

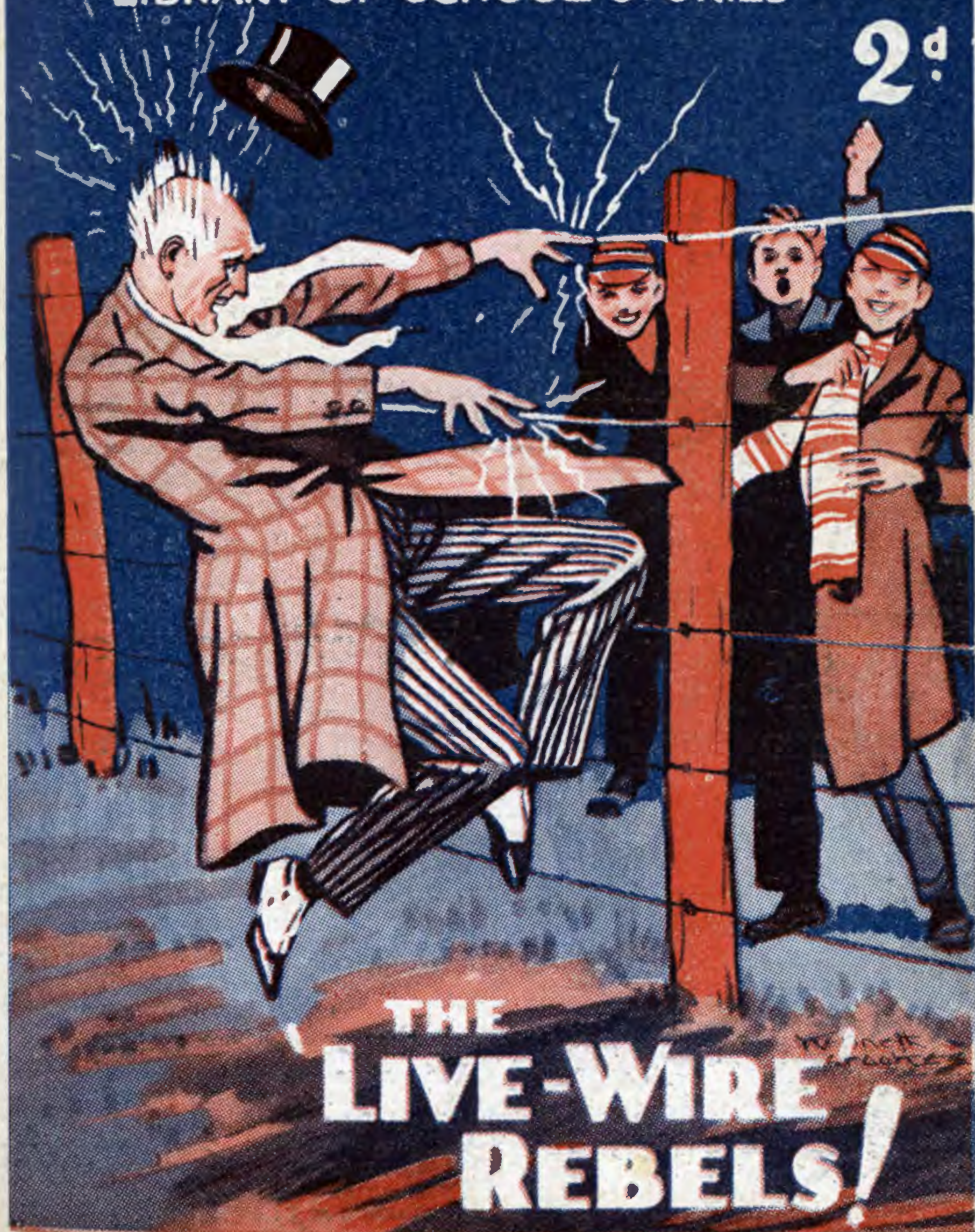
BARRING-OUT AT ST. FRANK'S!

Read the Sensational Long Complete School Yarn Inside.

THE NELSON LEE

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THE LIVE-WIRE REBELS!

A shock for the spoil-sport Head! One of the lively incidents from this week's stirring long yarn featuring the cheery Chums of St. Frank's.

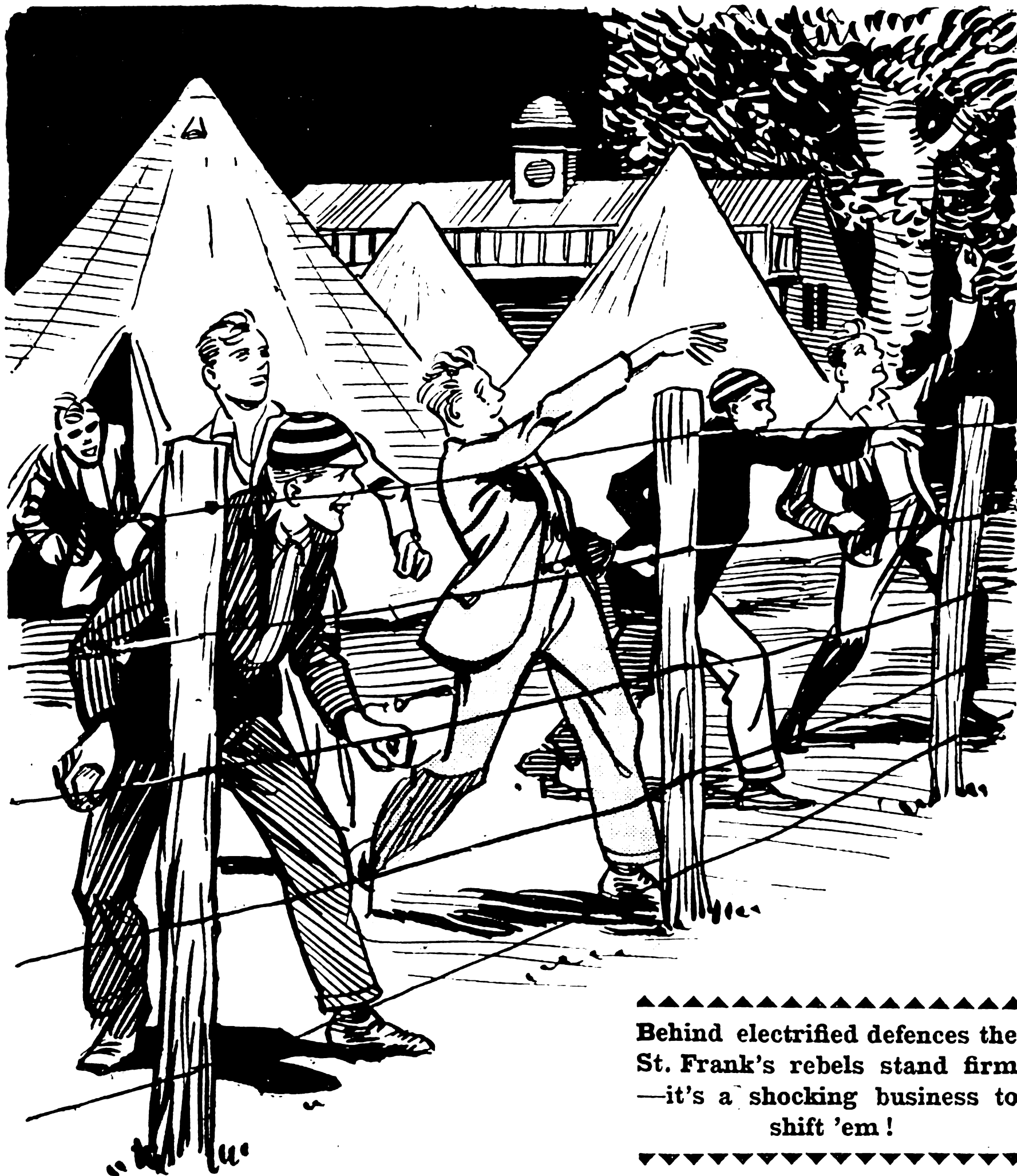
New Series No. 86.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

September 12th, 1931.

Sensational Barring-Out At St. Frank's.

THE "LIVE-WIRE"



Behind electrified defences the St. Frank's rebels stand firm—it's a shocking business to shift 'em!

CHAPTER 1.

Rebellion!

"DOWN with Ogleby!"
"Hands off the playing fields!"
"Hurrah!"
Excitement ran high at St. Frank's.

The famous old school itself was calm enough; but out on the spacious playing fields the boys of the Lower School were shouting furiously. They were wildly excited, and their excitement was inflamed by anger and indignation. The Remove, the Fourth, and the Third were practically at full strength; and the playing fields, in consequence, were swarming.

Electrifying Complete Yarn of School Life!

REBELS!

By

EDWY SEARLES
BROOKS



Those shouts, with their almost alarming significance, were unusual at St. Frank's, where discipline was strict. For they implied direct defiance of all authority. Rebellion was in the air. The boys were in a mood for any mischief.

Professor Thorpe Ogleby, the Chairman of the St. Frank's Board of Governors—and the self-appointed headmaster of the school—was about as popular at that moment as a thunderstorm at a cricket match. If he had been rash enough to appear it is very probable that he would have been seized by the more hot-headed of the incensed boys and frogs-marched to the nearest ditch.

Professor Ogleby's non-appearance was not due to any realisation of his danger, but to the fact that he was temporarily stunned by the complete collapse of his carefully-planned scheme. The boys did not know it, but Professor Ogleby was standing, at that moment, at the top of the School House tower, from which lofty viewpoint he could take in the whole picture. And the learned man was well nigh speechless with disappointment.

He did not regard those playing fields with the love and affection which stirred every fibre of the St. Frank's boys. To them, those fair stretches of turf were sacred. They were rich in history, in

tradition. For centuries the playing fields had remained practically unaltered; through fire, through flood, they had emerged unharmed.

On those fields, with their springy, mossy turf—turf which took centuries to bring to such a pitch of perfection—the fathers and grandfathers and great grandfathers of many of the boys had played, in very much the same way as they themselves played. The preserving of these playing fields was, in the eyes of the school, a sacred trust.

And here was this new headmaster, ready to destroy the playing fields at one dire blow; ready to prohibit all sports at the old school! A man who had no understanding of games at all; a man whose whole life was wrapped in the dreary, musty business of archæology.

Merely because he suspected that the remains of an old Roman camp lay buried beneath Little Side and Big Side, Professor Ogleby was attempting ruthlessly to destroy the playing fields.

For a week or two now the boys had known of Professor Ogleby's nefarious intentions; and there had been more than one clash. The professor had brought men to the school to dig up the ground; and the boys had taken a firm stand. There had been an attempt, at dead of night, to use Farmer Holt's ploughs; but again the boys had been ready.

Now the last straw had been placed upon the camel's back. It was the breaking point. Open rebellion had blazed forth, and the situation on this warm, sunny September evening was dramatic in the extreme.

A BIG luxury motor-coach glided almost noiselessly through the great gateway of St. Frank's into the old Triangle. Stalwart youths emerged from it, many of them six-footers. They were the big men of the Sixth and Fifth—the members of the St. Frank's First XI., just returned from Barcliffe College, where they had won a hard-fought victory. They were accompanied by a goodly crowd of other seniors who had gone over with the team to give it their moral support.

"Well, here we are!" said Biggleswade, of the Sixth, grinning in his usual cheerful way. "The conquering heroes return, tired, hungry, and slightly battered, but supremely happy!"

Browne of the Fifth was looking round sadly.

"What has happened to the populace, brothers?" he asked. "Where are the juniors? Why are they not here, to swarm around us with their eager inquiries as to

our success? I confess that I am grievously disappointed. Our triumphant return, apparently, means nothing to the rest of the school!"

William Napoleon Browne was one of the strong men of the Senior XI. He it was, in fact, who had scored the winning goal. Incidentally, he was a fellow who had a liking for the limelight, and this neglect on the part of the Lower School pained him. Generally, when the seniors returned from an away match, they were eagerly awaited, and when they arrived they were pestered with excited questions.

But now the Triangle was empty; not a junior was to be seen.

"I wonder what all that noise can be?" said Fenton, of the Sixth, frowning.

"You may well ask, Fenton!" came the acid comment from Mr. Pycraft, the bony, sharp-featured master of the Fourth Form, as he stood on the East House steps. "Yes, Fenton, you may well ask."

He advanced towards the seniors, and Edgar Fenton, the captain of the school, eyed him curiously.

"Brother Pieface is not in the best of humours," murmured Browne. "Which clearly indicates, to a fellow of my superlative intelligence, that the juniors have been indulging in one of their high-spirited outbursts. Alas! The recklessness of youth is, indeed, painful to us elders."

"The only thing that's paining you, Browne," said Stevens, "is that you weren't mixed up in the junior rag yourself!"

Mr. Pycraft was looking rather hot and bothered.

"I am glad you have returned, Fenton," he said. "You are the captain of the school, and you may be able to influence these wicked, foolish boys."

"The row seems to be coming from the playing fields," remarked Fenton.

"It certainly is," agreed Mr. Pycraft. "The boys have seized the playing fields, by what I can understand. They have gone quite out of their minds with excitement."

"But hasn't something been done about it?" asked the school captain. "I mean, what about your own boys, sir?"

"I have not been instructed to deal with this—er—disgraceful commotion," replied Mr. Pycraft curtly. "It is a regrettable fact that the Housemasters—and most of the other masters, in fact—are willing to stand by and do nothing. They say that it is for Dr. Ogleby to quell the commotion. It was he who started it, so it is he who must attend to it. In my opinion, a

lamentably weak attitude. Alone, I can do nothing!"

"I had better go along and see what it's all about," said Fenton briskly.

He had no faith in Mr. Pycraft. The very fact that the other masters were taking no action was significant. Fenton, who knew how the playing fields had recently been in danger, was rather concerned.

Most of the other seniors accompanied him; and they were relieved to see that Big Side was in no way damaged. Cheers rang out when the seniors were seen, and the Fourth-Formers and Removites and fags came crowding round as the stalwarts of the Sixth entered the arena.

"Steady — steady!" shouted Fenton. "Not so much noise! Nipper, you're the Junior captain—and I take it that you are in the lead here. What's happened? What's it all about?"

"More dirty work by the Ogleby bird," said Nipper promptly.

"I thought as much," nodded Fenton. "What's the exact size of it?"

"Look here, Fenton, if you're going to start grouching, we don't want to hear it!" put in Edward Oswald Handforth, the aggressive leader of Study D. "You needn't think that you can make any difference. We've rebelled, and we're going to have a barring-out."

"Rebelled!" interrupted Fenton sharply.

"Sorry, Fenton, but it's the only possible course," said Nipper, his voice quite steady. "Ogleby has gone the limit. We're not going to give him another chance!"

"Go on!"

"Well, you know how he has been acting lately," said Nipper. "You know he's got a bee in his bonnet about those old Roman remains. He doesn't care twopence about our playing fields, and he'd cheerfully see them ploughed up."

"I agree that the man has a kink where archæology is concerned," said Fenton, nodding. "A clever, likable chap, really—a brilliant scholar and an exceptionally gifted scientist. But his interest in archæology is so rabid that sports, to his mind, are trivial."

"Well, a man with a mind like that shouldn't be the headmaster of a big public school," said Nipper gruffly.

"I agree; but he is headmaster," said Fenton. "And all this talk of rebellion is just nonsense. Things like that aren't done in well-conducted schools. You'll only get yourselves into a hopeless mess if you keep up this tomfoolery."

"I knew it!" groaned Handforth.

"Wait a minute, Fenton!" said Nipper fiercely. "You haven't heard yet. For some days Ogleby has been away, and most of the chaps thought that the danger was over. Well, we were away at Bannington, playing those Council School chaps in our League match——"

"We drew — two-two," interpolated Handforth.

"Never mind that," frowned Fenton. "What did Ogleby get up to during our absence?"

"Oh, nothing much," said Nipper caustically. "He only turned up with three whacking great traction-engines. It was his amiable idea to let those traction-engines loose over the playing fields—and each engine was fitted with an automatic digging apparatus. You know the sort of thing—they use them on steam-rollers, for tearing up the roads."

"I know," nodded Fenton, his face hardening. "So Professor Ogleby did that, did he?"

"He didn't!" retorted Nipper. "He tried to, but young Willy Handforth happened to be here with a crowd of fags. Willy 'phoned us, and we buzzed over; and in the meantime the fags just managed to keep Ogleby's men busy. Well, anyway, there was a terrific dust-up, we turned the traction-engine men away, and the danger's over. But we thought it just as well to take possession of the playing fields. And here we're staying!"

"Oh!" said Fenton, and he glanced significantly at the other seniors, who were all looking startled.

"You're sports, skipper, and you're head prefect," continued Nipper. "All the same, Fenton, I hope you won't ask us to give up this wheeze. We're sick of Professor Ogleby and his tricks. If we don't stick tight to these playing fields by sheer force, one of these days he'll put something over. Well, all the chaps of the Lower School have agreed to back me up. We're staying here, in possession. We're going to bar the professor out—and anybody else who tries to interfere with us. The thing's too risky now. It's a rebellion, yes, and we're not going to give in. We'll only return to the school if the professor promises that he'll keep his hands off our playing fields!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Nipper!"

"You heard that, Fenton?" demanded Handforth. "If you don't like it——"

"But I do like it," said Fenton, smiling.

"Eh?"

"Good luck to you," went on the school captain heartily. "I entirely agree that this barring-out is justified. I'm with you

—and I think the other seniors will be with you, too. And thanks awfully, kids, for protecting Big Side for us during our absence."

"Brave words, Brother Fenton," said Browne approvingly. "I venture to suggest that the Upper School, in one solid phalanx, will give you its support."

"Yes, rather!" shouted a number of the seniors.

"Well done, kids!"

"Keep it up—and good luck to you!"

The juniors, hot and flushed with fresh excitement, cheered joyously.

"I knew you'd be a brick about this, Fenton," said Nipper. "It helps us a lot to know that the whole school is with us. And I'm going to suggest that you should leave us juniors to look after the playing fields. You seniors carry on as usual, in the school. After all, this sort of thing is a bit below your dignity," he added dryly. "So you can be quite comfortable in leaving it to us."

"That's a good idea," nodded Fenton. "We seniors will keep the flag flying in the school—and we'll make it quite clear to Dr. Ogleby that we approve of your stand. But until we're absolutely compelled we won't take any active part in the rebellion. You started it, so you can carry on with it. But don't forget, if you want any help—call on the Upper School."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Fenton!"

And the juniors cheered themselves hoarse.

CHAPTER 2.

Straight from the Shoulder!

IT was small wonder that the St. Frank's juniors were freshly excited.

This promise of support from the Upper School, negative though it was at the moment, made all the difference. The seniors fully approved of the barring-out; there would be no interference from prefects. And the masters, by their inactivities, had already hinted that they were leaving the settlement of this rebellion to Dr. Thorpe Ogleby.

The new headmaster's latest attempt to "mutilate" the playing fields had aroused the indignation of the whole school. The juniors, by their strong action, had earned the school's gratitude, and so this rebellion was universally popular. Everybody else in St. Frank's felt that the playing fields would be safe so long as the juniors remained in possession.

Dr. Ogleby, meanwhile, was recovering.

From the School House tower he and Mr. James Drummond had seen everything. They had seen the traction-engines turned away; they had seen the juniors establish themselves, and they had seen the arrival of the seniors.

Mr. Drummond, who had come down to St. Frank's to take charge of the actual work of excavation, was a brisk little man with an eager, boyish enthusiasm. He was a noted archæologist, and he was just as keen and as enthusiastic as the professor himself. He was frankly mystified by the school's antagonism.

Professor Ogleby himself was bony and lean; he possessed a big head with a massive brow, and it was perched on a long and scraggy neck. There was something bird-like in his appearance, for he had a trick of thrusting his head forward, and his thin nose was startlingly beak-like.

"I have been waiting, Drummond," he said suddenly, his voice thick with suppressed anger. "And it seems that I have been waiting in vain."

