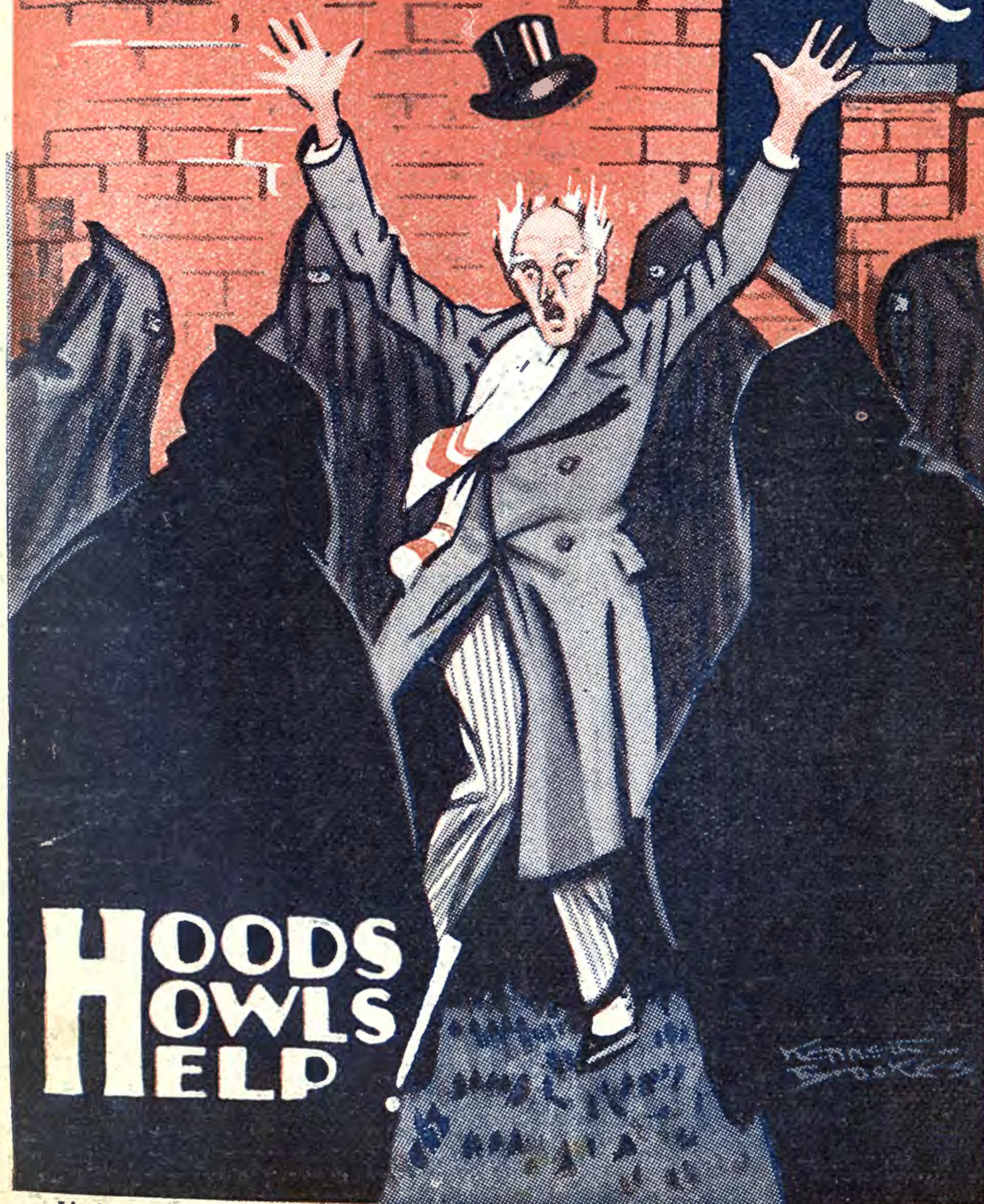


"THE SPOIL-SPORT OF ST. FRANK'S!" Long school and football yarn complete inside.

THE NELSON LEE

LIBRARY OF SCHOOL STORIES

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Lively larks at St. Frank's, in this week's rollicking complete school and sports yarn, with Nipper and his cheery chums at the top of their form.
New Series No. 85. OUT ON WEDNESDAY. September 5th, 1931.

The SPOIL-SPORT of

CHAPTER 1.

Ripe for Trouble!

ST. FRANK'S seethed with indignation.

It was Saturday evening, the football season had just commenced, and the playing fields had been placed out of bounds!

Hence the school's indignation.

Crowds of Removites and Fourth-Formers were holding a mass meeting in the Triangle. Voices were angry and faces were flushed. Excitement ran high.

"It's all Mr. Lee's fault!" said De Valerie, of the Ancient House. "If he hadn't resigned the headmastership we shouldn't have been in this mess!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Lee's let us down!"

"Rather!"

"Three groans for Nelson Lee!"

Nipper, the popular captain of the Remove, heard those groans with rising anger. Groans for Nelson Lee — and previously he had always received cheers! It was an undeniable fact that the famous schoolmaster-detective's stock was at its lowest ebb.

"Here, hold on, you idiots!" roared Nipper furiously.

"Oh, dry up!" sang out Armstrong, of the Fourth. "You'll stick up for Mr. Lee, of course! He's your guardian! But we jolly well know that he's let the school down!"

"With a wallop!" said Buster Boots.

"Surely Nipper's not denying it?" asked Castleton, of the West House.

"Facts are facts—and you can't get away from 'em! While Mr. Lee was Head our playing fields were safe. But the instant he resigned Professor Ogleby stepped into his shoes, and the very first order he gave to the school was to clear off the playing fields!"

It was quite true that Dr. Thorpe Ogleby had exploded a bombshell by depriving St. Frank's of its playing fields.

Dr. Thorpe Ogleby was the new chairman of the board of governors. He was a very learned man, a great scholar, and an enthusiastic archæologist; but he didn't know the first thing about football.

Quite by accident he had discovered that the remains of a great Roman camp or city lay buried within the vicinity of St. Frank's. Most of it was on the Earl



of Edgemore's property, and the earl had point-blank refused to have his ground disturbed for the sake of a few old Roman remains.

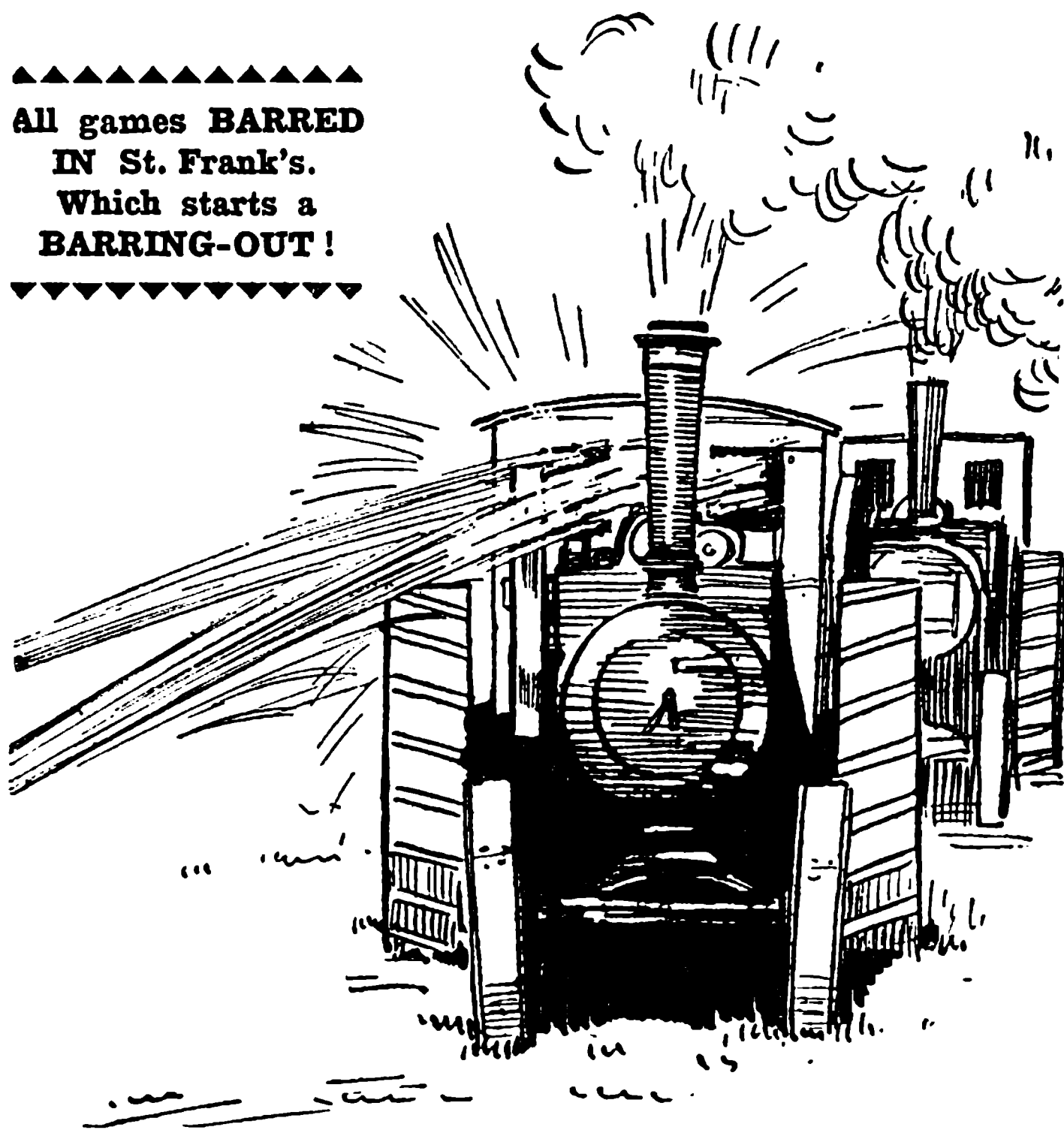
So the professor, who was as keen as mustard on investigating, came to the conclusion that the only course was to dig

Sensational Long Complete Yarn of School Life.

ST. FRANK'S!

By
**EDWY SEARLES
BROOKS**

▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲
All games **BARRED**
IN St. Frank's.
Which starts a
BARRING-OUT!
▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼



playing the River House in the first match of the St. Frank's League Championship — that newly-formed league which had aroused such tremendous enthusiasm in all the great schools of the district, and in the Council schools and local boys' clubs.

Professor Ogleby had wasted no time. As chairman of the governors he had promptly appointed himself headmaster; and he had just as promptly rushed out to the playing fields, had "shooed" everybody off, and had declared them out of bounds!

up the playing fields. He had called a governors' meeting, and he had been so eloquent that he had got the governors to agree to the proposition.

Arriving at St. Frank's with a large number of workmen and tools, he had found, however, that Nelson Lee was whole-heartedly opposed to the plan.

And Lee was the headmaster—with full authority. Even if the governors had provided the school with substitute playing fields, Lee would hardly have agreed; but as no substitute playing fields had been suggested, he put his foot down firmly. Professor Ogleby, excited and angry, was up against a nasty snag.

In his fury he had abused Nelson Lee, and Lee, who was unaccustomed to that sort of treatment, and who certainly wouldn't put up with it, took the only possible course and resigned.

That had been during the afternoon, whilst the St. Frank's juniors had been

"**YOU** dense fatheads!" roared Nipper hotly.

"Look here, you ass——"

"Listen to me!" went on Nipper. "I'm your junior skipper, and if you don't listen to what I've got to say you're a lot of unsportsmanlike blighters!"

"Hear, hear!" bellowed Edward Oswald Handforth, of Study D. "Dry up, you chumps. Give our skipper a hearing!"

"Rats! He's only trying to defend Lee!"

"That's all!"

"And Lee's done the dirty on the school!"

"He hasn't!" retorted Nipper fiercely. "My guv'nor, by resigning, has helped us!"

"What!"

"Draw it mild!"

"Helped us?" asked Vivian Travers.

"Well, well! How do you make that out, dear old fellow? I hate to be carping or critical, but I must say that Mr. Lee has chosen a rummy way of helping us."

"You're just a crowd of blockheads!" shouted Nipper witheringly. "I gave you credit for more sense! Mr. Lee is relying upon the school to take matters into its own hands!"

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie Glen-thorne. "You don't absolutely mean rebellion!"

"Why not?" retorted Nipper, his eyes glowing. "I tell you that my guv'nor is brainy—yes, and all his sympathies are with the school! He's relying upon us to protect the playing fields. Didn't he stop the professor's game this morning? The old boy insulted him, and the only thing Mr. Lee could do, if he was to retain his dignity, was to resign."

"So his dignity comes before our playing fields?" asked Bob Christine, of the Fourth.

"Oh, give me patience!" sighed Nipper, clutching at the air. "Can't you understand? Supposing it comes to rebellion—as it will if the professor tries to dig up our precious playing fields—do you think Mr. Lee could range himself with us? Of course he couldn't. As Head, he'd have to stop the rebellion. And he'd find himself in the rummy position of squashing a rebellion which had all his sympathies!"

"By jingo, that's right enough, you chaps!" said Buster Boots excitedly. "I hadn't looked at it like that!"

"Well, you'd better look at it now," said Nipper, noting, with satisfaction, that he was receiving much more attention. "My guv'nor is going away for the simple reason that there's not room enough at St. Frank's for both him and Professor Ogleby. And by going away he's leaving us a clear field—knowing that we shall refuse to recognise the authority of that old fanatic."

"By George!" roared Handforth. "He's hit it, you fellows! We wouldn't dare to defy Mr. Lee, would we? But we'll jolly well defy Professor Ogleby!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Rather!"

"Down with the old fossil!"

"There you are—that's exactly what I mean!" said Nipper. "Mr. Lee, instead of letting the school down, has acted like a sportsman. And don't forget that he's relying on us!"

"Well, I'm blessed!"

"Three cheers for Mr. Lee!"

They were given heartily, and Nipper grinned. It was astounding how easily a

crowd of schoolboys could be swayed from one view to another. This time, happily, they had got the right end.

"What are we going to do?" asked Skeets Rossiter. "We can't build a wall round the playing fields."

"But we can protect them," replied Nipper. "Not that there's any need to do anything this evening. To-morrow is Sunday, and those workmen have made a camp for themselves in the Half-Mile Meadow. They won't start anything until Monday morning, at the very earliest."

"That's true enough."

"And what's going to happen on Monday?"

"For one thing, we're going to prevent any monkeying with Little Side!" said Nipper firmly. "We can rely upon the seniors to protect Big Side. That's their look-out, anyhow. If they're idiots enough to allow it to be dug up, it'll serve 'em right!"

"It's going to be awkward," remarked Lionel Corcoran, the skipper of the Fourth. "I mean, a pretty nasty mess, looking at it all round. It isn't as though Professor Ogleby was a bullying tyrant."

"That's just it," agreed Nipper. "We can't use violence with him. He's such a mild, inoffensive old chap. Besides that, I believe he's a kindly man."

"No man is kindly who can deprive a school of its football," said Handforth tartly.

"My dear chap, he doesn't realise the importance of football—that's all," said Nipper. "Football, to Professor Ogleby, is about as important as marbles is to us."

He was right. He had hit the nail on the head.

Professor Thorpe Ogleby was, at heart, a kindly, gentle-natured man. But, having made this wonderful discovery, he was impatient to commence operations.

The buried remains of an old Roman camp! And a part of it actually on the St. Frank's property! It seemed to Professor Ogleby that the obvious thing to do was to unearth the centuries-old relics. Playing fields? Pshaw! With a shrug of his shoulders, he dismissed the playing fields. He was disgusted and disappointed by Lord Edgemore's attitude. But then, what else could one expect? Everybody knew that the Earl of Edgemore had recently been a rancher in Canada. What would he know about Roman remains? He preferred to leave them in the ground—buried and hidden.

However, the St. Frank's playing fields could be dug up, and the priceless Roman remains exposed to view—after a thousand

years of undisturbed peace. And, in pursuit of his purpose, the kindly-natured professor was a changed man. He hardened himself. If these boys hindered him, well, they would soon find that he was not the kind of man to cross!

Professor Ogleby was excitable, too. He was impatient. Any kind of delay irritated him beyond measure. Although he had appointed himself headmaster, the school itself meant nothing to him. His sole interest lay in the playing fields. Indeed, if he had had his own way, he would have set his gang of men to work that very evening. He was annoyed—painfully surprised—that the school should set itself in opposition to him.

"These boys are appallingly selfish!" said the professor bitterly. "What is the sacrifice to them? A mere nothing! Football! Pah! It is about time that the younger generation became more serious-minded. There is far too much sport nowadays. Cricket, football, hockey, tennis, golf! Nothing but sport! It is a positive menace to civilisation! I am grieved that the boys of St. Frank's should be so lost to all sense of responsibility!"

Then and there the professor had conceived a wonderful idea. Not only would he serve the nation by bringing to light these wonderful relics of ancient Rome, but he would make St. Frank's an example which would be copied throughout the length and breadth of the land. It was high time that a crusade against this craze for sports was started!

The professor did not quite realise it, but he could not have chosen a more inopportune moment for such a movement.

For the St. Frank's fellows were filled with enthusiasm over the formation of the new St. Frank's Football League. The St. Frank's Junior Eleven and such schools as Carlton College, Bannington Council School, Helmford College, and Caistowe High School were members of the league, which was to be run on the same lines as the English Football League. The season was just beginning—which meant that the St. Frank's playing fields were indispensable.

And here was this enthusiastic old fossil hunter planning to confiscate them!

CHAPTER 2.

The Lull Before the Storm!

LORD DORRIMORE, the genial sporting peer, strolled out of the Ancient House and smiled benignly upon the indignation meeting.

"We live in stirring times," he remarked approvingly.

The one and only Dorrie was the sponsor of the St. Frank's Football League; he had been round to all the schools and clubs and had fixed things up generally. Not only that, but Dorrie was providing a handsome cup for the winners of the Championship—and valuable medals for every member of the team which concluded the season with the highest number of points. The St. Frank's Junior XI had, of course, already decided that that Cup and those medals should be theirs.

Later on, coinciding with the big English Cup Competition, St. Frank's was to hold a knock-out affair, too.

"Hallo, sir!" said Nipper, glancing round as his lordship came up. "I've just been trying to make these chumps understand that Mr. Lee has done the right thing by resigning."

"Oh, undoubtedly," agreed Lord Dorrimore. "He couldn't very well do anything else. And it's up to the school, now, to fight for its playing fields."

"Hurrah!"

"We'll fight, sir?"

"To the last ditch!"

"That's the spirit!" said Lord Dorrimore approvingly. "It is decidedly thick that Professor Ogleby should descend upon the school with his drastic schemes for mutilating the playing fields. But he's got this bee in his bonnet, and nothing will shift it."

"He's clean off his rocker, sir!"

"Mad as a hatter!"

"Not exactly," said Dorrie. "And don't shout quite so loudly, young 'uns. I'm in a delicate position. I'm entirely on your side—but, officially, it's just as well that I should keep the peace with the worthy professor. The old boy is perfectly sane—one of the most charming men imaginable. He's just enthusiastic on the subject of archæology. But I quite agree that we can't have him messing about with our playing fields."

The juniors grinned.

"You talk like one of us, sir," chuckled Reggie Pitt of the West House.

"And I am one of you," replied Dorrie promptly. "Didn't I play footer and cricket on those very fields myself, in my younger days? Don't forget that a great many of your fathers and grandfathers—yes, and great grandfathers—played on those selfsame fields, too. And the very idea of their being dug up is scandalous. They are sacred to St. Frank's."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Dorrie!"

"I had intended leaving St. Frank's to-day," went on Lord Dorrimore, "but I think I shall stay until the beginning of

next week. I'm rather keen on seeing the fireworks. I fancy there'll be quite a few. Without taking sides in this quarrel, I strongly urge you to stick to your guns. Stand firm, and protect your playing fields!"

The juniors grinned—and quite a number of seniors had gathered round now. Lord Dorrimore's idea of not taking sides was humorous.

"Remember that your playing fields existed, practically in their present form, when Henry the Eighth was on the throne," he said impressively. "When Prince Rupert's cavalry was charging at Edgehill, games were being played upon these fields! While the Great Fire of London was raging, football—or what stood for football in those days—was being played on Little Side and on Big Side. Or it may have been cricket. What does it matter? We'll go back further. While the Wars of the Roses were rife, while the Battle of Bosworth was being fought, while the Battle of Flodden was raging, the St. Frank's playing fields stood as they stand now! While the Spanish Armada was being routed in the English Channel, that turf was bending under the feet of your ancestors. Will you let that turf be ruthlessly torn up—for the sake of exposing a few mouldy stone slabs which sundry Roman blighters shoved down in the Year One?"

"Never!" went up a roar.

"Good enough!" said Lord Dorrimore cheerfully. "It's a jolly good thing that Mr. Lee has cleared off. You fellows can let yourselves go—if the occasion arises. But, as I've already said, I'm a guest at St. Frank's, and I can't very well take sides."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Dorrie!"

His lordship nodded and, chuckling, he went indoors.

MEANWHILE, in the headmaster's study, Professor Thorpe Ogleby was sitting at his desk, eyeing with strong disapproval the deputation of two which had come to beard him in his den.

Those two were Mr. Alington Wilkes and Mr. Beverley Stokes, the Housemasters of the Ancient House and West House respectively.

All the Housemasters, of course, had been informed that Nelson Lee had resigned, and that Professor Ogleby had taken up the control of the school. The St. Frank's masters were thoroughly annoyed about the whole matter; and Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Stokes had thought it

just as well to have a heart-to-heart talk with this enterprising chairman of the governors who looked like stirring up a hornets' nest.

The professor was a lean, bony man, with a big head perched on a long and narrow neck. It was a habit of his to project his head forwards, until he closely resembled a human hawk. His nose was thin and long and beak-like. His eyes, deeply sunken, were surrounded by countless wrinkles. Altogether, a very learned-looking gentleman; and, when he liked, a charming and amiable gentleman.

