

"St. Frank's In Disgrace!"

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Yarn Complete Inside.

THE NELSON LEE

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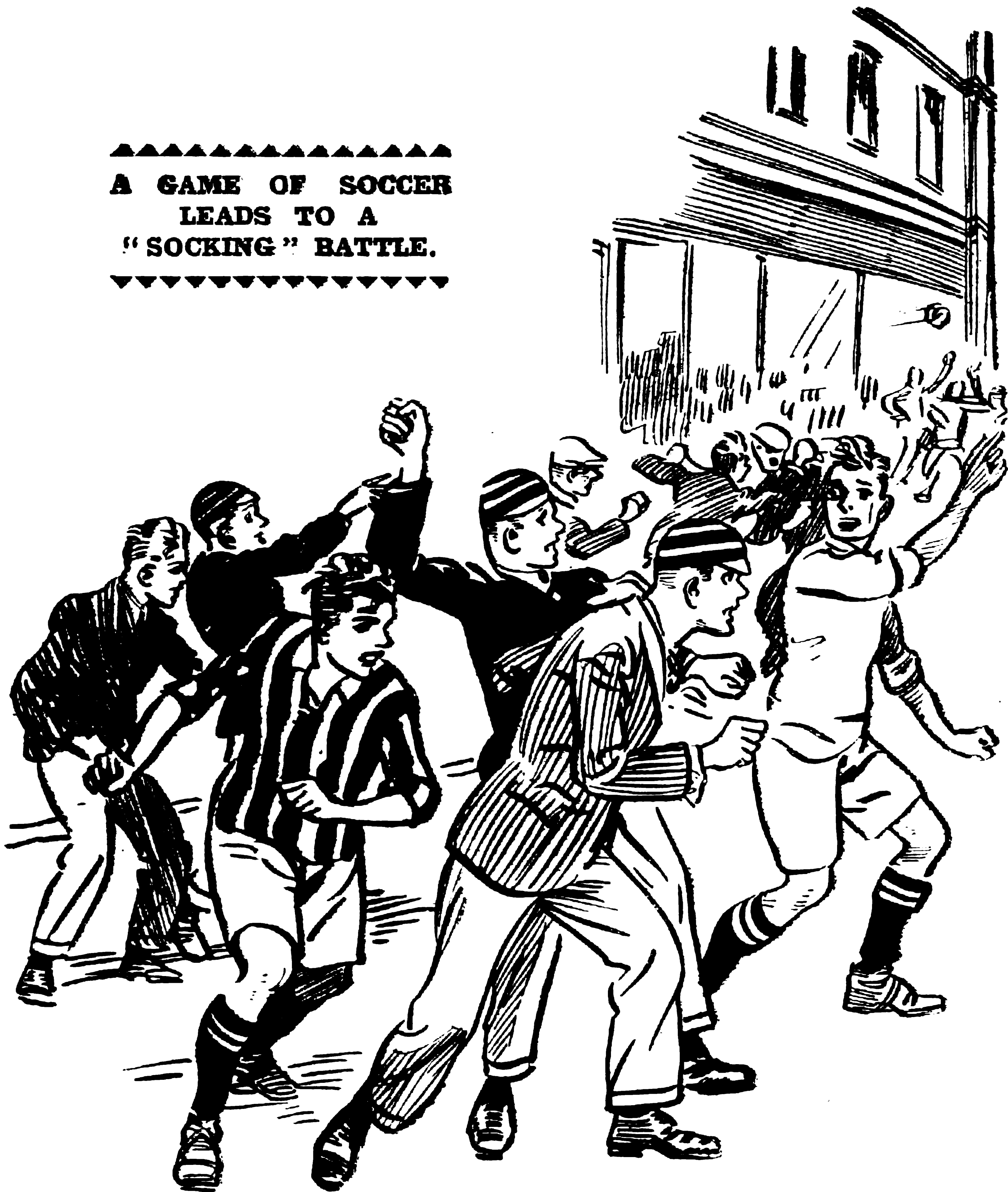
**A
BATTERED
COP!**

E. O. Handforth arrested for fighting! This week's superb long story of the
Chums of St. Frank's is packed with exciting action and schoolboy fun,
New Series No. 95. OUT ON WEDNESDAY. November 14th, 1931.

Free fights galore in St. Frank's feud with Bannington rivals.

ST. FRANK'S IN

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**A GAME OF SOCCER
 LEADS TO A
 "SOCKING" BATTLE.**
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CHAPTER 1.

Handforth Puts His Foot in It.

"MY only sainted aunt!" said Handforth blankly.

The celebrated leader of Study D at St. Frank's was leaning over a rickety fence, and he was surveying the open space of ground

beyond. Also leaning on that fence were Nipper, the St. Frank's Junior skipper, Tommy Watson, Sir Montie Tregellis-West, Church, McClure, Vivian Travers, Reggie Pitt, Jack Grey, and Jimmy Potts. In a word, most of the stalwarts of the Junior XI.

"This can't be it!" said Reggie Pitt, shaking his head.

Stirring new series of smashing school yarns starts this week.

DISGRACE!

By **EDWY SEARLES**
BROOKS



"Well, that errand-boy at the greengrocer's told us it was," said Nipper. "So it must be. But don't be in too much of a hurry. Sam Beckle will be here soon."

"Yes, that kid said he would fetch Beckle, didn't he?" asked Jimmy Potts. "Phew! It looks as though we're in for a lively time on Saturday!"

It was only mid-week now, and the Removites had chanced to meet in the Japanese Cafe in the Bannington High Street. Somebody had suggested a trip to the Hotspurs' football ground, and the others had thought it a sound idea. So they had gone off in a body.

They had had difficulty in locating the spot. Various people of whom they had made inquiries had never even heard of

the Bannington Hotspurs' Club. Others seemed to have a vague idea that such a club did exist. But at last a grubby boy had directed them; they had made their way by devious lanes to the lower quarter of the town; they had skirted the gas-works; and, finally, at a little corner greengrocery shop, an errand-boy had given them final directions.

Passing a number of allotments, the St. Frank's juniors had at length found themselves walking along a ratty road with dreary waste ground on either side. Then Handforth had spotted a notice board on some ramshackle gates. And on the notice board were the crudely daubed words: "Bannington Hotspurs. Private. Sam Beckle, Captain."