"I must confess, sir, that I do not quite understand," ventured the second-in-command.

"You can see what's happening, can't you?" said the professor, with a wave of his bony hand towards the playing fields. "These boys are out of control. There are masters in this school—and prefects, too—whose duty it is to maintain discipline. I have been waiting for these masters and prefects to do something. And what have they done, Drummond?"

"Nothing, as far as I can see."

"By Heaven, sir, you are right!" shouted the professor. "They have done absolutely nothing! And I am shocked! Is it possible that they are leaving it to me?"

Mr. Drummond did not risk giving his opinion. It did not seem merely possible, but highly probable, that Professor Ogleby's theory was correct. And Mr. Drummond wondered just what the professor would do.

Ogleby himself was more or less nonplussed. He had appointed himself headmaster after Nelson Lee had resigned—for Lee had found it impossible to submit to the professor's authority. The unfortunate archæologist was discovering, to his inward dismay, that the control of a great public school was not half so easy as it looked. To back out now would be cowardly—and he would only make himself a laughing-stock. Having once started this thing, he would have to finish it.

He had fondly imagined that the Housemasters and the Form-masters and the prefects would "carry on," and that



Handforth aimed at the stake with his mallet, missed, and gave himself a hearty clout on the leg instead.

he himself would be free to occupy all his time on the vital work of excavation. He was wrong. He was the Head, and the school was making it quite clear to him that he could not be a figurehead.

He received further evidence of this when he and Mr. Drummond descended from the tower and encountered Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Stokes—the Housemasters of the Ancient House and West House respectively—in Inner Court.

"Well, gentlemen?" snapped the Head. "May I inquire why you have taken no steps to quell the disgraceful disturbance on the football grounds?"

Both the Housemasters looked astonished.

"The boys appear to have broken out into open rebellion, sir," said Old Wilkey gently.

"Don't I know it?"

"Well, sir, it is essentially the headmaster's task to deal with such a grave matter," said Mr. Wilkes firmly. "Nobody else in the school would presume to act whilst you are on the spot yourself."

"It would be an unheard-of liberty!" said Barry Stokes, in a shocked voice, and the two Housemasters walked away, looking preternaturally grave.

"Well!" panted Professor Ogleby helplessly.

The Housemasters, at least, had made it quite clear to him that their sympathies were with the rebels. It was a startling and alarming discovery.

Yet, in his heart, the professor had half expected it. His conscience had smitten him more than once of late. He was essentially an honest man; indeed, a kindly, generous-hearted man. Only his fanatical love of archæology had led him into this

tangle of trouble in which he now found himself, and the antagonism of the St. Frank's boys had hardened him.

He had come to the school quite blithely, under the impression that he would be able to dig up the playing-fields without a word of protest from anybody. The manner in which the boys were hindering him was disgraceful beyond words. Even the masters had taken sides against him. It was an intolerable situation.

He had even found it necessary to take over the headmastership—but even that bold stroke had not served him very well. The only thing to do, he decided, was to deal drastically with these impertinent boys.

So, steeling himself and hardening his nature more than ever, he proceeded towards the playing-fields—Mr. Drummond trotting breezily behind, filled with suppressed excitement.

The rebels gave him a surprise.

Instead of greeting him with catcalls and other shouts they were silent. He was permitted to walk unhindered to Little Side, and the boys stood round respectfully. Nipper had been busy, and he had impressed the fellows with the importance of treating the Head with the respect which was his due.

"We don't want to give him a chance of saying that we acted like a crowd of irresponsible kids," said Nipper. "This is a dignified barring-out, my sons, and the seniors and masters are behind us. But if we start any rough-house stuff we shall lose their support. We're not rebelling against the school authority; we're only protecting our playing fields."

The Remove and the Fourth and the Third backed him up loyally.

"Who is the ringleader here?" was Professor Ogleby's first question.

"There is no ringleader, sir," replied Nipper, striding forward. "We are all in this together."

"An absurd evasion!" retorted the professor angrily. "You are the ringleader, Hamilton, and you know it! How dare you defy me in this way? You and all these other boys will return to your respective Houses at once!"

"We shall be only too pleased to, sir," said Nipper readily.

"Eh?"

"If you will give us your word of honour, sir, that you will take no further steps to dig up the playing fields——"

"I shall do no such thing!" shouted Professor Ogleby furiously. "Good heavens! How dare you make such a suggestion? Are you mad, boy? Do you

think that I shall make any such promise?"

"If you don't, sir, we shall be reluctantly compelled to remain here, on these fields, so that we may protect them," replied Nipper. "There have been too many attempts to trick us. We're not taking any more chances. Either you give us your word that the playing fields will not be touched, or we remain here to guard them!"

"Hear, hear!" came a swelling murmur from all the others.

"This—this is outrageous!" exclaimed the professor, looking helplessly at the already helpless Mr. Drummond. "Do you hear them, Drummond? Did you ever hear anything so scandalous?"

"You would be well advised, my boys, to remember that Professor Ogleby is your headmaster," said Mr. Drummond nervously.

"Don't misunderstand us, sir," said Nipper earnestly. "We're not defying you out of any spirit of mischief. We're only protecting these fields—which are ours."

"Yours!" roared the professor, almost beside himself. "They belong to the school, and the school governors have decided that the important work of excavation is more vital than your absurd games."

"That's just the pity of it, sir," said Nipper steadily. "You regard our games as absurd; we think they're important."

"Well, I won't be defied in this way!" stormed the professor. "Listen boys—all of you! Are you going to obey me, and return to your Houses?"

"No, sir!" shouted the Lower School, in one voice.

"Then, by heaven, I'll have you thrown off by force!" shouted Dr. Ogleby. "Do you hear me? By force! You can take your choice now! You will either obey my orders, or you will be removed from these meadows by violence."

"That's a declaration of war, sir," said Nipper spiritedly. "All right! We've already chosen—and we stay here!"

"Hurrah!"

"Long live the rebellion!"

"Hands off the playing fields!"

"Hurrah!"

Professor Thorpe Ogleby, freshly stunned, staggered away.

EXCITEMENT ran higher in the rebel camp; but Nipper, with his strong powers of leadership, soon had the fellows well in hand.

The die was cast.

It was war now—and there could be no drawing back. Professor Ogleby had refused to listen to reason, so he would be barred out from the playing fields until the bitter end. Nothing but his solemn promise to abandon his excavation scheme would end this trouble.

There were feverish activities during the remainder of the evening. The rebels felt an unusual exhilaration as they moved about the school; everywhere they went the seniors nodded cheerfully to them, some grinning, some uttering hearty words of encouragement. There wasn't a single frown—not even from a master. Mr. Pyecraft would have frowned, but he thought it advisable, in all the circumstances, to be busily employed in his study for the rest of the evening.

The affair was not at all like an ordinary barring-out. The rebels had no enemies; everybody in the school approved of what they were doing. In the history of St. Frank's there had been many stirring rebellions against unjust authority, yet, in its way, this was the most important and far-reaching barring-out that the old school had ever experienced.

The boys did not roam about the school needlessly. They were all very busy. Their main task was the fetching and carrying of their Scouts' equipment.

The majority of the juniors were Boy Scouts—even the Third-Formers. They all had their camping outfits—tents, camp-beds, cooking utensils, and so forth. Everything of this nature was now carried triumphantly on to the playing fields.

The housekeepers of all the Houses were startled and scandalised by the arrival of strong forces of juniors who came to raid the stores. These daring raids were carried out boldly and openly. The domestic staff could do nothing except stand by in open-mouthed indignation, or with secret approval, according to the way they looked at things.

At all events, there was no resistance.

Food, as Nipper had explained, was a very important item; and it was only just that the school should provide that food. So large stock of foodstuffs were carried away and stored in the pavilion.

There were really three pavilions at St. Frank's. The central one, which stood midway between Big Side and Little Side, was quite an imposing brick structure. It was very picturesque, with verandas and covered accommodation for spectators. Inside there were roomy lounges and recreation rooms and dressing-rooms. The building provided the rebels with an excellent

headquarters. All round it the tents were pitched.

The other two pavilions were smaller. One faced Little Side, the other faced the end of Big Side. These were mere wooden shelters, quite charmingly designed to match the big pavilion, but there was not a great deal of room in them. However, they were very handy for the defence forces.

Other tents were pitched round them, and before darkness descended the playing fields presented the appearance of an armed camp.

By now all the rebels were back from their various expeditions—and the great barring-out was "on."

CHAPTER 3.

Good News for the Professor!

A STRONG guard was maintained throughout the night.

Nipper organised a simple but effective sentry system. Not for one moment during the hours of darkness was the vigilance relaxed. The main rebel force slept soundly—but ready enough to leap into activity should the occasion arise.

No trouble was anticipated the next day, which, of course, was Sunday. Everything was quiet in the rebel camp, and scarcely any work was done—although Nipper knew the importance of fixing up some effective defences. However, he had no wish to alienate the sympathies of the masters and other people by making a lot of noise on the Sabbath.

Dr. Ogleby had gone—which, in itself, was significant.

During the morning the professor sent for Mr. Alington Wilkes, and in a few words he informed the senior Housemaster that he—Mr. Wilkes—would be in complete charge for the time being.

Later Professor Ogleby and Mr. Drummond drove away, taking several well-packed suit-cases and bags with them.

"There'll be a bit of a lull, and after that—fireworks," said Nipper, when he heard. "The Ogleby bird and Pugdog Drummond aren't beaten, my sons. Don't be fooled by this move; they haven't quit. They've merely gone away from St. Frank's so that they can make fresh plans."

"Just the same as they did the last time," nodded Lionel Corcoran, the Fourth Form skipper. "We know 'em! A tricky pair! How long do you think

it'll be before the old boy puts his threat into effect?"

"To chuck us off by force?" asked Nipper musingly. "Goodness knows! He only said that in the heat of the moment, and it may come to nothing. Still, we must be ready."

That night was peaceful again, and throughout Monday the rebels worked far harder than they would have worked had they been in school. But, to them, it was sheer enjoyment. They revelled in it. It was a sort of mock warfare—the preparation of wire defences all round the "front."

There were funds in plenty. Such fellows as Nipper, Archie Glenthorne, Travers, Lord Pippinton and Singleton came up well to the scratch. Several big rolls of wire were purchased, to say nothing of a great wagon-load of wooden props. These were delivered during the morning, and after that the real work began.

Right round the playing fields the defences were erected—a line of wooden props, joined together with lengths of wire. There wasn't a gap of any kind. The juniors thoroughly enjoyed the task—with the possible exception of Handforth, who, operating a large mallet, missed the post he was driving into the ground, and caught himself a hefty clout on the shin.

When Tuesday passed, and nothing happened, a restlessness made itself apparent in the rebel camp.

"Why the dickens doesn't something happen?" demanded Handforth. "We're all ready for action, aren't we? Our defences are prepared, and we're spoiling for a scrap! Why doesn't old Ogleby get busy?"

"Give him time, Handy," said Church patiently.

"He's had practically three days!"

"Perhaps he isn't going to fight us at all?" suggested McClure. "Perhaps he's given up the whole thing as a bad job. It wouldn't surprise me if Mr. Lee suddenly turned up and told us that the excavation wheeze has been abandoned."

"But that's rot!" said Handforth, in alarm. "That'll mean that we shall have to go back to school!"

"It'll mean that we shall have won," replied Mac.

Handforth couldn't see it at all. Winning in that way would be very feeble and tame. A fight, and a desperate fight, was his idea of a barring-out.

The school, in the meantime, was placidly carrying on as usual. The Junior masters, of course, found themselves with plenty of time on their hands; and they

were rather enjoying their enforced holiday. But, like everybody else in the school, they felt a bit jumpy. Trouble was coming—but when? There was a tension in the air. There was a feeling of uncertainty, of suspense.

When was the blow going to fall?

VERY late that evening Mr. Drummond went on a scouting expedition. He and his chief had arrived after dark—in fact, after the school had gone to bed—and nobody at St. Frank's knew of their arrival. Professor Ogleby had no intention of giving the rebels a warning.

Mr. Drummond did not like his task; it savoured of spying. However, he was as much incensed against these boys as the professor, and he was exasperated by all this delay. The sooner they were pitched off, the better—for then the great work of excavation could begin.

It was about eleven o'clock, and the sky was dark and overcast. It was an ideal night for such work as this.

Like a shadow, Mr. Drummond stole round the school property, so that he could approach the playing fields from the open meadows—where there was less chance of an alert watch being kept.

The necessity to crouch low, almost on all-fours, worried him. It wasn't in keeping with his dignity. Still, it couldn't be helped; and there was nobody to see. Feeling something like a Red Indian on the trail, the unhappy little gentleman crawled nearer and nearer.

"Dear me!" murmured Mr. Drummond abruptly.

His eyes were thoroughly accustomed to the gloom, and he could see numbers of wooden stakes sticking out of the ground—some straight, some crooked, but all of them firmly embedded. From them stretched lengths of wire, forming a barrier which apparently extended all round the playing fields—not on the actual playing pitches, but just beyond where the crowds of spectators usually stood.

"H'm! The wretched boys have erected a wire fence all the way round," mused Mr. Drummond, not without a feeling of contempt. "How absurd! It may afford them a certain amount of protection, but determined men——"

He crouched lower as he heard voices. Dim figures were approaching, their footsteps noiseless on the soft turf. He dared not move, in case he should be seen. He crouched almost flat, trying to make himself look as much like a shadow on the grass as possible.



Cautiously Mr. Drummond prowled round the rebels' encampment. "We shan't need any guards to-night," he heard Nipper say.

"No sentries to-night?" were the first words he heard.

"No need at all," came another voice—which he recognised as Nipper's. "We'll go on this tour of inspection, just as a matter of form, and then we can turn in."

"Well, that's a relief, anyhow," said the other voice.

"There's not much chance of anything happening," continued Nipper. "The Ogleby bird is still away. There's no earthly reason why we should keep guard, as we did on the first night."

"Good egg!" said the other rebel. "So we'll all sleep soundly until morning, eh? The whole giddy camp!"

"That's it," came Nipper's voice, less distinct now, as he and the other moved away. "We shan't need any guards to-night."

Mr. Drummond heard no more—but what he had heard was enough.

Ten minutes later he was talking excitedly with Dr. Thorpe Ogieby. The headmaster was in his study; the heavy curtains were drawn so that no chink of light escaped.

"I have been very successful, sir—indeed, very lucky," reported Mr. Drummond.

"You are certainly very dirty," said the professor, eyeing his lieutenant's damp

and muddy clothing. "What in the world have you been doing, Mr. Drummond? Was it really necessary to get yourself into this—er—unfortunate condition?"

Mr. Drummond was righteously indignant.

"Really, sir, one cannot crawl about on all-fours, over wet grass, amongst numerous molehills, without getting dirty!" he protested. "You appear to think that my task has been easy—whereas I can assure you that it has been most——"

"All right, Mr. Drummond—all right!" interrupted the professor hastily. "I am sorry. I did not quite realise the thoroughness with which you have undertaken the work."

"The boys are entirely unsuspecting," said Mr. Drummond, somewhat mollified. "And you will be glad to learn, sir, that the entire camp is going to sleep. No sentries are being kept on duty."

"No sentries!" echoed the professor. "Do you mean that there will be no guard at all?"

"None."

"You'll forgive me, Mr. Drummond, but I can hardly believe——"

"I heard the boys talking!" broke in Mr. Drummond triumphantly. "I will repeat their own words."

He did so.

"Well, it seems that we need not have prepared such a formidable attacking force, after all," said the professor. "However, it is just as well to be absolutely certain. The knowledge that these rebellious boys are not maintaining a guard is all to the good. I cannot say that I am surprised."

"You appeared surprised when I first mentioned it, sir," commented Mr. Drummond. "So surprised, in fact, that you wouldn't believe it."

The professor grunted.

"I have had time to think," he replied. "And you must remember, Mr. Drummond, that we are dealing with mere schoolboys. Two or three days of inactivity—two or three nights of fruitless watching—and the young scamps think they are perfectly safe! This delay has helped us considerably. Within an hour, my friend, we shall be in possession of the playing fields."

"I sincerely hope so," said Mr. Drummond.

"There's not a doubt of it," said the professor, pacing up and down, his eyes burning. "The boys will be turned off—packed back to their dormitories. Our men will take possession of the camp, and use it for themselves. And to-morrow the great work of excavation will commence."

"I can scarcely wait," said Mr. Drummond breathlessly.

"We have had a hard and trying time through these misguided schoolboys," continued the professor. "Their obstinacy and their stubbornness have hindered us very seriously. And the expense, I may tell you, Mr. Drummond, has been considerable. But it will be some satisfaction, at least, to triumph over them."

"Is that quite the right—er—spirit, sir?" ventured the other.

"It is!" retorted Professor Thorpe Ogleby curtly. "I am by nature a generous and forgiving man, but these boys have exasperated me to such an extent that I shall take nothing but pleasure in witnessing their complete downfall. They have dared to defy me—and they shall suffer the full penalty!"

CHAPTER 4.

A Shocking Business!

IN his way, Dr. Ogleby was a strategist. This delay in attacking the rebels had been more or less unavoidable; before making the attack it was necessary to obtain a suitable force. But the professor might easily have speeded

things up. He had waited deliberately—feeling certain that two or three days of idleness would make the boys unsettled, and therefore the easier to force into surrender. The professor was not to know that the boys, for the most part, had been intensely active.

"You tell me that there is a wire fence all round the playing fields?" he said, after he had listened to Mr. Drummond's report. "Ordinary wire, or barbed wire?"

"Quite ordinary wire, I think."

"It makes little difference—the men will make short work of such an obstruction," said Dr. Ogleby, glancing at his watch. "Well, we shall soon be on the move, my friend. The men are due in the outer meadow, near the river, at midnight. Oh, yes! We shall soon have those boys off that property!"

The professor had every reason to be confident. He had collected a large number of reliable men who were engaged primarily for the task of excavating the Roman remains. Fighting was not in their line at all, but Dr. Thorpe Ogleby had been perfectly honest with them.

He had told them just what their work would be, but had been careful to explain that a large number of high-spirited schoolboys were in possession of the fields. They had no right there; they were disobeying orders; and their defiance was a direct menace to discipline. Much as Professor Ogleby hated taking the men to St. Frank's in the dead of night, it was the only reasonable thing to do. And the men's first task would be to get the boys off the ground.

"But please understand that there must be no—er—violence," the great man had explained. "You may find it necessary to handle the boys a trifle roughly, but nobody is to be hurt. The misguided youngsters are defying all my orders, so my only course is to adopt this unhappy expedient."

"Supposing the boys show fight, sir?" one of the men had asked. "We mustn't be violent, you say? But what if they're violent with us, sir? Boys ain't very particular, you know, and when they're excited——"

"I quite understand," interrupted the professor. "Don't mistake my meaning, men. When I say that there must be no violence, I mean that the boys are not to be injured in any way. It is quite likely that the young rascals will resist strenuously—that they will fight—and in that case you will be compelled to handle them—er—drastically. Oh, yes, you have my full permission to handle them drastically."

But if any boy is injured during the—er—*mêlée*—I shall be very angry.”

The men had laughed. It seemed to them that their task would be an easy one.

TWELVE o'clock boomed out solemnly from the clock-tower of St. Frank's. Midnight—and the rebel camp slept.

It slept soundly. There was no trickery here on the part of the juniors; they had not been aware of Mr. Drummond's spying activities, and they had not uttered those words especially for his benefit.

It was a positive fact that everybody in the camp slept. Not a single fellow remained on guard. Not a sentry was on duty. Even Nipper, who was such a capable and vigilant leader, slept as soundly and as peacefully as any of the others. It seemed that this carelessness was to cost the rebels dearly.

Professor Ogleby, in one of the neighbouring meadows, inspected the position. He couldn't see much in the gloom, but he was satisfied that the camp was unprepared.

“Listen to me, men,” he said softly.

The men were ready; stalwart, honest enough fellows, glad of the work and the good wages.