But he didn't like now. His blood was up. He had come down to St. Frank's to dig up those playing fields, and he was going to dig them up. He was exasperated beyond measure at all this ridiculous fuss and bother.

He was not quite so confident, however, as he had been several hours ago. The attitude of the boys had startled him. Now he was suffering a reaction. He was beginning to appreciate, in fact, that he would have to "watch his step." And this merely annoyed him all the more.

"The whole school regrets that Mr. Lee has resigned," old Wilkey was saying. "We can only trust, Dr. Ogleby, that you will not proceed with your alarming project of excavating the playing fields for Roman remains."

"It is my intention to proceed, no matter what the school thinks or says or does!" said Professor Ogleby curtly.

"For Heaven's sake, sir, reconsider!" urged Barry Stokes. "You don't realise what you're doing!"

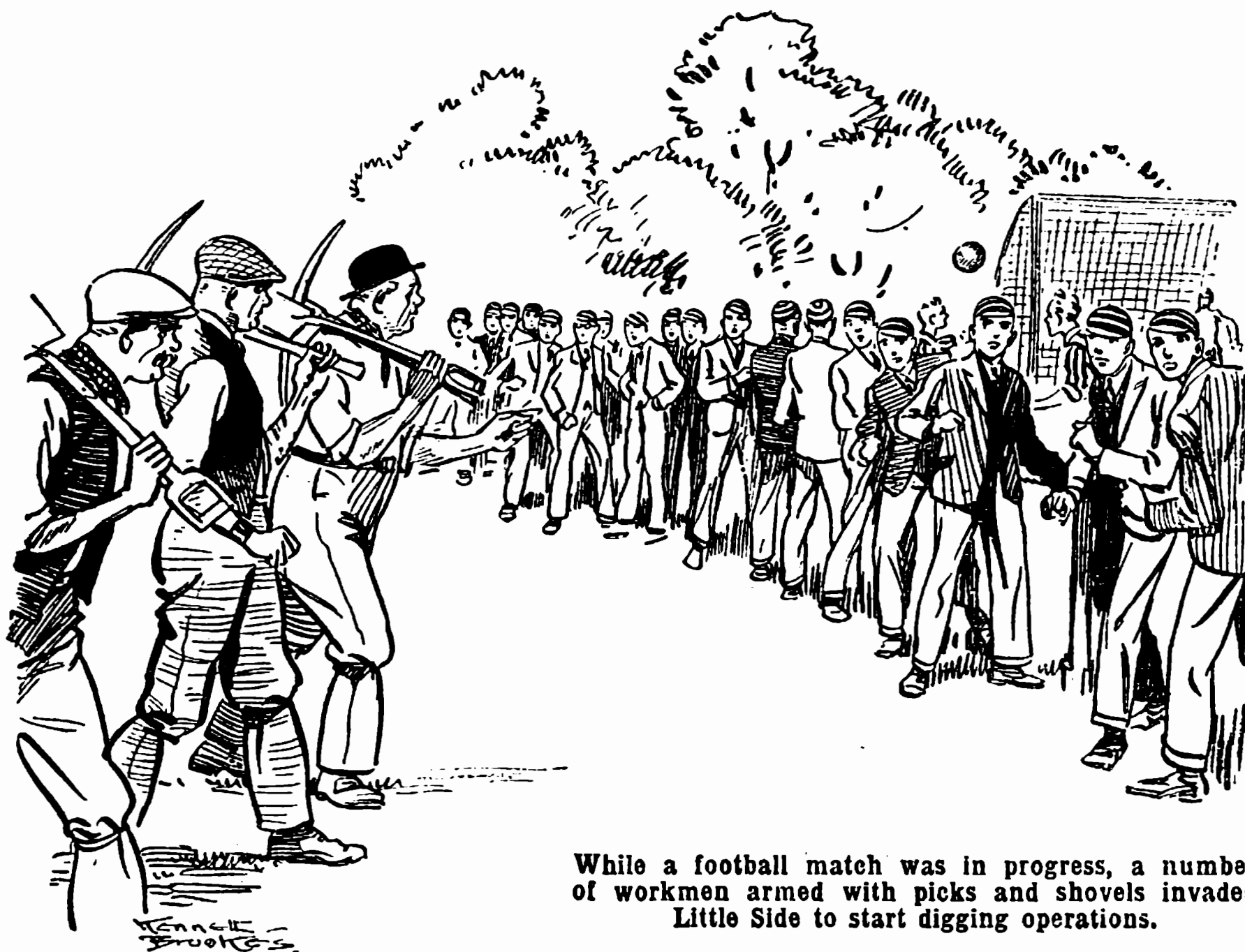
"Indeed!"

"We Housemasters simply cannot be responsible for our boys if you go ahead with this fantastic plan," went on Mr. Stokes earnestly. "There'll be the biggest row that the school has ever known! You can't pitchfork St. Frank's into that sort of trouble, Dr. Ogleby!"

"I am the headmaster, and I intend to have my own way!" retorted Professor Ogleby. "I am disgusted—horrified—that masters as well as boys should regard these playing fields with such reverence. What are they, after all? Fields—meadows! Why make all this fuss over a mere stretch of grassland?"

"To the boys of St. Frank's—and to thousands of old boys in all parts of the world—these playing fields are something more than stretches of grassland," said Mr. Wilkes quietly. "Perhaps you are not a sentimental man, Professor Ogleby —"

"I am not!" snapped the professor.



While a football match was in progress, a number of workmen armed with picks and shovels invaded Little Side to start digging operations.

"It is certain that you do not understand the school's feelings," continued old Wilkey. "But it is our duty to warn you that there will certainly be a great deal of trouble if you proceed——"

"It will be your duty, as the Housemasters of this school, to deal with that trouble," interrupted the professor calmly. "I may as well inform you now, gentlemen, that I have come to a definite decision with regard to the playing fields—quite apart from the Roman remains which lie buried beneath them, and which I intend to restore to the world."

He paused impressively, leaned forward, and thrust his hawk-like head across the desk.

"I have made up my mind to abolish games at St. Frank's," he said deliberately. "Very simple, is it not? With games prohibited, there will be no necessity for any playing fields at all. So the whole problem is solved."

"Is that what you call solving it, sir?" asked Mr. Wilkes, in amazement. "You are banning all games completely?"

"I am!" insisted the new Head. "The world is games mad! Schoolboys, nowadays, think far more of football and cricket than they do of their studies!

It's all wrong, and it's got to be stopped!"

The two Housemasters eyed him almost pityingly.

"Whilst admitting that an over-influence of sport is detrimental, let me point out, Professor Ogleby, that the balance of such things at St. Frank's is extremely rational," said Mr. Wilkes. "A certain amount of sport is necessary for the health and well-being of the boys. All youngsters need an outlet for their boisterous spirits. Prohibit games, and they will seek pursuits which are less healthy."

"We will not argue on this matter," said the professor gruffly. "I have made up my mind, gentlemen, and there is no more to be said. I may add, however, that I shall let matters rest as they stand until Monday morning."

So the two Housemasters took their departure, relieved that there was to be a respite.

"But there'll be dynamite on Monday," said Barry Stokes, as he and old Wilkey crossed Inner Court. "And unless I'm very much mistaken, that dynamite will explode."

NEXT day, being Sunday, it was a case of "all quiet on the St. Frank's front." Professor Ogleby, eager as he was, could not very well set his men to work on the Sabbath. So the playing fields were in no danger.

The threat of their destruction, however, was the sole topic of conversation throughout the school. In the afternoon, Nipper and Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West, and a crowd of other juniors, including Handforth & Co., went for a long walk. It was a warm, sunny afternoon, more like summer than early autumn. The skies were blue, the countryside still looked fresh and green, and wasps and bees and other winged creatures hummed through the drowsy air of the hot afternoon.

"We've got to decide upon some plan of action, of course," Nipper was saying, as they walked along the Bannington road. "It's no good leaving it until the last minute. Professor Ogleby means business. This is only the lull before the storm."

"Thanks to Sunday!" nodded Vivian Travers.

"Exactly," said Nipper. "To-morrow starts a new week, and we can be pretty certain that Ogleby will set his men to work at half-past six or seven."

"If those rotters start monkeying with our playing fields, we'll smash 'em!" said Handforth threateningly.

"It's hardly fair to be down on the workmen," said Nipper. "They're not to blame. By what we saw of them yesterday, they're a decent crowd. That's what makes it so beastly awkward. We don't want to lay hands on them until we're absolutely forced. We've no quarrel with the workmen."

"Hallo! Look who's coming!" said Handforth abruptly. "Jiggered if it isn't Ted Sparks and his crowd!"

"Out for a Sunday afternoon stroll—like us," said Nipper. "Good egg! I rather wanted to have a word with old Sparky."

A number of stalwart youths, dressed in their Sunday best, joined forces with the St. Frank's boys. They were healthy, ruddy-featured youngsters, and they were all grinning cheerfully. Ted Sparks was the captain of the Bannington Council School XI, and with him were Will Clark, Charley Sargent, Bob Jenkins, and all the other members of the cheery crew.

"Hallo, fellows!" said Ted Sparks, by way of greeting. "How's things?"

"Fine with us," replied Nipper. "We whacked the River House yesterday, and bagged our two points."

"Same here," grinned Ted. "We won, too!"

"How many goals?" demanded Handforth.

"One-nil."

"My poor ass, we won by three-two," said Handforth triumphantly. "So we're standing better in the League table than you are."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's rather early to talk about the League table, Handy," grinned Nipper. "Jolly glad to hear that you won, Sparky. It looks as if you'll give us a good game next Saturday."

"A good game," echoed Ted Sparks. "We're going to lick you!"

"A delusion, my poor chump," said Nipper. "We've already made up our minds to wipe you off the map—on your own ground."

There was a good deal of chaffing; for the St. Frank's boys and the Council School youngsters were on the best of terms. They were all looking forward to the "local Derby," so to speak, which would be played on the Council School ground next Saturday.

"I say, we've heard some rummy rumours about your school," said Sparks, becoming serious. "Is it a fact that some old josser has been threatening to do away with your playing fields?"

"Yes, we're having a bit of trouble," admitted Nipper. "And it's rather awkward because Professor Thorpe Ogleby is not only the Head, but also the Chairman of the Board of Governors."

"Phew!"

"You're up against it, all right!"

"Hot and strong!"

The Council School boys were deeply concerned.

"We can deal with the professor, I think," said Nipper, a determined note in his voice. "It's all the more exasperating because Lord Dorrimore brought him down to St. Frank's by 'plane—and from high in the air the old boy spotted signs of a Roman camp, buried deeply beneath the playing fields and the surrounding countryside. Now he's half off his nut with excitement."

"Why can't he dig up the meadows round about?" asked Bob Jenkins, the burly Council School goalie.

"Because they belong to Lord Edgemore—and Lord Edgemore won't hear of the countryside being mutilated," said Nipper. "Good luck to him! It's rough on us, though, because the professor means to mutilate our playing fields."

"Well, if you chaps want any help—don't forget us!" said Ted Sparks prompt-

ly. "You can generally get hold of me by ringing up Bannington 304—that's old Gibbons' place—the grocer's shop on the corner opposite our footer ground. If the trouble at your school looks like getting beyond you, just call on us."

"Rather!" chorused the others.

"Good men!" said Nipper heartily. "That's the spirit I like! We'll give a district call, eh? Thanks awfully, you chaps. But I fancy that we St. Frank's fellows can protect our own property all right. Still, we'll remember your offer."

It was an exhibition of goodfellowship which Nipper and his merry men much appreciated. If things came to a crisis at St. Frank's, the school would have plenty of sympathy—and plenty of helpers!

CHAPTER 3.

Trouble Begins!

AS the first streak of dawn was appearing in the eastern sky, St. Frank's stirred.

It wasn't usual for St. Frank's to stir at this remarkably early hour. But this morning—Monday morning—was rather special.

As the sky lightened, figures began to appear from the Ancient House and from the West House; they emerged from the Modern House and the East House. Sixth-Formers, Fifth-Formers, Removites, Fourth-Formers—and even fags. Every section of the school was represented.

For there had been a secret meeting of all the Form captains the previous night, and certain decisions had been made.

It was not phenomenal for members of the Junior School to get up a stunt which involved very early rising. But it was seldom indeed that the seniors indulged in this sort of thing. But it was Monday morning—and Professor Ogleby was on the warpath.

Many of those figures emerging from the various Houses were dressed in footer togs. Some of the boys were yawning, some were grumbling, whilst others—such as Handforth—were eager-eyed and ready for the fray.

Almost before there was sufficient light, no less than three football matches were in progress. On Big Side, the Sixth was playing a match against the Fifth. On Little Side, two Junior teams were actively engaged—Ancient House versus Modern House. Willy Handforth and his stalwarts of the Third were having a game of their own, in a corner of the playing fields.

There was nothing startling in the play. The boys, in fact, were not interested so very much in the football. They were playing merely for the sake of playing—or, to be more exact, for the sake of occupying the ground.

However, it wasn't long before they almost forgot their real object; for as the light increased, and their muscles grew free, they began to enjoy themselves. Even the spectators became interested; and there were plenty of spectators round the ropes. It wasn't merely the players who had turned out so early. Every Form was well represented.

"It's a jolly good wheeze, if you ask me," said Handforth, as he lounged in the Ancient House goal-mouth. "This early morning footer is first-class! We shall have such appetites for breakfast that there won't be a giddy crumb left on the tables."

"Look out, you chump!" shouted one of the spectators, from behind the goal. "What do you think you're doing? Look at Bob Christine."

The Modern House junior was streaking for goal, and Handforth, who had been neglecting the game, suddenly found himself called upon to move pretty rapidly. Christine sent in a shot which tested the burly Handforth to the full limit.

"Cheek!" he ejaculated indignantly, after he had just managed to tip the ball over the crossbar. "I'm blessed if he didn't nearly score!"

"What do you think the Modern House forwards are on the field for?" asked Church sarcastically as he ran back. "Wake up, Handy! You're still half asleep!"

"But it's not a real game!" protested Handforth. "It's like Christine's nerve to try— Oh, my hat! They're taking the corner kick!"

Buster Boots and his Modern House men evidently regarded it as a real game, and they were doing their best to score. The leather came soaring over, and Handforth only just managed to clear.

Then the play shifted up into mid field, and before long the Modern House goal was being raided. At this point a scout—in the person of Jimmy Potts—came hurrying up, his face flushed.

"They've started!" he exclaimed eagerly. "They'll be here in a minute or two!"

The word was passed round like lightning, and it soon reached all the players.

"They're coming! Look out for squalls!"

"All right—we're ready!"

The games continued, but the spectators had now lost interest in football. They were watching for the arrival of the workmen whose task it was to play havoc with the playing fields.

They soon appeared.

There were two dozen of them at least. On the Saturday there had not been so many; but the rest had evidently arrived in the meantime. Many of the men were carrying picks and spades, and some of them were provided with surveying instruments. All were looking surprised and dubious.

"Something funny about this," said Jim Purcell, the foreman. "Mr. Drummond told us that we should have a clear field this morning. Not that I'm surprised. The boys are rare worked up about the whole business."

"Still, we can't be stopped by them," said one of the other men. "We were ordered to start at six-thirty, weren't we?"

"It looks like trouble to me," said Jim, worried.

His orders were to start work on Little Side. Professor Ogleby had prepared an exact map, and the men knew, almost to a yard, where to commence operations.

"Just a minute!" said Vivian Travers casually.

He and a number of other Removites had come forward to meet the workmen. Fourth-Formers were pressing round, too. And on all those youthful faces there were expressions of grim purpose.

"Now, look here, young gents——" began Jim Purcell protestingly.

"It's a lovely morning, isn't it?" asked Travers benignly.

"The morning's all right, but——"

"I suppose you strolled along to watch the football?"

"You know very well we haven't, young gent," said Purcell gruffly.

"No?"

"Our orders are clear enough," continued the foreman. "We've got to go on this ground, and start excavating for them Roman ruins."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors laughed, but there was not much hilarity in that laugh.

"It is rather early in the day for funny jokes," said Travers reproachfully. "We laughed out of mere politeness—but please don't expect too much before breakfast."

"Look here, young gentlemen, we men are sorry about your football ground," said Purcell earnestly. "But it's not our fault. We've got our orders, and if you hinder us we shall only get into trouble. Why not make the best of a bad job?"

Thus appealed to, the juniors felt rather uncomfortable; but Vivian Travers, who had appointed himself spokesman in the absence of Nipper—who was on the field—shook his head.

"Sorry, but there's nothing doing!" he said firmly. "If you start digging up this field there's going to be trouble!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Travers!"

"We'll keep 'em out!"

"Rather!"

The workmen looked at one another helplessly. The boys were becoming aggressive.

"If you don't let us start prompt at half-past six—and it only wants a minute to the half-hour—I shall have to go and report," said Jim Purcell bluntly. "And that'll only mean trouble for you boys. We don't want that, young gents."

"We're not exactly looking for trouble, either," said Travers. "It's entirely up to you men. Our advice to you is to go quietly back to your camp."

"But we can't do that!" protested Purcell. "It seems to me that you boys have got up especially early so that you'll be on the spot to hinder."

Vivian Travers shook his head.

"I don't think much of that deduction," he said. "In fact, it isn't a deduction at all. As 'Punch' would say, it's merely another glimpse of the obvious."

"Look out, Jim; Mr. Drummond's coming!" sang out one of the men in the background.

Jim Purcell glanced round.

"And a good thing, too!" he growled. "He's the boss, so he can deal with the situation."

All the workmen were relieved. Mr. James Drummond was a brisk little man, and although of middle age he had an eager, boyish enthusiasm in his manner. He was a very pleasant gentleman ordinarily, as friendly as anyone could wish; but it so happened that he was as keen on archæology as Professor Ogleby himself. Therefore he was inclined to look upon the activity of the schoolboys in a warped sort of way. He considered that they were a mischievous crowd of young rascals. Mr. Drummond was the professor's right-hand man—his chief lieutenant. He was in full command of the men's camp.

"What is all this?" he asked impatiently, as he came breezing up. "Upon my word! Football at this hour of the morning!"

"We can't very well start work while the boys are playing, sir," said the man.

"Then they'll stop playing," retorted Mr. Drummond. "It's perfectly ridiculous!" He turned to the boys. "I regret that I have no authority over you," he went on, "but, at least, you can explain this gross breach of rules."

"There's no gross breach of rules, sir," said Lionel Corcoran, the skipper of the Fourth. "Of course, we don't often play footer at such an early hour, but it's not entirely unknown. We're at liberty to use Little Side whenever we please, too."

"That is not correct," said Mr. Drummond hotly. "Your headmaster has placed the playing fields definitely out of bounds."

"Really, sir?"

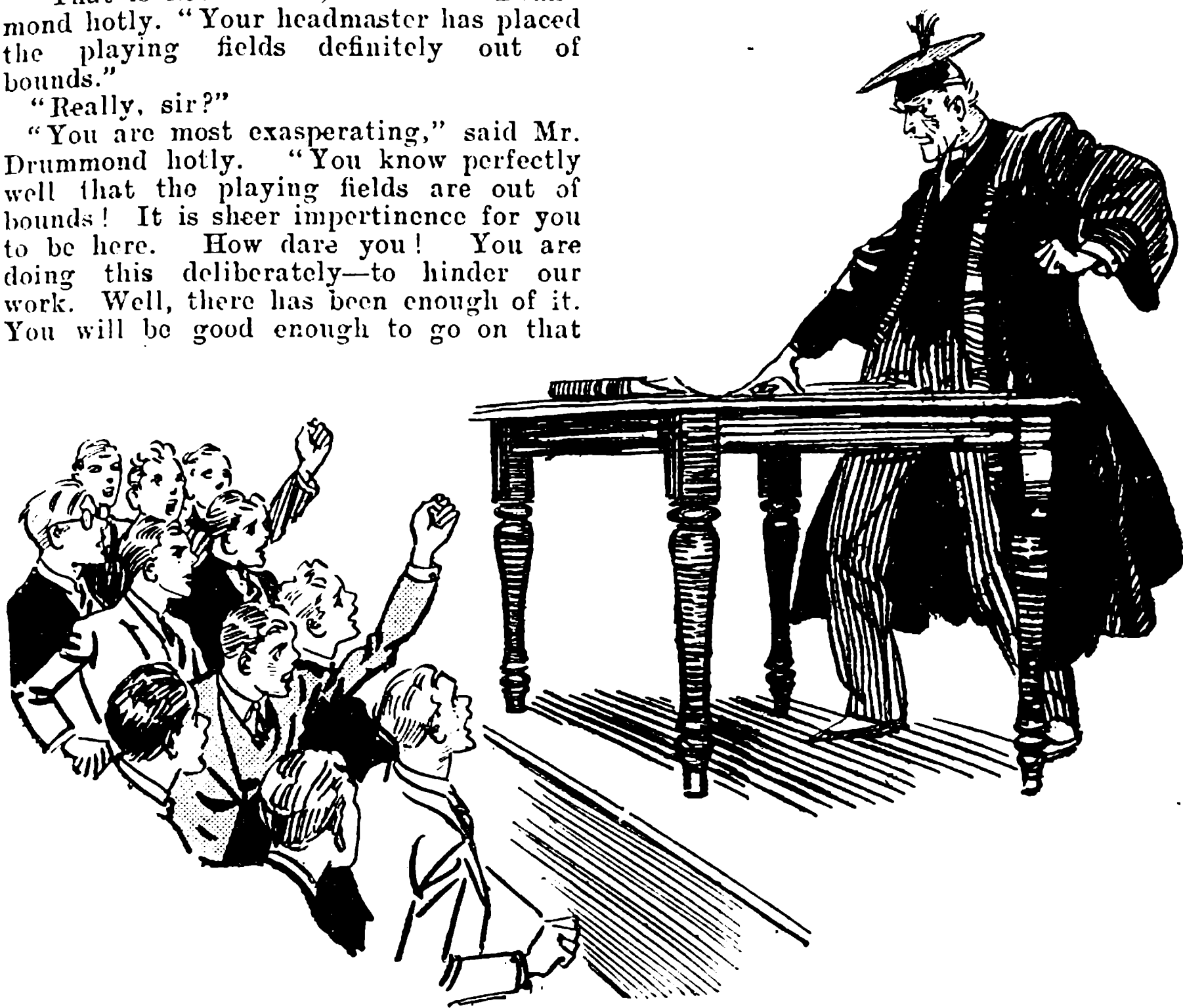
"You are most exasperating," said Mr. Drummond hotly. "You know perfectly well that the playing fields are out of bounds! It is sheer impertinence for you to be here. How dare you! You are doing this deliberately—to hinder our work. Well, there has been enough of it. You will be good enough to go on that

Ogleby and inform him of this nonsense. Since you will take no notice of me, perhaps you will take notice of him!"

