orlando, sir, and this one is Maddox."

Biggleswade retired, and Old Wilkey sat back in his chair, adjusted his glasses and surveyed the two new boys. The two new boys surveyed Old Wilkey—and wondered. Certainly, Mr. Wilkes was not in keeping with their ideas of a St. Frank's Housemaster. He was an untidy-looking man, dressed in a shabby old Norfolk jacket and baggy flannel trousers; his hair was ruffled, and he wore an open-necked tennis shirt.

"I am very pleased to meet you, my boys," he said genially as he stood up and shook hands. "I hope you will like St. Frank's, and do well here. But didn't Biggleswade make a mistake just now?"

"A mistake, sir?" repeated Victor.

"I think so," said the Housemaster gently. "He introduced you as Paul Maddox and your companion as Victor Orlando."

"That's right, sir," said Paul, with dignity. "I am Victor Orlando, King of Caronia. This is my friend, Paul——"

"Oh, no!" interrupted Old Wilkey, shaking his head. "Oh, no!"

They looked at him in some dismay.

"Oh, no!" repeated Mr. Wilkes. "That won't do at all. What's the idea of trying to pull my leg? I know which of you is Orlando, and which is Maddox. You are Orlando!" he added, pointing a pencil at Victor.

"But—but——"

"What's the big idea?" asked Mr. Wilkes, taking a couple of photographs from the drawer of his desk and adjusting his glasses. "You may find it easy to fool the boys, but you can't fool me. A little practical joke, eh?"

He inspected the photographs, smiled, and transferred his attention to the new boys again. They, having exchanged glances, were looking more dismayed than ever.

"We—we were only having some fun,

sir," faltered Victor. "It's quite true that I'm Orlando, but we've changed places. Maddox thought he'd like to be king for a bit, and——"

"Neither of you is a king at St. Frank's," interrupted Mr. Wilkes gently. "I should think the boys have made that quite clear by this time. Don't think I'm scolding you for playing a little practical joke. Good luck to you! But, of course, you can't keep it up."

There was something about Mr. Wilkes which left the two young Caronians rather breathless. He was so calm, so cool, so genial; and yet, at the same time, he was very authoritative.

"Must we tell all the other boys, sir?" asked Paul awkwardly.

"You may have your joke out, by all means," replied the Housemaster. "I don't mind how long you keep it up; but, sooner or later, the truth is bound to come out. I'll leave it to you. Now, how is it that you arrived so peculiarly? I thought the headmaster sent his car to meet the train?"

Paul and Victor were still flustered. Old Wilkey had unmasked them in such a calm, matter of fact, way, and he seemed to think so little of it that they hadn't had time yet to recover their breath.

"We didn't like the idea of being brought down by Colonel Rutz and all those other officials from the Embassy, sir," said Victor. "So we came down alone. Then three St. Frank's fellows met us at Bannington, and brought us here in a little car. It seems that some other fellows had arranged a special reception at Bellton, and——"

"That'll do—that'll do!" chuckled Old Wilkey. "I think I can guess the rest. Come along. I'll take you straight to the headmaster; he must be wondering what has happened to you."

He bustled up, went to the door, and marshalled the new boys out.

"Before we go over to the Head's house I might as well show you your studies," said Mr. Wilkes as they went down the passage. "You probably know your study mates already——"

"But we've got a study to ourselves, sir," put in Victor, in surprise.

"Oh? A study to yourselves?"

"Yes, sir," said Victor. "And thanks awfully for letting us have such a nice, airy room."

Old Wilkey began to smell a rat.

"A nice, airy room, eh?" he repeated. "That's interesting! And who introduced you to this charming study?"

"A fellow named Hamilton, sir—they call him Nipper, I think," said Paul. "A lot of the other fellows showed us in, too. We didn't expect to get half such a nice study."

"I don't suppose you did," murmured Mr. Wilkes dryly. "Well, let's have a look at it. There may have been a little mistake."

The two young Caronians were rather startled.



With the second ball of the first over Harry Gresham was clean bowled. He'd scored a duck against the Moor View girls.

"By Jove!" burst out Victor. "Do you mean that we've been fooled, sir?"

"I shouldn't be at all surprised," smiled the Housemaster.

"Well, I'm dashed!" said Paul disgustedly. "I thought there was something funny about that study of ours!"

They hurriedly took Mr. Wilkes to the Common-room, and when the Housemaster opened the door he interrupted a loud burst of laughter from the crowd of Removites within.

"Oh!" said Old Wilkey, his eyes twinkling. "So this is your study, eh?"

"So we were told, sir," chorused Victor and Paul, whilst the Removites were stricken dumb.

"I see!" said Mr. Wilkes. "Quite a nice room—and looking much nicer than usual, even." He beamed upon the Removites. "I understand, you fellows, that you have given this room to the new boys as their study?"

"Well, sir——" began Nipper.

"Very generous of you all," continued Mr. Wilkes. "In fact, I might say, most self-sacrificing. In order that these two new boys shall be quite comfortable you have sacrificed your Common-room. I'm very pleased with you. It reveals a generous spirit which I had never even suspected."

The japers looked thunderstruck.

"I raise no objections at all," continued Mr. Wilkes gently. "If you are agreeable to giving up your Common-room for the sake of Orlando and Maddox, all well and good.

Bravo, all of you! I like to see that spirit of goodwill. From now onwards, this Common-room shall be regarded as the joint study of Orlando and Maddox."

"Common-room!" ejaculated Victor, as he grasped the situation. "Oh, I say! What asses we were not to suspect it before! But we couldn't think of keeping it, sir——"

"Nonsense," laughed Mr. Wilkes. "These boys have given it up for you—so you must accept it. In fact, I insist. This room is your study. Now, come along, we'll go to the Head."

He carted Victor and Paul away, and left the Remove japers in a condition bordering upon collapse.

CHAPTER 8.

Handy Hits Out!

NIPPER was the first to recover, and he took a deep breath.

"My sons," he said, looking round, "it's time that this jape ended!"

"It ought to have ended sooner!" growled Handforth. "What are we going to do about our Common-room? It's like Old Wilkey's nerve calmly to give the room to those new kids——"

"We gave it to 'em—not Old Wilkey," interrupted Travers mildly. "All Wilkey did was to place his seal of approval on the idea. Good old Wilkey! He's a sport!"

"Rather!" grinned Nipper. "We can always trust Old Wilkey to enter into the

spirit of a joke. But this time the laugh has gone against us."

"He couldn't have meant that about our giving up the Common-room," said Handforth, in alarm. "I mean, hang it, that would be too thick!"

"We'll put everything right," said Nipper calmly. "Lend a hand, you fellows. Before those new kids come back, we'll have these plush hangings down, and we'll put the rugs and the cushions back where they belong."

"And chuck these silly flowers out, too," added Tommy Watson.

A rapid transformation was made. Within ten minutes the Common-room became itself.

"We shall have to be looking alive," said Nipper, as he glanced at his watch. "The Moor View girls will be here presently—and we haven't had tea yet. By the way, how about inviting Orlando and Maddox to tea?"

"They're going to have tea with me, in Study D," replied Handforth promptly.

"Rats! I'm the Remove skipper, and it's my privilege," said Nipper. "Those new chaps will have tea in Study C."

"Yes, but——"

"No time to argue, old man," said Nipper briskly. "It's settled. And don't smile so much, all of you, when I talk about Irene & Co."

"How can we help smiling?" grinned Harry Gresham. "They've had the nerve to fix up a cricket match with us, haven't they? It's only an evening game, I know, and it's generally looked upon as a joke."

"And it will be a joke—unless we put out a strong team," said Nipper warningly. "It's all very well to scoff! Those Moor View girls have been doing wonders at cricket this season. They're hot stuff! Didn't Doris Berkeley make sixty-seven runs in a match last week?"

"Yes—against girls," said Church. "That's nothing."

"She can handle a bat—and so can some of the others," replied Nipper. "We'll need our best men this evening, and even then I doubt if we shall get the match completed before it's time to draw stumps. Some of you chaps think that we can skittle the girls out in ten minutes, and then knock up the necessary runs in another five! But it won't be so simple as that!"

They were interrupted by the return of Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox. Their interview with Nelson Lee, the headmaster, had been brief—much to their relief. Lee, with his usual tact, had treated them in exactly the same way as ordinary schoolboys; he had merely greeted them, put them through the necessary formalities, and had sent them back to their own House.

"Oh, here you are!" said Nipper briskly. "We want you two new kids!"

Victor and Paul exchanged a quick glance, and Paul—the supposed King—drew himself up haughtily.

"May I ask what all you fellows are doing in our study?" he inquired, with kingly dignity.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no reason for this absurd laughter," said Paul coldly.

"Come off it!" chuckled Handforth. "You know jolly well that this isn't your study. Didn't Old Wilkey tell you? This is the Junior Common-room."

"I seem to remember that Mr. Wilkes presented the room to us, as our study," replied Paul, with a majestic gesture. "Enough! Be good enough to depart—all of you! I am the King of Caronia, and this is my study!"

"Oh, is it?" roared Handforth. "Well, the joke's over! See? If you think you can pinch our Common-room——"

"Not at all," interrupted Paul, elevating his eyebrows in pained surprise. "Is there any question of—er—pinching? You gave us this room freely. Do you repudiate your gift? Paul, I am astonished to hear this. I had thought better of these English boys!"

"It is a great pity, your majesty," said Victor sadly.

The Removites were startled, and they looked uncomfortable. Inwardly, Victor was chuckling. This was going fine! Paul's air of kingly disdain was worth walking a mile to see.

"Just a minute!" said Handforth aggressively.

He strode forward, and he thrust a big, grubby fist under the supposed king's nose.

"See that?" asked Handforth darkly.

