

GRAND SCHOOL AND FOOTER YARN—Inside!

THE NELSON LEE

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GOAL!

The Head heads the ball! A "smashing" incident from this week's superb long complete yarn of school and sport, introducing the cheery Chums of St. Frank's.

New Series No. 84.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

August 29th, 1931.

You'll Catch It Too When You Read This Corking Yarn!

And CUP!

By **EDWY SEARLES**
BROOKS

were returning to St. Frank's for the new term.

The summer holidays were over, and now the football season was imminent. The boys were returning to St. Frank's eager and enthusiastic for the king of winter games.

They were in distinguished company, however, in that air-liner's saloon. Irene & Co., of the Moor View School, were

to the St. Frank's boys and Moor View girls, too.

There had been some very exciting times in that little mid-European kingdom of late; but the revolution was over now, and Caronia was at peace. Lord Dorrimore and Nelson Lee had brought their party of boys and girls home to England in that liner of the skies; it was the self-same machine which had served them so



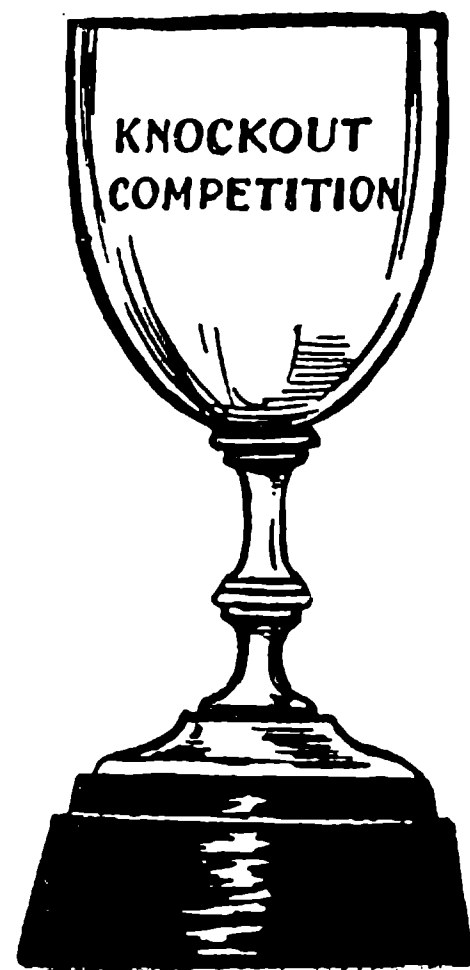
there; Lord Dorrimore, the famous sporting peer, was enjoying himself hugely; there were Mr. and Mrs. Alington Wilkes, of the Ancient House; Mr. and Mrs. Beverley Stokes, of the West House; and even Professor Thorpe Ogleby, the famous scientist and archæologist.

This novel mode of travelling down to St. Frank's had been Lord Dorrimore's idea.

Characteristically enough, the one and only Dorrie had hired this super air-liner from the Caronian authorities, to whom it belonged; at least, he had tried to hire it. But the Caronians refused to listen to any such proposal; they gladly and eagerly placed the machine at Lord Dorrimore's disposal for just as long as he chose to use it. The Caronians had every reason to be grateful, not only to Lord Dorrimore, but

well in escaping from death at the hands of the revolutionaries.

It had been Dorrie's whim to keep the machine at Hanwell for some days, while the boys and girls returned to their respective homes, to spend the tail end of the vacation in the bosoms of their own families. Lord Dorrimore's wheeze was for them all to go down to St.



Frank's just as they had escaped from the enemies of Caronia.

So here they were, about to arrive at St. Frank's in style.

As it was a rather special occasion, the millionaire peer had extended his invitation to a few notable people, such as "Old Wilkey" and "Barry" Stokes, the two popular Housemasters, and their wives. Nelson Lee was not there, since he had gone down to St. Frank's a day earlier; his duties as headmaster demanded his early presence.

Dorrie had been really pleased when Professor Thorpe Ogleby had accepted the invitation. For it so happened that this great man was the new Chairman of the St. Frank's Board of Governors. The boys and girls were not quite so pleased with his presence, for they could not help being slightly awed by the great man. But they were getting over that feeling now, for the professor proved to be a genial, kindly, likable man, as human as he was simple.

"But what about your priceless pater, laddie?" Archie Glenthorne had asked of Alf Brent, who shared Study E with him, in the Ancient House.

"He resigned the chairmanship a month or two ago," replied Brent. "He was never very keen on it, you know, and my pater, first and last, is a business man."

It appeared that Sir John Brent, who had been chairman of the governors for so long, had resigned owing to pressure of business. He had recently gone off on a prolonged world tour, studying foreign markets, and it was quite on the cards that he would be away from England for the better part of a year.

Professor Thorpe Ogleby had been unanimously voted to the chair by all the other Governors. He was ideally suited for the job, for in his earlier days he had been a schoolmaster. He was a man of great learning, and it was felt that he could look after the great school's welfare admirably.

After all, it was an honorary job, and there was really nothing to do—beyond certain formalities which the professor would probably revel in, but which Sir John Brent had cordially detested.

"I am charmed—quite charmed," said the professor, as he sat with Lord Dorri-more in the luxury saloon of the air-liner. "I must admit that I have previously been greatly prejudiced against all aircraft, and this, indeed, is my very first flight."

"It's the best way of getting where you want to go," declared his lordship. "We're swinging round a bit now; there's

St. Frank's, down there. Looks pretty insignificant from this height—eh?"

"Good gracious!" said Professor Ogleby. "I can scarcely credit that that tiny group of buildings can be the great school."

He was justified in his expression of surprise.

The great, silver-winged 'plane, having passed over Bannington, was now circling the village of Bellton and the school itself. It was at a great height—not less than ten thousand feet—and the air was crystal clear on this sunny, cloudless August afternoon. The view from the saloon windows was fascinating.

Looking straight down, one obtained a vivid, clear-cut impression of the school and the surrounding countryside.

Everything looked singularly dwarfed and unreal. The meadows were like the patches of a crazy quilt; the cornfields, with their yellow stubble, stood out in striking contrast to the greens of the meadows and the browns of the ploughed fields. The roads and lanes were like carelessly flung lengths of string; the River Stowe was like a length of winding white ribbon.

As for St. Frank's, the school buildings had an appearance of insignificance; just a tiny group of grey stonework in regular formation, surrounded by an expanse of green. Even the boys were fascinated. They knew that their playing fields were extensive, but from this height Big Side and Little Side looked like halfpenny postage stamps.

"Well I'm jiggered!" commented Edward Oswald Handforth, the burly leader of Study D. "Look at our giddy pavilion! Smaller than a matchbox!"

"We're going to land on the playing-fields, aren't we?" asked Church.

"Yes," replied Handforth. "It's all arranged with Mr. Lee. But, by George, there doesn't seem to be enough room! We can't land on a tiny patch like that!"

Church and McClure grinned.

"It's bigger than it looks, old man," said Mac. "You ought to know that—you've played on Little Side often enough."

The boys had flown over St. Frank's on more than one occasion; but they had never been at such a height as this.

"If you think St. Frank's looks small, what about our poor little school?" asked Irene Manners, with a laugh. "Oh, I say! Did you ever see such a dot?"

The Moor View School, beyond St. Frank's in the direction of the moor, did, indeed, look tiny. One might have been

forgiven for supposing that it was only a cottage.

The boys and girls were all making comments of a like nature as the great 'plane continued to circle. The pilot—who was, incidentally, the air commodore of the Caronian flying service—was circling deliberately, at Lord Dorrimore's suggestion. Dorrie himself had now passed forward through the little passage into the control cabin.

And it was at this point that Professor Thorpe Ogleby changed from a mild, inoffensive gentleman and became wildly excited.

A half-strangled cry escaped him, audible up and down the entire length of that luxuriously appointed saloon. All the schoolboys and schoolgirls turned and looked at the professor. He had risen from his chair, and was clutching at the rail in front of the nearest window. He was staring down, and his eyes were wild with excitement; he shook from head to foot with some strong emotion.

"What's the matter, sir?" asked Nipper, who was nearest.

"Don't talk to me!" panted Professor Ogleby hoarsely.

"Are you ill, sir?"

"Ill? No!" shouted the other, his manner more wild than ever. "Ill? Leave me alone!"

The boys and girls exchanged startled glances. Their first impression was that Professor Ogleby had been seized by airsickness—although this was unaccountable, because the great monoplane was as steady as a steam yacht on a calm sea. But they could now see that the professor's complaint was more mental than physical.

"Look!" he panted, pointing earthwards with a quivering finger. "Good heavens! And I never even suspected! I knew nothing of this! It is a staggering, bewildering discovery!"

Some of the boys crowded round.

"But we don't understand, sir," said Handforth, in his blunt way.

"No?" said the professor, almost fighting for his breath. "Look! Don't you see?"

"See what, sir?"

"Heavens, boy, are you blind?" shouted the great man.

"I can see St. Frank's, if that's what you mean, sir," said Handforth, bewildered. "It doesn't look much of a place from this height, but——"

"No, no, not St. Frank's!" interrupted Professor Ogleby. "Don't be foolish! I am not in the least interested in St. Frank's!"

"Sorry, sir; I thought you were," growled Handforth. "I mean, being Chairman of the Governors, and——"

"Cannot you see something else—something amazingly obvious, even to the eye of the uninitiated?"

"Eh?"

"Never in my life have I seen plainer indications. Good gracious! We are descending, are we not?" asked the professor, in alarm. "Run, one of you! Run to the pilot! Tell him to go higher—higher! Tell him to remain here for some time, so that I may make a better examination!"

Handforth looked round at the other fellows helplessly.

"Dotty!" he whispered. "He's off his rocker!"

"Fathead!" hissed Church. "He'll hear you!"

"We'd better humour him," went on Handforth anxiously. "I mean, it's no joke having a raving lunatic——"

"I'll go and tell the pilot!" shouted McClure.

"Good—good!" said Professor Ogleby, nodding. "Splendid! Tell him to remain at this height for some time. I will send word when I am ready to descend."

With throttled engine, the great silver 'plane was already going into a graceful dive; but soon after McClure had vanished through the little passage the purring of the engines was resumed, and the machine continued flying in a wide circle over the school property.

Lord Dorrimore, somewhat startled by Mac's information, had returned to the saloon.

"Is anything wrong here?" he asked mildly.

He could see, at the first glance, that Professor Thorpe Ogleby was a changed man. No longer was he the quiet, genial man of learning. He was sizzling with excitement.

"Ah, Lord Dorrimore!" he exclaimed, beckoning. "Come here, sir! Splendid! Come and look at this! Did you ever see anything so marvellous in all your life?"

Lord Dorrimore, warned in advance by Mac, took a look.

"Wonderful!" he said enthusiastically.

"You see what I mean, my dear sir?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dorrie. "You mean the school, and the general view, and all that?"

Professor Ogleby gave him a sharp look.

"I mean nothing of the sort," he said testily. "Upon my soul! Do you mean to assure me, Lord Dorrimore, that you

cannot see the extraordinary — er—configuration of the ground?"

"The which of the ground?" asked his lordship blankly.

"Perhaps that is not quite the right word——"

"I'm sure it isn't."

"What I mean to say is, the appearance of the fields and meadows near the school buildings," continued the professor eagerly. "Do not regard them as fields and meadows, however. Forget that they are fields and meadows."

"Mad as a hatter!" murmured Vivian Travers sadly.

"You must look deeper—actually below the surface, so to speak," said Professor Ogleby breathlessly. "If you do that, Lord Dorrimore, you will see a remarkable series of circles; indeed, circles within circles. The colouration of the ground will show what I mean."

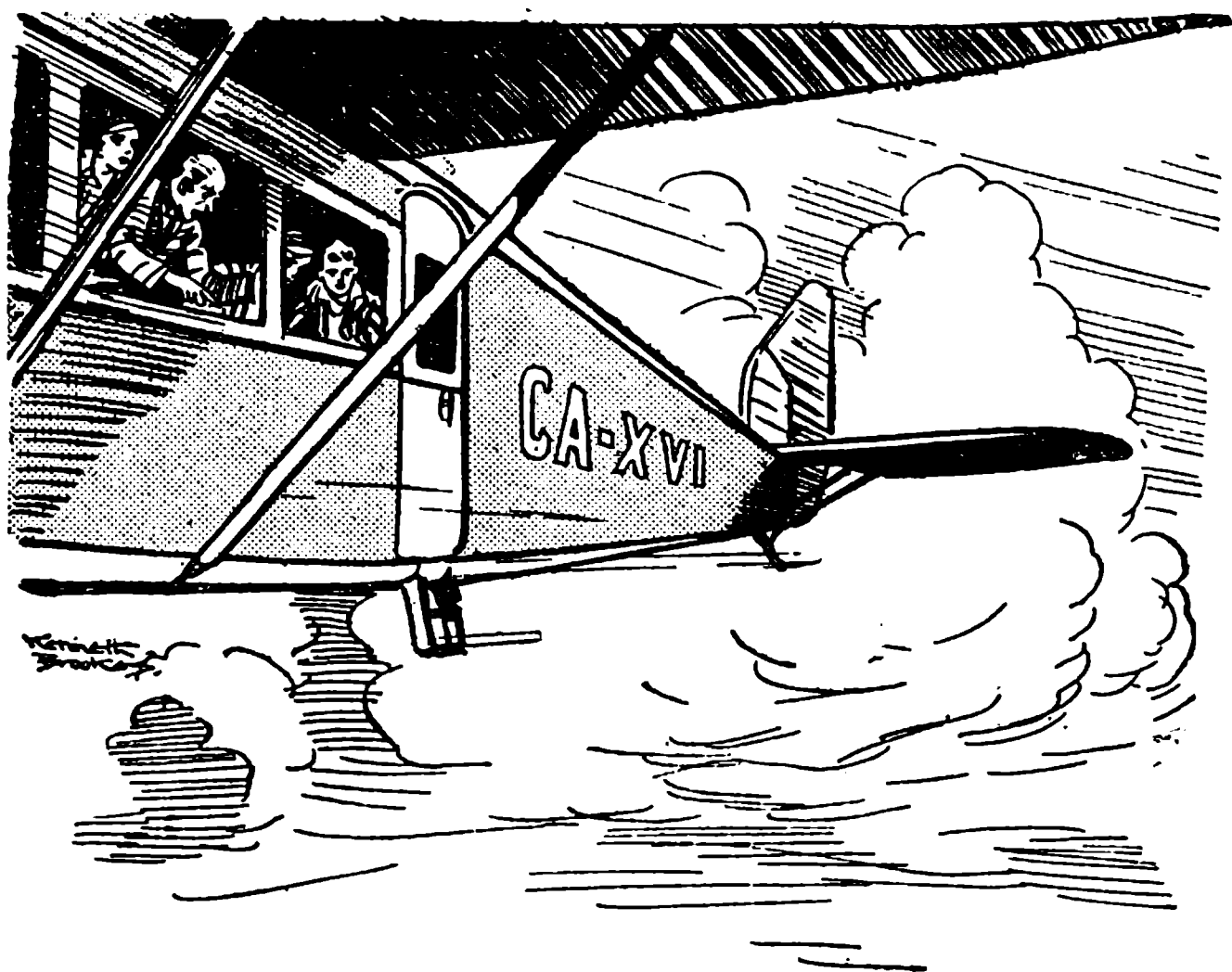
"Will it?" asked Dorrie hopefully.

"I say, Dorrie!" ejaculated Nipper. "The professor's right, you know! Look! Can't you see? It's on the fields and meadows adjoining our playing fields—and a part of it stretches right across Big Side and Little Side!"

"Oh, you mean that rummy difference in the colour of the ground?" asked his lordship. "At least, I think it's a difference in the colour. Anyhow, I can see a vague kind of circular business. But what is it? Something to do with the soil?"

"No! It is nothing whatever to do with the soil," replied Professor Ogleby, his eyes burning behind their glasses. "In actual fact, Lord Dorrimore, I have made one of the greatest discoveries of the age. We are now gazing down upon what was once a great Roman camp. There lies the remains of a buried Roman city!"

And the professor, acting like an excited schoolboy, continued to stare downwards at his "find."



Professor Ogleby was wildly excited when he saw that the ground below was "scarred" by a number of curious circular marks. "There lies the remains of a buried Roman city!" he exclaimed jubilantly.

CHAPTER 2.

A Bee in His Bonnet!

THE St. Frank's fellows and the Moor View girls were aware of a sudden sense of relief, mingled with disappointment.

All this fuss over an ancient Roman camp!

They remembered, now, that Professor Thorpe Ogleby was a very famous archæologist. Perhaps he wasn't so dotty, after all! But it was impossible for the young people to share his excited enthusiasm.

Even Lord Dorrimore found it difficult to be more than polite.

"A Roman camp?" he said, with assumed interest. "Splendid! You don't know how thrilled I am!"

The professor, who was a lean, bony man, with a big head perched on a long, narrow neck, had a habit of projecting his head forward until he resembled a human hawk. Even his nose was long and thin, very much like a beak. His eyes, deeply sunken in hollow sockets, and surrounded by countless wrinkles, were now glittering like twin pools of fire.

"Yes, a Roman camp!" he said tensely. "The signs are unmistakable. Positively unmistakable! Buried beneath these fields and meadows are the age-old foundations

of a Roman city! There can be no other explanation of this remarkable phenomenon. Perhaps we are gazing down upon the remnants of one of those long-lost Roman cities which we know of by repute, but the remains of which have never been discovered!"

Handforth sighed.

"Why didn't you mention something about Roman remains before, sir?" he asked, in a tired voice. "It's no news to us. We St. Frank's chaps have always known that there were Roman remains in the neighbourhood. Why, we once found lots and lots of Roman coins and other relics on Farmer Holt's property."

"Yes, yes, I know!" said the professor impatiently. "You cannot tell me anything about those paltry relics, boy. But this is different—this is big. It is stupendous. Magnificent! A clear indication of a great buried camp, or citadel!"

"Oh, rather," said Handforth helplessly.

He did not feel equal to prolonging the discussion; the subject was of little interest to him. But archæology was the professor's hobby. More than his hobby—it was his life work. He had written many weighty tomes on the subject.

Now that he had clearly indicated the reason of his excitement, all the boys and girls could see the peculiarities of that scrap of the landscape. A distant series of circles, curiously regular, could be seen extending over the greater part of the St. Frank's playing-fields and the adjoining meadows. Hedges and lanes and thickets could not disguise the circles. Whether it was a difference in the colour of the grass or the soil, nobody could quite tell.

They only knew that the circles, though vague and blurry, could be seen.

"Funny thing, we've never noticed anything like this before," remarked Tommy Watson.

"Not at all," said the professor quickly. "It is only our great height which has made this discovery possible. It has long been known, of course, that more than one Roman camp has been identified from a high-flying aeroplane. In just the same way, submarines can be detected far, far below the surface of the ocean by aircraft. They can be seen distinctly, no matter how deeply they descend."