The space beyond was little better than the rest of the waste ground; of turf there was practically no sign. Some rough patches of coarse grass could be seen, but mostly the ground was lumpy and barren. The touch-lines were hardly visible; the goalposts were leaning crazily, and there were no nets. In lieu of a pavilion, there was a dilapidated-looking old railway carriage, with a crudely constructed veranda jutting out in front of it.

Nipper could not help grinning.

"Well, my sons, there's one thing about this League," he said cheerfully. "We do mix with all sorts, don't we? And that's to the good. This match against the 'Spurs ought to be novel."

At the beginning of the footer season Lord Dorrimore, the famous sporting peer, had inaugurated a St. Frank's Football League, and it was run on very much the same lines as the big Leagues. St. Frank's had done well, and it was standing at the top of the League table. On the previous Saturday the Saints had entertained Redcliffe College, and Redcliffe, incidentally, had been handsomely beaten by two goals to one.

The next match, Nipper found on consulting his fixture list, was against Bannington Hotspurs—away. Lord Dorrimore himself had invited the various schools and local clubs to enter the competition. The one and only Dorrie was a great sportsman. He had cheerfully included Council School elevens, working lads' clubs, and so forth. And the scheme had been working exceedingly well. There was a fine spirit of goodfellowship amongst these variously assorted football teams.

But it must be admitted that the St. Frank's juniors received rather a shock as they surveyed the Hotspurs' ground. They had played on one or two rough grounds in these League matches; but this one was the limit.

Accustomed as they were to their own well-equipped playing fields, they were somewhat dismayed at the spectacle now in front of their eyes. This ground was all hills and dales; there were muddy hollows, there were ugly hummocks. Football on such a ground seemed impossible.

"If you ask me, dear old fellows," drawled Travers, "we ought to hand it to Sam Beck'e and his team! Upon my Samson! They play regularly on this dump, and the Hotspurs are well up in the League table. These chaps deserve our praise. They are heroes!"

"Well, here's the chief hero now," said Nipper brightly.

The others glanced round. Coming towards them, still some distance away, was a hulking youth in the shabbiest of clothing. There was an apron round his waist, but it was rolled up. He was hatless, and his mop of dark hair was far more untidy than Handforth's. His features, like his frame, were large.

This youth was Sam Beckle, captain of the Hotspurs. Nipper eyed him with particular interest. Beckle had the reputation of being a bully—and he looked it.

"Hallo, mates!" he said awkwardly, as he came up. "From St. Frank's, ain't you? Having a look at our ground, eh? 'Tain't much, is it?"

"Ahem! I've seen worse," replied Nipper politely. "Glad to know you, Beckle," he added, extending his hand. "I'm Hamilton, Junior captain of St. Frank's. Better known as Nipper."

They shook hands, and Sam Beckle's face was flushed with pleasure. The others solemnly shook hands, too, and the introductions were soon over.

"We ain't so well off as you St. Frank's chaps," said Beckle, almost apologetically. "I dessay this ground looks funny to you? Still, it ain't so bad. We play on it regular—and we win, too."

"Well, we'll do our best to give you a good game on Saturday," said Nipper cheerily. "I understand that the Hotspurs are—er—hot?"

"As hot as I can make 'em," said Beckle, nodding.

Sam Beckle, on closer acquaintanceship, proved to be a pleasant enough fellow. He was rough, but that wasn't his fault.

"I suppose you'll clear up your ground a bit before Saturday?" asked Handforth incautiously.

"Clear it up?" repeated Sam. "How do you mean?"

"Well, look at it!" said Handforth, with an eloquent wave of his hand.

The Hotspurs' skipper looked.

"Anything wrong with it?" he demanded, a truculent note in his voice.

"Well, dash it, look at the tin-cans and brickbats," said Handforth. "You're not going to leave them on the ground, are you? It looks like a dust heap."

Church and McClure were nudging their leader, but he took no notice. They suspected that Sam Beckle was sensitive on the subject of the Hotspurs' ground; and they were right.

"Looks like a dust heap, does it?" he said loudly. "Not good enough for your bloomin' lordship, hey? Well, you

needn't play unless you want to! Do you think I care?"

He had flushed, his eyes were blazing. It was a revelation to the St. Frank's fellows. A minute earlier Sam Beckle had been polite and calm. They were finding out that Sam's weakness was his hot, quick temper.

"You mustn't take any notice of Handy," said Nipper, with an easy laugh. "He means well. He's called our own ground a dust heap more than once."

"Oh, well," growled Sam, cooling down. "That's different. Sorry, mate," he added, looking at Handforth. "But I get fair mad when people point out the condition of this ground. It's the kids," he added confidentially. "Reg'lar tough lot round here, you know, and the more we try to keep 'em off our playing pitch, the more they come on."

"Hard luck," said Nipper sympathetically.

"We've got plenty of supporters," went on Beckle, "and we've got plenty of the other sort, too." He grinned ruefully. "You're right about it being a dust heap," he added frankly. "Still, don't you worry; we'll have all these tin-cans and brick-bats cleared off by Saturday."

He was cheerful again, and Handforth slapped him heartily on the back.

"Good enough!" said that cheerful idiot. "As long as you admit that the place is a dust heap, we'll say no more about it!"

"See here——" began Sam, bridling.

"Let's go and have a closer look at the ground," interrupted Nipper hastily. "It'll help us for Saturday."

CHAPTER 2.

A Fruity Affair!

BERNARD FORREST, of Study A, bestowed a sour look upon his two breathless chums.

"Well, you've been long enough!" he commented unpleasantly.

Considering that Gulliver and Bell had been pedalling their hardest against a strong head-wind for the last fifteen minutes, Forrest's remark was unkind. He had come into Bannington on his motor-cycle, and, naturally, he had arrived long before the others.

"Dash it, give us a chance," said Gulliver, with a glare. "We came as quickly as we could."

"Oh, all right, don't make a fuss," growled Forrest. "You're here now, anyway."

"How does the jigger go?" asked Bell.

"Rotten!" said Forrest disgustedly.

He had recently come a cropper on his motor-cycle—the result of reckless riding. The engine had been badly damaged in the accident, and Forrest had spent all his available pocket-money on repairs. But his bus was still very much off colour; and Forrest, in consequence, was extremely irritable.

"These rotten garages are no good," he grumbled. "I could have done the job better myself!"

"You can't expect them to do miracles," remarked Bell. "Before that machine's right again, it'll need new pistons and—

and things."

"We won't talk about it," said Forrest curtly. None of them noticed a red-headed boy with a fruit barrow, who was slowly trundling his wares past. It was a well-stocked barrow; there were loads of oranges, piles of apples, grape-fruit, and so forth.