"Think so, sir?" asked Travers. "Well, we all live and learn."

"Good heavens!" said the little man. "You are not suggesting, are you, that you will defy your new headmaster?"

"All we're suggesting, sir, is that these are our playing fields, and we're not letting anybody fool about with them," said Corcoran. "Professor Ogleby can come here with the whole giddy board of



A chorus of boos and jeers greeted Professor Ogleby's announcement to prohibit all games at St. Frank's.

field, and tell the boys to cease play."

But Mr. Drummond soon found that he was up against a brick wall, so to speak. The boys were polite to him, but they took no notice of his suggestions. He even tried to force his way on to the field himself; but he met with little success. He was soon hustled off again, at which he lost his temper completely.

"Very well!" he said, fuming. "My only alternative is to go straight to Dr.

governors—but these are our playing fields."

"And we're protecting 'em to the last ditch," said Travers, nodding.

"I have never heard of anything more ridiculous in all my life!" said Mr. Drummond angrily. "The whole situation is outrageous. You boys are making a grave mistake in thinking that you can defy authority in this disgraceful manner!"

He saw the uselessness of further argument, so he hurried straight off to the Head's house, and before long he was talking to Dr. Thorpe Ogleby. That gentleman, who was only half-dressed, and who appeared in a bath-robe and slippers, was scandalised after he had listened to the story.

"Leave this to me, Mr. Drummond—leave this to me!" he said fiercely. "Good heavens! I thought, on Saturday, that the boys were convinced! When I became their headmaster they came under my authority. How dare they defy me in this way?"

"They seem very determined, sir," said Mr. Drummond.

"And I am determined, too!" retorted the Head. "There is only one way to deal with this situation, Mr. Drummond—and that is to act with absolute harshness. I shall nip this absurd thing in the bud at its very inception!"

"Really, sir, it is the only thing to do," agreed the other. "I greatly dislike any kind of trouble, and I am grieved that we should find the boys so opposed to us, but it is quite impossible to allow this situation to continue. We are entirely at a standstill."

"Wait until I am dressed, Mr. Drummond," said the Head. "I won't keep you waiting more than five minutes."

"I was just wondering, sir——"

"Well? What were you wondering?"

"It seems a pity to provoke these foolish boys to—er—violence," said Mr. Drummond diffidently. "I hate to say it, professor, but I really do believe that the boys, if provoked, will defy us—and even lay hands upon us!"

Dr. Ogleby stared.

"Lay hands upon—me?" he repeated. "Nonsense! On Saturday they might have committed such folly. But I am their headmaster now, and they know very well that any violence of that sort would mean the most drastic punishment."

"I was only going to suggest, professor, that we wait until after breakfast," said Mr. Drummond mildly.

"Indeed? And why? Don't you think there has been enough time wasted already?"

"After breakfast, sir, the boys will be confined to their class-rooms," explained Mr. Drummond. "Thus we shall have a clear field. I think it would save quite a lot of trouble."

"H'm! There's that, of course," admitted Professor Ogleby, frowning. "With the boys all at their lessons, they certainly could not hinder the workmen."

"And once the excavations were really

commenced, sir, the boys would give up this nonsense completely," urged Mr. Drummond. "They would know that they were beaten, and then the whole trouble would collapse. Don't you see? I really do think that it would be advisable to use a little diplomacy."

Professor Ogleby suddenly snapped his fingers.

"No, no!" he said fiercely. "I won't! If I failed in my duty now I should be unworthy of my position. I am the headmaster of this school now, and I must insist upon strict discipline and obedience."

"But in the circumstances, sir——"

"Were I to allow these boys to persist in their folly it would be a lamentable exhibition of weakness," continued Professor Ogleby. "Cannot you see that? Whatever authority I might have had will be sacrificed. No! I must be firm. It is the only possible way. Do you suppose that I am frightened of these young rascals? Pough! I will soon show them who is master!"

He strode off, and Mr. Drummond sighed. The little man was genuinely sorry. He appreciated the situation far better than Professor Ogleby.

Ten minutes later the professor reappeared, and now he was fully dressed, and, furthermore, he was wearing a gown and a mortar-board. Since he was headmaster, he might just as well array himself in his official robes. And he was shrewd enough to realise that the boys would stand in greater awe of him if he appeared in mortar-board and gown. They were the symbols of his authority.

The two men found the games still in progress, and there were great crowds round the ropes. The workmen had withdrawn, and were standing about waiting for further orders.

Dr. Ogleby, realising that the juniors were representative of the more reckless element, strode straight on to Little Side.

"Stop!" he commanded sharply. "Stop this game at once!"

The referee—Armstrong of the Fourth—blew his whistle. Armstrong was a burly junior, but the very sight of the Head scared him.

Nipper ran up.

"We want you to understand, sir, that we don't mean any disrespect to you personally," he said earnestly. "But these are our playing fields, and——"

"Playing fields are no longer necessary at St. Frank's," interrupted Professor Ogleby sharply. "You boys have defied my authority by entering these fields, and you shall be suitably punished. I have

nothing further to say now—except that I order you all to leave.”

The players gathered round, seething with excitement.

“We’re not the only ones, sir!” shouted Handforth. “The Fifth and Sixth are just as determined. You’re up against the whole school! We’re not going to have our playing fields spoilt!”

“Never!”

“Hands off the playing fields!”

“Hear, hear!”

“Down with the spoil-sports!”

“Silence!” thundered Professor Ogleby. “I may as well tell you at once—although I intended reserving this until you were all together in Big Hall—that games are henceforth forbidden. The youth of the country is being ruined by an excess of sports and games. St. Frank’s is to set the example, and football and cricket and hockey and such frivolities are, from this day onwards, prohibited.”

He was amazed by the roar of indignation and protest which went up. He had expected dismay on the part of the boys; but he had never anticipated this uproar.

Fortunately, Fenton of the Sixth arrived on the scene, and his very presence calmed the juniors.

“You’d better get off, all of you,” said the school captain; and although he spoke quietly everybody heard his words. “The headmaster had given his orders, and there mustn’t be any disobedience.”

The playing fields were quietly evacuated; and Professor Ogleby, watching, flushed with triumph. So there would be no real trouble, after all!

“Now, sir,” said Fenton, with a quietness which was in itself significant. “The Junior captain and I would be glad if you would listen to us for a few minutes.”

Nipper was with him, and Professor Ogleby looked at them both in some surprise.

“I feel this is hardly the moment——” he began.

“But I think it is, sir,” insisted Fenton. “I am the captain of St. Frank’s—the Senior captain of sports. Hamilton, here, is the Junior captain of sports. You will thus understand that we represent the whole school so far as games are concerned.”

“Well?” asked the new headmaster.

“We would like you definitely to understand, sir—and please also understand that we mean no disrespect to you—that the school has made up its mind to fight for the playing fields,” said Fenton.

Juniors and seniors had pressed round, and everybody listened with bated breath.

“To fight?” repeated Professor Ogleby, with a start.

“That is what I said, sir.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed the professor. “So you have the colossal impudence to——”

“Don’t misunderstand us, sir,” interrupted Nipper quickly. “Both Fenton and I haven’t the slightest desire to be impudent. We’re only telling you that there’s a strong feeling throughout the school. The seniors are just as earnest as we juniors. This is a matter which is dear to our hearts—it is even more serious than you may realise. In a way, sir, we’re warning you, but we want to do it frankly, so that there may be no misunderstanding.”

Professor Ogleby was astounded.

“You are warning me?” he repeated, as though he could not believe the evidence of his ears. “Good heavens! Do you realise what you are saying? And you, sir!” he added, turning to the tall, stalwart Fenton, who looked even older than his eighteen years. “You say that you are the captain of the school. You are practically a man. Do you agree with this boy’s preposterous statement?”

“The whole school is agreed, sir,” replied Fenton steadily. “These playing fields are ours, and we shall only ignore your orders if you force us to do so. But it is just as well that you should understand, sir, at the outset, that we’re not going to let any of those workmen start digging.”

“You’re not going to let——” The professor nearly choked. “Upon my soul! This—this is open rebellion!”

“Call it what you like, sir,” said Fenton quietly. “As captain of St. Frank’s, I fully realise the gravity of what I am saying. But at least I know that I have the whole school behind me to back me up.”

“Hear, hear!”

It was a swelling murmur, coming from all ranks, and it gave Edgar Fenton strength.

“Rebellion!” panted the Head. “Did you hear, Mr. Drummond? Never in my life have I witnessed anything quite so scandalous!”

“It seems to me that these two boys are responsible——” began Mr. Drummond.

“We admit it,” interrupted Fenton. “This is entirely a matter which affects our sports, and we are the sports captains. We acknowledge full responsibility.”

“Not likely!” went up a yell from Handforth. “We’re all in it, Fenton!”

“Yes, rather!”

“The whole giddy school!”

“Hurrah!”

"Will you be silent?" shouted Professor Ogleby, almost beside himself. "I will not stand this any longer!"

He spun round, and waved his arm to Jim Purcell and the workmen.

"Come here—all of you!" he commanded. "You will take no notice of these boys, but you will go upon this field, and you will start operations in accordance with my orders!"

CHAPTER 4.

Dorrie to the Rescue!

JUST a minute!" said Edgar Fenton sharply.

There was such authority in his tone that the workmen hesitated. The crowds of boys, who had commenced to look warlike, held themselves in check.

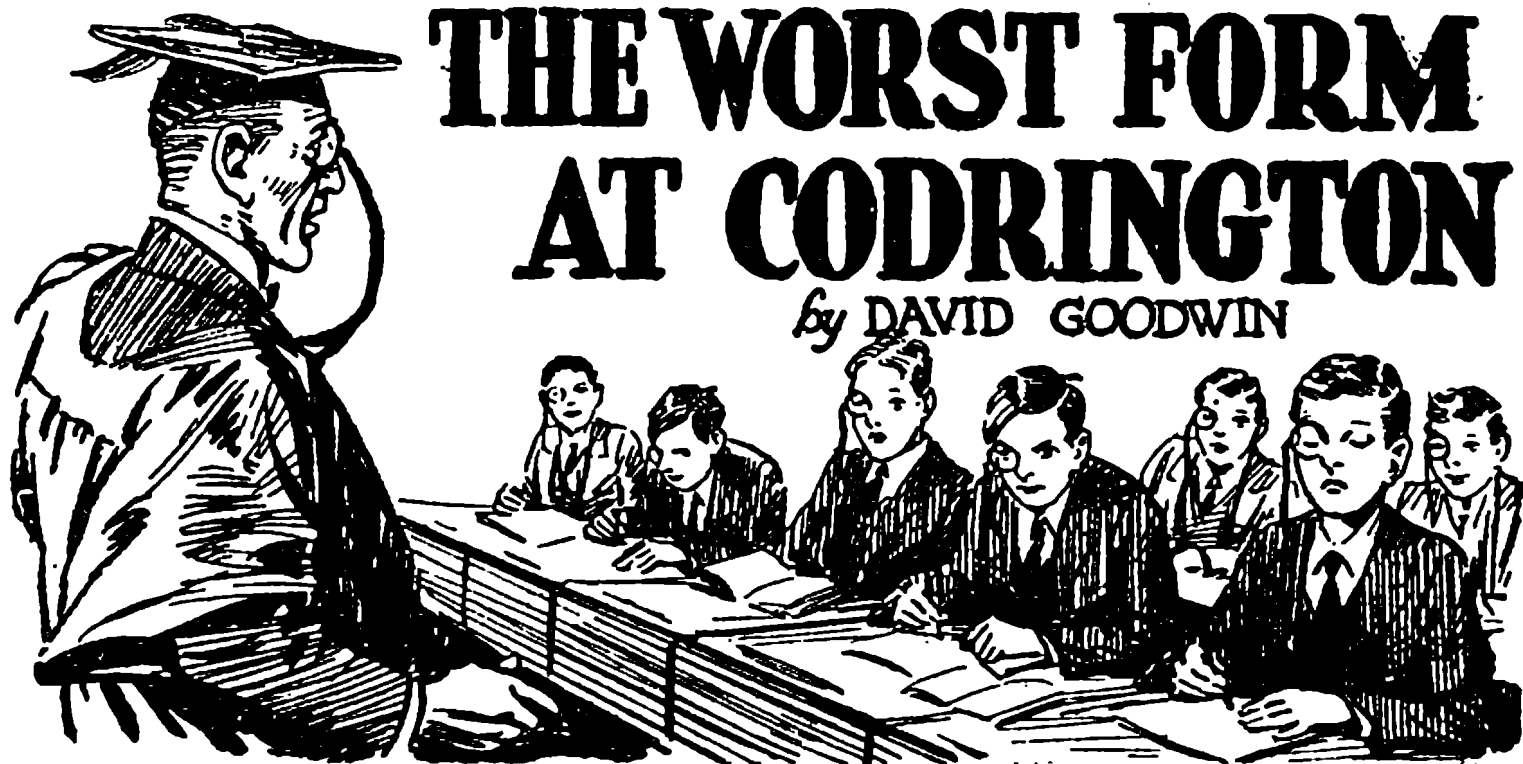
"How dare you?" asked Professor Ogleby, glaring at Fenton. "Are you presuming to countermand my orders——"

"No, sir," said Fenton. "But I feel it is only right that you should know what it will mean—if those men obey your instructions."

"What it will mean?" repeated the professor. "I confess I fail to understand you. I am your headmaster——"

"I know it, sir, and you can, perhaps, understand how acutely I feel my present position," said Fenton steadily. "As captain of the school, I have certain responsibilities and privileges. I am as anxious to maintain discipline as anybody in the school. But I am very much afraid that if these men go upon the field, it will result in a fight."

"You bet it will!" said Handforth with relish.



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"Good old Fenton!"

"Am I to understand that you are threatening to start a brawl?" asked Professor Ogleby loudly.

"It won't be a brawl, sir—it'll be a quick fight, and your men will undoubtedly get the worst of it," said Fenton. "We are practically three to one by this time. I hope you won't force the issue, sir. None of us has any ill feelings against these workmen, and——"

"Enough!" broke in the exasperated professor. "I declare that my patience is exhausted. Mr. Drummond, tell your men to begin work immediately."

Jim Purcell strode forward, and there was an almost resentful light in his eyes.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but we didn't come down here to fight school-boys," he said respectfully. "When we're free to go on this ground, we'll start work. We came here to excavate—not to fight."

"Are you—are you daring to disobey me?" asked the professor.

"I'm saying that me and my mates aren't prepared to fight these young gentlemen," replied Purcell. "As they say themselves, they've got no grudge against us—and we've got no grudge against them. It seems to me, sir, that you'd best settle this quarrel without us. When you're ready, we'll start work."

"Hurrah!"

"Three cheers for the workmen, you chaps!"

"Good egg!"

"Hurrah!"

The cheers were given with gusto, and Jim Purcell flushed. He would much rather be friendly with these boys than at enmity.

As for Professor Thorpe Ogleby, he clenched and unclenched his fists, and his beak-like face had gone almost white in his rage. So furious was he that when he tried to speak he could not frame the words. He gobbled, not unlike a turkey-cock.

"Calm yourself, sir," muttered Mr. Drummond, alarmed. "I beg of you, sir——"

"I am dumbfounded!" panted Professor Ogleby, finding words at last. "Am I mad, Mr. Drummond, or are these boys and these workmen mad? All this ridiculous fuss over a mere meadow! First the boys defy me, then Mr. Lee resigns the headmastership of the school, and now my own workmen, whom I especially engaged for this job, are refusing to obey orders!"

"No disrespect to you, sir——" began Purcell.

"Nonsense!" barked the Head. "How dare you say that it's no disrespect to me? You're merely repeating what these impertinent boys have said. Of course it is disrespect to me! I give you my orders, and you refuse to carry them out! Don't you call that disrespect? Well, I've had enough of it!"

He waved an imperious hand.

"You are all dismissed—all of you!" he went on furiously. "Mr. Drummond will give you your week's money, and you can go back home. I won't have men working for me who——"

"That's not fair on us," protested the foreman, with some heat. "We're special men, sir—picked men, as you might say. You engaged us for six weeks——"

"And now I dismiss you—on the first day!" snapped Professor Ogleby. "I repeat, I will not have men working for me who refuse to obey orders. Go! You are not under contracts, and a week's money in lieu of notice is all that you can demand."

"All right, sir," said Jim Purcell gruffly. "But it's an unfair trick, all the same. We didn't come down here to fight schoolboys!"

"Thanks awfully, you men," said Nipper. "This is fearful rough luck on you."

"Can't be helped, young gent," said Purcell. "It ain't your fault any more than it is mine."

All the men were looking a bit sick, and the boys felt exceedingly sorry for them. At the same time, they felt relieved. The menace, for the moment, was over.

"May I gently barge into this scene?" asked a voice.

Lord Dorrimore lounged up, as elegant and as cool as ever.

"Good-morning, professor! Good-morning, Mr. Drummond!" he said genially. "Glorious morning!"

"I am not interested in the morning, Lord Dorrimore," said Professor Ogleby, with asperity.

The workmen regarded Dorrie with new interest. They were impressed. Lord Dorrimore! Who had not heard of this famous sporting peer? Many of them had seen him before, and they liked him, too.

"I understand that you men are free?" asked his lordship, with a deliberate wink at Fenton and Nipper—which most of the other boys saw.

"Us, sir?" asked Jim Purcell. "Why, yes. We've just been sacked."

"It is entirely your own fault," said Professor Ogleby.

"Well, of course, that's a matter of opinion," said Lord Dorrimore. "I take it, professor, that you have no further use for these men?"

"No, I have not!"

"In that case I am glad," said Dorrie, turning back to Jim. "I think you're the foreman of the crowd—eh?"

"Yes, sir—I mean, yes, my lord."

"You can cut out the 'My lord' as soon as you like," said Dorrie amiably. "Now, you chaps are pretty expert at digging and building and all that sort of thing, eh?"

"Well, we're not ordinary labourers," replied Purcell. "The last job we were on was pretty tricky. We were working for four months on Trenton Abbey, restoring it, sir. It's specialised work, and that's why we were engaged for this excavation job."

"Splendid!" said Lord Dorrimore. "Just the men I want."

"Beg pardon, sir?"

"I'll engage the whole lot of you now, and I'll give you the same wages that you would have been getting from Professor Ogleby—and, what's more, I'll give you certain work for three months," said the millionaire peer coolly. "In Dorrimore Park—that's my estate in Derbyshire—there's an old, half-ruined chapel which badly needs restoring. I think you fellows can do the work quite well. It might take you longer than three months."

Jim Purcell's eyes were gleaming.

"Is this a real offer, sir?" he asked eagerly. "I mean, you ain't joking, are you, sir?"

"My dear fellow, what a thought!" said Dorrie. "Of course I'm not joking. You've lost your work here, so I'm providing you with a new job. I'm leaving this morning, anyhow, and as I'm going straight to my ancestral home, I might as well take you along with me. Only too glad to get hold of a bunch of men without all the tiresome formalities."

Professor Ogleby was breathing very hard.

"Stop!" he shouted, running forward. "I—I have changed my mind! I won't let you men go. Lord Dorrimore, I am astonished that you should act in so underhand a manner."

"Underhand!" ejaculated Dorrie, pained. "But, my dear sir, I have been perfectly open. Not three minutes ago you told me that these men were free."

"That's all right, sir; we're with you," said Jim Purcell, and the other men chorused their approval. "Sorry, sir," went on Jim, turning to the dismayed

professor. "We're all working for Lord Dorrimore now. We'll be getting along to the camp, sir, and pack up."

And the workmen, grinning happily, went off.

"By Heaven! You shall hear more of this!" exclaimed Professor Ogleby tensely. "I—I—— Come, Mr. Drummond! I am feeling positively ill!"

He strode off, looking the reverse of dignified, for his mortar-board had slipped sideways, and was resting at an acute angle on his head.

The boys, seniors and juniors, surrounded Lord Dorrimore.

"I say, sir, that was awfully sporting of you!" said Fenton gratefully.

"Eh? What was sporting?"

"To engage those men," said the school captain. "It was rough luck on them, losing their jobs. But we don't mind now, because we know they've got a better job. You only did it to help us, sir."

"Rubbish!" said Dorrie. "In fact, nonsense! Or, if you like, fiddlesticks! I need those men. For years I've been telling myself that I'd have that old chapel restored; and it's just about time I got busy on the job."

"Good old Dorrie!"

"You can't fool us!"

"Not likely!"