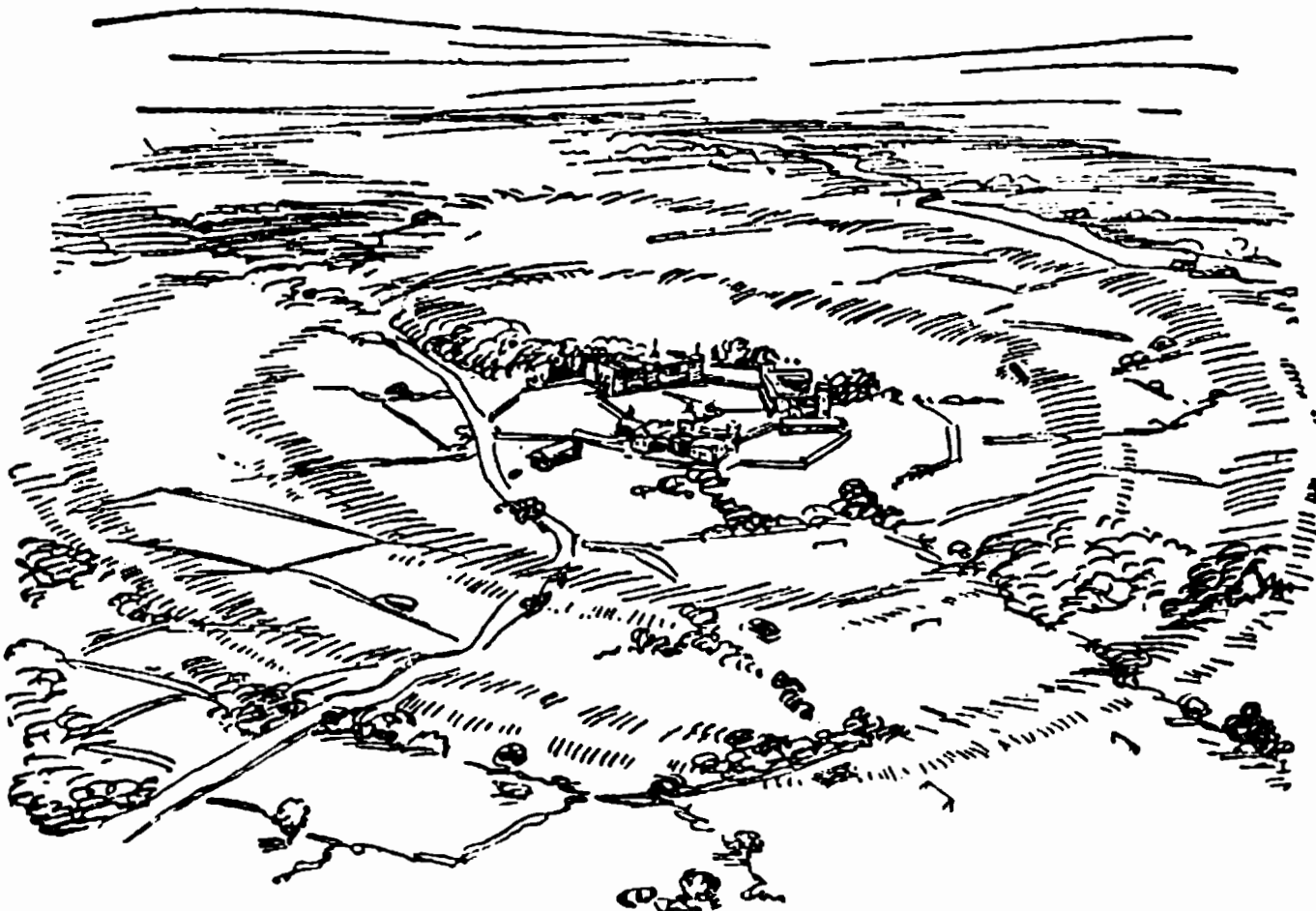
The professor was speaking the truth. It was, indeed, only the aeroplane's height which had "brought out" that queer marking of the earth's surface, thus giving the clearest possible indication of the centuries-old buried remains.

"I am grateful for the fact that we flew over the school at such a great height," said the professor tensely. "At any ordinary flying height—such, for example, as a couple of thousand feet—I doubt if we should have noticed anything out of the ordinary. We have only seen this because the school meadows and fields are dwarfed, and their real character more or less disguised. At ground level, of course, nothing whatever can be seen. One might have searched for years, and even then the camp would not have been discovered. On the ground there is merely the vista of meadows and woodland which one ordinarily expects to see. I regard this as a revelation of astounding importance."

"Ahem!" coughed Handforth, going back to his chair.

The others sat down, too. There was nothing to get excited about. Professor Ogleby might consider that he had made a discovery of "astounding importance," but Lord Dorri-more and the boys and girls were bored stiff. This revelation left them stone cold.

"I am a fool!" said the professor.



"I beg your pardon, sir?" asked Dorrie.

"I repeat, sir, I am a fool!"

"Yes, I thought that's what you said."

"An obstinate, pig-headed, stubborn fool!" said the professor fiercely.

"Well, of course, you ought to know best," murmured his lordship.

"For years I have heard that the only satisfactory way to explore the earth is to travel in a high-flying aeroplane," continued the professor. "And for years I have ridiculed the suggestion. Now, by pure chance, I have hit upon this discovery. I realise, of course, that I was utterly and absolutely wrong. I shall take to flying from this day onwards," he added stoutly.

"You couldn't do better," said Lord Dorrimore, with conviction. "One of the healthiest sports——"

"I am not thinking of my health, my dear sir," interrupted the professor testily. "I shall purchase an aeroplane without delay—I shall secure the services of a reliable pilot—and I shall fly far and wide over the countryside. But first of all there is this amazing Roman camp at St. Frank's to be investigated. Photographs, eh? By Heaven, yes! I must have some aerial photographs taken, so that I can compare them with the ordnance map, and thus locate the exact position of this buried city."

"Wouldn't it be rather a good idea to let it remain buried?" asked Dorrie mildly. "After all, what is there to be found? A few slabs of stone, perhaps, and some long-buried foundations. Perhaps a crumbling wall or two, many feet under the surface. Of course, I'm not an enthusiast like you——"

"I can plainly see that!" interrupted the professor coldly. "You suggest that these remains should be left buried? Ridiculous, sir! By careful exploration and investigation, it will no doubt be possible definitely to identify this ancient camp, and thus add materially to our archaeological knowledge. My name will go down in history as the discoverer of this camp!"

"Just as you like, professor—we won't argue about it," said Dorrie good-humouredly. "But I shall be awfully glad to know when you've finished your preliminary survey. I mean, isn't it about time we landed? Down at St. Frank's they'll be wondering what's wrong. They'll think the controls have stuck, or something."

"The controls?" repeated the professor. "Oh, yes! Quite so! Perhaps we had better descend. One moment, though! There is something I want to do."

He whipped out a pencil and an old envelope. Standing at the window, and peering down at the far-distant earth, he perpetrated a crude sketch of the immediate district, giving the rough position of the buried camp.

"Yes, yes, I see," he murmured, as his pencil flew. "The camp, for the most part, extends through a couple of meadows, two or three ploughed fields, and those chicken-runs near the school."

"Chicken-runs!" said Nipper indignantly. "They're our playing-fields, sir!"

There were a few grins.

"Oh, indeed?" said the professor. "Playing-fields? Quite so! You mean playground?"

"I mean cricket and football enclosures, sir."

"Oh, naturally," agreed the professor. "But I must confess that neither cricket nor football interests me. There! I think that will do for the moment."

He took another look, and Lord Dorrimore, feeling that this matter had gone far enough, went forward to the pilot's cabin, and had a word with Air Commodore Rolph.

"You can take her down now, old man," grinned Dorrie. "The old boy—meaning Professor Ogleby—has been going a bit dotty over some Roman remains he has spotted. How awful it must be to spend your whole life delving into the age-old past! I mean to say, where's the sense of it?"

"We all have our hobbies, yes," smiled the Caronian officer.

"Well, I suppose so," admitted Lord Dorrimore. "Poor old boy, he has my sympathy. If ever a man had a bee in his bonnet, he has one. A whole bally hive, in fact!"

So the great 'plane glided gently to the ground, and as she dropped lower and lower, so those vague circles vanished, merging into the grass and hedges and woodland of the countryside. A thousand feet up there was no indication of them at all.

"You see?" asked the professor, turning excitedly to Mr. Wilkes, who, with his wife, was interestedly watching the school buildings as they seemed to come upwards towards the 'plane. "If we had flown to the school at this level, we should have known nothing!"

"That would indeed have been tragic, sir," said Old Wilkey gravely.

Fortunately, Professor Ogleby did not observe the grin which overspread Mr. Stokes' face. Neither of the House-masters—nor their wives, if it came to that—had taken any part in the recent discussion.

They were rather fed up, in fact, with all this delay, and they had had no desire to make it longer.

"Not a trace—not a single trace!" said the professor, as he stared down. "Amazing! But now it doesn't matter; I have seen, and I know! I must confess I am eager and impatient to examine the ground at close quarters."

Crowds of Removites, Fourth-Formers, and fags were standing about in the Triangle and round the boundaries of the playing fields; but that great expanse of grassland was empty—temporarily out of bounds, by the headmaster's order.

The plane came over the hedge at the deep end of Little Side, touched the turf as lightly as a feather, ran forward, and pulled up with all the grace and ease of a perfectly-controlled automobile.

CHAPTER 3.

The St. Frank's Football League!

"ABOUT time, too!" said Armstrong, of the Fourth.

He was grinning as he grabbed Nipper's hand and slapped him on the back. The passengers were piling out, glad enough to feel the turf of the St. Frank's playing fields beneath their feet. It was good to be back at the old school.

"How's everything?" asked Nipper genially.

"Fine!" replied Timothy Armstrong. "But how long is this flying hotel going to stand here? We've been barred from the playing fields all the afternoon, and by the look of things we shan't be able to get any practice in until to-morrow."

"You're pretty keen, aren't you?" asked Handforth, staring.

"Keen isn't the word, my son!" replied Armstrong. "Corky is footer mad."

"He would be," nodded Nipper. "He owns a club of his own."

"Rats! He doesn't care a snap about professional football!" retorted Armstrong. "He's mad about school games. As skipper of the Fourth, Corky swears that he'll have you silly Removites well subdued before the end of the second week!"

"Poor old Corky!" said Nipper sadly. "Where does he get these hallucinations from? Doesn't he know that the Remove is going to wipe the Fourth practically out of existence?"

"He certainly doesn't," said Lionel Corcoran, the Fourth Form captain, as he came up and shook hands. "Sorry, Nipper, old man, but this is going to

be the Fourth's term as far as footer is concerned."

"Well, don't let's start a free fight," chuckled Nipper, as he observed Handforth preparing to roll up his sleeves. "We don't want any Form rows the very instant we arrive, do we?"

"There's plenty of time," replied Corky cheerfully. "Well, you bounders, what do you mean by it?"

"Yes," said Armstrong. "You've been having all the excitement, haven't you? Getting mixed up in revolutions, and goodness only knows what else!"

"Well, we're here now, and although it's cricket weather, we're all keen on footer," said Nipper. "Anybody got a ball handy? I'm dying to have a kick!"

They strolled off in various groups, talking animatedly. Meanwhile, Professor Thorpe Ogleby had gone off on his own, and he was nosing about like a bloodhound on the scent. Not that he found much. At ground level the Roman camp was, to all intents and purposes, non-existent.

The boys forgot Professor Ogleby altogether; there were much more important matters to engage their attention. Irene & Co., for one thing, had to be escorted to their own school, and there were old friendships to be renewed, studies to be looked into—just for old times' sake—and, of course, it was impossible to ignore the school shop.

So, for the next hour or two, everybody was busy.

"WHAT about a big feed?" asked Nipper thoughtfully.

"Rather!" agreed twenty or thirty voices in one shout.

Nipper grinned.

He was in the Ancient House Common-room, and that celebrated apartment was crowded. Tea was over, and as it had been a very special tea—quite usual on the first day of term—none of the fellows could have been very hungry.

"Going to stand treat, old man?" asked De Valerie.

"I'm afraid you don't quite get the idea," replied Nipper. "I'm not suggesting that anybody should give the Form a treat—a feed—but that the Form should give old Dorrie a feed."

"Not a bad idea," said Handforth. "In fact, it's a jolly good idea. I was going to suggest something of the sort myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you believe me?" roared Edward Oswald. "Not half an hour ago I met Dorrie, and he was moaning hor-

ribly because he was afraid that he would be invited to dinner with the Head."

"He wouldn't moan over that," said Nipper. "Dorrie and my guv'nor are the biggest pals."

"Ass! Don't I know it?" said Handforth. "But that old fossil, Professor Ogleby, will be there, and Dorrie is afraid that the conversation will be confined solely to entomology."

"You mean archæology," said Nipper gently.

"What's the difference?" growled Handforth. "Anyhow, Dorrie says that it'll give him a pain in the neck. I think we ought to rescue him. By the way, what the dickens do the school Governors mean by electing that antiquarian old lizard as chairman? He's not half such a good man as Brent's pater."

"What difference does it make to us?" asked Travers, with a yawn. "Life's too short to worry over trifles, dear old fellow. But about this feed, Nipper. Here's a fiver if you're out collecting the exes."

Many of the other fellows were eager enough to contribute, and Nipper soon had ample funds in hand. Quite a special feed was decided upon. It didn't take the Removites long to get things moving. Once they made up their minds to provide a feast, the feast was a certainty. There were any amount of willing hands, and the Common-room was converted into a temporary banqueting hall.

Lord Dorrimore was run to earth by Nipper and Travers and Handforth in the cool shade of Big Arch.

"A feast?" said his lordship, his eyes lighting up. "A feed in your Common-room? In an hour's time?"

"That's it, Dorrie," grinned Nipper. "Are you on?"

"Am I on!" echoed Dorrie. "May the saints be praised! You can bet I'm on! Anything to escape from that human earthworm! No offence to the old boy, of course, but what is he but an earthworm? Always digging about, probing under meadows and things. I'm with you!"

He was as good as his word. When the feed commenced, Lord Dorrimore sat in the place of honour, and the whole affair was just the kind of free-and-easy, go-as-you-please, help-yourself feed that he loved.

"I suppose you'll be off back to London in the morning, Dorrie?" asked Nipper, about half-way through the repast.

"I might, and I might not," said his lordship. "As a matter of fact, Lee has invited me to stay for a week, and it's

so pleasant down here that I might accept."

"Be a sport and stay, Dorrie!"

"Rather!"

"Thanks, young 'uns!" said his lordship, warmed by the eagerness of those voices. "Of course, Air Commodore Rolph will be off back in the morning, so you needn't worry about your playing fields. They'll be freed. To tell you the truth, I'm keen on seeing your first game of Soccer."

"The first one won't be much cop, Dorrie," said Nipper. "Only a Form game, you know."

"Yes, we shall have to give Corky & Co. a licking, just to keep them in their places," said Handforth carelessly.

"It ought to be a spirited game, anyhow," grinned Lord Dorrimore. "I'm willing to risk it. By the way, how do you manage about your school games? Your fixture list, I mean?"

"Well, we're a bit early this year," replied Nipper. "I mean, the term's started a little before its time, hasn't it? Some new stunt of the governors I suppose. Anyhow, we seldom fix up any matches against other schools until well into September. There's still the cricket, you know."

"Cricket's at its last gasp towards the end of the summer," said Dorrie. "Footer's the game now. Why don't you begin on the same day as the Football Association? All the games begin next Saturday, don't they?"

"Yes, but——"

"And while you're about it, why don't you run your school games on the same lines as the Football League?" continued his lordship, with a grin. "You know what I mean—a championship table, and everything. Points and places, and all that sort of thing. A league of your own—eh?"

There were a good many grins now, and a good many comments, too.

"Well, of course, we've always had something of the sort," said Nipper. "Not a league, of course. I'm afraid our school fixture list has been more or less free and easy, with gaps here and there——"

"Well, that's what you want to avoid," said Dorrie. "Make it hard and fast—just like the big League. Have your fixtures as certain as the laws of the Medes and the Persians; start your games on the tick of the clock. That's a point that always feeds me up when I see a school game or an amateur match. It's supposed

to start at 2.30, and the spectator is lucky if the ball is kicked off at ten to three. What would happen at White Hart Lane if the Spurs turned out twenty minutes late?"

"There'd probably be a riot!" grinned Reggie Pitt.

"And I'd be the one to start it," declared Lord Dorrimore. "Punctuality in a football match is important."

"Of course, that's not a bad wheeze of yours, Dorrie," said Nipper, an eager light in his eyes. "A league of our own, I mean. There are plenty of schools round and about which would be willing to come in."

"Enough to form a league?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Well, you can regard me as the founder of the St. Frank's Football League, and if you ask me nicely enough I'll be president," said Dorrie genially. "It's the president's job, I believe, to whack out any necessary expenses, so I'll start off by buying a handsome cup for the championship winners, and solid gold medals for all the members of the team that finishes in the top position at the end of the season."

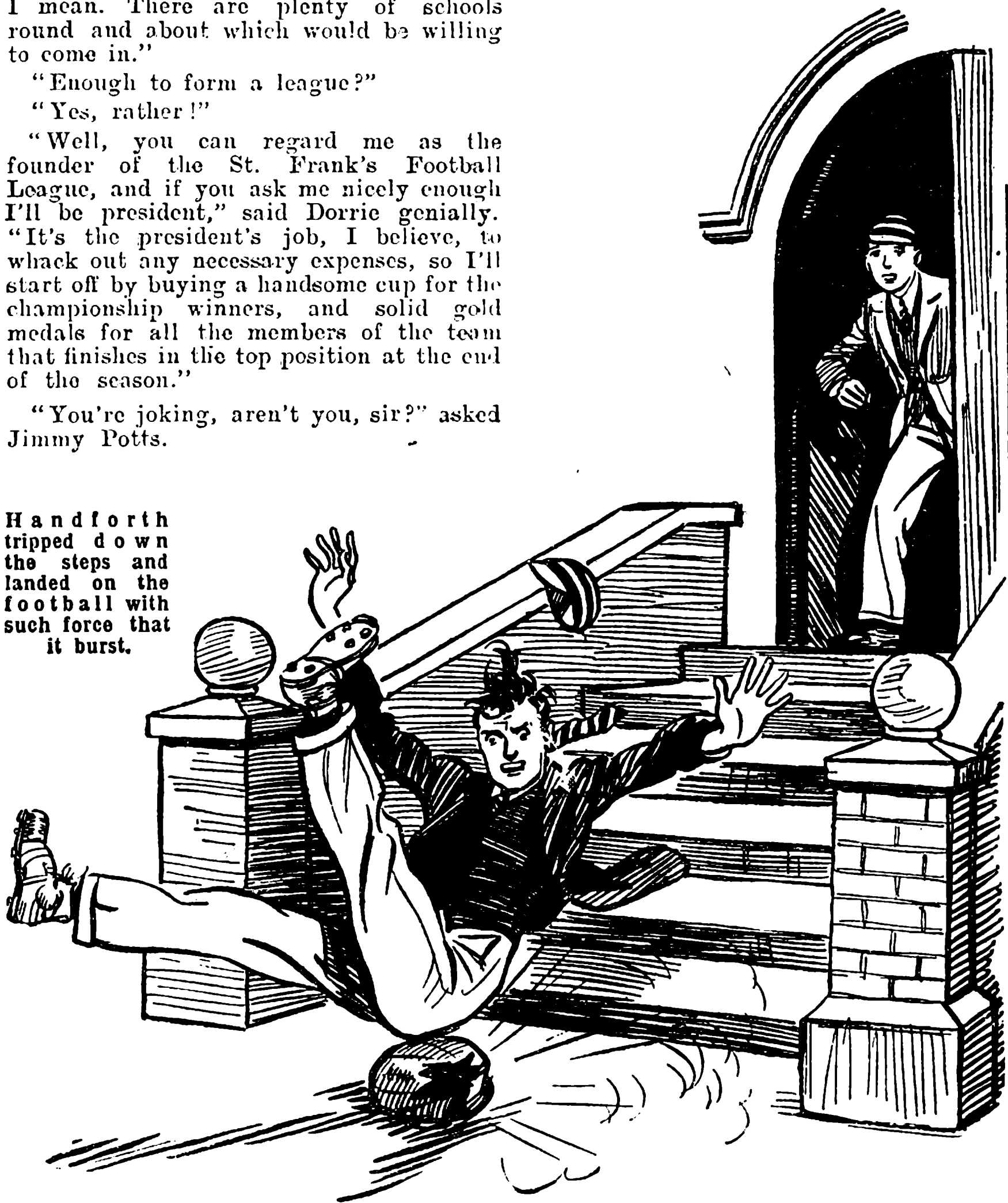
"You're joking, aren't you, sir?" asked Jimmy Potts.

"Joking be hanged!" said Dorrie. "Of course I'm not joking! If we do the thing at all, we might as well do it properly."

"By George!" ejaculated Handforth, his face flushed. "A cup for the championship winners, and medals all round! That's like the real thing—eh?"

"I can give you nine schools right off," said Nipper. "There's St. Frank's, the River House School, Bannington Grammar School, Carlton College, Barecliffe

H a n d f o r t h
tripped down
the steps and
landed on the
football with
such force that
it burst.



School, Helmford College, Yexford College, Redcliffe College, and Caistowe High School. I know all the junior skippers, and they'd be as keen as mustard to come in."

"Nine's not enough," said Lord Dorrimore, shaking his head. "We ought to have sixteen, at least. Sixteen teams would make a really respectable league. What about the Council schools?"

"That's a ripping idea," replied Nipper promptly. "We've got three more teams right away—Bannington Council School, Helmford Council School, and Caistowe Council School."

"Aren't there any working lads' teams in the district?"

"Heaps of them, sir," replied Nipper. "Whoopee! That's the stuff! We could invite Bellton Rovers to join, for one. Bob Catchpole is the skipper, and he's a sportsman."

"Rather!" said Jimmy Potts, nodding. "I once played for Bellton Rovers—in one match. Do you remember, you chaps?"