"I can see nothing else," retorted Paul, with distaste. "It fills the entire horizon."

"You'd better not get cheeky, my lad!" said Handforth. "I don't like knocking new kids about, but sometimes it's necessary. You wouldn't like to feel this fist, would you?"

"I should absolutely hate it," replied Paul, shuddering.

"Well, you will feel it—in your eye—if we have any more of your high and mighty ways!" said Handforth. "You're not a king here, as I've told you before. You're just a raw new kid. Any more of your cheek, and you'll get biffed!"

Paul was nonplussed, and Victor almost burst out laughing. Both of them were really mightily pleased with Handforth for his straight speaking. They were just as keen on being ordinary Removites as the Removites themselves. But it certainly seemed that their little jape was coming unstuck at an early hour.

However, an unexpected issue developed, for Bernard Forrest, backed up by Gulliver, Bell, Hubbard, Gore-Pearce, and others, pushed forward. They elbowed the real king roughly aside, and they formed a kind of bodyguard round Paul Maddox.

"Here! What's the idea?" demanded Handforth. "You silly idiots——"

"How dare you speak to a king in that way?" demanded Forrest hotly. "It's all right, Orlando—we're your friends. We'll deal with these hooligans!"

"Hooligans?" gasped Handforth.

"Yes!" shouted Forrest. "There's always an exception to every rule, and Victor

Orlando is the exception in this case. He may be a new kid, but, at the same time, he's a king! He's the King of Caronia!"

All the other snobs shouted excitedly; and Victor, an onlooker, had ample opportunity of judging the difference between the two sets of Removites. Nipper and Handforth and the others were genuine; Bernard Forrest & Co. were not.

Handforth, as usual, got into action.

"Did you hear that, you chaps?" he yelled. "That cad, Forrest, called us hooligans! Come on! Down with 'em!"

Crash!

Handforth's fist shot out, and it was the signal for Gulliver and Bell and their supporters to make a dash. Handforth went under in the rush; and Nipper, Travers and a dozen more sailed in.

In less than ten seconds a free fight was in progress; and Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox, unable to extricate themselves, were in the midst of it.

In fact, in the general excitement, they got half-slaughtered. Handforth went for Paul enthusiastically—not by accident, but deliberately. Paul defended himself well, but Edward Oswald's whirlwind tactics took him by surprise. By the time Handforth was finally dragged off, Paul's nose was looking slightly larger, his left ear was puffy, and his right eye was swollen.

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Church. "You've been knocking the king about!"

"I meant to!" retorted Handforth, breathing hard. "I went for Forrest and those other cads at first, and then I changed my mind. Blow the king! Doesn't he deserve a licking? What does he mean by haughtily telling us to keep quiet? This is his study, is it? He'd better think again—and remember that he's only a new kid."

Nipper managed to smooth things over, and he adroitly got the two new boys upstairs and locked them in a bath-room, where they could clean up.

"Cheese it, all your chaps!" said the Remove skipper briskly. "There's been enough scrapping. As soon as the new fellows come out I'm taking them to tea in my study. So the rest of you can buzz off!"

"We're having him to tea with us!" shouted Forrest savagely. "We've prepared a special banquet befitting a king—"

"Well, he's having bread-and-butter off a cracked plate, and tea out of a chipped cup in Study C—as befitting a raw new kid!" retorted Nipper. "And he ought to feel jolly honoured that he's been invited to tea at all! Understand, Forrest, once and for all, there's going to be no rotten snobbery!"

IN the bath-room Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox were surveying one another with different expressions. Paul was looking rueful; Victor was grimacing.

"Did you hear that?" asked Paul, tenderly rubbing his nose. "We're going to have tea out of cracked cups."

"And why not?" asked Victor blandly. "Isn't it just what we wanted?"

"It's just what you wanted, you mean," growled Paul. "You said you wanted to be treated like any ordinary new boy."

"Exactly," nodded Victor. "Those silly snobs can keep their special banquet!"

"Things don't seem to be going right," grumbled Paul, as he filled one of the wash-basins. "I'm not so sure that being a king is all that it's cracked up to be!"

Victor grinned.

"Well, I warned you," he replied. "I've had some before. People fawning all round you and making no end of a silly fuss. Look how it's been here. I'm the real king, but they don't know it! And what's the result? I'm ignored! Those chaps have been swarming round you."

"And punching me on the nose!" said Paul tartly.

"Those chaps who punched you on the nose are your real friends—our real friends," agreed Victor. "They're the real sportsmen in the Remove. They've no use for kings—and jolly good luck to 'em!"

"Jiggered if you're not right, old man," said Paul. "I've had enough of being in your shoes. You can come out in your true colours just as soon as you like."

"Oh, no!" laughed Victor. "Nothing doing!"

"What?"

"A bargain's a bargain," continued the young king blandly. "I'm having the time of my life—as a mere subject. You can remain the king."

"But the Housemaster said——"

"He told us that we could keep up the jape as long as we liked, and I'm not ready to change places yet," said Victor. "We'll keep up this little wheeze for the rest of the day."

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Paul. "And I thought being a king would be a bit of fun! I must say these St. Frank's chaps are hot stuff."

When they went downstairs Paul happened to go first, and he was immediately seized by Nipper & Co., and carried off to Study C, where tea was waiting. Victor took the opportunity of striding up to Forrest & Co., who were gathered in a sulky-looking crowd in the lobby. They regarded him disdainfully.

"Well, what do you want?" asked Gore-Pearce, with a sneer. "I thought you were going to have tea in Study C?"

"I thought I'd give you fellows a word of warning, that's all," said Victor mildly.

"Warning?" repeated Bernard Forrest. "Oh?"

"Yes," said Victor. "I happen to be the king's best friend, you know. It seems to me that you fellows are merely after him because he is a king."

"Look here——" began Forrest.

"We're both Caronians," continued Victor. "We're both St. Frank's fellows. That makes us very much alike, doesn't it?"

Yet it seems to me that you chaps regard one of us as solid gold and the other as dirt. That's a bit snobbish, isn't it?"

"You've got a nerve!" said Forrest angrily. "Isn't it natural that we should be more friendly with the king? You're nobody!"

Victor flushed.

"We two have been friends ever since we were tiny children," he said quietly. "It doesn't make the slightest difference to us that one was born nobly, and the other humbly. And I don't see why it should make any difference to you. Nipper and Handforth and those other fellows have the right idea. Anyhow, I'm giving you a warning now—straight from the shoulder. Don't try any of your beastly soft-soap tricks with the king, because he doesn't like them. Leave him alone, or somebody will start some trouble."

"Who's the somebody?" snapped Forrest.

"I'm the somebody," replied Victor. "And I'm telling you I don't want my friend to be annoyed. Understand?"

"Did you hear him, you chaps?" roared Forrest furiously. "We've read about him in the papers, haven't we? Paul Maddox—the son of a rotten Caronian commoner! Let's chuck him outside!"

"Hear, hear!"

The cads roughly seized hold of the young King of Caronia and rushed him to the big open doorway. With a mighty heave they pitched him out, and it was just a piece of

luck that a crowd of Moor View girls appeared in the Triangle at that fateful moment. Irene & Co. saw the whole humiliating business. They saw Victor thrown out on his neck; they saw Forrest & Co. follow him down and grab him; they saw Victor dragged along the gravel and bumped.

Then they saw something else—something which rather pleased them. Nipper, Handforth and Tregellis-West and about half a dozen other stalwarts dashed out of the Ancient House and fell upon the rotters with a determination and efficiency which was good to see.

CHAPTER 9.

Nipper's Predicament!

IRENE & CO. watched contentedly. They didn't like Forrest & Co. at the best of times. And now, having seen Forrest & Co. treat a new fellow with such roughness, they watched the "slaughtering" of the snobs with real pleasure.

The Moor View girls were in force. They were all dressed in spotless white, and most of them carried cricket bags. Prominent amongst them were Irene Manners, Doris Berkeley, Marjorie Temple, Mary Summers, Winnie Pitt, Phyllis Palmer, Betty Barlowe, Ena Handforth, Tessa Love and Vera Wilkes. They were, in fact, the Moor



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

HOT STUFF.

Teacher: "An abstract noun is the name of something you can think of but cannot touch. Can you give me an example, Jones?"

Jones: "Yes, sir; a red-hot poker."

(R. Nears, 241, Underhill Road, East Dulwich, S.E.22, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

ALWAYS THERE.

Police Sergeant (to loiterer): "Move on, there. We don't get stripes for leaning against lamp posts."

Urchin (cheekily): "No. You'd be like a zebra if you did!"

(A. W. Hawkins, Manningford Abbas, Marlborough, Wilts, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

COULDN'T TEACH HIM ANYTHING.

At a Territorial drill-hall a batch of recruits were undergoing musketry. They were not a very bright lot, and the fiery sergeant-major noticed a particularly uninterested looking private yawning. Striding up to him, he snatched the rifle from his hands and gave him a lengthy instruction of its various parts. But still the recruit seemed as uninterested as ever.

"What's your trade?" bellowed the sergeant-major furiously.

"Gunsmith," was the meek reply.

(F. Williams, 162, Gipsy Road, W. Norwood, has been awarded a book.)

TOUGH.

Diner: "Waiter, what kind of meat is this?"

Waiter: "Spring lamb, sir."

Diner: "I thought so. I've been chewing a spring for the last half hour."

(K. Morgan, 64, Camlan Road, Bromley, has been awarded a penknife.)

NOTHING DOING.

McTavish had met with an accident. Meeting a neighbour, who was a doctor, he hoped for a little free advice.

"Doctor, what should I do for a sprained ankle?" he asked.

View girls cricket XI, with a number of enthusiastic supporters.