“It seems that your task will be comparatively easy,” continued their employer. “The boys, I find, are quite unprepared. They are all sleeping, and you will be able to fall upon them, so to speak, by surprise.”

“Looks like there won't be any fighting, then, sir,” said one of the men.

“If there is any fighting, it will be brief,” replied Professor Ogleby. “Now, I suggest that we use a little strategy. It will be a good idea for a third of you, say, to approach on one ‘front,’ whilst the other two-thirds comes up in the rear. You understand? In that way the boys will be taken by surprise, even if they awaken to the fact that they are being attacked.”

“Wouldn't it be better for us all to run into their camp at once, sir?”

“Oh, no!” replied the professor quickly. “I forgot to tell you. The boys have erected a crude defence of wire all round the playing fields.”

“Oh!” murmured one or two of the would-be attackers.

“There is nothing for you to worry over,” continued the professor. “A wire fence won't hinder you for long—and I understand that it is not even barbed wire. But the—er—obstruction will prevent you from making any sudden rush.”

“Not if we get past that fence first, sir,” said one of the men. “How about all creeping through that wire, getting ready, and then making our rush?”

“Yes, that would be good,” said the professor. “Well, you can start as soon as you like. Spread out carefully, do not talk and, above all, do not injure any of these boys in the fighting. Once you have seized the fields, you will take possession of them yourselves. Now, go ahead—and good luck!”

“Leave it to us, sir!”

“It won't take us long!”

“We'll soon have them kids on the run, sir!”

Chuckling amongst themselves, the men light-heartedly entered upon this raid. They were strangers in the district, and they knew nothing of the invincible Remove or the fighting Fourth—or, if it comes to that, of the warlike Third. This attack upon the boys' camp, in its way, was rather a case of leading the lambs to the slaughter.

The camp slept—yes—but Professor Thorpe Ogleby had made a stupendous mistake in assuming that the rebels were unprepared and unguarded.

ZERO hour!

Like shadows of the night itself, the workmen, having spread out, approached the wire “entanglements.” About a couple of dozen of them grasped the wire at the same moment.

And instantly the peace of the night was violently shattered!

There were gasps and howls of consternation mingled with pain. Hands that had grasped the wire were jerked back. The foremost men fell away, shouting. Their companions, filled with amazement, blundered on.

Many of them grasped the wire before they knew what had happened to their companions. There were more howls, more gasps. The wire was released as though it were white-hot.

But it wasn't white-hot; it was cold and wet with the dew. It stretched round the playing fields, a seemingly harmless enough obstacle.

Not until those midnight attackers had touched the wire did they realise the truth. And then it was too late. Their shouts had given the warning.

Confusion reigned, the attack petering out before it had fairly started. Professor Ogleby's men, completely disorganised, were backing away into the darkness.

“Something bit me!” panted one of the workmen

"Bit you be blowed!" shouted another. "That old gent spun us a yarn—that's what he did! Plain wire, eh? It ain't no more plain than my foot! It's barbed wire, or something like that!"

The confusion increased.

"Barbed wire my eye!" said another man thickly, as he reeled away from the defences. "That bloomin' wire is full of juice!"

"What!" went up a general shout.

"I ought to know—I've been an electrician!" bellowed the man. "It's charged with electricity!"

"Well, I'm blowed!"

"Crikey!"

"No wonder we was hurt!"

And the attacking force, in panic-stricken disorder, backed still farther away. The truth was clear to them now. Those wire defences which completely encircled the playing fields were electrified!

CHAPTER 5.

Not So Sleepy!

NIPPER sat up with a jerk.

"Hallo!" he muttered grimly. "Something doing!"

The Remove skipper had a knack of awakening to full alertness on the instant. He knew exactly what those shouts out of the darkness meant. The commotion was increasing, and it was coming from all sides. Many of the other rebels were awakening, but most of them were still too sleepy to realise fully what was happening.

Nipper dived his hand under his pillow, grasped a police whistle, and then blew it piercingly. Blast after blast shrilled out. It was a prearranged signal—and every rebel knew exactly where to run, and what to do.

"Begad!" gurgled Sir Montie Tregellis-

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West, sitting up. "I say! What the —"

"It's the signal!" yelled Tommy Watson. "Come on! We're attacked!"

Racing out into the open, Nipper continued to blow on his whistle, and the result was instantaneous. Sleepy-eyed juniors came pouring from the main pavilion and from every tent.

"What's happened?" asked Handforth excitedly.

"Don't know—but there are a lot of men round the wires!" yelled somebody else. "Buck up, you chaps! Get to your posts!"

Within thirty seconds the rebel camp was ready for action. There was no confusion—no wild rushing to and fro. Every junior ran direct to his own post. It had all been rehearsed many times—for Nipper believed in being thorough.

Right in the centre of the playing fields stood a curious group of vehicles—Handforth's Morris Minor, motor-cycles belonging to Nipper, Travers, Singleton, Jimmy Potts, Corcoran and others; William Napoleon Browne's car, too. Boys, rushing to them, switched on the powerful electric headlamps, and in a moment the entire "battleground" was flooded with brilliant white light.

It had been a good idea, this. The cars and motor-cycles were so arranged that when the headlights were switched on, the beams reached every corner and angle of the defences. Although the camp had been sound asleep a minute earlier, it was now fully alive to the situation and prepared for action.

The floodlights revealed the groups of men beyond the electrified wire. Nipper, after the first glance, shouted reassuringly to his followers. Everything was all right; the attackers were already beaten off, and it was a more or less disorganised force which lurked out in the gloom.

"Easy, you chaps—easy!" shouted Nipper. "Don't start anything yet. Leave it to the enemy. If an attack develops, you know just what to do."

"Hadn't we better give 'em a sample of something straight away?" asked Handforth.

"No; no need to do anything unless these men try to break through the wire," replied Nipper. "It's all to our advantage to keep a few surprises up our sleeves!"

"Hurrah!"

"Down with Ogleby!"

"I wonder how his men like the 'fluence?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The rebels, supremely confident, stood at their posts. They had not been so careless as Professor Thorpe Ogleby had supposed. They had slept peacefully in the knowledge that the wire defences, so harmless-looking in the darkness, would give them all the warning they needed in the event of a surprise attack.

The electrification had been a tricky enough task, but there were quite a number of clever amateur electricians in the Remove and Fourth. The current was "borrowed" from the main supply in the big pavilion. By ingenious wiring, the defences were capable of giving a nasty but perfectly harmless shock. If any man was rash enough to climb through the electrified wires, however, he would certainly know all about it.

"Bally nuisance, being routed out in the middle of the night like this!" grumbled Forrest, of the Remove, with a yawn.

"Just what I was thinking," said Gulliver. "No need for us to mess about out here, is there? Let's get back to bed."

"Good idea!" agreed Bell.

But the slackers of the Remove found Vivian Travers facing them.

"Cut it out," advised Travers smoothly.

"Look here——"

"Stick to your posts, you blighting blighters," said Travers. "All hands are needed at this job."

"Rot!" said Forrest sourly. "There's nothing doing, is there? Just a few men dodging about beyond those wires. This attack won't come to anything, so we might as well go back to bed."

"If we all said that, the attack would soon succeed," retorted Travers. "So we're all staying on duty."

"Who says so?" demanded Forrest.

"I say so—and if there's any more of your rot, dear old fellow, I shall be reluctantly compelled to dot you on the nose," said Travers. "There are plenty of other chaps here who will help in the good work."

"Oh, blow you!" growled Forrest. "We don't want to start any bother in the ranks. All right—we'll stay. But it's a sheer waste of time."

The cads of Study A—and a number of other fellows, too—had been grumbling a lot of late. But only Forrest & Co. themselves had actually jibbed. They made it quite plain to all the others that they had no interest in the barring-out. However, the Lower School was solid in this affair, and Nipper was not allowing any of the boys to break away.

PROFESSOR OGLEBY, thoroughly startled, was doing the best he could.

He had waited, with Mr. Drummond by his side, confidently anticipating an easy victory. Then had come the shouts and bellows of the startled workmen. In the gloom, the professor had seen the men breaking ranks, and running back from the wire defences. Then the floodlights had blazed out, revealing the attacking force as a disorganised mob.

The professor ran forward, excited and worried.

"What is the matter?" he asked sharply. "Good heavens! What of my orders? Did I not tell you to make a silent attack? What made you give yourselves away by uttering those ridiculous shouts?"

"Hold hard, guv'nor!" said one of the men. "You'd shout, too, if you touched them wires!"

"Wires!" repeated the professor. "What are you talking about?"

"Them wires are full of electricity, sir!" said one of the other men.

"What!"

"They're electrified, sir!"

"Nonsense!" shouted the professor angrily. "Absolute nonsense!"

He could not believe it. Such a thing was absurd. How could those crudely-erected wire defences be electrified? He had never heard of anything more ridiculous.

"You don't know what you are talking about!" he shouted furiously. "You are spoiling everything by this delay! Go forward at once—all of you! Smash through——"

"It's all very well to talk about smashing through, guv'nor—but we ain't touchin' them wires again!" interrupted one of the workmen. "This job's a lot different from what you told us."

"Ay, so it is!" muttered some of the others.

"Are you children?" roared the Head. "I am ashamed of you! Men—strong men—and you're afraid to throw a handful of insubordinate schoolboys off these meadows!"

"We'd soon have the kids off if we could get at 'em," grunted one of the workmen. "But how do you think we can get through them wires? They feel as if they're red-hot!"

"I tell you it's impossible!" shouted the professor, running forward. "Who started this preposterous rumour? This fence is made of ordinary galvanised iron wire——"

He broke off, and uttered a bellow of pained surprise. For at that moment he had grasped the wire himself—just to prove that the story was absurd. The shock which ran through him jarred his whole body. For a dreadful second he believed that he would not be able to let go of the wire, and when he did back away he was shaking in every limb.

"Good heavens!" he panted, aghast. He was convinced now—and the startling truth bewildered him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How do you like the 'fluence, professor?"

"It'll do you good, you know!"

"Electric shocks are good for the system!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The rebels, having seen the professor's move, were shouting with laughter and uttering many humorous comments. Professor Ogleby backed away, his face white with disappointment and fury.

"You shall pay for this, you—you young scamps!" he roared, shaking his fists. "You dangerous rascals! You might have killed me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't worry, professor!" sang out Nipper. "It's not really a powerful shock—it only feels like it. It's guaranteed harmless."

In his excitement the professor ran forward again.

"I command you boys to give up this preposterous nonsense!" he shouted. "How much longer will you defy me——"

He broke off with a fiendish yell, and jumped about eighteen inches into the air. He had accidentally touched that wire again—with shocking effects!

"Men—men!" he panted, turning desperately to his helpers. "Show me that you are not afraid of these boys! Charge this wire—smash it down!"

"Not much, guv'nor," said one of the men. "What do you take us for?"

"I paid you a week's extra wages to do this for me!" almost pleaded the professor desperately. "I order you—I ask you—I beg of you! One rush, and you'll be through—by the sheer weight of your charge! Come, men!"

His tone had the desired effect.

"What about it, you fellers?" shouted one of the burliest of the workmen. "This electricity ain't really dangerous. Come on! Let's make one big rush! Mebbe we'll get through!"

"Right-ho, Sam! All together, then!"

The professor's entreaty had had the necessary effect. The men were exasperated and angry. They didn't like to



Deeper and deeper into the tunnel penetrated Professor Ogleby—followed by Bernard Forrest who had betrayed the rebels.

admit defeat by a pack of schoolboys. In a desire to get their own back against these live-wire rebels they were willing to brave the electrified defences once more. Gathering their forces, the workmen prepared for another charge.

"Good enough, you chaps!" came Nipper's cool, cheery voice. "It looks like more trouble. We'd better let 'em have it!"

"Hurrah!"

"Get ready!" yelled Nipper. "Now then—fire!"

The workmen, on the point of charging, received a fresh shock. It wasn't an electric shock. Crowds of boys behind the protective wires were running forward, hurling what looked like small bombs.

Pop-pop-pop!

The bombs hurtled through the air, exploding with curious little harmless puffs. They were all flung so that they struck the ground or the men's feet. Reeking masses of vapour arose, and as the attackers caught the first whiff they reeled dazedly.

"Hi, help!" gurgled one man. "Great Jeosophat! What is it? I'm poisoned!"

"Poooooh!"

"Oh, my grandfather!"

"Let's get out of this, you fellers!"

The attackers backed away, gasping and gurgling. The appalling odour which arose on all sides was overpowering. It hit the men like something solid, and sent them dashing away in panic.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's done the trick, you chaps!"

"Rather!"

"Our bombs may not be destructive—but they're pretty effective!"

"By George, yes!" came a yell from Handforth. "Let 'em have another dose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Those stink-bombs were certainly miracles of chemical ingenuity. Dick Goodwin, of the West House, had invented them, and he had done his work well.

The attacking force melted away; it scattered in all directions. Those men who were not affected by the appalling "niff" ran helter-skelter from those who were. It was worth running a couple of miles to get out of that zone.

And the attack fizzled out like a damp squib. Even Professor Thorpe Ogleby

made no attempt to collect his scattered forces. For the professor himself was reeling towards his own house. One of those bombs had burst at his feet, and it was now a matter of entire indifference to him whether the rebels were thrown off the playing fields or not. All he thought about, in a dazed kind of way, was getting his clothes off and giving them to somebody to burn.

CHAPTER 6.

Trouble in the Ranks!

NEXT morning the school chuckled joyously.

The rebels were openly jubilant over their midnight success, and the story, of course, had spread throughout the school five minutes after the rising-bells had gone.

The seniors were chuckling hugely over the whole business; and the masters, whilst preserving an air of strict neutrality, were secretly pleased. In their opinion, Dr. Ogleby had asked for trouble, so it was up to him to make the best of things. Let him get on with it!

Scarcely a person in the whole school sympathised with the professor. The very fact that he had secretly returned at midnight, bringing a crowd of men with him to attack the rebel camp, alienated all sympathy. He was behaving childishly—foolishly. He was making himself a laughing-stock, and reducing the dignity of St. Frank's to a farce. In his fanatical determination to dig up the playing fields, he was involving the whole school in a welter of publicity which the school in no way desired.

That day Professor Ogleby remained behind locked doors. He sulked. He even refused to see Mr. Drummond. So Mr. Drummond took it upon his own shoulders to send all the workmen to Bannington, there to get lodgings, and to await further orders.

Among the letters that morning was one from Carlton College. It was addressed to Nipper, and Nipper instantly recognised the handwriting. Various friendly Fifth-Formers had brought the morning's mail to the rebels. The Fifth-Formers, prompted by William Napoleon Browne, were doing all sorts of favours for the juniors.

"They are engaged in a great work, brothers," Browne had said. "Let us, therefore, show our appreciation by rallying round and making ourselves occasionally useful."

Nipper made a little grimace as he prepared to open the letter.

"It's from K.K.," he explained, as Handforth and Travers and a few others gathered round him. "About our next fixture, I suppose. It'll be an awful pity if we can't play it. Somehow, I don't think this trouble will be over by Saturday."

"Doesn't look like it," agreed Reggie Pitt, of the West House. "It's Wednesday already. What does K. K. say?"

All the St. Frank's fellows remembered K. K.—otherwise Kirby Keeble Parkington, the go-ahead captain of the Fourth Form at Carlton. K. K. and his so-called "Red-Hots" had been at St. Frank's for a spell, and they had made the fur fly considerably during that hectic period. K. K. & Co. were thoroughly decent fellows; but the St. Frank's boys liked them better at a distance.

"It's nothing much," said Nipper. "K. K. has heard that we're in a bit of trouble here, and he's written to ask if he shall bring his team over on Saturday to keep the League fixture. He doesn't want to come over for nothing, he says. Of course, we can't blame him——"

"Better tell him to come," interrupted Handforth. "We've got to keep the fixture, you fatheads! It's in the League! We can't miss one of our League games!"

In all the excitement of the "battle for the playing fields," the boys had not lost their interest in the newly-formed St. Frank's Football League. There was a large number of local schools and boys' clubs in the league. It was run in very much the same style as the English Football League, and Lord Dorrimore, the millionaire peer, was providing a handsome cup for the championship winners—to say nothing of gold medals for the members of the winning team.

"Yes, I'll write to K. K.," said Nipper. "We'd better tell him to bring his team over. And, by hook or by crook, we'll play the match."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's the stuff, Nipper!" said Buster Boots, of the Fourth. "We can't allow this silly business to interfere with our fixtures!"

Bernard Forrest, who had strolled up, gave an expressive grunt.

"But it's interfering with everything else," he grumbled. "I don't mind telling you that I'm getting fed up to the teeth with the whole rotten stunt!"

"We didn't need any telling," said Nipper tartly. "Since Monday, Forrest, you and your precious pals have been giving us the pip."

"And we've had about enough of it," added Handforth aggressively.

"Oh, don't start a row," said Forrest. "But I'm hanged if I can see why I should put up with all this beastly inconvenience. No proper food, no comforts——"

"What do you mean?" broke in Handforth indignantly. "No proper food! There's been plenty of grub, hasn't there?"

"Of a sort," admitted Forrest. "But you can't honestly mean to say that the slipshod meals we've been having lately are good enough. And what about being confined to this wretched field?"

"Wretched field!" echoed Handforth indignantly. "Do you mean Little Side?"

"Why not?"

"Did you hear him, you chaps?" asked Edward Oswald, appealing to the others. "Little Side—a wretched field! His lordship doesn't like it! His lordship finds this confinement to the rebel camp irksome, if you please!"

"Oh, leave him alone," said Nipper gruffly. "He deserves to be kicked, but we don't want to start any quarrelling in the ranks. The best thing you can do, Forrest, is to dry up!"

"Oh?" said Forrest, with a stare. "We can't speak our own minds, then? We're being gagged now, are we?"

He walked off in a temper, and the other fellows stared after him threateningly.

"You can't expect anything else," said Nipper. "Forrest and his pals are only here because we forced them to come with the rest of the Lower School. But they don't care a toss about sports, anyhow."

"You're right there," agreed Buster Boots. "Football means nothing to them—and these playing fields mean nothing. It wouldn't worry them a bit if they were wiped off the map."

"It wouldn't worry me if Forrest & Co. were wiped off the map," said Handforth darkly.

Nipper looked thoughtful. He had known all along that Bernard Forrest and his cronies would resent the hardships and discomforts which went hand-in-hand with a barring-out. The bulk of the fellows revelled in them—their enthusiasm for this campaign to save the playing fields kept them going. It permitted them to make light of hardships at which they would ordinarily jib.

But the cads had no patience, and after the first novelty of the situation had worn off they were becoming restive. They would have to be closely watched. They were capable of spreading discontent amongst the rank and file.



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Certainly, the rebels had plenty of time on their hands. And idleness is a good breeder of discontent. There were no lessons, and although meals had to be prepared, the boys took turns at such tasks—which meant that the bulk of them were idle for long periods.

No move came from Professor Thorpe Ogleby, and by now the seniors were losing interest; they were not going to the playing fields so often to chat with the rebels. The boys felt isolated—they felt bottled up. But Nipper, by his cheery leadership, kept most of the juniors in good spirits.

Football practice, of course, was indulged in freely. There were all sorts of scratch games, and it was the football, in fact, which prevented the fellows from thinking too much of their self-imposed imprisonment. During the afternoon the seniors turned up, too, for practice on Big Side. So there was plenty of activity.

In one of the tents, however, three Removites were sprawling at their ease—and, incidentally, they were smoking. Bernard Forrest and Albert Gulliver and George Bell were trying to make the best of things.

"It's sickening!" Forrest was saying. "I suggested running down to the village this afternoon, but that fool, Nipper, put the veto on the scheme. I suppose you know that these are our last cigs?"

"What are we going to do?" asked Gulliver.

"I know what I'm going to do," retorted Forrest promptly.

Something in his tone made the others sit up and look at him eagerly.

"Well?" they asked, in one voice.