"Then there's Edgemore Athletic," continued Nipper. "Oh, we can make up the sixteen easily."

"What about the other schools?" asked Travers. "Yexford, for example. They're a bunch of snobs at Yexford, you know; they wouldn't join a league with Council school teams in it."

"You leave Yexford to me, my lad," said Lord Dorrimore. "I'll go and see the Yexford headmaster—yes, and the Yexford junior captain, too. Football's a game for everybody."

There was a lot of excitement now, and everybody was talking at once. Dorrie's suggestion was acclaimed as a brain wave.

"I'll organise everything, Dorrie," promised Nipper. "I'll write to all the junior captains, and——"

"Just a moment, my son," interrupted his lordship coldly. "Where do I come in? Kindly remember that I'm the president of this league. Who do you think you are, to bag my jobs?"

"Yes, but I thought——"

"Never mind what you thought," said Dorrie. "You're merely the captain of just one team. I'm the president of the whole sixteen! And I'm going to trot round to these various schools during the next few days and get everything fixed. I'll have some paper printed, fixture cards, and all that sort of thing. Oh, we'll do it thoroughly. What's more, we'll start our season on the same day as the Football League, and we'll run it on exactly the same lines."

CHAPTER 4.

Football Fever!

"GOOD old Dorrie!"

"Hurrah!"

"You're a brick, sir!"

Excitement was rife in the Common-room. Lord Dorrimore had aroused the fellows to a high pitch of enthusiasm. The forthcoming football season would be more interesting than ever. A championship cup to be won! Then and there the St. Frank's footballers vowed that they would secure the necessary points—for the league table would be run in the orthodox way, with two points for a win, and one point for a draw.

"We'll make it the finest footer season we've ever had!" said Nipper keenly. "By Jove, you chaps, this'll be a great incentive for the small clubs—teams like Bellton Rovers and Edgemore Athletic. It'll help the Council schools, too; they'll have something to fight for. There have been lots of complaints, in other seasons, that they couldn't get enough dates."

"They ought to be encouraged," said Lord Dorrimore. "With sixteen teams in this league, you'll get plenty of fixtures—running right through the season."

"I think we'd better play them every Saturday, for the most part," said Nipper. "Then we can have our ordinary House games on other days, and any other fixtures that we choose to make. We'll keep Saturdays for the league games, so that they coincide with the real English League games."

"That's it!" said Handforth eagerly. "And by George, what about a knock-out competition?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses, I mean it!" shouted Handforth excitedly. "Why not have Cup-ties? We've got sixteen teams in the league, and if we had our first tie on the same date as the Fifth Round for the English cup, we should make them tally, too."

"Good old Handy!"

"Always full of brainy wheezes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Handy is on the right track, my sons," said Lord Dorrimore coolly. "It's a brilliant stunt. We'll have a cup competition, too, and I'll provide the cup!"

"What!"

It was a general shout, and there was more excitement.

"We might as well do the thing thoroughly while we're at it," grinned his lordship. "What's a cup to me? It's not the value of the thing—but what it

stands for. There's no reason at all why we shouldn't have a knock-out competition, too. Who's got a fixture list for this season?"

Several were offered to him, and he selected one and turned over the pages.

"Here we are," he went on. "With only sixteen teams, we should only be able to have four ties. The Fifth Round for the English Cup will be played on February 13th, so we can leave February 13th open for our first tie. How's that? Then our ties will run parallel with the real thing until the Final."

"I say, you know, it's great!" said Vivian Travers. "You're a real sport, sir! We've never had anything like this before, and it'll make the chaps keener for football."

"Leave it to me," said Dorrie cheerfully. "I've got absolutely nothing to do for the next week, so I'll trot round to these various schools and boys' clubs and get things fixed. I'll put it over all right!"

After that, of course, there was any amount of football fever at St. Frank's.

Nelson Lee, as headmaster, gave the whole scheme his official sanction and approval. Some of the seniors were not quite so ready to approve. Perhaps they didn't like being left out in the cold, so to speak.

"It's a bit thick, if you ask me," said Grayson, of the Fifth, and who was very much of a snob. "What on earth is St. Frank's coming to? These juniors ought to be kept in check."

"What have they been doing now, brother?" inquired William Napoleon Browne, the lanky Fifth Form skipper. "You may safely confide in me."

"You've heard, haven't you?" asked Grayson, with a sneer. "According to the yarns that are floating about, the juniors are going to invite all sorts of Council school teams to St. Frank's—yes, and even teams like Bellton Rovers, composed of village louts!"

"More power to their elbow, Brother Grayson," said Browne. "I like to see this cameraderie."

"This which?" said Grayson, staring.

"This good fellowship," continued Browne. "I regret exceedingly that the St. Frank's First XI. is not included in the noble scheme."

"You're mad!" sneered Grayson. "The First XI wouldn't have anything to do with it."

"I will confess that Lord Dorrimore has shown his good sense by confining his activities to the juniors," agreed Browne. "Have I not always said that

the junior school is the heart and soul of St. Frank's? I sometimes regret that I am in the Fifth." He sighed. "Alas! age creeps upon me," he added. "How much sweeter is the lot of the care-free Removites!"

NEXT day there was tremendous activity on Little Side. Over half the Remove and half the Fourth wanted to practise. Everybody was becoming keen on football. In fact, there never had been such keenness. It was a Wednesday, and there was to be a match that afternoon—Remove versus Fourth. The two Forms were equally convinced of success.

There were crowds round the notice board in the Ancient House when Nipper pinned up the list of names. The junior skipper was taking no risks. His team consisted of: Handforth; Church, McClure; Singleton, Giesham, Castleton; Pitt, Travers, Nipper, Potts, Fullwood.

"What have I done?" asked De Valerie. "I'm good enough for a Form XI, aren't I?"

"And what about me?" shouted Somerton.

There were many other complaints, but Nipper only grinned.

"My dear asses, the season hasn't started yet," he said gently. "I can only shove eleven fellows in this team. It's Soccer—not Rugger."

"It's a pity we don't play Rugger!" grumbled De Valerie. "More of us would have a chance."

The Fourth Form team, it was found, was made up as follows: O'Grady; Bray, Boots; Oldfield, Denny, Armstrong; Yorke, Talmadge, Christine, Clapson, Corcoran.

Corky had made one or two changes. O'Grady, the Irish junior, had played so well towards the end of the previous season that he was being given a chance in goal. The Fourth-Formers were convinced that O'Grady would prove to be a second Handforth—a cool-headed, invincible goalie.

In his enthusiasm, Handforth dashed out of the Ancient House after breakfast punting a football. It was characteristic of him, of course, to step on the ball at the top of the stone steps. His feet went from under him, he flew hurtling down the steps, and it was a real piece of luck that he happened to sit fairly and squarely on the ball.

Bang!

Footballs are pretty strong, but they have their limitations. This one exploded.

"My new footer!" howled Handforth, leaping to his feet in dismay.

"You ought to be jolly thankful!" said Church accusingly. "That football saved you from crocking yourself!"

"Eh?" gasped Handforth.

"If you had come a real cropper on those steps, you wouldn't have been able to play this afternoon," went on Church. "You careless fathead! Don't forget that you're the official goalie of the Junior XI. You can't take risks, Handy! Your life is valuable!"

"Oh, well, of course, I dare say you're right," admitted Handforth. "Perhaps it's just as well that I fell on the ball. But what am I going to do now? I wanted to do a bit of punting."

"Punting?" said Bernard Forrest, strolling out of the Ancient House doorway. "That's something new for you,

Handy. I can give you a pretty good tip for the three-thirty race at Helmford."

Handforth glared.

"You can keep your rotten tips to yourself!" he retorted.

"But didn't you say you wanted to do some punting?" asked Forrest mildly.

"Punting a football, blow you!" roared Handforth. "But I don't suppose you'd understand. A football is the thing you use in a game," he went on with elaborate sarcasm. "Of course, Forrest, it's a game you don't play. You wouldn't. It's only a game for strong, healthy chaps."

Fortunately, he was distracted at that moment by the appearance of a football from nowhere. Handy pounced upon it and kicked with enthusiasm. It was Reggie Pitt's ball, and Pitt was on his way to Little Side.

Cra-a-a-sh!

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Edward Oswald's exuberance was tremendous. So tremendous, in fact, that the leather, hurtling from his foot at express speed, swerved in the wind and bored its way through the window of Mr. Crowell's study. And Mr. Crowell was the Remove Form-master!

"Crumbs!" gurgled Handforth, aghast.

"Cave, you fathead!" hissed Church. "You mustn't be seen here! You'll be detained all the afternoon!"

"But I can't be detained!" gasped Handforth. "I'm playing goalie for——"

"Do you think Crowell will care about that?" snapped Church. "If you don't cut—— Oh, help! It's too late!"

Mr. Crowell came dashing out of the lobby, his gown flying, a cane wagging fiercely in one hand.

"Who—who kicked that football through my window?" he demanded angrily. "I might have been severely injured!"

"Accidents will happen, my dear sir, even with the best regulated footballs," said a mild, apologetic voice. "I am really most awfully sorry. Please accept my heartfelt apologies."

Handforth and the other juniors spun round, their jaws sagging. Lord Dorrimore, having strolled through West Arch, was looking suitably guilty.

"Really, Lord Dorrimore!" said Mr. Crowell, his temper subsiding. "I am astonished!"

"As long as you're only astonished, it doesn't matter so much," said his lordship. "I was afraid that you might be hurt."

"Am I to understand, Lord Dorrimore, that you—er—kicked that football through my window?" asked the Form-master.

"I've been trying to give you that impression," said Dorrie contritely. "But there! I'm so enthusiastic about the game that I find it difficult to control myself——"

"Look here, sir——" began Handforth.

"However, no great harm has been done," continued Dorrie hastily. "If you will send me a bill for the damage, Mr. Cromwell, I shall be most happy to settle it. And I give you my assurance that I shall be very, very careful in future."

Mr. Crowell succumbed.

"Of course, Lord Dorrimore, that will be quite all right," he said. "I really thought that one of the boys had kicked the football through my window. Don't worry at all. I will have fresh glass put in without delay."

He went indoors, and the Removites breathed with relief.

"I say, sir, that was awfully sporting of you," murmured Handforth gratefully. "You're a brick!"

"Rats!" said Dorrimore, with a grin. "I heard what some of these other chaps said about you being detained, and I rather want to see you keep goal this afternoon!"

CHAPTER 5.

Remove Versus Fourth!

BO' TH junior teams that afternoon "were on their toes." Nipper would be keeping his eyes well open, and he would select his XI. for the first big match of the season from these twenty-two players.

Browne of the Fifth had consented to act as referee, and he was on the field in good time.

"Punctuality is our watchword, brothers," he said. "Let us start, then, on the stroke of the hour. And I trust that various kind friends will be gathering round the arena with chunks of ice and long, cool drinks for the hard-pressed warriors."

"You're about right, Browne," said Nipper, as he mopped his brow. "Phew! It's an absolutely ideal afternoon—for cricket!"

"It's always the same!" grumbled Handforth. "For weeks after the cricket season starts, it's football weather—wet, rainy, and cold. And as soon as ever the footer season starts, we get some blazing hot days."

It was certainly a dazzlingly brilliant summer's afternoon. The air seemed to quiver with heat, there was not a cloud in the sky, and scarcely a breath of wind stirred. The shade temperature was somewhere in the seventies.

"The best thing we can do, you chaps, is to forget the heat," said Nipper briskly. "The more we think about it, the worse it will seem."

The game started on the stroke, for Browne was a referee who allowed no laxity. Lord Dorrimore was sprawling in the pavilion, determined to enjoy himself. He was feeling very lazy; and, as he remarked to some of the juniors who were with him, it was a glorious afternoon for a nap.

From the very kick-off, the juniors displayed an energy which made Lord Dorrimore envious. He was an athletic man himself, but he marvelled at the vitality of these young footballers. From their play, it might have been a bitterly cold day in mid-winter.

The game was fast. Bob Christine, playing centre-forward for the Fourth, nearly snatched a goal in the first minute. He accepted a well-directed pass from Denny, trapped the ball, and streaked down the field. He made rings round Castleton, one of the Remove half-backs, and then, shaking off Gresham, who was well on his track, he dashed for goal.

"Shoot, Bob!" shrieked the Fourth-Formers.

Church was on the job. Fearlessly he dashed up, and just as fearlessly he robbed the leather from Christine's very toe. Church steadied himself, and kicked the ball safely down the field.

"Good old Churchy!" sang out Handforth. "You're a cert for the eleven if you keep playing like that!"

Singleton had the ball now, and he swung it out to Reggie Pitt, on the wing. Away went the lightning winger, streaking down the touch-line. At the crucial moment he centred, and the ball came soaring across.

Up went Jimmy Potts' head, and the leather was diverted towards the Fourth Form goal. O'Grady leapt, he clutched securely at the leather, and kicked clear.

"Oh, well saved!"

"Good for you, O'Grady!"

Thus the game went on, fast and furious all the time. Perhaps the juniors were just a little too energetic at this stage of the game; for long before half-time they were beginning to feel the effects in that sweltering heat. Their speed was reduced—but not their keenness. They still played for all they were worth.

Lord Dorrimore did not get his nap. He was too interested in the game. So far, there had been no goal-scoring—owing to the determination of the respective defences. But now, just before half-time, Nipper seized a golden chance.

Armstrong, in passing to one of his forwards, mis-kicked. The ball came to Nipper, and in a flash Nipper saw that there was an opening. He streaked off. In vain, Buster Boots tried to intercept him, but he was a shade too late. On the run, Nipper kicked. It was a first-time shot which left his foot low and fast.

O'Grady did his best, but he was taken by surprise. The ball was past him before he knew it, rebounding from the back of the net.

"Goal!"

It was a breathless shout from the Removites.

"Oh, well kicked, Nipper!"

"A glorious, goal, old man!"

"Hurrah!"

"Remove leads!"

They kicked off again, and almost from the start the Fourth-Formers battled desperately to equalise. Christine and Talmadge, working splendidly together, nearly succeeded. They ran clean through, and Talmadge sent in a shot which looked a winner all the way. But the one and only Handforth, leaping lightly upwards, tipped the ball neatly over the cross-bar.

"Corner!"

"Well saved, Handy!"

The corner-kick was taken, but Handforth's fists were there, and almost as soon as the ball had got into midfield the whistle blew for half-time.

"Phew! Thank goodness!" breathed Nipper, the perspiration streaming from him. "Well, my sons, we're leading! But if we're to win this game we shall have to keep up the pace! These Fourth-Formers are as hot as cayenne!"

"I venture to suggest, Brother Nipper, that every player on this field, to say nothing of the referee, is as hot as cayenne," remarked William Napoleon Browne. "No doubt you will all remember my good services after the game, and invite me to the celebration feed which is an inevitable sequel to a victory on the footer field."

"Rats!" put in Lionel Corcoran. "You're coming to the Fourth feed, Browne!"

"Do the vanquished give feeds also?" asked Browne, in surprise.

Nipper glanced upwards as a droning hum smote his ears.

"What's that giddy aeroplane doing up there?" he asked, as he espied a tiny dot in the blue of the heavens. "It's been circling the school for a long time, hasn't it?"

Later, they had an explanation of that aeroplane's activities. It was a special machine, hired by Professor Thorpe Ogleby, and it was taking aerial photographs.

"I wonder if they managed to snap that goal you scored, Nipper?" grinned Handforth.

"Oh, bother the professor and his giddy photographs!" said Nipper. "What do we care? Still, if it's giving the old boy a thrill to have these photographs taken, why should we worry?"

Nipper had other things to think of; he was keenly watching the various members of the teams; he was noticing which players revealed the greatest staying powers.

In the second half of that game, the Fourth-Formers managed to equalise after twelve minutes of determined play. But



Handforth's enthusiasm changed to consternation when he kicked the football through his Form-master's window.

Corky & Co. found it impossible to maintain the pressure. Reggie Pitt, after one of his characteristic dashes, put the Remove ahead again by a beautifully-scored goal, and from then onwards the Fourth never had another look in.

“WELL, I think I can select my team for Saturday without much difficulty,” said Nipper, next day.

He had been making notes, and he had come to the conclusion that at least three Fourth-Formers could be included in the Junior XI. The Fourth-Formers wouldn't be pleased when they heard, for they were expecting that at least half a dozen of them would be selected.

Nipper kept his men at practice, and he set them an excellent example. And when he wasn't on the playing fields, he was locked away in his study, wrestling with dates. Lord Dorrimore had been as good as his word; he had been from school to school throughout the district.

By the Friday, everything was fixed up. The St. Frank's Football League was no longer a dream; it was a reality. All the sixteen teams were glad to join up, as it were. And that evening—Friday evening—there was an important meeting, arranged by Dorrie.

The captains of the teams collected at St. Frank's. It was a gathering of the clans. The final details were worked out. So far as St. Frank's was concerned, the fixture list, when finally completed, was as follows:

Aug. 29	River House School	Home
Sep. 5	Bannington Council Sch.	Away
12	Carlton College	Home
19	Helmford College	Home
26	Bellton Rovers	Away
Oct. 3	Caistowe High School	Home
10	Barecliffe School	Away
17	Bannington Grammar Sch.	Home
24	Helmford Council School	Away
31	Yexford College	Home
Nov. 7	Edgemore Athletic	Away
14	Redcliffe College	Home
21	Bannington Hotspurs	Away
28	Hazlehurst College	Home
Dec. 5	Caistowe Council School	Away
12	River House School	Away
19	Bannington Council Sch.	Home
Jan. 16	Carlton College	Away
23	Helmford College	Away
30	Bellton Rovers	Home
Feb. 6	Caistowe High School	Away
13	Cup Tie	
20	Barecliffe School	Home
27	Cup Tie	

Mar. 5	Bannington Grammar Sch.	Away
12	Cup Tie—Semi-Final	
19	Holmford Council School	Home
23	Yexford College	Away
Apr. 6	Edgemore Athletic	Home
9	Redcliffe College	Away
16	Bannington Hotspurs	Home
23	Cup Tie—Final	
30	Hazlehurst College	Away
May 7	Caistowe Council School	Home

"Good egg!" said Handforth, with satisfaction. "So we play the River House chaps first—and we play on our own ground."

"The return match isn't until December 12th," said Nipper. "It's been arranged like that throughout the league. We're not playing at home one week and away the next. It's better to allow a lapse of time. Any team is liable to be weak for a period, and it'll give such teams a chance to pull round if the return dates are fixed some weeks ahead. Our second match, you see—to be played away from home—is with Bannington Council School. Then we shall meet our old pals, K. K. & Co., of Carlton College."

"There are some pretty big gaps here," said Reggie Pitt, who was examining the list. "There's no match between December 19th, and January 16th. Why is that, Nipper?"

"That's to allow for the Christmas holidays," explained Nipper. "We shan't be here, so we can't have any fixtures. It's the same at Easter. You'll notice that we're playing Yexford on the Wednesday before Good Friday—March 23rd—and then we don't have another game until April 6th—the return fixture with Edgemore Athletic. We've thrashed it all out pretty thoroughly, and I think it'll work pretty well."

"Rather!" said Handforth enthusiastically. "There are four dates left open, I see, for the cup ties. By George! There's going to be some excitement later on, my sons! I vote that we finish up at the top of the league table, collar the league cup and medals, and win the knock-out competition, too."

"You don't want much, old son, do you?" grinned Nipper. "But you're right! We'll go all out for the double honour! It's going to be the best footer season St. Frank's has ever known!"

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CHAPTER 6.

Nelson Lee's Visitor!

THE Great Day!

The official beginning of the football season! And the St. Frank's juniors were so smitten by football fever that dozens of them were out on the playing fields that morning long before the sounding of the rising-bell.

It was rather dull, and there was a strong wind. But nobody was particularly worried about the weather. One only worried about the weather when cricket was on the programme. Football could be played in anything except snow or fog.

Nipper had selected his team, and the notices had already been posted. That list, of course, came in for a good deal of criticism—particularly from the Fourth—but Nipper was a strong-minded skipper, and he could afford to ignore criticism. If his XI was decisively beaten by the River House School it would be time for the critics to raise their voices. Nipper was no believer in favouritism; his only object, in forming his XI, was to send out a team which could win.

The names on the list were as follows: Handforth; Church, McClure; Singleton, Boots, Armstrong; Pitt, Travers, Nipper, Potts, Christine.

Nipper turned a deaf ear to the demands of the fellows who considered that they had a right to play. But Nipper had been keeping a very careful watch; and he knew that quite a few of the juniors—men who had been hot stuff last season—were very much off colour. It would take them some weeks to find their old form. Meanwhile, they would have to practise, and stick at it.