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

"Everything's all serene like this," chuckled Lord Dorrimore. "You boys are pleased, and those men are pleased—although I cannot say, with any truth, that Professor Ogleby strikes me as being pleased."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

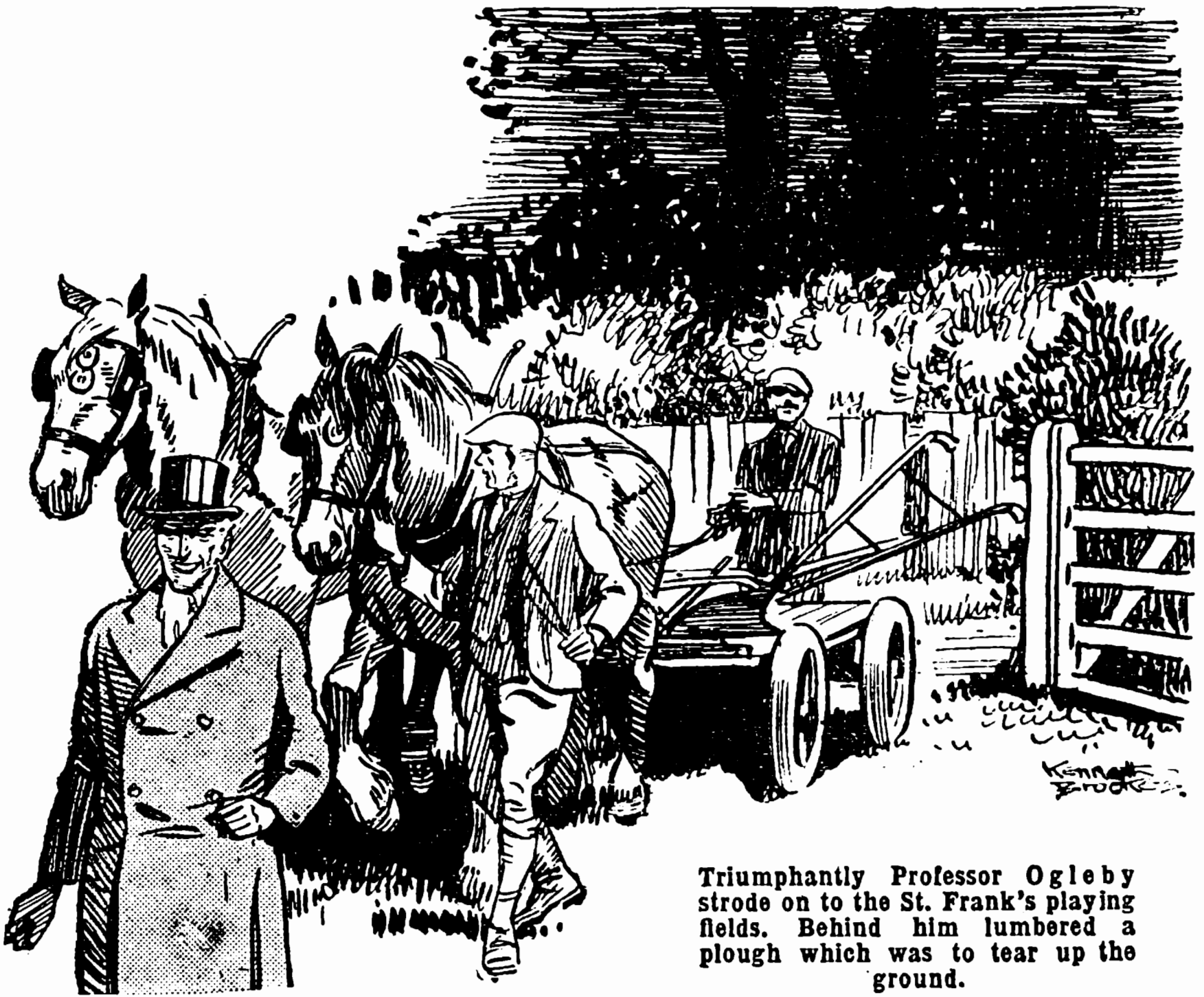
"I have half an idea that he is slightly annoyed," continued Dorrie dryly. "And between you and me and the goalposts, the sooner I fold up my tent and steal away, the better. After this, I don't think I shall be regarded as a very welcome guest."

"I say, we don't want to lose you, Dorrie!" said Nipper, with concern.

"That's all right. I was going this morning, anyhow," said his lordship, with a smile. "Honest Injun, you fellows. I feel the urge to seek fresh excitements. I shall probably go to the North Pole in a glider; or, on the other hand, I might attempt the Atlantic crossing on a pair of water-skates; or I might even visit the cannibals of unknown Papua."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come and see me before I go, young 'un," said Dorrie, pressing Nipper's arm. "Bring your pals, too. I've shifted my quarters since this trouble began, and I'm staying with Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes."



Triumphantly Professor Ogleby strode on to the St. Frank's playing fields. Behind him lumbered a plough which was to tear up the ground.

Lee's there, too, and we're both going up to town by the morning train. I fancy we shall leave St. Frank's in good hands—yours."

So the fellows returned to their Houses in the highest of spirits. Professor Thorpe Ogleby was stranded, and the playing fields were temporarily safe.

CHAPTER 5.

Mr. Wilkes Speaks His Mind!

LORD DORRIMORE caused general laughter at the Wilkes' breakfast-table when he gave an account of what had happened on Little Side.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes were the host and hostess, and their daughter, Vera, was frankly joyous as she listened.

"Oh, don't I wish I were a boy!" she said breathlessly, her pretty face glowing with eagerness, her eyes sparkling with vigorous health. "The chaps will have all the fun, dad! It's an awful pity I'm a girl!"

Mr. Wilkes coughed.

"You apparently forget, young lady, that you are talking to the senior House-master of this great college," he said severely. "When you talk about the boys having 'fun,' you mean that they will give your poor father an endless amount of trouble."

"Cheese it, daddy!" laughed Vera. "You can't spoof me! You're just as much on the boys' side as I am."

"The slang you pick up, darling, is too terrible!" murmured her mother.

But Vera only chuckled, and continued her breakfast.

"I must say, Dorrie, that you handled the whole affair rather well," said Nelson Lee amusedly. "Quite a master-stroke on your part, in fact, to bag the professor's special workmen."

Nelson Lee was rather concerned at the turn of affairs; but he was glad that he had resigned. Professor Ogleby himself was responsible now, and Lee was confident that the school would successfully stick up for its rights. So it was just as

well that he—Lee—should be out of the way for the time being.

"It might be a diplomatic move on my part to drop in on Professor Ogleby pretty soon," remarked Mr. Wilkes thoughtfully. "I'll just give him time to cool down. He may be proposing something startling, and he'll have to be restrained. He knows as much about controlling a big Public school as I know about archæology."

That old Wilkey was justified in his suspicions was evident from the heated conversation which was then proceeding in the headmaster's study. At least, it was more of a monologue than a conversation. Dr. Thorpe Ogleby was speaking, and Mr. James Drummond was listening.

"I'm tired, Mr. Drummond," said the Head, sitting in his chair, and mopping his brow. "I tell you candidly, I am utterly weary."

"I'm not surprised, sir," said Mr. Drummond. "You have done quite a lot of rushing about——"

"Try not to be a fool, Mr. Drummond, please!" interrupted the professor coldly.

"Really, sir——"

"When I say I am tired, I mean that I am tired of these wretched boys," went on Dr. Ogleby. "Physically, I am per-

fectly sound. I am aghast, sir, that these boys should defy me for so long. It is an unprecedented situation. And what am I to do? My whole project is at a standstill. Not a spade or a pickaxe has been used."

"And now we have lost our workmen," said Mr. Drummond.

"You needn't remind me of that," grunted the professor. "Lord Dorrimore acted quite outrageously in stealing my men away from me."

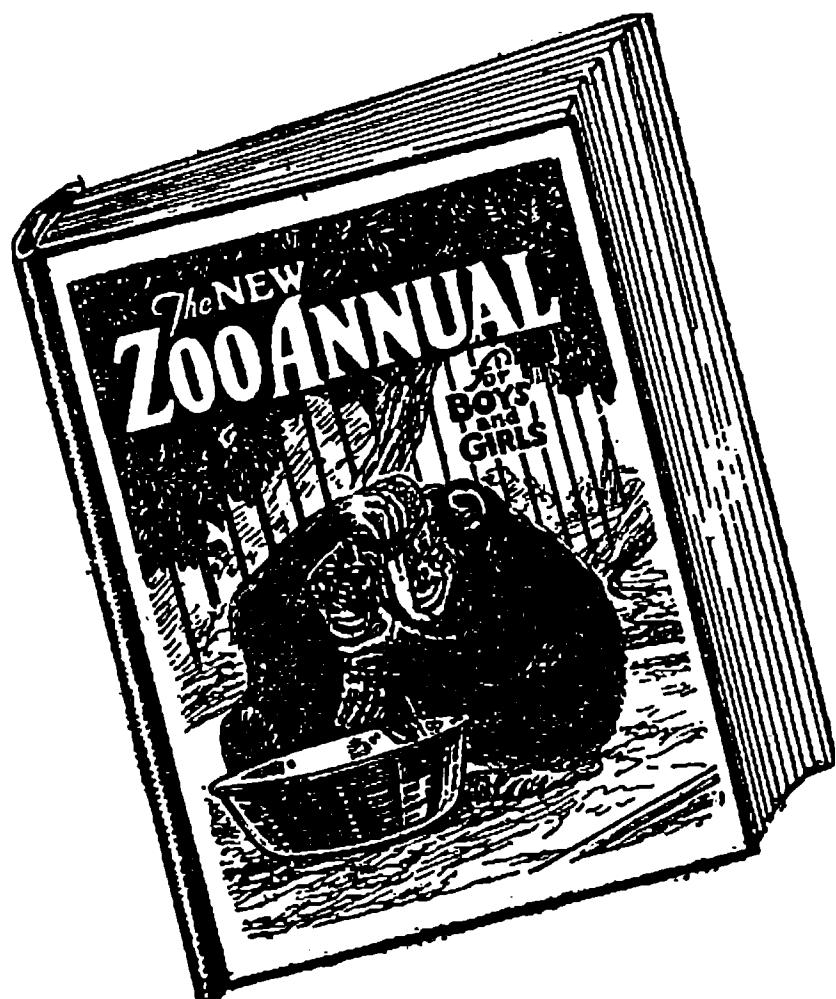
"But, after all, sir, you dismissed them——"

"And you know very well that I didn't mean it!" roared the professor, exasperated. "I was only trying to frighten them. Now we're at a deadlock. The whole position is ridiculous. Lord Dorrimore is just as mad as the boys, he sympathises with them in their insane attachment for those paltry meadows."

The professor rose to his feet, and paced up and down.

"I shall act at once," he continued, making up his mind. "There is only one thing for it, Mr. Drummond. Those two unfortunate, misguided boys shall be sent away. What are their names? Fenton and Hamilton. Yes. I shall send them away. They are the ringleaders, and

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once they have gone, the other boys will be easy enough to handle."

Mr. Drummond, who knew absolutely nothing about the control of the school, made no comment.

"I shall expel them!" said Professor Ogleby, with relish. "That is the correct word, Mr. Drummond. I shall expel them in disgrace. That, I think, will bring the whole school to its senses. What is the time? You don't know? I didn't expect you would."

He looked at his own watch, and nodded.

"In a very short time the whole school will be in Big Hall, for prayers," he went on. "An excellent opportunity! After prayers, I will have these two boys fetched upon the platform, and I will tell them of my decision—in the hearing of all the others. Yes, Mr. Drummond, I will show them who is master!"

"Don't you think, sir," ventured Mr. Drummond, "that it might be more diplomatic—"

"Well?" said the Head, as the other paused.

"Well, I mean, wouldn't it be better to wait for a while?" asked the little man. "We cannot commence operations yet, as we have no men. Why not let the school get over its excitement? The boys are reckless now."

"The expulsion of Fenton and Hamilton will have a subduing effect," said Professor Ogleby grimly. "Oh, yes! Boys need a strong hand, Mr. Drummond. You mustn't let them have their own way, or they will get completely out of hand. I know that much, at least."

A tap sounded on the door, and Mr. Alington Wilkes entered.

"Ah, Mr. Wilkes, I am glad you have come," said the professor briskly. "You are, I think, the senior Housemaster of this school?"

"That's true," admitted old Wilkey.

"I have decided to expel Fenton and Hamilton," said Dr. Ogleby. "They were the ringleaders in that disgraceful affair this morning, and expulsion, in my opinion, is the only fitting punishment for them."

Mr. Wilkes did not move a hair.

"Well, of course, it is the best possible thing you could do—"

"Splendid! I thought so!"

"If you want to start a rebellion."

"Eh?"

"Yes," said Mr. Wilkes. "You couldn't incite the school in a better way."

"A—a rebellion!" stammered Dr. Ogleby. "Good heavens! Do you realise what you are saying, sir?"

"I think so," said old Wilkey, with a shrug. "Do just as you like, of course, sir. You are the headmaster. But if you want to turn St. Frank's inside out and put an end to every scrap of discipline—well, go ahead with that plan."

He was glad that he had looked in. He had suspected that Professor Ogleby would get hold of some fantastic idea. And this one was certainly fantastic. Mr. Wilkes felt almost sorry for the professor. He was very much like a man who has been suddenly placed in charge of an enormous piece of machinery, which is going at top speed, and about which he does not know a thing.

Well, he deserved no sympathy. He had made it impossible for Nelson Lee to remain; and he had picked up the reins of control himself, thinking, evidently, that the school would placidly continue its usual routine whilst he dug up the playing fields to his heart's content. But the professor was encountering many unexpected snags.

"I cannot help thinking, Mr. Wilkes, that you have exaggerated the—er—danger," he said hesitantly. "You are, of course, in a better position to know these things than I. But these boys have transgressed seriously. Surely they should be punished?"

"Not by expulsion, which would be out of all proportion to their offence," replied old Wilkey. "Besides, when you come to analyse it, what is their offence? They are the senior and junior captains of sport, and they spoke only for the whole senior and junior school."

"But they are the ringleaders in this disgraceful affair."

"They acted as spokesmen, certainly," admitted Mr. Wilkes; "but that is all. As far as I have been able to see, the school is pretty well solidly behind them. Anyhow, professor, the fact remains that Fenton and Hamilton are regarded as heroes by ninety per cent. of the boys. If you expel them, nothing on earth can avert a rebellion."

CHAPTER 6.

A Shock for the Professor!

PROFESSOR THORPE OGLEBY was more than startled.

"A rebellion?" he repeated.

"Do you mean, sir, that the school will defy all authority and discipline?"

"I am afraid so."

"Then I am amazed," said the new Head coldly. "I can only assume that the discipline, as it stands at the moment, is incredibly lax."

"The discipline was tight enough whilst Mr. Lee was headmaster," said old Wilkey pointedly.

"Oh! What do you mean by that?"

"Well, if you want to know, Professor Ogleby, I must be quite frank and tell you that the boys regard you as an interloper."

"An interloper?" repeated Dr. Ogleby, aghast.

"I am afraid so."

"But I am the chairman of the board of governors!"

"It wouldn't matter much to the boys if you were the Shah of Persia," replied Mr. Wilkes dryly. "All they think about is that you have appointed yourself headmaster, and that you have attempted to deprive the school of its playing fields."

"But there are Roman remains buried beneath these fields," said the other. "They are of far more importance than the fields themselves. All this is most ridiculous, Mr. Wilkes!"

"Not in the eyes of the school," said the Housemaster. "You might just as well go into an Indian temple and lay hands on the gods of that temple. If the worshippers discovered you at it, you would be torn limb from limb. I am not suggesting that the St. Frank's boys will tear you limb from limb if you actually succeed in—er—desecrating the playing fields, but they will certainly give you a run for your money."

"Upon my soul, Mr. Wilkes, you are an extraordinary man!" said Dr. Ogleby, staring. "You are a Housemaster, and yet you say this. What of the other Housemasters?"

"None of us will be answerable for what happens if you expel Fenton and Hamilton," replied Mr. Wilkes. "You must understand, sir, that our sympathies are with those two boys. I, for one, shall resign if you go to such lengths. I can well believe that the other Housemasters will resign, too. You will create utter chaos. I urge you, therefore, to reconsider the whole matter, and, if possible, make some other arrangements regarding the Roman remains you are so anxious to unearth."

"That I shall not do," said the professor sharply. "I might let these boys off, but I am certainly not going to abandon my project. Never, sir!"

Mr. Wilkes shrugged.

"That, of course, is for you to decide," he said. "I can only say that we look like having some lively times."

He took his departure, and Professor Thorpe Ogleby, who had liked Mr. Wilkes very much at first, now considered that Mr. Wilkes was a foolish alarmist, and a man lacking in his sense of duty.

BIG HALL was humming with subdued excitement.

Prayers were over, but there had been no dismissal. It meant that the new headmaster was going to address the school. And the school, which had expected some sort of sequel after that affair of the morning, waited tensely and eagerly.

Professor Ogleby, when he came on the platform, was looking quietly dignified. He had recovered his temper, and he had decided upon his course of action. He would be strong. He would show the boys that he was not only capable of controlling the school, but that he was a man of his word.

"There is a matter of some importance which I have to speak upon," said the professor, impressed by the awed hush which fell as he advanced towards the edge of the platform. "In the early hours of this morning, a very disgraceful scene took place on the junior playground."

"Oh, my hat!" came a groan from Handforth, audible to all. "He calls Little Side a playground!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am going to say as little as possible about that unfortunate incident," continued the professor, speaking more loudly. "Two boys, one a responsible senior, and the other a misguided junior, behaved—well, I will put it mildly, and say that they were hasty. I have decided, after due consideration, to let the whole matter drop."

"My hat! He's not such a bad old sort, after all!"

"Good old professor!"

"Rats!" murmured Handforth. "He's getting scared of us, that's all!"

"Does he mean that he's abandoned his wheeze altogether?"

"Silence!" shouted the prefects. "Silence!"

"I am still of the opinion that the school has disgraced itself," continued Dr. Ogleby. "I have come to the conclusion that St. Frank's is sports mad, and that, of course, is lamentable. I do not wonder that the country is going into a rapid decline."

(Continued on page 24.)

Special Bright and Breezy Summer Number.



HANDFORTH'S Weekly

No. 20. Vol. 1.

LATEST NEWS

from the seaside resorts.

By REGGIE PITT.

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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

September 5th, 1931.

MY HOLIDAYS

St. Frank's celebrities
tell how they enjoyed
themselves.

Crawlingdene. The Town Council have provided several brand-new bath-chairs for the use of residents, and the chairmen are experienced men who seldom allow a chair to run over the cliffs. No more than three fatalities of this nature have occurred during the whole of this season.

Orville Slowe. The number of visitors this year has beaten all previous records. If it goes on increasing at this rate, the number of visitors in the town will soon reach double figures.

Newbourne. This is the latest seaside place to spring up, and consists of three most excellent bungalows and a fried fish shop. There are many attractions in the "town." For instance, on the cliffs there is a glorious oak tree said to be nearly two hundred years old. At the foot of the cliffs, and butting out on the sands, is an ancient groyne, covered with many fine specimens of barnacles. During the time of the full moon the promenade is very well lighted.

Wildfun-on-Sea. At last the municipal council have responded to the need of attractions upon the sea front, and have installed a very beautiful hokey-pokey barrow on the promenade. The sands at this delightful place stretch for miles, and if they weren't entirely covered with stones, to a depth of about four feet, bathing would be highly enjoyable. The council have, however, engaged an old man to throw the stones back to sea with a fire shovel.

Mudford. The pier has now been extended to a length of two miles and a quarter. Upon the end of the pier the council have affixed a large telescope, through which, on clear days, it is possible to view the sea.

Rainard-at-Sea. The weather here is glorious. The sun was visible for a few minutes at five o'clock yesterday evening.

Watt Hope. The town is closed to visitors temporarily as the only hotel has collapsed. Visitors who have stayed at this hotel in past seasons will be delighted to hear the news.

Timothy Tucker. I am happy to state that my respected father took me to the British Museum in the vacation, and permitted me to spend my time with the mummies in the Egyptian Room. The consequence was I experienced a highly enjoyable time, and my knowledge of mummies has been greatly increased. (If you had my father, my lad, your knowledge of daddies would also be increased—E. O. H.)

Clarence Fellowe. What did I do in the holiday? Well, first I went to Pebble Bay to swim about within the sea with a highly amusing company. This, of course, is an awful lark, unless by chance you see a shark, which fills you full of awe and dread—(Oh, cheese it, and go back to bed!—E. O. H.)

Vivian Travers. What did I do in the holiday? Crossword puzzles, of course. (You be careful that you don't carry this unhealthy excitement too far.—E. O. H.)

Mr. Suncliffe. I played cricket every day for eight weeks. It was a very nice holiday, but I should have liked a little more cricket with it. (By George, some people are never satisfied!—E. O. H.)

Archie Glenthorne. Begad, I don't really know much about the subject, don't you know. I went to sleep at the beginning of the vac., and Phipps woke me up at the end of it. Ask Phipps. He can tell you.

Phipps. Mr. Glenthorne spent his eight weeks' vacation in a short nap. Thank you, sir.

Ulysses Adams. I spent my goldurned holiday in London, watching the motors come up one way and go down the other. Aw, gee! Way over in the—(Yes, yes, yes! We know all about the Yewnited States.—E. O. H.)

(Cornelius Trotwood's account of his holiday will be published in the Christmas Number. We shall have made him understand the question by then.)

E. O. Handforth as a child—he was scream!**The Editor's Life Story.**

This is what happened in last week's instalment of my thrilling Life Story. When I was eighteen months' old my nurse left me for a moment on Clarence Pier, at Southsea, and I followed a lady on to the Isle of Wight boat. Now read on:

WHEN we were half a mile out at sea, the lady suddenly dived in her bag and produced a ham sandwich.

"Here, Johnny, eat this," she said, passing it over to me.

"Thank you, madam," said I, grabbing it quickly.

She looked up, and when she saw me her eyes went as big as the portholes on the boat.

"My child!" she screamed. "You are not my precious Johnny! What has happened to my son?"

I didn't reply, because my mouth was full of sandwich. But the ticket inspector came along, and she grabbed his arm.

"What has happened to my boy?" she yelled.

The inspector pointed to me.

"Why, there he is," said he.

"That little monster!" shrilled the lady wildly. "How dare you say that hideous little wretch is my son?"

"Here, cheese it, ma'am!" I exclaimed, gobbling sandwich.

"Put the boat back!" she yelled, jumping up. "My only son has been left at Southsea. Go back this moment."

