

*Details of Fights of Bygone Days, that live in the Memory of Old Boys, have been Garnered and Set Down here by a St. Jim's Sixth-Former.*

**I**f the historic walls of the school gymnasium could speak, what a host of thrilling stories they would relate! Stories of grim glove-fights between bitter foes; stories of gruelling boxing-bouts for cups and championships; stories of courage, and endurance, and endeavour—qualities which have been possessed and demonstrated by St. Jim's fellows throughout the generations.

The gymnasium walls cannot speak; but I can speak for them by proxy, as it were. I can tell of some of the famous fights that have been fought in the gym.—and in less public places. For my information on this subject I am indebted to many Old Boys who were either eye-witnesses of the fights, or participants in them, and who love to talk over old times when they revisit St. Jim's.

#### **An Epic Struggle!**

**N**ONE of the present masters at St. Jim's is old enough to remember the fight between Ransome and Raikes, of the Sixth;

and the present generation of pupils was unborn. But the fight is still fresh in the memories of some of the older Old Boys, who never tire of describing it. Truly it was a terrific business.

We find Roderick Ransome, Captain of St. Jim's, tall as a Viking, handsome in a manly way, and the idol of the fags, challenging Peter Raikes, six feet of strength and sinew, and a blustering bully into the bargain, to a fight in the gym. Raikes had long been the terror of the smaller fry at St. Jim's; indeed, he was feared and hated throughout the school because of his uncurbed brutality. Ransome saw that the fellow would have to be put in his place; and in order to do this he must choose between reporting him to the Head or making him suffer the humiliation of a public thrashing in the gym.

Ransome chose the latter course. He threw down the gauntlet, and Raikes accepted the challenge with alacrity. He had such confidence in his giant's strength



that he foresaw no difficulty in trouncing the captain of the school; and he rather gloried in the prospect, having some old scores to settle with Ransome.

The fight was governed by two conditions. It was to be fought with bare fists, and also to a finish, there being no limit to the number of rounds. Such an encounter smacks of the old Corinthian days; certainly it would not be permitted to take place to-day. Perhaps we have grown "softer"; but I prefer to think we have grown more civilised.

The gym. was packed to suffocation, and Ransome was cheered to the echo when he stepped into the ring. Not so Raikes, who was received in chilling silence. Grenfell of the Sixth was referee; and it was expected that he would have to caution Raikes for employing unfair tactics. To do the bully justice, however, he fought fairly and cleanly throughout, albeit very fiercely.

Ransome was a fine boxer, quick on his feet, and possessed of a powerful punch. But he had need of all his skill and resource in the earlier rounds, when he was hard pressed, and withstood any amount of punishment. His chums were very anxious as to the issue, for Raikes was fighting like a giant. His energy seemed dynamic, his powers of endurance inexhaustible. He was impatient of the intervals between the rounds, whereas Ransome could not have carried on without them. Six rounds were fought out, and the captain of St. Jim's was getting much the worst of the argument. But his pluck was indomitable.

In the seventh round, Ransome whipped up his flagging energies, and fought like a fellow inspired. Raikes, astonished by this unexpected revival on the part of his opponent, was driven round the ring under a relentless rain of blows. The tide had turned, now, in Ransome's favour, and he gave his man no quarter. A powerful drive between the eyes caused Raikes to rock on his feet; but before Ransome could deliver the upper-cut which was to have followed the bell rang to signify the end of the round—and Raikes was saved.

The next two rounds saw plenty of give-and-take fighting. Raikes had rallied from his bad spell, and was holding his own again. Both combatants were considerably the worse for wear. Ransome's lip was cut and swollen, and an ominous bruise was forming on his forehead. Raikes had temporarily lost the use of his left eye, besides suffering other facial injuries. The referee seriously debated whether he ought to stop the fight. He decided to give it one more round, and it was fortunate that he did so, for the tenth round brought matters to a climax.