"As soon as it's dark this evening I'm going to slip out," said Forrest. "What's more, I'm going to Bannington."

"We'll come, too," said his study mates, together.

"Well, I suppose you can, if you care to risk it," drawled Forrest. "There's always the chance that Nipper and these other blighters will find cut—and there'll be trouble when we get back."

"Who cares?" asked Gulliver. "We'll have a proper spree, eh? We'll go to the Japanese Café and have some real food for once. Then we'll go to the talkies, and perhaps look in at the Wheatsheaf for a game of billiards."

They planned it all out, and revelled at the prospect. Very unwisely, they talked too much. They got in touch with Merrell and Marriott, of the East House Fourth. Somebody must have been incautious, for it was soon being rumoured throughout the camp that Forrest & Co. were talking

about making a trip to Bannington after dark.

Nipper did not beat about the bush. He sought out Forrest and faced him.

"Is this true, Forrest?" asked the Remove skipper quietly. "Are you and your pals planning to break away from camp this evening and go to Bannington?"

Forrest glared.

"Mind your own business!" he snapped.

"It is my business," replied Nipper. "I'm the leader of this rebellion——"

"We didn't ask to come into it, did we?" interrupted Gulliver. "What do we care about the rotten rebellion? Why should we be bottled up day in and day out like this?"

"We won't go into that," said Nipper. "I just want to warn you fellows that we're not having any traitors in this camp. If you go to Bannington this evening, you'll go out of this camp for good."

"Don't be an ass!" growled Forrest. "We've got to stick together, haven't we? If old Ogleby knows that we've left the camp, he'll jump on us. We can't go back to our own House—until the rest of you come."

"Well, it's your own look-out," said Nipper. "You are at perfect liberty to stay here, if you want to."

"Hang it and dash it!" shouted Forrest, exasperated. "Where's the harm in going off for an hour or two? Anyhow, we're going!"

"Hear, hear!" said Gulliver and Bell. "You can go and eat coke, Nipper!"

"If you're going, you might as well go now," said Nipper coolly. "All three of you. Since Monday you've been spreading as much discontent as you possibly could. If you're sick of us, we're sick of you. Why wait until it gets dark?"

"Look here——" began Forrest in some alarm.

"It's too late now," interrupted Nipper. "You want to clear out—so you can clear. Grab them, you chaps. Bring 'em along to the wire."

"And jolly good riddance!" said Handforth heartily.

Forrest & Co., to their alarm, were seized by many willing hands. They were roughly escorted to the wire fencing. The current, of course, was cut off during the daytime.

"Here, wait a minute!" roared Forrest desperately. "You can't do this, you rotters! You know jolly well that the professor will jump on us!"

"That's what we're hoping!" said Handforth bluntly.

(Continued on page 24.)



HANDFORTH'S Weekly

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EDITORIAL STAFF.

September 12th, 1931.

Weekly Science Talk

By

Professor Napoleon Browne.

No. 1: Eating.

Editor-in-Chief E. O. Handforth
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Rest of Staff E. O. Handforth

OUR POETS' CORNER

BROTHERS! List and ye shall hear.
In these weekly talks, my brethren,
I shall demonstrate to you plainly
some of the remarkable forms of
science in this wonderful world. Let there be
no laughter or ribald merriment while I talk,
for these talks are not funny.

First of all, I shall talk to you about a
science which is dear to everybody—especially
to Brother Little, who is asked kindly not to
shuffle his feet while I am talking. I allude
to the science of eating.

Eating is an art—not a frivolous pastime.

Consider the delicate position of the youth
who is commanded to "Go and eat coke."
Coke is not an article that lends itself to
mastication. It has to be chewed thirty-seven
times before it can be swallowed, and then
not always. The only way to eat coke success-
fully is to turn it into a vegetable. This can be
done by giving a "hearty-choke" with each
mouthful.

Eating should be tackled with reserve.
A person who loveth the science of eating
beyond all things is called "a greedy hog"
—unless he be a fat man of great importance,
when he is called a "gourmand," which comes
to the same thing.

The result of being a gourmand is that the
waistcoat begins to expand like a sunflower
when the sun shineth on it. A person in this
condition dares not stand on a weighing
machine, for the machine merely returns the
penny in a scornful manner, and refuses to
have anything to do with the affair.

This is, in America, called Central Eating.

A great feast is good in moderation, my
brethren; but beware of indulging too rashly
in tarts and the pop of the ginger. There will
come another sort of pop, and bits of you will
hit all four walls at once.

For why, I ask you, is a great feast called
a "blow out," if not because of this?

(Next Week: WALKING.)

I've never been shipwrecked
Or cast in the sea,
And I do not expect
It will happen to me.
Yet this situation
Still gives me the pip,
For I know the sensation
As well as the ship.

When borne on the following
Roar of the gale,
Helplessly wallowing,
Shorn of a sail,
The ship feels the shocks and,
Her decks all a-soak,
Is hurled on the rocks and
Tempestuously broke.

I know the disaster;
The feeling's not new;
No angry Form-master
Can make me so blue;
Yes, I feel those shocks, and
I think it no joke
When I'm on the rocks and
Exceedingly broke.

(Jack Grey, West House.)

Old Arthur Hubbard, he went to the cupboard
To get out a packet of fags;
But Wilkey blew in with an amiable grin,
And Hubbard got six on the bags,

(Walter Church, Remove.)

LATEST NEWS FROM ST. FRANK'S.

The West House masters are each to be pro-
vided with a short stick to push open the
doors of their studies. The booby-trap menace
has been increasing greatly over there.

Mr. Pycraft (East House) has been recom-
mended by his doctor to take more exercise.
Judging from the strained looks of Armstrong
& Co., he is following this advice.

Handy as a lost baby proves himself a great lad!

THE EDITOR'S LIFE STORY

By Himself

HAVING got away from my pater and mater at Southsea and boarded the boat to the Isle of Wight, I fancied I was in for a good time. But, by George! they wouldn't let me land at Ryde, because I was under eight years old and had no parents with me.

"Where's your daddy and mummy, sonny?" asked the ass of a ticket-collector, chucking me under the chin.

I landed out with my left on the spot, and got him right in the optic. It was the first eye I ever blacked, and the feeling was so good that I decided to make a habit of it. I've never regretted it.

The ticket-collector soon lost his loving look. He eyed me blackly—in more ways than one.

"You little imp!" he snarled. "You'll stay right here on board until we go back to Southsea."

But I'd made up my mind that I wasn't going to hang about on that silly boat. The only trouble seemed to be how I was going to get off. There were a couple of sailors by the gangway, besides the ticket-collector, and they had got orders not to let me go ashore.

I wandered away behind the saloon, and then I had a wonderful idea—I've always been full of wonderful wheezes, you know. I took off my little woollen jacket and dragged a deck chair to the side of the boat. Then I uttered a loud yell, dropped the deck chair in the sea with a splash and threw my little jacket after it. That done, I crawled behind the pile of deck chairs and lay doggo.

As soon as the ticket-collector heard my yell, he roared out:

"Jumping cuckoos! That little demon's fallen in the sea. I heard the splash."

He and the sailors tore round to the side of the boat, and the first thing they saw was my little jacket floating on the water. Without a single yip they all jumped over the poop-rail and dived in.

I chuckled joyously. As they came to the surface, dashing water out of their eyes, I looked down and waved my hand.

"Ta-ta, old things!" I chortled. "Tell me how you like your bathe. I'm just going to take a walk round on shore."

The ticket-collector shook his fist and

THE EDITOR'S LIFE

went under like a cork. When he came up he was puffing and blowing.

"If I ever catch you again," he yelled, "I'll give you ten minutes that you'll never have come to an end of."

"Tell that to the ticket-collector," I said. "Give my love to the ticket-collector. Bye-bye!"

I strolled down the pier and arrived on the pier selling oranges. I was selling oranges at the entrance, so I waited for some oranges.

"How many?" he asked.

"Eight," I said. "Eight, I said. It's a dozen. And will you take them up separately?"

"Wotcher want them separately for?" he asked.

"Because I like them separately," I answered simply.

So she got out some string and wrapped up the oranges after another. Then she loaded the oranges on a cart.

"That's ninepence," she said. I gave her a sweet.

"I'm sorry to hear that," I said. "I'm sorry to hear that," I told her, "to walk away, where you are."

"Give me back my little rascal!" she said.

So I left her to go on her day unwrapping, and walked down the pier.

(The Editor meets his pater is still in bed.)

SUNRISE

By Timothy Tucker

WHEN the youth Pitt informed me that Handforth desired a description of the sunrise for his WEEKLY, I replied at once that I should be very glad to undertake the task.

"We want a description of the gradual rising of the mighty sun, flooding the earth with light; in fact, the whole bag of tricks," explained Pitt seriously. "Give us something in your most long-winded style—I mean, your best style."

"Leave this thing to me, my dear fellow," I acquiesced cordially.

"We want you to stand at the window of your dormitory in the West House, and watch the sun as it slowly peeps over the horizon," he told me. "You'll have to get up about four o'clock."

"Absurdly simple," I interposed. "I will take an alarm clock to bed with me to-night, and it will arouse me in due time to-morrow morning."

As a result of this conversation, I took an alarm clock to my bed-room that night and set it for four o'clock. The bell aroused me instantly. It also aroused my sleeping companions, and I regret to state that they showed their disapproval by hurling vari-

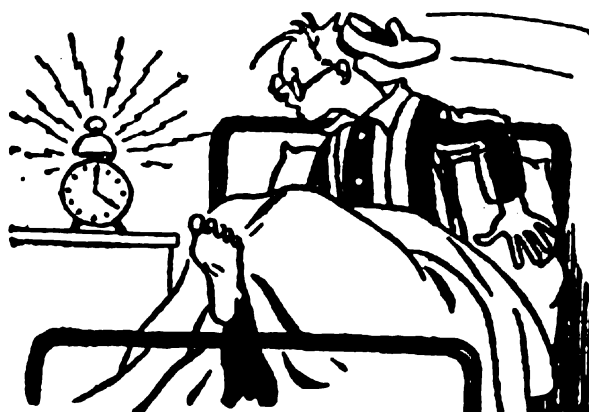
ous articles at me. I explained at some length about the sunrise; but after telling both the sun and myself exactly what they would like to do with us, they dropped off to sleep again.

I crept to the window shivering. It was very cold and very dark, and as I stared out of the window, I began to think that the sun would never rise. However, after a while it began to get lighter on the horizon, and I awaited breathlessly for the first beams of the newly-risen sun.

I waited in vain. It grew lighter and lighter, and was evidently going to be a bright morning, and yet the sun still lingered behind Bannington Moor. I supposed that it was hidden by clouds. Yet, save for the vanishing darkness, there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Very puzzling!

Seven o'clock came, and still I was waiting for the bright orb of day to appear. Seven-thirty found me still at the window, and as the rising-bell began to

(Continued at foot of next col.)



SUNRISE

ring, the youths in and stared at me.

I explained how the sun to dawn, and I all indulged in sense.

"Cuckoo!" said Canham, joining in. "Look at Sincle Triangle."

"What about him?" I asked. "Look behind Robert Canham."

"Dear me!" he said. "Why, he is actually behind him. And you are."

"You potty!" said Canham. "That's your leg. Don't let the window faces WEST."

CAUTION

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FE STORY (Cont).

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A TERRIBLE DISASTER

By Lionel Corcoran

THIS is what actually happened.

Mr. Crowell, while out for a stroll, saw a nurse from the hospital crossing Farmer Holt's field, and, knowing Holt's bull to be a rather touchy animal, Mr. Crowell ran after the girl to warn her. The nurse thereupon turned back with Mr. Crowell. The bull, at this point, uttered a loud bellow, whereat Mr. Crowell and his companion beat a hasty retreat over the stile into the road—and only just in time, too.

Edgar Fenton, who was passing at the moment, saw the incident and jokingly related it to Morrow in the presence of his fag, Chubby Heath.

Very well!

Coming back from an afternoon in Bannington, we gathered that something was up by the attitude of the fellows who were talking excitedly in the Triangle.

"You chaps heard?" asked Denny.

"Heard what?"

"Old Crowsfeet doing the gallant cavalier," chortled the chump. "He saw a girl being savaged by old Farmer Holt's bull, and he went in and beat off the bull with his gamp and rescued the girl. Dashed sporting of the old top—what?"

"The girl is at Bannington Hospital," put in Bray, trotting up.

We looked alarmed.

"Was she seriously hurt?"

"Blessed if I know," said Bray. "I heard Heath tell Farman that Crowell told Fenton that the girl went to the hospital."

Somerton sauntered up, looking rather blue.

"Bad luck on old Crowell, isn't it?" he said.

"What's up with him?"

"Haven't you heard? He's been gored by a bull."

"Whaat?"

"Fact," said Somerton, nodding seriously. "He went to the rescue of a girl who was being attacked by old Holt's bull, and the animal went for Crowell and gored him horribly."

"Oh, crikey!"

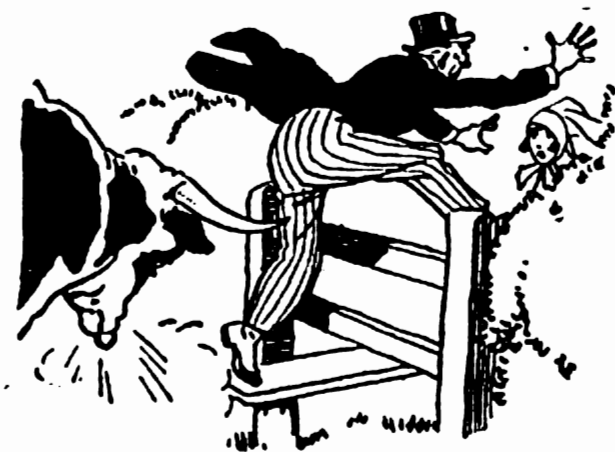
"What rot!" snorted Pitt, joining in.

"Old Crowell got off with a few bruises. It was the girl who was badly gored. She's in Bannington Hospital. Old Crowell went to her rescue and fought the bull single-handed for over an hour until he drove the animal away, and was able to carry the body out of the field."

"The body!"

"I mean, the wounded girl."

"I heard it was Crowell who was gored," said Somerton doubtfully. "Chubby Heath told Juicy Lemon, who told Biggleswade, who told Sinclair, who told Jack Grey, who told Montie Tregellis-West, who told me."



"Gee whiz!" we grinned. "Is this a round game, or something?"

"You fellows heard?" asked Jimmy Potts, strolling up.

"Here's another of 'em. How's Crowell?"

"Very bad. He was carried out of the field by a hospital nurse. Fenton saw it all, and fetched the ambulance. I heard him tell Browne about it."

"Great pip!"

Tommy Hobbs trotted up in great excitement.

"I say, you chaps," he squeaked, "do you think we shall all have to wear black for old Crowell?"

We blinked at him.

"I suppose the Head will give us a day off to go to the funeral, won't he?" Hobbs asked anxiously.

"Why, you—you—"

"You silly ass!" snorted Jimmy Hook, standing by. "It's the girl who is dead—not Crowell. The doctor says Crowell may get over it if they operate at once."

"Then he's got over it mighty quickly," I grinned, "for there he is, coming through the door with Wilkey to take call-over."

They all looked very sheepish, and Boots and I rubbed it in, you bet. We walked away towards Big Hall. As we went, we passed near an enthralled group of fags, who were listening to Chubby Heath.

"Just think of it," piped Chubby, thrilled. "Four monstrous great bulls, and Crowell killed three of 'em with his bare hands before he could get the bodies of the girls away."

We chortled, and walked into call-over singing a little ditty to the tune of Three Blind Mice.

*"One small bull,
One small bull,
See how it grows,
See how it grows,
It's now divided into four
With bodies sprinkled on the floor
And poor old Crowell drenched with gore
From one small bull."*

TAIL-PIECE

Bernard Forrest is reported to owe money to a bookmaker. He said, the other day, that if he couldn't get hold of any cash he would be sacked. The Remove promptly passed round the hat—to pay his fare home.

Continued).

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THE 'LIVE-WIRE' REBELS!

(Continued from page 20.)

"You—you traitor!" howled Gulliver wildly. "We shall get sacked!"

"Booted out of the school!" gasped Bell desperately. "And we've done nothing! Old Ogleby will make an example of us and——"

"Oh, cut it out!" snapped Forrest. "Who cares? I'm only too jolly glad to get out of this sheep-pen!"

They were assisted through the wire, and they were solemnly warned that if they came back they would not be admitted.

CHAPTER 7.

The Traitors!

"I'LL be all right, won't it?" asked Jimmy Potts dubiously.

They were watching Forrest & Co. disappear in the distance.

"Things will go on a lot better without those discontented bounders," said Nipper. "Blow them! They've been trying to stir up trouble for a day or two."

"Supposing old Ogleby jumps on them?"

"We shall hear if he does," replied Nipper. "And, of course, we won't allow them to suffer. If he plans to flog them, we'll rescue them. If he decides to expel them, we'll take them back into camp, and we won't chuck up the barring-out until he cancels the expulsion. But that's looking at the worst. The chances are he'll allow those Study A chaps to wander about the school as they like. After all, he might just as well expel Fenton. Everybody in St. Frank's except Forrest & Co. is with us."

The Study A trio, feeling very nervous, had reached the Triangle. They were glad to be back in the old familiar surroundings, yet their gladness was tempered by a considerable amount of fear.

"Well, you've done it!" growled Gulliver, with a glare at his leader. "A nice mess you've got us into!"

"You ought to be pleased with yourself," said Bell viciously.

"Oh, dry up!" said Bernard Forrest. "We'd better clear straight out—before anybody spots us. Might as well go to Bannington at once, eh?"

"And what about coming back?"

"We can leave that until we get there," said Forrest. "It's no good meeting trouble half-way. If the worse comes to the worst, we'll leave it until about midnight, and we'll go back to the camp. Nipper and those others won't refuse to admit us at that time of night."

However, they were not allowed to put this plan into execution, for, as luck would have it, Dr. Thorpe Ogleby came striding through Big Arch just then, accompanied by Mr.

Drummond. It was the first time he had appeared publicly since his return.

"Cave!" gasped Bell wildly. "It's the Head! Bunk, you chaps!"

Professor Ogleby started, and he gazed sharply in the direction of the three juniors.

"One moment!" he exclaimed. "Boys, come here! I want a word with you!"

Forrest & Co. hesitated, and it is well said that those who hesitate are lost. If they had broken into a run, they could easily have escaped; but, after all, the spirit of discipline was deeply ingrained in them, reckless young rascals though they were. Orders from the Head were not lightly to be disobeyed. Whilst they hesitated, Dr. Ogleby strode up.

"Oh!" he said, eyeing them grimly. "Three junior boys, eh? You have just come from the—er—rebel camp, I take it?"

Forrest was about to speak, but Gulliver got a word in first.

"Please, sir, we're not rebels," he gasped. "We never were! We didn't care a hang about the—the barring-out! We—we think it's a good idea for you to dig up the playing-fields."

"Rather, sir!" panted Bell. "Those rotters have—have thrown us out, and—and——"

"That will do!" interrupted the Head. "You three boys will come with me."

"But look here, sir——" began Forrest.

"At once!" ordered Professor Ogleby curtly.

There was no help for it. They went. And soon they were on the carpet in the Head's study, whilst the Head himself sat in his chair. Professor Ogleby was feeling rather pleased. He was glad enough to get hold of these three rebels.

"I intend to make an example of you three boys," he said firmly. "It will show the school that I am a determined man."

"May we ask what you're going to do with us, sir?" asked Forrest boldly.

"I am going to flog you heavily."

"Oh, corks!" moaned Gulliver, who was a physical coward.

"You have been rash enough to leave your companions, so you must suffer the consequences," said the headmaster. "I shall, of course, give the other junior boys a chance of helping you. If they will surrender, and go quietly back to their Houses, you will be excused and the ringleaders punished in your stead."

Forrest, who judged everybody according to his own standards, shook his head.