Forrest and his pals were hammered right and left. Handforth was enjoying himself hugely. Nipper, well aware of the fact that a prefect might spot this scrap, hauled Victor to his feet as quickly as possible and hustled him indoors.

"Awfully bad form for a new chap to get into a scrap on his first day," he explained breathlessly. "You'd better buzz upstairs and have another wash, old son."

"Thanks!" gasped Victor. "I didn't really mean to start any trouble——"

"We won't inquire into that," said Nipper. "Those chaps aren't worth worrying about, anyhow. No need for me to tell you what breed they are."

"No!" said Victor grimly. "I've found out."

They were attracted at that moment by a sharp word of command. Glancing out into the Triangle, they beheld Mr. James Crowell, the master of the Remove. Mr. Crowell was angry.

"Stop this brawling at once!" he was saying. "How dare you? Handforth! Travers! Forrest! Tregellis-West!"

He called several other names, and the scrap came to an abrupt end. The juniors sorted themselves out and stood at attention. Handforth, catching sight of the Moor View girls out of the corner of his eye, was dismayed. It was an extraordinary thing, but

whenever the girls came along they nearly always caught him fighting somebody or other. It was most distressing. He regarded it as just bad luck, and never seemed to realise that the very obvious reason was because he nearly always *was* scrapping with somebody or other.

"I'm ashamed of you all," said Mr. Crowell sternly. "Fighting in the open Triangle. Brawling! And to make it worse, in front of these young ladies!"

"We—we didn't know they were there, sir!" gulped Handforth.

"I can quite believe it," retorted Mr. Crowell. "You never thought to look, did you? Your enthusiasm for fighting and brawling is so keen that you never worry about any possible spectators. Well, I'm going to make an example of you this time. You will all come with me to the class-room."

"Hang it, sir, look here——" began Forrest.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Crowell. "How dare you, Forrest? I intend to detain all you boys in the class-room for two hours, and during that time perhaps you will have an opportunity of meditating upon your folly."

Handforth was aghast.

"But look here, sir, we can't stay in the class-room for two hours!" he protested. "Travers and Tregellis-West and I are wanted for the cricket match."

"Limp!" replied the doctor, who was also Scotch.

(E. Crosland, 32, Leymoor Bottom, Huddersfield, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

CHAMPION.

Caddy (to golfing amateur who has lost his club for the third time): "If you keep on like that, mister, you'll be the champion of the world."

Golfer: "What—at golf?"

Caddy: "No; at throwing the hammer."

(C. Lemon, 21, Runacres Cottages, Western Road, Mitcham, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

WAKE UP.

Johnny was sitting with his foot on the alarm clock.

"Good gracious! What on earth are you doing?" asked his mother.

"My foot has gone to sleep," replied Johnny, "and I'm trying to make it wake up."

(L. Emery, 1, Lugtrout Lane, Solihull, near Birmingham, has been awarded a penknife.)

AN ACCIDENT.

Magistrate: "So you broke your umbrella over your husband's head; what have you to say?"

Defendant: "It was an accident."

Magistrate: "How could it have been an accident?"

Defendant: "Well, I'd no intention of breaking the umbrella."

(G. L. Thame, 104, Clydesdale Road, Romford, has been awarded a penknife.)

GREEDY GERALD.

Hostess: "Goodness me, Gerald, why are you eating so quickly?"

Gerald: "Because I want to eat as much as I can before I lose my appetite."

(H. J. Jeans, 72, Cochrane Street, St. John's, Newfoundland, has been awarded a book.)

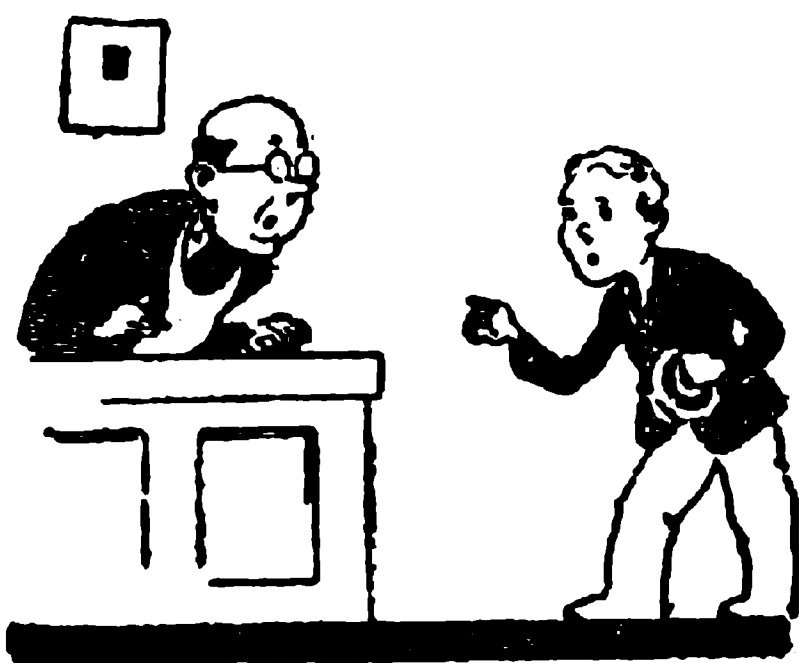
GROOOH!

Jimmy (rushing into father's office): "Dad, mother says you are to send your sandwiches back."

Father: "I can't—I've eaten them."

Jimmy: "Mother made a mistake in the tins, and now we will have to clean the brown boots with sardine paste."

(S. Strevens, 51, Churchfields, South Woodford, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)



"Oh, indeed!"

"We're in the team, sir——"

"You mean, Handforth, that you were in the team," interrupted Mr. Crowell coldly. "You are not in the team now. The team must get along without you, for you will be detained."

"Oh, but really, sir——"

"Another word, Handforth, and I shall increase your period of detention by one hour," snapped Mr. Crowell. "Now then! Attention! March!"

And the dismayed Removites were marched off without any further parley.

"I say, I'm afraid this is all my fault," said Victor contritely. "I started the trouble——"

"Don't you worry yourself, old man," said Nipper. "It wasn't your fault in the least. It's unfortunate, of course, because three of my best men are out of the Eleven."

The Junior skipper was worried. He went out into the Triangle, and a crowd of other Removites followed him, including Victor and Paul. Tea, of course, was completely forgotten. Gresham and Jimmy Potts and other members of the Eleven gathered round concernedly.

But nothing was said at the moment. Irene & Co. were greeted, and they went off to Little Side in order to put in some preliminary practice. Nipper was rather pleased, in fact, to get them out of the way.

"We couldn't say anything in front of them, of course," he remarked. "But we're in an awkward fix. We need our best men, and Travers and Handforth and Tregellis-West are in detention."

"Irene's pretty cut up about it," said Church with a grin. "Still, it was Handy's own fault——"

"Perhaps if I went to that master and explained that I started the trouble he might let them off?" suggested Victor. "You see, I was talking to Forrest and his friends, and I said something that upset them. So they threw me out."

"And we sailed into Forrest and his friends, and made hay of them," nodded Nipper. "Sorry, old man, but it's over. Too late to do anything now, and I don't regret it, anyhow. As for going to old Crowell, you might as well save your breath."

"I don't see that it matters, anyhow," remarked Jimmy Potts. "Of course, it's rough on the chaps who are detained; but we can put a pretty strong side into the field. And we're only playing girls."

"You're all too much inclined to say 'only' playing girls," exclaimed Nipper. "'Only' doesn't apply to girls nowadays, my son. Do you think we want to risk getting licked? Who am I going to play instead of Handforth and Travers and Montie?"

"Why, anybody will do," laughed Potts.

"Anybody won't!" retorted Nipper. "Don't forget that half the Junior Eleven is drawn from the Fourth, and this is purely

a Remove game. St. Frank's Remove versus the Moor View Girls' Eleven."

"H'm! That's true," admitted Harry Gresham thoughtfully. "But, dash it, there's no real danger of our being beaten, Nipper."

"In cricket, anything can happen," replied Nipper, shaking his head. "A fellow like you, Gresham, could easily knock up a century against the girls, and he could just as easily be dismissed for a duck in the first over."

"Draw it mild!" protested Gresham.

"In fact, it's probable that you will get dismissed for a duck in the first over," went on Nipper. "You think these girls are soft, don't you? That's not the spirit to have when you go out to bat. You'll be caught napping, my lad!"

"By Jove! That would be a tragedy!" said Gresham, with a whistle. "Out for a duck—bowled by a girl! I'll take your advice, and be on my guard."

"Irene & Co. have been doing wonders at cricket," said Nipper, frowning. "They're not to be sneezed at or under-estimated. With those three chaps out of the Eleven there's just a chance that we shall get whacked."

"Horrible thought!" said Reggie Pitt, grinning.

"Oh, you can take it lightly!" grunted Nipper. "But do you realise that we'd never hear the last of it? Licked on our own ground by a girls' team! My sons, we can't afford to take the risk."

"Ahem!" coughed Victor Orlando gently.

"Eh?" said Nipper.

"I'll play against the girls if you like," suggested Victor tentatively. "I know it's an awful cheek, putting myself forward. I'm only a new boy, and——"

"Do you play cricket? I mean, real cricket?"

"I think so," said Victor eagerly. "Of course, I didn't expect to get a chance at St. Frank's this season. But as it's only a game against schoolgirls——"

"All the more reason we need good, proved men," interrupted Nipper. "Sorry, old chap."

"The king can play, too," murmured Victor. "That is to say, Orlando can play. He'd be no end pleased if you gave him a chance."

Nipper felt uncomfortable.

"You two Caronians are keen enough, anyhow, and I admire you for it," he said. "Still, I don't think this is the ideal moment for you to start your cricket. I want to see you at the nets first."

"I'm sorry," said Victor, flushing. "It—it was only a suggestion. I think I'll go and find my friend."