Ransome fought magnificently. He saw that Raikes was tiring, and he hammered home his advantage. First he pummelled his opponent severely about the body; and then, after brief reprisals by Raikes, the captain of St. Jim's sailed right in, and floored his man with a terrific drive to the jaw. Raikes went down, and stayed down, and the Homeric tussle was over.

The result of the fight was to inspire Raikes with a wholesome respect for his conqueror. He dropped his bullying ways, and was agreeably surprised to find that the school held him in higher esteem than it had previously done. He backed up the captain in matters of administration, and in time became almost as popular as Ransome himself.

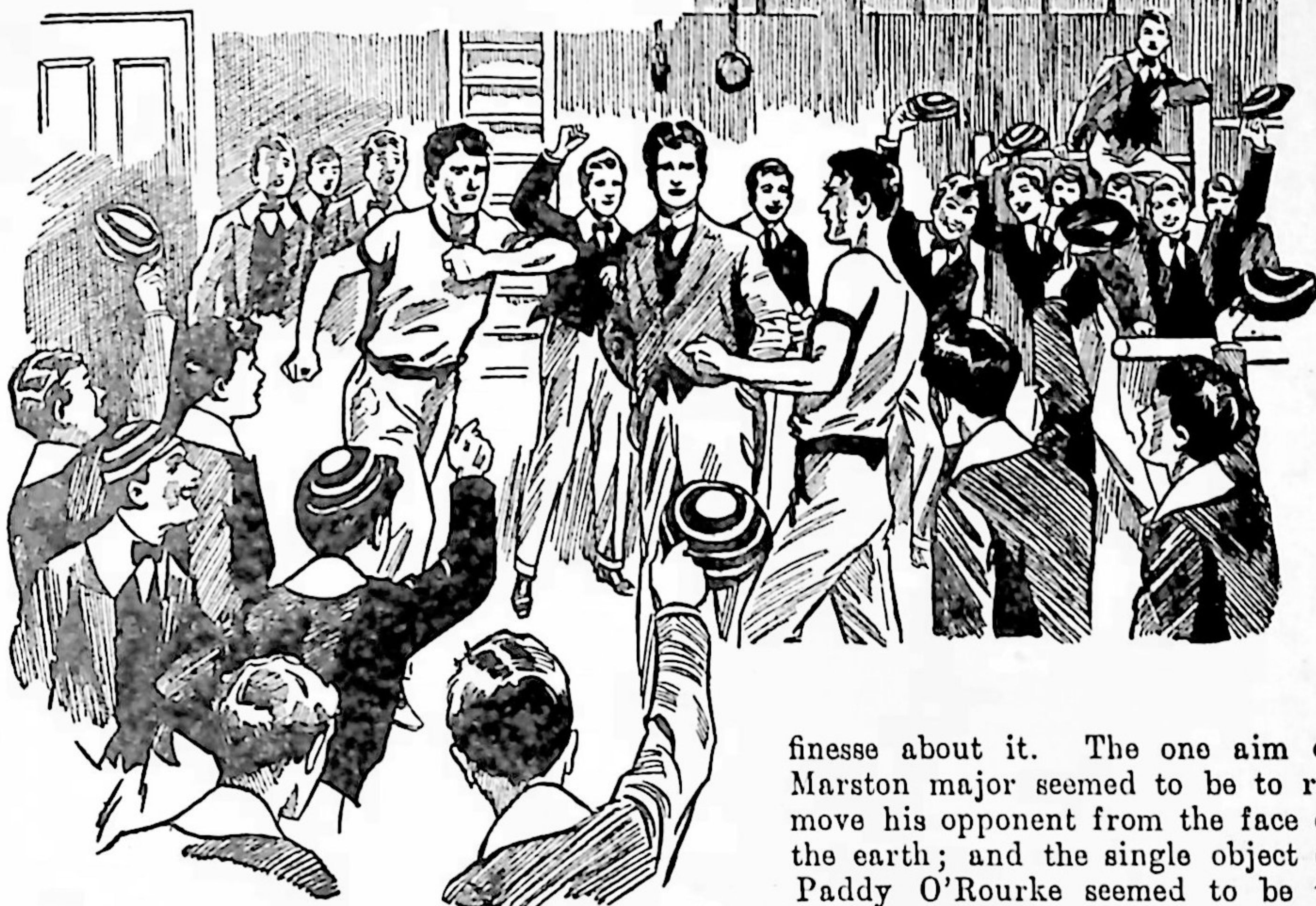
### The Pluck of Paddy O'Rourke!

