

HANDSOME PRIZES FOR JOKES!

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COOLING OFF HANDY!

An amusing incident from this week's rollicking long complete school and adventure yarn of the cheery Chums of St. Frank's.

New Series No. 90.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

October 10th, 1931.

E. O. Handforth, off his guard, becomes guardian of two-year old child!

HANDFORTH'S GOOD

CHAPTER 1.

Forgotten Treasure!

"YOU'VE dropped something, Handy!"

"Don't bother me now, ass!"

"It looks like a ten-pound note!"

"Rats!"

"Best imitation I've ever seen——"

"Are you going to dry up, Walter Church, or shall I dot you on the nose?" roared Edward Oswald Handforth, glaring across the table. "Here am I, wrestling with rotten mathematical problems, and all you can do is to gas about ten-pound notes! Dry up!"

Study D, in the Ancient House at St. Frank's, was looking cosy on this blustery October evening. The celebrated Handforth and his chums were doing their prep. At least, Handforth was doing his. Church and McClure had finished—they were generally first—and they were waiting patiently to turn on the wireless.

"Look at it, Mac," murmured Church, spreading out the crisp, flimsy scrap of paper. "Just like the real thing—eh?"

The alleged tenner had dropped out of Handforth's pocket a minute earlier. Edward Oswald, in searching for a paper on which he had written some notes, had turned his pockets out hurriedly; and the flimsy scrap of paper, folded and crumpled, had fallen to the floor in company with some editorial notes for the next issue of "Handforth's Weekly," and a slightly sticky bag which had once contained a confection locally known as "Mother Hake's Jaw Glue," because of its tendency to adhere to the teeth. It

EDWY SEARLES

By

BROOKS

Handy's guests become

FED-UP

even although he forgets the

FEED!



was a special toffee, manufactured and re-tailed by Mrs. Hake, of the school shop, with considerable profit to herself.

"Better chuck it in the fire," advised McClure, as he took the alleged tenner and rolled it up into a ball. "I don't believe in fake paper money."

DEED!



Handforth glanced up from the table, with suspicion in his eyes.

"What's that you're doing?" he demanded impatiently. "What have you got there?"

"Only that imitation tenner," replied Mac, tossing it into the fire. "You——"

He was interrupted by a wild, almost fiendish, howl from Handforth. The burly junior leapt to his feet with such violence that he sent his chair flying, and

the table tipped over. Books, inkpots, and papers went flying over the floor. Handforth dived into the fireplace, and grabbed at the ball of crumpled paper, which had fallen, fortunately, upon an unburnt coal.

"Thank goodness!" gurgled Handforth, as he sat back on his knees.

"You — you reckless dummy!" stormed Church. "You've spilt ink all over the tablecloth——"

"Blow the table cloth!" roared Handforth, rising to

his feet. "What the dickens do you mean by trying to burn my money?"

"Rot! That's not a real tenner——"

"Oh, isn't it?" shouted Handforth. "That's just where you're mistaken! It is a real tenner!"

"What!"

The Scottish junior, whose hand had performed that dread deed, reeled giddily.

"Handy!" he breathed. "You — you mean to say that I nearly burnt up ten quid?"

Handforth smoothed out the note, and glared.

"Anybody but a born chump could have seen that it was real," he said tartly. "By George! And you a Scotch chap! You ought to be kicked!"

"But—but——"

Mac's voice was feeble; he was still suffering severely from the shock.

"You're kidding us, aren't you?" asked Church, staring. "You never told us that you had a tenner, Handy! That thing's only a fake."

"Rot! My pater gave it to me before he went away," said Handforth. "Do you think my pater would give me a dud tenner?"

Church and McClure were beginning dimly to understand. It was only a few days since Sir Edward Handforth had left the school, after a brief stay. There had been quite a lot of excitement then, for Sir Edward had been victimised by a couple of clever Italian confidence men, who had attempted to rook him of a small fortune. Owing to the brilliant handling of the case by Nelson Lee, the famous detective-headmaster of St. Frank's, the plotters had failed. And Sir Edward had been so delighted at his narrow escape that he had not only given his elder son a ten-pound note, but he had presented Willy, of the Third, with a fiver—and another fiver had gone to his daughter, Ena, of the Moor View School. Sir Edward, always a generous man, had been extra generous in his relief.

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!" said McClure, with a gulp. "A real tenner! And I nearly burnt it! Why the dickens didn't you tell us, Handy?"

"Why the dickens should I?" retorted Handforth gruffly.

"But your pater left the school days ago!"

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Nothing, only—only——"

"I still had a quid left, and I shoved the tenner in my pocket and forgot all about it," explained Handforth.

His chums rocked on their heels.

"You forgot it?" repeated Church dazedly.

"Yes."

"Forgot that you had a tenner?"

"Why not?"

"He forgot it, Mac," said Church, turning to McClure like a fellow in a dream. "He shoves a real, genuine, cast-iron ten-quid note into his pocket with a bag of toffee—and forgets it!"

McClure sighed.

"He oughtn't to be allowed about loose," he said huskily.

CHAPTER 2.

Pulling Handy's Leg!

WHEN Church and McClure went to the Common-room, some minutes later, they were still feeling rather unsteady on their feet. McClure, in particular, was rocky.

"We can't really expect to win," Nipper was saying. "In fact, we shall do pretty well if we force a draw."

Handforth's chums listened uninterestedly; football, at the moment, did not appeal to them.

"Yes, Barcliffe is a pretty warm side," said Fullwood. "I expect we shall do well if we draw—and away from home, too. We had a pretty bright victory last Saturday, against Caistowe High School."

"Yes, we whacked them two-one," said the Remove skipper complacently. "We're doing very well in the League, if you ask me."

Vivian Travers smiled.

"You haven't forgotten the great black mark, dear old fellow?" he asked politely.

Nipper almost winced.

"No; and I'm not likely to forget it," he growled. "You mean the Saturday before last? Our game with Bellton Rovers? My only hat! Just imagine those village chaps licking us three-two!"

St. Frank's had not yet recovered from the shock. Bellton Rovers had dealt the St. Frank's Junior XI its only knock-down blow in the season. There had been six games so far in the League, and of these the St. Frank's juniors had won four—the four home games against the River House School, Carlton College, Helmford College, and Caistowe High School. Of the two away games one had been a draw—against Bannington Council School. The other, in which the celebrated Bellton Rovers had figured, had resulted in defeat for the Saints. And it had been largely their own fault, for they had regarded the Rovers as "easy game"; only to find that Bob Catchpole and his merry men were brilliant footballers.

"Confidence in a team is a big step towards victory," said Nipper soberly. "But over-confidence means a licking. We were over-confident when we played the Rovers. Now, next Saturday, when we play Barcliffe, we must profit by our mistakes, and——"

"Aren't you chaps ever going to stop?" demanded Church, walking into the crowd round the fire. "Mac and I have got something to tell you."

"It can wait," said Nipper briefly. "It can't be more important than football!"

"But it is," said Mac. "It's about money."

And before the others could resume their football talk, McClure, in a hushed, awed voice, told of the narrow escape of Handforth's tenner.

"I don't see why you chaps are so surprised," remarked Nipper, at length. "It's just the sort of thing Handy would do—and you ought to know it better than anybody. He's a careless blighter with his money."

"But fancy forgetting a tenner!" said the Scottish junior indignantly.

"He'd forget anything!" grinned Nipper. "He's been pretty excited about that Black Hand business, when those Italians tried to dish his father. Handy can't get over the disappointment. He was knocked cold when it turned out that those fellows were fakes, and not genuine Black Hand men."

There were some chuckles, and, before anybody else could make any comment, the door opened and Handforth himself walked in. His face was glowing, and he was rubbing his hands together with satisfaction.

"Anybody seen two escaped inmates of Colney Hatch knocking about?" he asked briskly. "Oh, there they are!" he added, as he caught sight of his chums. "Now what about it, you fatheads?"

"What about what?" growled Church.

"I thought you said I couldn't work out that maths problem?"

"I still say it."

"But, you silly chump, I've done it!" roared Handforth. "And, what's more, I'll get full marks from old Crowell."

"Wait until he sees your paper," said Church, with a sniff. "You'll probably get full marks all right—but they'll be the kind of marks which need embrocation!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass——"

"Peace, children," urged Vivian Travers mildly. "Why discuss such painful subjects when there is a much more delightful one to claim our attention? We understand, Handforth, dear old fellow, that you possess a crisp tenner?"

"Well, what about it?" asked Handforth.

"We further understand that the said tenner was forgotten by you?"

"Not forgotten, fathead—overlooked temporarily."

"Well, for the love of Samson, isn't that enough proof that the tenner is more or less superfluous?" said Travers. "I ask you!" he added, appealing to the others, and winking. "Don't you think it would be a good idea if we helped Handy to blue that ten?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Not likely!" said Handforth. "What do you take me for? I'm thinking of buying some new gadgets for my Morris Minor——"

"Gadgets are more trouble than they're worth," interrupted Travers firmly. "Besides, you're not really believing that that tenner is yours, Handy?"

"If it isn't mine, whose is it?"

"Well, your pater gave it to you naturally," said Travers, with a shrug. "But surely it's obvious to you that he meant you to whack it out for the benefit of the Form?"

"The Ancient House half of it, anyway," amended Nipper.

"Well, we'll say the Ancient House half," agreed Travers. "We might include Tom Burton, of the West House, because the Bo'sun took a hand in rounding up the crooks. Nipper was there, too, and, in a way, we can say that the Remove did the job."

"Oh, did it?" growled Handforth. "What about Mr. Lee?"

"I'm not denying that Mr. Lee helped," said Travers generously. "But we're talking about that tenner. And when your pater whacked it out he naturally meant you to do the big thing."

"But look here——"

"A nice little feed, at the Japanese Cafe, say," continued Travers thoughtfully. "Just we Ancient House Remove chaps—with the Bo'sun as a sort of guest. For ten quid we ought to get a pretty decent feed."

"Well, of course——"

"Nothing particularly lavish," said Travers. "After all, a tenner won't stretch beyond a certain point."

"This tenner won't stretch beyond my pocket!" said Handforth warmly.

"How about to-morrow afternoon?" asked Travers, ignoring him, and looking round the room.

"That'll suit us," said Fullwood, nodding.

"To-morrow afternoon, then," said Travers. "It's a half-holiday, and we haven't any important football on the agenda. We can all do with a trip to Bannington, and a spree in the Japanese Cafe will be a real treat."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's settled, then," said Travers calmly. "Thanks awfully, Handy, dear old fellow."

"Eh?"

"To-morrow afternoon at three o'clock, say."

"Yes, but look here——"

"At the Japanese Cafe," nodded Travers. "Good man!"

"Why, you—you——"

"We gladly accept your invitation," said Travers, beaming.

"My—my invitation?" gasped Edward Oswald.

"And we all think that it's very generous of you."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Not only generous, but handsome," said Travers heartily. "Not that we're surprised, Handy—it's just the sort of thing you can't help doing. We're proud of you!"

"Yes, rather!" said Nipper, clapping Handforth heartily on the back. "We'll all be there, Handy. Thanks no end!"

"Good old Handy!"

Everybody in the Common-room took up the cry, and Handforth, flushing, looked round in bewilderment. He didn't realise that his leg was being pulled.

"Well, of course, if you really think —" he began.

"What about giving him a cheer, you chaps?" shouted Nipper.

"We'll give him three," said Travers generously.

The cheers were given, and Handforth flushed.

"That's all right," he said awkwardly. "As a matter of fact, it's a pretty good idea of yours. I don't see any reason why the tenner shouldn't be whacked out on a Form feed. I'm game. I'm jolly glad you've accepted my invitation!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What the dickens——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled with laughter, and Handforth looked round in astonishment. Church and McClure were grinning widely, and he appealed to them for enlightenment.

"You silly ass, Travers was only pulling your leg," chuckled Church. "He didn't really mean it."

Handforth frowned.

"Pulling my leg, was he?" he roared. "Look here, Travers, you funny practical joking fathead——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Travers.

"You think it's a joke, do you?" belated Handforth. "All right, I'll show you! You can't pull my leg like that, you silly lunatic! I do invite all you chaps to a feed at the Japanese Cafe!"

"What!" went up a general yell.

"Rather!" said Handforth triumphantly. "Now, Travers, my son, perhaps you won't crow! Perhaps you won't say that you pulled my leg! That invite was genuine, and don't you forget it!"

Edward Oswald Handforth meant it, too; and the Removites chuckled gleefully.

Handforth would "fall" for Vivian Travers' leg pull. The joke of it was, Handforth had insisted upon "blueing" his tenner on a feed, even after he had discovered that he had been the victim of a little jape.

The Ancient House Removites, on the whole, was perfectly satisfied.

There were certain modifications, of course. Such fellows as Forrest, Gulliver, Bell, and Long were not included; Handforth would not have invited them at any price. And a few other West House Removites, in addition to Tom Burton, were pressed to attend—not that they needed much pressing. Such stalwarts as Reggie Pitt, Jack Grey, Dick Goodwin, and Alan Castleton. Then, too, it had been Handforth's bright idea to include a merry crowd of the Moor View school-girls.

"Why not?" he asked defensively.

"And echo answers, 'Why not?'" murmured Travers. "After all, it's your feed, dear old fellow. You're the host, and it's your tenner."

"It's a pity he doesn't invite the whole school, and the Moor View School as well, with the River House chaps as a make-weight," said Church sarcastically. "How far does he think a tenner will go?"

"Rats!" said Handforth, with a grin. "You can get a lot of tuck for a tenner."

"We shall be all right," said Nipper complacently. "Even if the party runs to forty, that'll be half-a-crown each, all round—and the Japanese Cafe gives a slap-up feed for half-a-crown."

"You don't know Handy!" growled McClure. "He'll expect four or five courses, expensive fruits, ice-creams, and goodness only knows what else, and when he finds that he can't get 'em he'll call the proprietor a swindler!"

Very much as Church and McClure had feared, the chief work was allocated to them. Handforth carried them off to Bannington almost an hour before the rest of the guests were due to start. They went in Handy's Morris Minor, and he drove straight to the Japanese Cafe.

"You two chaps can get out," he said briskly. "Pop in, and make the preliminary arrangements, while I'm garaging the car."

"I thought you 'phoned up this morning?" asked Church.

"So I did, but there'll be other things to fix," replied Handforth. "You see that the tables are nicely set, and make sure that there are plenty of flowers, and all that. I want this to be a proper banquet."

CHAPTER 3.

The Girl in the Boat!

THERE were many chortles during the remainder of the evening, and throughout the next morning. Nobody had really expected that

"It's a funny time to have a banquet," grumbled Church. "It'll be a sort of low tea."

"What do you mean, you idiot—a low tea?"

"Well, if people have tea very late, they call it a high tea," explained Church. "We shall be having it early, so it stands to reason that it'll be a low tea."

They escaped before Handforth could make any comment. He seemed to imagine that he could buy the whole place with his tenner; but his chums knew that a good deal of tact would be required to make that money spin out.

"It's not a bad idea—our going in first," said Mac. "We can arrange the

ordinary traffic of the High Street was not obstructed. The "lifeboat" was a rather cleverly-devised structure, mounted on a motor-car chassis.

There was a big mast, and on this mast there was a great banner, informing all and sundry that the Edgemore Orphan Asylum for Homeless Babies was ready and eager to accept contributions.

The lifeboat itself was evidently allegorical. Handforth dimly remembered that an old country house, in the hamlet of Edgemore, had recently undergone ex-



With a wild howl Handforth leapt to his feet, knocking over chair and table. Just in time he retrieved his ten-pound note from the fire.

menu. We'll make it something choice, but light. The fellows and the girls won't expect a whacking great meal at this time of the day."

They went into the cafe. Meanwhile, Handforth garaged the Minor, and then he walked back briskly along the High Street, fondly fingering the tenner in his pocket. He had an idea that the Japanese Cafe people would want to have a look at that tenner before the actual feast commenced.

"Hallo! What's this?" he murmured.

A small crowd had gathered round a gaily-decorated carnival lifeboat, which was standing near the War Memorial. There was a big, open space here, and the

tensive alterations and renovations, and that it had been opened as the Edgemore Orphan Asylum under the auspices of various famous county people. There was a whole string of influential names on view.

There was something else on view, too.

Handforth, in fact, hardly saw the lifeboat, or the banner, or the list of names. He was looking at the occupant of the boat, who stood in a neat little cockpit.

"By George!" breathed Handforth appreciatively.

The girl was undeniably pretty. In fact, she was radiantly pretty; and young, too. She was attired in nurse's uniform, and it suited her admirably.

Handforth stood watching, admiring, appreciating. Her hair was neither golden nor red, but something between the two; her complexion was like the complexion of a girl one sees on a magazine cover. It was quite natural, too. Her eyes were so deeply blue as to be almost violet. When she smiled, her teeth showed like little rows of glistening pearls; her nose was so perfect that Handforth devoted a full minute to its contemplation alone.

When it came to a matter of feminine beauty, Handforth was something of a connoisseur. At least, he was liable to "fall" for any unusually pretty face. Church and McClure held the private view that their leader was giving this feed in the Japanese Cafe because he was secretly hoping that there would be a new waitress there. Handy was rather keen on the Japanese Cafe waitresses; there had been more than one row because of his pointed attentions.

"Would you care to make a little contribution?"

Handforth jumped. The vision was looking straight at him, smiling at him. Her eyes were aglow, her teeth flashed, and when she smiled she looked prettier than ever.

"By George!" murmured Handforth again.

It suddenly came to him, with a shock of satisfaction, that he would not need an ordinary introduction to this girl. He could speak to her freely. For here she was publicly soliciting subscriptions for the orphanage!

"A sub?" gasped Handforth, leaping forward. "Rather! I'm on!"

CHAPTER 4.

Just Like Handy!

THE girl in the nurse's uniform smiled at Handforth's boisterous enthusiasm.

"It's awfully kind of you," she said sweetly. "Thanks ever so much. You know what we're here for, don't you?"

Handforth elbowed a few inquisitive children aside, and he leaned over the lifeboat contentedly. In fact, he scrutinised the girl so closely, and so ardently, that after a few moments she lowered her eyes.

"We shall be very grateful if you will do something to help," she murmured. "Every sixpence is of value, sir."

"Sixpence!" ejaculated Handforth. "What's the good of sixpence to an

orphanage? And, I say, for goodness sake don't call me 'sir.' Are you one of the nurses at the Babies' Home?"

"Well, yes——"

"My hat! Those babies are jolly lucky!" said Handforth enviously.

She laughed.

"At present we have four wards, and there is sufficient accommodation——" she began.

"Oh, cheese it!" protested Handforth. "I—I mean, I don't want to hear all that, miss! My name's Handforth, by the way. Ted Handforth. I belong to St. Franks."

"Yes, I noticed that," laughed the girl. "My own name is June Truscott."

Handforth looked at her dreamily.

"I say, what a ripping name!" he murmured. "June! It reminds me of summer—of flowers and glorious sunny mornings, and—and cricket, and—— Oh, all sorts of lovely things! June! What a name!"

This time the girl laughed merrily.

"How silly you are!" she exclaimed. "And, really, you mustn't stay here talking to me unless you contribute something. I don't wish to sound money grabbing——"

"You—money grabbing?" asked Handforth indignantly. "What rot! I—I mean, you mustn't say things like that, Miss—Miss Truscott! How much do you want? I've got plenty of money, you know."

He had completely forgotten the reason for his visit to Bannington; he had forgotten the Japanese Cafe and the guests who would shortly be arriving. So engrossed was he, in fact, in this pretty nurse that he did not even take any notice of the little crowd round about. The children were noisy, and a few grown-ups were chuckling amongst themselves—rather to the girl's embarrassment. But Handforth was totally blind to all this.

"Naturally, we are grateful for any little sum," she said, trying to speak in a prim, businesslike manner. "It is a very good work we are doing. All the babies who come to the orphanage are well cared for——"

"Blow the babies!"

"I—I beg your pardon?"