With that she seized her umbrella and tore up to the bridge, where the captain was standing with his field-glasses under his arm.

"Turn the boat back!" she screamed.

But the captain wouldn't oblige, so the lady raised her gamp and smote him on the top-knot.

Whack, whack, whack!

Then up came the purser and a couple of sailors, and they hauled her down below. The captain was a sight for sore eyes. He



That's me, watching—E. O. H.

had a red nose, a thick ear, and his cap was smashed over his head. I gurgled with delight, which only seemed to make the gent more wrathful.

As soon as he had gone below to get a wash and brush up, I decided to have a look round the bridge. The first thing I saw was a long string, and I started to play with it. I was only playing in a harmless way, like any baby might do; but, by George! in five minutes I had every man jack on board the ship round me.

You see, I got tangled up in the rope, and I couldn't undo myself. So I gave it a hard jerk—and I nearly fell off the boat. For right above my head a tremendous booming sound roared out. I had got tangled in the rope of the siren, and there was the old boat hooting away like mad.

A dozen sailors rushed up and tried to stop the din; but I was so wound up in the beastly rope that they couldn't get me out. At last they cut the rope, and then the captain caught hold of me firmly.

"Jenkins," he said, turning to a sailor, "give me a rope's end, and place this little imp face downwards across that locker."

Two minutes later, dear readers, everybody on the sea thought the siren had started again. But, needless to say, it was only me hooting this time.

(To be continued.)

SEASIDE

If all the stones put in a railway would think they were

Chubby Heath's face before he goes will be taken for a

We still hear the Canute commanded back when he got people now think the to swim the Channel, better of it at the last

The extraordinary last week was caused there were too many in the sea at once.

Touching old King we don't think here very commanding easy to make the sea know the way. Let He said, "Roll on, blue ocean—roll!" if the ocean didn't do

The latest sticks of little holes bored in This is so that you c with dynamite before

380,972 people were end last Saturday. must all have travel train as I did.

A learned professor the task of counting stones on Brighton balmy, obviously.

LISTEN TO

Afternoon Program Winklebay

Happy Days are

Sonny

Happy Days are

Sonny

Sunny Days are

Happy

Happy Days are

Sonny

SEASIDE APARTMENTS VACANT.

BUGVILLE-ON-SLOSH. "Gasworks Villa." Delightful board-residence. All windows face the gasworks. Only 50 minutes from sea (by taxi). Picture of Uncle Ben in the front parlour. Electric light next door. Terms up to 5 guineas per week (higher, if possible). Prop.: Mrs. Visage.

STONYHAMPTON. "Hardupp Villa." Vacant (as usual) for immediate visitors. Terms 3 guineas, with attendance (if the servant takes back her month's notice). No I.O.U.'s accepted. Sea immediately opposite; at high tide sea sometimes in drawing-room. Write to Mr. Skinnem.

BRIGHTHAVEN. "Hotel de Splendide." 160 rooms. Dining-hall, smoking-room, lounge, ladies' lounge, writing-room, library, palm-room, conservatory, magazine-room, reception rooms, card-room, dancing room, grill room, etc. Guests have to sleep out because the builder forgot to put in any bed-rooms. Terms from 80 guineas per week, not including tips to 1,751 servants.

BROKE-ON-ROCKS. For the convenience of visitors, in the second week of their fortnight's holiday, Otto Dinkerweiser (Scotch), pawnbroker, will remain open till 8 p.m. each night.

NOTES.

Sandhaven were
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Here Again.

Boy.

Here Again.

Boy.

Here Again.

Boy.

Here Again.

Boy.

SITTING ON THE SANDS.

By ARCHIE GLENTHORNE.

WHEN you are on holiday at the seaside, old lads, there's nothing to beat a comfy deckchair on the sands and a number one brand snooze. What is better than to fall into the deep and dreamless, wafted by a lullaby of murmuring voices and the roar of the gurgling waves as they tinkle over the golden sand? Dashed poetic—what?

But, if you understand what I mean, that's all right in theory, so to speak; but it doesn't work out in practice. Absolutely not.

You squat down in the chair, and the next minute you're half up to your tonsils in sand where some blighter has dug a yawning chasm behind you. And, of course, the bally chair has collapsed and trickled you into it.

You pick yourself up, straighten out ye chair, and once more wrap it round your classic figure; and, just as the old eye is winking for the thirty-ninth time, and you're on the point of taking a nose-dive into the land of dreams, some frightful lad, with jam plastered over his face, oozes up and wants to know the time.

You drag out your watch and tell him, "Ten to three," and then a cove wanders up and tries hard to sell you hokey-pokey at 2d. a lump. You snort a bit, and twitch

the old eyebrows, and tell the sportsman that you don't want any hocus-pocus, or whatever it is. The cove toddles away, and you relax once more.

Two minutes later back comes the child.

"Did you say ten to three or ten past three, mister?" says the infant.

You give the child a dark look and the necessary informash. You're just dozing off again when he returns and wants to know whether you said three past ten or ten past three. You haul out the good old timepiece and tell him three o'clock. Then he says that you told him it was ten to three before. You say: "Yes; but that was ten minutes ago, don't you know, I mean." Finally, the dashed lad goes away with the idea that you're a dotty fibber who can't tell the time.

Once more you sink back, you feel the good old dreamless closing over your optics, when a sailor hauls into port and bawls out:

"Any more for the Mary Ann. A nice trip round the 'eadland. Only a bob! Just starting!"

The sailor continues to bellow like this for the rest of the afternoon, so there's nothing for it but to throw the deckchair at him and go back to the hotel.

HOLIDAY HINTS.

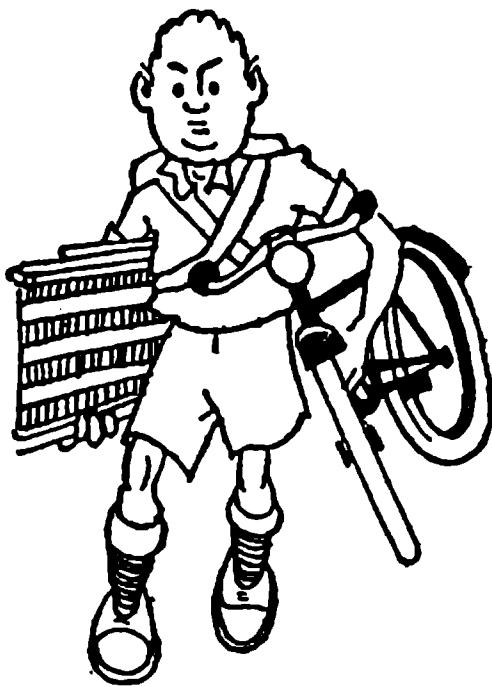
By VIVIAN TRAVERS.

THERE are so many different ways of enjoying your holidays that I can mention only one or two. But you can be sure this advice is worth having. The knowledge in this article has been won by bitter experience, and is worth its weight in coal.

When going on a picnic be sure you take a copy of Professor Thickedd's "Rare Insects of the British Isles." It is so nice, when an insect stings you, to turn it up in the book and say: "Three cheers, boys! I've just been stung by a Greater Bull-Necked Turtle Fly."

And you will want to find out the names of the strange insects that drop into your ginger-pop. Some of them might be very rare. Could you ever forgive yourself if you swallowed a red-spotted horn wasp? (P.S.—Insects should never be killed unless they are breaking the law. You are not allowed to squash a glowworm if it is wearing a rear-light.)

Here's a tip when you are out swimming. If you get into deep water, and see a black triangular fin coming towards you, it is



The hiker sets out.

generally considered lucky to turn round and break all speed records back to the shore.

Cricket on the sands is a jolly pastime, but before starting your game it is advisable to read up the sand-cricket rules issued by the M.C.C. (Mudlark Cricket Club). Some of the most important rules are as follows:

Rule 19. If long-on or square-leg is carried out to sea by the tide the fielding side shall be allowed to find substitutes.

Rule 26. If a batsman, in striking at the ball, hits a jellyfish by mistake and is bowled, the umpire shall signal j.b.w.—jellyfish before wicket.

Rule 30. If the ball shall strike a lady sitting in a deckchair, it shall count four to the batsman. If the lady is stunned by the ball, it shall count six.

Rule 41. If the umpire is hit by a tidal wave, there will be an interval of five minutes to celebrate it.

Here is an essential hint for hikers. Before going hiking, don't forget to purchase the necessary equipment. A good bicycle, a large deckchair, and an interesting book will meet the case.

THE SPOIL-SPORT OF ST. FRANK'S

(Continued from page 20.)

"Who says it is, sir?" shouted somebody.

"Hear, hear!"

"England's not done yet!"

"No fear!"

"Never say die!"

"I—er—had no intention of making this a patriotic meeting," said Professor Ogleby sarcastically. "We are not discussing England, or Great Britain, or the Empire, but the meadows which are attached to the school, and which you have been using for some time for the purpose of playing football and other games."

"For some time!" yelled Handforth. "For centuries, you mean, sir!"

"It has been discovered that those meadows hold, beneath them, buried I do not know how deep, the remains of a once-noble Roman camp, or city," continued Professor Ogleby, warming to his subject. "Boys, boys! Why will you not agree to help me in this great work? St. Frank's will become the most famous spot in the whole country if you will only be reasonable. People will flock here in their thousands to see this Roman camp, which I intend to restore."

"But we don't want people flocking here, sir."

"We want our playing fields!"

"Hear, hear!"

There was such an uproar that the great archæologist, waxing enthusiastic, lost some of his fire.

"Owing to that wretched affair this morning I have no workmen, and so there must be a delay," he went on. "I shall reconsider the whole matter, but, in the meantime, the playing fields will remain out of bounds."

"What!"

"Oh, I say, sir!"

"What about our footer practice?" yelled Handforth. "We've got two House matches this week, and a League match on Saturday! How are we going to practise?"

"Draw it mild, sir!"

The uproar subsided as the professor held up his hand.

"I will tell you why the playing fields are out of bounds," he shouted angrily. "This demonstration has convinced me, more than ever, that sports are harmful. They are taking up far more of your time than lessons. All you think of is football and cricket and other sports! Well, all that is now over."

There was a tense hush, like the lull before the storm.

"You need not be so deeply concerned about your playing fields, because you will never need them again," continued the Head. "Whether they are dug up, or whether they are allowed to become a wilderness, makes little or no difference. I am so appalled by the sports craze which has gripped you all that I have decided to prohibit all games."

He expected the school to be stunned. It was, but not in quite the way he anticipated. He regarded his decision as a master-stroke. For, once the school realised that games were completely forbidden, what necessity was there to worry about the fate of the playing fields?

It was all right in theory, but in practice it was like the bursting of a charge of dynamite.

There was complete silence at first, then a low, excited murmur which suddenly burst forth into a veritable tornado of excited shouting.

"No games!" gasped Handforth. "No football!"

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!"

"He's mad!"

"If he thinks we'll stand this, he's off his rocker!"

"By Jove, rather!"

"Down with Professor Ogleby!"

"Yah! Spoil-sport!"

"Boc-boo!"

Somebody started it, and in less than ten seconds Big Hall was resounding to such booing and hooting as had never been heard before. The prefects did not even attempt to silence the commotion. They knew that it was beyond them; and, besides, they were hot with anger themselves. The masters stood helpless; and Dr. Ogleby, on the platform, felt his knees almost knocking together.

"Silence!" he roared. At least, he meant to roar; but his voice sounded like a cracked whisper in his own ears. He ran so precipitately towards the edge of the platform that he nearly tumbled over. "Wait—wait!" he shouted hoarsely.

"We want our playing fields!"

"Hear, hear!"

"You can't stop football!"

"Not likely!"

Mr. Wilkes, looking on, expected that the various Forms would break ranks at any moment; and if that happened there would be pandemonium. It would be open rebellion. The other Housemasters were too startled to do anything, but old Wilkey, with one bound, reached the platform.

"Steady, now!" he sang out. "That's about enough, you fellows!"

The effect was magical. The uproar

ceased, and the school, breathing hard, waited.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, making all that noise," said Mr. Wilkes accusingly. "I'm sure that Professor Ogleby did not mean what he said."

"No, of course not!" gasped the professor. "I was merely—er—applying a—er—test."

"I thought so," said old Wilkey smoothly.

"I have no real intention of prohibiting games and sports," continued the professor. "Good gracious, no! You may continue your games and sports to your hearts' content. And I may as well say, also, that I have reconsidered my decision, and the playing fields are no longer out of bounds."

"Oh!"

It was a long breath of relief and triumph. It came from every Form, and Professor Ogleby, as he heard it, writhed.

"I—I shall make new plans," he said, almost feebly. "Yes, new plans. You may have your playing fields—you may use them as you like. And now you had better dismiss."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Wilkey!"

"Three cheers for Professor Ogleby!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The school went crowding out of Big Hall, and Professor Thorpe Ogleby, staggering through the doorway at the back of the platform, went unsteadily into the apartment which was known as the governors' room. He was thankful that none of the other masters had accompanied him. He sank down and mopped the cold perspiration on his brow.

"Good heavens!" he muttered. "I really owe Mr. Wilkes an apology. He is not such a fool as I thought. I do believe the school was on the point of open revolt. Horrible—horrible!"

After he had recovered slightly, he was fully conscious of the lamentable exhibition he had given. Weakly, feebly, he had knuckled under. What would the school think of him?

He groaned. By seniors and juniors and masters he would be held in contempt. Instead of displaying that strength he had boasted about, he had given way at the first blast of the school's wrath!

He was appalled because it was so incomprehensible to him. When he had come to St. Frank's he had not anticipated any trouble at all. The playing fields? Pough! What would the boys care, anyway, after their first pang of disappointment? But he was finding out that the boys did care—and, what was

more, that the boys were prepared to fight for those playing fields!

Slowly Professor Ogleby recovered his strength and nerve; his brain began to function normally. Ideas came to him.

"Perhaps it is just as well," he muttered. "I hate to adopt any scheme which might be termed underhand, but the boys have driven me to it. They think I am beaten, do they? By heaven, they will soon know differently! Nothing shall stop me from uncovering those priceless relics of ancient Rome!"

CHAPTER 7.

Ready for an Emergency!

"HURRAH!"

"We've won!"

"Down with the professor!"

Out in the Triangle, the juniors were shouting and cheering. The seniors had gone off to their own various quarters, highly satisfied, but rather shocked at the whole undignified affair.

"Poor old boy, I'm almost sorry for him," said Nipper, with regret.

"Sorry for Ogleby?" asked Handforth, staring.

"Yes."

"But the man's a lunatic!"

"All the more reason we should be sorry for him then," said Nipper. "But you're wrong, Handy. Professor Thorpe Ogleby is one of the most brilliant men in the country. His brain is as sound as a bell. He is a kindly, generous man. That's what makes it so beastly hard."

"Generous?" asked Church. "He's got a funny way of showing his generosity!"

"First and last he is an archæologist," said Nipper. "It's just a matter of proportion. Everything else, in the professor's view, is of scarcely any importance at all. But we've given him a jolt this morning. At last he realises that the school is in earnest, and after this things might be better."

"I regret to say, my dear Nipper, that I cannot agree with you," said Timothy Tucker, the bespectacled firebrand of the West House. "In no circumstances can the situation be regarded as better when it is quite clear that there is to be no revolt."

"Poor old T.T.!" grinned Nipper. "You love revolts, don't you?"

"I am no advocate of violence," replied T.T. coldly. "But I hold that any rebellion against the ruling classes is for the good of the masses."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Handforth impatiently.

"Really, Handforth, I shall do no such thing," said Timothy Tucker. "Dear, dear! Do you realise that coke is quite uneatable? But to return to the argument. Professor

Ogleby is representative of the ruling classes; we are representative of the masses. I should have liked it much better if the school had broken into open revolt, in Big Hall. We should have swept the autocrat out of the school."

"Ass! We didn't want to hurt the professor!"

"Every school should be run on co-operative lines!" shouted T.T., his eyes gleaming behind his big spectacles. "That is the ideal, my friends. Why have masters at all? The boys of any school, providing the system was right, could get along much better without being constantly ground under the heel of the autocratic masters. Now, I have a proposition——"

"So have I!" yelled Handforth. "Grab him, you chaps! He needs cooling off, and the fountain pool is handy."

"Help!" shrieked T.T. wildly.

He bolted, and a roar of laughter followed him.

"I thought that would bring his eloquence to a full stop," grinned Handforth. "Not that he was far wrong," he added thoughtfully. "It's rather a pity we didn't have a revolt."

"Never mind; we've scored a big triumph, dear old fellow," said Travers complacently. "Professor Ogleby is dished and diddled and done. What more do we want?"

Morning lessons were more or less disturbed that day. None of the boys could get down properly to work. However, the Form-masters were unusually patient. The general feeling was that Professor Ogleby had overstepped the mark, and that after this he would be easily handled. He was tamed.

Immediately after lessons Nipper sent round a "general call" throughout the Junior School. As a result there was almost a full meeting of the Remove and Fourth in the Ancient House lecture hall soon afterwards.

"What's the idea of this?" asked Corcoran of the Fourth. "What's this meeting for?"

"If you'll be patient, I'll tell you," said Nipper. "Everybody here?" he added briskly. "Good!"

Others were crowding in, but the rest of his audience was growing impatient.

"It seems to be pretty well taken for granted that Professor Ogleby is finished," said Nipper. "Well, I don't think——"

"So he is!"

"We've won!"

"Nothing to worry about now!"

"Just as I thought," said Nipper, nodding. "The seniors are just as bad. They're crowing all over the Upper School. The ban has been taken off the playing-fields, and everything is all serene. That's the talk that's going round. But don't you believe it, my sons!"

"Eh?"

"What are you getting at, Nipper?"

"The professor is a determined man—that's what I'm getting at," said Nipper. "He's not the kind of man to give in."

"But he has given in, you ass!"

"Temporarily, yes," admitted Nipper. "What else could he do? He had to knuckle under to prevent a revolt. Besides, he hasn't any men for his excavation work now."

"He won't dare to get any more, either," said Castleton.

"That remains to be seen," replied Nipper. "I may be wrong, but I'm suspicious. I've got a hunch that something will happen to our playing-fields if we don't watch out."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But he daren't!"

"We should spot it at once if he tried any monkey business!"

"So we should—in the daytime," said Nipper significantly. "Call me an idiot if you like, but I believe that the old boy is merely playing for time."

"Great Scott!"

"There's something in it, dear old fellows," remarked Travers. "Anyhow, it wouldn't do any harm to take a few safeguards."

"That's just the point," said Nipper, nodding. "Safeguards! Do you remember the trouble we had with Amos Whittle of Bannington? That business about the Half-Mile Meadow? We instituted vigilance committees then; and it seems to me that a vigilance committee is called for now. The whole position is different, but if we don't take steps to guard Little Side, we shall wake up one morning and find that the professor has stolen a march on us."

"Oh, crumbs!"

The fellows were impressed; Nipper's hints alarmed them.

"You'll remember that the old chap merely removed the ban," continued Nipper. "He's got a breathing space—and it's my belief that he's planning something pretty big. He didn't say anything about keeping his hands off the playing-fields, did he?"

"By George, no!" said Handforth breathlessly.

"We've got to consider the possibilities," said Nipper. "Professor Ogleby has found that he can't do much in the daytime, so he'll try to catch the school on the hop—by night! We've got to get busy!"

The Remove and the Fourth, realising the gravity of the situation, got busy.

THE seniors were not brought into the scheme at all.

True, Fenton and his stalwarts had rallied round splendidly in the early morning. The juniors were very proud of Edgar Fenton. His quiet, dignified strength had saved the situation.

There was really no need for him to be bothered with this vigilance committee stunt. The juniors felt that they could manage quite well by themselves—and they would be more free and easy. Also, if any scrapping took place, the fewer seniors on the scheme the better.

"Better not have them in it," Nipper had said. "Some of them are prefects, and they'll frown pretty heavily when we suggest slipping out of doors after lights-out. It's a pretty serious offence, you know. Besides, it would be risky to tell them anything."

"How risky?" somebody had asked.

"They might consider our fears groundless," replied Nipper. "Then the prefects would put their foot down hard, and they'd jolly well see that we didn't break bounds. So we should defeat our own object by telling the seniors. No, we'll keep it to ourselves."

That night, as eleven o'clock was striking, silent activities commenced in many of the junior dormitories. In all four Houses boys were quietly getting dressed. Two dozen of them—six from each House.

It had all been carefully planned. These Removites and Fourth-Formers would remain on guard for two hours—until one a.m. Then they would be relieved by a similar crowd, who would stay on duty until three—and so on. In this way, the playing fields would be kept under constant observation.

Spies had been out, too—for Nipper had organised a careful intelligence department. Two of these agents brought interesting information.

Professor Ogleby had gone out at 10.30, and had vanished down the road towards the village. But the professor had not reached the village. Somewhere down Bellton Lane he had vanished—and it was very mysterious. What was the meaning of the old archæolo-



Professor Ogleby was startled to find himself surrounded by a number of sinister-looking, cowled figures. "We are the Hooded Protectors!" rumbled a deep voice.

gist's night jaunt? The fellows could not help feeling that there was something fishy about it.

By ten past eleven the various units had collected in the pitchy darkness of Little Side, which was wet with dew. It was a black night, with scarcely any stars, and it was mild for the time of the year.

"What's the programme now?" whispered Buster Boots of the Modern House.

"Nothing much," replied Nipper. "We'll post ourselves round the playing fields—so many yards apart. You know the plan. All we've got to do, then, is to wait and watch

—and listen. If nothing has happened by one o'clock, half of us will go in to rout out the relief. The other half will go in when the relief arrives. Is that all clear?"

"Yes, rather!" murmured a number of voices.

"Good enough! Get to your places, then."

The black, shadowy figures vanished into the night.

CHAPTER 8.

Dirty Work!

THAT the juniors' precautions were justified was soon to be proved to the hilt.

Nipper had not been far wrong in his suspicions; in fact, he had been dead right. Professor Thorpe Ogleby, during that day, had had plenty of time to think—plenty of time to recover his normal composure. And, having recovered it, he had decided to take action.