SIX-FORMERS were again the belligerents in a great fight which took place some years after the Ransome-Raikes affair. It must not be supposed that members of the Sixth, which is the Palladium of a Public-school, are always "scrapping." On the contrary, tussles between Sixth Form men are so infrequent that the few which have occurred stand out in the memory. There have been hundreds of junior fights, but these were everyday occurrences, and therefore attracted little notice.

Paddy O'Rourke was a big, loose-limbed, good-humoured son of Erin—quite a charming fellow, but a very demon when roused. The exact cause of his quarrel with Marston



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major is not definitely known. It was a long time ago, and the event is wrapped in obscurity. But, although the cause of the fight has been forgotten, the fight itself remains fresh in the memory of Old Boys. It took place, not in the gym., but behind the chapel—a spot where St. Jim's fellows have settled their differences from time immemorial.

Marston major was even more burly than Paddy O'Rourke. He was a great hulk of a fellow, and his reputation as a fighting-man was unique. When a Fifth-Former, he had fought twelve fights in one term, and had won the lot with consummate ease. His fight with Paddy O'Rourke was the first and last in which he engaged since his promotion to the Sixth.

It was a wild and whirling scrap. Science was thrown to the winds and there was no

finesse about it. The one aim of Marston major seemed to be to remove his opponent from the face of the earth; and the single object of Paddy O'Rourke seemed to be to make mincemeat of Marston major!

Jove, how they fought! The crowd watched as if spellbound. It was indeed a battle of giants, and sledge-hammer blows were dealt out by each of the combatants. It lasted twenty minutes; and there is no knowing how long it might have lasted had not Authority, in the person of the Head, put in a timely appearance. After ten minutes' fierce fighting, O'Rourke's right arm was rendered limp and useless; but despite this handicap he fought on, as only a fiery Irishman can fight, and the crowd roared its approval of his pluck.

It was probably their roar which brought the headmaster on the scene. Marston major ceased fighting at once; but it took a moment or two to subdue Paddy O'Rourke, whose fighting spirit was roused to concert-pitch.

The Head held an inquiry into the matter, and the two seniors were deposed from their



prefectship. Perhaps they were fortunate to escape a more severe punishment. Old Boys still talk of that terrific scrap; and the expression, "As plucky as Paddy O'Rourke," has been handed down through the generations, and is still sometimes heard at St. Jim's.