Lord Dorrimore, who was taking a keen interest in the schoolboy league, was remaining at St. Frank's for the time being, the guest of Nelson Lee. He was determined to see the opening match of the season, at least. He had been working very hard this week. Nobody quite realised it, but the genial sporting peer had been tireless in his efforts.

"I like to see this good comradeship between such schools as St. Frank's and the Bannington Council School," said Dorrie, at breakfast that morning. "What do you say, Lee? You're the headmaster of this historic old pile."

"I entirely agree with you, old man," said Nelson Lee, smiling. "I have given you every facility, right from the very start. This schoolboy league will be a great success, I believe. You're spending quite a lot of money, aren't you, Dorrie?"

he added pointedly. "You're getting solid silver cups and medals and——"

"You can mind your own business," interrupted Dorrie gruffly. "If I like to buy solid silver cups, why shouldn't I? What's the money to me? And the youngsters might as well have something decent to fight for."

"I rather think they will value the honour more than the cup itself," said Lee dryly.

"That's true enough," said his lordship. "But if I can't do a thing properly, I don't do it at all. You'll excuse my dashing off, won't you? I've got some important work with the junior captain."

He hurried away, and Nelson Lee chuckled. Lord Dorrimore always bolted when money matters came under discussion.

Soon after breakfast Nelson Lee had a visitor. Lee saw the man arriving in a two-seater car. He was a brisk little man, about middle-age, with an eager, boyish enthusiasm in his manner. He entered Nelson Lee's study breezily on the heels of his card.

"This is a very great pleasure, Mr. Lee," he said, with a charming smile, as they shook hands. "I am delighted, my dear sir. To meet such a celebrated gentleman as yourself is indeed an honour and an event."

Nelson Lee glanced at the slip of paste-board.

"You believe in making your calls early, Mr. Drummond," he smiled.

"Yes, I am anxious to make an immediate start," said Mr. James Drummond eagerly. "I have already instructed my men, and——"

"I am afraid you have the advantage of me, sir," interrupted Lee. "What is the precise object of your visit?"

"But surely you know?" asked Mr. Drummond, in some surprise. "Upon my word! How careless of me! I have a letter here, from Professor Ogleby himself. I should have given it to you immediately."

Nelson Lee took the letter—which was merely a letter of introduction, an assurance of Mr. Drummond's credentials. The professor was not long-winded, but what he said in that letter was eloquent enough. Mr. Drummond, it seemed, was an old friend of his, an experienced and enthusiastic archæologist. He was a practical man, and in all such operations as this he was the professor's chief lieutenant. There were some vague references to the excavations, and to the workmen who were to encamp on the St. Frank's property. The professor was confident that Nelson Lee

would give Mr. Drummond and his men every facility to proceed with the work unhindered.

"I must confess," said Nelson Lee, glancing up from the letter, "that I cannot quite understand what Professor Ogleby means."

"But surely, sir, you know why I am here?" asked Mr. Drummond mildly. "It is a wonderful project. I am honoured, indeed, to be associated with such an epoch-making event. I shall never cease to be grateful to Professor Ogleby for honouring me in such an outstanding way."

His eyes glowed with enthusiasm, and he bent closer to Nelson Lee. Clearly, Mr. Drummond was a man who found pleasure in his work.

"I am proud to say," he continued, "that I have been associated with the professor for many years. I was responsible for the extensive excavations in Kent, three years ago. It is undeniable, of course, that Professor Ogleby supplied all the necessary funds; but I think I can take the credit of being the man on the spot. Many valuable discoveries were made then, Mr. Lee. But that excavation was a mere trifle compared with the work which is to be put in hand here, at St. Frank's."

"Oh?" said Nelson Lee politely.

"To be sure," nodded Mr. Drummond briskly. "We have every reason to believe—the professor and myself—that we shall make the most amazing discoveries of the century—here, at this school. Naturally, we are both just a little excited." Mr. Drummond smiled. "We cannot expect you, perhaps, to share our enthusiasm, Mr. Lee, but there can be no question of your wholehearted co-operation."

Nelson Lee gently shook his head.

"I cannot help thinking, Mr. Drummond, that we are at cross-purposes," he said. "In the first place, I am quite in the dark regarding these excavations you talk of so freely. Am I to understand that Professor Ogleby and yourself have decided to dig up the fields in the vicinity of the school? I know, of course, that the professor is interested in Roman remains, and——"

"But, my dear sir," protested Mr. Drummond, startled. "The professor gave me to understand that he had sent you a long communication, and that you would be in possession of all the facts."

"The professor was mistaken, sir," said Lee. "He has not communicated with me at all."

"Tut-tut! How annoying!" said Mr. Drummond, vexed. "But I am not really

surprised. The professor is an appallingly absent-minded man. However, considering the importance of this matter, there is no excuse for him. Not that his neglect makes any real difference. I am here with the professor's full authority—and that letter, alone, should be sufficient to convince you, Mr. Lee, that my projected operations at St. Frank's are approved by the school's governors."

"And these operations?" asked Lee smoothly.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Drummond, nodding. "Perhaps I had better explain. You see, sir, the professor has had a number of aerial photographs taken, and enlargements were made from these. By careful comparison with ordnance maps, we have located the exact site of this long-buried Roman camp. The professor has decided to commence operations by digging up the school playing fields."

"Indeed!" repeated Lee, without turning a hair. "So the professor has decided to dig up the school playing fields?"

"Exactly," said Mr. Drummond, without in the least realising the change in the Head's manner. "I am here with full authority from the professor to close the playing fields at once—to-day. I am hoping, in fact, that I can start my men on the digging."

"You are optimistic, Mr. Drummond," said Lee.

His voice was cold, and his eyes glinted; but Mr. Drummond only laughed.

"My optimism is not without justification, my dear sir," he said. "I have my men here, ready."

"Indeed?"

"A dozen of them," continued the visitor. "And all highly specialised men, let me add. They are the very men who worked so loyally and so skilfully in Kent, three years ago. Excavators of proven ability, Mr. Lee. It is a great pity that the professor did not write to you, as he promised. It seems that we have taken you by surprise?"

"Very much by surprise," agreed Lee, with a hard note in his voice.

"That is a pity," said Mr. Drummond, with regret. "However, I cannot see that it makes any real difference. My men are here, and I must inform you that they have brought several lorries."

"Oh! Lorries?"

"Tents, digging and excavating tools, and so forth," explained Mr. Drummond cheerfully. "You see, the work is of such paramount importance that the professor has decided to establish a camp on the playing fields—on the scene of operations."

(Continued on page 24.)



HANDFORTH'S Weekly

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EDITORIAL STAFF.

August 29th, 1931

THE EDITOR'S LIFE STORY

(Continued)

Written by **HIMSELF.**

Editor-in-Chief

E. O. Handforth

Editor

E. O. Handforth

Chief Sub-Editor

E. O. Handforth

Literary Editor

E. O. Handforth

Art Editor

E. O. Handforth

Rest of Staff E. O. Handforth

minute. Nursy is just going with this gentleman to be photographed."

They went off together, and I sat in the pram for about five minutes, feeling very fed up with myself. Finally I got out and strolled up

LAST week I described how the governor, the mater, my nurse and I set off for Southsea on holiday. I was eighteen months old at the time; but I was a jolly lot more intelligent than most kids at twelve years.

We arrived at Southsea without any other accident, except that I stuck the butter knife into the tyres of the car while we were at tea. I wanted to find out if there was air inside, or if the tyre was solid rubber. I found out.

Rooms in a posh hotel on the front had been reserved for us, and the first thing my nurse did on arrival there was to bung me off to bed with a plate of Dr. Beestley's Brat Biscuits, which I threw out of the window to the seagulls.

The next morning they dressed me up very nicely, put me in a pram, and wheeled me out on to Clarence Pier. My pater took a hard look at me and wagged his umbrella at me.

"My son," he said sternly, "I'm going away for a few moments. I shall leave you with nurse. If you dare to move one step out of that pram, I'll give you such a tanning that you'll be sore for months."

He went. There were a lot of soldiers and sailors at Southsea; they had come over from Portsmouth. There were crowds of them strolling up and down the pier, and presently one of the soldiers came over to Nurse and said:

"Well, well, well! How de do?"

They stood talking a long time, and then nurse turned to me and said:

"Little Teddy, be a good boy for a

the pier like a lot of other men, were doing.

There was a man just in front of me—an awful swell, with a monocle and a cigar. I thought I would like a cigar, so I went up to the cigar stand.

"I want a nice, cheap cigar, please," I said.

The man peered down at me.

"Are you over sixteen years old?" he asked.

"Well, not exactly, but——"

"Then we can't serve you. Run away."

Mournfully I walked to the end of the pier. When I got there I found a whole crowd of people watching a big steamboat which had just come in. A sailor lowered the gangway, and shouted:

"This steamer for the Isle of Wight! Look sharp, there! Hurry on, please!"

The people all began crowding up the gangway, so I thought I had better go, too. I followed a lady with a boy of ten or eleven. I managed to wedge myself in front of the boy, and when we got to the ship, the sailor looked first at me and then at the lady.

"Is this your child, madam?" he asked.

She didn't look round.

"Of course it is!" she snapped.

So I tacked on behind her, and her son tried to follow. But the sailor yanked him back and said:

"No children allowed on board without parents. Beat it!"

He made her son go back to the pier,

Five minutes later the gangway was drawn in, and we were off.

(To be continued.)

COMING NEXT WEEK!

Special Summer Number.

All the Fun of the Seaside, River,
Hiking, Motoring and Yachting.

COME TO HANDFORTH-ON-SEA!

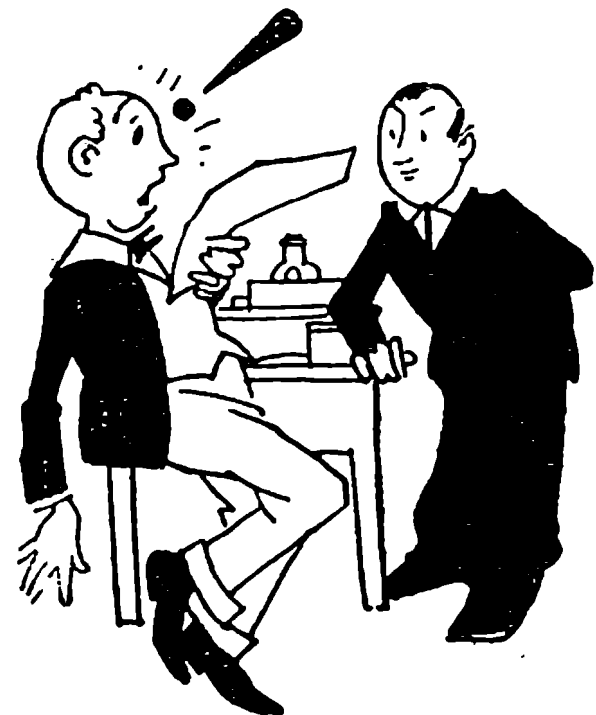
FARE .. 2d.

BOOKING OFFICE:

Your Nearest Newsagent.

FIFTY YEARS HENCE

Our Interesting Interviewer calls on
WILLY HANDFORTH.



"HI, you!" shouted the Editor. "Your highness!" I exclaimed, prostrating myself. "Go and interview my minor," bawled the Editor. "You'll find him an old man of sixty-four, but as businesslike as ever. He's the enterprising Chairman of Handforth's Giant Stores. Take the lift to the fourth floor, go in the room marked 'Silence,' and yell for his secretary. Hop it!"

I hopped it, and, following the above simple directions, I was soon in the presence of W. Handforth, Esq., a brisk man with a grey moustache. His secretary was standing by, smoking a cigar.

"Good morning, sir," said I. "Will you tell me why your secretary is smoking a cigar?"

"Certainly," said he. "He is smoking it for me. I like a cigar, but I haven't time to smoke it. Would you like one?"

"Thank you!"

"Have fifty."

"You're very kind, Mr. Handforth."

He turned to the secretary.

"Bring the gentleman fifty cigars this minute."

"I have come," I explained, "to interview you for the WEEKLY, of which your major is Editor."

"Yes, Ted always was potty. But, look here, old man—you can't write down my remarks in pencil. Do let me supply you with a good fountain pen."

"It is really very good of you."

"Don't mensh!" He turned to the secretary, who had come back with the cigars. "Go to the Fountain Pen Dept., and bring this gentleman the finest pen you can find."

"Really," I said, "I don't know why you are so good to me, Mr. Handforth."

"Oh, that's quite all right. Anything else I can get you? Would you like a sample of a very fine old ginger pop?"

"You make my mouth water."

"This is a magnificent brand. Won't you take a dozen bottles home with you to try?"

"Such generosity——" I gasped.

"Don't talk about it!" He turned to

the secretary. "Bring this gentleman a dozen bottles at once."

I was trying to fix the fountain pen at that moment, and I had the misfortune to shake the ink on one of my gloves. Mr. Handforth jumped up in concern.

"My dear sir!" he exclaimed. "Pray allow me to make good the damage." He turned to the secretary. "Bring the gentleman half-a-dozen pairs of fur-lined kid gloves."

"I really can't accept——"

"You must, my dear sir."

"Thank you. And now I must go, Mr. Handforth. I've got to get back."

"Must you really go? I'm sorry." He turned to the secretary. "Bring this gentleman's account."

Whereupon the secretary handed me an invoice, on which was written:

	£	s.	d.
50 Flor de Broccolo Cigars ..	11	5	0
1 Fountain Pen de Luxe ..	3	3	0
12 Ginger pops (extra special)	3	12	0
6 pairs Gloves, at 15s. pair ..	4	10	0

£22 10 0

Terms: Strictly Cash.

Pay at the Desk.

TRAGEDY!

By HAROLD DOYLE.

(This is a tragedy in itself.—E. O. H.)

THIS happened at the School Sports. My sister came down to watch the sports, and so did Larry Scott's cousin. After the mile race we decided to have tea in the meadow, so Larry, Yung Ching and I went over to the canteen to get the things.

We ordered five cups of tea, bread-and-butter, cakes, lettuce, etc., and when Mrs. Poulter (who was helping to serve) had got all the stuff together, there was a tidy lot of it.

We looked at it. I said to Larry:

"You take the plates and the cakes, Yung Ching can take the bread-and-butter and lettuce, and I'll take the teas."

"You couldn't carry the tea ten yards, let alone a hundred," snorted Larry.

"You'd drop the lot. I'll take the tea."

"In that case, we may as well kiss it good-bye right away," I retorted.

We stood and snorted at each other for two minutes, and then suddenly I had a bright idea.

"What champion asses we are," I said.

"Here's Chingy, the celebrated juggler,

Special Report

REMOV

THE Remove is supposed to be a debate—according to the usual custom—

"in an interesting and comfortable to and comfortable work of each Form." the chair, and the debate in an orderly manner. usually finishes in a similar manner, and the subject usually lost sight of in minutes.

Here is the report of the subject for debate.

"That Brutus acted wisely of Rome when agreeing to the execution of Caesar."

And the form-papers were read:

Proposed by SIR JIMMY: "That the subject of the debate should be in Self-Interest."

Proposed by R. J. "That the subject of the debate should be in Self-Interest." Amendment: "That the subject of the debate should be in Self-Interest." ing Cad and ought to be kicked out of the school."

Proposed by E. O. H.: "That the subject of the debate should be in Self-Interest." At 8.5 p.m. Mr. Handforth called upon Sir Jimmy to move the Resolution standing on the agenda.

Sir Jimmy said that he had had an old bean. He was

who can keep ten cups in the air at once. Five cups of tea will be kid's play to him. Let Chingy carry them."

"I should be very pleased to help," smiled Chingy.

So we loaded the cups on him.

By Jove! You'd think it would be safe enough. But it's always the same. Two minutes given himself a shot the five cups were on the ground.

He'd forgotten to juggle with 'em!



on the latest meeting of the

THE DEBATING SOCIETY

Debating Society is met once weekly to bring to school rules in proper manner upon controversial subjects. Presently with the Nipper usually takes the debate always opens in an unfortunately it is decidedly disorderly. Part of the debate is after the first five

this week's meeting. The debate was:

on the best interests of the assassina-

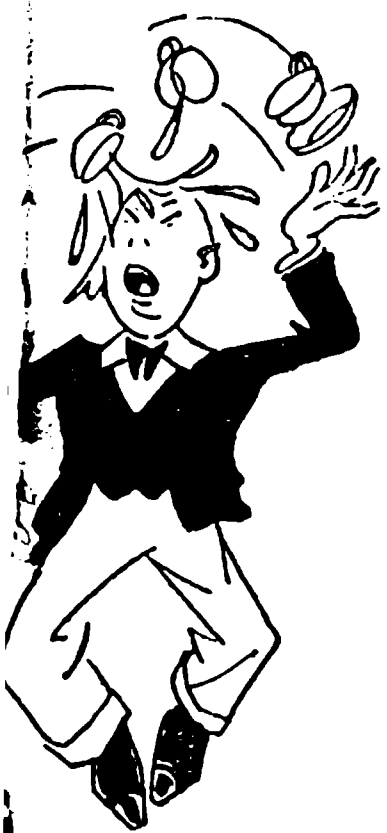
on the notice

JAMES POTTS. Brutus acted only in the best interests.

FULLWOOD. Brutus was a Howler. It would have been better if he had been a

SNIPER. Milton took the chair. James Potts to move in his name.

But Brutus wasn't a tool of Cassius,



have thought that he wouldn't you? It was unexpected that as later Chingy had a bath of tea, and the grass at his feet. He was, and tried Can you beat it?

Casca and Cinna. (A voice: "Who was a sinner?")

SIR JIMMY: "I said Cinna, fathead! (Order!) Order yourself! That rotter Hubbard is chucking paper darts. (Loud yells and more darts.) Give a chap a chance to speak. I was going to say that Brutus was persuaded to agree to bumping off old Cæsar— (Order!) All right—killing Cæsar, if you like—and the rotter jolly well ought to be killed for writing all that bilge about Gaul. (Great applause.) Brutus did the right thing. (Hear, hear!) Shut up, Handforth. Don't bawl at a fellow. You're worse than Brutus, Cæsar, and all the rest of 'em. Now if only old Handy had been stabbed in the Forum, they would have had a public holiday to celebrate it— (Uproar!)"

HANDFORTH (rising in great wrath): "You rotter! Wait till we get outside. (Order!) I'll jolly well—"

The **CHAIRMAN** rose and said that it was not yet Mr. Handforth's turn to speak.

HANDFORTH: "Well, why did he say I was stabbed in the forearm— (Loud yells of laughter.)"

SIR JIMMY: "I said Forum, fathead." (Loud chortles, and more darts from Hubbard.)

The **CHAIRMAN** called upon—or, rather, bawled upon—Mr. Fullwood to speak.

MR. FULLWOOD: "I disagree with all that the last blithering ass has said—"

SIR JIMMY: "That's the Chairman—he was the last one to speak." (Ha, ha, ha!)

MR. FULLWOOD: "Well, I dare say the Chairman is as blithering as anybody, but that's neither here nor there. If you chuck any more darts, Hubbard, I'll give you a hiding, my lad. Gentlemen, I'm glad to say that St. Frank's beat the River House School this afternoon— (Hurrah! Hear, hear!) At one time I thought they were going to pull it off—(No, no!)—when Travers' missed an open goal like a fatheaded idiot—"

(At this point Travers rose, outraged, and hurled himself on the speaker. When the dust had subsided, and the two combatants had picked themselves up, the debate continued.)

The **CHAIRMAN** called upon **MR. SNIPER** to speak.

MR. SNIPER: "I can't speak. Some brute has hacked my shins. Of all the howlingest, measliest rotters—Yooop! That beast Hubbard's chucking darts." (A voice: "Throw him out!")

The job of throwing Hubbard out began a glorious free fight, which continued until the arrival of Biggy and Fenton with canes, after which the debate was declared over. The next debate will be upon the subject of who won the last one.

The SONG OF THE DIRT

By CECIL DE VALERIE.

(NOTE: This sarcastic parody of Tom Hood's "Song of the Shirt" has been written for us by de Valerie for a special reason. The ordinary reader may not be aware of the fact that Teddy Long has, in the last fortnight, been ragged three times by Crowell for not washing himself properly. There's only one way to cure such a rotter, and that is to ridicule him.—E. O. H.)

Dig, dig, dig!

With arms and fingers hurt,
'Midst gravel and stones, in tremulous tones,

He sang the Song of the Dirt.