"Nunno! I—I mean—— Sorry!" gasped Handforth. "Please go on."

"All the babies are orphans—quite homeless, and many come to us in a terribly weak condition," said the girl earnestly. "It is our aim to bring them to a perfect state of health, and to rear them with as much loving care as though they were not fatherless or motherless. In the orphanage they will be well edu-

cated, and when they grow old enough to go out into the world they will be healthy and strong and——"

Handforth was not listening particularly. All these details bored him. What fascinated him was the animation of her pretty face as she talked. He could have stood there for hours, just looking at her. By this time he was well and truly smitten.

She paused, and he started slightly.

"Go on, please!" he urged.

"I don't believe you have been attending to me," she accused.

"Eh?"

"What was I saying last?"

"About—about the babies," faltered Handforth. "I say, do go on talking, Miss—Miss June! You don't know how pretty you look——"

Her smile vanished, and a cold, frigid look came into her dark eyes.

"I think you're making fun of me," she said indignantly. "Will you please go?"

Handforth was horrified.

"But—but I haven't made any contribution yet!" he protested. "Besides, I wasn't making fun of you—really!"

"If you care to take one of our little booklets, you are perfectly welcome," said the girl coldly. "They are free, but you may, if you feel inclined, place a subscription for the orphanage in this box."

She expected sixpence at the most; and she was angry when Handforth pulled out a piece of crisp paper and attempted to push it into the slot of the subscription box.

"How dare you?" she cried. "I thought you would make fun of me!"

Handforth was upset. He had offended her. He didn't know how, but, by hook or by crook, he had to bring back that smile. He gave up the ten-pound note without a qualm. And why not? Wasn't it all in a good cause? Poor, homeless babies! Jolly good luck to them!

"Why, what's the matter, miss?" he asked earnestly. "Honest, I'm not trying to make fun of you. Let me put this note into the box."

"Note?" asked June quickly.

She took it from him, unfolded it, and a little gasp escaped her lips.

"But—but this is a ten-pound note!" she exclaimed dazedly.

"Yes, I know."

"You really wish to contribute this to the orphanage?" she asked in amazement. And then, as a sudden thought struck her: "Or is this just a trick—is this note a—a fake?"

"It's not a trick!" insisted Handforth desperately. "And it's a perfectly good

tenner, Miss June. Honest Injun, you know! Honour bright, and all that! I can contribute ten quid if I like, can't I?"

"A real ten-pound note," said the girl softly.

His manner impressed her. His earnestness was genuine. All the same, she was more or less bowled over. Schoolboys with ten-pound notes were rare phenomena.

"Yes, rather!" said Handforth eagerly. "I told you my name, didn't I? My pater is Sir Edward Handforth. Don't you remember? That affair the other day, you know, when my pater was nearly rooked of a fortune. He was so bucked when Mr. Lee saved him that he gave me a tenner."

The girl remembered; all the countryside had been talking of that sensational affair. She knew that Handforth was speaking the truth. Her eyes softened, her smile came back, and Handforth breathed freely again.

"By George, that's better!" he said, with relief. "You made me awfully miserable, you know! I wouldn't make fun of you for the world, Miss June! Honest Injun, I wouldn't!"

She was shaking her head.

"But I can't take all this—from a schoolboy," she said quietly.

"Of course you can!" exclaimed Handforth. "And more, too! I'll give you another sub when I see you next time. Rather! My pater is pretty generous, and I generally have plenty of cash. Do let me!" he urged.

"If you really mean it, I don't know how to thank you," said June Truscott happily. "This is too wonderful for words! The matron will be overjoyed. And don't forget, an initial ten-pound contribution gives you certain privileges at the orphanage. Let me explain."

She explained—but Handforth did not hear a word.

What she was saying did not matter a toss. She was talking again—and talking much more animatedly than before now. Handforth feasted his eyes upon her pretty young face; her sparkling eyes, her flashing teeth. So enthusiastic was she that she did not even notice his admiring gaze.

Handforth was in a sort of dream. What a girl! That she should be talking to him like this—practically making a friend of him—filled him with joy.

"There, I think I've explained just what it means," said June, at length. "What do you think of it—Ted?"

She spoke the name rather mischievously—after all, he was only a school-

boy—and Handforth jumped. She had called him "Ted"!

"Of course!" he said breathlessly.

"You quite understand, don't you?"

"Oh, rather!"

"And do you really mean that you agree?"

"Why, of course I agree!" said Handforth eagerly. "Why shouldn't I?"

"I shall have to give you a receipt for this money," said June. "And if you will sign this paper——"

He signed readily enough. He didn't know what it was, but he signed. She gave him a receipt, and he stuffed it carelessly into his pocket.

And it was at this interesting moment that Church and McClure arrived on the scene.

CHAPTER 5.

Trouble in the Offing!

"OH, my hat!" groaned Church.

In a flash, he and Mac knew what had happened. One glance at that pretty girl was enough to inform them. They knew Handforth only too well!

"What do you think of him?" asked McClure bitterly. "He leaves us at the Japanese Cafe, saying that he'll be along in a minute! We wait and wait, and when we come out we find him making eyes at a pretty nurse girl!"

"You're not surprised, are you?" growled Church. "You know jolly well that it's dangerous to leave him by himself for five minutes an end!"

They went forward quickly. The guests would soon be arriving, and it was important that the host should be on the spot. There was only one thing to do in a situation like this—and Church and McClure did it.

"Pardon us, miss," said Church, raising his cap.

Without any preliminaries, he and Mac seized Handforth by the arms, and yanked him backwards. June looked on wonderingly.

"Hi! What the—— Leggo, you dummies!" roared Handforth. "What the dickens—— Let me go, blow you! I haven't finished with—with this young lady yet!"

"I don't think there's anything else for us to talk about—really," said June hastily. "Thank you ever so much."

Handforth was in no position to make an adequate reply. He was being yanked along the High Street at express speed—backwards. It was a most undignified

proceeding, and the leader of Study D boiled.

Unfortunately, Church had crooked his elbow round one of Handforth's armpits, and McClure had done the same. They were running hard, and Handforth, who had his back to them, was at a total disadvantage. He couldn't run backwards at that speed, so he was dragged.

"Hi! Stop!" he howled. "I'll—I'll smash you—— Leggo!"

But Church and McClure did not let go. They wanted to get Handforth well clear of the danger zone. Edward Oswald himself was filled with mortification. She had seen this undignified departure of his! In that moment Handforth's feelings towards his chums were more or less homicidal.

"Now!" panted Church, at length. "That'll do, Mac."

"Yes, I think so," gasped McClure. "But hold him tightly! You know what he is!"

They all halted, and some passers-by smiled; others frowned. There was never any telling what these schoolboys would do.

"You—you faithless rotter!" said Church, in a voice of breathless accusation.

"Eh?" gurgled Handforth.

"At any minute Irene will be here, and we find you flirting and gallivanting with a pretty nurse girl!"

"I wasn't flirting!" roared Handforth.

"It's no good your denying it——"

"Or gallivanting, either!" growled the rugged junior. "She's—she's getting subscriptions for the Edgemore Orphan Asylum for Homeless Babies. You silly asses, I was only giving her a sub!"

"Giving her the glad eye, you mean!" said Church sternly.

"And I wasn't sure that she didn't give you the glad eye back," added McClure. "A jolly pretty girl, I'll admit——"

"Pretty?" echoed Handforth, with concentrated scorn. "What do you mean—pretty? She's glorious—she gorgeous—she's too marvellous for description! The English language isn't good enough to——"

"Never mind the English language!" interrupted Church hastily. "All we know is that you're coming with us. We leave you alone for a couple of minutes, and when we find you you're giving the glad eye to a pretty girl. You ought to wear smoked glasses—or blinkers!"

"Blinkers?" snorted Handforth. "I'm not a horse!"

"Perhaps not; but you're a mule," retorted Church. "And mules wear blinkers,



Handforth leapt over the banisters and grabbed the letter. "It's from her," he said softly.

don't they? For goodness' sake, snap out of it, Handy!"

"What do you mean—snap out of it?" demanded Handforth coldly. "If you want to talk to me, talk English!"

"He wants to argue now," groaned McClure. "Don't you realise, you dummy, that all your guests are due to arrive?"

Handforth started.

"Guests?" he repeated. "What guests?"

"You don't mean to say you've forgotten the feed?"

"Feed? What feed?"

"At the Japanese Cafe!" yelled Church.

"Japanese Cafe?" repeated Handforth dazedly.

"Oh, help!" groaned Mac. "He's not a mule—he's a parrot!"

Remembrance was dimly returning to Edward Oswald Handforth.

"Oh, I see what you mean now," he growled, after a few moments. "That feed at the Japanese Cafe?"

"It's sunk in," said Church, with relief. "It's penetrated the reinforced concrete."

"As for the feed," said Handforth, smoothing his crumpled jacket, and glancing anxiously down the road, "the feed's off!"

"The feed's—which?" asked his chums, in one voice.

"Off!" repeated Handforth briefly.

"Oh, it's off, is it?" fumed Church. "Just because you fall in love with a pretty girl you desert all your guests?"

"I haven't fallen in love!" said Handforth fiercely. "If you say that again, Walter Church—"

"Oh, let it rest," said Church wearily. "You ass, don't you understand that everything is fixed up at the cafe, and that your guests are due?"

"I can't help my guests," said Handforth defiantly. "I keep telling you that the feed's off. How the dickens can I spend that tenner on a feed when I haven't got the tenner?"

"Haven't got it?" asked Mac, with a catch in his voice.

"No, I haven't. I've given it as a sub to the orphanage."

The Scottish junior rocked on his heels, and Church grabbed at him for support.

"You've given that girl ten quid—as a sub?" whispered Church, in a thin, feeble voice.

"Yes, I have!" said Handforth defiantly.

"But—but—but——"

Words failed Church. He knew that he ought to have realised it before. Wasn't it just like Handy to whack out that tenner, and to give it to charity—after he had fixed everything up for a Form feed?

To say that Church and McClure were aghast would be putting it very mildly. They were speechless. And if Handforth thought that he was going to escape, so that he could return to the fair June, he was due for another think.

For the guests were arriving, and the guests seemed to fill the whole of Bannington High Street.

CHAPTER 6.

Cooling Him Off!

THEY came, mostly, on bicycles; and Church and McClure were relieved to see that the Moor View girls had turned off, and were making for the cafe. Nipper and Travers, and a number of other Removites, seeing the Study D trio in the road, were approaching.

"Anything wrong?" asked Nipper politely.

He could see that Handforth and Church and McClure were flustered. Clearly, there had been a little tiff. This was unfortunate on the eve, so to speak, of the feed.

"Oh, it's nothing much," said Church, speaking with deliberate bitterness. "Merely a trifle. The feed's off—that's all."

The majority of those Removites must have possessed marvellously acute hearing; for even the boys on the outskirts came crowding round, their faces expressive of consternation and alarm.

"Say that again," said Travers. "Were you talking about the feed?"

"Handy has blued the tenner on something else!" said McClure hopelessly.

"What!"

It wasn't so much an exclamation as a unanimous yell.

"Listen, you chaps," said Handforth coolly.

He felt, in the circumstances, that it was up to him to explain. And he was such an optimist that he firmly believed that his explanation would be satisfactory.

"Go on," said Nipper ominously. "I think you wanted to say something, Handy?"

"About the feed," said Handforth. "It's rather rough on you chaps, I suppose, but I don't think you'll mind when I tell what I've done with that tenner."

"You have done something with it, then?" asked Travers, slowly turning up his coat sleeves. "Well, well! We're dying to hear some more, dear old fellow! Carry on!"

"You see, it's like this," explained Handforth. "There's a new babies' orphanage at Edgemore, and they're in the town appealing for subscriptions."

"And you gave them ten quid?" asked Fullwood sarcastically.

"Yes!"

This time it wasn't a yell, but a fair imitation of a clap of thunder.

"Don't get excited!" shouted Handforth. "It's a jolly good cause—this orphanage. I'm not going to tell you any lies. As a matter of fact, I forgot all about the feed."

"He forgot the feed!" whispered Jimmy Potts faintly.

"This other thing was so much more important that I was justified in forgetting the feed," said Handforth defensively. "Hang it, you can't jump on me for giving money to charity——"

"You can do what you like with your own money, of course, old man," said Nipper. "But that money wasn't yours—because you had already invited a crowd of us to a feed. Couldn't you have given the orphanage ten bob, or half-a-crown, or something? Was it absolutely necessary to contribute a tenner?"

"I—I felt generous," explained Handforth unconvincingly.

"And I'll tell you why he felt generous," added Church, in a grim tone. "You didn't see the girl who is collecting for the orphanage, did you? A regular ripper—a stunner! Only a young girl, as pretty as they make 'em. You can guess the rest."

The guests were pressing round, and now their comments were more than ever like rumbling thunder.

"I think we can understand, you chaps," said Nipper darkly. "Handy didn't give that tenner to the orphanage—he wasn't even thinking of the orphanage. He's smitten again!"

"And he gave that money to the girl because she was pretty!" yelled Harry Gresham. "He's dished us out of our feed because of some nursemaid! Oh, my hat! What are we going to do to him?"

The exasperated guests crowded round excitedly. Handforth began to get alarmed. Things were not looking any too bright.

"But—but it was for charity!" he yelled. "You don't seem to understand!"

"We understand perfectly, and it's as clear as daylight that you need cooling off, my son!" said Nipper. "We don't blame you so much—it must be your hot gypsy blood."

"I'm not a gypsy!" howled Handforth.

"If we were to examine the Handforth family tree, we'd probably find gypsies somewhere in the past generations," said Nipper. "Anyhow, you need cooling off. Grab him, you chaps!"

Handforth was promptly grabbed.

"Bring him this way," said Nipper. "Here's the very thing we need."

His eyes were glinting. If he and his companions couldn't have the feed, they could, at least, have something as a substitute. And Nipper had just spotted a lumbering water-cart a hundred yards away. The other juniors soon caught on. Handforth was to be cooled off! Right!

Half a dozen of the Removites leapt at the driving-seat, and the surprised driver was compelled to pull up his horse. He was also compelled to get down from his seat. While this little argument was going on in front, a dozen other fellows dealt drastically with Handforth.

Quickly he was bound hand and foot; there were plenty of long scarves which were brought into use in lieu of rope. Somebody had turned off the water supply; Handforth was tied just below the long sprayer. It was quite an ordinary water-cart, and the sprayer, about three feet from the ground, was the same width as the cart itself. Handforth was slung beneath it in a horizontal position. Crowds of interested people gathered round, and there was a good deal of laughter.

"Right away!" sang out Nipper, who was the master of the ceremonies. "Turn her on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nipper himself leapt into the driving-seat. Somebody yanked the handle, and the full surging spray poured out of the numerous holes. Undeniably it was an excellent method of cooling off Handforth. He was soaked to the skin in the first minute, and the water was splashing all over him and all round him in a continuous cascade.

"Hi! Help!" he gasped. "This water's cold, you rotters! Lemme go!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Up the High Street went the water-cart, with Handforth tied to the rear, getting all the water before it reached the road. From the point of view of the exasperated guests, it was the funniest thing they had seen for weeks.

To make matters worse, from Handforth's point of view, Irene & Co., of the Moor View School, had turned up; and they were interested, if scandalised, spectators.

"Oh, what are you boys doing?" cried Irene, who was Handforth's special chum, as she ran forward. "Why are you treating Ted like that?"

"It's too bad of you," said Doris Berkeley, joining her.

"You don't understand," said Church hastily. "He invited us to a feed, didn't he—you girls, too?"

"Yes, but——"

"Well, he sent Mac and me into the Japanese Cafe to make arrangements," said Church deliberately. "When we came out we found him making eyes at a pretty girl—that one with the orphanage life-boat."

"Oh, my aunt!" murmured Winnie Pitt. "Yes, we know! We saw her as we came along."

"Go on!" said Irene, her voice becoming cold.

"That's all, except that he had given that girl a ten-quid note—which he was supposed to spend on our feed," said Church. "Nipper thought he needed cooling off, so, as this water-cart was handy, we got busy."

Irene nodded.

"Go ahead!" she said briskly. "I've changed my mind. All I hope is that the water-cart was full up, and that Ted won't be released until it's empty!"

THERE were two other spectators of that astonishing scene.

They were Edward Oswald Handforth's kith and kin; or, to put it plainly, Ena Handforth and Willy Handforth, his sister and brother. They

watched indignantly at first; then they heard the truth of the matter.

"We've got to do something, sis," said Willy, in his decisive way. "We can't let Ted ruin our name like this—the fair name of the Handforths!"

"I don't know what you're getting at," said Ena coldly.

"Ted's promised these chaps and you girls a feed at the Japanese Cafe," explained Willy. "He's given the money away, hasn't he? That means there'll be no feed—unless we come to the rescue. He's our brother, and we've got to get him out of this mess."

"But—but——"

"That fiver of yours," said Willy crisply. "It's still intact, isn't it?"

"Yes, but——"

"So is mine," said Willy. "I was going to buy some materials for improving my

pets' quarters—and I believe you were going to buy a wristlet watch, weren't you? Well, all that is off! Give me your fiver."

"My poor child," said Ena pityingly. "What do you take me for?"

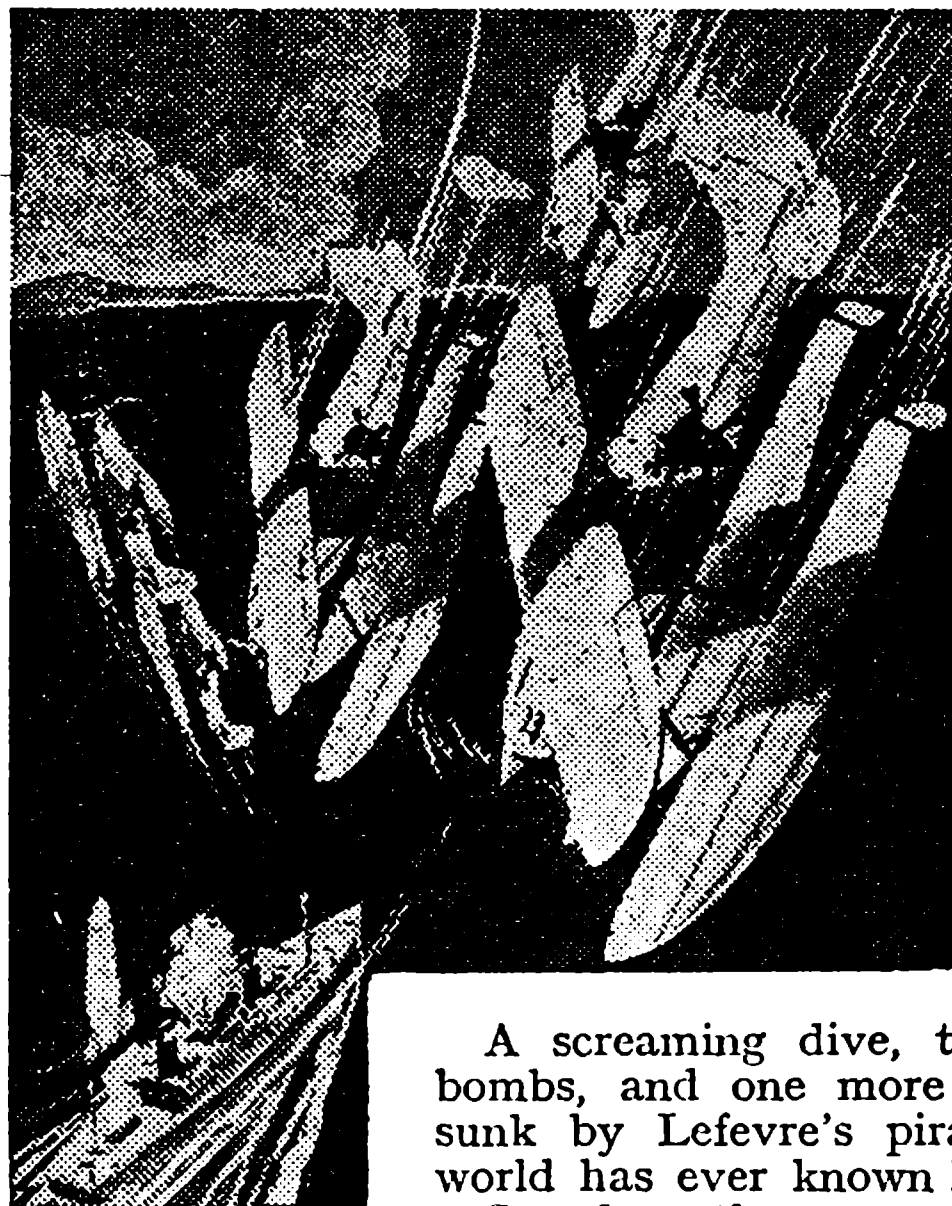
"I take you for a sport," replied Willy. "We've got ten quid between us—the same amount as Ted has given away. Well, for his sake, we've got to come to the rescue."