His first step had been to make casual inquiries in the village; he had sent Mr. Drummond on this errand. Mr. Drummond had returned to report that there was a farm comparatively near at hand owned by a certain Mr. Jeremiah Holt.

In the afternoon, whilst the school was at lessons, Dr. Ogleby had interviewed Farmer Holt; and Farmer Holt, who was an unpleasant man in many ways, was pleasant enough with the professor. Mr. Holt had a permanent grudge against the St. Frank's juniors; they were frequently running over his property, and annoying him. He fell in wholeheartedly with the scheme which Professor Ogleby outlined.

Now, between half-past ten and eleven at night, the professor, well booted, trudged across the meadows towards the old farmhouse. Before he arrived there he encountered Mr. Drummond, who had been making preliminary arrangements.

"Well?" asked the professor eagerly.

"Everything is ready, sir," replied Mr. Drummond. "The men are waiting."

"Good!" breathed the other. "Splendid! I rather think, Mr. Drummond, that we are being quite clever in this little matter, eh?"

Mr. Drummond was silent.

"Don't you think so?" asked the professor.

"Well, since you insist, sir, I must say that I look upon the whole business with great distaste," said Mr. Drummond uncomfortably. "It savours of—well, of trickery. It is so underhand. I cannot help feeling that we are taking a most unfair advantage of the boys."

"Nonsense!"

"I mean, this working by night——"

"We are working by night, sir, because the boys themselves have made it so difficult for us to work by day," interrupted the professor curtly. "Who is to blame? Why am I forced to adopt this trickery? Good gracious, Drummond, are we to be foiled by these wretched boys?"

"I don't think you like the plan much yourself, sir," said Mr. Drummond quietly.

"H'm! Perhaps you're right," admitted

the professor. "Perhaps I don't. But that doesn't alter the fact that it's got to be done. Confound the boys! This wretched business worries me! Still, what else can we do?"

"Yes, what else?" murmured the other regretfully.

Both these men were honest to a degree. It certainly did go against the grain to act as they were acting now.

But the professor, at least, consoled himself with the thought that what he was doing was in no way dishonourable. He was the headmaster of St. Frank's, he was also the Chairman of the Governors, and the Governors had decided that the playing fields should be opened up, so that those old Roman remains should be exposed. So everything was straightforward and above-board. The boys had chosen to oppose the professor. Well, it was up to him to show them that he was quite ready to beat them.

It would all be very simple. By the time they returned to the school everybody would be sound asleep. It would be midnight. Professor Ogleby steeled himself, and became grim. He remembered his humiliation—and that gave him strength. Never again would the boys treat him with such insolence!

Walking on towards Holt's Farm, the two archæologists came to a meadow where a number of figures were to be seen. There was a faint chink of harness now and again.

"Who's that?" came a gruff inquiry.

"It is I, Mr. Holt," said Professor Ogleby. "Is everything ready?"

"Why, yes, sir," said Farmer Holt, merging out of the gloom. "I've got my men here, the ploughs are fixed on those special carriages, and the horses are harnessed. We can start as soon as you like."

"Good!" murmured the professor. "You are quite sure that these ploughs will not make any creaking noises?"

"Not a sound—they're all oiled thoroughly," said the farmer.

During the afternoon he had had two or three men busy on the preparation of special carriages for the ploughs—with rubber-tyred wheels. Normally a plough being pulled along a country lane makes a clattering and squeaking; but these would be virtually silent. And silence was an important factor. Professor Ogleby had no desire to be disturbed in the night.

As for Farmer Holt, he was ready enough to go through with this novel ploughing scheme. He was being paid very highly—and he was giving his men special money, too.

"Now I want you all thoroughly to understand that there is nothing whatever wrong about this," said the professor, addressing the ploughmen.

"No, sir!" they chorused, touching their forelocks.

"Certain of the junior boys have seen fit to stir up trouble," continued the Head. "There is, indeed, some danger of an open revolt. That is why this work is being done in the night."

"I dunno as we'll be able to plough straight furrows, sir," said one of the men.

"That doesn't matter at all," replied the professor. "The more roughly the better, in fact. You think the work can be successfully accomplished before dawn, Mr. Holt?"

"Easily," replied the farmer. "We'll be finished an hour or two before dawn. With four ploughs at work—two on what they call Little Side, and two on Big—why, we'll have that ground turned over in no time. Rare nice turf you've got up there, sir. Seems a pity to cut it up!"

"Upon my word, Mr. Holt, are you going to start now?" demanded the professor testily. "Man alive, what is turf?"

"No, sir," said the farmer hastily. "It's none o' my business, anyhow."

"I'm glad you realise that," said Professor Ogleby.

The journey started, the professor and Mr. Drummond going first, and Farmer Holt and his men following with the ploughs.

"This work, after all, is a necessary preliminary, Drummond," said the professor. "It will be all the better to have the turf turned over. The digging and excavating will be rendered a great deal easier."

"There'll be a terrible outcry in the morning, sir," said the second in command.

"Oh, the boys?" asked the Head. "Why, yes."

He was thinking of the marvellous discoveries which his excavators would bring to light when they really got to work. He frowned at the mention of the schoolboys.

"Yes," he repeated. "Certainly there will be an outcry, Drummond. But do you think I care? The boys will be furious, but there will be no rebellion."

"Doesn't it strike you, sir, that the boys might rebel in their excitement and anger?"

"No, it does not, Drummond," returned the professor. "You do not understand these things. You are not a schoolmaster. Don't you see that it will be too late? The boys will be furious, but where will be the use of a rebellion? Why should the school rebel when the harm is done? No, Drummond; at the first sight of the playing fields the school will realise that I have won—and the school will be compelled to admit defeat."

But Professor Thorpe Ogleby was rather counting his chickens before they were hatched.

NIPPER, standing silently on guard, saw a figure looming out of the night.

"That you, Montie?" whispered the Remove captain.

But it wasn't Sir Montie Tregellis-West—it was Stanley Waldo, of Study I.

"Something happening!" breathed Waldo. "What do you mean?" asked Nipper curiously.

"Listen! Can't you hear?"

Nipper listened; but all he could hear was the gentle swishing of the breeze in the nearby hedge. Down in the village a goods train was shunting, and from the main road

came the sound of a heavy lorry. Otherwise the night was silent.

"I can't hear anything out of the common," murmured Nipper. "I haven't got uncanny ears like you, Waldo."

The son of the Peril Expert laughed. His ears were certainly extraordinarily acute—as was his eyesight and his sense of touch. If anything was happening, it was natural that he should be the first to hear.

"Horses thudding on the grass," he explained, in a whisper. "There's a little creaking, too—and now and again a rattle of chains. Very faint, but it seems to be getting nearer."

Nipper became tense.

"Horses—creaking!" he repeated. "By Jove, Waldo! That sounds suspicious to me! Ploughs, eh? I say, what a dirty trick!"

Before long he could see other members of that watching party flitting about, exchanging whispered comments. Nipper could hear the mysterious sounds himself now, too.

And presently there was no longer any doubt. At the farther end of Little Side, running as far as the lane, was a paddock. In the gloom the watching juniors could see the gate being opened. Bulky figures were on the point of coming through. There was a general concentration of the defence force in this direction.

Whispered orders went round; some of the boys stole away on a mysterious errand. But, as yet, the defenders remained in hiding. They knew exactly what was happening. Ploughs were about to be brought on to Little Side!

Every one of those boys was thankful that Nipper had been cautious enough to arrange the vigilance committee. But for him, the supreme disaster might have happened.

CHAPTER 9.

The Hooded Protectors!

"**S**PLENDID!" murmured Dr. Ogleby.

He was quivering with suppressed excitement. Everything had gone well. The ploughs had been successfully conveyed across the paddock—the most dangerous zone, since it was nearest to the school. But now they were on the point of being taken on to the playing fields—and soon they would be at work.

Farmer Holt and his men were too busy with their horses and agricultural machinery to defend themselves when the attack came. It was totally unexpected, too. Having got so far without causing any alarm, they took it for granted that they would not be interfered with.

Then, suddenly, things began to happen.

Professor Thorpe Ogleby was the first to realise that everything was not quite as it should be. He had advanced into Little Side, well ahead of all the others, and he stood there looking at that fair expanse of turf. He could not see it very well in the gloom,

but his thoughts were busy. He was dreaming of the wonders that were to come. Once the excavations really commenced—

And then Professor Ogleby, with a little start, realised that there were several figures closing in silently upon him.

"Well, what is it?" he asked abruptly.

There was no reply.

The new Head, with a sharp intake of breath, dimly saw that these figures were not those of Farmer Holt and his ploughmen, as he had at first supposed. There was something peculiar about them. They were more or less shapeless; he could not distinguish any heads, or even arms.

"Good gracious!" stammered the professor.

He was not a superstitious man, but he could not help being struck by the ghostly appearance of these black, silent visitants.

They were very near now, and he could just make out that they were heavily cloaked, with black cowls which reached right down to their shoulders.

"Now!" murmured a ghostly voice.

There was a sudden rush; the figures closed in, and Professor Ogleby uttered a short, sharp cry.

"Help!" he gasped.

But that was all. The next second he was down, struggling. It was very brief. As he was held, ropes were quickly bound round his ankles and wrists. A thick muffler had been flung round his face and drawn tight, so that he could utter no further outcry.

But he was in no way hurt. His captors took care to treat him gently.

"Bring the prisoner to the Chamber of Judgment!" came a stern, cold, unrecognisable voice.

"It shall be done, Chief," breathed another voice.

The dumbfounded professor found himself lifted and carried bodily away.

Meanwhile, other things had been happening. Practically without a sound, Mr. Drummond, Farmer Holt, and the ploughmen found themselves surrounded by numerous foes. With four boys attacking each man, there was very little chance for the men. They weren't prepared for fighting, either. They went down quickly.

"Good egg!" came an eager voice.

"We've got 'em!"

"Rather!"

"Now we'll chuck 'em out!"

"Good!"

The comments were low-voiced—almost whispers. No wild shouting, no noisy commotion. It was all done very briskly and with businesslike accuracy.

The unfortunate Mr. Drummond was easily dealt with by only two boys; he scarcely fought at all, and he readily suffered himself to be hustled across the paddock.

"The professor!" he panted. "Where is the professor? You wretched boys! How dare you—"

"Sorry, Pugdog Drummond, but we're not giving any explanations," said one of the



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THE WRONG MEANING.

Tommy (who is having his morning bath): "Shall I take my medicine now, mummie?"

Mother (rather puzzled): "But why not wait until later, Tommy?"

Tommy: "Well, it says on the bottle, 'To be taken in water.'"

(W. Goss, East Winch, King's Lynn, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

VERY USEFUL.

Teacher (angrily): "You are a stupid boy! What is the use of your head?"

Backward Pupil: "Well, sir, it keeps my collar from slipping off."

(R. Hanley, 126, Northgate Street, Bury St. Edmunds, has been awarded a penknife.)

ELECTRIC.

An old countryman, who had been to London for the first time on business, returned with a bad opinion of the metropolis.

"At the hotel," he complained, "they kept the light burning all night in my bedroom. I couldn't get a wink of sleep."

"Why didn't you blow it out?" asked his wife.

"Blow it out?" snorted the old man. "I couldn't. It was in a bottle."

(W. Brown, 202, Caulfield Road, East Ham, E.6, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

THOUGHTS ARE CHEAP.

"I'm thinking of going to America this summer. How much do you reckon it would cost?"

"Nothing."

"What do you mean—nothing?"

"Well, thinking about it won't cost you anything."

(Doris Hooper, 270, Sherlock Street, Birmingham, has been awarded a book.)

A RISING YOUTH.

Bill: "Look, there goes Willy Wotnot! He has taken up French, Italian, German and Spanish."

Tom: "He must be clever."

Bill: "Not particularly, He's a lift boy."

(F. Butler, 50, Mount Pleasant Road, Lewisham, S.E.13, has been awarded a penknife.)

boys. "We've caught you and your crowd playing a dirty trick, and we're not showing you any mercy. Off you go!"

And off Mr. Drummond went—more or less on his neck. Farmer Holt and his ploughmen followed. They were pitched into the lane. The farmer was nearly inarticulate with fury.

"Ye'll pay for this, you young rips!" he panted hoarsely.

"Oh, dry up, Mr. Holt," said one of the Removites. "You can't expect any sympathy from us. You were just going to plough up our playing fields!"

"And you'd better not yell too much!" warned one of the others. "We're trying to keep this thing to ourselves—but if you want to rouse the whole school, go ahead! The other chaps might not be so gentle with you."

The farmer controlled himself with difficulty.

"Assault—that's what it is," he said thickly. "I'll have the law on ye for this, see if I don't!"

"Oh, clear off home!"

"If you do any harm to my ploughs——"

"We shan't damage them," interrupted one of the juniors. "Here they come, now. You can take 'em back with you. But if you bring those ploughs here again you can expect trouble. We shan't give you a second chance!"

MEANWHILE, Professor Ogleby, thoroughly frightened, was being carried steadily and in absolute silence. He hadn't the faintest idea where he was going, but it seemed to him that he was being carried for miles across country.

Now and again he was lowered to the ground, and then picked up again. There were so many of his captors that they could take it in turns to carry him.

Actually, he was being carried criss-cross up and down one of the meadows which adjoined Big Side. He wasn't more than a hundred yards from his starting point, but by the time the journey came to an end he felt that he was miles away.

He heard the creaking of a door, then followed a few whispered words. The door creaked again. He was carried forward, and he could now tell by the sound that he was in some sort of building. How could he guess that it was the old barn, which stood only a few hundred yards from St. Frank's?

A gruff, deep voice suddenly sounded.

"Remove the bandage from the prisoner's face!" it commanded.

The professor had been placed in a squatting position, and the muffler—which had covered not only his mouth, but his eyes—was pulled away. He sat there, blinking. His hands and ankles were still bound, so that he could not make much movement.

CORRECT.

Mother (teaching her son arithmetic): "Now take the Smith family. There are mamma, papa, and the baby. How many do they make?"

Bright son: "Two and one to carry."

(*W. Ricketts, Stable Cottage, Longworth, Nr. Hereford, has been awarded a penknife.*)

WELL, WELL.

Two men met in the street. One of them had been ill, and the other inquired:

"Are you feeling well to-day, Mr. Twiddle?"

"Yes, thank you; very well."

"And are you strong again?"

"Yes, thanks; quite strong."

"Then perhaps you will be able to bring back my lawn mower which you borrowed last month."

(*P. Durnford, No. 4, A Block, R.A.F. Base, Malta, has been awarded a book.*)

WHAT A MEMORY.

Absent-minded professor (after being pulled out of the river): "The silly part about it is, I've just remembered that I can swim."

(*R. G. Sinfield, No. 2 Bungalow, Bitton Road, Keynsham, has been awarded a book.*)

HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS.

Jones: "What would you say to anyone who sat on your hat?"

Smith: "I should call him a careless, stupid idiot."

Jones: "That's all I want to know. You're sitting on mine."

(*C. Westley, 46, Old Road, Enfield Highway, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

ALWAYS MISSING.

Teacher (during arithmetic lesson): "Jimmy, find the highest common factor."

Jimmy: "My hat! Is that thing lost again?"

(*W. Heaton, 25, Acre Street, Hollinwood, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

A CAUTIOUS CRITIC.

Author: "Tell me, candidly, what do you think of my latest book?"

Clubman: "No, no! Let us remain friends."

(*A. E. Oliver, 123, Constable Street, Newtown, Wellington, New Zealand, has been awarded a book.*)

FALSE.

The steamer was ploughing its way across the Channel. The sea was rough. A kindly steward went up to an old lady who, looking very pale and ill, was leaning against the rail.

"Come below—your teeth are chattering with the cold," he said tactfully.

"Don't tell lies, laddie," replied the old lady severely. "My teeth are in my pocket."

(*G. Byfield, 4, Salisbury Bldgs., Victory Place, Walworth, S.E.17, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)



"Good heavens!" he breathed, freshly startled.

He beheld an astounding scene. He was in the middle of a circle of black-gowned, squatting figures. Several of these figures carried electric torches, and all the beams of light were concentrated upon the professor, as he sat in the centre.

It was difficult, almost impossible, for him to see beyond those dazzling beams of light; he could only just make out the vague shapes of the figures, with their long cloaks and heavy cowls. He fancied that there were little eye-slits cut in the cowls, but he could not be sure. The steady, unwinking lights from the torches dazzled him whichever way he looked.

"What—what is the meaning of this outrage?" he panted desperately.

"Professor Thorpe Ogleby, you are in the hands of the Hooded Protectors," said the deep, relentless voice.

"Really, I—I—"

"You are listening to the Protector-in-Chief," went on the voice. "We, the Hooded Protectors, have pledged ourselves to safeguard the playing fields of St. Frank's," said the accusing voice. "To-night we have caught you in the act of dirty work—that is to say, you were about to use certain diabolical instruments upon the aforementioned playing fields. These said diabolical instruments, together with horses, men, and various fittings, have now been removed, and you have been brought here for judgment."

The professor was beginning to lose his earlier fear.

"This is arrant nonsense!" he said angrily. "How dare you? I know very well that you are St. Frank's boys!"

"We neither admit nor deny it," said the deep voice. "We leave it for you to draw your own conclusion."

"You shall pay dearly for this!" fumed the Head. "I know perfectly well that you are St. Frank's boys. You are committing an unwarrantable outrage!"

"Be silent, prisoner!" said the Protector-in-Chief sternly. "Whatever we are, you will find it very difficult indeed to identify us. Am I right? You may have your suspicions, but you will never have proof. We are safe—and, being safe, we intend to tell you just what we think of you."

"Ay!" came a growl from the circle.

"You sought to steal a march on us by ploughing up the playing fields during the hours of darkness," continued the spokesman. "But we were not to be caught napping so easily, Professor Ogleby. We were watching—we were ready. By your base trickery you have robbed yourself of any respect which the boys of St. Frank's might originally have had for you."

"Nonsense!" shouted the professor. "How dare you say that it was trickery?"

"We dare much," replied the Protector-in-Chief. "Have we not proved our daring by seizing you and bringing you to this Chamber of Judgment?"

"By Heaven! You have proved that you are capable of any outrage——"

"You should know much on that subject, Professor Ogleby, since you appear to be an expert on outrages," retorted the spokesman.

The professor, having lost his earlier alarm, was now losing his temper. A whispered word here and there, a cough or two behind those hoods, had convinced him that his captors were St. Frank's boys. He felt the position keenly. It was humiliating to be stuck here, in the middle of this circle, unable to move. The unwinking beams from the torches never left him.

"Release me!" he panted.

"You shall be released after you have heard the verdict," said the Protector-in-Chief sternly.

"Ver-verdict!"

"That is what I said!"

"But—but what are you going to do with me?"

"Have no fear; this time we shall not harm you," came the deep voice. "We shall not even tar and feather you, or indulge in any similar high-spirited trifle. But take warning! Hands off our playing fields!"

"Your playing fields?" snapped the professor. "Then you admit that you are St. Frank's boys?"

One or two whispers went round, and the spokesman chuckled.

"And supposing we do?" he asked. "I will give you three guesses, Professor Ogleby. Who am I? Who are my companions? Why do you suppose you are being kept here for so long? Well, perhaps it will be a waste of time to explain."

But Professor Ogleby was no fool—he could guess. He was being kept here by these disguised boys so that the others—those others who had dealt with the ploughmen—would have time to get back to their dormitories, back into their beds.

"Listen, Rash One, to the verdict of the Hooded Protectors," came the deep voice of the spokesman. "At least, listen to a solemn warning. Hands off the playing fields—or rebellion! It is for you to decide which!"

"Nonsense! If there is any——"

"Be silent!" interrupted the spokesman sternly. "You thought, no doubt, that when the school found the ground ploughed up it would be too late for a rebellion. Do not delude yourself any longer! If, by some mischance, you succeeded in your plans—even in the smallest degree—the rebellion will break out in all the full force of its fury. You are now being warned. You have aroused the blood of the St. Frank's boys, and if you are wise you will accept your defeat with a good grace. Has not the school proved that it is ready for you at every turn?"

Arms were suddenly raised, and a grim circle of warning fingers were pointed impressively towards Professor Ogleby.

"Take warning!" chorused the Hooded Protectors.

Then, as though this were a signal, every electric torch was snapped out. The professor heard a number of shufflings and



Handforth flung himself full length as Ted Sparks sent in a stinging shot. Would the Council School boys score?

scufflings; he heard the creaking of a door. Turning, he could see that the door had been left ajar.

"Come back—come back!" he panted desperately. "Good heavens! You're not going to leave me here, bound hand and foot, and——"

He broke off, for only the echo of his own voice answered him. He struggled desperately with his bonds, but he could not shift them. After some minutes he desisted, breathing hard. It seemed to him that hours must have passed, but the actual lapse of time was brief.

Then he fancied he heard a slight movement. Suddenly a torch flashed right into his face from close quarters, and he started.

"Your wrists!" whispered a voice.

The professor thrust his wrists forward, and the ropes were quickly cut through. Then the light went out again, and the mysterious figure vanished.

It was a clever move. It took the professor five minutes to untie the knots in the ropes which bound his ankles—five minutes during which the last of the Hooded Protectors was easily able to get into his own particular dormitory. When the professor staggered out into the open he was astonished to find St. Frank's in full view.

"Upon my word!" he exclaimed, in mingled relief and wonder. "I thought I was miles away! The young scamps! They were St. Frank's boys! And, what is more,

I will find them! I will identify them—and expel them from the school!"

But by the time he reached his own house he had cooled down. The school was black and silent. If he aroused everybody, what could he prove? By now his assailants were all safely in bed. All he would do would be to inform the school of the humiliating nature of his adventure. He would be a laughing-stock on the morrow.

Professor Thorpe Ogleby shivered.

No, on the whole, it was better to swallow his anger, and to make the best of a bad job. It was essentially a case where his silence would be golden.