He dug for all he was worth

At a mountainous mass of soil,
Said I, with mirth, "Now, why on earth,

D'you do this useless toil?

"Perhaps some chap has told
You yarns of buried wealth?
D'you think there's gold within that mould?

Or do you dig for health?

"But, no—you're much too fly,
And would not care a fig
For such a lie, so tell me why
The dickens do you dig?"

But answer made he none,
Save for a rather curt—

"Oh, just for fun," and when he'd done

He sang the Song of the Dirt.

"Dig, dig, dig!

And all for a cowardly squirt
Who's not worth the price of a half-penny ice,
Much less of the Song of the Dirt."

Said I to him, "My friend,
That's not for fun—it's plain;
Then what is the end of the toil you spend,
And what do you hope to gain?

"Not for a second you slack;
You labour for all you are worth;
You've an aching back each time you hack
At that oddly-shaped lump of earth."

I suddenly ceased my cries,
As the earth gave a kind of cough
And, before my eyes, to my utter surprise,
The mountain got up and went off.

I cried with amazement strong,
"Great Scott! It's an animal!"
He said, "You're wrong—it's Teddy Long,
And I'm scraping him clean—that's all."

FOR LEAGUE AND CUP!

(Continued from page 20.)

He is afraid that other enthusiastic archaeologists may get wind of the discovery. By camping on the ground itself, we shall be quite safe from interference or interruption."

"It is rather a pity, Mr. Drummond, that Professor Ogleby did not consult me in this matter," said Nelson Lee deliberately. "No, I am not a touchy man; I do not feel slighted. But, seeing that I am the headmaster of St. Frank's, the least he could do——"

"Yes, yes, of course!" agreed Mr. Drummond. "However, I have explained that the professor is absent-minded. I trust, sir, that you will not place any obstacle in my way?"

"I am afraid that I shall place a very serious obstacle in your way, Mr. Drummond," said Lee decisively. "To be quite blunt, I have no intention of allowing you to dig up the St. Frank's playing fields—or to establish an excavation camp there, either."

CHAPTER 7.

Nothing Doing!

MR. JAMES DRUMMOND started, a flash of alarm overspread his mild features.

"Good gracious me!" he ejaculated. "What do you mean, Mr. Lee?"

"I mean precisely what I say."

"But this—this is a bombshell!" protested the other. "The professor assured me that the work could be commenced without any hindrance. What is your object, sir, in taking this stand? I must confess that I am not only disappointed, but astounded."

"You are no less astounded than I am, Mr. Drummond," said Lee curtly. "You tell me that the school governors have coolly decided to close the playing fields, and to dig them up. You must forgive me if I cast a doubt upon that statement."

Mr. Drummond flushed more deeply.

"But it is a fact!" he protested. "You seem to forget that Professor Ogleby is the Chairman of the Governors! There was a special meeting only this week, and the whole matter was threshed out and settled."

"And I was not even consulted," said Lee. "I would remind you, however, that as the headmaster of this school I have full authority. And I repeat, Mr. Drummond, that I shall certainly not permit you to take any liberties with the playing fields."

"Liberties!" almost stuttered Mr. Drummond.

"That is what I said, sir."

"But I am amazed!" said the other. "What possible objections can you have, Mr. Lee? Surely you realise the outstanding importance——"

"I realise that to-day is the beginning of the football season," interrupted Nelson Lee.

Mr. Drummond stared blankly.

"The football season?" he repeated, as though to assure himself that he had heard aright. "But what has football to do with our discussion?"

"Football, Mr. Drummond, is quite important in the view of the St. Frank's boys," replied Lee. "Football is the game which is to be played on our playing fields."

Mr. Drummond's expression was blank.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "Let me understand you, sir. I must confess that I find it difficult to apprehend your meaning. Are you suggesting, Mr. Lee, that football is of any real importance? What is football compared with this epoch-making discovery of an ancient Roman camp? Are you actually refusing to close the playing fields because of football?"

He spoke in tones of absolute amazement—of incredulity. Indeed, the look he bestowed upon Nelson Lee suggested that the Head was not exactly in his right senses. How any sane man could talk of football in the same breath as archaeology was beyond him.

Nelson Lee, for his part, mustered his patience. This mild, inoffensive gentleman, like Professor Thorpe Ogleby himself, had one sole interest in life—archæology. Nothing else mattered; he regarded the closing of the school playing fields as a mere trifle.

"I am afraid, Mr. Drummond, that we are merely wasting time by prolonging this discussion," said Nelson Lee. "I am sorry, but I have no alternative but to refuse to recognise your authority."

Mr. Drummond started as though he had been stung.

"But—but this letter from Professor Ogleby!" he shouted. "Surely that is sufficient, Mr. Lee? You are not telling me that you'll refuse to let my men commence operations?"

"That is exactly what I am telling you."

"Well!" gasped Mr. Drummond, with mingled consternation and anger. "Are you daring to set yourself above Professor Ogleby, who is the Chairman of the School Governors?"

"We will not go into that, sir."

"But we will!" shouted Mr. Drummond excitedly. "We certainly will! I am amazed, sir, that you should adopt this attitude. I came to St. Frank's in a friendly spirit, expecting——"

"There is no need for you to lose control of yourself, Mr. Drummond," interrupted Lee calmly. "You do not see this matter from my point of view, that is all. I am the headmaster of St. Frank's—and I would remind you that I am in full authority. The last word is with me."

"Oh, indeed?" said Mr. Drummond, glaring.

"I am like the captain of a ship—in complete command," explained Nelson Lee gently. "The Governors may decide this, or they may decide that; but if they think that they can deprive the boys of their privileges in this outrageous manner, they are very much mistaken. I see no reason why the boys should be penalised—merely because Professor Ogleby has allowed his enthusiasm to run away with him."

"I don't understand you."

"I hardly expected that you would; for you are not the kind of man to take any interest in sports, Mr. Drummond," said Lee dryly. "Do you realise that the closing of Big Side and Little Side might very easily incite the whole school to revolt? And let me tell you, sir, that my sympathies would be entirely with the boys. Why should they be deprived of their sports? The St. Frank's playing fields are as old-established as the school itself. Professor Ogleby, within a few days, coolly decides to close and dig them up. Oh, no! That will not happen whilst I control the school!"

Mr. Drummond almost fought for breath.

"But you do not seem to appreciate the importance——"

"Do you know if the professor has made any arrangements for substitute playing fields?" asked Lee. "If he has done so, it will make a difference, of course."

"Substitute playing fields?" repeated Mr. Drummond impatiently. "Good heavens! I am amazed, Mr. Lee, that you should so concern yourself over these paltry playing fields. We do not regard them as playing fields at all. The Roman camp is buried beneath that turf, and it is of the utmost importance to—to posterity that we should unearth——"

"Unearth is a good word," broke in Nelson Lee. "What about the turf, Mr. Drummond?"

"The turf?"

"We are justly proud of our turf at St. Frank's," said Lee. "It is of age-old

quality. For centuries, the playing fields have been tended and nursed. I can assure you that the boys regard those stretches of grassland with positive reverence."

"But why consider the boys at all?" asked the amazed Mr. Drummond. "You cannot expect them to understand."

"And now you are calmly suggesting that the playing fields should be ruthlessly dug up—excavated," went on Nelson Lee, ignoring the other's remarks. "No, sir! I must put my foot down very firmly. Football may be of no importance to you, or Professor Ogleby, but it is very important to St. Frank's."

"And is this decision of yours final?" demanded Mr. Drummond hotly.

"Quite final."

"We will see about that, sir—we will see about that!" exclaimed the visitor. "I shall lose no time in communicating with Professor Ogleby."

"That, of course, is entirely for you to decide."

"I have decided already!" snapped Mr. Drummond, his mild manner overwhelmed by his anger. "What of my men? What of my equipment? Do you realise that I have already given them instructions to go straight to the playing fields and to take possession?"

"That is a pity—for if they present themselves at the school they will certainly be sent away," said Nelson Lee. "Now, Mr. Drummond, do not let us quarrel. That would be quite absurd."

"Quite!" agreed Mr. Drummond. "But let me tell you, sir, that your high-handed action shall be reported in full to the professor. You must allow me to say that I regard your attitude as outrageous!"

Nelson Lee rose to his feet.

"I think, Mr. Drummond, that we had better close the discussion," he said icily.

"The discussion may be closed, but the matter will not be allowed to rest here," said the archæologist fiercely. "Oh, no, Mr. Lee! Your antagonism is a pity—a great pity. But since you choose to adopt such an uncompromising attitude, I am compelled to speak bluntly. I have it in mind to ignore your orders altogether, and to take possession of those—those meadows!"

"I shouldn't advise you try it, Mr. Drummond," said Nelson Lee quietly.

"And why not?" retorted the other. "Who are you to forbid me? The headmaster—yes! But my superior, Professor Ogleby, is the Chairman of the Governors! His authority is far superior to yours—no matter what you may say!"

He suddenly made up his mind, and strode to the door.

"The professor sent me down here to attend to this matter," he added, his eyes burning. "Never once have I failed him! I shall not fail him now, Mr. Lee! I am sorry, but I do not recognise your authority! And let me add that it is your own ridiculous and unwarrantable attitude which has forced me to speak in this plain manner. I have my instructions from Professor Ogleby, and neither you nor anybody else shall prevent me from carrying them out!"

And Mr. Drummond whisked out of the room, slamming the door after him.

CHAPTER 8.

A Sensation!

"WHAT the—— How the—— Great jumping mackerel!" gasped Handforth, horrified.

Breakfast was over, and the leader of Study D, accompanied by Church and McClure, was strolling towards Little Side. There wasn't much time for footer practice before lessons, but Handforth believed in taking advantage of every available minute.

He and his chums had strolled through the West Gate, and they were now upon Little Side. And there, at the further end of that enclosure, a number of big lorries were visible. They had driven in through the gate from Bellton Lane. That gate, incidentally, was so seldom used that it might have been non-existent.

"What's—what's all this?" ejaculated Handforth, aghast. "Look at those lorries, you chaps!"

"On our turf!" howled Church.

"Ruining it!" yelled McClure.

They were filled with consternation. Lorries, heavily loaded, driving on to Little Side! Mercifully, they had done very little damage so far, for they had not actually driven on to the playing pitches.

"Quick!" shouted Handforth. "Run and tell Nipper! Tell all the chaps! There must be some mistake here!"

Church ran off, and McClure followed. One dashed across West Square, and the other flew into the Triangle. At the top of their voices, they yelled for the Removites and Fourth-Formers to rally round. It was the first day of the football season, and Little Side was regarded, by the Junior School as a whole, as sacred ground.

Handforth, running across the turf, waved his arms like mill-sails as he planted himself in front of the leading lorry—which, to his horror, was on the point of invading the football pitch.

"Hi! Hi!" bawled Handforth wildly. "Stop!"

The driver of the lorry, startled, applied his brakes. He and a number of other men looked at Handforth in wonder. There were over a dozen of them, all told—strong, capable, respectable-looking men.

"Steady, young shaver," said the lorry driver, jumping down from his seat. "What's the trouble?"

"Trouble!" howled Handforth. "Look what you've done!"

He pointed frantically at the ground, and the lorry driver and the other men, who were collecting round, stared uncomprehendingly at the turf.

"Are you off your head?" asked one of the men bluntly.

"Can't you see?" gasped Handforth. "You're ruining our footer field!"

"Oh, so that's it?" asked the lorry driver, winking at his companions. "Sorry, young gent! But it won't make much difference, seeing that the whole ground is to be dug up."

"Dug up?" gurgled Handforth, reeling.

"Didn't you know?"

"No, I didn't—and you can't fool me with that dotty yarn!" retorted Handforth. "Who told you to bring these lorries here? What are you doing, anyhow?"

"It's a funny thing the boys weren't told, Jim," said one of the other men uncomfortably. "Somebody must have been neglectful. Better get on that lorry again, and drive into the middle of the field."

"No, you jolly well won't!" yelled Handforth. "Hi! Back up, Remove!"

Handforth was quivering with indignation. Incalculable harm would be done to the splendid turf of Little Side, which was always kept in perfect trim, if these heavily-loaded lorries drove over it. The turf was beautifully smooth and level; St. Frank's was justly proud of its playing fields.

"Of course, young gent, it does seem a pity," said one of the men, with real regret. "As soon as I set eyes on this ground, I felt sorry."

"You're right, Sam," said one of the other men. "It's a downright shame to dig this up. But orders are orders, and——"

"You're not going to dig it up!" shouted Handforth hotly. "If you try to—— Oh, good egg! Come on, you chaps!" he went on, as swarms of juniors suddenly appeared. "Help! We'll jolly soon show you whether we're going to let you mess up our ground!" he added, turning back to the men.

A moment later the crowds of Removites and Fourth-Formers came surging round. They were in strong force; Church and McClure had done their work well. They had given the alarm so effectively that eighty per cent of the Junior School had turned up, even including Willy Handforth and his stalwarts of the Third.

"What's all the excitement here?" asked Nipper practically. "What are these lorries



The workmen were determined to drive their heavy lorries on to the playing fields. The St. Frank's boys were just as determined to prevent them, and a free fight was soon in progress.

for? What are they loaded with? Isn't there some mistake?"

"None that I know of, young gent," said Jim, who seemed to be the foreman. "My name's Jim Purcell. I'm in charge. We've had orders to bring our lorries into this field, and to set up our camp."

There was a chorus of excited yells.

"Camp?" repeated Nipper. "But are you sure you're in the right place?"

"This is St. Frank's, isn't it?" said Purcell. "And these are your playing fields, I believe. Well, this is where we're going to dig."

"Dig!"

"Excavate," explained Jim Purcell. "You see, there's an old Roman camp buried under this ground, and——"

"So that's it!" gasped Nipper. "Professor Ogleby is at the bottom of all this?"

"You've hit it, young 'un," said Jim. "Professor Ogleby's our boss. Mr. Drummond is in charge, and he'll live in the camp, and be in full command. It seems a rare pity to take your playing fields away from you, but——"

"Who said you're going to?" demanded John Busterfield Boots, thrusting himself forward. "Did you hear that, you chaps?"

"They're mad!" roared Armstrong.

"Yes, rather!"

"Absolutely, by gad!"

"The first giddy day of the footer season, and they talk of digging up Little Side!"

yelled Handforth. "Look here, you men! Are you going to take your lorries out quietly, or shall we chuck you out?"

"That'll be enough from you, my lad!" said Jim Purcell angrily. "Mr. Drummond told us to come here—and here we are. And the sooner you boys stop hindering us, the better. We're going to take these lorries into the middle of the field."

"Not likely!"

"Never!"

"Chuck 'em out, you chaps!"

"Hear, hear!"

Nipper faced the wildly-excited crowd.

"Hold on!" he shouted. "You can't blame these men—they're only acting under orders. Professor Ogleby's the one we've got to thank for this situation. You remember how dotty he went when he saw signs of a Roman camp from the air. But who the dickens could dream that he would——"

Nipper's voice was drowned in the general shouting. The rank and file of the Remove and Fourth were too excited to listen. All the fellows knew was that these lorries had invaded their precious ground, and that a number of men were determined to do further damage.

Nipper tried to stem the tide, but it was impossible.

The juniors, yelling excitedly, hurled themselves at the workmen, and those unfortunate men were soon the centre of a commotion

which was very much like a free fight. Rather foolishly the men resisted, and some blows were struck.

That was enough for the Fourth and the Remove.

They sailed in whole-heartedly, and after the fight had been going on for about one minute the men were bowled over, flattened on the ground, and swarms of juniors half smothered them.

"Cave!" went up a sudden shout.

"Don't take any notice!" exclaimed Handforth recklessly. "It doesn't matter who interrupts, we've got to chuck these men off Little Side!"

"You silly ass, it's the Head!" gasped somebody.

And even Handforth scrambled hastily to his feet, his face aglow with consternation.

Nelson Lee came striding up, and with him was Mr. James Drummond. That gentleman had really arrived in advance, but, seeing the sensational fight in progress, he had paused on the edge of the playing fields, thus allowing Nelson Lee to come up with him. Lee had lost no time in following Mr. Drummond out, for the schoolmaster detective, after Mr. Drummond's final sally, had made up his mind then and there to enforce his authority.

"Guv'nor!" exclaimed Nipper, running up. "Thank goodness you've come! These men say that they've got authority from Pofessor Ogleby to——"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Nelson Lee. "What have you boys been doing?"

"Well, there was a bit of an argument, sir, and——"

"Attention, everybody!" commanded Lee. "You had no justification for attacking these men. They are only acting under orders."

"But we had to, sir!" protested Handforth excitedly. "Look what they've done to the ground already! They refused to go, and they were going to drive these lorries right to the middle of the football field, sir! We had to do something to stop them!"

"The boy's quite right, sir," said Jim Purcell, looking hot and flustered. "We weren't going to take orders from schoolboys! Of course, we meant to drive the lorries to the middle of the field."

"In that case you have only yourselves to blame for being attacked," replied Nelson Lee. "You should at least have waited until somebody in authority came."

"Take no notice of him, men!" shouted Mr. Drummond, dashing forward. "Mr. Lee is the headmaster, but you have received your orders from me—from Professor Ogleby! This camp is to be established at once. Do you hear me? Drive your lorries straight to the middle of the field!"

And he gave Nelson Lee a defiant glare, which left Lee unmoved.

"This situation is absurd," said the Head quietly. "You men will kindly understand that I am the headmaster, and that my word is final. I am sorry to—er—defy Mr. Drummond in this way, but my instructions are

that you men shall take your lorries away at once."

"But look here, sir——" began Purcell.

"At once I said!" broke in Lee curtly.

There was such authority in his tone that the man had no further thought of resisting. The other men, too, were equally impressed.

"Very good, sir," said Jim respectfully. "Seeing that you're the headmaster, we'll do as you say, sir."

"Nothing of the kind!" almost shrieked Mr. Drummond. "Have I not told you that Professor Ogleby——"

"Sorry, Mr. Drummond, sir, but what can we do?" asked Jim, with a helpless shrug. "Mr. Lee's the Head, and what he says goes. Come on, mates! We'd better clear out. Seems like there's a misunderstanding somewhere."

While the exasperated Mr. Drummond gnashed his teeth, the men got aboard the lorries, and the heavy vehicles were backed away.

"Three cheers for Mr. Lee!"

"That'll be enough, boys," said Nelson Lee, holding up his hand. "We don't want any cheering. There has been too much excitement over this affair."

"By Heaven, sir, you will hear more of this!" panted Mr. Drummond, quivering from head to foot. "You have acted in a very high-handed manner, and I resent it exceedingly!"

He strode off, seething with rage. In spite of Nelson Lee's injunction, there was another cheer, and this time a large knot of seniors joined in. For the seniors had quickly grasped the situation, and they realised that Big Side, too, was equally threatened with destruction.

Nelson Lee had acted firmly, and his popularity with the boys became greater than ever.

CHAPTER 9.

Mr. Drummond Takes Action!

CLANG-CLANG!

The bell was ringing for lessons, and Nelson Lee faced the crowd good-humouredly.

"You mustn't let this worry you," he said. "You may be quite sure that as long as I remain headmaster I shall never allow either Big Side or Little Side to be dug up."

"Hurrah!"

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

"Unless, of course, the school governors provide us with substitute playing fields," continued Nelson Lee. "I can only assume that Professor Ogleby has not given the matter sufficient thought. Perhaps we shall hear more; but, if so, the school can be quite certain that I shall stand firm. Your playing fields will remain intact."

"But great Scott, sir," said Fenton, of the Sixth, "do you really mean to say that Professor Ogleby has arranged to dig up the

playing fields so that he can look for Roman relics?"

"That is the suggestion, I believe," said Lee dryly.

"It's outrageous, sir!" protested the St. Frank's captain. "I've never heard of such nonsense in all my life!"

"Just as Professor Ogleby cannot appreciate your love for your playing fields, you cannot appreciate Professor Ogleby's love for archæology," said Nelson Lee. "It is just a question of the point of view. But there are many hundreds of you boys to consider, and I regard it as my duty as headmaster to protect the playing fields. I am sorry, however, that Mr. Drummond created such a scene."

The boys drifted away towards the School House, en route for their Form-rooms. The juniors in particular were still very excited.

"Old Pugdog Drummond had better not come here again!" said Handforth darkly. "By George, if he shows his face anywhere on the school property he'll have it biffed! And I shall be the chap to biff it! Of all the nerve! Did you hear the way he spoke to Mr. Lee?"