"That wouldn't be any good, sir," he urged. "They wouldn't surrender to save us."

"Then it will be most unfortunate——"

"But listen, sir! I have an idea——"

"I do not want to hear it."

"You ought to hear it, sir," said Forrest boldly. "We don't care a snap about this rebellion. Look here, sir, if we can show you a way to defeat the rebels, will you let us off?"

The professor gave Forrest a cold suspicious glance. It seemed to him that these

boys were different from the general run of the others. There was something almost insolent in Forrest's manner; the young rascal was extraordinarily sure of himself.

"You are proposing the betrayal of your comrades?" asked Dr. Ogleby sternly.

"Well, I like that, sir!" protested Forrest. "It'll be all to your advantage——"

"I would like you to know, young man, that your manner is impertinent," said the professor. "I am not sure that I shall allow you to speak any further. You have already hinted at a base act of betrayal——"

"If you'll excuse my interrupting again, sir, that's not quite fair," said Forrest quickly. "Nipper—that is to say Hamilton—and those other chaps have thrown us out. If you don't believe me, sir, you can go and ask them. They've thrown us out, and they say that they won't have anything more to do with us."

"Indeed! Why did they act in this drastic manner?"

"Merely because we argued with them that the rebellion was wrong," said Forrest glibly. "We consider, sir, that the discovery of priceless old Roman relics is of far more importance than playing football."

The professor began to thaw.

"Oh!" he said gently. "You do not approve of football, then?"

"We never play it, sir, at any rate," said Forrest. "We're not in the Eleven. We're not mad about sports, like most of the other chaps."

"I am very glad to hear it," said the professor approvingly. "Sports can easily be a curse. I approve of sports, of course, but one can always have too much of a good thing."

"Well, as I was saying, sir, we can show you how to get at the rebels secretly—without having to bother about those electrified wires, and those stink-bombs, and all that sort of thing."

The professor shuddered slightly; the smell from those stink-bombs still lingered in his nostrils.

"Well?" he said grudgingly.

"Do you know that there are lots of old tunnels under the school, sir—secret passages, and all that?"

"My good young man, of course I know," said Dr. Ogleby, with some impatience. "At one time there were a great many of these secret passages, but what with the reconstruction of the school and various other tragedies, most of these passages no longer exist."

"But there's one tunnel which does exist, sir," urged Forrest. "You probably know of it. But perhaps you haven't thought of it in quite the right way. The tunnel I mean is the one which leads from the school—that is to say, the Ancient House—to an old gully on the Earl of Edgemore's estate."

The professor frowned.

"No, I don't think I have heard of it," he said. "What of this tunnel?"

"Some months ago, sir, some crooks unblocked the farther end of the tunnel, and

allowed a stream to flow in," said Forrest. "We were practically flooded out in the Ancient House, because the water came pouring down the tunnel. But it's blocked up again now, and the tunnel, of course, is quite dry."

"Well? Go on!"

"I was only thinking, sir," said Forrest casually, "that it might be of some use. You see, the tunnel passes right under the playing fields."

Professor Ogleby started.

"Under the playing fields!" he repeated, leaning forward in his chair.

"Yes, of course; it must do so to reach Lord Edgemore's property," explained Forrest. "It isn't a particularly deep tunnel, either. I mean, it's not very far below the surface. Well, that's the idea, sir. I thought something might be done."

"Wait! Wait!" muttered Professor Ogleby tensely.

He rose to his feet and paced up and down, his head thrust forward on his scraggy neck until he looked something like a vulture. His eyes were gleaming excitedly.

"A tunnel—leading directly beneath the playing fields," he muttered. "Good heavens! And I did not even know—Yes, there might be a chance! I have men here, and it would certainly be an excellent way of taking the boys completely by surprise. I wonder if it would be possible——"

He broke off, paced up and down again, and then abruptly turned to the three prisoners.

"Do you know how to get into this tunnel?" he asked sharply.

"Why yes, sir, of course," said Forrest, quite at his ease.

"Then lead me to it at once," said Professor Ogleby, hurrying towards the door. "I must look at it before I can decide what shall be done with you."

CHAPTER 8.

Mischief Afoot!

BERNARD FORREST flashed the light of an electric torch into a low, musty-smelling archway.

"Here we are, sir," he said. "This is the entrance. The other end, of course, is blocked up, and I'm not sure about the purity of the air in the tunnel. I shouldn't go far in, if I were you."

They were in one of the Ancient House cellars, and the professor was still excited. He judged, by the appearance of this old tunnel, that it was fifteenth century work. In a way, he was disappointed. Not that the age of the tunnel really made any difference to the main issue.

If this tunnel actually ran beneath the playing fields, the outlook was good. Already many possibilities had occurred to the professor; and there was one startling plan in his mind which rather frightened

him. Still, if this tunnel wasn't very deep, it might be possible.

"Let me have the light, boy," said the Head abruptly. "You needn't come unless you want to."

"If you're going, sir, we'll go with you," replied Forrest.

Gulliver and Bell were not sure that this was a brainy idea. They were funky of the tunnel. They didn't want to be gassed, or anything unpleasant like that. So they decided to keep well in the rear; and then if anything happened to the professor and Forrest, they would be warned and could dodge back.

Deeper and deeper they penetrated, and Professor Ogleby, who had a good sense of direction—he had noted at exactly which tangent the tunnel led from the entrance—judged that they were passing somewhere beneath Inner Court. That meant they would presently arrive beneath the playing fields themselves.

"Hallo! What's this?" said the archaeologist abruptly. "Dear me! Wait, boy, wait! Upon my soul!"

He was flashing the light at the walls, and at the curiously-arched roof. The tunnel was of different structure here. Forrest watched with interest. The difference was not very noticeable to him; but to the professor it was startling.

"Look!" shouted the great man, running forward. "Amazing! Wonderful! Marvellous! Look, boy! Perfect—almost perfect!"

"You mean the tunnel, sir?" asked Forrest, grinning.

The professor started.

"What else should I mean?" he said, attempting to control himself.

"Oh, well, if you ask me, sir, the tunnel looks pretty mouldy here," said Forrest candidly. "It's much better nearer the cellar."

"Better!" echoed the professor, his voice full of unutterable scorn. "Upon my word! Such appalling ignorance! Don't you realise, young man, that this tunnel we are now in is of Roman handiwork?"

"Clever old boys, the Romans, sir," nodded Forrest, with indifference.

"The preservation of this underground passage is remarkable," continued the professor, as though speaking to himself. "The original tunnel was merely fifteenth century restoration. But this is genuine Roman handiwork. I am more delighted than I can say!"

"Glad to hear that, sir," said Forrest. "I hope you won't forget that I told you about it."

"So you did," said the old archaeologist, beaming. "I owe you a great debt of gratitude, Forrest. Thank you—thank you heartily. But don't bother me now. I wish to spend a glorious half-hour surveying this remarkable discovery!"

He penetrated deeper, and Forrest & Co. felt sorry for him. What he could see in the damp, evil-smelling tunnel was beyond their comprehension. He was like a child

with a new toy. He positively crooned to himself as he potted along. Now and again he would let out a whoop of fiendish exultation.

Patiently the cads waited for him; and at last he decided to return. He was annoyed that nobody had told him of this tunnel before. It was a great discovery, and it fired him with a new desire to get ahead with the main excavations.

"My boys, I am proud of you!" said the professor, when they were once again in the open. "I have come to the conclusion, in fact, that you are the only right-minded boys in the school!"

"Thank you, sir!" they chorused.

"Whilst all those others hinder me and treat me with the utmost insolence, you realise the insignificance of football and the great importance of exposing the relics of a once-great Roman camp. How I could have thought of punishing you, I do not know. I hope you will forgive me, my boys, for being so hasty."

"That's all right, sir—don't mention it," said Forrest cheerfully. "We're only too glad to have been of some help."

"I must reward you," continued Professor Ogleby firmly. "No, not with money. You might be offended."

"Try us and see, sir," said Gulliver breathlessly.

But the professor apparently did not hear.

"I shall give you a week's holiday," he said, beaming upon them. "How is that? You may go home for a whole week!"

"Do you mean that, sir?" asked Bernard Forrest eagerly.

"Of course—of course," said Professor Ogleby. "Why shouldn't I mean it? You are at liberty to leave the school just when you please—and you need not return till this day next week. By then, I am sure, the absurd rebellion will be over, and the school once again at work. There! You may go!"

Forrest & Co. went, gleeful.

"He might have whacked us out a fiver, or something!" grumbled Gulliver.

"Rot!" said Forrest. "Isn't a week's holiday good enough? My dear sportsmen, we can have a ripping time. A clear week's vac. in mid-term, eh? That's what I call something like!"

They went to the playing fields, and the rebels eyed them suspiciously—and wonderingly—when their jubilant manner was observed.

"I say, Nipper," sang out Reggie Pitt. "You, too, Handy! Come and look at these Study A chaps! They're so pleased with themselves that their faces are splitting with the wideness of their grins!"

"Why shouldn't we grin?" asked Bernard Forrest coolly. "We've seen the Ogleby bird, and he has proved to be a decent old bird, too. Given us a week's holiday."

"What!" yelled the rebels.

"Fact!" nodded Forrest, grinning more than ever. "You see, the professor realises that we're the only chaps in the school with



"Here comes the Head!" yelled somebody. Handforth turned—and at that moment K. K. Parkington sent the ball whizzing into the net.

any sense. As a reward he's given us a week's holiday."

Yelling with laughter, the cads of study A walked off.

"I don't like it much," said Nipper, frowning. "It looks fishy to me."

"What have those rotters been up to?" demanded Handforth darkly. "It's jolly funny, if you ask me! What mischief have they been doing?"

Nipper was troubled.

"Perhaps it wasn't so wise to let Forrest and his pals go," he said. "In camp, under our eye, they couldn't do much harm. Oh, well! We're ready for the enemy, whatever happens."

"Yes, rather," said Handforth. "What do we care? We're not afraid of those cads! Rats to 'em! Good riddance to bad rubbish!"

And Forrest & Co. were thus dismissed. Little did the rebels dream of the ingenious plan of campaign which Professor Thorpe Ogleby, through Forrest's treachery, had formulated!

BUT nothing happened immediately.

The night proved uneventful, and so did the next day. The rebels were completely ignored by everybody in authority.

Seniors came occasionally to have a word with them, but they could bring no news—except that Professor Ogleby was carrying

on with his duties as headmaster in quite the normal way."

"I can't get to the bottom of it," growled Nipper. "If the old boy had gone away again, we should have suspected him of getting up some fresh game. But he's here—doing nothing!"

"And those workmen he brought have gone," said Lionel Corcoran. "If old Ogleby has given us up as a bad job, why does he say nothing?"

"I can't help thinking that he's got something up his sleeve—something which will come as a bit of a bombshell," said Nipper. "We shall have to be more on our guard than ever. The surprise, when it comes, will be sudden, and unless we're jolly careful we shall be caught napping."

He was only too well aware of the fact that many of the rebels were becoming slack. And Nipper, as the responsible leader, had much to think of—much to do.

He made a practice of going amongst the juniors, particularly the rank and file and the Fourth. The Third was well looked after by Willy Handforth, who would allow of no backsliding or grumbling. Willy was quite an autocrat in his own way. Nipper had no qualms about the Third.

It was this idleness which reduced the rebels to a comparatively weak force. Just one scrap would have revived all their old enthusiasm. If only Professor Ogleby had

taken some sort of action against them, they would have been all right.

There was the question of food, too.

Nipper took the bull by the horns, and led a big raiding party. Seniors conveniently made themselves scarce, and masters flitted away, whilst the raid was in progress. Store-rooms were emptied, and ample supplies of footstuffs were again laid in stock. Professor Ogleby heard about it, but he took no action. He merely shrugged his shoulders.

"Let the young rascals have their fling," he said gruffly. "It will not be long now before I shall show them who is the master of this situation!"

And he spoke with a confidence which boded ill for the St. Frank's rebels.

CHAPTER 9.

The Professor's Plan!

PROFESSOR OGLEBY was a man of many parts. He was unquestionably a learned archæologist; he was also a scientist of some note; he was a poor schoolmaster. But if he had employed himself in none of these vocations, he would certainly have made a good soldier.

His strategy was brilliant.

Finding that ordinary methods of force were met with determined resistance, he did not make the mistake which others might have made; he did not continue the exhibition of force. No; he bided his time.

And while he bided he planned.

Cleverly, like a great general planning to overthrow a much superior force in a strategic position, he mapped out his plan of action. He would defeat these boys, not by hurling bodies of workmen at them—workmen who had no spirit in the fight, anyhow—but by superior brain power.

For two days, unknown to anybody in the school, skilled surveyors had been at work at St. Frank's. They were not workmen, but grave-looking, well-dressed gentlemen. Even if they were seen by some of the boys, their task was not suspected.

These surveyors were busy in that old Roman tunnel, out in the country beyond the playing-fields, and other places. Aided by their instruments, they had fixed an exact spot in the tunnel. They had prepared maps, they had marked these maps, so that they could be compared with a section of the ordinary local ordnance map.

"This is just how we stand, professor," said the chief surveyor, as he explained the maps to the Head. "Here is the tunnel, and at this spot you will see a little cross."

"Yes, yes," nodded the professor eagerly. "That, I take it, corresponds with this cross on the ordnance map?"

"They are both really the same spot," explained the surveyor. "One is in the tunnel, and the other in the open. And you will see that this spot is exactly in the centre of the playing fields."

"Splendid!" beamed Professor Ogleby. "You are quite sure, Mr. Hampson, that there can be no error? This cross in the tunnel marks the precise centre of the playing fields?"

"Within a foot," replied Mr. Hampson, with dignity—for his skill, it seemed, was in question.

With this exact information in his possession, the professor had got busy. That had happened two days ago, and since then there had been other intensive activities.

With Mr. Drummond in full charge, a number of the workmen had been brought back from Bannington, and they had been set to work in the tunnel. It was found that the air was quite pure. There were crevices, further on, which allowed of free currents. Powerful incandescent storm-lanterns could be used without fear. The men knew their work; they entered into it with a will.

On the Friday evening, Professor Ogleby went down to have a look at the progress. He was delighted. At that spot marked with a cross, a side tunnel was being excavated out of the earth; it led upwards, and it was already of some considerable length.

"Dear me! I do hope this original Roman stonework is not being harmed in any way," said the professor, in some concern, as he looked at the dirt and tools which lay scattered about.

He and Mr. Drummond were alone, and the second in command laughed.

"We have been very careful, sir," he replied. "Every stone that was taken down from this wall has been numbered and carefully put aside. No damage at all has been done."

"And in the excavations you have not come across any further Roman work?"

"Nothing at all," said Mr. Drummond. "I may say we are now getting comparatively near to the surface. When the night shift comes on, in half an hour, they will not have very much to do. By midnight, or by one o'clock, we shall have penetrated to the limit of safety."

"Just exactly what I wanted," said the professor, unable to prevent a gloating note sounding in his voice. "Ahem! It is really hateful, Drummond, that we should be compelled to take such steps with these wretched boys, but in my own defence, it must be said that they have driven me to it. What else can I do? Am I to be defied indefinitely?"

"You are doing the right thing, sir," said Mr. Drummond stoutly. "Those young rascals have had their own way long enough."

ELEVEN o'clock boomed from the old clock tower.

Nipper, in the rebel camp, had taken a last look round, and was preparing for sleep. It was his turn for guard duty at one a.m. For guards were now posted all round the defences. Nipper was taking no chances.

That electrified wire was all very well; but the enemy knew what to expect now. Night after night the rebels had done sentry duty, but nothing had happened. They were all getting sick of the whole business.

"But we mustn't be slack," Nipper told them. "For all we know, the professor may send a gang of men with wire-clippers—and if we don't keep watch they'll cut their way through in no time, and make a complete gap in our defences."

"They'd get a terrific shock through the clippers," one of the other boys had said.

"Not if the men were wearing rubber gloves—as they certainly would be," replied Nipper promptly. "Oh, no! It's sentry-go from now onwards. If we're going to be defeated, we'll be defeated squarely—not by rank carelessness of our own."

"Who's talking about defeat?" growled Handforth. "We're going to win—and don't you forget it!"

But even the fiery Edward Oswald was losing some of his original ferocity. He was essentially a fellow of action, and the days of idleness had affected him seriously.

And now, on Friday night, while Nipper was preparing for bed, he was thinking of the morrow. The Carlton match!

All the juniors had been looking forward eagerly to that match, for Kirby Keeble Parkington and his friends were popular. They were good fellows. Also, they were inclined to be cocksure; they were coming to the school to register a victory, and the St. Frank's Junior XI were determined to put K. K. & Co. in their proper places.

Well, perhaps the match would come off all right. The Carlton fellows were coming over—Parkington had written to say so—and unless the professor took some sort of action in the meantime there was no reason—

"I say, Nipper!" came a tense, excited whisper.

Nipper's camp-bed was in the pavilion, and Vivian Travers had just crept in. Nipper was practically the last fellow to go to sleep. Travers was one of the sentries.

"Hallo! What is it?" asked Nipper, his heart giving a jump. "Anything doing? I jolly well hope so!"

"I don't know," replied Travers. "Come outside. It's queer."

It was black outside, and the grass was very damp with dew. A chill autumn wind was whistling drearily across from the sea.

"Rummy things going on somewhere," explained Travers mysteriously.

"What do you mean—rummy things?"

"Thuds."

"Eh?"

"It's a fact," said Travers. "Thuds in the ground."

"What on earth——"

"Nick Trotwood and I both felt them," went on Travers. "We couldn't hear much—we could feel rather than hear. You know when a cart or a lorry is coming along a road in the distance—when the sound of it is quite inaudible—you can put your ear to the ground and hear something?"

"Yes."

"Well, it was something like that," said Travers. "The grass was wet, but we didn't care. We put our ears to the ground, and we heard all sorts of rummy thuds. It struck us that they might have been caused by some of Ogleby's men at the other end of Big Side, trying to get up to mischief. But when we went on a tour round we couldn't see anything. The camp's all quiet everywhere."

"Sure you weren't imagining things?" asked Nipper.

"Cheese it! When we put our ears to the ground we heard the thuds so clearly that we were startled."

Nipper went on a round of the defences, but there wasn't the slightest indication that the enemy was contemplating a night attack. The school itself was in total darkness.

The effect of this was disturbing. Nipper and the sentries were unsettled and worried. What could be the explanation of the unaccountable thuds which had sounded from the ground? Shrewd as Nipper was, he did not suspect the real truth. All he could do was to wait, and he now decided to keep awake during the first spell of sentry-go.

But he wasted good sleep. When one o'clock solemnly boomed out the camp was as quiet as ever. There had been no recurrence of the mysterious thudding.

IN the headmaster's study, Dr. Ogleby was sitting in his chair, whilst Mr. Drummond stood with his back to the fire, smoking a final cigarette. The breezy little archæologist had come to say good-night, after a very strenuous evening.

"So all is ready, Drummond?" Professor Ogleby was saying. "I cannot tell you how pleased I am. Even the dynamite charge is in position, eh? And the wires have been carried through to the agreed upon spot?"

Mr. Drummond was looking uneasy; he had started at the word "dynamite."

"Candidly, Dr. Ogleby, I don't like it," he said. "I have reassured myself by remembering that I am only carrying out your instructions, but I tell you I don't like it. This—er—dynamite idea is alarmingly drastic!"

The professor laughed.

"My dear Drummond, I did not enter upon this plan until I had had expert advice," he replied. "There isn't the slightest danger. The dynamite charge, after all, is a small one."

"All the same, dynamite is dynamite," said Mr. Drummond stubbornly. "If any of those boys are near when the explosion takes place, they might get injured. And think what that would mean, sir! Think of the appalling scandal! Indeed, it would be worse than a scandal. You would probably find yourself in trouble with the police for causing grievous bodily harm——"

"Tut-tut! Don't be absurd, Drummond!" interrupted the professor half angrily. "What do you take me for? Do you think I would explode that charge with any boy near by? I've made my plans, and those plans are cast-iron safe." He banged the desk. "I

am determined to beat those exasperating boys, and to-morrow they will find that I am indeed their master!"