CHAPTER 10.

A Surprise for St. Frank's!

IN the morning there was no outward sign of the exciting events which had taken place during the night.

It was Tuesday, and the seniors wondered what had happened to Professor Ogleby. When he appeared on the platform, after prayers, in Big Hall, he looked haggard and tired. Most of the juniors, however, were in the know.

"I have decided for the moment completely to abandon my plan to excavate your playing fields," said Professor Ogleby quietly. "I am not an unjust man, and I am beginning to realise, perhaps, that I have been

unduly precipitate. So, for the time being, I shall do nothing in the matter. I shall leave St. Frank's in the hands of Mr. Alington Wilkes, and I shall make fresh plans."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old professor!"

But there was something ironical in that cheering—and the professor, who knew that the Hooded Protectors were among the boys in front of him, set his lips in a thin, straight line.

Even now Nipper was sceptical.

"You heard what he said, you chaps?" murmured the Remove skipper, as he stood in the Triangle later, surrounded by the various members of the Vigilance Committee. "He's abandoning his project—for the time being! He didn't say that he's abandoning it altogether. We scared him last night, and he has realised that he had better go easy. But, if I know anything, he isn't done yet!"

"By George, you were ripping last night, Nipper, old man!" said Handforth. "I was half expecting that the old boy would make inquiries this morning—but, instead of that, he's clearing off!"

"Good riddance to him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"All the same, we mustn't relax our vigilance for a moment," said Nipper. "We know what the professor is capable of now. And he, for his part, knows what he is up against. Everything seems very quiet, but the gauntlet has been flung down and Professor Ogleby has accepted the challenge!"

"My only hat!"

"I'm going to bribe Tubbs," said Nipper briskly.

"Eh?"

"Tubbs and Rodgers and Spratt and Jelks."

"The four page-boys of the various Houses," said Travers curiously. "What's the idea?"

"This Vigilance Committee is all very well during our free time—and during the night," replied Nipper. "But while we are at lessons we can't very well be keeping an eye on Little Side. It'll be a good wheeze, I think, to spring some fat tips to the page-boys, and to tell them to keep their eyes skinned during lesson-times."

"And if anything happens, they are to warn us, eh?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"Yes."

"It's a good idea!" said Edward Oswald. "There's not much chance that the professor will get busy during the day—but there's nothing like being on the safe side. We won't give him the slightest loophole."

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll dish him all along the line!"

"Every time!"

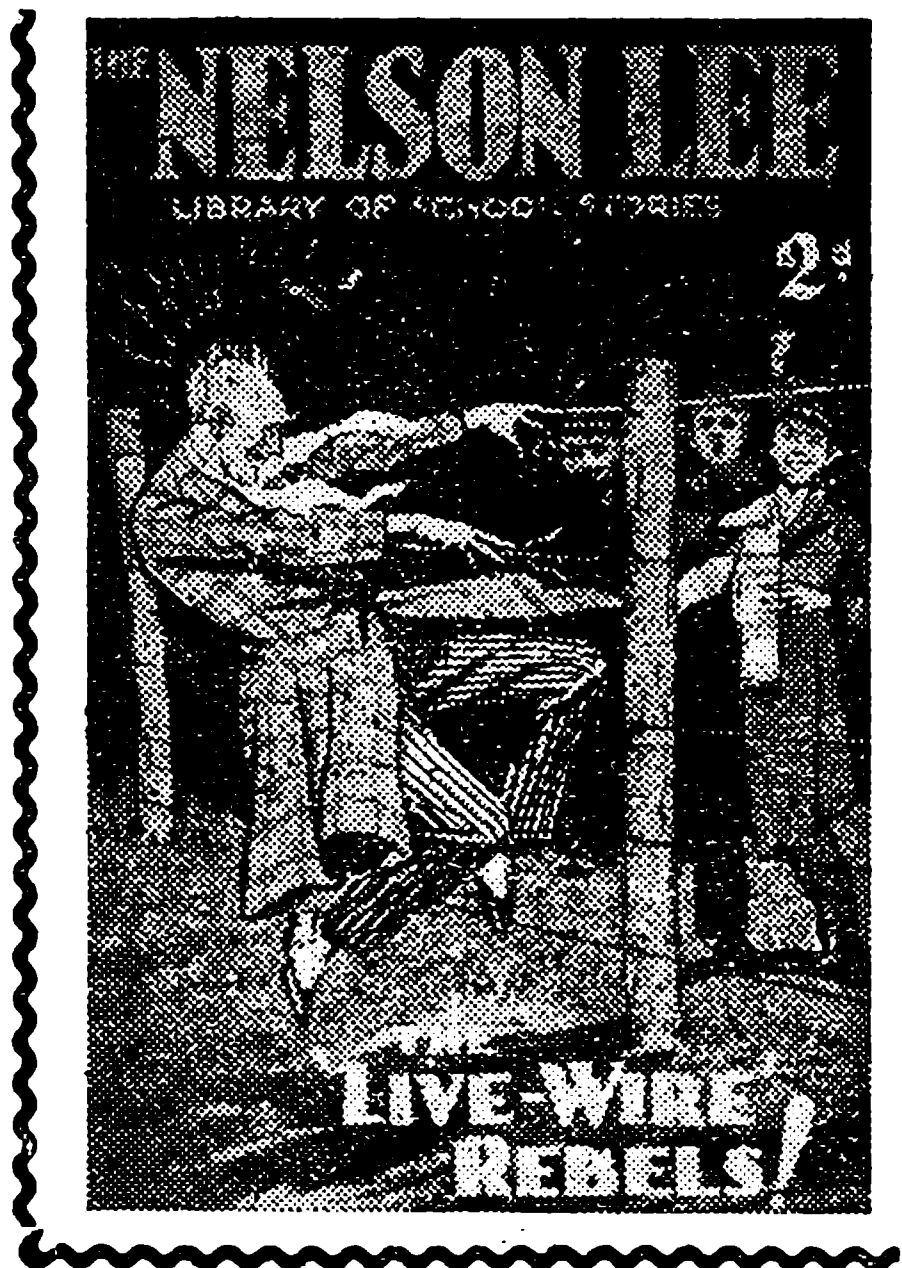
All these precautions, it seemed, were needless. That morning Professor Thorpe Ogleby, with numerous bags and other luggage, took his departure from St. Frank's. He had interviewed Mr. Alington Wilkes, and he had left the school in Mr. Wilkes' charge.

"Arrangements will be made as quickly as possible, Mr. Wilkes," the professor had said. "Whether Mr. Lee will return, or whether the Governors will appoint another headmaster. I do not quite know. But you will be informed. In the meantime, please carry on. I realise that I—er—am not wanted here."

And so the professor went. The day passed uneventfully—and so did the night.

Wednesday and Thursday and Friday were the same. The week proved to be singularly uneventful. The boys used their playing fields daily, and footer practice and games went on without interruption. It really did

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



seem that Professor Ogleby had given it up as a bad job.

The seniors were quite convinced that they had finally won, and a great many of the juniors were beginning to think that the Vigilance Committee was wasting its time.

Night after night the boys had kept watch—only a dozen each "relay" now, three from each House—and the organisation of these watches was quite a business in itself. The boys were beginning to think that it was all unnecessary.

The school, in fact, was lulled into a sense of complete security—and Nipper was the only one, perhaps, who guessed that this was Professor Thorpe Ogleby's intention. He had stirred up a hornets' nest, and he was giving that nest time to settle down. But

Nipper, when he voiced these opinions, was regarded as an alarmist. Wasn't it as plain as a pikestaff that Professor Ogleby had bolted from St. Frank's with his tail between his legs?

Saturday dawned, and there was no time to think of the old archæologist and his Roman remains. It was the second Saturday of the football season!

That afternoon the St. Frank's Junior XI would go over to Bannington Council School to play off their League fixture. They were determined to win, and so were the Council boys. Both teams were out to secure the two points, and a keen game was anticipated.

"The 'Live-Wire' Rebels!"

By E. S. BROOKS.

Nipper & Co. encamped on Little Side, which is ringed with wire defences.

"Hands off the playing fields!" is the war-cry of the St. Frank's boys—and Professor Ogleby finds them to be "live-wire" rebels in more senses than one!

The most sensational barring-out in history at St. Frank's is on—read all about it in next week's enthralling long yarn.

"Outlawed!"

By DAVID GOODWIN.

Dick Forrester crosses swords with a new and dangerous enemy in the next absorbing instalment of this magnificent old-time adventure serial.

"Handforth's Weekly!"