He went indoors hurriedly.

"That was awkward," muttered Nipper. "He meant well, but, of course, it's out of the question."

"Like his nerve, if you ask me," commented Fullwood.



With a devastating drive the schoolboy king sent Forrest to the ground—knocked out.

"Give the chap a chance," smiled Nipper. "He doesn't know the ropes yet; he doesn't know that new fellows——" He broke off, a sudden gleam coming into his eyes. "By Jove!" he went on. "I wonder!"

"Stop wondering, and tell us what you're driving at," said Tommy Watson bluntly.

"Well, the king has been throwing his weight about a bit," said Nipper, his eyes twinkling. "I don't suppose he can help it, and I rather like him! Don't forget the way he claimed the Common-room as his study; he refused to recognise that it had been a jape. It might be a good idea to take some of the pomposity out of him."

"But how?" chorused the others.

"By playing him against the girls," replied Nipper. "And if we play the king we'll play his friend, too."

"But they're probably duffers!" protested Gresham.

"Exactly," nodded Nipper coolly. "With a couple of duffers in our team we shall be excused if we lose the match. If we win—and you can bet we'll try to win—it'll be all right, just the same. And King Victor of Caronia will have been taken down a peg or two. I should think a king will feel pretty small potatoes when he finds himself making a poor showing against a girl's cricket eleven."

"And after that he'll have to hide his diminished head!" grinned Reggie Pitt. "My son, it's a brainwave!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Nipper!"

"It'll put King Victor in his place, and make him feel as small as an inch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

So the two young Caronians were destined to make cricket history at St. Frank's by appearing in a match on their very first day at the school, without even having been tried at the nets!

CHAPTER 10.

His Majesty Plays Cricket!

"BY Jove! Really?" exclaimed Victor Orlando eagerly.

"Yes—both of you," said Nipper.

"Buck up and change into flannels."

He had just told them, and they were delighted by the good news—having no idea, of course, that this was really another jape against them.

"I shall be pleased to lend my services for the occasion," said Paul, with kingly dignity. "I may add that I am quite a good bowler."

"That's splendid!" said Nipper, nodding. "We can do with another good bowler. I'm

glad you told us, Orlando, or we might not have known."

"But I didn't tell you," said Victor unguardedly. "I mean——"

"No, his majesty told us," chuckled Nipper. "Well, he shall have his chance. Now, what about flannels? I don't suppose you've got your own things as early as this, have you? Buzz upstairs with me, and we'll soon have you fixed up."

There was a record gathering of juniors round Little Side when the Remove XI appeared for the fray. The very fact that this game was against the girls attracted unusual attention. But the added fact that King Victor of Caronia was to appear for the Remove gave the whole match a sensational touch.

Irene Manners, the captain of the girls' side, tossed with Nipper—and won. So the St. Frank's fellows went out to field, and the girls started batting.

There was a good deal of laughter and cheering when the opening "batsmen" came out of the pavilion. Irene Manners and Doris Berkeley looked very neat and businesslike in their white, short-skirted dresses, and wearing their pads. They carried their bats confidently.

Harry Gresham started the bowling, and it was taken for granted that he would secure a wicket in the first over. But to the surprise of the schoolboy spectators—and to the delight of the schoolgirls—Irene, who took the bowling, knocked Gresham away for a two at the very commencement, and followed this up by hitting a glorious boundary immediately afterwards, and then following it with another two. In that very first over Irene proved herself to be hot stuff at cricket.

"Bravo!"

"Well done, Irene!"

"Keep it up, you girls!"

Bowling from the other end, Reggie Pitt sent down a short-pitched ball. Doris, without hesitation, leapt out of her crease and drove hard to the boundary.

"Oh, good hit!"

"Well done, Doris!"

In the pavilion, the other girls were clapping and cheering excitedly.

"We'll show 'em!" said Ena Handforth, in her matter-of-fact way. "We girls can't play cricket, eh?"

"All the same, I think we're starting too well," murmured Winnie Pitt. "I don't think those bowlers are really trying."

Doris hit the next ball for a single, and Irene now had the bowling. She brought off a neat stroke and sent the leather whizzing through the slips. The girls ran hard, and secured three.

It was true that the Removites had so far regarded the game as a sort of joke, but they soon began to settle down. Unfortunately, Irene and Doris had settled down, too. By the time the Remove bowlers started in real, deadly earnest, the girl "batsmen" were more or less set.

They proceeded to score freely, defying all the wiles of the bowlers; and the sceptical Removites had their last doubts removed. Irene & Co. were certainly brilliant cricketers!

"HOW are things going?" asked Handforth breathlessly.

He and Travers and Sir Monte had just arrived, with all the other fellows who had been detained.

"Hallo!" said Church, in surprise. "I thought old Crowell was going to detain you for two hours?"

"He relented," growled Handforth. "I believe he suddenly remembered that he had

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



an appointment, or something. Anyhow, he looked at his watch, grunted, and told us that we'd probably had enough. My hat! So the girls are batting?"

"Batting isn't the word!" exclaimed McClure. "They're slogging!"

"What about me?" demanded Handforth. "Where's Nipper? I can play now——"

"Too late, old man," interrupted Church. "Orlando and Maddox have been shoved in, and they're doing pretty well in the field."

"Those two new kids—playing in a match on their first day!" ejaculated Handforth.

"It's a wheeze!" grinned Mac. "Nipper wants to make 'em sing small—particularly that giddy king!"

Handforth looked at the score-board, and started.

"What's this?" he said. "Thirty-seven up—and no wickets!"

"Irene and Doris are doing wonders," said Church gruffly. "Our chaps can't get 'em out!"

"Good old Irene!" grinned Handforth. "Well done! Stick to it, Renie!"

"Fathead! She's playing against us!"

"Who cares?" roared Handforth. "She's a wonder! Haven't I always said so?"

Before Irene's wicket fell, she had scored 24 off her own bat—which was an astonishing performance for a girl cricketer against such bowlers as the Remove could provide. Winnie Pitt went in and started off slowly,

"THE KIDNAPPED KING!"

By E. S. BROOKS.

King Victor kidnapped by Caronian plotters, who seek to obtain the throne of Caronia for Prince Zeno, the schoolboy king's rascally half-brother.

It's up to Nipper & Co. to defend their new Form-fellow—and right valiantly they rally round.

Look out for this topping schoolboy mystery and adventure yarn next week.

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By JOHN BREARLEY.

Smashing attacks by the Night Hawk against the Phantom Foe. Next Wednesday's instalment is a succession of thrills.

"Handforth's Weekly!"

"OUR ROUND TABLE TALK!"

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

but Doris continued to hit with great power.

Doris lost her wicket, at length, owing to the agility of Victor Orlando. She knocked a ball that looked a certain boundary hit, and she and the other "batsmen" started running.

But Victor, with a Hobbs-like pounce, hurled himself full length, stopped the ball with a smack that sounded all over the field, and hurled it in like lightning. The stumps went flying a second before Doris's bat reached the crease.

"Oh! Well thrown in!"

"Well fielded!"

"Bravo!"

It had been a smart bit of fielding, and Victor, getting to his feet, flushed with pleasure.

After that, the girls did not do so well. Their "tail" was fairly weak. Still, they were not skittled out. Only two were dismissed for a duck; the others scored 7 or 9 or 15, or modest scores like that.

And then, just when it seemed certain that the boys would soon go in to bat, there was an unexpected eighth-wicket stand by Mary Summers and Betty Barlowe. They did not score freely, but they simply would not give the fieldsmen a chance. They protected their wickets effectively; they gave no catches; they just hung on determinedly.

Nipper was at his wit's end. None of his bowlers seemed able to do anything; and then, as a last resort, he put on Paul Maddox. And everybody, still unenlightened regarding Paul's real identity, grinned.

"Here goes the king!" chuckled Church. "Let's see how his majesty bowls."

"His majesty" bowled devastatingly. The Removites almost rubbed their eyes when Paul sent down his first ball. He took a fairly long run, and the leather, when it left his hand, sped through the air at a terrific pace. It seemed to be going wide of the wicket, but it turned in and nipped off the bails.

"How's that?" went up a yell.

"Out!"

"Well bowled, Orlando!" said Nipper enthusiastically.

"That was a lucky one," grinned Paul.

But he disproved his words within five minutes. For it was his bowling which dismissed the remainder of the girls' team. They were helpless against it. As the last wicket fell Paul came in for a great ovation.

"My hat! It's a pity you didn't put him on to bowl sooner!" said Fullwood, as he stood with Nipper. "The chap's a marvel. I didn't know they played cricket like that in Caronia!"

"I don't suppose they do," smiled Nipper. "This man's been trained at an English school, don't forget, and they trained him well."

"Your little stunt seems to be springing a leak," chuckled Reggie Pitt. "We're the fellows who look small, and King Victor has covered himself with glory."

The Removites were not very pleased with themselves. The girls had run up the formidable total of 116. And worse was to follow.

Perhaps the Remove fellows were overconfident; they were batting against girls, so there was nothing to fear. Yet the very disaster which Nipper had predicted for Harry Gresham happened in the first over.

Nipper and Gresham went out to bat, and two minutes later Gresham came back. He had been clean bowled with the second ball of the over by Vera Wilkes. Gresham felt like sinking through the solid turf, and as he carried his bat to the pavilion he seemed to have shrivelled to half his normal size.

Nipper stuck it, and scored freely, but the other batsmen failed to stay. Jimmy Potts only scored 7; then Fullwood came in, made 10 in brilliant style, and was then caught in the slips by Ena Handforth.

Tommy Watson slogged a boundary hit, and evidently thought the bowling was easy. He made just the same stroke at the next ball, missed it, stepped out of his crease, and was smartly stumped by Marjorie Temple, who was the wicket-keeper.