Toot-toot!

A big motor-coach was approaching, and the red-headed boy moved his barrow nearer to the kerb. By sheer accident the corner of it touched against the handle-bar of Forrest's motor-bike.

"Whoa! Look out——" began the boy with the barrow.

Crash!

Bernard Forrest jumped as his machine crashed over on its side. It was as much his fault as the other boys; for he had left his machine precariously perched, and the slightest touch was sufficient to over-balance it.

"What the—— Confound it!" roared Forrest furiously.

"That your motor-bike, young gent?" asked the red-headed boy, as he set down his barrow.

"Yes, it is!" shouted Forrest.

The boy ran round, and was in the act of picking up the machine, when Forrest elbowed him roughly aside.

"Keep your hands off it!" he snapped. "You've done enough damage."

"All right, all right," said the other, rather hurt. "Keep your hair on, young gent! I didn't mean to do no harm; that coach came along, and it didn't give me much room. Sorry I knocked your machine over."

It was a genuine expression of regret, and even Forrest, had he been in his normal humour, would have accepted it. But to-day he was particularly irritable; and when he saw that one of the handle-bar grips was badly grazed, he lost his temper completely.

"You fool!" he said insultingly. "Why can't you keep your filthy barrow away? The police ought to prohibit you people from coming into the High Street at all!"

"Oh?" said the red-headed boy, glaring. "And how do you suppose I could earn my living? I ain't a swell young gent like you, am I? You're one o' them St. Frank's boys. And let me tell you that my barrow is one of the smartest in the town."

"Oh, let's come away," said Gulliver hurriedly.

"Rot!" retorted Forrest. "Do you think I'm going away because of this—this clodhopper?"

He was behaving in a way which was quite characteristic of him. The red-headed boy had apologised, and he had done so sincerely. Bernard Forrest did not realise that he was igniting a fuse which might very easily result in a dangerous explosion.

For this boy with the barrow was Grigson, the Bannington Hotspurs' outside-right! Grigson was a decent enough fellow, but he had never come in contact with any of the St. Frank's boys before; and, not unnaturally, he judged them all by the behaviour of Forrest.

"Look here, you!" he said, losing his politeness. "I knocked your bike over by accident, and I said I was sorry. Ain't that enough? What do you expect me to do—lie on the ground and grovel? Because, if so, I ain't doing it! See? And you'd best not call my barrow filthy—"

"I'll call it what I like," interrupted Forrest furiously.

"Oh, will you? This is the best-looking barrow——"

"Perhaps this will make it look better than ever," broke in Forrest, acting on a sudden impulse.

He gave the barrow a mighty heave, and before the startled Grigson could avert the catastrophe, the barrow heeled over.

Cra-a-a-sh!

So great was the force of Forrest's shove that the barrow turned completely upside down, and the fruit was hurtled in all directions. In a moment the road became littered with apples, oranges, grape-fruit, and other choice varieties. Even Forrest was startled at the result of his action.

"By gad!" he ejaculated. "I—I didn't mean——"

"Let's bolt!" panted Bell nervously.

"Jolly good idea," said Gulliver, grabbing his bicycle.

Grigson appeared stunned.

"My fruit!" he muttered dully. "Crumbs! My old man won't half lam

me for this!" He turned upon Forrest. "You—you rotten cad!" he went on fiercely. "Look what you've done! Look at all my fruit! Most of it smothered in mud and ruined! And I thought you was a gent," he added contemptuously.

His tone, just as much as his words, stung Forrest.

"That's what you get for being cheeky," said the cad of Study A, with a shrug. "It serves you jolly well right."

He prepared to depart—not hurriedly, as Gulliver and Bell desired, but leisurely and with dignity. At the same moment Grigson placed two fingers in his mouth, and, using them as a whistle, gave a peculiarly shrill blast, which he repeated three times.

CHAPTER 3.

A Fright for Forrest & Co.!

TIMOTHY GRIGSON, with his barrow, was a well-known figure in the High Street. As though by magic, a number of boys appeared in answer to that shrill whistle. They came up apparently from nowhere, eager and excited.

"Lummy! Look at Timmy's barrow!"

"What's happened?"

"I'll bet them swell school kids did this!"

Forrest had halted, startled. Various other people—passers-by, mostly—had collected round, watching the scene either with amusement or sympathy, according to their temperament.

It was a critical moment.

If Forrest had run forward, then, assuring Grigson that he had not meant to tip the barrow completely over, the clash might have been averted. But it wasn't Forrest's way. Having started something which looked like developing into a vulgar brawl, his one desire was to make himself scarce. But his very lordliness prevented him from bolting; and his vindictive nature could not be denied.

"Well, we're quits now!" he said jeeringly, as he looked at Grigson. "You knocked my motor-bike over—and I've knocked your stall over. That squares the account, doesn't it?"

Grigson, hot with indignation and anger, ran up to him.

"I said I was sorry for knocking your bike over!" he panted. "It was an accident. What you did wasn't no accident—and you ain't said you're sorry! You did it a-purpose! All my fruit!"

"That's your trouble," sneered Forrest, with a shrug.



In his rage, Forrest grabbed hold of Grigson's barrow and turned it over completely. Fruit hurtled in all directions. "You rotten cad!" said Grigson fiercely.

"My trouble, is it?" said the red-headed boy angrily. "You—you——"

Plop!

A squashed orange, liberally coated with mud, whizzed through the air—flung by one of Grigson's town pals. The fellow had a remarkable aim, for that unpleasant missile struck Bernard Forrest fairly and squarely in the centre of the face.

"Let 'em have it!" yelled one of the other boys. "Come on, mates! Pelt 'em!"

"Yah! Stuck-up St. Frank's swells!"

Forrest, reeling back, attempted to wipe his face.

"You—you hooligans!" he shouted. "By gad! I'll have the police on you for this——"

Whizz!

An apple sang past his ear as he dodged. A wild howl came from Gulliver, in the rear. The apple had struck him just below the left ear, bursting spectacularly.

"Ear, mind what you're doin' with my fruit," roared Timmy Grigson.

"Garn! 'Tain't no good now, Tim," yelled one of the others. "Let's pelt these 'ere blighters!"

Whizz! Whizz! Thwop! Squelch!

"By gad!" snarled Forrest, reaching down and grabbing a couple of muddy oranges. "Two can play at that game."