Ena sighed.

"I suppose you're right," she admitted dismally. "Good-bye, wristlet watch! It's a real beauty, and I was so looking forward——"

"Cheer up, old girl," murmured Willy, with a sudden grin. "You'll get your watch all right."

"Eh?"



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"Leave it to me; I'll explain later," said Willy. "Let's have that fiver."

The leader of the Third Form could be very masterful when he liked; and although Ena preferred to think that she could "boss" her younger brother, she was quite mistaken. It was generally he who bossed her. He got possession of that fiver with ease.

"Hi! Hold on, you chaps!" yelled Willy, running into the crowd of Removites. "There's been about enough of this. Let my major go."

"You can cat coke!" retorted several voices.

"Let him go, I say!" insisted Willy. "Here's your ten quid for the feed!"

"What!" went up a concerted roar.

"Don't ask any questions—here's the cash," said Willy. "My major promised you a feed, and it'll be given according to schedule. Don't forget that we Handforths stick together."

There was no doubt about the genuineness of those two fivers, and the juniors regarded them with joy.

"But hold on, Willy," said Nipper. "I don't see why we should take your money—and your sister's. That wasn't on the programme——"

"Do you think we care whether it was on the programme or not?" interrupted Willy. "That feed at the Japanese Cafe was ordered, and it wouldn't be playing square to cancel it now. Never mind Ena and me. We'll be all right. And don't forget that this money is Ted's. We're lending it to him. He's giving the feed, just as though nothing had happened. Is that clearly understood?"

And so Handforth was released from his wet predicament.

It was some little time before he understood exactly what had happened, and even then he didn't approve of it. Not that he was allowed to argue with Willy and Ena. They had taken matters into their own hands—and, anyhow, it was highly necessary for Handforth to dash off somewhere and to get into dry things. Willy rushed him into a neighbouring temperance hotel, where he was granted the use of the bath-room; and there he had to stay until Willy cycled to St. Frank's and back to obtain a complete change of clothes.

"Don't worry, Ena, old thing," said Willy confidentially, as he had a brief word with his sister. "I'll write to the pater this evening, and if I don't wangle another two fivers out of him I'm a frizzle-haired Amazonian!"

"Willy, my lad, I leave it to you," said Ena cheerfully.

And she went into the Japanese Cafe, for the feed, with a light heart. She knew, from past experience, what a champion wangler Willy was.

The feed took place—precisely as arranged. It was a happy affair, and there was only one slight alteration from the original programme. The host was missing.

CHAPTER 7.

A Shock for Handy!

"A LETTER for you, Handy," said Church.

It was the next morning, and Church and McClure and a few other Removites were in the Ancient House lobby. Edward Oswald Handforth was just coming downstairs. He was sneezing violently as he did so—not because he needed to sneeze, but because he wanted to impress everybody with the fact that he had caught a dreadful cold. He hadn't caught a cold at all, and his sneeze was obviously forced. Since the previous afternoon he had been cold and distant with his chums; and even now he was not at all inclined to be friendly.

"You can leave my letters alone," he said, with disdain.

"It's from the Edgemore Orphanage," remarked Church carelessly.

"What's that?" yelled Handforth, leaping over the banisters.

He grabbed the letter from Church's hand, and his face was flushed. His eyes gleamed. The handwriting was neat—it was feminine.

"By George!" breathed Handforth dreamily.

"From your latest ladylove, I suppose?" asked Mac. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself? What about poor Irene? Don't you think she's breaking her heart because of your——"

But Handforth was not listening. He was turning the letter over and over in his hand. He was so excited that he forgot to continue his sneezing operations.

"It's from her!" he said softly.

"Goodness only knows what she wants to write to you for," grumbled McClure. "She got the tenner out of you, so what more does she expect? My poor old Handy, you can't trust those girls who go about getting subs for charities. They'll give any chap the glad eye if they think he's got any cash in his pocket."

"Rather!" agreed Church stoutly.

But Handforth paid no attention. He knew jolly well that June Truscott was a

very different sort of girl. Besides, he was feeling well disposed towards all mankind; he was in a charitable mood. And he was very curious about the letter.

"Well, why don't you open it?" asked Mac bluntly.

"I'll open it when you two inquisitive fatheads have cleared off!" retorted Handforth.

However, he tore it open, and he unfolded the sheet within. It was an official document, with the printed heading of the orphanage at the top. A single glance at the signature caused Handforth's face to drop a few points.

"Well, I'm dashed!" he said glumly. "It's not from June at all!"

"Perhaps it's from July?" inquired Church. "Or August?"

"It's signed 'Catherine Brody,' and there's the word 'Matron' under the signature," said Handforth. "Well, my hat, what a sell!"

His chums grinned.

"Poor old Handy!" chuckled Church. "Dished and done! You thought it was from your latest ladylove, and it's only from the motherly old girl who runs the show!"

"It's just an official acknowledgment of the tenner," said Handforth, stuffing the letter into his pocket, and regarding his chums coldly. "I suppose you chaps know that I'm not speaking to you to-day?"

"Well, you haven't made a very good start," said Church. "And why don't you read that letter? You didn't give it a glance."

"Who wants to? These letters are all the same."

"There might be an invite in it," suggested Mac. "Then you'd be able to see June again."

Handforth fished the letter out, and read it eagerly. As he did so, his expression changed; a blank look came over his face, a puzzled light dawned in his eyes.

"Jiggered if I can make this out!" he said, at length. "It's something about a little kid named Sylvia Howett, or something. What's this about a guardian? What the dickens—— How can I be the kid's guardian, anyhow? And how can she be my ward?"

"Let's have a look," said Church practically.

He took the letter, and McClure leaned over his shoulder. Although the wording was precise and clear, it was some moments before the full purport of the document dawned upon them.

"Five quid a month!" said Church, with a whistle. "What's this? Five quid a month for twelve or fourteen years—until the child is old enough to make her own way in the world?"

And then he suddenly let out a yell.

"What's the matter, ass?" demanded Handforth, who was looking intensely worried.

"Why, can't you see?" shouted Church excitedly. "You've promised to pay the orphanage five quid a month!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"It says so here," continued Church. "You signed a paper, or something, didn't you?"

Handforth reeled.

"A—a paper?" he repeated feebly.

"Didn't you sign something?"

"I—I don't remember," faltered Handforth, racking his brain. "Now you come to mention it, I believe I did sign some papers. June gave me a pen, and—and—— But I didn't take much notice."

"Well, you'd better take notice now," said Church, cooling down. "You signed a paper—an official paper—presenting ten quid to the orphanage for the upkeep of one female child, to wit, Sylvia Howett, aged two years three months, born in Southampton. Both parents lost in a motor-coach accident six months ago."

"But—but——"

"You've paid ten pounds as a sort of 'purchase price' for the privilege of becoming the kiddie's guardian," continued Church, looking up from the letter. "Anybody, it seems, can become a guardian to one of the orphanage babies if they pay ten quid down, and promise to pay five pounds a month for the child's upkeep."

"Five—five pounds a month!" gurgled Handforth, turning pale.

"That's what it says here."

"But—but that's all tommy rot!" exclaimed Handforth desperately. "Let me look!"

He read the letter again, and his face changed from pale to a mottled red. He became alarmed and frantic.

"But I can't do it!" he said hoarsely. "Five quid a month! That's—that's fifteen bob a week!"

"You'd better rub up your arithmetic, old man," said McClure gently. "It's twenty-five bob a week."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And you've promised to pay it for years and years and years," went on the Scottish junior, with relish. "You've promised to pay it, in fact, until the female child, to wit, Sylvia Howett, is old enough to make her own way in the world! Here

it is, all in black and white—and you, as the son of a gentleman, can't get out of it!"

Handforth clutched at his chums for support.

"But—but it's impossible!" he gasped. "I can't pay all that! Why, my pocket-money doesn't come to five quid a month, or anything like it!"

"That's awkward!" admitted Church. "Still, it's your own fault. This is what comes of making eyes at pretty girls in the Bannington High Street! And you can't blame her, either. I expect she explained the whole thing to you, but you didn't listen. You won't even listen to Mac and me, and it's a cert that you were struck deaf and dumb by that girl's dazzling beauty."

This was so near to the truth that Handforth received a shock. He remembered, dimly, that June had talked a lot to him, had explained all sorts of papers. And he had blindly agreed. He had signed something. She had expressly

number of others. They were all in footer togs, and they had been indulging in some early morning practice on Little Side.

"Handy's in the cart—that's all," said Church cheerfully.

"You don't seem very pained about it, dear old fellow," murmured Travers.

"Pained?" repeated Church. "I'm enjoying it! It serves him right!"

"Dood mornin', Guardy," lisped little Sylvia Hewett. "My only sainted aunt!" gurgled Handforth as, very red and embarrassed, he bent down and kissed the child.



asked him if he had understood, and he had assured her that he had.

By all appearances, Edward Oswald Handforth was fairly and squarely in the soup, and the soup was splashing up to his neck!

CHAPTER 8.

Poor Old Handy!

"WHAT'S the excitement?"

Nipper asked that question as he came briskly into the Ancient House with Tommy Watson, Tregellis-West, Travers, and a

Handforth wanted to escape, but it was impossible. He stood there, dazed and stunned, while Church and McClure explained the situation. Meanwhile, other Removites crowded round—until the lobby was packed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A howl went up when Handforth's predicament was fully understood.

"Poor old Handy!"

"Five quid a month, and he can't get out of it!"

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!"

Handforth, horrified, shouted for silence.

"You—you idiots!" he roared. "You don't think I'm going to pay this money, do you? How can I? I didn't know I'd signed anything like that——"

"You can see, can't you?" asked Nipper.

"Yes, but——"

"And you're not deaf," went on Nipper sternly. "That girl explained all this to you, I'll bet. Well, you went into it with your eyes open and your ears flapping, so you can only blame yourself for what's happened. What's more, you'll have to keep to the bargain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

This baby-supporting scheme was evidently one which the orphanage people had been pushing amongst the landed gentry of the county. It was all very well for a rich man to become a "guardian" to one of the babies, but it was a very different matter when a schoolboy undertook the responsibility. Five pounds a month to a rich man was a mere trifle; but five pounds a month to Handforth was a knock-down blow.

"I wish you wouldn't all stand there laughing like a lot of silly hyenas," he said irritably. "It's all a mistake, and one word from me will put it right. I

contributed the tenner—and I contributed it gladly," he went on, throwing his head back in defiance. "But I'm blown if I'm going to let these orphanage people soak me for five quid a month!"

Nipper looked at him in a pained way.

"You don't mean that you're going to repudiate your promise?" he asked. "You, a Handforth! Perish the thought, Handy! As a son of one of the noblest county families——"

"Sussex isn't my county, ass!" interrupted Handforth. "I'm a Suffolk chap, aren't I?"

"I don't see that makes any difference."

"It's all a mistake, I tell you!" went on Handforth hurriedly. "I've only to explain to Mrs. What-do-you-call-her, and she'll let me off. She must let me off! How do you think I can pay five quid a month when I don't even possess five quid a month?"

"It's one of those maths problems which need careful thought, dear old fellow," said Travers gravely. "Of course, you could earn some money."

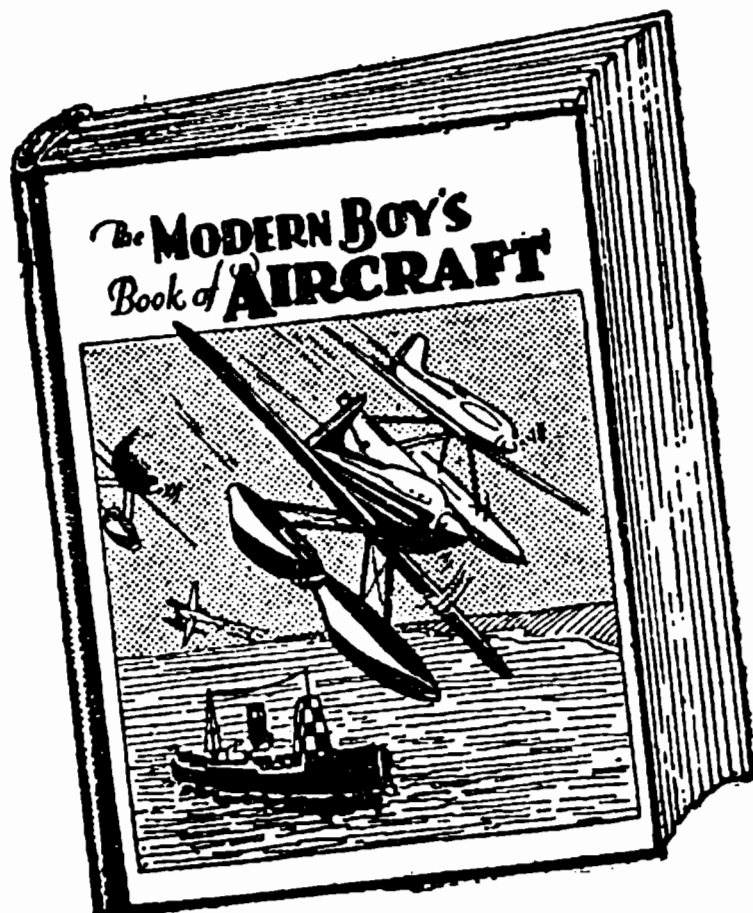
"Eh?"

"Other chaps have done it," continued Travers. "You could sell newspapers outside the Palladium, in Bannington——"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or you could run errands for old Sharpe, the ironmonger——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or you might even write some literary contributions for the humorous weeklies——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a regular yell of merriment, but Handforth, who had been looking more and more annoyed, suddenly flushed.

"By George! That's not a bad idea!" he said eagerly. "I could earn a lot of money by writing for the humorous weeklies, couldn't I?"

"You'd do better as a waste-paper merchant," said Church tartly. "You can't judge by the drivel you shove into your own silly 'Weekly.'"

"But editors want humorous stuff—they're crying for it!" said Handforth, his eyes sparkling.

"They'd cry all right if you sent them some of your stuff!" nodded Church. "Don't forget that you're your own editor, and so you can put any sort of piffle into the 'Weekly.' Look at that idiotic story of your own life! It's nothing but a lot of nonsense from beginning to end, and it's not even remotely near to the actual truth."

Handforth regarded him pityingly.

"Do you think that that life story of mine is supposed to be near the truth?" he asked coldly. "Everybody knows that it's a humorous effort; and you're not supposed to take humorous efforts seriously."

"Well, we won't argue," said Nipper. "You'd better abandon that wheeze of earning money by writing for the papers, Handy. What you have to face is the fact that you have promised to pay the Edgemore Orphan Asylum the sum of, roughly, one thousand pounds."

"What!" yelled Handforth.

"Well, reckon it up yourself," said Nipper. "Five quid a month for twelve or fourteen years——"

"I tell you I didn't know what I was doing!" roared Handforth. "What's more, I'm fed up with this! I'm off to the orphanage now, and I'm going to have a word with Mrs. Thingummyjig, and I'll make her understand that I'm not a millionaire!"

He rushed off with the yells of laughter ringing in his ears. He was disgusted with the Removites. Instead of extending him the sympathy he deserved, they were apparently regarding the whole wretched affair as a first-class joke!

It was all the more exasperating because that ripping girl, June Truscott, was

being dragged into the laughter. It was through her that Handy had made such a mess of things. It wasn't her fault, of course, but if she hadn't been so pretty——

Thus, his thoughts whirling and seething, Handforth started up his Morris Minor and dashed off for the orphanage.

THE Edgemore Orphan Asylum proved to be a sedate, dignified-looking establishment on the outskirts of the tiny village. At one time the place had been a gentleman's residence. It was a quaint, picturesque old house, and considerable renovations had been put into operation. The gardens were well-kept, and at the gate there was a handsome board, with gilt lettering, explaining to all who happened to pass that way the nature of the establishment.

Many of the old windows of the house had been knocked out and larger ones substituted, so that every available ray of sunlight could enter. It was all very modern now. There were sun parlours and other delights.

Handforth was rather rash in driving his car straight up to the front of the house. It gave him an air of considerable affluence—and this was exactly what he wished to avoid. But he wasn't renowned for his forethought.

As it happened, June Truscott, looking very trim in her short-skirted nurse's uniform, was standing in the doorway with a stoutish, elderly, comfortable-looking woman in a prim black dress. The lady in question was Mrs. Catherine Brody, the matron.

"I wonder who the early visitor can be?" the matron was murmuring.

"Why, it's that boy I was speaking to you about, Mrs. Brody," said the girl quickly. "You remember—the one you wrote to last night."

"Really?" said the matron, with interest, a kindly smile breaking over her face. "I shall be most interested to meet this young gentleman. An unusual schoolboy, June! A boy with a very big heart!"

"He's a dear!" said June, nodding.

"Ahem! I hope you won't say anything like that in his hearing, child," said Mrs. Brody. "Dear me! Is it usual for schoolboys to have their own motor-cars?"

"Of course not," laughed June. "Ted Handforth is quite an exception."

"So I should imagine," nodded the matron. "A boy who can contribute ten pounds so easily, and promise to pay the monthly expenses of one of my babies, is certainly a novelty. Evidently he has

plenty of money, and I am very glad that he is using some of it in such a sensible way."

The car drew up, and Handforth, getting out, was tongue-tied. On the way he had rehearsed the speech he would utter upon arrival; but every word of it had gone. June's presence flustered him.

"Er—good-morning!" he faltered, raising his cap.

June tripped down the steps to meet him, and Handforth was fascinated by her charm. He thought that she was prettier than ever.

"It's sweet of you to come so soon," she said, taking his hand. "Matron, this is the boy I was telling you about—the boy who has been so marvellously generous. Ted Handforth. Ted, this is Mrs. Brody, the matron."

Handforth, very awkward, shook hands with the large lady.

"I—er—that is—— You see——"

He paused, painfully conscious that his words were somewhat incoherent.

"My dear boy, please say nothing!" urged the matron warmly. "You cannot realise how delighted I was to hear of your amazing kindheartedness. I am proud to shake you by the hand, my dear, dear boy."

"But you see——"

"There are very few people in this world with such kind hearts," said the matron firmly. "I am delighted to tell you that our guardian scheme has been splendidly supported. But in almost every case the support has come from rich, influential families. It is indeed gratifying to know that at least one schoolboy——"

"Oh, rather!" said Handforth breathlessly. "But, you see, Mrs. Brody, it's not quite——"

"You are trying to tell me that you are only too pleased to help the orphanage," smiled the matron. "I have frequently noted that modesty goes hand-in-hand with generosity."

"You see, my pocket-money——"

"And such self-denial!" said the matron warmly. "Splendid! My dear June, can you imagine it! This kind, generous boy is even giving up his pocket-money in order to help the orphanage!"

"I think it's noble of him!" said June, regarding Handforth with such admiration that Edward Oswald almost reeled as he stood.

How could he go on with his explanation? How could he tell the matron, with June listening, that he had not meant his promise?