"What's the matter with them?" asked Handforth dismally. "They're coming out in one long procession. These girls are going to win, by the look of it!"

"Good luck to 'em!" said Mr. Wilkes, who was watching. "They're playing wonderfully. Perhaps you boys won't be so cooksure after this."

Fortunately Jerry Dodd settled down, and he and Nipper made a welcome stand. The girls were being shown, at all events, that they could not have everything their own way.

Nipper finally knocked what he thought to be a boundary, but a slim figure leapt upwards, a slim arm reached out, and a capable hand seized the ball and gripped it.

"Oh, well caught, Irene!"

Then followed another series of disasters. Reggie Pitt, to everybody's dismay, only scored 3, and then his wicket was shattered; Jack Grey, following him, made 9, after which he gave an easy catch to square leg.

There was a bit of a stir as Paul Maddox carried out his bat. At least, the spectators thought he was Paul Maddox. He was really Victor.

He started cautiously, merely contenting himself with keeping his wicket intact. A gasp of dismay went up when Jerry Dodd was clean-bowled, and further disaster was to follow for Castleton, the next man in, distinguished himself by getting a duck.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" groaned Nipper. "We're done, I'm afraid. There goes the last man in—Orlando—and we've only scored 83, all told!"

"It can't be done!" said Travers gloomily. "These two new chaps can't score 30 between 'em. For the love of Samson, we're whacked by the girls."

The girls themselves were wildly excited; the boys were sheepish with anxiety. Nobody really expected that Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox would do anything noteworthy.

But these two young Caronians were full of surprises. What they had done hitherto was nothing compared with the last wicket stand which enabled them to snatch a victory for the Remove XI.

The excitement grew as Paul and Victor took the total higher and higher. A roar of cheering burst forth when the 100 was reached. Victor proved himself to be a brilliant batsman, and as soon as he settled down he scored freely. His driving was powerful and masterly, and again and again he knocked boundary hits.

There was a tense silence all round Little Side when the score stood at 113. It was the last ball of an over, and Victor was batting.

The ball came down, a really good one. Victor swung his bat up, there was a click, and the leather went speeding away to the boundary for a 4.

"Hurrah!"

"Well done, you new chaps!"

It was the winning hit, and the next moment Little Side was swarming as everybody dashed towards the two young Caronians who had saved the game.

CHAPTER 11.

A Bashing for Forrest!

"YOU'RE all right!" said Nipper heartily, as he clapped Victor and Paul simultaneously on the backs. "Well done!"

"These girls are hot stuff, eh?" chuckled Victor.

"A lot hotter than we thought," agreed Nipper. "We nearly came a cropper, and we should have done, but for you fellows. I don't mind telling you that I only put you in this team to make you look small, and I'm dashed if you're not the heroes of the match!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Caronia!"

"This chap may be a king, but he's the goods!"

"Hear, hear!"

"A king who can play cricket like that is a bit of a novelty."

Everybody was talking at once; the girls were just as hearty in their congratulations as the boys. It had been a notable evening. Even the seniors, and one or two of the masters, came round and added their words of praise.

Victor and Paul were only too glad to get free of the crowd at last, and even then Paul found himself seized by Bernard Forrest & Co., and whirled away. Paul wasn't at all keen.

"What's the idea of this?" he asked breathlessly. "Where are you fellows taking me?"

"It's all right, King Victor," grinned Forrest. "We've prepared a special feast in your honour—something of our own, you know. You're our guest."

"Am I?" asked Paul. "Are you asking me to join your banquet just for myself, or because you look upon me as a king?"

"Well, you are the king, aren't you?" grinned Bell. "King of Caronia. And we're having you as our guest."

"That's just where you're mistaken," said Paul gently. "Thanks all the same, but there's nothing doing."

The Smart Set looked at him in dismay. "What's wrong?" asked Forrest. "Hang it, we're honouring you by inviting you to the feast, and we want you to honour us by accepting."

"I've been warned against you, if you want to know the truth," said Paul bluntly.

"You've been warned? By whom?" demanded Forrest.

"By my friend."

"By that common clodhopper Maddox?"

"He is my countryman," said Paul, his colour rising. "You'll either apologise for that remark, Forrest, or I'll knock you down."

"Hang it, I didn't mean to offend you!" growled Forrest. "I'm sorry. But Maddox hasn't any right to interfere——"

"Maddox is my friend, and he has told me that you fellows are insincere, that you only want to 'cultivate' me because I happen to be the King of Caronia. Thanks for the invitation, but I'm not accepting."

He walked off, and Forrest turned red with fury.

"And I even apologised to him!" he muttered. "It's not his fault. It's that beast Maddox. Maddox turned King Victor against us. By gad! I'll make him pay, too!"

The leader of Study A was seething with fury. He and his chums had already spent a lot of money that day in their endeavours to "capture" the young king, and they had spent more money on a special banquet. To be turned down like this, through the interference of Paul Maddox, as they supposed, was unbearable.

Forrest caught sight of Victor, and he hurried across, taking no notice of the other Removites who were near. He seized Victor by the shoulder and swung him round.

"I want a word with you!" snarled Forrest.

"Hallo! What's the matter?" asked Orlando in astonishment.

"Who the dickens do you think you are?" roared Bernard Forrest.

"Why, has somebody told you——" began Victor, misunderstanding him.

"King Victor has told me!" shouted Forrest. "He told me that you warned him against me and my pals."

"I don't think he needed any warning," retorted Victor shortly.

"Who do you think you are, giving advice to your own king?" demanded Forrest furiously. "You—a rotten commoner! It's like your nerve——"

"Just a minute!" said Victor quietly. "I have been given to understand that titles mean nothing in the Remove. What are you going up in the air about? Why do you favour my friend more than me? Because you think he's a king, eh?"

"I didn't ask you for any cheeky answers, you—you peasant!" roared Forrest.

"Oh!" said Victor ominously. "So you think I'm a peasant, do you. Well, whatever I am, I know how to use my fists!"

Crash!

His right thudded with terrific force into Forrest's face, and the cad of the Remove staggered back. But he soon recovered.

"All right, you—you gipsy!" he snarled. "I'll show you!"

He hurled himself at the young king, and a moment later they were fighting fiercely. A number of Removites and Fourth-Formers surrounded them and hid them from view, for there were prefects in sight and more than one master.

"I say, you fellows, chuck it!" urged Reggie Pitt, dashing up. "You can't fight like this on the playing-fields——"

"Let 'em alone!" interrupted Handforth. "By George! It's a glorious scrap! Go it, you new chap! Slish him!"

The new chap was going it, and he made short work of Bernard Forrest, much to Bernard Forrest's consternation. The leader of Study A was no mean fighter, and he had taken it for granted that he would be able to "wipe up" this Caronian in no time.

But he was the one who was wiped up.

Victor's right was deadly, and it hammered upon Forrest's face like a battering-ram. In vain Forrest attempted to get through Victor's guard, but it was no good. With a tremendous drive the young king settled the issue. Forrest reeled back, sat down and sprawled over, groaning.

"Good egg!" said Handforth approvingly. "Well done, Maddox!"

Nipper came hurrying through the crowd, and he was accompanied by a number of other fellows, to say nothing of an excited group of Moor View girls.

"Maddox, did you say?" asked Nipper. "We've been dished, you chaps. These two giddy Caronians have japed us up to the eyes!"

"What!" went up a general shout.

"Rather!" said Nipper, grinning. "This chap who has just knocked Forrest out is Victor Orlando, the King of Caronia himself!"

Paul Maddox looked at Victor.

"Sorry, old man, but I just couldn't keep it secret any longer!" he said. "Mr. Wilkes gave me a very rummy look, and I knew what he meant, and then I saw you scrapping. So I thought I'd better trot out the truth."

Victor laughed.

"Well, it doesn't matter," he said lightly. "We've had our fun, and I rather think we know who's who, too."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" ejaculated Handforth, staring from one to the other. "So you're the real king? And you've just given Forrest a licking. My son, put it there!"

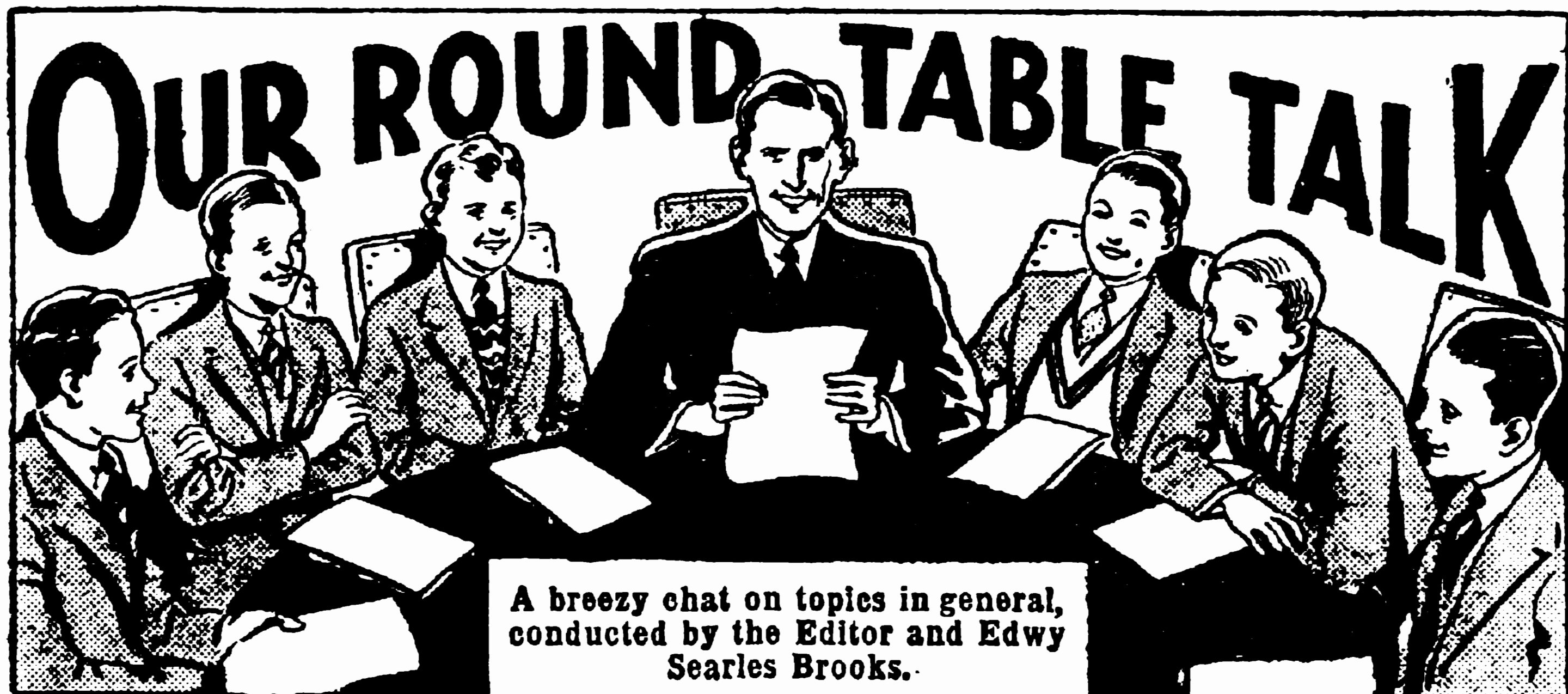
Paul was grinning, too.