He hurled the fruit with all his strength—and his aim was good, too. The unfortunate Grigson, opening his mouth to say something, received an orange right on the teeth. The affair was developing rapidly—alarmingly. A few elderly ladies were screaming, and all sorts of good folk were hurrying away from the danger zone.

More boys had arrived on the scene—some of them Hotspurs' supporters, and all of them naturally on the side of Grigson. Forrest & Co., in fact, were overwhelmingly outnumbered.

Gulliver and Bell would have fled precipitately, for they were not made of very stern stuff. But Forrest, with all his faults, was no coward. He set his teeth, yelled to his spineless study chums, and sailed into the thick of the battle.

Excited shouts sounded across the High Street. Buster Boots & Co., of the Fourth, had spotted the fracas. There were nearly a dozen of them—John Busterfield Boots

himself, Bray, Corcoran, Bob Christine, Talmadge, Yorke, and others.

"Come on, my sons!" yelled Boots, who was something of a firebrand. "Rally round!"

"Here, wait a minute," urged Bob Christine. "We don't want to get mixed up——"

"You're not blind, are you?" interrupted Buster. "Look at those three chaps! Ancient House caps! We can't leave 'em to their fate, can we?"

Loyalty to their school compelled them to forget all else. Helter-skelter, they ran across the road.

At closer quarters they recognised Forrest & Co.—and they had their doubts as to the wisdom of joining in the scrap. In all probability, the Study A cads were responsible for the trouble. But this matter had reached such a stage now that it was too late to ask any questions. It merely resolved itself into one issue. St. Frank's was being attacked! So it was up to any St. Frank's fellows on the spot to dash to the rescue.

"Carry on, you chaps!" bellowed Boots. "Here comes the Fourth!"

"Hurrah!"

And the Fourth-Formers, wildly excited, casting all scruples to the winds, hurled themselves into the fray.

"Yah! More of them kids from the swell school!"

"Pelt 'em!"

"Come on, the Hotspurs!"

Lionel Corcoran reeled.

"The 'Spurs!" he gasped. "Great Scott! I say, you chaps——"

"Come on!" urged Armstrong.

"But these kids belong to the Hotspurs," ejaculated Corky. "Have you forgotten? We're playing the Hotspurs on Saturday!"

But nobody was listening to him. The fight was the only thing that mattered now.

Within a few minutes it looked very much as though traffic would be held up. The combatants were spreading into the road, some fighting a hand-to-hand battle, others pelting one another with the muddy fruit. Various passers-by within the danger zone received pulpy apples or squashed oranges. They fled, shouting with anger and indignation. Several men had rushed up, attempting to stop the miniature riot; but they had soon backed away. The boys—both factions—had completely lost all restraint now. They were hurling themselves into the fight with ferocity and abandon.

And, as luck would have it, at that particular moment Nipper & Co. arrived back from the Hotspurs' ground!

CHAPTER 4.

The Battle of Bannington!

"WELL, I hope we have a good game, Sam," Nipper was saying. "Naturally the advantage will be with your team, since you'll be playing on your own ground—but that'll work itself right when you visit us. Anyhow, we're going to do our best to lick you."

"Same here," grinned Sam Beckle. "And if we can't lick you on *our* ground, we can't lick you nowhere! That ground of ours helps us a lot," he added cheerfully. "We know all the hills and valleys."

"To say nothing of the obstructions," remarked Handforth.

"Them tin-cans?" asked Sam, with a laugh. "All right—we won't quarrel about them no more, mate. I'll see that the ground's nicely cleared for Saturday afternoon. Leave it to me."

During their walk from the 'Spurs' ground to the High Street, a number of other members of the Hotspurs' crowd had joined them—two or three of the players, and quite a few supporters. These supporters were, in the main, a tough-looking lot.

"What's going on?" asked Nipper suddenly, as he stared. "My only hat! It looks like a free fight to me!"

"Where?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"We'd better keep out of it, old man," warned Nipper. "There's some trouble, anyhow—— Hallo! What the—— Look! Half those chaps are wearing St. Frank's caps!"

"My only sainted aunt," gurgled Handforth breathlessly.

"Lumme!" gasped Beckle. "Them others is some of our crowd!"

"Come on!" roared Handforth excitedly.

They all caught the fever, and in a moment they were running at full speed towards the centre of the scrap. The reinforcements arrived at an interesting moment.

As matters now stood the two forces were about equal. With Buster Boots and the other Fourth-Formers in support, Forrest & Co. were able to maintain their ground.

"Rally round, Remove!"

It was a desperate shout from Bob Christine. He had seen the Removites approaching.

"We're here!" bellowed Handforth with enthusiasm.

"I say, wait a minute——" began Church, tugging at his leader's sleeve.

"Don't be a chump," snorted Handforth, pulling himself free. "It's a fight, isn't it?"

"Yes, but——"
 "Well, we can't stand by and look on!"
 exclaimed Handforth indignantly. "What
 are you trying to do? These chaps are
 having a scrap with the town boys! Come
 on! It's up to us!"
 "Back up, the school—back up!"

It was a cry which was echoed again and
 again.

"Come on, the town!" went up an
 answering roar.

"Crikey!" said Sam Beckle helplessly.

At close quarters he saw that most of
 those fighters—on the town side—were
 either Hotspurs or Hotspurs' supporters.
 And Sam was dumbfounded. This wasn't
 a good augury for Saturday's match!

"Here, chuck it, boys!" he yelled, an
 urgent note in his voice. "Don't forget
 where you are! We'll have the cops here
 in two minutes——"

"Yes!" shouted Nipper, in full support.
 "Have you all gone mad? There'll be the
 dickens of a row over this! Chuck it!"

But they might as well have addressed
 their remarks to the moon. The fight was
 on now with a vengeance. Handforth had
 hurled himself into the fray—a fight, to
 him, was the spice of life. He had been
 spoiling for a fight for weeks, and now he
 thoroughly let himself go—as several of
 the town boys found to their cost.

Nipper, as the responsible Junior
 skipper, was aghast. Anything that inter-
 fered with football was to be deplored; and
 this affair looked like interfering
 seriously!

Town versus School!

It was an almost unprecedented situa-
 tion. In the past, perhaps, there had been
 minor scraps between groups of schoolboys
 and town boys; but generally they had
 been good-natured affairs. A pitched
 battle like this—practically in the middle
 of the town—was so serious as to be dis-
 graceful.

Exciting scraps between Saints and
 Grammarians were commonplace; and just
 as frequently the St. Frank's boys clashed
 with Hal Brewster and his River House
 crowd. The townspeople were accustomed
 to these diversions.