"I'm sure," said Mrs. Brody, "that your position will be unique, my dear boy. You

are a schoolboy, and yet you are the guardian of little Bonnie."

"Little which?" asked Handforth feebly.

"Oh, of course! You haven't seen your little ward yet, have you?" beamed the matron. "Such a delightful child!"

"Oh, rather!"

"Her name is Sylvia Howett, but she is such a strong, bonny child that we call her Bonnie," said Mrs. Brody, smiling. "I'm sure you will make very great friends with her. A sweet little thing—very playful, very healthy, very lovable."

"I—I suppose Bonnie is the female child, to wit, Sylvia—— I mean, she's the one—— That is to say——"

"And to think that you, a schoolboy of St. Frank's, are her guardian," laughed the matron. "Your generosity, dear boy, is so great that I cannot find words to thank you. I can assure you that the monthly contribution of five pounds will supply the child, not only with every necessity, but with a few luxuries, too. I am not going to spoil your wonderful generosity by pleading for additional contributions, but you will realise that any little extras will be spent on your child, and none other."

"My—my child?" breathed Handforth.

"Sylvia is yours now," smiled the matron. "How proud you will be when she grows up!"

"You mean, how broke I shall be—— That—that is to say, rather!" gasped Handforth. "But, the fact is, Mrs. Broadway——"

"Mrs. Brody," corrected the matron gently.

"I—I beg your pardon, ma'am! I mean, Mrs. Brody!" panted Handforth, confused. "You see, I'm afraid I shan't—— I mean, what I'm trying to say is that——"

"You need not worry yourself about the monthly contribution," beamed the matron. "There are two ways of paying—on the first of every month or, alternatively, on every fourth Saturday. The latter is, of course, the better, since it means thirteen payments of five pounds in the year, instead of twelve."

Handforth nearly choked. They were trying to shove another fiver a year on to him!

"You don't understand!" he panted. "These monthly contributions—— The truth is——"

"Now, now, my dear boy, you must not attempt to belittle your wonderful generosity," said the matron reprovingly.

(Continued on page 24.)

Three pages of chuckles which will keep the doctor away!



HANDFORTH'S Weekly

No. 25. Vol. 1.

**NUMBER
PLEASE**

By **THE EDITOR**

EDITORIAL STAFF.

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

October 10th, 1931.

**OUR
POETS'
CORNER**

BY George! Something will have to be done about our telephone service! What do you think of this for justice?

The other day I was stony, and it suddenly occurred to me that I might be able to touch the Editor of the NELSON LEE for a few bob until I received my next remittance.

So I promptly rang up the Trunk Call office on the Junior Common-room 'phone. I asked for the number, and pretty soon I was through.

"Hallo!" I said.

"Hallo!" said the girl at the other end.

"Hallo!" I said.

"Hallo!" said she.

"Er—how are you? Fine, what?"

"What do you want?" said she.

She had rather a nice voice, I thought. I wouldn't have minded talking to her for a little while; but, of course, business was business.

"I want the Editor of the NELSON LEE, please, if you don't mind," I said politely.

"He's engaged for a moment," she replied.

"I'll wait, miss. Nice weather."

"Sorry, I'm busy," said she. "Hold the line for a few moments. I'll put you through when the Editor's line is disengaged."

So she biffed off. I waited about two minutes, and then the telephone girl at the Trunks Exchange said:

"Do you want another three minutes, please?"

"Eh! Yes! Buzz off!" I said severely. "Don't interrupt me in the middle of a very important business conversation."

Three minutes later I'm blowed if she didn't interrupt me again.

"Look here!" I roared. "Don't I keep telling you this is an important call? Please go away, miss. Thank you."

She didn't interrupt me after that, and about ten minutes later I was put through to the Editor. When I told him what I wanted, he

(Continued at foot of next col.)

Little Timothy Tucker
Sang for his supper;
He asked a loaf of bread;
He got it—on his head.

(Clarence Fellowe.)

AMBITION.

I am not yearning to be wise,
Or know an awful lot;
For things like ginger-pop and pies
I do not care a jot;
All wealth and riches I despise;
I do not want a yacht,
And fame means nothing in my eyes—
I think it tommy-rot.

But every article I prize
And everything I've got
I'd give to do an exercise
Without a single blot.

(C. de V. Remove.)

(Continued from previous col.)

started chortling—I don't know why—and then he said:

"All right! I'll lend you ten bob, if you like. I'll post it on to you."

"Good."

I trotted out of the Common-room like a three-year-old and, just to celebrate, I invited Churchy and Mac over to the tuckshop to have a ginger pop at my expense—provided they lent me the money. We had the ginger-pop; we had two each.

Early the next morning I received a letter from the Editor with ten bob in it, and with it another letter containing an account for Trunk Call—12/6d.

By George! Isn't it the limit? I take all the trouble to ring up, and finish up 2/6d. out of pocket—plus the price of six ginger-pops. What a life!

Latest Trackett Grim masterpiece—sez you!

“POPPED” OFF!

By E. O. Handforth.

(Author of 1,019 stories of Trackett Grim, each one better than the last.)

“MR. GRIM, I need your assistance.”

The speaker was a fat, fair man with dark hair, who stood rubbing his bald head with a handkerchief and perspiring all over his face and half-way down his neck. Trackett Grim eyed him carefully as he entered the great detective's insulting-room.

“Dear me!” said Trackett Grim. “I deduce that your name is Samuel Battersmash. You live in Battersea. You are a retired batter-maker, worth £1,767,230 and sevenpence-halfpenny, and, in fact, taken all round, you're a batter man—ho, ho!—than I am.”

“Marvellous!” gasped Mr. Battersmash. “How did you manage to—”

“Elementally, my dear Batson—I mean, Wattersmash. I gathered your name from your card, which you sent up to me. Your address I also deduced from the same source. Your fortune I deduced by reading it in the papers.”

“It is very simple when you explain it, Mr. Grim. Now, I want your help. This letter has reached me to-day.”

Trackett Grim took the letter. It was written in violet ink, and the paper was covered with fingerprints. It ran:

“Dear Battersmash,

“I beg to inform you that I propose to burgle your house to-night, and steal £1,000,000 from the safe in your library. It's no use your fixing up any burglar alarms. I know every alarm ever invented, and they can't catch me.

“PERCY THE POP-PINCHER.”

“Ah!” said Grim. “I know this bad lad well. What he says is quite true. No burglar alarm will ever catch him.”

Battersmash wiped his brows feverishly.

“Then what can I do?” he groaned.

“How can I prevent this rotter taking away my small savings? What sort of crook is this Percy?”

“He is called Percy the Pop-Pincher,” answered Grim, taking a sip of his cocoa, “because of his extraordinary fondness for ginger-pop. He has broken into every ginger-pop factory in the country—and has never yet been caught.”

“Then I suppose I must resign myself to the loss of a million pounds,” groaned Mr. Battersmash.

Trackett Grim smiled in a sinister fashion.

“Not at all,” said he. “I propose to come home with you and fix a little burglar

alarm of my own invention.”

“But—but burglar alarms are no good against Percy the Pop-Pincher.”

“I think,” said Grim with a wink,

“that this one might be successful. We'll try it.”

“A million thanks, Mr. Grim,” sobbed this Battersmash. “If you succeed in saving my million pounds, I don't mind standing you a quid.”

So Grim and Splinter biffed off with the poor old chap to his great house in Battersea. On the way, Grim stopped at a shop and bought something, which he hid under his jacket.

• While the old man and Splinter were at dinner, Grim slipped into the library and fixed his alarm. Shortly afterwards, Battersmash peered in curiously and examined the safe all over. There was nothing there.

Early the following morning, Battersmash raced downstairs and into the library. The safe was broken open and a million pounds were missing.

“Baffled!” he shrieked. “My money is stolen. Grim, you and your silly alarm are wash-outs.”

Grim smiled an inscrutable smile and said:

“Let us follow his footsteps.”

They followed the burglar's tracks to the drawing-room, and there they found a man lying insensible beside an open window. The man was a villainous rascal, and he had evidently just been going to climb out of the window when he became senseless. In his hand was a million pounds.

“What—what—what?” gurgled Battersmash. “How on earth—Electricity, by Jove!”

“No,” laughed Grim. “Ginger-pop!”

“Ginger-pop!”

“Yes,” nodded the marvellous detective. “That was my burglar alarm. I carelessly left a bottle of ginger-pop on the sideboard—chock full of drugs. You'll find the empty bottle on the library floor. One quid, please.” “Make it ten bob,” suggested Battersmash.

THE END



Chubby Heath

DOWN WITH

IT'S a prefect's job fag dorm. early and see that getting up at

That's his job. A happens is this: A fag wake the prefect up round to wake the ju

That's just one of a fag gets. If he does up the prefect, the If he does wake h growsed at, stops a boko, and is told to

When Conroy major licks me. When he pockit, he licks me where it was. I don't triffically hard, but y Conroy says that kuff good for fags, because I don't get a chance

When I ask Conroy my prep, he says, “C if you don't mind kompliment by castin my Latin syntax. Y that twenty-third O while I do yore C Sarkastic beest! As man knew anything Horris.

NIPPER'S PUZZ

HERE are some puzzles this But don't run easy—wheny

1. Start with 5. T put the answer on original five. Add 4 written and again p as before. Take a number and write You now have a row with the addition make the answer t clear. Can you do it

2. There are two joined together with the middle. One of contains water. Th There is a hole near partition which lets i rate of one cubic minutes. When this long will it take for of water to flow into

But wait a mome readers are pretty sh I seem to hear you water couldn't flow is an outlet for the tank.” There is an of top of the tank. N You'll find the an

WEEKLY SCIENCE TALK.

By Professor Napoleon Browne.

This week: TALKING.

ys:

RAGGING!

go round to the
each morning
e juniors are
no rising bell.
sherally what
has to go and
before he comes
ors upp.

he rottun jobs
it go and wake
ag gets licked.
up, he gets
shoo with his
Buzz orf."

oses a book, he
nds it in his
or not knoing
ny he licks me
bett it hurts.
and klouts are
they get lazy.
get lazy.

help me with
inly, yungster,
returning the
yore eye over
u just dig up
from Horris
sar for you."

a Third-form
owt syntax or

CORNER.

mathematical
ek. Grooooh!
way. They're
u know how.

ke away 4, and
e right of the
the last figure
down the result,
y 4 from that
in the answer.

figures which,
one letter, will
he puzzle very

foot-cubic tanks
partition down
e six-foot cubes
other is empty.
e bottom of the
the water at the
oot every two

is opened, how
e one tank-full
e empty tank?

NELSON LEE
as a rule, and
saying: "The
all unless there
in the empty
et—a hole in the
what about it?
ers elsewhere.

THIS is a science about which I flatter myself I know a good deal. There are few better talkers at St. Frank's than I. Many brothers, however, do not seem to appreciate the true beauty of the art of talking. Some fellows, when I begin to speak to them, express a painful and intense desire to know if it is my lower jaw that moves. Others desire to know if I have ever read the Ancient Mariner. My answers are brief. It is. I have.

Practice is the great secret of talking, and to practise efficiently you should first of all buy a good, strong donkey. Examine the brute's hind-legs, to see if either of them is loose. If they seem to be fastened on pretty strongly, you can then begin to talk until you have succeeded in talking the donkey's hind leg off. Make sure you talk the *hind* leg off. You'll never be a really good talker if you merely rely on removing the donkey's fore-legs.

Many fellows think it is necessary to tether the donkey while talking to it. This is not the case. The donkey will listen to you patiently all the time. The reason for this is because he is an ass.

When you have become expert in straightforward talking, you can turn your attention to learning various tricks, such as talking through your hat and talking out of the back of your neck. You may then take your degree by addressing a meeting in a place called Random. Every good talker must talk at Random.

Let me warn you against seeking instruction at the "talkies." You cannot learn talking at the talkies. No, sir. They will teach you how to snuffle, how to drawl, how to whisper, how to honk, and how to make a sound like an ape with adenoids—but not how to talk.

If you want to learn talking, come to the man who invented it: William Napoleon Browne.

HERE AND THERE
AT ST. FRANK'S.

HANDFORTH says that he gets into at least one ragging every week. We have always suspected that "Handforth's Weekly" is a rag.

Clarence Fellowe tried to write a poem on "Autumn" the other day, but he couldn't think of a rhyme for "withering." So far, 187 fellows have told him one.

Professor Tucker clean forgot to have his breakfast the other morning. But he wasn't hungry because he forgot that he'd forgotten it.

Corcoran of the Modern House asked Nipper to join hands with him in a raid on the River House crowd. But Nipper evidently didn't understand what he meant by "joining hands," for he brought along a pair of handcuffs!

Euclid, says Mr. Crowell, was a slave, and narrowly escaped death. We are truly sorry.

By the same token, Virgil was nearly eaten by a lion. Well, it might have been a lion before it met Virgil; but it soon turned into an ass.

Speaking of thunder, Mr. Crowell asked us the other day what it was that roared out from the skies with a mighty clamour, regardless of mere shivering wretches of human beings. We knew the answer. Rising-bell!

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

The hidden sentence contained in this puzzle is in heavy type.

H	A	N	D	W	R	I	T	I	N	G		O	R
A	G	E			A	H	T		R			U	O
N	O	H			T	H	E		P	E	A	R	S
D		N	E	L	S	O	N		L	E	E		E
F	A	I	R			O			A	N	N	I	
O	P	P	O	S	I	T	I	O	N		E	N	A
R	P	P	I	S		T	H	E			I	N	
T	R	E	A	D		U	S		T	U	D	O	R
H	O	R	A	C	E				A	S	S	V	
S	C	A	R	A	B		N			B	E	T	A
E	H		I	N		P	A		F	L	E	E	S
W													

Answers to this week's problems.

1. I think I must have forgotten to tell you to use Roman figures. How many of you tumbled to it? The answer is: V I V I D—which is "very clear" indeed.

2. You are right—the water wouldn't and couldn't flow into the empty tank without a pumping engine. When the same level had been reached in each tank, the inflow of water would stop. There would be exactly three feet of water in each tank.

HANDFORTH'S GOOD DEED !

(Continued from page 20.)

"We quite understand that yours is an exceptional case. Rich people can support one of the orphanage babies without even feeling the loss of the money. But in your case it is noble. Yes, my boy, noble! It is a true example of self-sacrifice."

June, who could see that Handforth was labouring under some tremendous emotion, came to the rescue.

"Perhaps he would like to see Bonnie this morning, matron?" she suggested.

"And why not?" said Mrs. Brody, smiling. "Strictly speaking, visitors are not allowed to-day, but we can easily make an exception. Certainly, June! Take him right upstairs, and introduce him to his little ward."

CHAPTER 9.

Worth the Money!

HANDFORTH, dizzy and bewildered, found himself inside the orphanage.

He had scarcely been able to get a word in edgeways whilst Mrs. Brody had been talking. He was intensely relieved to find that the matron did not accompany them upstairs. He was alone with June! And it would be so much easier to tell her the truth!

But would it? When he looked at the girl's pretty face, when he saw her sparkling eyes, so full of admiration, his tongue seemed to turn to a chunk of cast-iron. He couldn't make it form the words that were in his mind.

"Here we are!" said June gaily.

They had reached an upper floor. Everywhere could be heard the various cries of extremely youthful humanity—squalling, ordinarily healthy crying, shouts of glee, shrieks of merriment, and so forth. Taken as a whole, it was rather ear-splitting.

Through various open or half-open doors, Handforth could see all sorts of babies and young children. Some were being bathed, others were being fed, whilst still others were just romping about, playing.

Handforth also caught a glimpse of other trimly-attired nursemaids. He felt strangely out of place; he felt that he was an intruder. Seldom, indeed, had Handforth so appreciated the feelings of the fish which finds itself out of water.

His mind still in a whirl, he discovered that he was in a pretty sitting-room, where there was a comfortable couch, a neat little bamboo table in the bay

window, and various odds and ends dotted about, eloquent of a feminine occupant.

"I say!" faltered Handforth.

"This is my own little den," explained June, smiling.

"Jolly nice, too!" said Handforth. "Look here, Miss June, there's something I want to tell you, but——"

"Yes?"

"Well, you see—— About this arrangement—— I mean——"

"I'm sure it's going to work out very, very nicely," laughed the girl. "Just wait here a minute—Ted."

He thrilled. It was lovely to hear her calling him "Ted" like that. The fact that she was at least four years older than himself did not seem to strike him. He wouldn't have believed it, even if he had been told. She didn't look a day more than fifteen or sixteen.

He found himself alone, but not for long. Before he could gather his wits about him, June returned, and now she was leading the child, Bonnie, by the hand. Even Handforth, who was scared stiff of children, found himself grinning.

Little Sylvia Howett was a sweet little thing. A tiny mite, just over two, and she wasn't a bit shy. She came gravely forward, and put up her mouth for Handforth to kiss.

"Dood-mornin', guardy," she lisped.

"My only sainted aunt!" gurgled Handforth.

He bent down and kissed her, so embarrassed that he went as red as a beetroot. He was pretty certain that June had put the child up to calling him "Guardy." And, somehow, it seemed to settle the whole matter. He was so deeply into this thing now that it was getting beyond his powers to extricate himself!

"Isn't that just sweet of her?" asked June, smiling. "You see, you are now the little darling's legal guardian."

"By George!"

"Your monthly contributions will entitle you to that privilege," explained June. "Won't you sit down? Bonnie won't be a bother—she's ever so good."

Bonnie got busy with her toys, and Handforth was relieved. He had been half afraid that she would want to climb on his knee, and play about with his necktie, or something.

"There are other privileges, too, Ted," went on the girl. "As Bonnie's guardian you will be allowed to call every Wednesday afternoon and every Saturday afternoon, if you want to—to see the child."

"Will—will you be here?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"I shall, as long as I am Bonnie's nurse," laughed June.

"I say, that's topping!" said Handforth, his eyes sparkling. "If I come on Saturday afternoon, can—can I stay long?"

"All the afternoon, if you wish, and you can have tea in here, with your little ward."

"And what about you?"

"Naturally, I shall be here, too," said the nurse. "You'll need somebody to pour out your tea, won't you? Won't it be jolly—just the three of us?"

Handforth could have laughed aloud. What a chump he had been! Thank goodness the matron had been so voluble! What a blessing it was that he had not been able to explain the real cause of his visit!

He had come to a sudden decision. By hook or by crook, he would get that fiver every month! It was worth the money! Twice a week he could come here—and come with all the assurance in the world, too, since he was the child's legal guardian. He could come, and there would be the joy of having tea with June!

And now, to his horror, he realised that if he said what he had come to say, June would scorn him. The thought of that made cold shivers run up and down Handforth's spine.

Besides, he would forfeit this glorious privilege of taking tea with her twice a week. By George! He couldn't allow a catastrophe of that sort to happen. And what was five quid a month, anyhow? Pouf! A mere trifle. He'd get it somehow or other!

And having come to that decision, he felt serenely happy.

CHAPTER 10.

Surprising the Natives!

"POOR old Handy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At St. Frank's the Removites were thoroughly enjoying the joke. The one and only Handy in love again! Smitten by a pretty nurse from the babies' orphanage! It was a first-class joke.

"I think we ought to do something about it," said Nipper firmly. "Why not spoof him?"

"How?" went up an eager chorus.

"When he comes back we'll gather round him and tell him that he can't besmirch the fair name of the Handforths by backing out of his promises," said Nipper with a grin. "Leave it to me, you chaps!"

"If he had given that money with a really charitable intention we could have admired

him," growled Church. "In fact, it would have been unfair to rag him. But he wasn't thinking of those orphans at all when he whacked out his tenner. He was simply fascinated by the girl."

"That's all," agreed Mac. "When Handy gets smitten he doesn't know what he's doing."

Meanwhile, Handforth himself was returning to St. Frank's in serene contentment. It seemed to him that the little Morris Minor was floating on air. Its engine, instead of purring in the usual way, was singing a joy song.

His visit to the orphanage had changed his whole outlook.