"Our Round Table Talk!"

~~~~~ORDER IN ADVANCE!~~~~~

When the Junior XI went over to Bannington it was accompanied by more than half the Remove and half the Fourth. The Council school ground was not situated near the school itself. The enclosure was part of a pleasant meadow on the outskirts of the town.

Amid tremendous enthusiasm the teams lined up for the start. The Council boys were in strong force, and they cheered their team to the echo. The St. Frank's fellows considered that it was their duty to cheer just as loudly. So the combined effort was earsplitting.

Nipper's mind was at rest. No need to worry. Willy Handforth and his stalwarts of the Third were playing a match of their own on Little Side at St. Frank's. So

nothing much could happen to the playing fields. Willy could be trusted to look after that precious turf—and he had been told that if he wanted to get hold of the Removites and Fourth-Formers, all he had to do was to ring up Bannington 304—which was Mr. Gibbons' grocery shop. Mr. Gibbons would lose no time in sending a message across to the Council school ground.

So Nipper, carefree, entered into the game with gusto. Within one minute of the kick-off, Nipper ran clean through and scored for the Saints.

"Hurrah!"

"Well done, Nipper!"

"One up, already!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

To the St. Frank's fellows this was a good omen. They had visions of a walk-over. But the Council school boys soon shattered that dream. Their defence had been slow in settling down; Nipper's surprise raid had taken them unawares.

From the restart, however, there was a different tale to tell. The St. Frank's players, eager to press home their advantage, swarmed to the attack once more; but this time they were met by a rock-like defence.

Although Reggie Pitt made run after run along the touchline; although he centred beautifully; although the inside forwards took shot after shot, they could not increase their lead. The Council School backs were always there—always working with grim, tenacious stubbornness. And Bob Jenkins, in goal, was a tower of strength.

Towards half-time, Ted Sparks changed his tactics. Until now he had been concentrating his men on defence. But quite suddenly the whole game changed. The Council School forwards, so ineffective up to this point, now became dangerous.

Time after time they swept down the field, passing the ball from one to another with a skill and precision which surprised and dismayed the St. Frank's defence.

Just before half-time Ted made a clean run through, fooling the St. Frank's backs completely. There was only Handforth to beat, and the leader of Study D, dancing up and down between the "sticks," was ready.

Thud!

Ted Sparks sent in a hot, low shot, which swerved as it came. Handforth dived, reached the ball, and punched out. Charley Sargent was waiting. As quick as lightning he got his foot to the ball, and kicked. The leather soared over Handforth's head and went into the net.

"Goal!"

"Oh, good egg!"

"We've equalised!"

"Jolly good, Charley!" panted Ted Sparks, running up to the scorer. "That was a first-class goal of yours!"

"Chuck it," grinned Charley. "It wasn't my goal at all—it was yours!"

Anyhow, the Council School boys had equalised—and the score was unaltered when the whistle blew for half-time.

By now Nipper and his men had forgotten Professor Thorpe Ogleby altogether. During that exciting first half, three great traction engines had lumbered past the football meadow—but the footballers had taken no notice. Later they were to remember those engines.

CHAPTER 11.

Rebellion!

WITHIN five minutes of the re-start the Saints received a shock. For the Council School boys scored again, and so well were they playing that it seemed any odds that they would obtain an even greater lead.

By this time those three lumbering steam tractors had reached Bellton Lane, and were approaching St. Frank's. Willy Handforth, on Little Side, heard them, and Willy whistled.

"No more football for us, my lads!" he said crisply, after he had stopped the Third Form game. "There's dirty work afoot, by the look of things."

"What do you mean?" went up a shout.

"Five minutes ago a big car arrived at the school," said Willy grimly. "I spotted it, although you fellows were too keen on your football to take any notice. The car brought our cheery friend, Professor Thorpe Ogleby."

"What!"

"Has he come back?"

"He has come back—and right on his heels come three whacking great traction engines," said Willy impressively. "Listen! Can't you hear 'em? I saw them coming up the lane—just had a glimpse when I went to the corner to look. Now, you may say, I'm suspicious-minded, but it looks funny to me."

"Traction engines!" gasped Chubby Heath. "Oh, crikey!"

"We can't do anything against traction-engines!" ejaculated Juicy Lemon. "I say, somebody had better send out the alarm! But—but what's the good?" he went on, dismayed. "The Remove chaps and the Fourth-Formers are away in Bannington. And the seniors have gone over to Barcliffe! We're practically alone!"

"I know it," said Willy crisply. "Chubby, dash indoors, ring up Bannington 304, and get Mr. Gibbons to send a message over to our chaps on the Council School ground."

"Right!" said Chubby Heath. "What's the message?"

"Just this—that Professor Ogleby has started a new stunt, but Nipper is not to worry," said Willy. "Tell him to hurry over with the Remove and the Fourth as quickly as possible, but finish his game first."

"Right!" said Chubby, looking a bit doubtful. "But wouldn't it be better, in the circles, to tell those chaps to dash here at once, without finishing the game?"

"You heard what I said at first," replied Willy calmly.

"Oh, all right—you know best."

And Chubby cut off.

PROFESSOR THORPE OGLEBY and Mr. James Drummond, having dramatically turned up at St. Frank's after nearly a week's absence, were looking rather puffed after a long climb. They had, in fact, mounted to the top of the School House clock-tower. From this vantage-point they could see all the surrounding countryside.

"Now, Drummond, I think we shall have these boys easily defeated," the professor was saying. "And this time we're not working by night—but openly, in broad daylight."

"Which is much better, sir," murmured Mr. Drummond.

They were looking down upon those three great traction-engines, which were even now trundling past the main gates.

"It will be over very quickly," went on the professor with relish. "It has cost me a good deal to hire these traction-engines, but it will be worth the money. I have waited, too—waited all the week, Drummond."

"If I may say so, sir, you have displayed remarkable strategy," declared Mr. Drummond enthusiastically. "With both the Junior XI and the Senior XI playing away from the school, the field is practically clear. There are, of course, a number of boys on the playing fields——"

"A handful of Third-Formers!" interrupted the professor contemptuously. "Let them try to stop these juggernauts if they can! I am taking no chances, Drummond. I have instructed the drivers of those engines to proceed straight across the paddock and right on to Little Side. There will not be one minute's delay."

"Those heavy wheels will do enormous damage to the turf," said Mr. Drummond, nodding.

"Wheels?" repeated the professor. "Good gracious, Drummond, I am not relying upon the wheels alone! Those engines are all fitted with digging spikes, such as steam-rollers use for tearing up the road. As the engines spread out across the playing fields those digging spikes will be put into operation, and by the time the boys arrive back from their wretched football games, these fields will be dug up from end to end. And I shall have won."

THE message got through to Nipper & Co. very promptly.

Mr. Gibbons sent his errand-boy across to the Council School ground—and the errand-boy was one of Ted Sparks' most enthusiastic supporters. He was very excited now, and after pushing his way through the crowds, he dashed right on to the field, just as a keen scrimmage was taking place in the St. Frank's half. The referee blew his whistle.

"Here, I say, Jimmy, what's the idea?" shouted Sparks, running up. "What do you mean by stopping the game——"

"Couldn't help it, Ted," panted Jimmy, the errand-boy. "The guv'nor's just had a telephone message from a chap at St. Frank's. A message for Nipper."

"What!" went up a shout from the St. Frank's players.

"Yes!" said Jimmy breathlessly. "I dunno what it means, but I'm to say that Professor Ogleby is there, and that there's trouble brewing."

"Great Scott!"

"We'd better dash off!"

"Rather!"

"No!" shouted Jimmy. "I was told to say that you were to finish your game—that everything would be all right until you got there, later."

"Good old Willy!" said Nipper heartily. "How many minutes to go, ref?"

"Ten," replied the referee.

"Good! We'll finish this game," said Nipper briskly. "It would be silly to abandon it now."

"Silly?" repeated Ted Sparks. "It would be darned unfair! Don't forget that we chaps are leading."

The game recommenced, and so excited were the St. Frank's fellows that their play was affected. They seemed to go all to pieces, and Ted looked like scoring a third goal.

However, there was another surprise. Nipper, at least, kept his head, and after an enterprising raid by the Council School forward, Nipper made a spectacular solo dash. Not only did he break clean through the Council School's defence, but he scored the finest goal of the match. Clean through he went, beating man after man—and then, with a slam, he scored. It was a beautiful drive, a shot which nine goalies out of ten would have failed to save.

"By George!" yelled Handforth, at the other end of the field. "Good old Nipper! We've equalised, anyhow! That means one point each!"

"Chuck it!" sang out one of the Council boys. "We want both them points!"

But they did not get them. The St. Frank's juniors, flustered and excited though they were, kept their end up until the finish of the game. When the final whistle blew the score was a draw, two—two.

"**R**EADY?" asked Willy Handforth crisply. "Let her go, then!"

Hissssss—sizzzzz—hisssss!

The enterprising Willy had taken the only possible course. One glance at those traction-engines had convinced him that the Third, valiant as it was, could do nothing to stop them. Nothing, that is, without some additional help.

For those traction-engines, unlike most vehicles of their type, were provided with enclosed cabins for the drivers. They were special wooden structures, in fact, which

Professor Ogleby had specified. Enclosed in them, the men in charge were safe.

The engines, one after the other, were now trundling heavily across the paddock, straight towards the gateway which led directly on to Little Side. The gate wasn't open, but the engines were obviously going to smash through it.

The fags were dismayed. Even Willy hardly knew what to do. To attack the engines would be useless; the boys might swarm all over them, but they could not stop their progress. With the drivers securely stationed in their wooden cabins, the position looked pretty hopeless.

Then it was that Willy's ingenuity showed itself.

He had been quick to perceive that there were big look-out holes cut in the front of those improvised cabins. Those holes gave Willy an idea. Getting all the fags to work, two or three hose pipes were rushed out from the school. There was a hydrant—in fact, two hydrants—near the bicycle shed, and hoses were rapidly fixed on to these. The bicycle shed itself stood in the paddock, and the hoses, being long, easily reached the scene of action. With a sudden rush, the fags charged forward. Water hissed from the nozzles.

Professor Ogleby, up in the tower, laughed with derision.

"Upon my word!" he exclaimed. "Look, Drummond! I feel almost sorry for those wretched boys! What do they hope to gain by spraying those engines with water? Do they imagine for a moment that—— Why, what—— Good gracious! The leading engine has stopped!"

It was true. Willy Handforth was concentrating on that leading engine; he was directing a powerful jet of water through the look-out hole in front of the wooden cab. The result, of course, was devastating. The driver and his mate were soaked, blinded and helpless. The water was pouring down in floods.

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"Hurrah!" yelled Willy. "That's stopped one of 'em—and I think we can hold the others at bay until the rest of the chaps arrive!"

"Hurrah!" yelled the other fags.

Before long, however, they were not so ready to cheer. The traction-engine drivers, after their first shock, rigged up a hasty protection in front of the look-out holes. Then they drove on blindly.

But the delay, brief as it had been, sufficed. A Morris Minor car came tearing up, accompanied by several motor-cycles. In the rear trailed a long stream of juniors, racing up by the dozen.

They lost no time in getting to work—much to the consternation of the watching Professor Ogleby.

Nipper & Co., their strength increasing every minute as more and more boys arrived, attacked desperately. They rushed at those great engines, they tore at the wooden cabs—which, after all, were only temporary structures—and such was their determination that in a very short time the men in the cabs were compelled to admit defeat.

"Sorry, you men!" said Nipper breathlessly. "We're not blaming you for this, but we advise you to clear off. Turn these engines about, and get back to the road."

The engine crews, realising there was no help for it, obeyed. To the professor's fury, the traction engines retreated, and the Remove, Fourth and Third dashed on to Little Side and took complete possession.

"Thanks, Willy!" said Nipper, giving the Third Form skipper a hearty slap on the back. "You did famously!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Willy!"

"Well done, the Third!"

"Cheese it!" said Willy. "What's the programme now?"

"We'll have no more messing about!" replied Nipper, raising his voice so that all heard. "This is the last straw! We're not going to give Professor Ogleby another chance! It's rebellion!"

"Hurrah!"

"Down with old Ogleby!"

"We'll hold these playing fields!" roared Nipper. "We'll bar the professor out from this minute—until he comes to his senses!"

So the die was cast.

Professor Thorpe Ogleby had goaded the boys too far—and now it was open rebellion: The most novel barring-out in the history of St. Frank's was about to begin!

THE END.

(A barring-out at St. Franks! The New Head is determined to dig up the school playing fields, and Nipper & Co are just as determined to prevent him. "The 'Live-wire' Rebels!" is the title of next week's rousing yarn, and it hums with excitement from the first chapter. Don't miss it. Order your copy now.)

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

Wm. J. Gibb, 5, George Street, Huntly, Aberdeenshire, wishes to hear from readers interested in past St. Frank's stories.

John S. Kay, 8, Wesley Road, Hayes, Middx., wants correspondents overseas.

Geo. Butler, 82, Queen's Head Street, London, N., would like to hear from readers interested in swimming and camping.

Miss D. Bird, Belle Vue, 44, Spencer Road, Luton, Beds., wishes to hear from girl readers.

Ernest S. Holman, Bromsgrove, 18, Scotts Road, Leyton, E. 10, wants correspondents who are interested in past St. Frank's stories.

J. G. Ritchie, 5, Lynedoch Avenue, East St. Kilda, Victoria, Australia, wishes to hear from readers who are interested in the stories which appeared in past series of the N.L.L.

Simon Durga Singh, 3, Lamaha Street, Demerara, British Guiana, wants correspondents.

Jack Rye, 80, Pakenham Street, Echuca, Victoria, Australia, would like a pen-friend; age 15.

Harold Percival, 13, Leslie Street, Mt. Lawley, Western Australia, wants correspondents anywhere, but more especially in Canada, India, South Africa and America.

Geoffrey Armstrong, 3, Dodwell Lane, Bursledon, Nr. Southampton, wishes to get in touch with a reader in Ireland; age 15.

C. Kenney, Silvan Road, Mt. Evelyn, Melbourne, Australia, would like to correspond with readers.

S. P. Crocker, 33, Pennsylvania Road, Eliacombe, Torquay, wishes to correspond with readers.

Miss Mollie Gahely, 32, Whistler Street, Manly, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, asks for girl correspondents.

Duncan Toombs, 312b, Blackthorne Avenue, Toronto 9, Ontario, Canada, wishes to hear from readers keen on the old St. Frank's stories.

Wh. George Ginn, 881, Green Lane, Chigwell Heath, Essex, wants correspondents, especially those interested in journalism.

J. Faircloth, 31, Wilson Street, Burdett Road, Bow, London, E. 3, would like a correspondent in Germany; age 18—20.

A. Matthews, 58, Lupin Street, Nechells, Birmingham, wishes to hear from readers.

Kenneth Mason, 72, Kenelm Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, wants correspondents anywhere, including Australia and America.

A. Barnard, 5, Collingwood Street, Chelsea, London, S.W. 3, would like to hear from readers in his district.

V. Hague, 124, Howard Road, Walkley, Sheffield, wants correspondents; ages 14—15.



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

LETTERS acknowledged from: Barbara Ives (Jersey), Valerie Lillian Dudley (Tallygaropna), D.M.B. (Leeds), Peter Mortis (London, Ont.), Norman H. Galle (Kilburn, S. Australia), Jack Settle (Rugby), Geoffrey Armstrong (Southampton), Eric J. Robson (Casewell, N.S.W.), Jack Ritchie (East St. Kilda, Victoria, Australia), Ernest S. Holman (Leyton).

* * *

Modern House Fourth Form studies are occupied by the following: Study No. 1, Bob Christine, Roddy Yorke, Charley Talmadge; Study No. 2, Ernest Lawrence, Hubert Churchman, George Holland; Study No. 3, Harry Oldfield, Len Clapson, Billy Nation; Study No. 4, Sessue Yakama; Study No. 5, Horace Crowe, George Webb, Albert Crooke; Study No. 6, John Busterfield Boots, Percy Bray, Walter Denny; Study No. 7, Walter Skelton, Eugene Ellmore; Study No. 8, Terence O'Grady, Herbert Vandyke; Studies 9 and 10 are not occupied.

* * *

There is no "Nelson Lee Annual," Barbara Ives, but a story featuring the chums of St. Frank's will appear in the next issue of the "Holiday Annual." Naturally, the yarn will be written by Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks. In general appearance Tessa Love is small and dainty and graceful, with dark brown, wavy hair, and merry eyes. She is one of the prettiest girls at the Moor View School—and one of the cleverest. The best way for you to obtain back numbers is to give particulars to your newsagent, who will then inquire through the Back Number Department, and if they are still in print he will be able to get them. The story called "The Boot-boy Baronet," featuring Sir Jimmy Potts, appeared in No. 90, 1st New Series, dated Jan. 21st, 1928.

* * *

Your mind-picture of William Napoleon Browne is so good, Valerie Dudley, that a full description seems unnecessary. William Napoleon is a very elegant fellow, tall, lean and scrupulously immaculate. His hair is

dark, and always brushed with great care. He never hurries himself needlessly, but when the occasion demands he cheerfully throws his dignity to the winds and moves apace. No, you are not the first reader to send a letter by air mail. With regard to your questions, Nipper has no parents, and his home is with Nelson Lee. St. Frank's is situated in the County of Sussex, two or three miles from the South Coast, overlooking the English Channel. Browne's father is a famous judge, and your other questions regarding parents will be answered in the course of the stories, space forbidding here.

* * *

Yes, of course, D.M.B., the St. Frank's boys are compelled to suffer the torments of exams. like every other schoolboy. But as exams. are not likely to be of particular interest to readers in general, they are scarcely ever mentioned.

* * *

The subscription rate for the Old Paper, Peter Mortis—and this may interest other overseas readers—is 11/- per annum, as you will see for yourself if you turn to the bottom of page 44. Your subscription can date from No. 72 of the New Series now running, and as soon as you send your sub. along the publisher will dispatch you the numbers already in print, and the others will come to you weekly.

* * *

The story in which Church was supposed to be dead, Jack Settle, was called "The Stricken Schoolboy," and it was published on October 15th, 1927, in No. 76, 1st New Series. The following three stories also dealt with the same subject.

* * *

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 other readers.

Like a fighting fury Dick Forrester battles for his life!

Outlawed!



A stirring serial of old-time romance and adventure.

By *DAVID GOODWIN*

The King's Riders!

SUDDENLY a great uproar rose outside—a loud yell and the thunder of horses' hoofs. A body of mounted men dashed up to the house like a whirlwind, and flung themselves upon the footpads. Captain Sweeny's shrill voice rang above the tumult with a savage oath:

"The King's Riders! Save yourselves!"

The words had hardly fallen on their ears when those who were within the room turned tail and bolted for their lives, flinging themselves out of the windows. The instant he was free Dick shouted to his serving-men, who swiftly ran to the scene of the fire and pulled the blazing sheaves of straw away, battering out the flames that were beginning to seize on the wood. For a moment Dick was so full of anxiety for the house that he forgot all else.

The footpad crew scattered like flies, and Captain Sweeny fled for the road. But two of the King's men threw themselves upon him, and, after a fierce struggle, he was overpowered and captured.

"Hold him fast!" cried the lieutenant of the Riders. "'Tis the thief Sweeny, as I live! We have flown at the falcon and caught the crow. Now for the knave we came to find, for I am persuaded he is in yonder house."

He rode up to the great front doors and jumped down from his horse.

"'Od's death!" said Turpin to Dick, in the dining-hall, glancing at him hurriedly. "Here's a pretty kettle of fish! The King's Riders have beaten off Sweeny and his men, but 'tis me they're after!"

"Plague on it! Why did they not leave us alone?" exclaimed Dick. "Here, Turpin, through the door and up the staircase—quick! I will find you a hiding-place!"

"Nay! I shall bring disaster on you and yours," said Turpin hurriedly. "You must not shelter me. I will out by the window and take my chance."

"You shall not!" cried Dick, seizing him by the arm. "Every lower window is watched. Pink me! What sort of a comrade do you take me for? Up the stairs, and I will see you safe!"

He thrust Turpin to a small side staircase that ran up from a corner of the entrance-hall, and the highwayman, after hesitating a moment, went up. There was such a thunderous knock at the outer doors that Dick himself paused.

"Admit no man!" he cried to the serving-man who hurried to answer the knocking.

And then he followed his comrade, who had already mounted.

"Where are you?" Dick said eagerly, pausing for a moment in the darkness of the stairs; and then he saw Turpin had turned to the right of the little landing, and had gone through a door in front. "Not that way, man; there's no place there, and no way out! It leads to a blind room. Out to the left here—quick!"

"Plague on it, which way?" muttered Turpin, as Dick came to the door to lead him back.

The moment's delay had been fatal, for a heavy step on the stairs was heard, and before they could cross the landing the lieutenant of the Riders appeared. Turpin darted back into the room.

"Give way, in the King's name!" said the lieutenant loudly. "I am here to arrest the outlaw, Richard Turpin, whom I saw mount these stairs, and I charge you to deliver him up!"

"S'death!" cried Dick in a rage, whipping out his rapier and turning on the man. "Who gave you leave to march into my house as though it were your own? Out, or —"

The lieutenant quickly plucked a paper from his breast and held it before Dick's eyes.

"In the name of the law!" he cried fiercely. "Here is my sealed search-warrant, and I am within my rights. Hinder me at your peril! Ho, there, men! Up and take the malefactor, for he is here!"

Cheated of Their Prey!

SO furious was Dick at the danger of his friend, and at this high-handed invasion of Fernhall, that there is little doubt he would have run the lieutenant through the body and defied the Riders, had not Turpin himself sprung out on to the landing and seized the rash young squire's sword-arm.

"Nay, Dick; if you love me you shall not imperil your own neck for me!" he said.

"Let them take me, since 'tis in your house. You shall not be ruined for my sake!"

"To me, men! Here is the outlaw!" shouted the lieutenant, springing at Turpin. "Come and make him fast!"

But Dick, as Turpin loosed his wrist and turned to face the danger, gripped the lieutenant's arms above the elbows with sinewy young hands and held him fast.

"Quick, comrade, I've got him!" cried Dick.

"I say you shall not sell yourself for me!" exclaimed Turpin.

"Waste no time in folly!" cried Dick, struggling with the lieutenant. "Don't talk, but fly! What's done can't be undone. Go, comrade, and good luck go with you!"

Seeing that Dick was obdurate, Turpin turned with an exclamation and ran back into the room, just as the Riders rushed up the stairs.

"Not that way!" cried Dick in despair. For it was by the other door, he knew, that the body of the house could be reached and escape made possible. "Plague on it, t'other door!" he panted, striving with all his might to hold the struggling lieutenant and blocking the way so that the men could not get past.

He held them back for some seconds, and then they hurled him aside and dashed through the door after the outlaw.

"Comrade," he gasped, struggling to his feet painfully, a sob in his throat, "they have you now, in spite of all!"

There was a furious rush as the Riders ran pell-mell into the room after Turpin, and then a great uproar. Dick knew there was no hiding-place in the room, nor any way out, and the window was forty feet from the ground. He expected to see his comrade brought out, bound and defeated. Then came a cry that was music to his ears:

"He is not here!"

"He is climbing down by the ivy!" roared the lieutenant's voice. "He has nearly reached the ground. Fire on him! Hang it, have none of you your pistols here?"

Dick's heart leaped with joy. He had never dreamed it was possible to escape by climbing down the ivy-covered wall—there was scarce a foothold for a sparrow, and a false step meant death.

"Down after him, some of you!" shrieked the lieutenant. "What, are you all afraid of it? Ah, he has reached the ground! A thousand fiends! Why is there no one watching this side of the house? Out and after him!"

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

DICK FORRESTER, once a notorious highwayman with a price on his head, thanks to the villainy of his uncle, Vane Forrester, now dead, has settled down to a life of ease and luxury on his estate of Fern hall. He sadly misses the company of his former cheery comrade of the road, **RICHARD TURPIN**, the famous outlaw. But Turpin once again comes into Dick's life when he seeks refuge in the young squire's house. He is being pursued by **CAPTAIN SWEENEY**, the villainous leader of a gang of robbers. Sweeney and his men make an attack, and for a time Dick and Turpin hold them at bay. The odds are too heavy against them, however, and after the footpads have set fire to the house, they are gradually beaten back. With backs to the wall, fighting for their lives, the two comrades make a last desperate stand.

(Now read on.)

He and his men came tearing down the stairs and out into the grounds again. Dick raised a cheer behind them, and the lieutenant turned and shook his fist at the young squire as he ran. A great shouting arose outside, and away they all went in full cry after the fugitive.

Dick watched them disappear into the night, and, despite his wounds and bruises, he laughed light-heartedly.

"Not all the Riders in Norfolk will catch him now. He has slipped through their lines and away into the woods, and the King's men are too clumsy for night-hunting. Hurrah for the knights of the road——"

Dick broke off abruptly. With something of a shock he remembered he was no highwayman now, but a man of landed estates and fortune. Might he not have imperilled his safety and the position he had done so much to win by this defiance of the King's officers?

"Nay!" he cried, smiting his thigh. "How could I have done otherwise? All that I have I owe to that merry outlaw and good comrade; and he would have given himself up to save me. Ah, here return the Riders! They are empty-handed—good luck to them!"

"The knave has slipped through our very fingers!" cried the lieutenant with a savage oath. "Thanks to that youngster who drew his bodkin on me! Ah, is it you, sir?" he roared, turning furiously to Dick. "This lies at your door, and you will rue it before the matter is dropped, I promise you!"

"I will answer at the proper time for all I have done," said Dick, standing erect. "Stand off, sir, and attempt no violence," he added, as the Rider strode angrily forward. "I am in my own domicile, and for what I have done you have no authority to do more than report to your chief."

The lieutenant, knowing Dick was in the right, bit his lip.

"All the worse for you," he said. "Come, men, bring up your horses. We have the knave Sweeny, at least."

At that moment one of the Riders came running up. He saluted hastily.

"Please, your honour, the prisoner Sweeny has escaped, and his two guards are lying dead!"

Unexpected Visitors!

DICK gave a start of surprise and horror. The lieutenant rushed off, followed closely by the young squire.

It was true. By some desperate means, or by the aid of his thievish underlings, the footpad captain had escaped, and the two riders who had held him were lying dead on the path, with deep dagger wounds to show how their fate had overtaken them.

"This is a fitting climax!" cried the lieutenant, turning fiercely upon Dick. "It is due to you, sir. By the rood, I think you will find yourself in no better case than Captain Sweeny would have been ere long! Thanks to you, we have missed both those villainous malefactors. Had you not defied

my warrant, we should have had them both. You shall answer for it, sir! You shall answer for it!"

Dick replied sadly yet with dignity.

"I regret the death of these brave fellows, lieutenant, as much as you do. But the knave who killed them was striving to kill me when you came, and if your men have failed to hold him, the fault is not mine. For the rest, I did no more than shelter my guest, and for that I will answer when the time comes."

"Ay, by the black rood you shall!" returned the lieutenant savagely. "Think not because you are a lord of the manor that you can oppose the king's officers in their duty!"

"No such thing was in my mind," said Dick sadly. "'Twas not for that I did what you complain of. Your duty and mine were at cross-purposes, sir, and so this unhappy broil arose."

The lieutenant muttered a threat under his breath, and, gathering his men together, made ready to leave.

Dick, after arranging with his serving-men for all that was necessary to be done, went into the house in a gloomy frame of mind, and retired to his lonely library.

"Od's fish!" he muttered. "And two hours since I was grumbling that matters went too slowly at Fernhall. I scarce bargained for this."

It was not the struggle with the footpad gang that grieved him, nor what he had done for Turpin, but the thought of the two slain riders—though their death was no fault of his—sat heavily on him. Moreover, he had certainly defied the law he lived under, and, though it was impossible for Dick to betray his old comrade, yet the lieutenant of the riders was doing no more than his duty.

"'Tis a stroke of sore bad luck—nothing else," muttered Dick. "I did not wish to be at loggerheads with the king's men again so soon, with the ink of my pardon scarce dry. Can they bring me to the dock for it? Men have been hanged for less, and two weeks ago I, too, was within a few hours of the gallows."

"Nay, it will not be that! There is no Vane now to drive the blow home, and make the worst of it. I have shed no blood, save of the footpads who were at my throat. I doubt 'twill be to mulct me in a prodigious big fine, since I am wealthy—one that will tax even the riches of Fernhall to pay. I trust 'twill be no worse, though I own matters look black. I will write to Deerhurst. Perchance he can smooth matters a little for me in high places."

He sat down and penned a message to his uncle, Lord Deerhurst, a brother of his late mother's, and who had some influence at court. Deerhurst had begun to take notice of Dick now that the boy was no longer an outlaw, but a great landowner and head of an ancient family.

"Deerhurst is always to be found on the winning side," said Dick to himself rather sourly, as he sealed the letter. "He was use-

ful to Uncle Vane when Vane held Fernhall; now he is equally zealous for me, as I am rich, and, whatever happened, Fernhall would not go to him."

Four days passed, during which nothing happened, and Dick was growing uneasy as to what might be in store for him, when a reply came from Lord Deerhurst, which, reading as follows, made Dick frown thoughtfully:

"My dear nephew,—Your unfortunate escapade is making a great stir among those in authority, and though I am doing my best to ensure that you escape with a fine, I may tell you you are in some danger. At least, be assured I shall do my utmost, and I think I can pull you through.

"It is fortunate, at this crisis, that your deceased uncle, Vane Forrester, left, as far as we know, no sons or daughters, especially in view of the hurried and somewhat slovenly way in which the legal part of your entry into possession of Fernhall was accomplished. Although your moral rights are certain, you should have had a better lawyer. I advise you to look into this. And remain, my dear nephew, your affectionate uncle,

"DEERHURST.

"P.S.—Break off all connections with that confounded rascal and robber Turpin. I am persuaded he will be your ruin."

Dick folded up the letter with a grunt.

"What a croaking letter! What does it matter about the lawyers now? Yet Uncle Deerhurst is a shrewd old fellow, and knows the world. As to Vane's sons and heirs, he never had any—at any rate, none came forward when I claimed my rights. Vane was a widower these fifteen years past, nor had he ever a child. Besides, we are the older line; and for the little time he had Fernhall, he won it only by felony and murder.

"None the less, I'm grateful to Uncle Deerhurst for what he has done for me. He will pay himself well, there's small doubt. Well, what is it?"

This last was to a footman, who appeared before his young master with such a scared face that Dick spoke somewhat sharply.

"If you p-please, sir," said the man, "there is a very strange m-message nailed on the outer doors. W-we thought you would like to see it."

"Message nailed to the door?" said Dick, striding down to the hall.

He flung the outer door back, and there, sure enough, was a large sheet of millboard on which was a crude drawing in charcoal of a grinning skull, and beneath it this inscription:

"Those who offend me never live to boast of it. Death is a little thing, but death at the hands of Captain Sweeney and his men is a thing to speak of in whispers. Ask of those who know. Make ready!"

There the message ended abruptly. Dick plucked it down from its place with a contemptuous jerk.

"Is this what scared you?" he said scornfully to the footman. "Are you an old woman, to be frightened by a piece of childish bombast?"

Dick tore the placard to scraps and cast it into the pond beyond the carriage-drive.

"Captain Thief knows where to find me," he said, with a grim laugh. "Let him think well before he tries a vengeance upon me. I was not called Galloping Dick for nothing!"

In careless mood, he saddled Black Satan, the magnificent horse of his highway days, and whom none of the grooms dared touch, and rode over the heaths and fields with a free rein, laughing ever and again as he thought, of the footpad captain's threat. He returned to Fernhall after dark, splashed and mud-bespattered; he had ridden the black mood out of his spirit, and felt himself again.

It was a couple of hours-after dinner when the butler announced two gentlemen to see him on most important affairs.

"Seekers after a lease, doubtless," said Dick. "Well, send them in."

Into the room came two people whom Dick had never seen before.

One was a lean, dark-faced youth, of about twenty-one; with long, white hands, and a Court rapier by his side. The other had the look of a lawyer of a rather second-rate sort—very bald, snuffy, ferret-eyed, and clad in rusty black.

Dick rose courteously.

"You do not know me, I see," said the younger man.

"I have not the honour," said Dick, "though there is something in your person which seems familiar to me."

"I can imagine it," said the dark man airily. "I am considered like my father—my late father."

"Indeed, sir," said Dick, beginning to feel a little impatient. "Who was your late father, and who are you?"

"My father," replied the young man, taking a chair, and looking insolently at Dick, "was the late Vane Forrester, owner of Fernhall, and I am Hector Forrester, his heir!"

Crossed Swords!

FOR a moment Dick sat as if thunder-struck. Then his face grew dark with anger, and his hand sought his sword-hilt. He felt tempted to run this unblushing liar through the body.

The young man remained immovable, not turning a hair, and Dick's face cleared. He made a deep, ironical bow.

"I am charmed to meet you, Hector Forrester!" he said bitingly, with a cool smile. "I presume it was a mere oversight on the part of my late uncle that he omitted to mention that he had a son. And so you came to introduce yourself to me?"

"I came to inform you that Fernhall belongs to me," said the dark man coolly, "and to make a small business suggestion to you."

"But I inform you that you lie," said Dick, with equal coolness, taking his seat again, and ringing his spurs on the floor. "For Vane Forrester never had a son, and Fernhall is mine, as it was my father's before me, and his forefathers' also, for six hundred years. And if my words give you any offence I am willing to make them good. You wear a rapier, I perceive. Or is it a sham one, like your name?"

The young man did not move a muscle. If he was a son of Vane Forrester, he had more control than ever his father showed.

"Not so," he said. "You may be a better swordsman than I—though I have my doubts of that—in which case I shall not live to enjoy my inheritance of Fernhall."

"Do not let that trouble you," said Dick. "There is an excellent level grass-plot outside, and your chances of inheriting Fernhall are the same whether you die or live."

"Why so?" said the other.

"Because, even were you Vane's son, you are not heir to Fernhall, since Vane himself never owned it. You seem to know something of the case; have you, however, heard in what way he obtained the will from my father?"

"I have heard the whole story," said the stranger coolly.

"Then you know that Vane Forrester never rightly owned Fernhall?"

The dark man smiled mockingly.

"In the eyes of the law, he did," he replied, "and you never upset his claim. You entered into Fernhall not as your father's heir, but as Vane's."

A sudden qualm seized Dick as he realised the truth of this.

"And, unfortunately for you," said the dark man, his smile still more mocking. "I, and not you, am Vane's next-of-kin. You seem to be dubious as to that. Give yourself no concern, I beg you, for the legal proofs of my birth are registered, and, indeed, I have hardly need to prove to all the world that I am Vane Forrester's son and heir. Any judge on the circuit can satisfy himself as to that."

"And so," said Dick, rising slowly, "you have come here to suggest that I should move out of Fernhall and make way for you. Enough of this, sir! Say what you mean."

"Not quite that," said Hector Forrester civilly. "I am here, as I said, to make a business suggestion. You are in possession here—nine points of the law, as Mr. Smear, my lawyer, agrees. It will take me some months to fight you in the courts and take possession myself, besides the cost of it. It seems to me there is enough for both. So I propose you should sign this document, which Mr. Smear has drawn up, legally surrendering Fernhall to me, and reserving to yourself half the other estate of Huntercombe."

(Will Dick agree to this startling proposition? Read next week's stirring instalment—full of surprises and thrills.)

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