This latest affair, however, was of a
 totally different character. This was no
 high-spirited "rag," but a desperate fight;
 and both sides had long since lost their
 tempers.

"It's a pity this started!" said Nipper,
 with a quick look at Sam Beckle.

They were practically left alone—the
 two leaders. This fight had been none of
 their making—and neither of them wanted
 it.

"I expect some of your chaps started it,"
 said Sam, without intending to be provo-
 cative.

"I don't see that," retorted Nipper, with
 a glare. "It's far more likely that some
 of your pals kicked off!"

"Oh, is it?" snapped Sam. "Let me tell
 you—— Ouch!"

What he was going to tell Nipper,
 Nipper never discovered. For at that
 moment a squashed orange, hurtling at
 random through the air, hit Sam Beckle
 over the ear. With a bellow he dashed
 into the fray. After that Nipper, every
 bit as excited, joined in. Hammer and
 tongs they went at it.

Bannington was destined to talk about
 this fight for weeks to come. A number
 of people wrote to the papers about it.
 The mayor called a special meeting of the
 town council. The chamber of commerce
 plaintively complained that such orgies
 would drive business out of the town.

Oblivious of all else, the combatants
 had now spread right across the High
 Street. All traffic was held up. Shop-
 keepers, shop assistants, customers and
 other worthy townspeople, were coming
 out into the open to watch. The good
 folk of Bannington could hardly believe
 their eyes.

"Come on, the town—wipe 'em up!"

"Hooray!"

"Up, St. Frank's! Down with the
 town!"

Yelling at the top of their voices, the
 boys hurled themselves into the fray.
 The policeman on point duty, attracted
 to the spot, had long since gone.

He had taken one look, and he had
 decided, then and there, that he would
 need support. Blowing his whistle, he
 ran agitatedly towards the police station.
 Other constables joined him. Inspector
 Jameson himself put in an appearance.

"Disgraceful!" exclaimed the worthy
 and portly inspector. "Good heavens!
 This is outrageous. We shall have to put
 a stop to it!"

CHAPTER 5.

Nipper's Promise!

"LOOK out!"

"The cops!"

"Hop it, mates!"

A dramatic change came over
 the battle as soon as the local constabulary
 got to work. Stalwart policemen were
 charging into the fight from all quarters,
 and quite a few indignant townsmen were
 assisting.

"Come on, St. Frank's!" yelled Handforth, brushing mud out of his eye with one hand, and dabbing his bleeding nose with the other. "Never mind the giddy police! Why can't they mind their own silly business? Back up, Remove!"

"On the ball, the Fourth!"

Recklessly the St. Frank's juniors hurled themselves into the fray with renewed vigour, and the battle became more furious than ever.

"Stop it, you young scamps!" shouted one of the police officers. "Do you want to be taken in charge?"

"Try and do it!" jeered somebody.

But there was a panic-stricken rush when the police got really going. Many of the town youths were well-known characters—recognised toughs. They had no desire to get into the hands of the police, and they bolted helter-skelter in all directions.

The St. Frank's boys, equally startled, ran for it, too. Muddy, dishevelled, battered and bruised, they scattered. With the town boys on the run, there was no further opportunity of fighting. Thus, just as dramatically as it had started, the riot finished. A few men in blue had done the trick.

Nipper, his fists tingling, had not retreated far, and suddenly he noticed Sam Beckle close by.

In a moment, Nipper's excitement died away. He was angry with himself. He had condemned the others for participating in the scrap, but he had done exactly the same thing! Nipper had not escaped undamaged. His left eye was puffy, a trickle of blood ran down from a corner of his mouth, and his collar had become partially detached.

"Here, Sam!" shouted Nipper urgently.

Sam Beckle turned and glared at him.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded the Hotspurs' skipper. "Want some more?"

Sam himself was a sight. Smothered with mud from head to foot—he had been rolled in the gutter by a crowd of Removites—he was in no mood for peace. He had a black eye, his nose was much larger than it should have been, and at least three of his front teeth were loosened. Sam Beckle had no reason to feel affectionate towards St. Frank's.

Nipper came up to him.

"Pax!" said the Junior skipper. "Don't take it like that, old man. Don't let us carry this madness any further. We've been fools."

"Speak for yourself," retorted Sam, his eyes blazing.

"That's what I am doing," replied Nipper quietly. "Don't be an idiot, Sam! Get hold of that temper of yours, and grab it! Where's the sense of our keeping up this ill-feeling? We haven't had any personal quarrel."

"Your fellers were fighting against my fellers——"

"That's their own look-out," said Nipper. "You're as much their leader as I'm the leader of the St. Frank's lot. It's our job, Sam, to put things right. We mustn't neglect our responsibilities."

The hulking Sam looked at Nipper suspiciously.

"If you're tryin' to kid me——" he began.

"I'm not," said Nipper quickly. "I'm quite serious."

"Now then—move on!" said a curt voice. "Best make yourselves scarce—and be quick about it."

One of the policemen frowned upon them, and they moved off. The traffic was on the go again, and Bannington High Street was resuming its normal appearance. In some mysterious way the fighters had more or less vanished. And the fight itself was definitely over.

"I'm thinking of Saturday's game," said Nipper quietly.

"Lumme!"

"It's a League fixture."

"Look 'ere, we can't let nothin' interfere with that match," said Sam Beckle, in dismay.

"That's what I think," agreed Nipper. "But unless we take a firm stand, Sam, our men will lead us—instead of our leading them. And that won't do. Quarrel or no quarrel, that fixture must be kept on Saturday."

Beckle took a deep breath, and he wiped his face with an enormous red handkerchief.

"Seems to me we've been darned silly," he grunted.

"Of course we have," laughed Nipper. "And those other chaps were sillier. I'll have a talk to my crowd when I get back to the school—and I'll make the fellows understand, quite definitely, that this ridiculous squabble mustn't be allowed to continue."