Not unnaturally he had believed that he would just have to fork out the fiver a month, with no compensations beyond the privilege of being little Bonnie's guardian. The realisation that he would be able to partake of tea with June twice a week, however, made him determined to see the thing through. The more he thought of June the more ecstatic he became. How charmingly pretty she was. Her eyes, her teeth, her hair—

So engrossed was Handforth in forming a mind picture of the girl that he completely forgot he was driving a car. The result nearly proved disastrous, and it was only in the nick of time that he prevented himself from running into a ditch. He pulled himself together after that, and when he arrived at St. Frank's he was more or less normal in mind.

Swarms of juniors came crowding round the Morris Minor as it drew to a standstill.

"Drag him out!" said Nipper sternly.

Handforth was dragged out.

"Hi, what's the game?" he demanded indignantly. "You silly asses—"

"What have you been doing at the orphanage?" demanded Nipper. "If you've backed out of your promise you'll have to back into it again! You went off in such a rush that we hadn't much chance of speaking to you. But we've been thinking—we've been considering."

"Oh?" said Handforth ominously.

"Yes, rather!" chorused the others.

"You can't do it, Handy," said Nipper reproachfully. "You can't shove a huge blotch on the Handforth name by repudiating your word!"

"You silly, lopsided ass—"

"It's dishonourable," continued Nipper scathingly. "You sign your name to a binding document, and then you back out of it. Are you heartless enough to put your pocket-money before the welfare of a helpless mite—"

"Hadn't you better dry up?" interrupted Handforth tartly. "You don't know what you're talking about! I haven't backed out of anything."

"Eh?"

"I've just been to the orphanage, and I've decided to stick to my promise,"

"What!"

"Of course I have," said Handforth coolly. "I'm going to pay that fiver every month!"

The Removites were staggered. Their spoof had missed fire like a damp squib. They had expected Handforth to come back relieved of his responsibility, and here he was, calmly saying that he meant to go on paying the sub!

"But you can't do it, Handy!" gasped Church in alarm. "Your pocket-money won't run to it!"

"I can earn the extra," said Handforth serenely.

"Earn it?" gurgled McClure. "How?"

"I don't know yet, but there are all sorts of ways," replied Edward Oswald, with an airy wave of his hand.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Church and McClure in one voice.

It only took them about one second to realise that the extra money would very probably have to come out of their pockets. This meant that Study D from now onwards would be stoney-broke. There wouldn't be enough pocket-money amongst the three of them to buy a tin of sardines!

"Every Wednesday afternoon, and every Saturday afternoon," said Handforth dreamily.

"Eh? What's that?"

"Visiting days," murmured Handforth. "I can go there to see the little kiddie, and I can have tea with June. By George! What a prospect!"

"Oh, so that accounts for the milk in the coconut!" said Nipper with a grin. "Did you hear that, you chaps? This monthly sub carries privileges with it. Handy can go visiting twice weekly—taking tea with pretty nurses!"

"Taking tea with my ward!" said Handforth coldly.

"Taking tea with your grandmother!" sniffed Church.

"Fathead! My grandmother won't be there!"

"You can't do it, Handy," said Nipper firmly. "What days did you say? Wednesday and Saturday? My poor, pitiful lunatic, have you forgotten football?"

Handforth started.

"Football?" he faltered. "But—but——"

"On Saturday afternoon, for example, we're going away to Barcliffe," said Nipper. "You'll be wanted in the team, old man. You're the Junior XI goalie. Need I remind you of that? You can't go visiting on Saturday afternoon, because you'll be playing footer for the school."

"I'm sorry," said Handforth stiffly. "My—er—responsibilities as guardian are more important than football."

"Why, you—you——"

"And I'm surprised at you other chaps," went on Handforth accusingly. "You, Travers, and you, Somerton, and you, Archie!"

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie Glen-thorne, adjusting his monocle. "What have I done, old tulip?"

"You mean, what haven't you done?" retorted Handforth. "Why don't you take an example from me? Why don't you go to the orphanage, pay your tenners, and promise to subscribe five quid monthly? There are plenty of other babies who need guardians."

"But are there plenty of other pretty nurses?" asked Travers pointedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not interested in the nurses!" said Handforth sternly. "I'm surprised at you, Travers!"

"You're only interested in one particular nurse, eh, dear old fellow?" said Travers blandly. "Well, well! So now we know!"

Handforth did not deign to reply. He brushed the juniors aside, and, chin in the air, stalked into the Ancient House. Nipper looked after him thoughtfully.

"Yes, now we know," said the Remove skipper gruffly. "And it seems to me, you chaps, that we're going to have some trouble with Handy. He's smitten so badly that even football has become a matter of minor importance to him. And that's not merely serious—it's tragic!"

CHAPTER 11.

Saying It With Poetry!

FOR the next two days Edward Oswald Handforth was a changed being. Church and McClure were miserable beyond words. Their leader scarcely spoke to them—in fact, he hardly seemed to notice their existence.

He went about in a sort of daydream.

Even when Irene Manners came he treated her distantly, and at the first opportunity he escaped altogether. Not that Irene really minded; she knew Handforth's little ways, and secretly she was amused. Ted was subject to these mental disturbances.

Saturday morning dawned clear and bright, and Church and McClure were awake early. They gave Handforth a brisk shake after they had jumped out of bed.

"Wake up, Handy old son!" said Church briskly. "Footer practice this morning!"

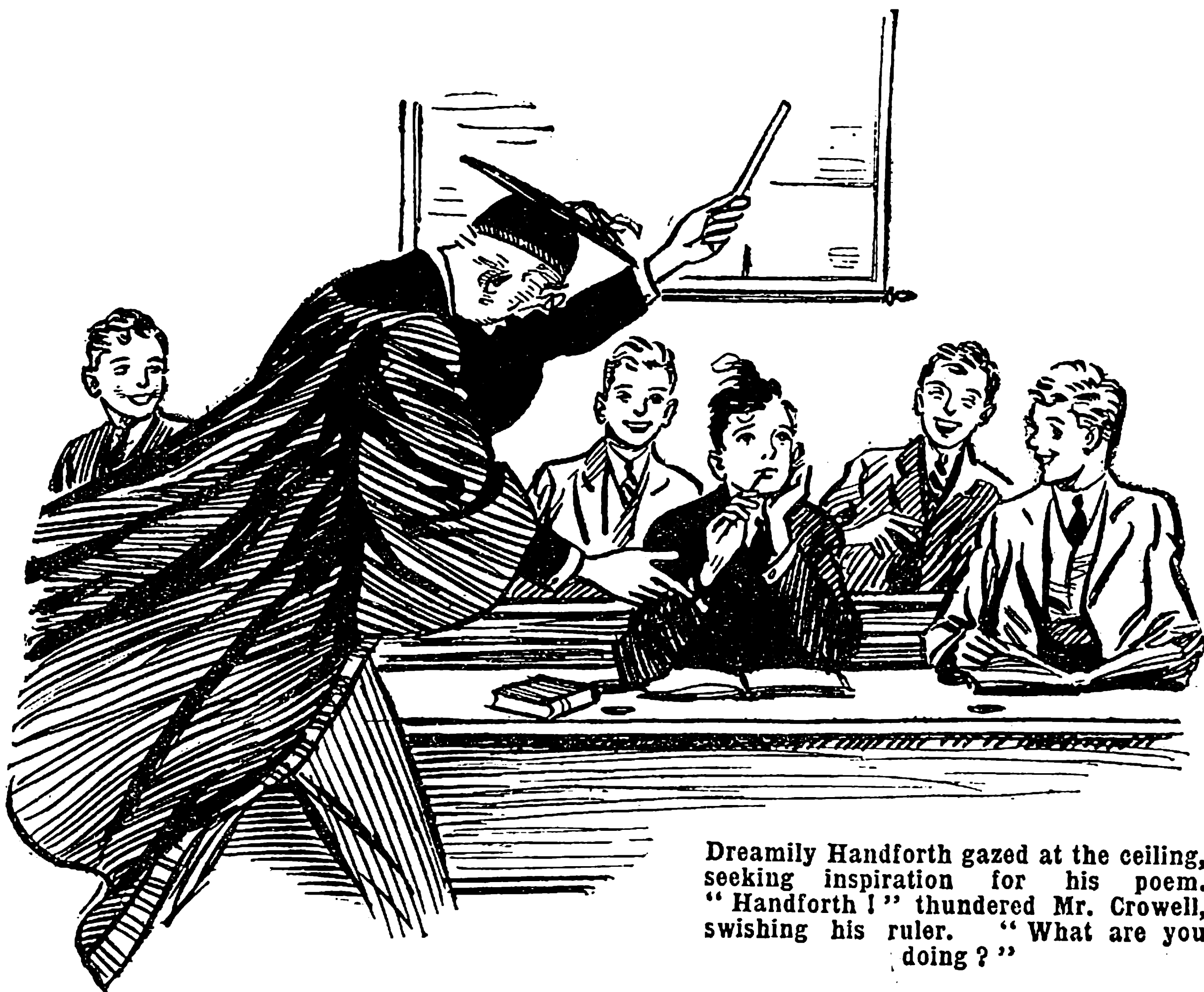
"Eh? Oh, yes, rather!" said Handforth, sitting up and rubbing his eyes.

"The Barcliffe match this afternoon, don't forget!" went on Church. "You're on the list, Handy. Goalie, as usual."

"Saturday afternoon!" breathed Handforth, his eyes gleaming. "Great Scott! To-day's Saturday, isn't it?"

He leapt out of bed joyously. It seemed ages and ages since he had seen June. He began to do what resembled a fair imitation of the Highland fling as performed by a young elephant. Then, aware that his chums were watching him suspiciously, his exuberance quickly evaporated.

This was not an example of "out of sight out of mind," for the more Handforth thought of June Truscott, the more eager he became for visiting day. Rather was it an example of "absence making the heart grow



Dreamily Handforth gazed at the ceiling, seeking inspiration for his poem. "Handforth!" thundered Mr. Crowell, swishing his ruler. "What are you doing?"

fonder." Thinking in this way, Handforth was struck by the conflicting sense of the two well-known proverbs.

He went out to footer practice with the others, and so brilliantly did he perform that it was generally supposed that he had made up his mind to turn out for the Junior XI. As a matter of fact, Handforth was only killing time, and football was a better way of killing time than any other.

During morning lessons he exasperated Mr. Crowell more than ever, for during the last day or two Handforth had been very much of a trial to the Form-master. He had been inattentive, he had been slack, and on each day he had been compelled to attend extra lessons. Not that this had had any effect.

"Handforth!" rapped Mr. Crowell during the second lesson. "What are you doing?"

Handforth did not reply. He hadn't heard the Form-master's question. He seemed to be in a trance. Oblivious of everything and everybody, he was staring dreamily at the ceiling, from which he seemed to be seeking inspiration. He sought further inspiration from a penholder, which he industriously chewed in his mouth.

"Handforth!" roared Mr. Crowell angrily and, swishing a ruler suggestively through the air, he approached that junior's desk. "What are you doing, boy?"

Handforth came back to earth with a start. He was writing poetry, with summer as the theme—particularly June—but he did not take Mr. Crowell into his confidence.

"Nun-nothing, sir!" he stammered. "I—I mean, just a bit of poetry— That is——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" frowned Mr. Crowell. "Let me remind you, Handforth, that this is not the time for writing poetry. I have no doubt that the—er—effusion is intended for that appalling publication of yours."

The other juniors thought otherwise, but they did not say so.

"If I have to speak to you again, Handforth, I shall detain you for the afternoon," said Mr. Crowell curtly.

That bucked up Handforth. The threat of keeping him in for the afternoon had a tremendous effect. He worked diligently.

"Only another hour or two!" he said happily just before dinner. "By George! What an age it seems!"

Church glanced at his watch.

"Yes," he said. "Kick-off at two-thirty, eh? It's not such a great distance to Barcliffe——"

"And I shall see her!" said Handforth absently.

"Eh?"

"I shall see her again!"

"Why, you rotter, I thought you were talking about the match!" said Church indignantly. "What do you mean—you'll see her? I suppose you're talking about that nurse?" Handforth jumped.

"What was I saying?" he asked hastily. "I—I meant Sylvia, of course! You silly asses! Who else should I mean? My ward!"

"You can't spoof us," said Mac, with a sniff. "You weren't talking about the kiddie—but about the nurse!"

"We won't argue," said Handforth coldly.

"Look here, old man, do be reasonable!" pleaded Church, adopting a different tone. "You're not going to cut the Barcliffe match, are you?"

"I'm sorry, but I'm a fellow of responsibilities now," replied Edward Oswald. "I'm the guardian of—"

"Yes, we know all about that," interrupted Church hurriedly. "But couldn't you go over to see June—I mean, the kiddie—after we get back from the match? Do be sensible, Handy! You know how jolly important this afternoon's game is!"

To Handforth, the game had dwindled to a matter of no importance whatsoever.

"Rats!" he said. "Nipper can give some other chap a chance."

"But—but you don't seem to understand!" shouted McClure, exasperated. "It's an away match, and it's against Barcliffe. The Barcliffe chaps are hot stuff. Even with luck on our side we shall do well to draw. Without you, Handy, we're booked for a certain defeat. And look at our position in the League table. Hang it, you can't let your school down with a flop like that!"

Handforth wasn't listening.

"As goalie, you're supreme," said Church, giving Handforth a jerk. "Don't you know that, you ass? Where is there another goalie of your quality?"

"Well, of course, if you put it like that —"

"How else should I put it?" asked Church. "With you in goal, Handy, the rest of us can play a great game—and it's even possible that we might win. Think of the glory of winning against Barcliffe away from home, too! Dash it, old chap, you've got to turn out!"

"I'll think about it," said Handforth uncomfortably.

For a moment he had a twinge. He was in a dilemma. The team needed him, of course, but only last night he had written to June—or, rather, little Bonnie—making final arrangements. It wouldn't be fair to the girl—or, to be more exact, the kiddie—at all.

There had been no stipulations as to time; Saturday afternoon was visiting afternoon. He could go when he liked. And he liked immediately after dinner. Church and McClure were on the watch, but they were a shade too late. They suddenly discovered that Handforth was missing. When they

located him he was in his Morris Minor, and the Morris Minor was in motion.

"Hi!" yelled Church, dashing up. "Just a minute, Handy!"

"Sorry—in a hurry!" sang out Handforth. "So long! Cheerio!"

He waved his hand gaily, opened the throttle wider, and roared past.

He congratulated himself upon his astuteness. He had given his chums the slip very nicely. He was dressed in his best, and he rather prided himself upon the fact that he looked smart.

He arrived at the orphanage almost before he realised it, and as he pulled the Minor to a standstill at the bottom of the steps he was gratified to discover that the door stood open and, better still, June was there!

"Well, you are prompt!" she smiled as she ran down to meet him.

"I say, you look ripping!" exclaimed Handforth admiringly.

She wasn't dressed in her nurse's uniform, but in ordinary attire—a neat tailor-made costume which set off her slim, graceful figure to perfection. There was a little hat on her head, and her red-gold curls peeped out on either side of her face in delightful waves.

"I thought it better not to wear my uniform," she explained, dropping her gaze under his enthusiastic admiration. "I got your letter, of course——"

"Good egg!" said Handforth eagerly. "Not a bad idea, eh? I mean, going out for a spin in the little bus. I hope you'll enjoy it."

"But isn't the ride for little Bonnie?" asked June gently.

"Eh? Oh, rather!" said Handforth with haste. "Naturally, I'm thinking of Bonnie. It's all right, isn't it? I mean, the matron doesn't mind? I can take my—my ward out for a drive, can't I?"

"Of course!" laughed June. "If you'll wait out here, Ted, I'll be down with the child in five minutes."

Handforth waited, whistling cheerily if unmusically.

CHAPTER 12.

Letting Down His Side!

NIPPER scratched his chin. "H'm! This is serious!" he said gravely.

"I should think it is serious," agreed Church, breathing hard. "When Handy shelves an important footer match to take a girl for a ride, it's—it's a sign that his brain's going."

"It didn't need to go far," commented McClure caustically.

They had just told Nipper of Handforth's escape, and they knew perfectly well where he had gone. There were other juniors gathered round, too. It was a matter of extreme urgency.

The Barcliffe match was important. Handforth was needed. There was no sense in

letting him have his own way. It was decidedly an occasion when strong measures were necessary.

"We can't afford to take any chances with this match," said Nipper. "We have our position in the League to consider. Handforth can go gallivanting about with nursemaids if he likes—but not on match days! We've got to fetch him back!"

"Easier said than done!" grunted Church. "He's at the orphanage by now."

"We'll start right away," said Nipper briskly. "Girls, as a rule, keep chaps waiting, don't they? It's any odds that we shall find Handy dithering about outside the place waiting. Anyhow, let's go!"

They went—Nipper, Travers, Jimmy Potts, Singleton and Waldo—who all possessed motor-bikes. This was an errand which called for speed.

The distance to Edgemore was trifling—not much longer than a mile. The young motor-cyclists covered it in three or four minutes, and they were gratified to find, as they dismounted at the gates, that Handforth's Morris Minor was drawn up at the foot of the orphanage steps. Handforth himself was standing beside the little car, looking at the motor-cyclists in dismay.

"You were right, Nipper," grinned Jimmy Potts. "She's keeping him waiting."

They left their machines at the gate, and they strode grimly up the drive, Handforth watching them uneasily.

"You can clear off!" he said aggressively as they came up. "What's the idea of this, you fatheads? You've no right to come here. It's only my privilege——"

"Never mind privileges," interrupted Nipper. "What about the Barcliffe match?"

"I'd—I'd forgotten—— I mean——"

"You can't do this, Handy!" said Nipper earnestly. "We can play Fatty Little, of course—he's pretty good in goal, but he's not in your class. And this match is important."

Handforth began to give way.

"I know it's important," he admitted feebly. "Still, all the same——"

"Where's your loyalty to the school?" broke in Nipper in a reproachful voice. "The Barcliffe match isn't an ordinary school match, Handy. It's a League game. We must—we simply must—grab at least one point. Fatty's good, but in such a vital game we need you in goal. You're fit as a fiddle—you proved that this morning. There's no earthly reason why you should drop out like this. I'm not ordering you about or anything like that—I'm appealing to your sense of loyalty."

Handforth crumpled up. Nipper was too clever for him. If the Remove skipper had adopted a more authoritative tone, Handforth would have told him to go and boil himself.

"Well, in the cires, perhaps——" he began. Then came an interruption.

"Here we are, Ted!" cried a laughing,

cheery voice. "Oh, I'm sorry! I didn't know——"

He spun round. June was at the top of the steps, sweet and flushed with happiness. She was holding little Bonnie in her arms, and the picture was a delightful one. The child was all dressed ready for the trip, and she was gurgling gleefully.

Handforth was in a dilemma. How could he dish the little kiddie out of the ride now—after June had brought her out, promising her that she would be taken for a drive? What was football, anyhow? Handforth was suddenly strengthened.

"I'm sorry, you chaps," he hissed, "it's off! Understand? I'm not playing this afternoon!"

"But look here, Handy——"

"You can all go and eat coke!" interrupted Handforth fiercely.

If he thought that June did not hear, he was fooling himself.

"We'll explain to Miss June if you'll let us," said Nipper. "She won't mind—when she understands how important it is. You must play in this match, Handy. Hang it, I'm not going to let you get out of it!"

"I won't play!" roared Handforth. "I'm going to take June—I mean, Bonnie—for a drive! And you can all jolly well go and chase yourselves!"

He ran up the steps, and he found June looking at him doubtfully.

"Don't take any notice of these chumps!" he breathed. "They're jealous! They're trying to drag me away—but I won't let 'em!"

"Oh, Ted, don't you think——"

He wouldn't let her speak. He fairly bundled her down the steps and into the little car. Nipper and Travers and the others stood by helpless. They couldn't handle Handforth as they wanted to. And before they could even put the case to the girl, Handforth engaged the gears and the Minor jerked forward.

"So long, you chaps!" sang out Edward Oswald. "See you later on. Good luck in the match!"