Mr. Drummond was somewhat reassured.

"The men finished their work to-night," continued the professor. "That side tunnel reaches upwards until there is only a small strata of earth between the end of the tunnel and the surface of the ground."

"Had they gone much farther, the ground would probably have caved in," commented the other.

"Exactly!" said the professor. "The dynamite cartridge has been placed in such a position that when it is discharged the force will be ninety-five per cent upwards. They can arrange these explosions in almost any way they like nowadays, Drummond. There is no chance about it. It is a certainty."

"I am glad to hear that."

"My plan will be effective because it is simple," continued the professor enthusiastically. "I could, of course, explode that dynamite charge now, or in the early morning, and send my men pouring through. But I'm not going to. I'm biding my time."

"I really think it will be better in daylight; and your method, too, is open and above-board," commented Mr. Drummond. "The boys will not be able to criticise you adversely. I am glad, sir, that you have decided to be so open about it."

"I hope I am an honest, straightforward man, Drummond," said Professor Ogleby, with dignity. "Now, this explosion will

merely blow a hole through to the surface, scattering the debris over a restricted area. No damage will be caused below, in the Roman tunnel. If there was any possibility of such damage, I would never have consented to the dynamite charge. But the main point is that we shall be able to take the boys by surprise. A sort of rear attack. I can assure you they will be so startled and bewildered that the rebellion will collapse."

There was plenty of reason for the headmaster's confident tone. The morrow, by all appearances, was going to be an exciting day!

CHAPTER 10.

The Interrupted Match!

KIRBY KEEBLE PARKINGTON, the burly red-headed skipper of the Fourth Form at Carlton, grinned cheerily as he grabbed Nipper's hand.

"Put it there, sweetheart!" he said. "Jolly glad to see you Old-Timers again!"

"Rather!" chorused Harvey Deeks, Clement Goffin, Langley, Sims, Bonner, and all the other familiar members of the "Carlton Gang," which had once belonged to the St. Frank's Remove.

"So you're keeping the flag flying, eh?" went on the genial K. K., looking round. "Good luck to you! A genuine, gilt-edged barring-out!"



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

THE FACTS.

Mother: "Tommy, I heard that instead of going to Sunday School this morning you played football."

Tommy: "That isn't true—and I've got a string of fish to prove it."

(K. Hannam, 12, Egerton Road, New Malden, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

CAUSE FOR CRYING.

Kind gent (to little boy): "Why are you crying, sonny?"

Small boy: "Mother's got pancakes and treacle for dinner."

Kind gent: "Well, surely that's no reason why you should cry."

Small boy: "But I can't find my way home."

(E. Dean, 141, Wallace Road, Grays, Essex, has been awarded a pocket wallet).

MAKING SURE.

Employer (to boy who has applied for post of office-boy): "Now, my boy, have you any grandmothers?"

Boy: "No, sir."

Employer: "Any grandfathers?"

Boy: "No, sir."

Employer: "Any relative who is liable to pass away at the Cup Final?"

Boy: "No, sir."

Employer: "Very good; start to-morrow."

(W. Frauley, 248, Chapel Street, Leigh, Lancs., has been awarded a penknife.)

TRUE.

Teacher: "Where did King John sign the Magna Charta?"

Dunce: "Please, sir, along the dotted line."

(W. Fell, 52, Somerset Road, Newport, Mon., has been awarded a penknife.)

HIS GROUSE.

Warder: "I understand you have a complaint to make. What is it?"

Prisoner: "There ain't enough exits."

(D. Jones, 12, Keyes Avenue, Rosebank, Johannesburg, S. Africa, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

"Not so genuine or so gilt-edged, either," growled Handforth. "We're fed up with the whole business! If only the Ogleby bird would get busy with something we shouldn't mind. Thank goodness you chaps have come for the League match! We're all right for the afternoon, anyhow."

"No chance of being disturbed, I hope?" asked Parkington politely. "I mean, we shan't be jumped upon by various platoons of the enemy? Exciting, of course, but football is football."

"Keep your hair on!" grinned Nipper. "If the playing fields are attacked, there are plenty of fellows to deal with the trouble, and our game won't even be interrupted."

"Well, you ought to know best," said K. K., with a chuckle. "My only Sunday topper! What a life! Why don't we have some excitement like this at Carlton?"

"Not a chance!" said Deeks, shaking his head. "Carlton is a properly conducted school, with a real headmaster."

"Any more chipping, my lads, and we shall forget that you're visitors!" warned Nipper. "Don't forget that we're old rivals, and at any moment, in an absent-minded fit, we might jump on you and then dot a few noses!"

"Would you like to try it?" asked K. K. promptly. "We came here for football, but if you are keen on turning the affair into a free fight we're perfectly agreeable!"

There were chuckles all round, and the visitors were escorted to the pavilion, where

they changed into their footer togs. Everybody was in high spirits this afternoon.

It was a dull day, but there was no real sign of rain, and a keen wind gave the air a real "football season" nip.

William Napoleon Browne, of the Fifth, with his usual cheeriness, had consented to referee the game. Little Side had been cleared, and there were throngs of Removites and Fourth-Formers and fags round the ropes. Beyond, on the other side of the wire barriers, a few seniors had collected, watching amusedly.

"I take it," said Browne, "that the 'fluence has been removed from the defences, Brother Nipper?"

"Of course," said the Junior skipper.

"That is good hearing," nodded Browne. "It would be a great pity to electrocute the spectators. However, if you see Grayson and Shaw, of my Form, grasping the wire, you may switch the current on with full force, and rest assured that you will be rendering a signal service to humanity at large."

"You silly chump, you know jolly well that the juice isn't dangerous," said Nipper. "What about Ogleby? Seen any sign of him this morning—or his men?"

William Napoleon Browne looked thoughtful.

"I may be mistaken—such a thing is, of course, feasible, even in a Browne—but take the advice of one who knows, and keep your eyes well uncorked!"

FREE SEATS.

Small boy (to cinema attendant): "Please, I want to see a little boy inside."

Attendant: "Who is he?"

Small boy: "Me."

(*L. Parsons, 11, Cranbourne Road Muswell Hill, N.10, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

WHY HE FOLLOWED.

He was such a bad golfer that no one would play with him, and so he set out on a lonely round. To his annoyance a strange boy kept following him round the course. At last he became impatient and turned to the lad, saying:

"Look here, you'll never learn to play by watching me."

"I'd never play the silly game," the boy replied. "I'm going fishing as soon as you dig up a few more worms."

(*J. Barton, 31, West Hill Road, Ryde, I.O.W., has been awarded a penknife.*)

HARD TO BELIEVE.

"I don't see how you can be a stonemason with only one arm," said the dear old lady.

"Well, it's like this, lady. I hold the chisel in my mouth and hit myself on the back of the head with the hammer," explained the hard-up man glibly.



(*R. Benjamin, 51, Gwyddon Road, Abercarn, Mon., has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

STALE.

Tripper: "I wish I had come to this restaurant last year."

Proprietor (beaming): "It is very kind of you to say that, sir."

Tripper: "Yes, this fish might have been a lot fresher then."

(*L. Jarman, 12, Cross Street, Rhymney, has been awarded a penknife.*)

GO HON.

Workman (to small onlooker): "And how old are you, sonny?"

Small boy: "Eight."

Workman: "And what are you going to be when you grow up?"

Small boy: "A man."

(*E. Davies, 10, Fallows Street, Middlesbrough, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

OFF THE TRAIL.

Tenderfoot Terence: "What's the rope for?"

Two-Gun Tom: "That's a lasso—you catch cattle with it."

Tenderfoot Terence: "What sort of bait do you use?"

(*A. Mee, 29, St. Georges Street, Avondale, Auckland, New Zealand, has been awarded a penknife.*)

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Nipper keenly.

"I am making no definite statement," replied Browne, "but I have observed a certain jauntiness in Brother Ogleby to-day. He has been at large more than once this morning, and with my usual perspicacity I have observed him closely. At a rough guess, I should say he is a man who is concealing something of a hefty size up his sleeve. He looks like a general awaiting zero hour, knowing full well that his forces are superior to the enemy's. However, do not let me alarm you needlessly. I am only suggesting caution. We are here for football, so let the leather commence its hectic career."

"Good enough, Browne," said Nipper, nodding. "Thanks. I'll send the word round."

He did so. Various juniors hurried among the spectators, warning them to keep one eye on the game and the other eye round about generally. Nipper realised that it would be quite like Professor Ogleby to pounce while the rebels were concentrating on the important League game.

But as events turned out, Professor Ogleby did not pounce at all. He acted boldly and openly.

The game started with a roar of enthusiasm from Saints and Carltonians alike. K. K. & Co. were not to be despised. The Carlton Junior XI was the hottest of hot stuff.

Right from the start K. K. forced the pace. He saw a good opportunity here of snatching an "away" victory. These St. Frank's chaps were a bit off their game; they were too busy with this rebellion; and they would prove easy picking.

At least, that's what Kirby Keeble Parkington thought—at first.

He soon changed his opinion. Nipper and his stalwarts threw themselves wholeheartedly into the match, and five minutes from the start Travers, receiving a lightning pass from Nipper, dashed through. Only by a miracle of agility did the Carlton goalie save—and then by tipping the ball over the cross-bar.

"Oh, well tried, Travers!"

"Go it, St. Frank's!"

Reggie Pitt took the corner kick, and dropped the ball beautifully in the mouth of the goal. There was a wild scramble, Nipper's head soared up amongst a number of other heads. The leather struck, bounced, and shot diagonally across the goal-mouth, to hit the further upright and rebound into play. Somehow, the Carlton backs scrambled it away, and the pressure was relieved.

"Phew!" whistled K. K. "That was a narrow squeak. The bounders nearly scored. What's the matter with 'em? This barring-out hasn't affected 'em at all, sweethearts! They're as keen as ever!"

The Carltonians bucked up; and the game swung away into the St. Frank's half of the field. By clever passing, the forwards defeated the efforts of the St. Frank's half-backs, and while Church and McClure were dashing up to capture the ball, K. K. saw

his opportunity. At the last second, after waiting until Church was practically on the ball, he sent out a long pass to the wing. Bonner trapped the ball neatly, sped down the touchline, and centred. K. K. was there.

Slam!

He sent in a first-time shot which made Handforth, in goal, gasp. The burly leader of Study D had no time to jump. He punched, and although that punch looked wild, it was sufficient to send the ball scaring back practically into mid-field.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Handy!"

"Those fists of his are useful!"

Nipper felt his heart fluttering. It always did when he saw Handforth taking such risks in goal. But they generally seemed to come off all right; seldom, indeed, did Handforth make a mis-kick, or blunder with his punching. Clumsy though he was elsewhere, in goal he was supreme.

"That's the first bit of work I've had to do in the game," he sang out. "Come on, you silly Carlton chumps! Why don't you give me something big to do?"

He had it sooner than he expected. K.K. had heard that challenge, and he had squared his jaw firmly. Almost at once he got possession of the ball, and with brilliant skill he tricked first Church and then McClure.

"Oh!" went up a gasp from the crowd.

Parkington was running through; Handforth was dancing up and down in the goal-mouth. He was having something big to do now! With two of the St. Frank's half-backs racing to flurry the Carlton leader, K. K. steadied himself and kicked.

It was at that exact moment that startled yells rang out from the crowd immediately behind Handforth's goal.

"Great Scott! Here comes old Ogleby!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Handforth half glanced round—and it was fatal. He heard the thud of the kick, and he leapt. He was a fraction of a second too late. The ball eluded his clutching fingers, and crashed into the back of the net.

"Goal!"

"Crumbs! K. K. has scored first!"

Handforth spun round indignantly.

"You rotters!" he gasped. "What did you want to yell like that for? Hi, referee! These chaps are to blame for that goal!"

"Don't you believe it, honeybunch!" said K. K. sweetly. "I'm to blame for that goal!"

There was now a very real interruption, however.

Professor Thorpe Ogleby, quite alone, and looking very dignified in his gown and mortar-board, was approaching. He gingerly made his way through the wire defences, and nobody thought of stopping him. He was the Head; he was alone, and so there was no excuse for laying hands on him.

Juniors gave way, nonplussed. He walked straight on to the field of play—just as the teams had lined up again, and just as Browne was about to blow his whistle.

"One moment," said the referee gently. With long strides he went to meet the Head. "You will pardon me, sir, I am sure," went on Browne politely. "You are, I know, unfamiliar with any kind of sport or games. Therefore I would mention that a football match is in progress on this field at the present moment."

"I am well aware of that, thank you," said Professor Ogleby, smiling confidently.

"In that case, brother—that is to say, sir—it is my duty, as referee, to point out that this interruption is one of those things which is not done in the best football circles."

"You may save your breath, young man," said the professor. "I am here for a purpose."

"May I venture to suggest that it is an unpleasant purpose?"

"Listen to me—all you junior boys," said Dr. Ogleby. "You other boys—you come from Carlton, I believe—had better leave as quickly and as quietly as possible."

"But, I say, sir," protested K. K. "We're a goal up, and that wouldn't be fair——"

"This game, as far as you are concerned, is over," said the professor serenely.

He pointed to the school clock, the hands of which indicated that the time was six minutes to three.

"Be silent, everybody!" commanded the Head. "Listen to me!"

There was an immediate hush. Even the rebels obeyed without a murmur.

"The time, as you will all note, is six minutes to three," said the Head. "In six minutes time—at exactly three o'clock, in fact—a charge of high explosives will blow the centre of these playing fields sky high!"

"Wha-a-at!"

It was a long-drawn-out gasp of consternation and amazement.

"I have surprised you, I think," said the professor, nodding. "You have a little over five minutes to get well away from the danger zone. And now I would remind you that you have been sufficiently warned."



Even as the St. Frank's boys raced for safety, there was a devastating explosion. Little Side had been blown up!

"Great Scott!" yelled Nipper suddenly. "I've got it now, you chaps! You remember those rummy thuds you heard last night?"

"For the love of Samson!" ejaculated Travers. "Men working underground—preparing the high explosive! They must have been burrowing!"

There were fresh shouts of dismay.

"Of course, there's a tunnel which leads to Lord Edgemore's estate," said Nipper quickly. "That's how they've done it!" He turned to the professor. "But look here, sir, if this high explosive goes off it will ruin the playing fields!"

"Which is precisely what I intend," said Professor Ogleby, with the confidence and satisfaction which his superior position justified. "And there is no 'if' about it, young man. The explosion *will* take place, and it will occur at exactly three o'clock. So you had all better be on the move!"

Many of the fellows were running already; the Carlton boys, looking very startled, were backing away hurriedly.

"You can't do it, sir!" shouted Handforth. "You'll ruin our playing fields! Hi, you chaps! Let's grab him——"

"If you are foolish enough to molest me, it will make no difference," said the professor sharply. "The explosion will not be controlled from here. Oh, no! I was not quite so careless as all that!"

Nipper looked round desperately.

"It seems that we're done, you chaps," he said ruefully.

"If you are not off the fields by three o'clock, and if any of you get hurt, it will be your own fault!" shouted Professor Ogleby. "You had better hurry! The dynamite charge will send the centre of these fields sky-high in just over four minutes!"

And so grim was his manner, so triumphant the light in his eyes, that the dismayed rebels knew that he was not bluffing.

CHAPTER 11.

Touch and Go!

REMEMBERING that tunnel, Nipper came to a swift decision.

"Quick, Remove!" he sang out.

"You Fourth-Formers, too! This way, some of you!"

He was dashing off the field, and Professor Ogleby, misunderstanding the move, smiled confidently. His plan was working out splendidly.

But Nipper had another idea in his mind.

"The tunnel!" he said tensely. "If only we can get down there in time, we might be able to cut the wire!"

"Hold on, you kids!" came a bellow from Biggleswade of the Sixth. "If you're thinking of getting into that tunnel, you'd better forget it."

"Why, what do you mean, Biggy?" shouted Handforth.

"A crowd of men has been in the Ancient House, and the cellar doors have been barricaded up," replied the prefect. "We wondered what on earth they were doing, and why, but it's pretty clear now. The professor doesn't mean you to spoil his latest stunt."

Nipper could have groaned. He did not doubt Biggleswade's word. It was obviously useless for a crowd of boys to dash to the tunnel, for if the cellar entrance was barricaded there was no admittance. Professor Thorpe Ogleby had half expected a rush, and he had prepared.

"Why didn't somebody tell us what was going on?" asked Nipper, half angrily.

"Have a heart!" said Biggleswade. "How were we to know what the game was? You kids were busy with your game, and there weren't many workmen, anyhow. I heard some hammering, and went along to investigate."

"Thanks, Biggy," said Nipper dully. "We're not blaming anybody."

He turned and gazed despondently towards the middle of the playing fields. By this time everybody had run clear. The danger zone was empty, and Professor Ogleby stood alone. He was almost quivering with triumph.

Then suddenly a glint appeared in Nipper's eyes—a hard glint of excitement.

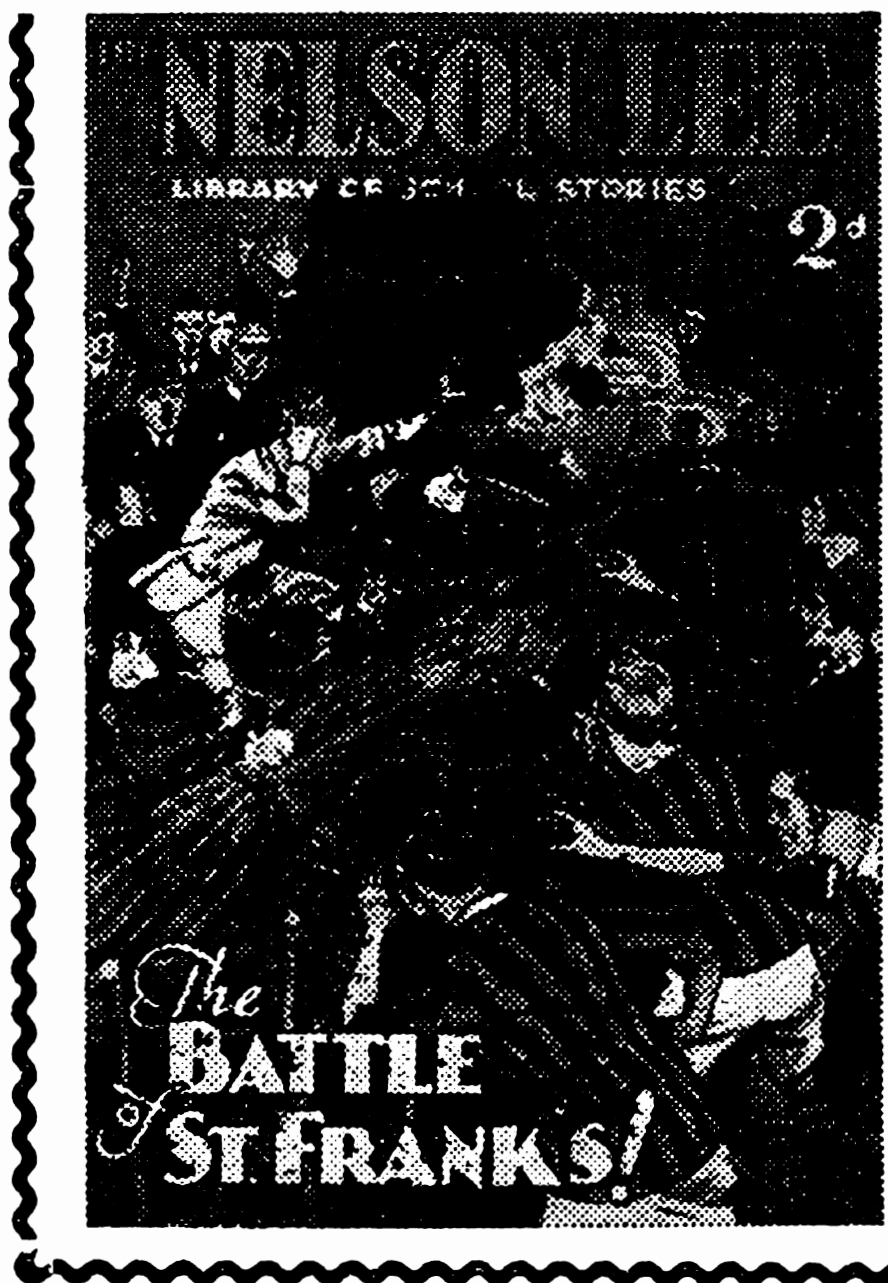
"By Jove!" he breathed.