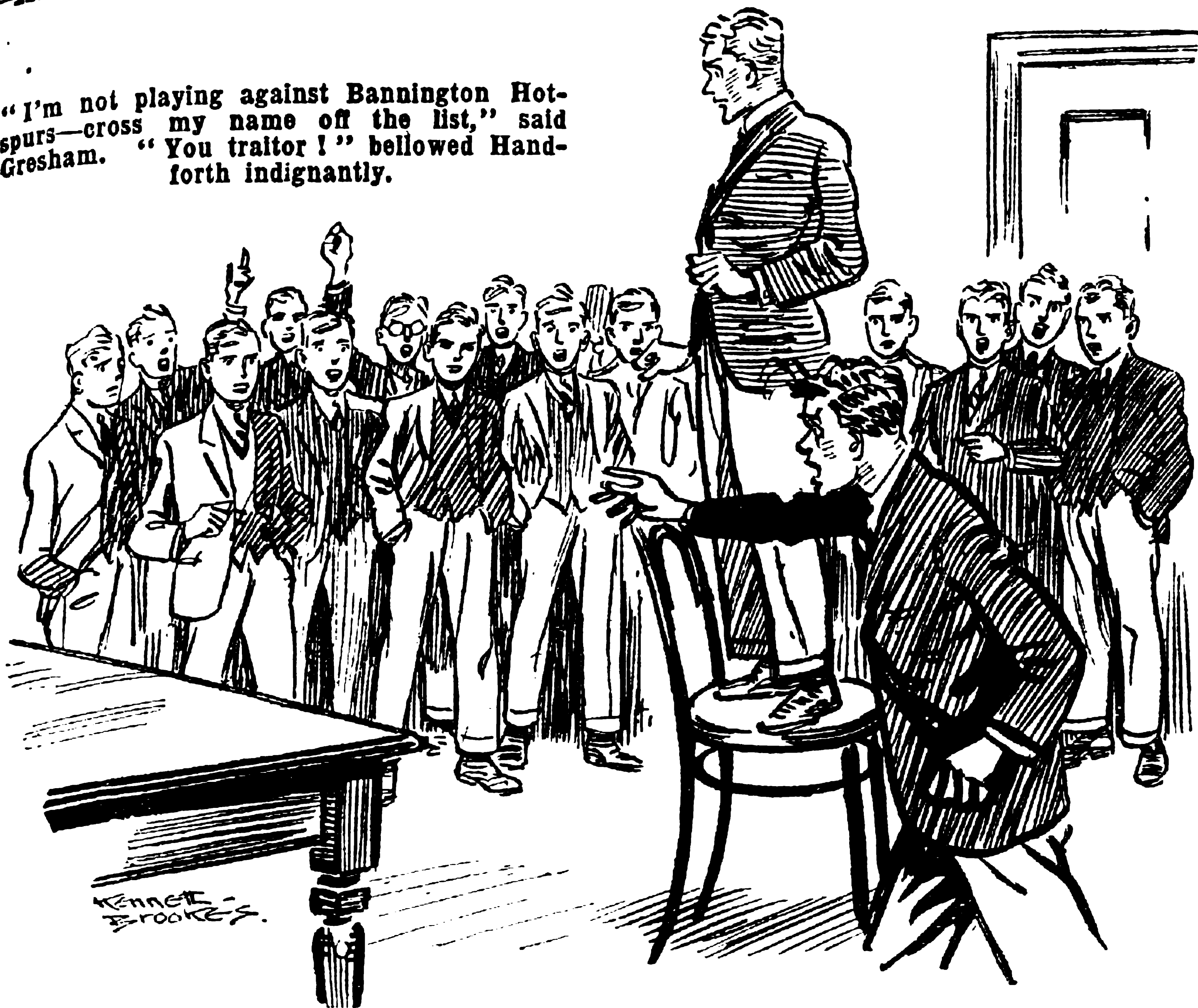
"I'll do the same—at least, I'll try," said Sam dubiously.

"You don't sound very hopeful."

"I ain't hopeful—and that's the truth," said the other. "Lumme! You don't know my crowd, mate! Tough ain't the word!"

"But if you talk to them properly——"
"Talk to 'em?" interrupted Sam, with derision. "Talkin' ain't no good, mate!"

"I'm not playing against Bannington Hot-spurs—cross my name off the list," said Gresham. "You traitor!" bellowed Handforth indignantly.



But look 'ere. About Saturday. That's a promise, ain't it? The fixture stands?"

"Of course."

"You'll bring your team over so's we can start the game at the proper time?"

"Yes."

"That's a promise?"

"My dear chap, it's a fixture," smiled Nipper. "Of course it's a promise. The only thing that will stop the game so far as I am concerned, is fog, or a flood. You can count upon me to bring my team."

"I'll take your hand on that, mate," said Sam, as they clasped. "Good enough! Sorry I was a bit nasty just now. I'm afraid I lost my temper. But we understand one another, don't we?"

Nipper liked the honest Sam's frankness. "Now, you talk to your men, and I'll talk to mine," he said cheerily. "And I mean it, Sam. If you talk to them properly——"

"It's this way, mate," said Sam confidentially. "Mebbe I can manage the team—the fellers listen to me. But what about the others? The supporters? Some of the people round my way think I'm a bit of a bully. P'r'aps I am. But if I didn't wipe some of our chaps up now and again, there wouldn't be no Hotspurs!

An' I'm tellin' you straight out, young gent, that lots of our supporters are tough. I'm givin' you fair warning that there's likely to be trouble on Saturday."

"It takes two to make a quarrel," replied Nipper. "We shall come openly—and in a friendly spirit. Really, Sam, I don't think there'll be any serious trouble. I'm sorry this silly fight happened. Well, we shall have to make the best of it—and patch it up."

"Lumme, you're the sort I like," said Sam Beekle, his eyes sparkling. "You ain't afraid to fight—but you've got tons of horse-sense. Good man! We're pals, anyway, ain't we?"

"You bet we are," replied Nipper heartily.

CHAPTER 6.

The Storm!

"I HATE to mention the matter, dear old fellows, but there'll be trouble over this," said Vivian Travers, with a sigh.

"Trouble?" repeated Jimmy Potts. "What do you call that mix-up in the High Street, then?"

"Compared with what's coming, that was a mere tea-party," replied Travers sadly. "Well, well! What's the good of crossing our bridges before we come to them?"

They were preparing to go home, and they were painfully aware of the fact that they looked decidedly wrecked.

"Yes, I guess you're about right, Travers," said Skeets Rossiter. "Next time we come into town we shall need to watch our step."

"I wasn't thinking of that form of trouble," said Travers, shaking his head.

"Eh? What other form——"

"It is rumoured," said Travers, "that there sits, somewhere at St. Frank's, a headmaster. I am willing to admit that the aforementioned headmaster misses a lot that goes on around him—at least, he turns a blind eye to it—but he's not likely to miss this. Frankly, I'm anticipating the worst."