The car sped past, turned out of the drive, and purred away along the quiet country road.

"Well, that's that!" said Nipper with a grunt. "The hopeless idiot! We're dished and done, you chaps! It'll have to be Fatty in goal after all."

"The rotter!" said one of the others. "He deserves to be chucked out of the team for good now!"

"Well, well," said Travers, "I thought better of our one and only Handy! He thinks more of the girl than he thinks of his school! I don't mind telling you, dear old fellows, that I'm disappointed."

"Oh, let's get back!" said Nipper gruffly. "Handy's not himself. It's no good being angry with him either. What he really requires is our sympathy."

But Handforth didn't get much of that!

CHAPTER 13.**June Has a Bright Idea!**

SOMEHOW the drive wasn't proving half so enjoyable as Handforth had hoped.

June was very silent, and even little Bonnie was so entranced by the moving panorama that she hardly spoke. Just a little chirrup of glee now and again. Handforth himself was feeling depressed.

It was all so disappointing, for he had been looking forward to this drive very keenly. He knew, in his heart, that the football match was responsible. There was no denying it—there was no looking at the thing in any other light—he was letting his side down!

He drove absent-mindedly, taking any route; and after a while he glanced round and met June's eyes.

"Sorry about that bit of bother at the orphanage," he said unhappily.

"They wanted you to play football, didn't they?" asked the girl.

It was an unnecessary question, for June knew a great deal more than Handforth supposed. She knew, for example, that this burly schoolboy was in that condition which is commonly known as "smitten," and she could hardly blame herself for that. She was also becoming convinced that he had signed that paper appointing himself little Sylvia Howett's guardian without realising what he was doing.

"Don't let's bother about football," said Handforth. "The team can get along all right without me."

"Those boys seemed very eager for you to play."

"I'm not so sure of that either," said Handforth suspiciously. "The asses seem to have an idea that I've fallen in love—I mean, that—that I'm keen on you—Keen on the kiddie, rather. And I believe they only came over to rag me—to pull my leg. At other times they haven't been so fussy about my being in the team."

"I don't think you can call it fussy," said the girl gently.

"I've planned it all out—this afternoon, I mean," said Handforth. "We're going for a drive, and then we'll get back to the home, and we'll take cakes and pastries and things with us, and have a jolly tea. And, of course, some new toys for Bonnie, eh? She likes toys, doesn't she?"

"Don't you think you're spending enough money as it is?" asked June.

"What do I care? I don't mind how much money I spend on you!" replied Handforth enthusiastically.

"On me?"

"I—I was talking to the little girl, of course," said Handforth with haste. "I thought we'd all have a ripping time."

"It's very, very nice of you to think of us like that, but I shouldn't feel comfortable," said June, shaking her head with firmness.



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.

STILL WAITING.

Young Jimmy had been sent to school for the first time, and his mother was anxious to hear what had taken place.

"Well, Jimmy," she said, "and how did you get on?"

"Quite all right, mummy," replied Jimmy, "but I didn't get the present."

"Present? What present, Jimmy?"

"Well," answered Jimmy, "teacher said, 'sit there for the present,' and I sat there all the morning and didn't get it."

(G. Logan, 35, Plemont Road, Liverpool, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

THE WRONG KIND.

A lady hurriedly entered an ironmonger's shop, and after waiting for some time to be

served, impatiently called to the assistant and said:

"Will you serve me with a mousetrap, please? I want to catch a train."

"Sorry, madam," replied the assistant. "We haven't one large enough for that."

(Miss I. Evans, 1, Selhurst New Road, Norwood, S.E.25, has been awarded a penknife.)

GONE FOR GOOD.

Gent (to young boy who is crying):

"What's the matter, sonny?"

Youngster: "Boo-hoo! I've lost a penny."

Gent (consolingly): "A penny does not go far nowadays."

Youngster: "Mine did. It fell down a drain."

(A. Bishop, Collingwood Court, Camberley, Surrey, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

A GOOD REASON.

Parent (to visitor): "Yes, Johnny always eats more pie when we have visitors."

Visitor: "Indeed! And why is that, Johnny?"

Johnny: "Because that's the only time we ever have pie."

(Y. Taji, 1 of 11, Chome, Kojimachi, Tokyo, Japan, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

"Honestly, Ted, I think you ought to keep faith with your school."

"Oh, I say!"

"I do!" insisted June. "You know perfectly well that you will feel miserable, knowing all the time that you ought to be playing in the team. What will you say if your schoolfellows come back this evening and tell you that St. Frank's has been beaten?"

"But they won't be," said Handforth quickly. "Fatty's jolly good in goal. He's a ripping 'keeper. As good as I am—nearly."

"But not quite?"

"Well, it's not for me to brag," said Handforth modestly. "The chaps say that I'm pretty hot stuff in goal. Anyhow, I'll bet those silly Barcliffe forwards wouldn't get the leather past me this afternoon! They're too jolly cocksure, those chaps! I'd take 'em down a peg or two!"

She smiled at his sudden change of tone.

"But look here, let's forget football," went on Handforth eagerly. "We're now approaching Bannington. Where would you like us to go, Miss June?"

"Barcliffe," she replied promptly.

"Eh?"

"Barcliffe School, if you please."

"But—but——"

"We might just as well go to Barcliffe for a drive as anywhere else," said the girl,

smiling. "Besides, I'd like to see you playing in the match."

Handforth jumped, and the Morris Minor swerved giddily.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "I hadn't thought of that!"

"But it's so easy, isn't it?" asked June. "We get the drive, Bonnie has all the fun, you play in your football match, and then there'll be the drive home—with a nice cosy tea in my sitting-room."

Handforth's eyes glowed.

"By George! Do—do you really mean that?" he asked eagerly.

"Of course I do."

"That you'd like to see me play in the match? And that we could drive home and have tea and——"

"Why not?" laughed June. "I love to watch a really keen football match. I'm quite a boy."

"You—a boy?" said Handforth, looking back at her instead of the road, and endangering three perfectly good lives by nearly running into a hedge. "Why, I've never seen anybody less like a boy in all my life! You're wonderful! What wouldn't I give to be in little Bonnie's shoes! I mean——"

"Don't you think you'd better hurry to Barcliffe?" suggested the girl with a little chuckle. "We're a good way away, aren't we? And we want to get there before the kick-off."

NOT PROBABLE.

Harold was home for the holidays, and his father was reading the term's school report. The boy watched anxiously while his parent scanned it.

"Conduct bad," read father angrily; "reading, history, drawing—all bad. What is the meaning of this, Harold?"

Harold thought hard.

"I can't understand it, dad," he ventured at last. "Do you think it might be a forgery?"

(L. Gyngell, 77, Watlington Street, Reading, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

NOT IN THE ZOO.

"Now, Willie," said the teacher, "give me the name of an animal."

"An average, teacher."

"An average? That's not an animal."

"Well, teacher," replied Willie, "the other day I heard my sister say that her young man lived ten miles away, and rode over to see her three times a week on an average."

(C. Smith, Box 21, Ganmain, N.S.W., Australia, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

NOTHING DOING.

Boss: "Consider yourself sacked, my boy."

Office boy: "But I've done nothing, sir."

Boss: "So I've noticed. That's why you're sacked."



(D. Scott, 188, Victoria Road, Auburn, E.3, Australia, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

COULDN'T BE DONE.

Motorist (after a collision): "Don't stand staring, man! Go and fetch the village doctor."

Onlooker: "I can't sir—he's the fellow you've knocked over."

(T. Cunningham, Millview House, Harolds Cross, Dublin, has been awarded a penknife.)

EXPECTING A LOT.

"This coin doesn't ring right, my lad," said the man behind the counter of the sweet-shop.

"What do you expect for a penny—a set of chimes?" asked the boy aggrievedly.

(Miss M. Firrell, Swiss Chalet, Burwash, has been awarded a penknife.)

A PRESSING QUESTION.

Tom: "My trousers need pressing badly."

Bill: "You have a queer taste. I like my trousers pressing well."

(A. M. Smith, Ebberston Hall, Snainton, Yorks, has been awarded a penknife.)

SCATHING.

Golfer (to caddie): "Well, how do you like my game?"

Caddie: "I suppose it's all right, but I still prefer golf."

(A. Frumkin, P.O. Box 69, South Porcupine, Ontario, Canada, has been awarded a penknife.)

June was not nervous of motor-cars, and she could see that Handforth was quite a capable driver; but she was responsible for little Sylvia Howett's safety, and she thought it better, all things considered, for Handforth to stop the car for a moment. That done, she alighted from the rear seat and transferred to the front seat, with the child on her lap. Now Handforth would be able to drive without having to glance backwards when he wished to speak to her—which was frequently—and thus the danger of his running into a ditch or hedge was eliminated.

It was an arrangement which suited Handforth down to the ground. He thrilled inwardly. This was too glorious for words! And she wanted to see him play in the match! Suddenly, all his keenness for football returned—intensified. If she wanted football, so did he! And, by George, he would prove himself to be as good as his word, too! Just let those fatheaded Barcliffe forwards try to get the leather past him!

He drove fast now, but not recklessly. When Church and McClure were in the car with him he took all sorts of chances. But Church and McClure were—well, they were Church and McClure. His present passengers were far more precious.

He was bubbling with joy. She wanted to see him play! What a ripping idea of hers, for them to go to Barcliffe! He certainly hadn't the faintest idea that June had conceived that idea well over twenty-four hours ago, and that she had intended to persuade him to play in the match all along.

They arrived at Barcliffe in fine style, and Handforth gave a whoop of joy after he had driven the little car into the wide, sweeping quadrangle. For the St. Frank's footballers had only just arrived, and they had not even changed into their footer togs.

"Hallo!" went up a yell. "Jiggered if Handy hasn't turned up!"

Handforth stopped the car and leapt out.

"Here I am, you chaps!" he sang out cheerily. "I'm all ready when you are!"

"Good man!" said Nipper heartily. "Do you mean that you're going to play?"

"Don't be an ass!" said Handforth. "What else do you think I should do? Am I the kind of chap to let his side down in an important match?"

"Ahem!" murmured Nipper, with a quick, understanding glance at June. "Thanks muchly!"

And those last words were addressed to the girl and not to Edward Oswald Handforth.

CHAPTER 14.

Invincible Handy!

FATTY LITTLE, puffing considerably, pushed his way through the crowd.

"Great doughnuts!" he ejaculated breathlessly. "What's this? What the pancake are you doing here, Handy?"

"Sorry about you, Fatty," said Handforth

uncomfortably. "I'm afraid you won't be able to play now."

"It's a swindle!" roared the fat junior indignantly.

Nipper mollified him. He pointed out that the game came first, and in a big game like this personal feelings had to be dropped. The unfortunate Fatty was much disgusted, but there was no arguing with the skipper.

"Where's the pavilion?" asked Handforth crisply. "I want to make my little ward comfortable," he added importantly.

"Your which?" asked Elton, the Barcliffe junior skipper, staring.

"My ward," replied Handforth. "I brought her out for a run, you know—with her nurse."

"Oh, with her nurse?" asked Elton. "Sure she's not your nurse?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll show you whether I need a nurse or not!" growled Handforth, colouring. "You Barcliffe chaps think that you're going to win this match, don't you? Well, if you get the ball into the St. Frank's net once—just once—I'll treat the whole Junior XI to a feed—and any other Barcliffe chap who likes to join in!"

"My poor deluded child, you mustn't be so rash with your money," said Elton sorrowfully. "I wouldn't dream of holding you to your word. This is a League match, and Barcliffe needs both the points. And, let me tell you, those points are as good as ours already!"

"I'd say 'bow-wow,' only it's rude!" retorted Handforth tartly.

The Barcliffe fellows were confident of victory. If they couldn't force a win on their own ground, it was a pity. But then, they didn't know that Handforth, always brilliant in goal, was pepped up to be super-brilliant to-day.

For June was looking on—June was watching him—and he had told June that he wouldn't let the leather pass him. Good enough! Seldom had Handforth been so aggressive on the footer field as he was this afternoon.

It is to be feared that he completely forgot the little child. She had never entered into his calculations much, anyhow; she was merely a sort of chaperone which made it permissible for him to take the pretty June out for rides. Handforth was thinking of the tea to come—the comfortable sitting-room at the orphanage, with June as the charming hostess.

"Go it, Elton!"

The Barcliffe crowds were shouting excitedly. Elton, who played in the inside-right position, was in possession of the ball, and he was streaking for goal. Church and McClure, the St. Frank's backs, dashed at him, but they failed to stop him.

Slam!

It was a low, fast shot, and a long-drawn-out "Ooooooh!" went up. Handforth merely laughed. He flung himself headlong across the goalmouth. With supreme confidence he



Church and McClure were startled to behold Handforth entering the study with a child in his arms. "This is my ward," announced Handy.

gathered up the leather, leapt to his feet, and coolly kicked the ball into midfield.

"Oh, well saved!"

"Good old Handy!"

Elton was feeling very fed-up. He had looked upon that kick as a certain scorer. Handforth's save had been marvellous—and all the more marvellous because he had seemed to do it so easily.

To make matters worse, Nipper, quite unmarked, gathered the ball as it fell. He sped forward and, like lightning, he passed out to Reggie Pitt on the wing.

Pitt trapped it in his usual inimitable style, and a second later he was flashing up the touch-line. Nipper and the other forwards ran up, and consternation spread throughout the Barcliffe defence.

All within the space of twenty seconds the positions were reversed; it was now the Barcliffe goal which was in danger. Across came the ball, a beautiful pass from Reggie. It fell at the feet of Nipper, but Nipper, instead of taking a pot-shot at goal, only pretended to do so, and the Barcliffe goalie leapt. It was a useless effort, for Nipper had cunningly tapped the leather to Travers.

Slam!

Travers took a first-timer, and drove the ball goalwards at express speed. Before the custodian could recover from his surprise the

ball was past him, bouncing at the rear of the net!

"Goal!" howled the St. Frank's supporters.

"Hurrah!"

It was a shock for Barcliffe. After that they bucked up considerably. Again and again the home forwards raided Handy's goal, but they couldn't score. He punched out, he kicked out, he even headed out once—and he grinned cheerfully all the time. At least three shots should have been scoring ones, but Handforth was invincible. He was here, there and everywhere. He dived, he jumped, he leapt this way and that. He gave his best performance of the season.

And when the whistle blew for half-time the score still stood at one-nil. The visitors were one up.

"Well done, Handy, old man!" said Nipper heartily, as he slapped Handforth on the back. "By Jove, you're a tower of strength to-day!"

"And these Barcliffe forwards are hot stuff," said Handforth, grinning. "Where's June? I—I mean— Was she watching?"

"June? I suppose you mean Sylvia?" asked Church solemnly.

"Why, of course—Sylvia," said Handforth hastily. "She's rather young to be looking at footer, but—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you chaps," grumbled Elton good-

naturedly, as he joined the St. Frank's players, "what's the idea of this? You might just as well shove a chunk of wire-netting across the face of your goal. How do you think we can score with that piece of human elastic between the posts?"

"I seldom warm up until the second half," remarked Handforth carelessly.

It sounded boastful, but it proved to be the truth. For in the brief interval Handforth had a word with June, and her glowing praise so bucked him up that he was more brilliant than ever in the second half.

There was one period of the game—for about fifteen minutes after the kick-off—when the Barcliffe forwards attacked incessantly. They were determined to score, and they sliced through the St. Frank's defence repeatedly—all except Handforth. They had Church and McClure confused and bewildered; they forced corner after corner.

But all to no purpose. Handforth was always there. His brilliance was enough to take the heart out of any forward line. And that is exactly what he did. For after that hectic spell Barcliffe faded out of the picture. They had shot their bolt.

And as so often happens in such cases, they went right to pieces. The St. Frank's players began to force the pace. It wasn't long before Nipper scored the second goal of the match, and on the top of that Reggie Pitt ran clean through and sent in a cross shot which the goalie didn't even see.

It was a victory—a great and glorious victory—for the Saints. Three goal to nil, and away from home! Not only did it send St. Frank's to the top of the League table, but it gave them the best goal average.

"Well played, Handy!" yelled the other St. Frank's juniors after the whistle had blown.

"Well played Handy nothing!" said Church. "That shout ought to be: 'Well played, June!'"

CHAPTER 15.

An Unexpected Visitor!

"**T**HANKS for giving us this ripping victory!"

Nipper, smiling, addressed the words to June Truscott, and the girl, blushing a little, looked at him wonderingly.

"I don't understand," she laughed.

"This is your win—not ours," replied Nipper. "Handy has played his best game of the season—and that's your doing. You were looking on, and he just couldn't help himself. The Barcliffe forwards had our defence whacked again and again, but Handy was always there! Thanks again!"

"I do wish you wouldn't be silly," smiled June. "I had nothing to do with it at all."

If the other players were delighted at this unexpected triumph, Handforth himself was bubbling with joy. Never had he enjoyed a game more.

He took no notice of the others as he rapidly washed and changed. All he wanted to do was to get out—to collect June and Bonnie and dash for the orphanage. He had an appetite like two.

He was hurrying towards the quadrangle, where he had left his car and where he had arranged to meet the girl and the child, when he halted in his tracks, staring.

"My only sainted aunt!" he breathed, hardly knowing whether to be pleased or dismayed.

But it wasn't his sainted aunt whom he saw—but his father! There was no mistaking the big limousine car which stood next to

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



the Morris Minor—and no mistaking the well-built, sturdy figure which stood chatting with June Truscott.

"Why, pater!" exclaimed Handforth, running up. "I say, this is ripping! I didn't expect to see you here to-day!"

"I just came down," said Sir Edward vaguely, as he patted his son's shoulder. "Well, how are you, Edward? I saw some of the game, and you played splendidly. Well done!"

"But why did you come here, pater?" asked Handforth. "I mean, I thought you would have gone to St. Frank's."

"I had certain business in this neighbourhood, and I knew that you would be playing here this afternoon, so I came along," explained Sir Edward, smiling. "There was

another reason, too, but that wouldn't interest you now. I shall be going along to St. Frank's presently, and I dare say I shall see you there later on in the evening, eh?"

He spoke mischievously, with a half-glance at June.

"Well, you see, sir—I mean——"

Handforth paused, hardly knowing what to say.

"You're afraid that I shall spoil your little tea-party, eh?" asked Sir Edward, with a chuckle. "But don't worry. You can escort your—er—little ward back to the orphanage—to say nothing of her charming nurse. You young rascal! I envy you!"

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"Yes, pater," said Handforth with a gulp. "And, by the way, I must tell you that I am very pleased with you, young man," continued the baronet, clapping his son on the shoulder again. "Splendid—splendid! Your self-denial is truly magnificent!"

Handforth looked from Sir Edward to the girl and back again. She smiled and nodded, and Sir Edward laughed.

"Yes, Miss Truscott has told me," he said. "She has explained how you contributed your ten-pound note to the orphanage, and how you promised to pay five pounds monthly for the upbringing of this charming little child. My dear boy, I am very proud of you!"

"It—it wasn't anything, pater," murmured Handforth uncomfortably.

He helped June and the child into the car, and then with exaggerated carelessness he went across to his father so that they were out of earshot.

"Pater!" he breathed huskily. "Just a word."

"Hullo! What is it?"

"About my pocket-money," whispered Handforth. "You see, pater——"

"Now, Edward, I can guess what you are going to say," interrupted his father. "You are thinking that I shall be angry with you for giving all your pocket-money to this orphanage for homeless babies? Not at all."

"But, you see——"

"I think that your self-denial is noble," said Sir Edward. "It will, of course, mean a complete stoppage of all your little luxuries, but what does that really matter? Think of the satisfaction you will constantly feel——"

"I—I was going to suggest, pater, that you might give me a little more pocket-money," interrupted Handforth meekly.

"Eh? What was that?"

"You see, pater, I shan't have enough," explained the rugged junior. "You don't allow me five quid a month, and I wouldn't expect you to ordinarily."