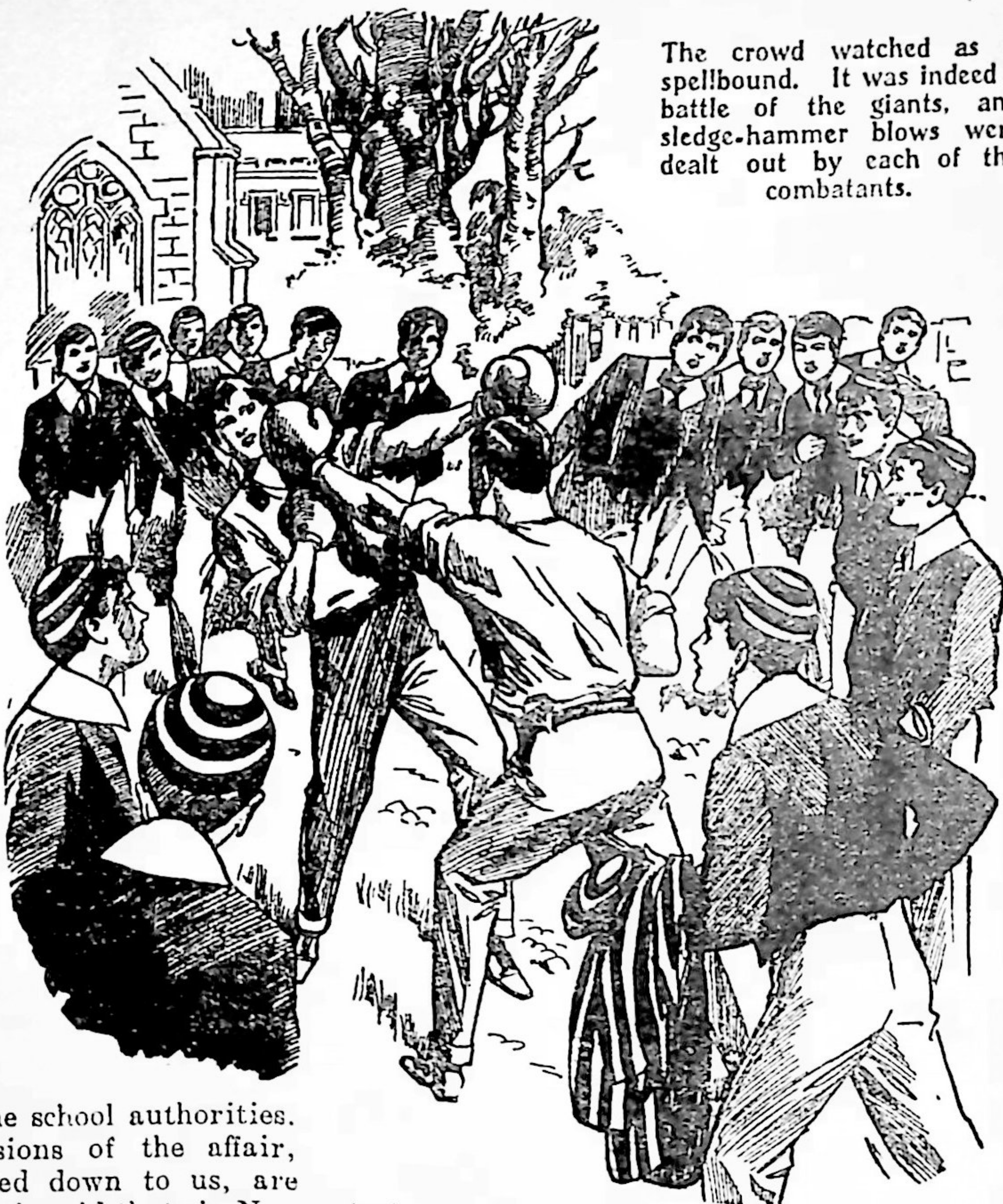
### The Battle of Wayland Wood!

**T**HIS historic event took place in 1901, when the New House at St. Jim's had only just been built.

Many are the legends which have gathered about this episode. It was a battle royal between the juniors of both Houses; and it was a very fierce and determined battle, fought in the heart of the wood, with no risk of interference from the school authorities. But some of the versions of the affair, which have been handed down to us, are grossly exaggerated. It is said that six New House fellows, and four School House juniors, were so badly injured in the affray that they had to be taken to hospital. Another account insists that sticks were used in the fray.

This is sheer nonsense. Of course, there were injuries on both sides, but nothing more serious than blackened eyes and swollen noses—the inevitable sequel to schoolboy warfare. Nobody was conveyed to hospital, or even to the school "sanny." As for sticks being used, such a display of ruffianism would have been quite foreign to the natures of St. Jim's fellows.

The Battle of Wayland Wood, as it came



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to be called, lasted about an hour; and it was the climax to a long and deadly feud between the rival Houses. The School House challenged the New House to a pitched battle in the wood; the challenge was taken up; and on the next half-holiday everybody wondered where the juniors of both Houses had got to! The young rascals were fighting hammer-and-tongs, and the School House, by virtue of superior numbers, won the day.

A description of all the famous schoolboy fights associated with St. Jim's would fill a good-sized volume. I have only been able to touch upon one or two; but I feel sure these accounts will be of interest to readers of HOLIDAY ANNUAL.