"Rats," said Jimmy Potts. "The Head may hear nothing about it. It was quickly over, and nobody was particularly hurt. Schoolmasters, as a rule, prefer to ignore rags."

"But was it quite a rag, dear old fellow?" murmured Travers. "That's the point."

There were others who were uneasy. And a great many of these others were angry, too. Fortunately, there were no masters or prefects about when the Removites and Fourth-Formers arrived back at the school. They hurriedly invaded the bath-rooms, and they washed themselves and generally tidied up.

After that crowds of Removites collected in the Ancient House Common-room, excitedly discussing the adventure. Those who had not taken part in the fight wanted to hear all about it, and those who had taken part were only too glad to hold forth.

While this Common-room was crowded, so were the Junior Common-rooms of the West House, the Modern House, and the East House. And the verdict, in every House, was the same.

"Of course, we can't play those rotten Hotspurs on Saturday," said Gresham.

"We'll fight 'em if you like—but we won't play 'em!" agreed Handforth, with a nod. "The blighters!"

"If that's a sample of the 'Spurs, we've had enough," said one of the other fellows. "Dash it, they oughtn't to be allowed in the League!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hooligans—that's all they are!"

"Just a minute," said Nipper loudly.

All the others in the crowded Common-room looked at him in some surprise. They took it for granted that the match against Bannington Hotspurs on Saturday would be cancelled. Yet there was something about Nipper's tone which arrested attention. A complete silence fell.

"It's all very easy to talk about hooligans," said Nipper deliberately. "Personally, I can't see any difference in their behaviour and ours."

"Eh? What the——"

"Chuck it, Nipper!"

"The whole affair was disgraceful—and we were just as much to blame as the town boys," continued Nipper. "In fact, I believe we were more to blame. I've heard rumours that Forrest started the whole thing. Not that it really matters how it started. The free fight was the big mistake."

"Mistake?" echoed Handforth, in horror. "You call a fight a mistake?"

"There are fights and fights, old man," said Nipper quietly. "This one has only succeeded in bringing St. Frank's into disgrace!"

There was another silence.

"Yes, into disgrace," emphasised Nipper. "It wasn't a particularly noble business, was it? Chucking things at one another in the High Street, stopping all the traffic, fighting like Hottentots! We shall be jolly lucky if we don't hear more about it from the Powers that Be."

"You're wrong," said De Valerie coldly. "Those town cads forced the fight. They started throwing things first."

"That may be true——"

"Well, then, they're to blame," declared Val. "What happened afterwards was all their fault. And that chap, Grigson, the owner of the stall, is a member of the Hotspurs' team. The other chaps who started the fighting were 'Spurs, too."

"And there's only one thing to be done," added Fullwood. "That match against the 'Spurs must be cancelled."

"Hear, hear!"

"Down with the town rotters!"

"Cancel the match!"

"Good egg!"

There was a wave of excitement, and a good deal of noise.

"You'll cancel it, of course, Nipper?" asked Fullwood. "We can't play those blighters now. It would be infra dig. You're the Junior skipper, and it's up to you——"

"If you don't mind, old chap, I'll do the talking," said Nipper politely. "It may interest you all to know that I have

decided that Saturday's match shall take place."

"What!"

There was an immediate uproar.

"That fixture will be kept," said Nipper firmly.

"But you're mad——"

"Wait a minute, before you all start speaking at once," said Nipper, leaping upon a chair. "I haven't finished yet——"

"Rats! We're not going to listen to you——"

"I said I haven't finished," roared Nipper, glaring round. "What's the matter with you idiots? Haven't you sense enough to see that if we cancel the match it will add to the bitterness? Can't you understand that the enmity will be all the greater?"

"What of it?" demanded Fullwood. "Who wants to be friends with those hooligans?"

"That's not the right spirit, Fully," said Nipper. "Of course we want to be friends with the Bannington boys. But that's not the point at the moment. Bannington Hotspurs are in the St. Frank's Football League, and we're booked to play the Spurs on Saturday afternoon. I'm Junior skipper, and I'm going to have my way. We're keeping that fixture. I hope that's finally and definitely understood."

His tone was so aggressive that many of the Removites stared in wonder. Nipper was usually so cheerful and calm. It was a novelty to see him worked up like this. But the Junior skipper was thoroughly exasperated; he hated to see this spirit of ill-will.

"That fight this afternoon was a mistake," he went on. "We don't want to begin a warfare between the school and the town. And by going over to keep that fixture we shall show the town that we're willing to let bygones be bygones. It'll be a friendly gesture."

"If we go we shall be attacked, dear old fellow," said Travers, shaking his head. "That Bannington crowd is hot. It'll wipe us up—and then there'll be another riot. And the next one will be twice as bad."

"Of course it will!"

"Good old Travers!"

"Cancel the fixture, Nipper!"

"Yes, yes!"

"After that dust-up this afternoon I had a word with Sam Beekle," said Nipper firmly. "I promised him that I would bring the Junior eleven over for the game on Saturday afternoon. I gave him my hand on it. Are you suggesting that I should break my word?"

"Can't you write to him and cancel the match?" demanded somebody.

"That would be breaking my word."

"You shouldn't have given your word," said Hubbard hotly. "You're no good as a captain! Why should we play against such rotters?"

"Why should you put your spoke in at all?" demanded Nipper angrily. "You're not in the team, Hubbard—and you didn't even take part in that fight this afternoon. So the sooner you shut up, the better!"

"Yes, but, dash it, I'm in the Remove," protested Hubbard, turning red.

"Yes, and he's got just as much right to give his opinion as we have," sang out somebody else. "You're too jolly high and mighty, Nipper! Come off your perch!"

"Or be shoved off!" yelled another voice.

Nipper, thoroughly angry, looked round at the excited crowd. Seldom had he met with such opposition. But, if anything, it added to his determination. Nipper—as the Remove well knew—could be very strong when he liked. And he liked now.

"Well, I'm not playing against Bannington Hotspurs on Saturday," said Gresham, in a determined voice. "You can take a team over if you like, Nipper—but you'd better cross my name off the list."

"Same here," said Fullwood.

Handforth gave a sudden bellow.

"You—you traitors!" he burst out. "You rotters! Members of the team—and you threaten not to play! By George! If I were skipper, I'd cut your names off the list altogether—and I wouldn't let you play again all the season!"

"But—but, Handy!" gasped Church. "I thought you were in favour of——"

"I've been listening to Nipper—and although I don't usually agree with him, I think he's right," snorted Handforth. "Football is football! We can fight the town chaps all we like afterwards. But to cancel a fixture because of a silly scrap—well, that's crazy. Whatever happens, that match ought to be played."