"My dear boy," said Sir Edward, his manner changing, "what are you thinking of? If I give you extra money to pay this orphanage subscription, what will become of your self-denial? There will be nothing in it at all—no self-denial whatever. Oh, no! I am disappointed that you should suggest this to me."

"Oh, crumbs!" muttered Handforth, dismayed.

"Your pocket-money will continue as before," said his father firmly. "It is insufficient, I know, but there are only two alternatives for you. Either you must work in some way and earn the extra money, or, according to the agreement you have made with the orphanage, you must, failing to supply the necessary money for the child's support, take the child away and support it yourself."

"Wha-a-a-at!" gurgled Handforth.

"Of course," said Sir Edward, elevating his eyebrows. "What else? It will be far better for you to find the money. But if you can't find it you will have to secure another home for your little ward. I dare say you can keep her at St. Frank's for less than twenty shillings a week. A child of that age doesn't need much, anyhow. You'd save quite a lot, Edward. Indeed, your existing pocket-money would be more than sufficient."

And Sir Edward walked off, leaving his son to wander dazedly to the Morris Minor.

It was a great shock.

Handforth, all along, had shelved that matter of the monthly subscription. He felt that he had practically four weeks, anyhow, and it would be quite a long time before the fiver was due.

He could enjoy himself, and, in the meantime, he could write to his pater, explain everything, and it was any odds that Sir Edward would "come across."

Thus had Handforth been thinking.

But now he knew differently. Sir Edward was here in person, and he had definitely laid down the law. And Handforth knew that it was no good arguing. In any case there wasn't anything to argue about. His father was right. There would be no self-denial in it if he received extra money to pay that sub.

"Is anything wrong, Ted?" asked June gently.

Handforth had climbed into the Minor without a word, and now he was sitting at the wheel, staring blankly through the wind-screen.

"Oh, nothing!" he said hastily. "My—er—responsibilities are worrying me a bit. But it's all right," he added, bucking up. "Why worry about to-morrow? We're going home to enjoy ourselves."

He forced himself to be cheerful. He chatted amiably all the way home, and the girl responded to his mood. Little Sylvia was very sleepy, and she was no trouble at all.

When they arrived at the orphanage it was rather late for tea, but the matron did not seem to mind. She welcomed them with her motherly smile, and Handforth, eager and happy, was escorted upstairs to June's cosy little sitting-room.

Why should he bother himself now? Plenty of time for that when he had to find the first fiver!

The tea was simple but plentiful, and Handforth enjoyed himself immensely. June was as charming as ever—in fact, she was so sweet that Handforth considered himself the luckiest fellow in the world. What a prospect! Every Wednesday and every Saturday he was privileged to come here and have tea with her.

All the same, when it was time for him to go, he felt a little anxious.

"I'll come down to the door with you," said June, smiling. "Just a minute while I get my coat. You can be saying good-bye to Bonnie."

"Oh, rather!" agreed Handforth.

She went out, and he turned his attention to the child. But just then the matron came in, smiling benevolently.

"So you are going?" she asked. "Well, my dear boy, I hope this will be the first of many such visits."

"By George, ma'am, so do I!"

"I—er—dislike to speak of such a subject after you have been so generous," went on Mrs. Brody, "but there is the little matter of the monthly subscription. It is a rule of the orphanage that all subscriptions by guardians should be paid on the twelfth of the month."

"The—the twelfth!" ejaculated Handforth, startled. "That's Monday!"

"Exactly," beamed the matron.

"You—you mean that I've got to pay a fiver on Monday?"

"It was your own promise, I think," said Mrs. Brody gently.

"Oh, rather! Of course," said Handforth helplessly. "Look here, ma'am, I'd better tell you the truth."

It was weighing on his conscience, and he was the last fellow in the world to tell a lie.

"I don't think I quite understand," said the matron.

"Well, you see, when I whacked out that tenner I didn't realise—I mean, I didn't understand—that it would mean another five pounds a month," said Handforth, turning red. "The fact is, I don't get five pounds a month pocket-money—or anything like it."

The matron's expression changed; she did not become cold or severe, but she certainly looked concerned.

"Am I to understand, young man, that you are attempting to—well, to repudiate your agreements?" she asked.

"Nun-no!" gasped Handforth. "I don't mean that. But, you see, I don't think I shall be able to spring the fiver by Monday. You'll have to give me time, ma'am. I'll try to earn the money——"

"But how can you earn money whilst you are at school?"

"I don't know—but I'll find a way," said Handforth doggedly. "I can't guarantee that I'll earn enough, but I'll do my best. And no chap can do more than that."

The matron considered.

"I am afraid that the arrangement would be very, very unsatisfactory," she said in a chilly voice. "I am disappointed. I was under the impression—— But what does it matter now? You tell me that you cannot pay this money, and that is sufficient."

"Oh, but I'll do my best——"

"I am not doubting your sincerity, but we cannot run an orphanage in such a slipshod fashion," said Mrs. Brody, shaking her head. "You realise, of course, just what this means? You have made yourself responsible for Sylvia Howett's upbringing."

"Of course!"

"You cannot pay any more visits to the orphanage," said the matron firmly. "In fact, there will be no need for you to do so. Since you cannot afford to pay for the child's upbringing in this institution, you will have to take the child away with you."

Handforth jumped nearly a foot into the air.

"Take—take her away with me?" he gurgled.

"What else would you think?" asked Mrs. Brody. "Of course you will have to take her away with you. She is your responsibility now, young man—not ours!"

"Oh, my goodness!"

"I am beginning to doubt your goodness," said the matron sternly. "Fortunately it is still comparatively early in the evening, and the weather is mild and fine. The child will come to no harm during the short journey

from here to the school. The orphanage cannot be responsible for little Sylvia any longer. She is yours to provide for as you think fit."

"But—but—"

Handforth paused, bewildered. Here was an awkward complication. Take the child back to St. Frank's! Why, it was impossible. The school authorities would never allow it. When Sir Edward had mentioned the matter at Barcliffe Handy had hardly heeded; certainly he had never anticipated the likelihood of such a possibility.

"Look here, Mrs. Brody, I can't take the baby away this evening!" he protested frantically. "I mean, it's—it's out of the question! What could I do with a little girl like that?"

"That is for you to decide," said the matron briefly.

"But it's heartless——"

"Is it any more heartless than your own behaviour?" retorted Mrs. Brody. "You promise to pay for this child, and now, after only a few days, you tell me that you cannot even guarantee the money! You are her guardian, and as you cannot afford to keep her at the home, you must take her away. That is final!"

CHAPTER 16.

Handforth's Baby!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH went hot and cold in turns. Here was a fine mess he'd landed himself into! He made one last desperate appeal.

"Mrs. Brody, if only you'll give me time I'll find the money all right. I want to come here every Wednesday and every Saturday so that I can have tea with June and——"

"With whom?"

"With Sylvia, I mean," said Handforth, correcting himself hastily. "Of course, with the little kiddie. But June will be there. She's the nurse, and——"

"You are taking a great deal for granted, young man," interrupted the matron. "June will not be in this institution after Monday."

Handforth looked at her in shocked surprise.

"Won't be here?" he repeated huskily.

"June—or, I should say, Miss Truscott—is not one of our permanent staff," explained Mrs. Brody. "If you had paid your subscription in the ordinary way, it would have been your privilege to visit the home twice weekly. But please understand that you would only have been able to visit your ward—not your ward's nurse."

"Oh, I say! I didn't mean——"

"In any case, June Truscott is leaving us on Monday," went on the matron relentlessly. "She is, in fact, going home—and her home is in Somerset. So you are not likely to see much of her in future."

June herself came in at that moment, and she paused in the doorway.

"I say, is that true?" burst out Handforth. "Are you going on Monday?"

"I'm afraid so," said the girl.

"And you live in Somerset?"

"Yes."

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Handforth. "Then—then——"

His dream was shattered. And somehow, knowing that the girl would soon be leaving, he discovered that he wasn't quite so keen on her. Handforth's "love" affairs were always extremely transient.

"Oh, well, that's different," he said dully.

"And now, young man, after you have doubted my word so openly to my face, perhaps you will tell me what you intend to do?" asked Mrs. Brody coldly. "Your ward's nurse in future, I may say, will be Mrs. Thompson. A very excellent nurse, but at least forty-five years old. And without any disparagement to her, distinctly plain."

Handforth winced. He knew just what the matron meant. June knew it, too, and she was blushing.

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do," said Handforth with sudden aggressiveness. "If you're not going to be here, Miss June, and if there's going to be any trouble about the sub, I'll take Sylvia away with me! By George! You say I'm her guardian, so I'll jolly well guard her. I'll look after her properly, too! This giddy home isn't so good as I thought it was!"

He gathered up the child in his arms and stalked out. The matron made no attempt to stop Handforth, but June ran after him.

"You'll need Bonnie's little coat and

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scarf," she whispered. "You mustn't risk giving her a cold, you know."

"No, I suppose not," agreed Handforth.

"If you'll let me, I'll come to St. Frank's, too—just to see that she's all right," murmured the girl.

"Will you?" asked Handforth eagerly. "I say, thanks awfully! That's ripping of you, Miss June!"

They went out to the waiting car. Handforth was considerably perturbed. Everything was going wrong. His dismay, in fact, was evident on his good-natured face. Here he was, saddled with this tiny child.

"I say, what rotten luck!" said Handforth dismally. "Your going away, I mean. I was hoping——"

"You see, I must go home," interrupted June gently. "I only came to Edgemore to help when the home was first opened. I'm not one of the regular staff. I'm attached to a big hospital in Somerset."

"Oh!"

"But I shan't be there long either," murmured June. "You see, my fiancé is one of the doctors, and we're already getting our homo ready——"

"Your—your which?" interrupted Handforth in a small, thin voice.

"My fiancé. Didn't you see my engagement ring?" murmured June. "I've never tried to hide it from you. You see, I'm over eighteen, and——"

"Oh, well, of course," said Handforth feebly. "I mean, rather! Why not? Jolly good luck to you, Miss June!"

He hardly knew what he was saying, but at least he now knew definitely that he would not be able to pay any further attention to this charming nurse. Funny thing, but he rather wondered why he had made such a chump of himself.

He was the old Handforth when he strode into the Ancient House, Bonnie in his arms. June slipped off somewhere, and Handforth walked straight into Study D. Church and McClure were there, sprawling at their ease.

Bonnie seemed to be enjoying herself immensely. Since arriving at St. Frank's she had been taking a great interest in her surroundings. At the present moment she was taking an interest in Handforth's nose, playfully pulling and tugging at it with enthusiasm. Handy's quiff of hair also seemed to be giving her endless fun.

"Hallo! So there you are!" said Church, getting up. "How did the tea-party—— Hallo! What the dickens—— What's that you've got?"

"Are you blind?" retorted Handforth. "This is my ward—little Sylvia Howett."

"But what have you brought her here for?" asked McClure in wonder.

"They've chucked her out of the home," growled Handforth. "I told the matron I couldn't pay the sub, and the old girl cut up rusty and said that I would have to take the kiddie away. So I've brought her along to St. Frank's."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a roar of boisterous, healthy laughter, and it came from Sir Edward Handforth, who was filling the doorway.

The chums of Study D stared in astonishment.

And then Handforth noticed that June Truscott was with him, and June was laughing merrily. She did not exactly share Sir Edward's boisterous hilarity, but she certainly knew what the joke was. Doors were opening up and down the passage, and fellows were being attracted.

"I say, pater, what's the joke?" asked Handforth in an aggrieved voice.

"You are, my lad!" chuckled Sir Edward. "That little ward of yours is rather a handful, eh?"

Handforth stiffened.

"It's all very well for you to laugh, pater, but I'm not grumbling, am I?" he retorted. "I don't want you to give me any extra pocket-money either. I'm going to keep Bonnie here for a bit——"

"My silly young ass!" said Sir Edward breezily. "The—er—kiddie is going back to the home at once—with her nurse. Don't you understand, Edward, that it was all a joke?"

"A—a joke?"

"Of course," laughed Handy's pater. "You don't really think that the matron of a highly respectable babies' home would allow one of the children to be taken away, do you? You don't think she would refuse to keep a child because an absurd subscription wasn't paid? In any case, none of these subscriptions is compulsory, as you ought to know."

Handforth's jaw dropped.

"But—but I thought——" he began.

"I have to thank this young lady for putting me in possession of the facts," continued Sir Edward genially. "Miss Truscott wrote to me, and she told me that you had 'adopted' a child without quite realising what you were doing: and she asked me to accept the responsibility."

"Oh!" said Handforth feebly.

"She told me that you would be at Barcliffe for the match, and that she would be there, too," went on the baronet. "And as I had business in the South of England, I came along. But I managed to see Mrs. Brody, and I explained the circumstances to her. Naturally, I am only too glad to help a well-deserving charity in this way." His eyes twinkled. "So you needn't worry about your pocket-money, Edward. None of it will be required by the orphanage."

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Handforth. "I—I believe I've been an ass!"

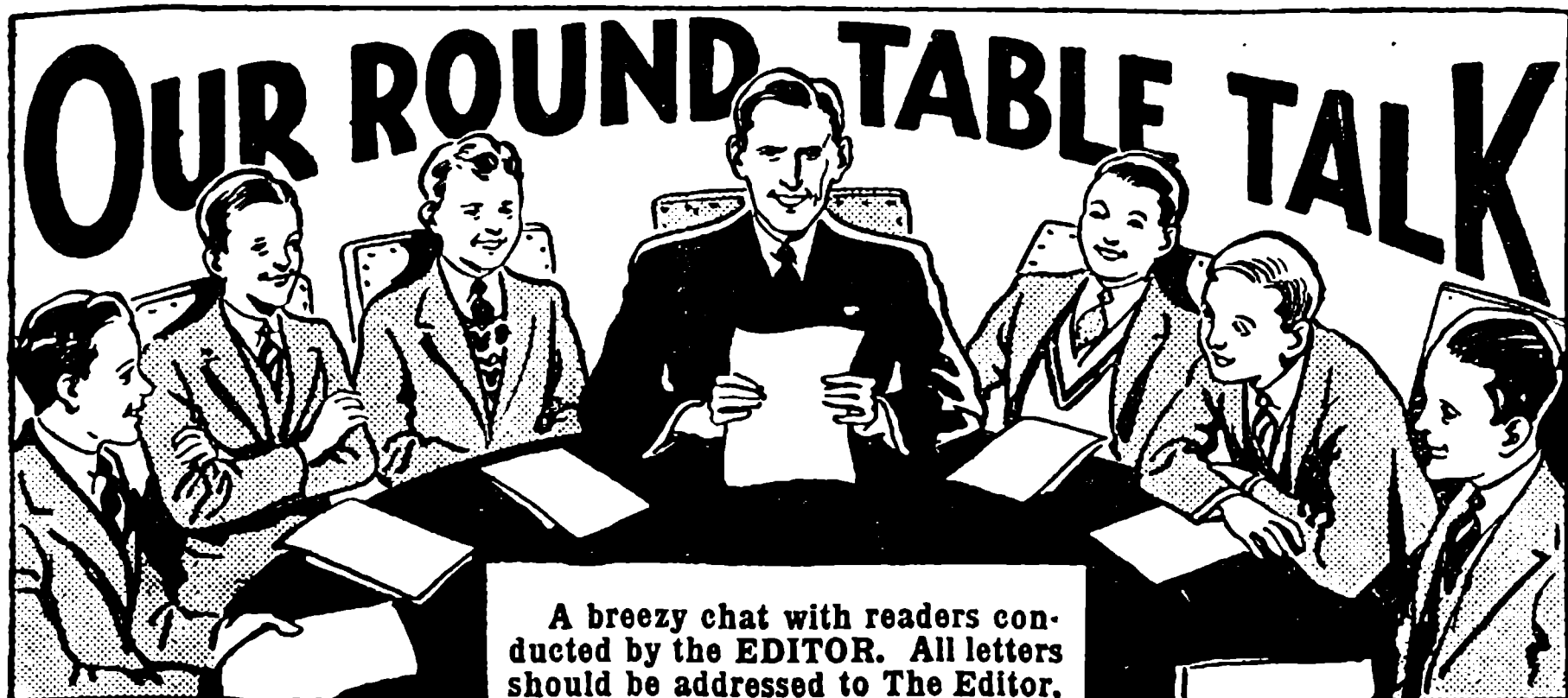
"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar from the crowd of interested listeners.

"We've had our laugh, Edward, and now I want to congratulate you upon your fine spirit," continued Sir Edward heartily. "You weren't going to give in, were you?"

(Concluded on page 44.)

The Editor will help you to solve your problems!



A breezy chat with readers conducted by the EDITOR. All letters should be addressed to The Editor,

NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HERE are some verses written around the St. Frank's characters by R. H. Rose, an enthusiastic Australian reader, which are worthy of the dignity of print.

We'll start with Fenton of the Sixth,
The captain of the school,
Respected and esteemed is he,
And certainly no fool!

Then William Browne Napoleon,
The Fifth's loquacious cap.,
His elongated colloquy
Is known all o'er the map.

There's Handforth, boss of Study D,
Whose exploits mirth unfold;
He knocks about his chums, and yet
He's worth his weight in gold.

There's Nipper, calm, and to the fore
In all the outdoor sports;
His leadership is unsurpassed
And yields sagacious thoughts.

Then Pitt, the West House leader, who
Is liked by one and all.
He's skipper—couldn't better it,
And shines most at football.

There's Archie Glenthorne, who appears
Lethargically inclined;
Yet when efficacy demands
He'll not be far behind.

There's Willy Handforth, of the Third,
So cheerful and so gay,
With iron hand he rules his Form
In truly fighting way.

Now to the author let us give
Three cheers for these fine books;
Long may he live and happy be—
Hats off to Mr. Brooks!

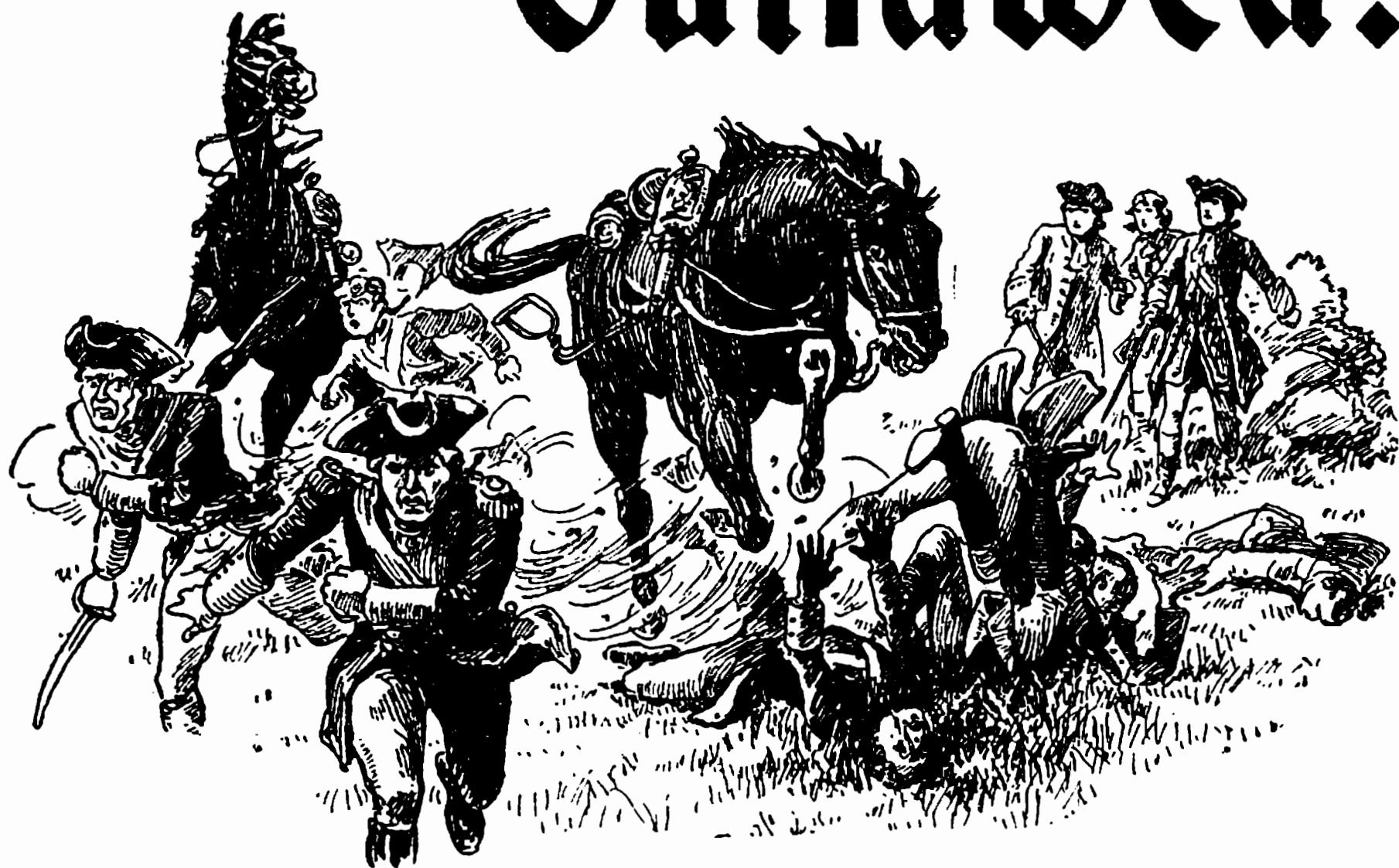
Well, you other readers, what do you think of these verses? I think, while we are about it, we ought to take off our hats to Reginald H. Rose, too.