Until that moment he had not been quite certain as to how the dynamite charge would be exploded. By electricity, of course; a fuse would have been too uncertain. But was the time "set," or would some other method be used?

Nipper's quick-wittedness served him well here. For he suddenly noticed that the professor was holding a big red handkerchief in his hand.

There was nothing particularly exciting in this fact, but once or twice the man had

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



glanced towards the rear tower of the Ancient House. And Nipper, now glancing in that direction, started. He could see a man's head projecting above the stonework!

So that was the wheeze! The explosion was timed for three o'clock, and the man with the plunger was up on the top of the tower. He would not make the contact until he received the signal from Dr. Ogleby's red handkerchief. In other words, there would be no explosion unless the professor gave the necessary signal.

"My only sainted aunt!" gurgled Nipper. "There's a chance! We can beat the old boy yet!"

"Eh!" exclaimed Handforth. "What do you mean?"

"What's the idea, Nipper?" demanded Travers, staring.

Nipper looked at the school clock. One minute to three!

"Listen, Remove!" bellowed Nipper at the top of his voice. "Listen, Fourth and Third! The centre of our playing fields is going sky high unless we do something to prevent the disaster!"

"Chuck it!" bawled Handforth. "What can we do to prevent it?"

"I'll tell you what we can do!" yelled Nipper. "How many of you are ready to come with me to the middle—to the danger zone?"

"What!"

"You're mad!"

"THE BATTLE OF ST. FRANK'S!"

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With soot and flour bombs, hoses and pea-shooters they defend their playing fields against the latest and greatest onslaught by Professor Ogleby. But the odds are too heavy; the defences fall.

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"OUTLAWED!"

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ORDER IN ADVANCE!

"We'll all be blown to bits!"

"Think again, Nipper!"

"I don't need to think again. I was an ass to be alarmed in the first place," replied Nipper, now icily cool. "I tell you, Professor Ogleby is bluffing!"

"But the explosion——"

"There'll be no explosion if we do the right thing!" shouted Nipper. "Come on! There's not a second to waste! He might twig our game. Who's got pluck enough to follow me to the danger spot? If we stand over that he daren't give the signal, and we shall save the playing fields!"

"Good gad!" came a gasp from Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, that's a frightfully bright scheme, you chappies. Of

course, it'll be a messy business if something goes wrong, but——"

"He's right!" roared Handforth. "The professor daren't blow us to smithereens!"

"Come on!" called Nipper. "I'll be the first!"

He was filled with sudden alarm. It was three o'clock! The chimes were commencing, and Professor Ogleby was even then preparing to give the fatal signal. But he hesitated—exactly as Nipper knew he would hesitate—as the Remove skipper dashed straight towards the danger zone.

"Stop!" panted the Head. "You—you young lunatic! You reckless boy! Do you want to get killed?"

"No, sir," sang out Nipper. "And you daren't kill me either! Rally round, Remove! Back up, everybody!"

"Hurrah!"

Handforth, Travers, Archie, Corcoran, Boots, Christine, Pitt, Fullwood, Castleton, and a few others obeyed the call on the instant. Flushed with excitement, they dashed after Nipper, and within a few seconds they were standing in a solid, defiant crowd over that precious turf which was in such danger. In their excitement, in their love for their playing fields, they had disregarded any possible danger to themselves. Besides, they accepted Nipper's word; they believed there would be no explosion if only they "called the bluff" of the professor.

A great many other boys, half scared, were running to the outskirts of the fields. Some were looking pale with apprehension. All this talk of an explosion had frightened them.

As for Professor Ogleby, his jaw had sagged, and an expression of consternation was on his learned face. All his former triumph had gone. The clock was striking three, everything was ready, but he knew that he dare not give that signal!

"Come back! Come back!" he shouted hoarsely. "Boys—boys, are you mad?"

"No, sir," replied Nipper coolly. "We were mad when we ran away, but we have recovered our senses."

"Good heavens! You don't realise——"

"Go ahead, sir!" invited Nipper, with a laugh. "Here we are—ready to be blown sky high! Give that signal—if you dare!"

CHAPTER 12.

All Serene!

PROFESSOR THORPE OGLEBY almost reeled with rage.

He had experienced all the emotions during the past few minutes. First of all, triumph! He would show those boys who was master! Then came consternation, as those same boys ran to the danger zone and defied him. Now he was filled with rage.

He was done—and he knew it!

For these shrewd youngsters had plumped upon the one desperately weak spot in his plan! He had known all along that he would never dare to give that signal if the boys refused to be frightened off the fields.

He was angry with himself, too. A minute earlier he could have given the signal. But, like a fool, he had waited until three o'clock. Now it was too late!

"You—you unmitigated young rascals!" he shouted hoarsely. "Don't you realise your deadly peril? Have I not warned you——"

"Oh, you warned us all right, sir!" yelled Handforth. "But what do we care? We defy you to give that giddy signal!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it, professor!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Those staunch juniors, standing in such a defiant body, were triumphant. They had all seen the dramatic change in the headmaster's manner, and they knew they were the masters of the situation.

"You shall pay for this—all of you!" almost sobbed the unhappy man. "You think you have beaten me, but you will see! Yes, you will see!"

In his excitement, he was shaking his fists at the boys, and he was quite unconscious of the fact that he still held that red handkerchief in one hand. The boys had forgotten it, too.

The red handkerchief, getting a bit loose, fluttered gaily. Nipper, seeing it, felt his heart give a jump. Here was an unexpected situation. By accident, Professor Ogleby had given the dread signal!

Nipper glanced hastily round towards the rear tower of the Ancient House, and his heart nearly jumped into his mouth when he saw a flash of red. There could be only one explanation. That man in the tower had seen the professor's signal, and was answering!

"Run!" yelled Nipper wildly. "Run for your lives!"

"Eh?" gasped Handforth, spinning round. "What the dickens——"

"The signal—the signal! He's given it!"

There was no time to ask questions; the alarm spread like lightning throughout that party of brave spirits. They realised their danger, and they bolted.

Like rabbits, they scuttled away, flying in all directions. Professor Ogleby, standing like a man who has received a stunning blow, turned deathly pale. For he, too, realised what he had done.

"Good heavens!" he gasped. "I had no intention of——"

Booooooom!

It came—a deep-throated, growling explosion from underground. The whole of the playing fields shook, and that central spot, over which the boys had just been standing, went skywards. A mass of earth and turf shot in the air, and it was curious how the force of the explosion was upwards—and only upwards. A great jagged rent, not more than six feet in diameter, appeared in the turf—although it could not be seen at the moment, owing to the clouds of dust and earth and smoke.

Spinning round, Nipper saw to his intense relief that all the boys had got clear. No-

body was hurt. Shouts of wild excitement were sounding from all sides.

Earth rained down perilously—chunks of it in some places.

The professor, who was standing nearest, received a dense shower which smothered him. But he came through unharmed. Then the fall of debris was over, and the smoke and dust drifted away.

The juniors gazed at the ruination with dismay. The explosion had taken place not far from the touchline of Little Side—their own playing pitch. Big Side was not damaged; only a shower of earth had affected it. But Little Side not only revealed that gaping hole, but the earth was piled all round; the turf was practically hidden over a large radius.

"He's done it!" shouted Handforth thickly. "He's ruined our footer pitch, you chaps! Oh, my hat! Look at it!"

"And he tried to kill us!" yelled somebody else. "Let's grab him! He tried to kill us all!"

The professor found his voice.

"No, no!" he croaked. "Boys, you are wrong!"

"You gave the signal!" went up an accusing chorus.

"I did—but it was entirely by mistake!" panted the Head. "Great heavens! It is a merciful thing that none of you is hurt! I had forgotten that the handkerchief was in my hand and——"

"That's all right, sir—we understand!" said Nipper crisply. "Cheese it, you fellows! The Head didn't mean to hurt us—and, as it happens, there's no harm done."

"No harm?" echoed Handforth. "What about our footer field?"

Nipper's coolness was infectious, however, and the boys were calmed. Professor Ogleby staggered away to his quarters, followed by jeers and catcalls, but that was the only demonstration. Meanwhile the rebels had run on to Little Side, where they inspected the damage with simmering indignation.

"This place must be guarded," said Nipper briskly. "It leads down into the tunnel—and the old boy might send some of his men through—to catch us in the rear. But if he tries any dodge like that, it's doomed to failure. Half a dozen of us can hold this hole against a thousand men."

"I'll tell you what!" said Travers. "Let's grab some of those hurdles from the paddock and lay them across the gap! We can stake them down, too, and that'll stop any funny business!"

"Good idea!" said Nipper, nodding.

"But look at our playing pitch!" wailed Handforth, suddenly realising the extent of the damage. "What about our game? We can't even finish our league match!"

"There's no need to get excited, Handy," said Nipper soothingly. "The damage looks far worse than it actually is. We can collect this earth, sweep the turf, and there won't

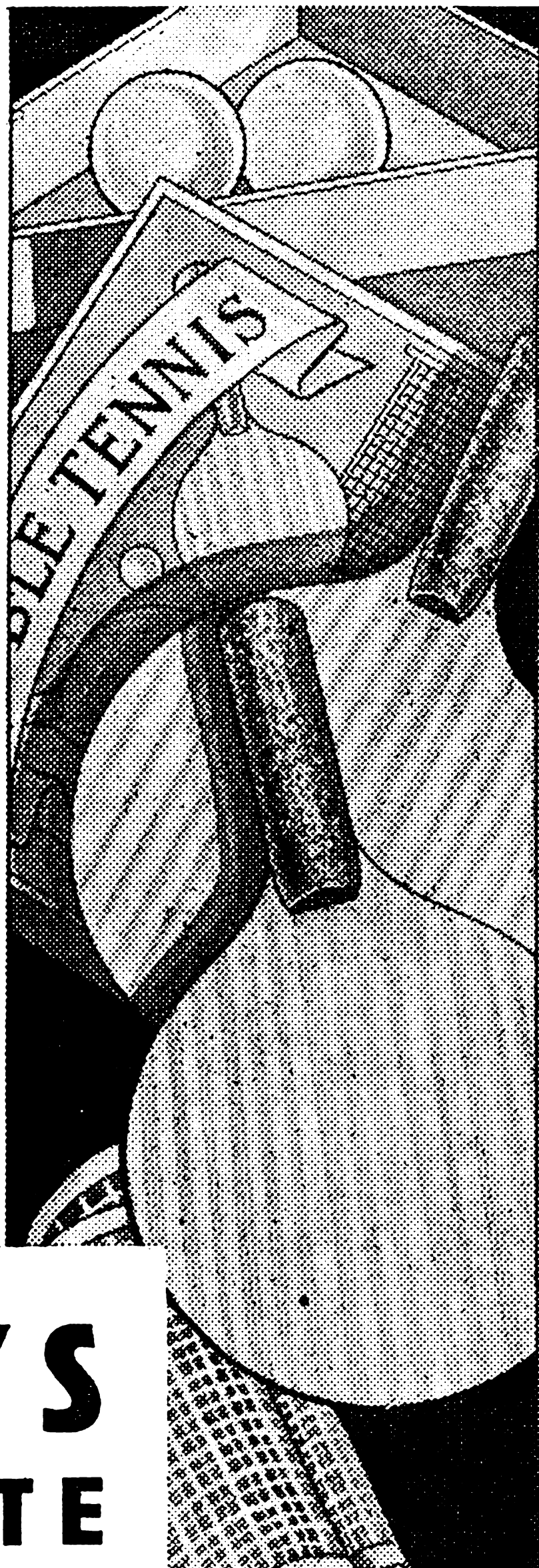
(Continued on page 44.)

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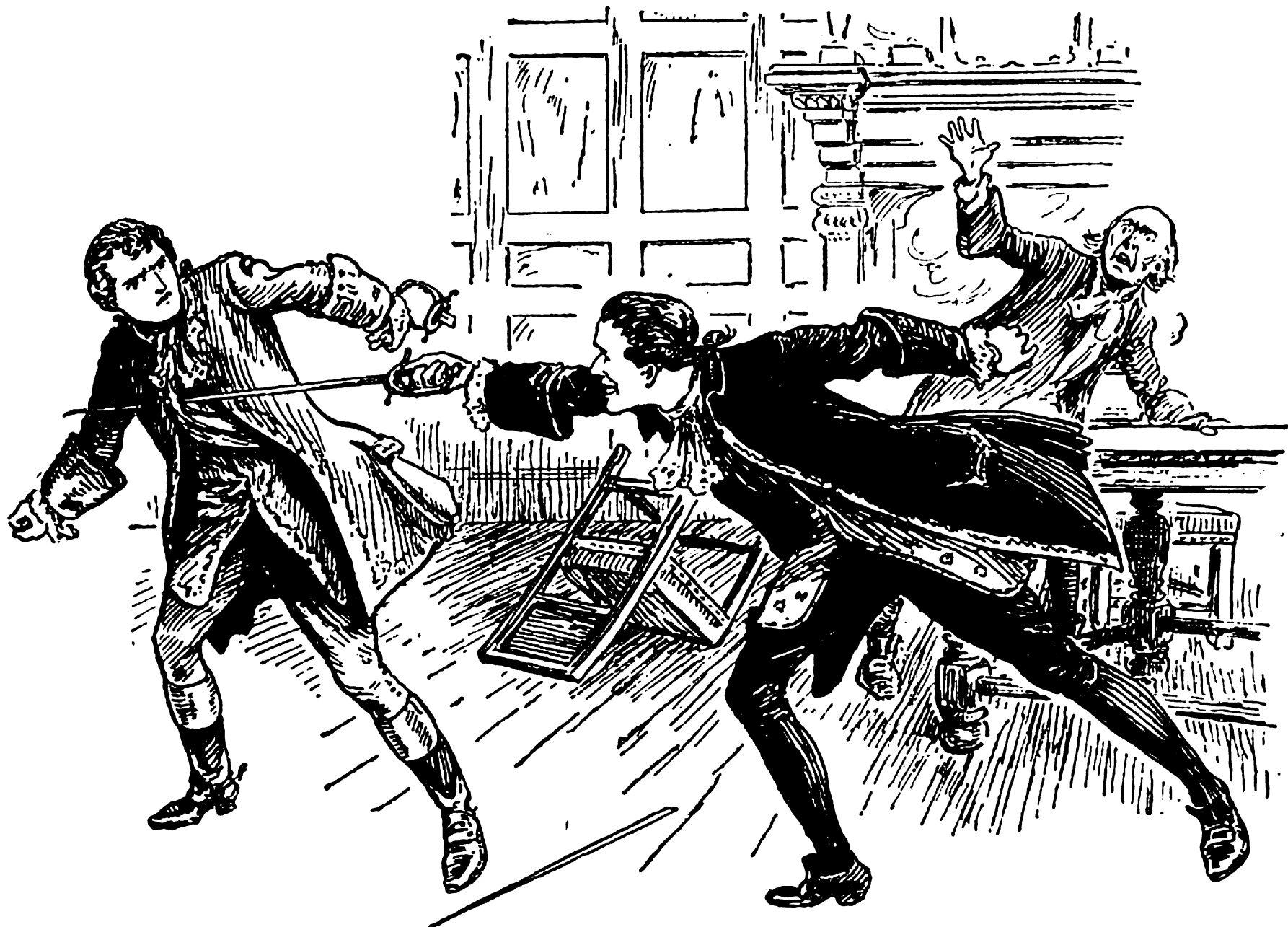
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A Fight for Fernhall.

FOR a moment or two, after Hector Forrester had made his startling proposition, Dick sat motionless; then he sprang to his feet.

"You pitiful knave!" he cried fiercely. "Have you no fear for your cowardly skin, to enter my house with such a trick as this?"

The sallow stranger's cheeks turned pale.

"Then it is war?" he said, with a sneer. "Think well, Dick Forrester. I only claim my own."

"Your own, you hound?" said Dick hotly. "You lie, and none knows it better! Vane Forrester had no more claim to Fernhall than a thief to the loaf he steals! Know you that he murdered my father and that Vane confessed it on his death-bed, and withdrew all claim? Dare you claim what he denied?"

Again the cynical smile on the stranger's face.

"What proof is there of this confession?"

"I was witness of it."

"Not enough. Your word, alone, on the statement of a dead man."

"The clergyman whom I summoned. To him your father—if such he was—laid bare his confession, as also to me. The Rector of Hutton is my witness!"

"Alas!" said Hector Forrester mournfully, but with a sneering smile belying his tone. "He died last week!"

Dick looked straight into his rival's eyes, and his own blazed hotly.

"You villain!" he said hoarsely. "You mean you killed him, lest he should testify!"

Seizing Hector Forrester by the throat, Dick hurled him with a crash against the panelling of the wall.

An oath burst from Hector's lips as, white to the forehead, he picked himself up, and his sword flashed from its sheath. Dick withdrew his own rapier in a moment, and the two met in the centre of the room.

"This is the better way of it," said Dick, with a harsh laugh; "and the good blades are too straight to fawn or lie. Let the steel say who shall be heir to Fernhall!"

And the keen rapiers crossed with a click.

Hardly had the blades met, ringing through the lofty chamber, when Hector Forrester made a furious attack on Dick, his rapier playing and glinting like sheet-lightning. He had a wonderful quickness of delivery, and fought as though he hoped to finish his adversary at the first bout.

Gritting his teeth, his eyes glaring, posturing and stamping, Hector attacked like a wild cat.

Dick, on the other hand, hardly moved, save for the light swaying of the body and the deft turns of his wrist; but every thrust and stacado that Hector made found Dick's blade there to turn it aside.

The first bout ended, Hector springing back with a gasp. Then once more the blades met in fury of slashing strokes.

The old lawyer, who had started up in dismay at the drawing of the swords, stood staring for some moments in stupefaction, his polished head and red nose gleaming like beacons. Now he rushed forward between the combatants.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, I beg!" he said. "Oh, dear me, what shall I do? This is not the way to settle it. What will become of my fees if you are killed? Oh, bless my soul! Oh!"

"Stand back, you pettifogging knave!" cried Dick.

And the snuffy lawyer, well pricked on both sides for his pains, retreated hastily again, rubbing his hurts and yelping.

"To it again, man!" cried Dick to his rival. "We play for a fair stake—all Fernhall to the winner, and the grave to the loser!"

"Hang you!" said the other between his teeth. "Why didn't they hang you for the robber and ruffian you are when they had you in Hutton Gaol?"

"So you find the outlaw little to your liking!" laughed Dick fiercely between the ringing of the steel. "Thus, and thus, and thus did we learn it on the road, and so I teach it to you!"

Dick's sword-point slashed three times within Hector's guard, wounding him slightly at each thrust. The dark youth gasped, and beads of perspiration started upon his forehead. He was a skilful swordsman, and had thought to make short work of his rival; but he found Dick's skill the greater.

"What, flinching already!" cried Dick, with savage scorn. "You thought to have me on the floor before this, I'll wager. See," he added, tossing the rapier swiftly to the other hand, "if you think I have the advantage, I will meet you left-handed!"

A gleam of hope shone in Hector's eye, and he pressed forward again; but even with the left hand Dick's swordsmanship was too much for the new claimant to Fernhall.