"Good old guv'nor!" said Nipper, his eyes sparkling. "They won't shift the guv'nor, you chaps! He's on our side."

"For the love of Samson," said Travers, "think of it, dear old fellows! Those lorries were going right into the middle of our footer ground. And this afternoon we're playing the River House chaps in the first match of the league!"

"I wonder where old Dorrie is?" said Nipper. "He'll have something to say about this crazy stunt, I know. Well, we needn't bother any more. The danger's over."

AT that very moment Mr. James Drummond was in the concrete public telephone-box outside Bellton post-office. The lorries were temporarily accommodated in the George Tavern yard, and the workmen were taking their leisure in the tavern itself.

Mr. Drummond had cooled down somewhat, but he was still angry. He regarded Nelson Lee's attitude as preposterous. Playing fields, indeed! How any sane man could place the childish desires of schoolboys before the importance of this sensational excavation of priceless Roman remains was beyond the archæologist's comprehension. Football! An absurd, useless game!

"Hallo, hallo!" said Mr. Drummond as he heard a voice at the other end of the wire. "Oh, splendid! Is that you, sir? Is that you, Professor Ogleby?"

The connection was established. Mr. Drummond, in Bellton, was speaking with Professor Thorpe Ogleby, in London.

"What is it, my dear Drummond?" came the professor's eager voice. "How are you getting on down there? It is very thoughtful of you to ring me up and give me such an early report. You have established the camp already? Excellent!"

"Nothing of the sort, sir!" shouted Mr. Drummond.

"What did you say?" came the professor's voice. "You may rely upon me being down as early as possible next week. In the meantime, Drummond, I am relying upon you to go ahead with the preliminary excavations——"

"But you don't understand, sir," shouted Drummond excitedly. "The camp has not been established—and it won't be unless you take some drastic action. Mr. Lee, the headmaster, has forbidden us to take possession of the fields!"

"What's that?" came the professor's amazed voice. "You say that Mr. Lee has refused—— But that's absurd! What do you mean, Drummond?"

"I mean that we're helpless, sir!" replied the other. "I tell you that Mr. Lee won't let us commence the work. He declares that the playing fields are for the boys, and he ridicules——"

"But wait—wait!" interrupted Professor Ogleby, aghast. "Repeat that, Drummond!"

Mr. Drummond repeated it; he also went into fuller details, and Professor Thorpe Ogleby was mentally staggered. Never for an instant had he dreamed that his authority as Chairman of the Board of Governors would be questioned.

"This is very disturbing, Drummond—very disturbing indeed!" came the professor's voice. "However, you mustn't let it worry you too much. I am very sorry there was such a scene at the school. That's a pity—a great pity! You say that you were practically pitched headlong out of the place?"

"The boys not only assaulted my men, but Mr. Lee upheld them in their hooliganism!" said Mr. Drummond hotly.

"Mr. Lee's attitude is indefensible," said the professor. "It isn't as though he did not know of your coming. I wrote to him very fully two days ago, giving him a verbatim report of the Governors' meeting. That report——"

"One moment, professor!" interrupted Mr. Drummond. "That reminds me. Mr. Lee says that he has heard nothing from you whatever! My arrival took him completely by surprise."

"But that's nonsense! He must have had the report!"

"Do you think it possible, sir, that you might have—er—forgotten to post it?" asked Mr. Drummond. "That would partially explain Mr. Lee's attitude—although, in my opinion, nothing can excuse his conduct. Surely he could have taken my word? I gave him my definite assurance that I was acting with your full authority."

"Upon my soul, Drummond!" came the professor's agitated voice. "Good gracious! Now that I come to think of it, I don't remember posting that letter! I prepared the report, and I wrote a long letter, too. Just one moment." There was a pause. "Very careless of me, Drummond!" came the professor's voice again. "What a fool

I am when it comes to letters! I have found that report here, in my desk. It was never posted."

"I'm not surprised, sir," said Mr. Drummond acidly. "Not that I can see that it makes any real difference. As I told you before, Mr. Lee should have taken my word. But he seems to think that these paltry football grounds are of far greater importance than the wonders of your extraordinary archæological discovery!"

"No, no, Drummond! I blame myself entirely!" said the professor. "I shall, of course, take steps to put matters right. I can quite understand Mr. Lee's reluctance to admit you and your men. He does not understand that the Governors have unanimously agreed to my propositions."

The professor was relieved. He had been very pleased with himself after that Governors' meeting. He had enthused those slightly moth-eaten gentlemen with his eloquence, and he had secured a vote in favour of digging up the playing fields. He had made the Governors understand that the unearthing of that Roman camp was of far greater importance than football.

"That's all very well," grumbled Mr. Drummond. "I still think that Mr. Lee acted in a very high-handed manner. Do you realise, sir, that in my hearing he told the boys that they can continue to use their playing fields?"

"Mr. Lee will soon change his view," promised Professor Ogleby.

"Games are planned for this afternoon—and I had been hoping to make quite a good start to-day," said Mr. Drummond bitterly. "As it is, I can do nothing. I have brought my men to the George Tavern, in Bellton, and we are simply cooling our heels."

"Oh!" came Professor Ogleby's angry voice. "Mr. Lee did that, did he? He told the boys that they could play? And they are using the grounds this very afternoon? Leave this to me, Mr. Drummond! It seems that Mr. Lee requires to be put in his place—and I shall see that he is put in it, too!"

BY the time morning lessons were over, the excitement at St. Frank's had died down.

As most of the fellows told themselves, it was only a storm in a teacup. The Head had done the right thing, and there was now nothing to bother about.

Thus the matter was dismissed; and football, the King of Winter Games, was soon the sole topic of conversation.

When the River House Junior XI arrived for the great game—the opening game of the season—there was a good deal of laughter. Hal Brewster and Glyn and Ascott, and all the other members of the merry River House crowd, were quite tickled. They had heard the rumours.

"I can just see you chaps allowing Little Side to be pinched!" laughed Hal Brewster.



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.

A GOOD IDEA.

Teacher: "Go and stand in the corner, Jimmy! What will you do when you grow up if you don't learn your lessons?"

Jimmy: "Oh, I shall build houses with round rooms!"

Teacher: "Goodness! Whatever for?"

Jimmy: "So there won't be any corners for poor little boys to stand in."

(E. Ash, 21, Camel Road, Littleport, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

A PAINFUL REPLY.

He was seated in the dentist's chair.

"What is your charge for extracting this tooth?" he asked.

"Three shillings," said the dentist.

"What!" gasped the client. "Three shillings for about three seconds' work?"

"Well," said the dentist obligingly, "if you prefer it, I'll draw the tooth in slow motion."

(T. Thorpe, 4, Bolton Road, Wednesfield, has been awarded a penknife.)

HARD-BAKED.

The young wife was in tears.

"Just think, mother," she sobbed, "Henry threw a cake at me—one I had baked myself, too!"

"The brute!" cried her mother. "He might have killed you!"

(A. Connelly, 106, Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, E.2, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

DELAYING THE DEED.

Small Boy: "Mother says that if you hit me she'll send you up to bed without any supper."

Big Brother: "Then just you wait till after supper!"

(R. Taylor, 51, Fern Dene Road, Gateshead-on-Tyne, has been awarded a penknife.)

GENEROUS.

First Tramp: "I wish you'd gimme a piece of that loaf."

Second Tramp (eating): "You know well enough that I'd share my last crust with you."

First Tramp: "Well, why don't you?"

"Mr. Lee knew what he was doing when he took your side!"

"By George, yes!" said Handforth. "If they really tried to dig up Little Side we'd start a riot! We'd have a giddy rebellion!"

"Of course you would!" said Hal Brewster. "And so would we, at the River House, if anybody tried to play tricks with our ground. Well, let's forget it. How are you fellows feeling? Are you ready to be licked on your own ground in the first match of the season?"

"My poor ass, you're going to get the hiding of your lives!" said Nipper, grinning. "You may as well know, right away, that we've decided to finish the season at the top of the championship table, and to bag the cup!"

"That's funny!" said Glynn, in surprise. "That's what we've decided to do, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyhow, this league stunt is top-hole!" declared Hal. "Good luck to Lord Dorri-more for meeting all the exes!"

"Dorrie has worked like a Trojan, too!" said Nipper heartily. "He's been dashing all over the place ever since Tuesday, and he's worked wonders. The league's a fact. He's done a month's work in three days!"

It was a big day of footer at St. Frank's. Not only were the juniors playing this all-important game, but the First XI had a big home fixture, too.

Just before the time for the kick-off—which was the same for both matches—Big Side and Little Side were crowded. The footballers themselves occupied the arenas, and round about were great crowds of spectators. The whole scene was one of tremendous animation.

If any fellow happened to remember the incidents of the morning, he laughed. How absurd it seemed! How preposterous that anybody should even suggest the confiscation of these wonderful playing fields!

CHAPTER 10.

Ogleby's Orders!

"SHOOT, Travers, shoot!"

Excited yells were sounding from all corners of Little Side. The game had been in progress five minutes, and, after many breathless exchanges, Vivian Travers had got the ball, and he was making a spectacular run down the field.

Seldom had there been such excitement at a junior game. For the fellows were fully aware of the importance of this football. A win would mean two points. The game had all the significance, in a minor way, of a big First Division match.

Travers, finding himself hindered by the River House backs, who were converging upon him, passed swiftly and cleanly to

Second Tramp : "I haven't come to it yet."

(A. Hirshfield, 527, Magnus Avenue, Winnipeg, Canada, has been awarded a book.)

ASS !

Tom : "They want £100,000 for that house."

John : "Where's the stable?"

Tom : "What stable?"

John : "For the ass who buys it."

(E. Smith, 46, Hartshorn Street, Bilston, has been awarded a penknife.)

MISUNDERSTOOD.

The man had just come on deck resplendent in a wonderful new suit. The sea was rather rough, and most of the passengers were below.

"Bit of a swell to-day, sir," remarked the captain as he passed by.

"Yes," replied the man, beaming; "but you ought to see me on Sundays!"

(E. Lloyd, Police Station, Acton, near Stourport, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

WHEN HE WAS A BABY.

"My father used to ride in his own carriage," boasted Jones.

"Yes, and his mother used to push it!" retorted Smith crushingly.

(J. Tayler, 35, Westbank Terrace, Melbourne, Australia, has been awarded a book.)

CRAMPED.

Old Salt : "Yes, guv'nor, I was shipwrecked and lived for a week on a tin of salmon."

Listener : "By Jove! Not much room to move about, what?"

(E. Goodger, 260, Perry Hill, Catford, S.E.6, has been awarded a book.)

SANDY'S OFFER.

"Twenty-five shillings a night for this bedroom!" exclaimed Sandy indignantly. "Why, mon——"

"But you see, sir," interposed the hotel-keeper, "the view from that window alone is worth a sovereign."

"Ah," said Sandy, "I'll give ye five bob and promise not to look out of the window!"

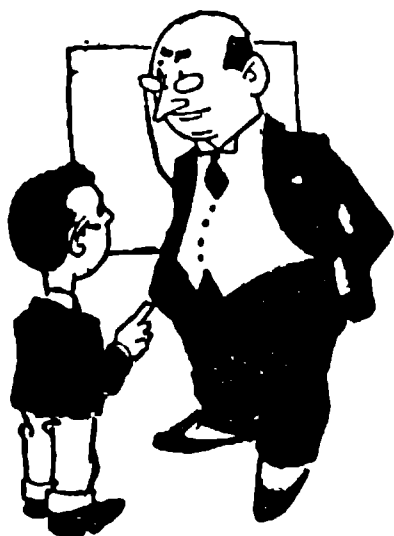
(J. Smith, Post Office, Newthorpe, Notts, has been awarded a penknife.)

HARD LINES.

Office Boy (to employer) : "Can I take a day off, please, sir?"

Employer : "Yes—off the calendar."

(A. Greenwood, 10, Victoria Buildings, London, E.1, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)



Jimmy Potts, who was well positioned, and on-side. Like a flash, the schoolboy baronet trapped the ball, and his first-time shot hurtled goalwards.

"Oooooooooh!"

A long-drawn-out gasp sounded. It was a mighty narrow thing. The River House goalie, in the nick of time, got to the leather, and it was touch-and-go whether he would be able to turn it round the post or not. He just managed to do so.

"Corner!"

"Now then, Christine, do your stuff!"

"Drop it right in the goal-mouth, Bob!"

While the excitement was waxing high here, Big Side was a scene of similar animation. The seniors were dignified enough usually, but during a football match they were apt to unbend. In other words, they so completely lost themselves in the game that they neglected their dignity.

As the corner kick was being taken by Bob Christine, an interruption occurred—rather a dramatic interruption, too. A tall, lean gentleman with a beak-like face, followed by a smaller gentleman, ran on to the playing-pitch. The whistle blew shrilly for a complete stoppage, just as Bob was bracing himself for the kick.

The players looked round in wonder.

"Great pip!" gurgled Handforth. "Old Ogleby! What's he doing here?"

Professor Thorpe Ogleby soon let everybody know what he was doing.

"Stop!" he commanded angrily, waving the umbrella which he was carrying. "Stop this game at once!"

Shouts went up from the players as they came crowding round. Bob Christine, seething with indignation as this abrupt interruption of the game, recklessly kicked the ball. His aim was true. Professor Ogleby stopped the leather with the tip of his beak-like nose.

The professor spluttered with rage and pain. He pointed his umbrella at Bob Christine, who didn't know whether to laugh or feel appalled at his own recklessness.

"Boy, you kicked that—er—football at me deliberately!" thundered Professor Ogleby. "Good heavens, you shall suffer for your unparalleled audacity——"

Biggleswade of the Sixth, who was referee, came running up.

"I say, sir, this is a bit thick!" protested Biggy, who didn't seem to care in the slightest that the professor had just stopped the leather with his face. "What's the idea of interrupting the game like this?"

"Who are you, young man?" snapped the professor, turning upon Biggy.

"I'm the referee, sir," said the prefect. "My name's Biggleswade, and I——"

"Very well, Biggleswade, you will be good enough to stop this match," said Professor Ogleby. "It has been decided, at a meeting of the school Board of Governors, that the playing fields are henceforth out of bounds!"

A shout of consternation went up from all the players.

"You can't mean that, sir!" panted Nipper, pushing forward. "What shall we do without our footer ground? We've just fixed up a big series of games, and——"

"You will be silent, my boy!" interrupted Professor Ogleby coldly. "You know who I am, do you not? Do not dare to argue!" He spun round upon Biggleswade. "You heard what I said! This game is ended, and you will be good enough to clear all your players off the meadow."

"Meadow!" gasped Biggleswade. "This isn't a meadow, sir!"

"Whatever you may like to call it, you will take all your players back to the school," said Professor Ogleby sharply. "Do not compel me to speak to you again."

He turned on his heel and, accompanied by Mr. Drummond who was flushed with triumph and excitement, made his way to Big Side. Apparently he had forgotten all about Christine—for the moment, at any rate. At Big Side he repeated his tactics. To the utter consternation of the seniors, he ordered an immediate stoppage of the First XI game.

The juniors were seething on Little Side by now, and the spectators had crowded on to the field, too.

"Easy, you fellows—easy!" said Lord Dorrimore, who had been sitting in the pavilion, and who now took command of the situation. "Not so much excitement! You'll have that old boy back again unless you're careful!"

"He's stopped our game, Dorrie!" exclaimed Nipper.

"I know that—and Mr. Lee will start it again," said his lordship. "You can trust Mr. Lee, can't you? He won't let a thing like this stand."

"But—but——"

"It's easy enough to understand what's happened," continued Lord Dorrimore, grinning. "Our mutual friend, Pugdog Drummond, gave his report to the professor; and the professor has dashed down, hot-foot. But Mr. Lee will smooth everything out."

Thus the juniors were calmed—although they were still hot and indignant.

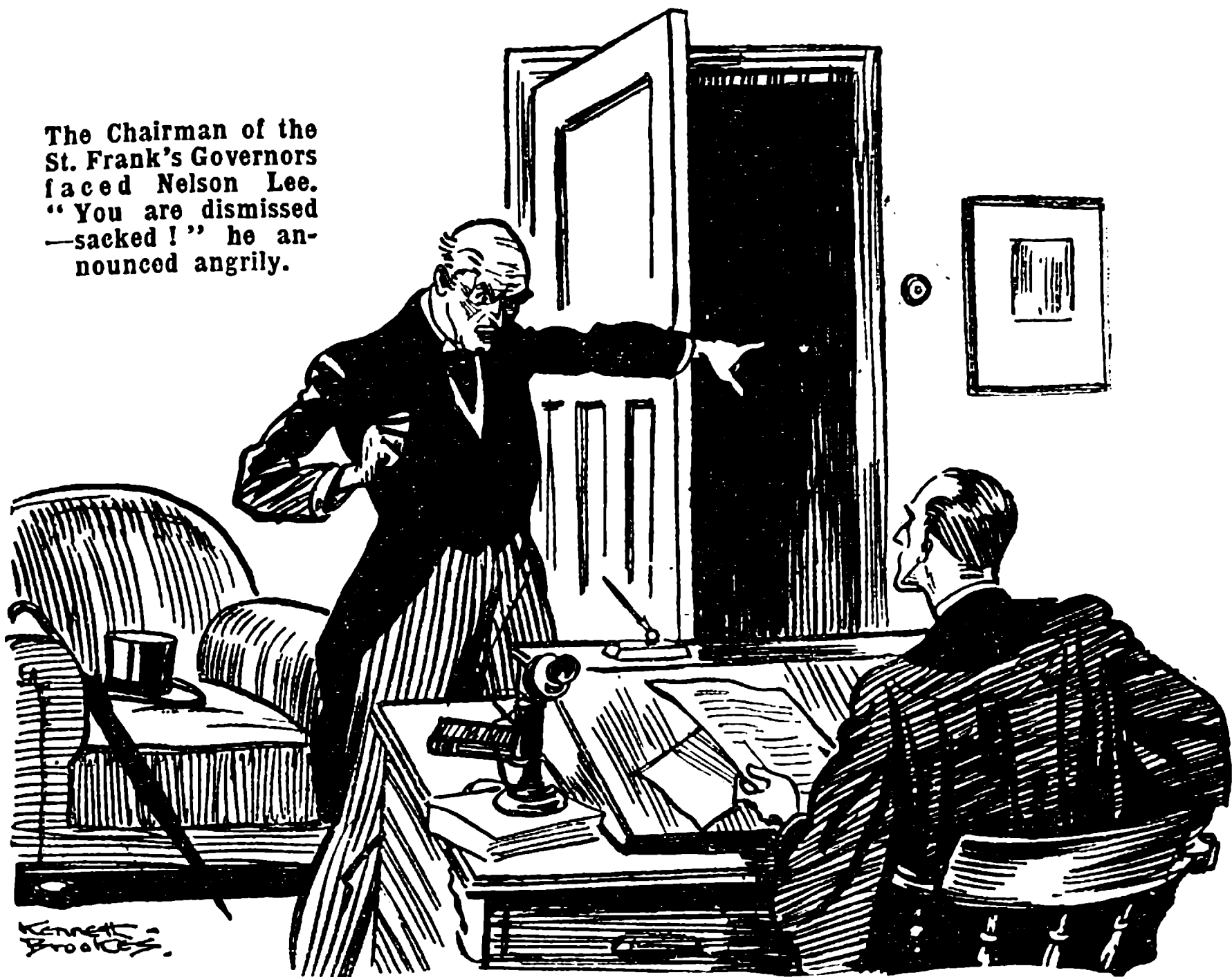
Fenton of the Sixth was very calm and cold. He set a good example to the other seniors.

"Very good, sir," he said, after he had heard Professor Ogleby's orders. "We don't want to have a scene here, so we'll stop the game. But I would like to tell you that I am captain of sports, and I resent this gross interference with the school's liberties."

"You will not impress me, young man, by your impertinence," said Professor Ogleby curtly. "It is my intention to see Mr. Lee at once, and I shall give him to understand that my authority is stronger than his. Ordinarily, I would have allowed you to finish your games to-day, but I consider the school needs a lesson."

"Then Mr. Lee hasn't said that games are barred?" asked one of the other seniors.

The Chairman of the St. Frank's Governors faced Nelson Lee. "You are dismissed—sacked!" he announced angrily.



"What Mr. Lee says is of no importance!" "But he's the Head, sir!" protested Fenton.

"These playing fields are henceforth placed out of bounds by order of the school Governors," said Professor Ogleby. "That should be sufficient for you. Now, I do not intend to argue any longer. Go—all of you!"