The St. Frank's masters who most frequently come into the St. Frank's stories are: Mr. Nelson Lee, headmaster. Ancient House: Mr. Alington Wilkes, Housemaster; Mr. James Crowell, Remove; Professor Sylvester Tucker, science. West House: Mr. Beverley Stokes, Housemaster; Mr. William Pagett, Fifth. Modern House: Mr. Arthur Stockdale, Housemaster; Mr. Robert Langton, Sixth; M. Henri Jacques Leblanc, French. East House: Mr. Barnaby Goole, Housemaster; Mr. Horace Pycraft, Fourth; Mr. Austin Suncliffe, Third. There are quite a few other masters, but as they so seldom appear in the stories their names are presumably of no interest to readers.

It is my intention to give, week by week, tiny thumbnail sketches of the more prominent St. Frank's characters, and we will commence this week with the Sixth, giving the names in alphabetical order. **DAVID BIGGLESWADE.** Tall and inclined to be loose-jointed. Excessively good-natured, and the butt of everybody's pleasantries. Particularly popular in the Third, as he always treats his fags well. Seldom, if ever, known to grumble. Takes life as it comes. **HAROLD CARLILE.** Well set up, and inclined to be handsome. Neither brilliant nor dull at studies and games, but just medium. Easily swayed, and can be talked into doing things which his real nature rebels against. Normally a thoroughly decent fellow. **HOBART CONROY.** The eldest brother of Conroy minor and Conroy minimus. A studious senior, particularly clever at maths.; only fair at sports. His chief hobby is avoiding his two younger brothers.

Black Satan to the rescue—Dick Forrester's horse routs King's Riders.

Outlawed!



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By *DAVID GOODWIN*

A Desperate Plight!

DICK stood firm, with white, set face. Of all encounters, he liked this least. In open fight, with enemies or betrayers, he had no such scruples, but for all his lawless career he had never brought himself to take the life of a King's man, however hard-pressed he might be.

The law had hounded him from his own, and proclaimed him outlaw—so bitterly had he been used, aforesaid and now, that he felt himself justified. Yet he had the feeling that to slay a King's servant, even to save his own neck, would put him beyond the pale for ever.

Turpin had no such qualms. His pistol cracked, and the first of the oncoming Riders pitched forward and lay quiet. Turpin had no ambition to adorn a gibbet—these men came to bring him to a shameful death. Crack! A second Rider dropped in his tracks. Still the others came on.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The Riders' pistols flashed—three shots only. One struck Turpin in the left forearm, making him drop his empty weapon. But he was none the less pleased that the Riders threw away their

shots by firing as they ran, instead of waiting to come to close quarters. The other two bullets whistled harmlessly overhead. The leader called on his men to shoot again; but Turpin had guessed rightly. All but three, in their hurry, had left their pistols in the holsters of the saddles, and were armed only with the steel.

"Cut the knaves down!" roared the leader. "Take them alive or dead!"

A rush, a shout, and the Riders swept down upon the three comrades like a whirlwind. So clumsily did they attack that Turpin spitted the first one through the shoulder, and Dick, parrying the thrust of a big corporal who rushed blindly at him, gave the man such a buffet on his head with the flat of his sword that he dropped senseless.

The blundering rashness of the attack gave the first advantage to the defenders, but it could not last. The Riders became more wary on finding with what skilled opponents they had to deal, and the odds were hopeless. They closed in on all sides, and the rapiers began to play like lightning.

Had the Riders possessed the skill of the highwaymen, the three comrades would have

been annihilated at once. As it was, with the utmost difficulty, Turpin and Dick kept them at bay, Dick covering his young brother as best he could.

Back to back the three fought, but the weight of numbers soon told. Dick was wounded in the thigh, Ralph had his wrist laid open, and Turpin was so hard-pressed that even his strength began to fail.

With an inward groan, Dick realised that the end was near. Attack was impossible—with three swords against him, however clumsily used, he could only defend himself, and that not for long!

"Oh, Ralph boy, why didn't you go when you might?" he muttered, between his teeth.

The words had barely left his lips when a great black body swept past, and two of Dick's assailants were sent flying. A yell of dismay arose, and a second upheaval followed.

"Satan! It's Black Satan!" cried Dick. And in an instant his despair was changed to joy. "Here, boy! Down with 'em into the dust!"

The great black horse, his eyeballs glaring and his teeth bared, came plunging through the mob of Riders like a thunderbolt, his terrible forehoofs striking out left and right, and the Riders went down like ninepins. Behind him followed Turpin's beautiful Bess, tearing with teeth and hoofs, transformed into a lashing fury by her master's peril.

Both horses, recovering from their coltish panic when they bolted with Ralph's frightened hunter, had returned to their masters. Black Satan, even as he had scattered Vane Forrester's ruffians in the old days, came to his master's rescue once again, and the Riders scattered before his terrible onslaught like chaff before the wind. The men, taken by surprise, and half of them already on their backs, halted, uncertain what to do.

"Saved, by the rood!" cried Turpin. "Here, Bess!"

"Satan, to me!" shouted Dick, and the great horse was beside him in a moment.

He vaulted into the saddle, gave Ralph a quick lift behind him, and galloped away like the wind, Turpin by his side on Black Bess, leaving the Riders raving but helpless.

"In the very nick of time!" cried Turpin, patting Bess on the neck as they galloped across the heather. "See, there comes another troop of the Riders! Bess, my girl, you nearly lost me my neck to-day, but you've made amends."

"Hold tight, Ralph!" said Dick as the wind sang in his ears. "It was all that fiddle-headed roan beast of yours that did the mischief. I never knew Black Satan to fear man before. Never fear for those rogues behind. Even if they crossed the bog they would never catch us up in a cross-country ride!"

The discomfited King's men, indeed, were by this time left hopelessly behind, and the second troop, realising they had no chance of capturing the fugitive, had stopped to tend their comrades.

"Yonder is a horse," said Turpin, pointing to a riderless horse cantering some way ahead. "Egad, 'tis that brute of Ralph's! We had best catch him and put the boy on his back; 'tis not fair that Satan should carry double. And then we must put half a county between us and the Riders, for we have seen enough of them to last the day out."

They caught Ralph's horse, and he mounted it, after which they set off at a steady gallop, leaving the moors and gaining the wooded country to the westward, where they took trail that, for distance and doubles, the Riders would never be able to follow.

"We are well out of that," said Turpin at last, breathing a sigh of relief. "It is all due to your scruples, Dick. I told you we should have shot that captain through the head whom you took prisoner."

"Nay, it was not he," said Dick. "He was not among those who attacked us, nor were they the same troop who beset us at Fernhall. 'Twas the dogs that tracked us down."

"They will track us down no more," said Turpin, with satisfaction. "Moreover, we have forded two rivers on our way hither, which is a precaution I should have taken before, only I dreamed not that they had any hounds in these parts."

Dick, who had been strangely quiet for some time, drew rein and turned to his brother.

"We must part here, Ralph," he said. "Do you make the best of your way back to Huntercombe."

Ralph flushed and looked gloomy.

"Have I not shown myself fit to ride with you, Dick?" he said.

"You have shown yourself a Forrester to the backbone, youngster," replied Dick, "for which very reason I am going to see that you keep your neck out of the noose that is being woven for me. I am outlawed, Fernhall is

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

DICK FORRESTER, formerly a young highwayman, has been deprived of his estate and fortune by the trickery of

HECTOR FORRESTER. This is only the beginning of Dick's troubles, for he falls foul of **CAPTAIN SWEENEY**, the notorious leader of a gang of footpads, and is also wanted by the King's Riders for assisting his former comrade of the road,

RICHARD TURPIN, the famous highwayman, to escape capture. Dick is forced to become an outlaw, and he and Turpin ride off together. The boy's young brother, Ralph, accompanies them when they are attacked by a number of dogs. They win through, only to find themselves face to face with a troop of King's Riders. "Surrender, or we will slay you where you stand!" cries the leader.

(Now read on.)

in the hands of Hector Forrester, and between the gallows and Captain Sweeny I am like to have my hands full. Believe me, Ralph, if you wish to serve me you can do it best at Huntercombe or St. Austell's school. Hector may not hold Fernhall for long. Either he or I must die before the question is settled in full."

"He knows it, Dick," said Ralph. "Before I rode out to you, I heard that he has sworn never to rest till he sees you swinging in chains."

Dick laughed grimly.

"There has been many a gibbet prepared for me," he said, "and many an enemy has sought my death. Those enemies have come to little good, and I still ride the roads. If ever danger threatens you, Ralph, remember I am your brother!"

And after a heartfelt handgrip from the two highwaymen, Ralph turned his horse's head and rode back to Huntercombe.

"**T**IS a pity to part with him, doubtless," said Turpin, drawing one of his pistols and carefully cleaning it, "but the lad is better out of it all."

"I am with you there," said Dick. "My only fear is that he may have been recognised by some of the Riders in that little brush upon the moor. But I think not. Besides, he is too young to be held for such an affair."

"He is old enough to hang," said Turpin, "though I think with you that he will come to no harm this time. See well to your pistols' priming, Dick. Your life may rest on it. 'Tis a proverb on the road that Turpin's pistols never miss fire."

"A pleasing reputation to have," laughed Dick. "Add to it that the bullet always reaches its mark, and 'tis no wonder they seek you so eagerly for the gibbet, comrade, though by this time I think there's little to choose between us. They desire my neck as earnestly."

"Nay, I think I am still the most sought after," replied Turpin, feigning to be jealous. "You are young, and have scarce so pretty a record as I. Yet I will not deny that you come second—a very good second."

"We won't quarrel about that," said Dick, laughing heartily. "If you prefer it, let it be that you are a still greater blackguard than I. You know what the pot said to the kettle, eh, Turpin? But who is this running out of the wood?"

A brown-faced, bare-legged boy approached and saluted Turpin.

"'Tis Master Richard Turpin, sir, I doubt not?" he said.

"No other," said the highwayman. "What's your pleasure, my young Romany?"

"I have been following you this hour, sir, with this message from my father, Jasper Griengre."

Turpin tore the missive open and uttered an exclamation.

"'Od's wounds! An old comrade of mine needs my help sorely, Dick. I must ride to his aid."

"So! I'll come and lend a hand!" said Dick eagerly.

"Nay, lad! I would like nothing better than to have you, but this is a matter in which I must move alone. We shall meet again soon, and I shall have news for you. Wait for me at the Wensley cross-roads by midnight in three days' time. Farewell now, for I must spur and spare not!"

"Good luck go with you! I will be there!" called Dick, and, with a wave of his hand, Turpin galloped away down the road, cleared a five-barred gate, and was off across country as straight as the crow flies.

"Now, what under the stars may Turpin be riding at such speed for?" said Dick to himself as he rode along the North Road at an easy trot. "Who is it that needs his aid, and why should he not let me accompany him?"

The boy frowned worriedly.

"I shall be blithe when the hour comes for us to meet at the cross-roads," he went on musingly. "What a staunch, merry rascal he is, and how good a friend in need! 'Od's so! It takes the sting even from the loss of Fernhall and my outlawry to ride knee to knee with him across England."

Dick forgot his anxiety and laughed exultantly. He urged Satan to a canter, and so they came upon a breezy down, beyond which lay the dark woods of Danesford.

The Lonely Hut on the Moor!

"**B**UT twelve guineas left! Satan, boy, this will not do. We must fill our coffers with a barker in each hand, and I would be blithe to see some gold-bearing magnate riding this way, his mind bent on the shillings he could squeeze from the poor. Hallo! Who slips back among the gorse-bushes?"

Dick was riding on his way to the north, after staying for the night at a small hostelry near Danesford. Passing over the common, he thought he caught sight of a shabby-looking fellow watching him among the nearby bushes.

"Pink me, I like not these byway inns! I thought this morning the landlord had some suspicion who I was. In truth, Black Satan and I are becoming too well known about the country. If mine host has set any man to spy upon me 'twill be ill for him!"

Dick's lips set grimly, and he watched carefully as he rode to see if his movements were followed. For the danger he cared nothing, but treachery was a thing he always punished sorely. Convinced, after a time, that his suspicions were groundless, he rode on his way to the north, halting only for food. The afternoon waned.

He drew his riding-cloak about him, for night was beginning to fall, the wind was rising, and the most threatening sky Dick had ever seen shrouded the setting sun.

"'Od's! It looks as though a tempest were brewing. I trust not. A thunderstorm in

"March is not common, but all the worse when it happens. On, Satan! Let us find shelter before the storm breaks. Yonder is one who will suffer by it. 'Tis an odd time to sit by the roadside."

A solitary figure, despite the gathering storm, sat on the roadside some way ahead. As Dick approached he saw it was an old man, poorly clad, who sat with his head bowed in his hands, oblivious of the threatening sky. So sad and wretched was his attitude that the young highwayman was touched with pity.

"What ails you, good father?" he said, drawing rein. "By the sky, 'tis no time to loiter!"

The old man raised his head.

"The tempest can do me no worse hurt, sir," he said. "Let it burst! My sorrow overwhelms me, and I care not."

"I grieve to hear it," said Dick. "Is it a matter that I can mend? Any help I can give is yours. Perhaps you are in want?"

"'Tis not only money that I lack," said the old man, "but I am homeless. This very day I was cast out from the place I have lived in all my life, my livelihood taken from me, and there is nothing left me to do but die!"

"Turned from your home!" exclaimed Dick. "Who did such a thing?"

"'Twas Farmer Bence, of Stamford, who has bought the land round where my old hut stood. This morning he seized my belongings and turned me out to starve."

"'Od's blood!" exclaimed Dick. "This is just such a matter as pleases me to set right! I will present myself to this farmer Bence in such manner that he will think 'tis the fiend himself come to claim his own! Come, good father, walk at my stirrup-iron. I will see you righted, and you shall see me teach this man Bence such a lesson as will shake him to the marrow!"

"My thanks to you, sir," said the old man, rising, and looking keenly at Dick. "I see you are a youth of no ordinary parts and courage. How you can benefit me I do not know, but I believe you will do it."

"You shall see," said Dick. "Now, take me to the house of this man, and I will lay a rare jest before you. I have a plan in my head which promises good sport, so let us not delay."

"Will you not come first to my hut, sir," said the old man, "that you may know I speak the truth?"

"Ay," said Dick, after a moment's thought, "perhaps that will be the better way of it. We will bring the worthy Bence thither, and show him the error of his ways. 'Od's bodikins, but I promise myself some sport to-night! Lead on!"

They made their way over the moor till they reached the slope of a valley, down which they went.

"A plaguey lonely spot, this place of yours!" said Dick.

"I was born in it, and love the loneliness," said the old man. "Yonder is my good abode—mine no longer since that cormorant has cheated me of it!"

He pointed out a large thatched building like a barn, standing in a stony ravine.

"Egad!" murmured Dick as they reached it. "Doubtless you have a love for it, father, but to a stranger it seems no great loss. I have seen many a barn that was a palace to it. I wonder, too, 'tis not swept away by floods, for this looks like the bed of a river."

"Centuries ago it may have been," said the old man, "but no water has flowed here in living memory, and the position is sheltered from the winds that sweep the moor."

"Yet it shows signs of flood water round the walls," said Dick. "But, 'od's fish, good father, can you have lived in here?" he added as they entered. "Why, half the roof is gone!"

"You must understand that Farmer Bence wishes the hut removed," said Dick's guide, "and his men have even now begun to pull it down. The roof was sound yesterday."

"Now, do you listen well to what I say, and act upon it," said Dick.

"I am all attention," said the old man.

"To begin with—Nay, stand where I can see your face. What are you passing behind me for?"

"This!" said the old man.

Dick suddenly felt a pair of powerful arms thrown round him like a vice from behind. Then, in a moment, the whole room filled with men. They leaped up from behind the straw-sheaves, rushed in by the door, and scrambled through the crazy window. They flung themselves on Dick like one man and overpowered him.

"Bind him fast!" said the old man triumphantly. "Now he is our prisoner!"

(Dick Forrester tricked—a prisoner! By whose hand? Look out for another thrilling instalment of this fine serial next Wednesday. Order your copy in advance.)

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HANDFORTH'S GOOD DEED!

(Continued from page 38.)

Splendid! That's just what I'd expect from a son of mine. Never give in!"

"Bonnie's had quite an exciting afternoon," smiled June, as she took the child. "Well, she hasn't come to any harm, and everything has turned out all right. I'll be going now, if you don't mind, Sir Edward."

"I say, I'll drive you back to the home!" said Handforth eagerly.

Amid many chuckles, he escorted her away—and now he was perfectly happy. Furthermore, he was relieved. Until that minute he hadn't guessed that his father had been having some fun at his expense.

"I SAY, pater!"

Sir Edward was on his way back to Mr. Wilkes' study, and he was chuckling heartily to himself.

"Hallo, hallo!" he said, turning. "So it's you, William. Well? You've heard about your brother, I suppose?"

"Oh, Ted's always doing something dotty, pater," replied Willy, with a grin. "You may remember that he contributed his tenner to the home the other day?"

"I do," nodded Sir Edward. "A very generous act."

"Particularly generous, as he had already invited a crowd of Remove fellows and Moor View girls to a feed at the Japanese Café," agreed Willy. "In point of fact, Ena and I whacked out our own fivers, and the feed took place as per programme."

"Well?"

"Well, what about it, pater?" asked Willy. "A man of your intelligence doesn't need

any telling that Ena and I are minus five quid each."

"I cannot see exactly how that is any affair of mine," said Sir Edward, stroking his chin. "You surely don't expect me to give you another five-pound note each, do you?"

"Well, we gave up our money to save Ted—to save the fair name of the Handforths," replied Willy. "Come on, pater! Be a sport! Fork out!"

"Certainly not! I shall do nothing of the sort!"

"Anyhow, I'm not going to give in," said Willy coolly.

"Eh?"

"We Handforths never give in," continued Willy. "Wasn't that the advice you just gave to Ted? Fork out—and smile!"

Sir Edward was trapped, and he knew it.

"Well, of all the impudent young ragamuffins!" he ejaculated, as he took out his notebook and extracted two fivers. "There you are, William! And now be off with you!"

"You're a brick, pater!" said Willy, grinning. "Thanks awfully—and thanks from Ena, too. It's all serene now."

He strolled off, whistling. Sir Edward watched him go, a broad smile on his strong face. His two sons were young scallywags, but, by Jove, he was proud of them!

THE END.

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