Despair began to seize him, when, at a sudden clinch of the swords, Dick's blade suddenly broke just below the cross and clattered on the floor, leaving the boy with only the hilt in his hand.

With a fierce cry of triumph, Hector sprang forward and made a furious thrust at his breast. The instant he saw the move, Dick leaped aside, and the keen point hissed past him, ripping through the silk of his vest.

Hanging on the wall was a long but fine-tempered sword of Charles I's time, and which Aubrey Forrester had used at Edgehill. Dick snatched it down in a moment, and was on guard.

"A foul stroke!" he said grimly. "You would kill an unarmed man, you dog! Now come and take the reckoning!"

He made a swift attack on Hector, his eyes flashing fiercely, his face pitiless and hard.

Hector's guard broke down. His cheeks were ashy-white, and instead of facing his rival, he leaped away and flung his sword down upon the floor with a crash.

"Enough!" he cried. "I will not fight—I will not, I say! You cannot kill me unarmed!"

"Knave!" cried Dick, beside himself with anger. "Do you dare to show your back now? Stand to it, you dog!"

He gave Hector a stinging blow with the flat of his sword; but the coward only dodged and whimpered.

"I will not make a pin-cushion of myself for your sword!" he whined. "You have the better of me; let that satisfy you. I will not be robbed of my heritage in such a fashion! Come, Smear, let us go!"

Dick laughed bitterly.

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 Fernhall. 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 attack, but they flee when the King's Riders arrive. The footpad leader, in escaping, kills two of the Riders. Dick assists Turpin to elude the King's men, thereby breaking the law. Later he receives two visitors—a lawyer and a young man who gives his name as Hector Forrester, Vane Forrester's heir. He announces that he has come to take possession of Fernhall.

(Now read on.)

"By the black rood," he said, "I do believe now that you are Vane's son, by the coward heart of you! Heaven forbid I should speak ill of the dead, yet none but his son could be such a cur and a traitor!"

Hector reddened about the cheeks. He shot a venomous glance at Dick, but he made no movement to pick up his sword. He cringed as his rival advanced.

"You waste your words!" muttered Hector. "I will not fight again!"

"What is to be done with such a poltroon?" cried Dick bitterly. "You come here to trick me out of Fernhall, and when you have failed you bring it with insults to the cold steel. Then, finding your skin in danger after all, you cringe like a scullion!"

"I will have Fernhall from you yet!" snarled Hector. "The law gives it me. In a week it will be mine!"

"Then, by all the fiends, I'll put you in possession of it!" cried Dick, springing forward and gripping him fast. "Come and be baptised into your rights, you cowardly knave!"

Hector tried to struggle, but Dick had him in an iron grip. Kicking the door open, he hauled the claimant of Fernhall bodily out, through the hall, past the outer doors, and on to the drive. Beyond this glimmered the lily-pond and fountain.

"Let me go—let me go!" yelled Hector, struggling wildly. "You shall pay for this!"

"Here is your baptism!" laughed Dick fiercely. And with one heave he slung Hector into the pond. "So doughty a fighter should have his blood cooled, lest his valour bring him into trouble!"

With a loud splash the shrieking Hector plunged into the pool.

Mr. Smear, the lawyer, who had followed them out, stood on the brink wailing and wringing his hands.

"My fees—my fees!" he moaned. "If he is drowned who shall pay me! Pull him out, somebody!"

Gasping and wallowing, covered with mud and dead water-weeds, Hector Forrester dragged himself out by the further bank of the pond.

"You will rue this!" he snarled. "The reckoning will be heavy!"

"Ay!" cried the lawyer, dancing up and down excitedly, and shaking his fist at Dick. "He shall pay dear for it, doubt it not! I was witness to it—I was witness to it!"

"Peace, rogue," said Dick, turning upon him, "or you shall follow him into the pond!"

The lawyer stopped his abuse hurriedly, and scuttled round by the shrubbery till he reached the further side of the pond, where he helped Hector to climb up the slippery bank.

Dick, his anger past, laughed heartily at the ridiculous plight of the formerly bold Hector Forrester, standing on the pond's brink, the black mud and the water streaming from him.

But Hector did not laugh. His dark face was livid and distorted with fury, and his teeth chattering with the cold.

"You shall lose more than Fernhall for this!" he cried hoarsely. "You shall lose more than you dream of! Dog! Pauper! Beggar!"

Dick laughed contemptuously.

"What, is the lesson not yet learned? Here, Matthews, Johnson, Greaves! Herd these knaves out of the ground, and if they ever show their nose here again, let them be whipped over the boundary!"

Hector Forrester and Smear the lawyer did not wait for the serving-men. They slunk off hurriedly through the shrubberies; but before he disappeared from view Hector turned, and shook his fist at Dick.

"In a little while we shall return!" he cried furiously. "We shall see then on whose shoulders the whip will fall!"

— —

Captain Sweeny's Threat.

THE precious pair disappeared, and Dick waited till they were out of sight, a grim smile on his lips.

Then, turning away, he walked with leisurely stride into the house. He entered the dining-room, and picked up the blade of his sword from the floor, where it had fallen in his fight with Hector.

"If I had here the armourer who hilted this sword, I would run it through his body!" said Dick. "A plague on all these jewelled Court toys! I will wear again the trusty blade I carried at my side when I rode with Turpin on the highways. Heigh-ho! Those were days! Well, I have no need to complain of dullness now, for that matter."

He threw himself into the chair by the fire.

"Who is that knave with the dark face? Is he truly Vane's son? Surely he would not dare try such a trick otherwise. Yet if he is not, 'tis easily shown."

"He has the very turn of Vane, but more courage, though no great amount even at that. Moreover, until I had him beaten he showed an airy coolness, a suave impudence, that tries one's temper greatly. I almost respected the knave then. Vane was not like that—he was all threats and bluff."

"I have little fear of Fernhall's safety from his claim. He knew he could hope for little success at law, or he would not have come here with that trick of offering to let me remain at Huntercombe. Ay, I think we shall hear no more of Mr. Hector Forrester and his snuffy-coated lawyer. Hallo! How now?"

There was a muffled crack somewhere outside among the laurels, the report of a pistol, and a bullet sang past Dick's head and buried itself with a thud in the panelling by the side of the fireplace.

In an instant Dick was on his feet. He flung the window open and called to his servants, who came flocking out at the cry.

"What was the shot, sir?" cried Johnson, the steward.

"Some knave shooting at me from the shrubberies," returned Dick. "Loose the dogs and search the place through and through! Take picks and scythes—anything—and cut down any stranger you find lurking! Quick, men! He cannot have gone far!"

They hunted the whole place through, searching every nook and cranny, while Dick sent mounted grooms to scour the fields and copses round about. But though they spent an hour over the hunt, no sign or trace of the would-be murderer was found, and at last the search had to be given up.

Rather moody and disappointed, Dick went back to the Hall. There, on the very door itself, over the knocker, was nailed another placard, like the one that had been put there three days before, save that it was smaller. Dick plucked it down and read the crude charcoal scrawl upon it.

"The luck was with you this time. But we never miss twice. We have a slower death waiting for you, and the score will soon be paid.—CAPTAIN SWEENY."

Dick laughed shortly.

"They say he is a clever knave, and indeed it looks like it. 'Twas no small thing to nail this upon my door and disappear while twenty of us were searching for him in the grounds. 'Twas not there when the shot was fired, I'll swear to it. Well, Captain Footpad, we shall see who wins. Never yet has an enemy had the best of me for long."

* * *

"WITH an honourable enemy one needs no more than a good sword," said Dick the next morning when, coming down after a good night's sleep, his eye fell on the bullet-hole made in the panelling by his unknown assailant the previous evening. "But with an assassin it becomes necessary to take some few precautions. It would be humiliating to be shot through one's own window; so, as I intend to see Captain Sweeny's end instead of his seeing mine, I will set about it."

He called out all his men, and had the dining-hall and the lower rooms completely shut up, and the iron shutters made fast. This part of the house—the most comfortable part—had been built in Elizabeth's time, and so it had the tall, mullioned windows and square walls and jutting oriels—very well for comfort, but little use for defence.

During the days that followed Dick barricaded that part of the house, leaving it untenanted, and guarded the timberwork with iron grilles, so that it could not be fired. The young squire shifted his own quarters to the grey old dungeon-keep and double-towered gateway, on to which the later part of the house had been built. It had always been used, and was comfortable enough and far more easily defended.

There were no windows nearer than thirty feet to the ground, and the towers were pierced with loopholes and arrow-slits, all that remained of the storming Norman and Plantagenet days, when the great feudal House of Forrester held its own against the assaults of armies.

"Yet Captain Sweeny and his careful cut-throats are a more dangerous crew than our old knightly enemies were," thought Dick, "and though these serving-men of mine will do their best, and are faithful and trusty, yet some of them are somewhat soft in the arm. I only wish a few of the trusty rogues I knew on the road were with me. If a strong attack is made I have little to hope for from the law now, and, indeed, much to fear—" His thoughts were interrupted at that moment by the entry of one of his serving-men, who carried a letter in his hand. "What is this—a letter?" added Dick, frowning.

He tore open the missive, and read it eagerly. It was another note from his uncle, Lord Deerhurst, to whom he had written for help after that affair when he had helped Turpin to escape from the King's Riders. It read as follows:

"My dear Nephew,—I fear that escapade will be your ruin. I cannot think how you can have been such a fool as to mix yourself up with this rogue Turpin again, who is wanted by every gallows in England. Once you had come into possession of your estates and had your follies forgiven, you should surely have consulted your own interests and shaken off these perilous companions.

"I have done all things here to serve you, but I fear you will suffer heavily for what you have done. To defy the Riders and shelter this outlaw was a fatal error, for it shows you to be in sympathy with the knights of the road, of whom you were lately a member. An excellent plan for you now would be to decoy this Turpin to your house and deliver him up to the law, which would show your zeal for the

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proper cause, and might well procure your pardon. I pray you lose no time, but set about it at once."

"A likely matter," muttered Dick to himself, "that I should betray a staunch comrade who has saved my life! These place-hunters in the Government have an unsavoury smell about them. What more does he say?"

"If you delay," continued the letter, "your ruin will follow. But there is another matter which threatens you. I hear of a son of Vane Forrester who is pursuing his claims to your estates in the courts, and I hear, too, that your own legal position is even worse than I thought. It seems you made practically no proper registered claim at all, but counted on the fact that, as you thought, there could be no rival. You entered into possession with the help of your friends Stanhope and Vincent, and delayed observing the proper formalities. You will regret it.

"The king is abroad, and the Secretary of State, who issued and signed your pardon, is very ill. Altogether, your position is one of extreme gravity.

"If I can do any further service, command me, but my time is much occupied.
—DEERHURST."

The Blow Falls.

DICK folded up the letter with a little laugh.

"The rats desert the sinking ship," he commented. "My uncle draws into his shell, as my case grows worse. He thinks he may yet need to keep his civility for Hector Forrester, if that knave succeeds. Between Hector and the law and Sweeny, my troubles are treading on each other's sword-hilts." The boy laughed fiercely. "Well, I knew how to meet them when I rode the highways. Perhaps I have not forgotten."

Dick went into the house and saw that all was in order and ready. He took from a drawer his old silver-chased double horse-pistols, and fingered them lovingly.

"Nay, this will not do," he said, putting them back. "Not unless I am robbed of my own again must I resort to the use of these. I am still Forrester of Fernhall. Do I hear voices at the gates?"

He shut the drawer and a page entered.

"Two gentlemen request to see you, sir."

"Two?" Dick thought a moment. "Who are they? Neighbours of mine?"

"Nay, sir; strangers from London, I think."

"Ah! Admit them, then. And see that only these two enter."

The page departed, and presently two strangers entered the room. One was a prosperous-looking man in plain but dignified attire. Behind him, treading rather cautiously, was the snuffy lawyer, Smear,

who accompanied Hector Forrester a few days before. He avoided Dick's eyes, but the young squire showed no sign of recognising him.

"To what do I owe this honour?" said Dick quietly to the prosperous-looking man.

"My name is Christopher Staines," he replied, with a polite bow. "I am an attorney, of London, and my duty is a somewhat unpleasant one, I fear, from your point of view, Mr. Forrester."

"Never mind the unpleasantness, sir," said Dick. "There may be more anon. What is your news?"

"It is that Mr. Hector Forrester, my client, has established in the Court of Chancery his claim to the estate of Fernhall, and will shortly take possession."

"Established his claim?" gasped Dick, with a short laugh. "The Courts of Chancery move passing quickly on your account, sir, if I may say so. 'Tis but three days since Hector Forrester came here."

"The claim has been under process for nearly a fortnight, sir," explained the lawyer.

"I think you are making some small error," said Dick, with dangerous quietness. "I am heir and owner of Fernhall. A man cannot be deprived of his own by law, even if the other side is right, without being given a hearing."

"There is no question of depriving, sir," said the attorney politely. "Your own claim to Fernhall was never made, and so you never had rightful possession. That being so, my client had no rival to fight. His father, the late Vane Forrester, was owner of the estate, and Mr. Hector Forrester had only to prove himself his father's son. He has, of course, done so, and the courts have admitted him as heir. There was no will."

A spot of red showed on each of Dick's cheeks, and his eyes gleamed.

"What proof have I of this?"

"Here is the order of the Court of Chancery," replied the attorney, unrolling it before Dick's eyes. "I may add that my client could claim against you for the time you have spent here in this house. But he generously forgoes that, and merely comes to take possession of his own. But there is another matter which I have to carry out, and which also concerns you."

He drew from a brief-bag a piece of folded parchment.

"This, sir, is a writ of attainder against you. I have the honour of serving it. It means that you are, by order of the courts, deprived of all landed property and fortune, and all offices of dignity which you may hold in the county. It has been issued on account of your having sheltered from justice a notorious outlaw, and defied and thwarted the King's officers who came to arrest him!"

(Deprived of his estates and fortune! But Dick Forrester is full of fighting spirit, and in next week's stirring instalment he makes things hum. Don't miss reading it).

Take Your Place for This Week's Chirpy Chin-Wag with the Editor.



THERE'S one thing about you, Ralph Clarry (Toronto), which stands out like a beacon, and that is your tremendous enthusiasm for the Old Paper. You are so enthusiastic, in fact, that your letters bristle with grumbles, and that's a sure sign of enthusiasm. What you want more than anything else, it seems, is a whole-hearted return to the old style of St. Frank's yarn. Well, it has often been said in these columns that fair-minded grumbles are welcomed, and it is my job to please the majority of readers; or, at least, to do the best I can in this direction. You say that you revel in such stories as "The Hooded Unknown" and "The Siege of Moat Hollow," and "The Legions of Foo Chow," and similar type yarns. In that case the forthcoming yarns in the Old Paper are certain to please you, for I have arranged an autumn and winter programme of outstanding "majority-pleasers."

There can be little doubt that Ralph Clarry shares the enthusiasm of thousands of other readers in the recent Caronia series, for Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks was right back in his old style in writing these yarns. And in the series now running he is again giving you the fare you most favour. Future stories, too, will be on similar lines—fast-moving action, thrills, humour, a touch of mystery here and there, and all in the "good old style."

And now for answering a few of Ralph Clarry's questions. The old secret passage from Willard's Island to St. Frank's is still in existence, but a part of it is blocked up, and therefore the passage is more or less useless. The Hon. Aubrey De Vere Wellborne and his priceless chums, the Hon. Bertram Carstairs and the Hon. Cyril Coates, are still very much in evidence in Study No. 10 at the River House School, and they are just as rascally. And Cyril Graham, the son of the famous West End comedian, and a real chip of the old block, is ever-ready to help Hal Brewster & Co. in their japes. Morgan Evans, the Welsh boy at St. Frank's, is, of course, in the Remove.

It will please you to know, Jack Murtagh (Hastings, New Zealand), that Mr. Brooks is now planning a series of super-mystery stories of the very type you say you like so much. He is striving to go one better than the Ezra Quirko stories, and the Dr. Karnak stories, which were so popular in the past.

A few of the Sixth-Formers find it necessary to shave, Jack Godden (Hilton, South Australia), but razors are practically unknown in the Junior School. You say that you are fifteen, and that you have been shaving for a year; but in the more temperate climate of England beards do not develop so quickly. The captain of the Third Form, before Willy Handforth turned up, was Owen minor. Edward Oswald Handforth is a slogging batsman, and with luck on his side he has more than once made his century; but he is not much good as a bowler, although he fondly imagines that Nipper is a chump for never putting him on. Evans, the River House prefect, is not related in any way to Morgan Evans of the Remove at St. Frank's. You are not paying much of a compliment to Mr. Alington Wilkes when you ask if he is related to the rascally Sam Wilkes who tried to murder Stanley Waldo on one memorable occasion. Emphatically, he is not.

The occupants of the Fourth Form studies in the East House are as follows: Study No. 11: John Holroyd, Edwin Munroe, Peter Cobb. Study No. 12: Lionel Corcoran (Fourth Form captain), Timothy Armstrong, Louis Griffith. Study No. 13: Clement Turner, Joseph Page, Donald Harron. Study No. 14: Julian Clifton, Robert Simmons. Study No. 15: David Merrell, Frederick Marriott, Enoch Snipe. Study No. 16: William Freeman, Eric Dallas, Arthur Steele. Study No. 17: Arthur Kemp, Cyril Conroy. Studies No. 18, 19 and 20 are at present unoccupied.

All letters for discussion on this page must be addressed to the The Editor, NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

THE 'LIVE-WIRE' REBELS!

(Continued from page 36)

be much wrong. We can soon fill the hole, and then put some new turf over this gap."

"Yes, rather!"

"Things aren't so bad, you chaps!"

"And we're still in possession of the playing fields!"

"Hear, hear!"

Kirby Keeble Parkington, now that most of the excitement was over came strolling up.

"Well, sweethearts, you certainly do see life!" he said enviously. "Good old St. Frank's! What a school! Sometimes I'm almost sorry that we Red-Hots went back to Carlton!"

"But we're not sorry a bit!" retorted Handforth promptly.

"Well, we won't argue," sighed K.K. "How about our little game? I suppose you realise that we were in the middle of a match? I suppose you also realise that Carlton is one up?"

"Yes," said Nipper briskly. "Come on, everybody! We've got to carry on with that game—and we've got to give these Carlton chaps a good licking, too!"

"By George, rather!"

"Try and do it!" said the Carlton chaps in one voice.

It was impossible to finish the game on Little Side; but Big Side was empty, and the seniors would have no objection to the juniors using their ground.

A number of boys—mainly fags, under Willy Handforth—had hurried off to get hurdles, and the hole in the ground was temporarily covered and guarded.

The main crowd surged off to Big Side; Browne blew his whistle, and the interrupted match was carried on.

K.K. & Co. received a shock.

They had been one goal up, and they had told themselves that the Saints, after the recent commotion, would be put right off their game. Kirby Keeble Parkington, in fact, had dreamed of returning to Carlton with a handsome victory.

What actually happened was disturbing.

Within five minutes of re-starting, Nipper, playing better than ever, had led his forwards so brilliantly that they sliced clean through the Carlton defence. It was Nipper who scored the equaliser—a red-hot shot from close range. The Carlton goalie scarcely saw the ball.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Nipper—do it again!"

"Go it, the rebels!"

During the second half, the play was faster than ever; for K.K. & Co., burly fighters all, were putting up a magnificent game. But the Saints played with a dash and an abandon which defied all the efforts of the Carlton defence. Jimmy Potts scored again for St. Frank's, and when the final whistle blew they left the field victors by two goals to one.

Kirby Keeble Parkington and his Red-Hots departed from St. Frank's in high good spirits—admitting that they had been well and truly whacked.

And the barring-out went on. The rebels had received that impetus which had been needed to give them fresh spirit and enthusiasm.

The battle for the playing fields was not over yet!

THE END.

(Professor Ogleby has been defeated this time—but he is far from beaten. Next week he launches another smashing attack against the football rebels. Look out for this sensational yarn. Entitled, "The Battle of St. Frank's!")

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