"I don't mind admitting I'm jolly pleased," he said. "Poor old Vic. I've often wondered what it was like to be a king, and now I know. Half a day of it is half a day too much."

"You boulder!" chuckled Nipper. "So you were only spoofing when you put on that pompous air?"

(Continued on page 44.)

Gather round, boys, for our weekly chin-wag



EDWY SEARLES BROOKS wishes to acknowledge letters from the following readers: Sidney Ward (N.W.10), Cedric L. Woods* (Brandon), Reg. T. Staples (S.E.17), Leslie W. Trevor (Bolton), William Slogan (Sandwich, Ontario), Harold W. Steff* (Kettering), Douglas Knox (Dover), Ruby Drake* (Toronto), Donald d'E Morin (Montreal), Kenneth Macdonald** (Barrow-in-Furness), Ernest S. Holman (E.10), Barbara M. Ives (St. Albans, Jersey), Gordon E. C. Smith (Richmond), Geoffrey H. Wood (Walsall), Victor Ambridge (S.W.15), Bertram H. Mallett (Enfield).

The regular wicket-keeper of the Junior XI, Harold W. Steff, is Boots of the Fourth. As for Travers keeping his place in the Eleven, there is no doubt that he will manage this all right, as Travers is a most enthusiastic cricketer. With regard to your postscript as to whether there are any serious objections to your writing again, this scarcely needs answering. All readers are invited to send letters for "Our Round Table Talk," and such cheery, witty letters as your own are not likely to be discouraged. Let's have some more, old man!

The holiday adventure series describing Nipper & Co.'s visit to Arizona, Douglas Knox, appeared in August, 1929. You ask if Willy Handforth has any girl chum. Well, Willy is a matter-of-fact youngster, and he doesn't pay much attention to girls; but he made a real chum of Molly Stapleton in a series which appeared a year or two ago. Since then Molly has come to the Moor View School, and Willy still regards her more or less as his own particular property.

Wally Freeman, the St. Frank's Soccer coach, is not Sports Master, Ernest S. Holman. He is a footer coach, and nothing else. He has his time pretty well occupied, too. At this season of the year, of course, he is having his well-earned holiday.

In answer to your questions, Gordon E. C. Smith, there is no Russian boy at St. Frank's at present. Enoch Snipe is in the East House;

he shares Study 15 with David Merrell and Frederick Marriott. There is nobody living in Moat Hollow now.

The boys you mention, Bertram H. Mallett, are still at St. Frank's—Augustus Hart and Justin B. Farman are in Study T, in the West House, with Owen major; Lord Pippinton (better known as "Old Pippy") is in Study W with Alan Castleton and Tom Burton; and Charlie "Boomerang" Bangs is in Study F of the Ancient House with Jerry Dodd and Hubert Jarrow. Tommy Watson's sister, Violet, is still at the Moor View School.

The gymnasium, Reg. T. Staples, is always open to the boys. No restrictions are placed on physical exercising, and even when there is no compulsion many of the boys are to be found in the gym. But they can only receive instruction at certain fixed times. The gym instructor has never been actually mentioned in the stories, but when the occasion arises he will be properly introduced to the readers. Fullwood has two sisters. With regard to Conroy minimus and his eldest brother, Conroy major, although the prefect is somewhat aloof with the fag at school, as befits his dignity, whenever they are in private there is a vast difference. Conroy major unbends, and he treats his young brother quite affectionately. Bob Christine also has a sister at the Moor view School—Agnes.

George Wraith, of Halton, near Leeds, asks for particulars as to how he can join the Merchant Service. He should write to the Sea School Selection Officer, Board of Trade Office, 79, Mark Lane, London, E.C.3, or to any shipping company. Unfortunately, he has been rejected by the Royal Navy on account of weak eyesight, and this may again affect his chances where the Merchant Service is concerned.

Readers should address their letters to The Editor, "Nelson Lee Library," Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, who will get Mr. Brooks to answer personally for "Our Round Table Talk," any queries which require his attention.

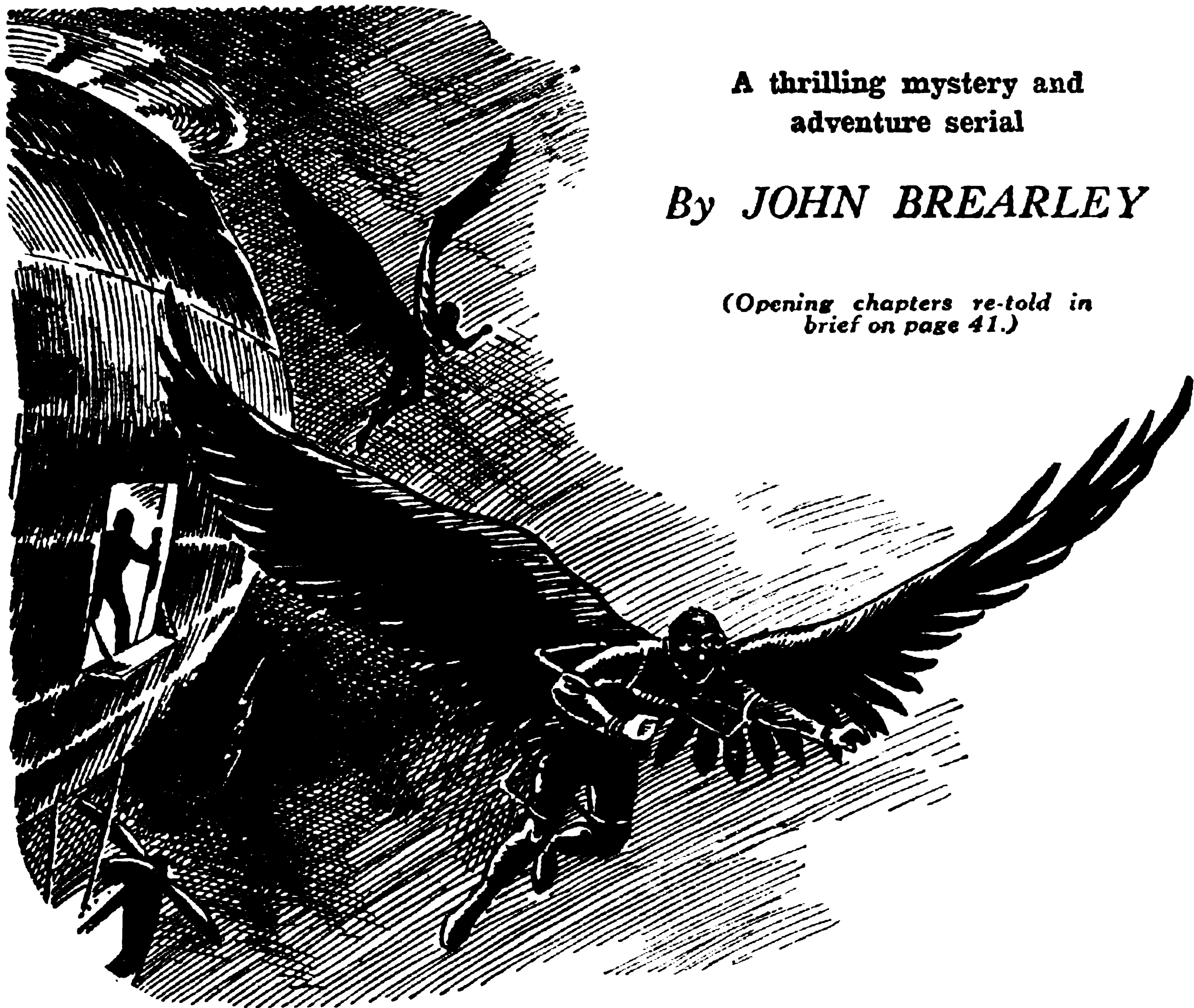
Night Hawk and Snub—two winged figures of vengeance!

The PHANTOM FOE!

A thrilling mystery and
adventure serial

By JOHN BREARLEY

(Opening chapters re-told in
brief on page 41.)



The Phantom's Headquarters!