Having satisfied himself that all the boys were duly impressed by his importance—having put a complete stoppage to the games—he hastened off to the headmaster's house. He would complete the good work.

"**W**E'RE not going to stand it, of course!" said Handforth fiercely. "Not likely!"

"The old fool ought to be kicked!"

"Easy, you chaps!" said Nipper. "It's not right to call Professor Ogleby an old fool."

"Yes, but dash it, after all he's done——"

"Our first impression of Professor Ogleby was favourable," went on Nipper. "He struck us as being a genial old boy. There's only one trouble with him—he's a fanatic on archæology. These buried Roman remains are a thousand times more important to him than football. All he's thinking about is digging up the ground and looking for the long-hidden relics of that Roman camp."

"And what about us?" asked Handforth hotly. "Aren't we to be considered at all?"

"Not by Professor Ogleby," replied Nipper. "It's just our bad luck that he happens to be Chairman of the Board of Governors. The worst of it is, he's a man of importance. But don't forget that Mr. Lee is the Head—and even the Chairman of the Governors can't order the Head about."

"Thank goodness for that," said Hal Brewster. "I say, you chaps, this is rotten luck for you!"

"We'll get over it," said Nipper. "In any case, we'll finish our game to-day. That's a certainty!"

"And to think that good old Dorrie is the cause of all this trouble!" said Travers, shaking his head. "Well, well! Funny how things work out!"

"What's the idea of blaming me?" asked Lord Dorrimore, who had overheard.

"I'm not blaming you, sir," replied Travers. "But it was your idea, wasn't it, to bring Professor Ogleby to St. Frank's in that big air liner? And if he hadn't seen St. Frank's from that height he'd never have known about the Roman camp, so he would always have remained a perfectly harmless gentleman, without any evil designs upon our footer ground."

"That's perfectly true," admitted Lord Dorrimore, with a wry grimace. "It's just

the irony of things. But how the deuce was I to know?"

"I say!" sang out Gresham suddenly. "The first eleven match is going on again!"

"What!"

Nipper and some of the others ran hurriedly across to Big Side. It was perfectly true. The seniors were continuing their match just as though nothing had happened.

"What's the idea?" asked Nipper breathlessly.

"The idea's a good one, my son," replied Biggleswade, who had just been on the point of coming away from Big Side. "Fenton and his men, after a quick consultation, have decided to go ahead with the game. And why not? We can rely upon Mr. Leo to convince Professor Ogleby that these grounds are ours, so there's no earthly reason why we shouldn't carry on."

"We'll do the same, eh?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"You bet!" said Biggleswade. "Come on, everybody! You spectators can clear off the field as quickly as you like. All you players take up your positions, and we'll start again."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Biggy!"

"Christine will take that corner-kick again," went on Biggleswade briskly. "We'll show Professor Ogleby, my sons! Like his nerve to butt in and mess up our games on a Saturday afternoon!"

"By Jove, it's the only thing to do, you chaps!" said Nipper. "Biggy's right—and the seniors are right, too. Come on! Let's carry on with the game!"

"Good egg!"

"Go it, you chaps!"

The spectators scuttled off the field, and excitement ran high. This was as it should be! Professor Thorpe Ogleby's ridiculous orders were being completely ignored!

CHAPTER 11.

Nelson Lee—Sacked!

WHEN Professor Ogleby was ushered into Nelson Lee's study, he was calm and collected. His manner, in fact, was charming. He shook hands very warmly.

"I owe you a very sincere apology, Mr. Lee," he said by way of opening the conversation.

Nelson Lee was inwardly pleased. Apparently the professor had realised his mistake, or perhaps it was Mr. Drummond who had been mistaken.

"Yes, I think there has been a little misunderstanding," said Nelson Lee pleasantly. "Please make yourself quite comfortable, professor."

"I have here a report," continued the professor, taking some papers from his pocket. "A report of a Governors' meeting which took place earlier in the week. It should have been sent on to you by post, Mr. Lee,

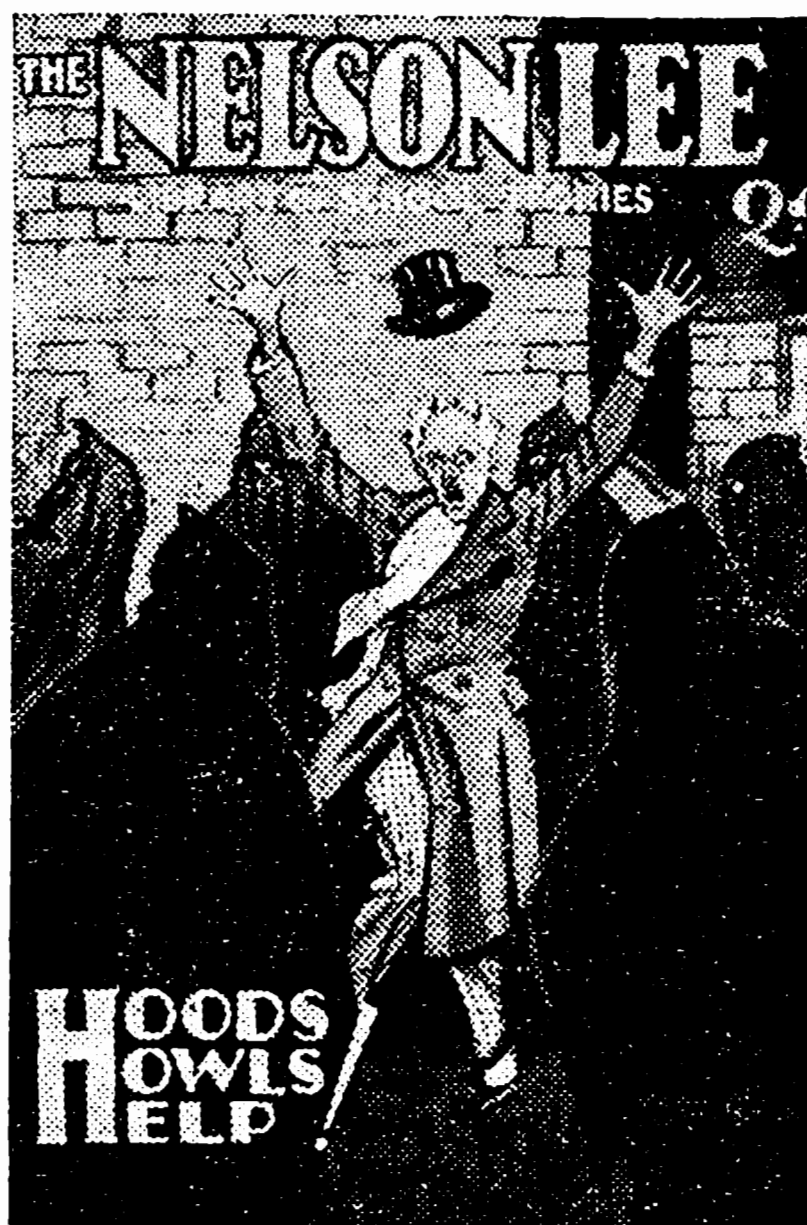
but, owing to gross negligence on my part, it was overlooked. I beg of you to forgive me. Owing to the non-arrival of this document there was, I regret to say, a little—er—scene here this morning."

"It did not amount to very much," said Lee, taking the report.

"It need never have happened," said the professor, with regret. "If you had had this report in your hands, you would have been fully prepared. And in order that we may understand one another quite clearly, Mr. Lee, I am going to ask you to read that—er—paper at once."

"You will excuse me, then?" asked Lee.

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



"Certainly! Certainly!"

The professor sat back in his chair, and he watched Nelson Lee's face closely. If he expected to see any change in the headmaster's expression, he was disappointed. For Nelson Lee read steadily, and his learned, clear-cut face remained immobile.

"An extraordinary decision, professor," was Lee's comment after he had finished.

"You mean the decision to close the playing fields? You call that extraordinary?"

"Nothing was mentioned at the meeting, it seems, regarding the provision of substitute playing fields for the boys," said Lee evenly. "Do you know, Professor Ogleby, if anything has been definitely arranged in that direction?"

The professor waved a hand

"We need not bother with that now——" he began.

"I think we need," interrupted Lee. "It is a very important matter, professor. For, until the Governors *do* provide substitute playing fields I shall not permit the present playing fields to be interfered with."

The professor, who had been looking very complacent, suddenly changed colour.

"Indeed!" he said loudly. "You will be good enough to remember, Mr. Lee, to whom you are talking. I am Chairman of the Board of Governors, and this decision with regard to the playing fields——"

"THE SPOIL-SPORT OF ST. FRANK'S!"

By E. S. BROOKS.

The Hooded Protectors!

It's Nipper's idea. Professor Ogleby has decreed that the St. Frank's playing fields shall be excavated, and the boys are determined to "do him in the eye." The cranky professor has fifty pink fits. You'll have five hundred laughs when you read this rollicking story. Don't miss it, chums.

"OUTLAWED!"

By DAVID GOODWIN.

Many stirring adventures await young Dick Forrester and his highwayman pal, Turpin. Look out for the second instalment of this gripping new serial next Wednesday.

"Handforth's Weekly!"

"OUR ROUND-TABLE TALK!"

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

"Was taken without my knowledge," broke in Nelson Lee. "Don't you think, Professor Ogleby, that you might at least have consulted me? As the headmaster of this school, I am in a better position to know whether such a step would or would not be wise, and I am telling you frankly that it would be highly dangerous."

"Dangerous!" repeated the professor, staring. "What in the world do you mean, sir? How could it be dangerous?"

"The boys would bitterly resent the confiscation of their sports grounds," replied Lee. "I can assure you that there will be a very great deal of trouble in the school if you insist upon this singular course. Indeed, professor, I do not for one moment give it my sanction."

The Chairman of the Governors was rapidly losing his temper.

"I am grieved to learn, Mr. Lee, that the Governors have offended you," he said, with biting sarcasm. "You will please understand, however, that in this matter you have no voice. While on the subject, I would like to mention that I am astounded that you should adopt this autocratic manner. By what right do you presume to know better than the Governors?"

"By every right," replied Lee sharply. "I am the headmaster of this school. I am here, on the spot, in constant touch with the boys. You Governors, far away in London, or in your various homes, have not the slightest appreciation of the school's feelings. If you were to deprive the boys of their playing fields, it would be a gross injustice. Even if a substitute ground was provided, the injustice would still be grave. Not for a moment will I countenance this absurdity."

"What did you call it, sir?" shouted the professor.

"I called it an absurdity—and that is exactly what I mean," retorted Nelson Lee. "Why dig up the school playing fields? This ancient Roman camp, as you told me yourself, extends for practically a mile beyond the school property. Only a small section runs beneath Big Side and Little Side. Why cannot you dig elsewhere—in the meadowland and ploughed fields?"

Professor Ogleby compressed his lips.

"It has been decided to confine the activities to our own property," he said gruffly.

But he had been struck upon the raw, and Nelson Lee knew it. It was the one weak spot.

"Is there such a desperate hurry to begin these digging operations?" went on Lee accusingly. "For perhaps a thousand years this old Roman camp has been buried. Why this desperate rush?"

"You fail to realise the importance of the discovery," said the professor testily. "Why should I lose any time?"

"Why should you rob the boys of their sports grounds?" retorted Lee.

"I do not see any reason why I should go into these explanations, Mr. Lee, but you exasperate me exceedingly!" said Professor Ogleby, with anger. "As a matter of fact, the greater part of this old Roman camp lies beneath the property of Lord Edgemore."

"So I believe," nodded Lee. "Would it not be advisable to approach Lord Edgemore and——"

"Haven't I done so?" broke in the professor hotly. "Good heavens! The man is impossible! I approached him on this very subject, and as soon as he heard that it was my desire to dig up the ground he point-blank refused. The man is an arrant fool! I told him of the importance of this discovery, and all he could reply was that he would not have the countryside desecrated by a lot of unsightly digging. In his opinion, it would be a good thing if the remains of the Roman camp were to stay hidden. What do you think of a man who talks like that?"

"Well, viewed dispassionately, there is something to be said for his point of view," said Nelson Lee. "You cannot deny, Professor Ogleby, that these digging operations will make a very serious blot on the landscape."

"But what of the discoveries that will follow?" demanded the professor excitedly. "The uncovering of a Roman camp—one of those lost camps which we so often read about, but which we so seldom locate! Why, when this work is finished, we shall have achieved a veritable triumph!"

"And you are proposing to penalise the St. Frank's boys for this object."

"I will confess that I had not considered the feelings of the boys," said the professor impatiently. "Boys can play anywhere, can't they? This is perfectly ridiculous, Mr. Lee! Since Lord Edgemore refuses to co-operate with me in this epoch-making undertaking, I am compelled to confine my early activities to the school grounds. Later, of course, I will overcome the Earl's scruples. If necessary, I will purchase the ground for miles round. However, we need not go into that now. I am determined to begin operations without a day's delay—and the only place where I can begin is here, on these sports grounds."

Nelson Lee shook his head.

"No, Professor Ogleby, you will not dig up the St. Frank's sports grounds while I am headmaster," he said quietly.

"But—but this is outrageous!" protested the other. "Are you daring to ignore the decision of the Governors' meeting? Are you setting yourself up in defiance——"

"It is not a question of defiance at all," said Nelson Lee. "A headmaster would be no headmaster at all if his authority was anything but absolute. My appointment gives me complete control of St. Frank's, and even the Governors themselves cannot give me orders."

"No?" roared the professor. "Well, Mr. Lee, I am giving you orders! Who do you think you are?" He was seething with rage. "What are you, indeed, but a paid servant? A mere schoolmaster, and——"

"Let me urge you to control yourself, sir," interrupted Lee quietly.

"I will not control myself! I refuse to control myself!" raved Professor Ogleby. "Do you think I am to be flouted and defied to my face? I have made all my arrangements—I have brought a great deal of equipment to this school; I have engaged a large number of men. And I am not going to be turned from my purpose—by you, or by anybody else. The Earl of Edgemore may be able to hinder me, but not you! Not you, sir!"

He had risen to his feet now, and he was shaking from head to foot with emotion. His head was thrust forward on his long neck, and his face was more beak-like than ever.

"You are the headmaster, eh?" he went on ferociously. "As such, it is within your

power to ignore the decisions of the Board of Governors! Very well, Mr. Lee! You are dismissed!"

"You are making it very difficult——"

"Do you hear me, sir?" thundered the professor. "You are dismissed! Sacked! I take it upon myself, as Chairman of the Governors, to throw you out of this position. Now, sir! What have you to say?"

Nelson Lee regarded him almost sorrowfully.

"I am very sorry, Professor Ogleby, that you should have lost your temper so needlessly," he said, with quiet dignity. "I would remind you that I am not a porter, to be dismissed at a moment's notice. Certain documents which I signed, and which Sir John Brent, the then Chairman of the Governors signed, mention the period of six months as a reasonable notice of dismissal."

"Six months!" ejaculated the professor, who was no business man, and who was staggered. "Good heavens! Are you telling me, Mr. Lee, that you——"

"Not at all," interrupted Lee. "After what has happened this afternoon, Professor Ogleby, I am not inclined to retain the headmastership for one minute longer. I have kept my temper with difficulty. I am not the kind of man to be spoken to as you have spoken to me. Frankly, I cannot help feeling a little contemptuous of your very remarkable behaviour."

"Sir!" panted the professor.

"And as amicable relations between us seem quite out of the question, my only alternative is to resign," continued Nelson Lee, with the same quiet dignity. "I shall be obliged, sir, if you will release me at the earliest possible moment. I will continue with my duties until you find a man who will more readily bow down to you: entirely fictitious authority."

Professor Thorpe Ogleby pointed a quivering finger at the door.

"You may go, Mr. Lee!" he said tensely. "You are released at once! I am fully qualified as a schoolmaster, and I will remain at St. Frank's myself!"

CHAPTER 12.

Defying Orders!

NELSON LEE, who had been expecting something of the sort, merely shrugged his shoulders.

"No more need be said, then," he exclaimed quietly. "As soon as I have packed up my personal belongings, Professor Ogleby, I will depart."

"And from now onwards, I am the headmaster!" shouted the professor. "You have resigned. Good!"

He was delighted with himself for his astuteness. This solution had not occurred to him until now. How easy it would be! In his younger days he had been a schoolmaster. The Governors, of course, would

readily enough confirm this self-appointment. They couldn't very well do much else. As for conducting St. Frank's, it would be child's play. And he would soon show these impudent boys what was what!

It would be an unique arrangement. As Chairman of the Governors, he would also be his own headmaster—so there would be none to question his authority. He glowed more than ever with triumph.

Nelson Lee smiled rather bleakly as he sat down at his desk after the professor had dashed out of the study. Actually, Lee would be quite glad of a respite; there were several matters he was anxious to attend to in London. For the great detective never lost track of his other work. At heart he was still the active-brained criminologist.

And it would do this arrogant new Chairman of the Governors a world of good to be left in full control at St. Frank's for a time! Somehow, Nelson Lee had no very grave fears for the safety of the playing fields. The boys themselves would have something to say! The professor would not find his task so easy as he thought.

Lee was certainly not the kind of man to browbeat and bully. Had he chosen, he could have insisted upon his authority; but he felt that it would be better, from every angle, to let Professor Ogleby have his own way. There is no lesson so bitter as that taught by experience. This learned man of science, it seemed, needed close, personal contact with St. Frank's before he became really fitted as

(Continued on next page.)

"Fine Score that!"



HE was well past the century before he was caught out. A fine score by a good player.

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the Chairman of the Governors. A week or two on the spot would do him no harm at all! Let him get on with it!

FIVE minutes to go!

The great game between the St. Frank's Junior XI and the River House School was in its closing stages. Each side had scored two goals, and there seemed every prospect of the game ending in a draw.

"Buck up, you St. Frank's forwards!"

"Let's have another!"

"Go it, River House!"

"On the ball!"

The shouting was continuous—although the players themselves were scarcely aware of it. They were concentrating on the game, and the play, in spite of the tired condition of the players, was hotter and faster than ever.

"Why don't they score again?" groaned De Valerie. "What's the matter with 'em? Christine had a fine chance just now, and he threw it away! That pass of his was rotten!"

"Give 'em a chance!" said Somerton. "Christine skidded just as he was about to centre."

"Then what about Travers?" put in Jerry Dodd. "Travers had an open goal five minutes ago, and I'm jiggered if he didn't kick right over the crossbar!"

"My hat! Look!" said Somerton, in a startled voice. "Cave, you chaps! Look who's here!"

"Blow, who's here!" roared Skeets Rossiter. "Whoopee! Nipper's going through!"

"But it's that old fossil, Ogleby!"

"What!"

The juniors were startled. They turned and saw Professor Thorpe Ogleby striding up; and there was something very purposeful about the great man's walk. The professor had been delayed; he had been having a long talk with Mr. Drummond. Now, coming out to the playing fields, he was astonished to find the football going on just as though he had not forbidden it.

But now there would be a difference! He was the headmaster—and he would see that his orders were strictly obeyed!

"I say, you chaps!" exclaimed De Valerie. "There's only three minutes to go! We can't allow this old chump to mess up the game on the last lap!"

"But—but what can we do?" asked Somerton helplessly.

"We can grab him—hold him—hustle him away!" said Val eagerly. "Who's game? It'll mean a row afterwards, but he doesn't know any of our names, and——"

"Good egg! We're on!" interrupted Corcoran of the Fourth.

There were plenty of willing helpers, and Professor Ogleby was rather astonished, a moment later, to find himself surrounded by a noisy, jostling mob of juniors.

Meanwhile, the game was getting more exciting than ever; Nipper had just collared the ball, and was racing down the field.

"Out of my way!" shouted the professor angrily. "How dare you? What do you boys mean by disobeying my orders? I distinctly said that there was to be no further playing——"

"Oh, did you say that, sir?" asked De Valerie coolly. "Well, it doesn't much matter."

"It does matter!" roared the new Head.

"Well, of course, if you say so, perhaps you're right," admitted De Valerie, taking the professor's arm. "By the way, sir, have you seen the cloisters? They're pretty wonderful, you know. This way, sir."

"Release me!" bellowed the professor. "Release me at once!"

"But the cloisters are topping, sir——"

"You—you impudent scamp!" hooted the great man. "You are doing this deliberately. I am determined to stop this game, and——"

"And we're just as determined that you shan't!" interrupted De Valerie blandly.

"Good heavens! You stand there and admit——"

"Why not?" asked Val. "Hold him, you chaps! It's no good trying to get him away by persuasion."