THE bleak little island, buttressed by granite rocks and saw-edged reefs against the onslaught of the snarling waves from the Atlantic wastes, lay hidden under its eternal shroud of raw grey sea-mist. It was one of a long chain of islets that lay on the lonely waters like grim flotsam; the homes of terns and seagulls, places shunned and forgotten by the world.

Twenty miles to the east, hidden by the mists that brood constantly over the seas in this region, were the Outer Hebrides, sparsely inhabited and very desolate. A few fishermen plied their trade in the coastal bays there, but none ever ventured among the scattered islands out beyond. There was nothing to be earned by doing so save a battering from the

seas and the ever-present danger amid fog-bound reefs and vicious tide-rips. Even the big coasting steamers gave the island-chain a wide berth.

All of which suited certain people down to the ground. For, on the largest island of the group, the greatest band of criminals in modern times had their base and headquarters.

In the main hut of the island, a frame-built affair of pine and corrugated iron, two men in masks and long yellow robes stared through the window in moody silence. Thirty yards away, on bare rock, lay the slender shape of a beautiful air-ship, seen dimly in the clinging mist. Many men were on top of the hull, hard at work; the clang of riveting hammers rang out briskly, and brazier fires glowed foggily. But the busy sight brought no

pleasure to either of the masked on-lookers, one of whom turned away at length with an oath.

"Bad—cursed bad!" he growled.

The other nodded.

"You're right, chief. Gad, it was some struggle to get home the other night, after we'd dropped you. Both helicopters were smashed this time by that hound, Kyle. And the damage inside from his infernal grenades was enough to put years on me. We just about crawled here!"

The Phantom Foe grunted again and paced the hut rather wearily. Poor news this, to reward him for the hasty secret journey to the north. With a maximum cruising speed of two hundred m.p.h., three hours flying at the outside enabled the airship to reach her lonely lair from any point in Britain. But it took the Phantom considerably longer—from where he had come!

Halting in his stride, he glowered at his lieutenant.

"How long before you can fly properly again?" he jerked.

"At least a week, chief!" was the reply that made him curse once more.

"Huh! And all through that dog, Thurston Kyle. Well, anyway, we gave him something to think about, too, with our bomb, the dog. No; we didn't get him, or his brat of an assistant. They're still alive—I've seen them. But you should have seen his house—I had a look at that, too. We smashed it to pulp!"

The lieutenant growled savagely.

"Wish we'd smashed Kyle to pulp, too!" he grunted.

A gleam of insane fury flashed from the Phantom's eyes.

"Oh, we'll get him. We'll do it. I'll get him alive this time, too, lieutenant. Catch him—like that!" One muscular fist clenched evilly. "And, by thunder, I'll make him regret he ever butted in on me or my affairs!"

For some seconds neither man spoke again, the silence broken only by the furious strides of the Phantom up and down the room. There was something tigerish in his restless pacing—a rage that choked him and made his firm lips twist and quiver under the mask. His lieutenant, who had seen him in this mood before, knew better than to interrupt. He only frowned at the floor and waited.

At last a bitter gasp from his leader told him that the fit had passed. The rage ebbed from the Phantom's face, leaving it cold and masterful as ever; and, crossing to a chair, he sat down, nodding his companion curtly to another. Then he laid a firm hand on his knee.

"We've got to get Kyle, my friend. He's the one thing standing between us and a complete clean-up. We can do nothing properly now while he is at large, swooping on us with those uncanny wings of his. He's a scientist, too, remember, and a great inventor. It won't be long before he devises some weapon more powerful than those grenades he carries. And then, once he catches us—good-night!"

"And we can't hit him, either, chief!" complained the other. "Firing at him in the darkness is like shooting at a moth. Our smoke screen holds him off, true. But it doesn't catch him——"

"Catch him!" The Phantom took up the words eagerly. "Ay, that's what we want. Not to waste lead on a will-o'-th'-wisp, but to capture him—yes, in mid-air!"

The lieutenant looked up with swift interest in his face. Knowing his leader, he guessed from his tone that some new idea had occurred to the brilliant brain of the great gangster. He was right.

"And I've got a plan!" said the Phantom sombrely. "A plan to nail him in flight, too. He uses those infernal wings to attack us. Well"—he laughed with harsh venom—"we'll use them to trap him!"

"Ah!" His companion raised his eyebrows. "What's the big idea, chief?"

"I'll tell you. You say you'll be a week making repairs to the ship? Well, then, get on with it. And while you're doing it, set some of the men on this scheme!" And, leaning close despite the quietness of the hut, he began speaking in low, but forcible sentences that thrilled his listener through and through. Gradually, as the idea was outlined, admiration and delight dawned in the lieutenant's eyes. When the clear-cut orders were finished, he shot out a hand and seized the Phantom's in a warm grip.

"My stars, chief, you're wonderful. That's a great idea—simply great!"

The Phantom nodded and lit a cigarette.

"Yes, I think it may do. The technical details I leave to you—as usual. But there is something more yet. The scheme will be useless unless we can draw Kyle into the net for certain!"

"That's so, all right. Well?"

"And this is what we'll do!" Once again the Phantom gave his orders, and once again, when he had finished, his assistant chuckled hoarsely.

"A fake raid, eh? Gad, yes. He's sure to bite, chief. We'll hook him this time for keeps!"

"I think so—I think so!" purred the

Phantom, well-pleased; and he stood up. "Well, I can't stay here. Order me some food, lieutenant, and I'll be getting back to the mainland!" He laid a hand on the other's shoulder. "You do your part, old friend. I'll do the rest—in London!"

"London!" Disapproval and gloom edged the lieutenant's voice as he repeated the word. He shook his head earnestly. "Chief, when are you going to chuck it and come aboard for good? You're running the devil's own risk all the time, you know; and——"

"I'll come aboard—when the time is ripe for the clean-up!" replied the Phantom sternly. "Believe me, I'm quite safe—for the time being, anyway. It would take more than the police to catch me where I'm hiding, eh?" Both men laughed as at some priceless jest. "And until Thurston Kyle is caught, I'll be more useful on the ground, leaving you to run things here!"

Every time the Phantom made one of his brief visits to the airship, his loyal friend made the same remonstrance and received the same answer. He was no match for his dominating leader. He turned away now with a half-shrug.

"O.K.—you'll play your own game, I know. I—I'll see about some food!"

"And see to my orders, too!" was the deep reply.

Left alone, the Phantom walked to the window again, staring with unseeing eyes at the busy men on his airship. Suddenly, as though voicing some pleasant thought, he spoke softly to himself. His right hand began to clench, slowly, and in a gesture that was as ugly as it was significant.

"Like that, Thurston Kyle. Just—like—that!" he whispered. And the hand closed finally, like a trap.

An hour later, watched by silent, rigid figures on the rocky island, a tiny sailing-boat bobbed out through the reefs. Gradually the mist closed about it, hiding it from sight. The Phantom was going

away again, back to the mystery in which he worked and dwelt.

Back to clear away the one man who stood in ambition's path.

Message of Menace!

MEANWHILE, Thurston Kyle and Snub had disappeared!

Their old house at Hampstead, shattered by the Phantom's bomb three days ago, was in the hands of the builders. Inquiries as to the scientist's whereabouts were answered by a certain lean and dark-browed gentleman named Alf Jenkins—of the Kittens—who lounged about the grounds. If he thought fit he referred the inquirers to an old firm of solicitors in Lincoln's Inn, where messages might be forwarded. But mostly he did not think fit, and merely scowled and turned away.

Thurston Kyle, however, was not very far off—no farther, in fact, than the peaceful quietness of his friend, Sir John Alan's, little estate among the Surrey hills down Reigate way. There, with Snub recovering quickly from his injuries, the Kittens within telephone call, and his airship Thunderer safely under cover in its sheltered paddock, the Night Hawk got on with his own plans for battle. Lone-handed plans, without the aid of Scotland Yard; and consequently safe from the Phantom's eavesdropping.

Knowing the damage he had done to his enemy's airship, he guessed that Britain would be safe from the latter for several days at least—probably over a week or so. For all that, he wasted no time. Each day he motored up to town, spending many hours in the works of the little electrical firm of which he was the virtual owner. Three experts there were always free to attend to any work he required done. Moreover, they could be trusted to do it in well-paid secrecy.

Thus when, eight days later, the Phantom brazenly announced his next

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. The Night Hawk discovers this, but in his first clash with the Phantom is defeated. Scotland Yard calls in Kyle, and he promises to assist them to bring the criminal to book. He outlines a plan to Captain Frank Arthurs, but, owing to a leakage of information, the Phantom outwits them. Then comes the sensational news that Lucius Pelton, of the Treasury, has vanished, and Arthurs immediately suspects that he is in league with the Phantom Foe. The Night Hawk also has his suspicions regarding the identity of the crook, but he does not reveal them to Scotland Yard; indeed, after his house is wrecked, and Snub injured following a bombing attack by the Phantom, he severs his connection with the Yard. But only because he has secret plans of his own.

(Now read on.)

coup in that bold way of his, Thurston Kyle rubbed his hands grimly and prepared for action. . . .

The Phantom's message, sent by post from the Strand to every paper in the South of England, was brisk and arrogant as usual, tinged with the sardonic humour for which his communications were as famous as they were dreaded:

"To-morrow night, at eleven, I intend to raid either Southtown or Porthampton from the English Channel. I have not yet decided which. Airplanes, battleships, and guns will be useless, so I advise the authorities not to risk their men.

"Good people of Southtown or Porthampton, you will know my decision to-morrow at eleven. Pay your money and take your choice. Or, rather, I make the choice and you pay the money.

"THE PHANTOM FOE."

Thurston Kyle, perusing the amazing message that even now was causing a panic in the threatened towns, smiled, although his eyes held a deadly serious light. The insolence of the Phantom was not the mere conceit of the average criminal, but deliberately calculated cleverness. Safe in their weird airship, armed with their virulent anæsthetic, the Yellow Gas, his gangsters could well afford to laugh at any defence in the world. With his modern weapons of attack, the Phantom had got guns and battleships "stone cold," as Snub put it. And by taunting his prospective victims beforehand, and keeping them in open suspense, he increased the mystery and terror of his name.

"But perhaps others have a few ideas, too, my friend!" Thurston Kyle mentally apostrophised his enemy. "Possibly I'll be over the Channel near those towns to-morrow night also. We'll enjoy a good laugh together—if you are on board!"

It was diamond cut diamond. The Phantom had not the least intention of wasting Yellow Gas on the quiet Channel towns he had named. But he did intend luring Thurston Kyle to their defence. And by picking a thirty-miles "beat" between them, he avoided any chance of gun-batteries on ground or sea showering lead into the air above Southtown and Porthampton, on the off-chance of hitting him.

He had planned his trap well. And, what was more, Thurston Kyle was going into it. He, too, had a surprise or so for the Phantom Foe.

The Attack of the Sparrowhawk!

THE summer storm that had been brewing all day over southern England had burst at last with the coming of night. Like the clap of doom, the first crashing roar of thunder split the sky just after ten o'clock, heralded by a vivid, vicious flash of lightning. From then on, pandemonium raged overhead, as, with every minute, the pent-up forces of Nature grew in strength.

Great gashes of livid flame tore the darkness asunder, illumining the greasy Channel waves and the Hampshire countryside. For quivering seconds on end, every detail of trees, fields, houses and roads stood out stark and clear in the brilliant flashes, only to vanish again into humid blackness. The glare shone, too, on warships cruising off-shore, on two towns cowering with unlighted streets, while in the hills behind, anti-aircraft crews crouched round their guns, ready to spray the skies with shells the split-second the Yellow Gas appeared.

To add to the ferocity of the storm, a savage wind sprang up on the heels of the thunder, reaching gale-force long before eleven. It was a wild night for wild deeds. The one comfort the townsfolk of Southtown and Porthampton hugged to their hearts was that the upheaval might prevent aircraft of any kind, and the Phantom's in particular, from sailing.

That was a vain hope.

Exactly fifteen minutes before eleven, a splendid airship did sail in across the Channel coastline, magnificently contemptuous of the raging storm and gale. But it was not the Phantom's; it was another, just as dangerous, coming like a lean avenger to take up his challenge.

And every man aboard, as tough a crew of fighting-men who ever stepped, wore goggles made of anti-actinic glass, the one kind that would reveal the presence of their "invisible" enemy. A few had binoculars also, fitted with the same lens.

Directly above Southtown, the larger of the threatened towns, the Thunderer stopped and "anchored" in mid-air at six-thousand feet, under the great helicopters whirling on the roof. Why the Phantom, usually so decisive, should have made such a vague threat Thurston Kyle could not fathom, nor did he try particularly hard. It was enough that he had made plans himself to cover the whole of the thirty miles between the towns.

As soon as the Thunderer stopped, those plans began. An air-lock opened aft; and for a moment, as lightning flooded the sky, a tall, fantastic figure stood revealed in the exit. The next, the Night Hawk,

under stiffly-spreading wings, had launched himself far out into the turmoil of the wind. He was gone in a flash, steadily slicing his way out into the Channel.

And directly he had gone, another winged figure darted from the hovering airship also—a short, sturdy youngster with heart beating joyously—borne aloft by wings that were the duplicate of his master's. There were two flyers quartering the sky that night in search of the Phantom Foe!

When Thurston Kyle had first proposed to "arm" Snub Hawkins with pinions like his own, the grimly-genial Kittens had promptly christened the lad "The Sparrowhawk." But Snub, fighting his way out to his station above Porthampton, did not care a hoot. All he knew was that his dearest ambition had come true. He was in the air at last, flying and fighting with his beloved chief, as he had always longed to do.

In theory he knew as much about the wings as the Night Hawk did. In practice, however, he had not the skill, of course, although a week's hard training had had its effect. He sped westwards now at a good speed, lurching off his course occasionally in the bitter struggle with the wind.

Getting the strength and direction of the slanting gusts eventually, his progress became smoother. There had been a few minutes earlier-on during which Thurston Kyle had doubted whether he should send the lad out on such a night for his first trip, but Snub, in his obstinate way, had set his teeth. His orders were to patrol above Porthampton, while the Thunderer did the same for Southtown, and the more experienced Night Hawk watched above the stormy Channel. Thus the Phantom, in laying in ambush for his enemy, was sending his gang and his ship straight into another net, guarded at three points by fast, determined foes. Snub, as he battled through the storm, prayed that he would be the first to spot the airship's arrival.

And, as he flew two miles off Porthampton, his heart gave a single thrilling leap.

His hand streaked to the back of his belt, where six grenades were clipped—new and terrible throwing-missiles of T.N.T.—which, if hurled cleanly into an airship's interior, would smash it wide open. At the same moment, he jerked out a flare-gun and fired two signals at desperate speed.

Unfortunately, a blinding streak of forked lightning shot down at the same

time, "killing" them both in its fierce bright glare, so that neither Thurston Kyle nor the Thunderer's crew saw them. It was a slip in the plans that led to strange events.

Snub, burning with anxiety to distinguish himself, whirled on his wings and raced upwards—to meet the dimly-glowing vessel shooting down towards him!

His wish had come true. Down from the tremendous height at which she had been flying dived the Phantom's airship, in a straight, steep tilt. Before Snub reached her, the beautiful, evil craft flattened out; swung athwart him, and started forth on her "beat," there to wait patiently until her enemy, the Night Hawk, fell into the trap and attacked her.

But instead of the Night Hawk, still cruising above-Channel, came Snub Hawkins, the Sparrowhawk!

Belting into his fiercest speed, he swirled aloft, coming down again in a whirlwind, diving onslaught, as Thurston Kyle had taught him. Nearer and nearer loomed the hull of the airship, until Snub found himself not ten yards off.

The airship was at his mercy.

Quick as a flash, he jerked a grenade from its clip, swung back his arm, and poised himself for a tremendous throw and a lightning getaway.

But the missile he held was never thrown. A fraction of a second before he realised it, something reached out and gripped him—something unseen and uncanny, strong beyond the strength of the wind, resistless as fate. It was as though powerful, invisible hands had caught him in mid-flight. They clutched him, drawing him towards the airship as a whirlpool ensnares a tired swimmer.

Frantically he tried to throw his grenade, but it jerked feebly from his hand and disappeared. He could feel the thing that was gripping him now; his wildly-beating hands came into contact with thin steel meshes that clung and stuck to his wings and the steel controls; wrapped him tightly about the legs, arms and body, closing over him in an all-embracing grip.

Like a fish struggling in a net, Snub fought then; and his struggles were just as vain. Stronger and firmer grew the meshes around him. Relentlessly he was drawn through the air towards the shining hull before him. Straight towards two masked, powerful men who waited eagerly in an air-lock to haul him in!

(Will Snub be captured by the Phantom Foe? See next Wednesday's sensational instalment—it's a thriller!)

HIS MAJESTY OF THE REMOVE!

(Continued from page 37.)

"That's all," replied Paul. "We thought we'd keep it up as long as possible. Naturally, we don't want the Common-room for a study. We'll dig with the other chaps, and we're only too pleased."

Bernard Forrest, slowly recovering, staggered to his feet. His physical pain, however, was as nothing compared with his mental anguish. He had heard everything. He stared at Victor dully. He had called him a commoner, a peasant, a gipsy. He had insulted him right and left—and actually he was the real King Victor of Caronia! Forrest reeled away, his collapse complete, and the other cads were equally staggered. It was too late now to put things right.

As for the schoolboy king and his friend, they were glad enough that the jape was over, and that they could now settle down as ordinary Removites.

Victor, in particular, was pleased. By arriving at the school under another name he had gained popularity through his own personality, and not by his position. Also, he had got the exact measure of his future school-fellows.

So everything was all serene.

THE END.

(Caronian plotters at St. Frank's! King Victor kidnapped! Nipper & Co. are booked for many stirring adventures now that they have a schoolboy king in their ranks. Next week's exciting, long complete yarn, featuring the Chums of St. Frank's, is entitled: "The Kidnapped King!" Order your copy now to avoid disappointment.)

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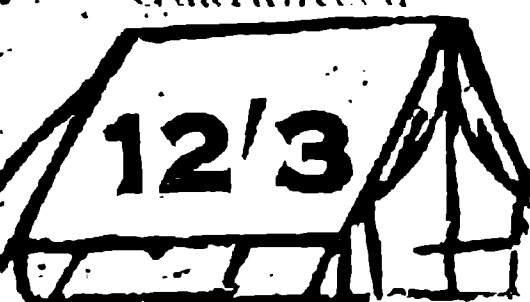
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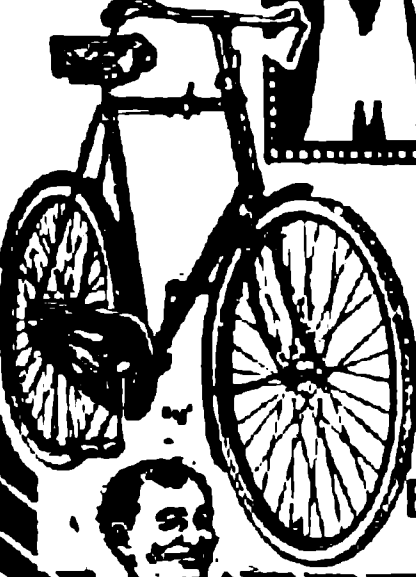
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