"Nipper's running through!" came a yell from one of the other fellows on the outskirts of the crowd.

"Good egg! Let's hope he scores!"

The boys closed round the professor more tightly than ever. On the field, Nipper, knowing nothing of this hastily averted interruption, was concentrating upon a final dash. He was after that second point for St. Frank's.

The River House defence was determined to smother all raids. The forwards were more or less spent, so all the members of the River House team were concentrating upon defence. They would feel themselves lucky enough if they took a point away with them.

But Nipper, in that last hectic minute of play, was like a fellow possessed. He did not know that the game was in danger of being broken up, but perhaps he instinctively sensed it. He was aware that a big commotion was taking place beyond the ropes.

Accepting a pass from the wing, he leapt forward. He took a chance. Kicking the ball fairly hard, he punted it well ahead of him; then, racing like the wind, he tore round one of the tired River House backs, collared the ball again, and then streaked on.

"Oh, shoot!"

"Go it, Nipper!"

A half-back was on him from one angle, a back from another. Nipper shot hard, then followed up. The River House goalie just managed to stop the leather from going in, but he was flustered by Nipper's rapid approach. Wildly, he flung the ball out into play. Nipper leapt; his head met the ball, and the next second it shot past the goalie's outstretched hands.

(Continued on page 44.)

Have you written to the Editor Yet? All Letters Welcome.



A breezy chat on topics in general, conducted by the Editor

LETTERS acknowledged from: Peter Barleycorn (Balham), Terence Douglas Harding (Southsea), Eric V. Copeman (Petersham, N.S.W.), Frank Crooks (Newcastle, N.S.W.), Gordon Taudevin (Brisbane), Ronald Arames (Melbourne), Cyril R. F. Amery (Beckom, N.S.W.), Frank Hunter (Sydney), Robert J. Wareing (Birmingham), Arthur Turck (Bayswater), Kenneth Armes (Norwich), Molly Poulton (Liverpool), W. A. Hawkins (Bedford), Ernest S. Holman (Leyton), Charles A. Webb (Heston).

As promised last week, here are the occupants of the Remove studies in the West House: Study O: Reginald Pitt, Jack Grey. Study P: Nicodemus Trotwood, Cornelius Trotwood, James ("Fatty") Little. Study Q: Johnny Onions, Bertio Onions, Guy Pepys. Study R: Hon. Douglas Singleton, Hussi Ranjit Lal Khan. Study S: Solomon Levi, Dick Goodwin, Morgan Evans. Study T: Justin B. Farman, Charles Owen, Augustus Hart. Study U: Clarence Fellowe, Timothy Tucker, Robert Canham. Study V: Harold Doyle, Yung Ching, Larry Scott. Study W: Alan Castleton, Tom Burton, Lord Pippinton. Studies X, Y, and Z are not occupied.

It is quite possible, Arthur Turck, that Browne and Stevens, of the Fifth, will again be prominently featured when the occasion arises. Your letter was as welcome as ever. As long as your sentiments are sincere—of which there is no question—the paper you use for your letter-writing is, after all, a matter of very small importance.

There isn't the slightest doubt, Molly Poulton, that some of the St. Frank's boys have far too much pocket-money. Very few parents are wise in this respect. They usually give their boys too much pocket-money, or too little. Such fellows as Vivian Travers and the Hon. Douglas Singleton and Archie Glenthorne undoubtedly have too much: but, at the same time, they are very useful fellows when an occasion arises for unusual expenditure.

There is no need for you to be confused about the New Series, W. A. Hawkins. The Old Series finished with No. 568, dated April 24th, 1926. A new series started with the May 1st, 1926 issue, and ran to No. 194, dated January 18th, 1930. Then another New Series started with the January 25th, 1930 issue, and it is this series which is now running. Handforth did not sell his Austin Seven, but his fond aunt surprised him by taking it away and giving him a brand new Morris Minor in exchange. Yes, Professor Sylvester Tucker is still at the school, and his nephew, Timothy Tucker, of the Remove, is as full of crank ideas as ever. Yes, Boz—Nipper's dog—is very much alive, but there would be no particular interest in dragging him into the stories every time Nipper took him out for a run. He will only appear in the stories if and when he is of importance to the plot.

Carlton College, where Kirby Keeble Parkington and his chums are so much in evidence, Ernest S. Holman, is situated in Surroy. It is not a very great distance from St. Frank's—quite an easy journey by bike or motor-coach. It is really so near that although K.K. & Co. have left St. Frank's they will still remain as permanent characters in the St. Frank's stories, appearing from time to time—chiefly on those occasions when the two schools have football and cricket fixtures. Oh, no, you haven't seen the last of the famous Red-Hots by any means.

The River Stowe, Charles A. Webb, flows into the English Channel at Caistowo. It carries a good deal of barge traffic along its winding course—so it is easily possible for a motor-boat to start from St. Frank's and reach the English Channel.

All letters for discussion on this page must be addressed to The Editor, NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. To ensure a printed reply readers should include in their letters some point, or points, likely to interest a majority. Questions, in one letter, should be limited to three.

Dick Forrester Meets an Old Friend—and Makes a New Enemy!

Outlawed!



Opening chapters of a stirring new serial of old-time romance
and adventure.

By **DAVID GOODWIN.**

CHAPTER 1.

Forrester of Fernhall!

“**P**EACE on earth, goodwill towards men!”

Dick Forrester kicked out his spurred heels and rung them on the floor as he sat in the deep armchair before the huge fireplace in the dining-hall of Fernhall.

“An easy text to live with, when one has such a place as Fernhall, ecod! ’Twas not long since when, as Galloping Dick, I rode with one hand to the butt of my pistol and the sheriffs of three counties at my heels.”

Perchance it was the loneliness of the room and the solitary dinner he had partaken of; or perhaps the memory of the wild life past—the thousand dangers of the road when there was a price on his head—that had stirred Dick Forrester into rebellion.

For long months the young Squire of Fernhall had ridden the highways of England in company with the outlaw, Richard Turpin.

It was through no fault of his own that he had been forced into that wild and perilous life. But at last, after many adventures, he found himself restored to his own, with a free pardon, and all was well with him.

His Uncle Vane, who had robbed him and his brother Ralph of their inheritance, and procured the branding of Dick as an outlaw for a boyish escapade—in which he rode off on his uncle’s coach-horse in the company of the road-rider, Richard Turpin—had expiated his sins in death. Dick and his brother Ralph had stepped into their kingdom once again—the house of their forefathers, the wide lands of Fernhall and Huntercombe. It was a little before Christmas that Dick and his brother, with their newly-made friends, Sir Henry Stanhope of Basing, and Sir Adam Vincent, the bluff old squire who had rendered them much service at the last, came to Fernhall to help take possession and make merry.

A glorious Yuletide it was; never a better was kept in Old England. None who came

to Fernhall was allowed to go away hungry, and Dick entertained like a prince. But now weeks had passed. Stanhope and Vincent had returned to their homes. Ralph was on his separate estate of Huntercombe. And Dick, left to himself for a day or two in the great house, felt lonely.

"Sheriffs, ecod! The rogues are glad to dine with me now. Ay, peace to the lord lieutenant! Goodwill to every lickspittle that cringes to Forrester of Fernhall, and who would have hanged him for the price of his neck last year, save that never a one dared show his front to Galloping Dick. Pink me! I almost think I liked that name best!"

He rose and began to pace the room. The ring of his spurs as he strode seemed to wake some sleeping fiend in his blood.

"It doesn't suit us, this silk-cushion life. I am growing peevish, with naught to do but receive my rents from the land steward. There is far more than I can spend even with the most lavish hospitality, and I care not to lose it in play to blacklegs."

He laughed scornfully.

"Black Satan is the worse for it, too. He grows sleek and fat in his stall, though his temper is no mecker. Fox-hunting cannot wet his edge, for he has hunted man. A gallop after stag-hounds does not satisfy me, who have been a score times in place of the stag, with the hounds of the law straining to pull me down."

He turned once or twice up and down the hall, and then smiled at himself.

"But this life is the best. It is now free from treachery and strife and bitterness, nor is it any merit to be a felon. Vane and the law drove me to do what I did, else I would never have ridden the roads. It may be, indeed, that I harmed no man who did not molest me, nor robbed any but the rich and miserly. Yet what is a robber but a robber? Though time was when half the gentlemen of England did little else."

He threw himself into his chair again with a laugh.

"No, no, Dick Forrester! Fernhall is a fair estate. No lord in the county has longer ancestry or a better rent-roll. There are great things before me. The cloud is lifted from my life. Yet, ecod, what wouldn't I give to see Turpin once more!"

Memory of the famous highwayman made Dick's thoughts race quickly through his brain.

"What a merry rogue he was! What a rascal! Yet what a staunch comrade to any who played him fair. And to think I owe him my life twice over! But for Turpin I should not be here, lapped in luxury, but drying in the wind on the highest gibbet upon Black Wold! And, egad, here I am, master of Fernhall, while he is risking his neck upon the highway!"

"I've hit it! That's what I lack—his cheery company and his devil-may-care laugh. Felon he may be; I met many a worse in high places. I would not care what peril it was to me could I see the rogue again, and—'Od's death! Am I dreaming?"

There was a sharp rap on the centre window, and Dick, glancing that way, gave a sudden start and an exclamation of amazement. Looking in at him through the leaded panes was a face he knew well, perhaps too well. In another moment the casement was plucked open, and the form outside vaulted into the room.

"Turpin!" cried Dick, springing forward.

"Hush!" said the famous highwayman hoarsely and beneath his breath, slipping quickly against the wall so that he could not be seen from without. He was wet and haggard, and blood trickled from a wound over his forehead. "Someone may hear! Shut that window quickly!"

Dick did so in a moment, and turned to grip his old comrade by the hand.

"'Tis like a draught of the water of life to see you again, old boy!" he said heartily. "But what's wrong? You are wounded!"

"Ay, the very knife's at my throat! Where can you hide me? Can you give me refuge, Dick?"

"Refuge?" cried Dick. "Did I not tell you Fernhall was as much yours as mine while I live? We will soon put you out of danger. Is it the King's Riders?"

"Nay, not the law, boy. I would not have risked bringing trouble on you by coming here had it been they, nor do I give a snap for all the King's men in England! It is Captain Sweeny and his company. I have fallen to loggerheads with him."

"What, the leader of the footpad band—that murdering ruffian and his crew of thieves? You have made an ill enemy, Turpin. Step quickly across here and into the back room. Is he at your heels?"

"Ay! He laid a trap for me, after filching away my weapons, and I barely escaped with my life. He is the lowest, cunningest traitor in Britain, Dick, and strikes from behind, like the footpad thief he is!"

CHAPTER 2.

A Fight for Life!

DICK had heard of the notorious "Captain Sweeny," but as yet had had no meeting with him. He was the leader of a band of sneak-thieves and footpads, whom he used like pawns in a game of chess, and it was his boast that no enemy ever escaped him. He was the lowest and in many ways the cleverest villain in England, and was unhampered by any of the notions of honour which some of the highwaymen observed. He would cut a sleeping comrade's throat with equal unconcern. And, though the knights of the road held him in loathing and contempt, once he was on the trail of vengeance, with his fellow-cut-throats behind him, there was no more deadly foe.

"I've thrown 'em off the track, Dick!" said Turpin. "I have but to lie here till they pass. When once I get my weapons and Black Bess again—she is out in the woods—

there will be a black reckoning for Captain Sweeny!"

"Ay, I'd be sorry to walk in his shoes!" said Dick quietly. "And now—— Ah!"

Turpin suddenly clutched him by the arm and dragged him into the back room. The highwayman, with a muttered ejaculation, pointed to the window he had entered by.

A face showed against the glass—a dead-white, cruel, evil face, with a thin, crooked nose and the eyes of a snake. It peered into the room.

"Captain Sweeny—the hound himself!" whispered Turpin. "Hang me, he's seen us!"

The man at the window threw up his arm as if in signal to those behind him in the outer darkness, and then, gripping the window-latch, he tore the casement open and jumped into the room.

Dick sprang through the door and faced him, furious with rage that this evil-faced scoundrel should break into the house of Forrester as though he owned it.

"Out, hound!" he cried, as he ran at the man. "What brings such carrion as you into my dining-hall?"

"Captain Sweeny goes where he will!" said the footpad with a sneering laugh.

And, whipping out a pistol, he snapped it in Dick's face before the boy could reach him.

But for once Captain Sweeny failed. The night was wet, and the driving rain had damped the priming. The pistol flashed harmlessly.

Springing back with a snarl, the footpad captain drew his knife; but before it was clear of his belt Dick had him by the wrist and the waist-belt.

With a fierce cry of joy—the lust of battle glittering in his eyes—the powerful young squire caught the footpad in his grip. This was what he longed for—to feel his hands upon an enemy.

"Hands off!" screamed Sweeny in a voice like an angry wild-cat's. "No man touches me and lives!"

With a mocking laugh Dick swung the footpad captain off his feet, and with one great heave sent him crashing through the mullioned window.

Captain Sweeny's yell of pain and rage rang loud above the crash of glass, and he landed in a heap in the laurel-bushes outside. For a moment he lay, cursing and muttering, and then struggled to his feet. He was tough as whipcord, and the fall had broken no bones; but his cruel face was transformed with bestial rage, and trickling with blood drawn by the splintered glass.

"The fiend tear your throat!" he shrieked at Dick. "Better you had never been born than laid hands on me! Here to me, boys, and we'll have the hearts of them!"

He swiftly gathered together his comrades, who swarmed round him at the signal. Turpin sprang to Dick's side.

"A sword! Give me something to spit the knaves with!" he said quickly. "Oh, Dick, it was sweetly done! You have left your badge on the footpad captain, and he'll not

forget it. A weapon, quick, and we'll handle the rogues!"

"Take the old court rapier from the wall there!" said Dick, as he whipped out his own blade and faced the window. "'Twas my father's, and there was never a better." He pulled the bell-rope violently, and the steward appeared in an instant. "Bar the doors, Johnson! Summon every able man of the household, and arm him! This riff-raff is about to attack the house!"

"Scatter round the doors!" cried Sweeny's shrill voice. "In with you, before they have time to rally! Spit every knave of a scullion who stands in the way, and break into the room by the door! The rest of you with me to the windows!"

"Strike quick, and strike home!" said Turpin, springing to the left-hand window, while Dick took the right.

Those of the ruffians who had pistols drew them and fired; but such a soaking night was it that no priming could be kept dry, and only a single barrel went off. The ball ripped through Dick's sleeve, smashing a mirror on the back wall of the room. Then, drawing their long knives, the knaves made a rush at the windows.

The rapiers of Dick and the highwayman played like lightning, and two of the footpads dropped back screaming, pinked through the arms. They made another rush, but had no stomach to face the long, thin blades, and fell back again. Then, on a cry from Sweeny, they scattered out, and closed in afresh by creeping along against the walls, whence they suddenly sprang at the windows.

The casements had already been shattered with stones and faggots, and now the two defenders found themselves hard pressed. From the entrance-hall, too, rose a violent clamour, as those of the thieves who went that way fell in with Dick's sturdy cellar-man and grooms, who laid about them lustily with anything that came to hand. How the fight was going there, Dick had no chance to see; but he heard a groan and the stifled voice of his stalwart old house-steward, and guessed that a knife had sunk home. A moment later there was the sound of men hurrying to the dining-hall door.

"You must hold both windows while I keep these knaves back!" cried Turpin, springing to the door just as it was thrown open by three of the footpads. He scored by meeting the first of the attackers with a thrust in the throat the instant he appeared; but of the other two, one had a sword and the other a knife lashed to a long stake. In a moment Turpin was fighting desperately for his life.

CHAPTER 3.

Two Against Ten!

MEANWHILE Dick was hotly engaged at one window, and was bleeding freely from a flesh-wound made by a knife flung from the open palm of one of his assailants. A short, stout ruffian



Dick Forrester gave a heave, and Sweeny crashed through the mullioned window.

sprang in at the other window, to be met by a thrust that sent him howling to the floor. For a while, at least, Dick was able to hold his own.

"The plague strike them!" cried Sweeny. "Are you never going to get at their throats? Here, keep this whelp engaged, four of you, while three more carry a torch to the wood-work yonder! We'll burn the house about their ears and pick them back into it to roast!"

"Hi, Johnson—Baines!" cried Dick eagerly, as he plied his weapon. "Out to the front, three of you, and beat off those dogs! They'll fire the house!"

With a thrill of anxiety he remembered how dry and tindery was the old half-timber work of that part of the house. The buttresses sheltered it from the rain, and a torch or two might well set the old Hall in flames. Sweeny's quick eye had seen the chance.

"Bring up some sheaves of straw from the stables!" cried the footpad captain. "That's it! Pile it against the house and set the torch to it! We'll make roast meat of the dogs!"

Dick redoubled his efforts as he saw the torches flare outside, and heard the shouts and hoarse laughter of the ruffians. It cut him to the heart to think of the home of his father's burnt to ruin by the footpad rabble; but Sweeny's men seemed to swarm, and Dick's servitors were so beset that they could

not get to the place of danger, nor could Dick turn his back on the foe for a moment. Turpin had pinked one of his assailants, but two more fell upon him, and he was hard pressed. With a groan, Dick heard the yell of triumph as the red glare shot up from the masses of straw.

"The house is doomed!" he cried; and, beside himself with fury, he made such an onslaught on those storming the window that he bade fair to beat them back and make his way through.

He might have succeeded, but that two of the footpads made their way in by the other window and fell on him from behind. He was forced to turn his attention to the newcomers. On came those outside once more, swarming through the windows—at least ten of them—and, beset on both sides, with the fire beginning to roar without, Dick saw there was little hope for him.

"Back to the wall!" he cried hoarsely to Turpin. "Let us leave our mark on them before we go down!"

His rapier-point bent on one man's shoulder-blade as he spoke; a knife on a stake wounded him under the arm at the same moment. Side by side, with backs to the wall, the two comrades prepared to sell their lives dearly.

(Thrills and excitement in next week's gripping instalment of this superb new adventure serial. Don't miss it, chums.)

FOR LEAGUE AND CUP !

(Continued from page 38.)

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"St. Frank's wins!"

"Well played, Nipper!"

It had been a clever goal, and from round the touchline went up a tremendous burst of cheering.

The players lined up again, Nipper flushing with pleasure. All the footballers knew that something pretty big was happening beyond the ropes, but they did not know what it portended.

Half a dozen kicks, and then Biggleswade blew a long, shrill blast. The game was over—and St. Frank's had won!

"LISTEN, everybody on this field!" shouted Professor Thorpe Ogleby.

At last he had been released, and his rough handling by the boys had calmed him somewhat. Yet he was calmed more by the knowledge of what he was about to tell the school. At present the boys believed that he had no real authority; well, they would soon know the truth!

Footballers and spectators stood round, and seniors from Big Side had come, too. Many were grinning. The general idea was that Professor Ogleby had seen the Head, and that he had come here to say that the playing fields were in no danger, after all.

"Go it, sir! We're listening!"

"Rather!"

They were ironical comments, and Professor Ogleby set his teeth.

"I have an announcement to make which affects everybody in this school," he said, in a voice which carried to the farthest ends of the crowd. "I do not intend to make a long speech—but it will interest you to know that

Mr. Nelson Lee, your headmaster, has resigned!"

"Wha-a-at!" went up a prolonged roar.

"Yes, exactly!" said the professor, grinning with triumph. "Precisely! Mr. Nelson Lee is no longer your headmaster—but I am! Do you understand, you young rascals? I am your headmaster!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"It's—it's impossible!"

"I never heard such rot——"

"Silence!" thundered the new Head. "Understand me once and for all! You are to leave these playing fields immediately—and you will not return to them! From this minute, they are definitely out of bounds!"

A gasp of dismay went round.

"And let me add that any boy who is rash enough to defy me will be expelled!" said Professor Thorpe Ogleby, with relish. "Is that clear? He will be expelled! My authority is complete, and I intend to have my own way! Now! You will go, all of you, and if there is any unseemly commotion, the culprits will be drastically punished!"

The bombshell had fallen—and St. Frank's was stunned.

Seniors and juniors drifted away from the condemned playing fields, and although blank consternation filled every mind at the moment, this blank consternation was soon to turn to something else.

Professor Thorpe Ogleby was undoubtedly in command—but he was quickly to learn that he had stirred up a hornets' nest!

THE END.

("The Spoil-sport of St. Frank's!" is the title of next Wednesday's corking school yarn. Professor Ogleby finds Nipper & Co. a hot handful to manage. This series is going to prove a real winner—tell your pals.)

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