"And it's going to be played, Handy," said Nipper, nodding. "Thanks for your support."

"Rats! If these other chaps don't support you, I'll punch their heads," growled Handforth, glaring round.

While this scene was taking place in the Ancient House Junior Common-room, similar decisions were being taken in the other Common-rooms. The West House Removites and all the Fourth-Formers took it for granted that Nipper would scratch the match. Therefore, they were very

surprised when the rumour spread to them that Nipper had made up his mind to keep the fixture.

"Well, I'm not playing, anyhow," said Buster Boots hotly. "Nipper can find somebody else!"

"The same with me," said Goodwin, of the West House. "By gum! There's a limit!"

Nipper said very little. The juniors were excited, and he wisely refrained from goading them. Between now and Saturday, no doubt, they would cool down—and on Saturday morning they would be in a different mood.

That evening Nipper was definitely unpopular. His firm stand was against the general opinion. But he didn't care. He was strong, and he felt that he could easily weather this storm.

But could he?

CHAPTER 7.

Bannington Banned!

THERE was a certain tension during the remainder of the evening.

Various seniors, of course, had heard about the trouble in Bannington, and many juniors were closely questioned. But these worthies appeared to have only vague ideas of what had really taken place. The prefects, fortunately, said nothing, and the masters appeared to be in total ignorance of the whole trouble.

Nipper met with black looks everywhere he went. Fully half the Junior School was opposed to him. Of the other half, a dozen or so wavered, whilst the remainder steadfastly backed up Nipper.

The worries of a football skipper are many; and Nipper had his full share this



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evening. He resented the attitude of those players who had refused to turn out. It was rank defiance. And without them the team would be considerably reduced in strength. That would almost certainly mean a defeat—and Nipper had hopes of taking a strong team to Bannington and giving the Hotspurs a good licking on their own ground. Then, perhaps, they would respect St. Frank's. A good, clean, honest game of football would put a different spirit into them.

Prep was very much neglected that evening. The fellows hurried through their work, and then they collected in studies, in groups in the passages, in the Common-room—engaged in endless discussions. Many of them had suffered severely at the hands of the town boys, and they were in no mood to listen to Nipper's peace talk.

"You guys make me tired," remarked Ulysses Spencer Adams, the American boy. "If a thing like this happened over in the States, those town mutts would have something coming to them—and I don't mean maybe! Shucks! If you go over for that ball game on Saturday there'll be another riot."

"You said a volume, U.S.A.!" nodded Fullwood.

"Listen!" went on Adams, his lean face flushed, and his eyes alight. "What's the big idea in keeping this Nipper guy on the pedestal? I'm telling you, boys, he's all washed up. Yes, sir! What you need is a live wire—and I guess I can lay my hand on his right now."

"Meaning yourself, I suppose, dear old fellow?" asked Travers mildly.

"You said it!" shouted Adams. "Make me captain of the Remove, and I'll show you some real peppy American ideas. I guess I know my onions! I'd make those town dumb-bells feel like a canful of dead fish."

"Oh, dry up," growled Handforth. "There's plenty of talk about you, Adams—but precious little else."

"Gee! Can you beat that?" asked the American boy, looking round. "I guess it would be a lucky break for the Remove if I stepped into Nipper's shoes. It would be cream in the can!"

Teddy Long came bursting in, wild with excitement.

"I say, you fellows——" he gasped.

"Don't say any more," interrupted Handforth.

"But—but it's important," panted Teddy. "I've just seen Inspector Jameson."

"What!" Even Handforth joined in the general shout.

"Fact!" said Teddy, pleased with the sensation he had made. "Fat old Jameson, you know! Coming from the Head's house! The miserable old rotter must have been complaining, or something."

"That's done it," said Travers, with a sigh. "Trouble, with a capital T, in the offing!"

Strangely enough, however, nothing further happened that evening. In fact, before bed-time the fellows came to the conclusion that Teddy Long had seen double—or that he had been lying. Anyhow, the school went to bed without any storm breaking.

But the storm broke in the morning!

Naturally, the "riot" of the previous day was the sole topic of conversation before breakfast—during breakfast—and after breakfast. The seniors were suitably shocked, and they had many caustic remarks to make to the juniors.

Then, after prayers, when the whole school was assembled in the Big Hall, came the announcement that the headmaster had something to say.

When Nelson Lee appeared upon the platform there was a tense hush. The famous schoolmaster-detective was looking unusually grave. Characteristically enough, he went straight to the point.

"It has come to my notice that there was a disgraceful scene in Bannington High Street yesterday afternoon, in which a large number of St. Frank's junior boys were involved," he said, his voice grim. "So grave is this complaint—a complaint from the police, I may add—that I shall immediately set up an inquiry."

The Senior School beamed its approval. The Junior School was dismayed.

"Old Jameson!" muttered Handforth hoarsely. "Teddy Long was right, then! The old blighter did come here last night and complain!"

"I understand that there was a serious clash between St. Frank's junior boys and town boys," continued Nelson Lee gravely. "Now, any incident of that kind is to be greatly deplored—and, certainly, another such incident must on no account take place. I am informed that traffic in the High Street was completely disorganised for a considerable period. I shall say no more on the subject at present, but pending the inquiry the Junior School will understand that Bannington is definitely out of bounds."

"Oh!"

This time it was a vocal sign of the Junior School's dismay.

Nipper was not a slow thinker; and at this crucial moment his thoughts were like

lightning. He stepped forward and held up his hand.

"Yes?" said the Head inquiringly.

"May I speak, sir?"

"Yes."

"As captain of the Junior School, sir, may I ask how long this inquiry will take?"

"Several days, perhaps, Hamilton."

"Will it be over before Saturday, sir?"

"The day after to-morrow? No, Hamilton, it will not."

"Well, sir, I would like to point out that the Junior eleven has a League fixture with Bannington Hotspurs on Saturday," said Nipper steadily. "I take it that I shall be permitted to take my team over for the fixture?"

"I am very much afraid, Hamilton, that the game must be cancelled—or, at least, postponed," replied the headmaster quietly.

There were murmurs of satisfaction from the Senior School—and from most ranks of the Junior School, too.

"But, sir——" began Nipper.

"You will realise, Hamilton, that I cannot engage in an argument with you in front of the whole school," said Nelson Lee curtly. "I am informed that the boys—the town boys—who took part in yesterday's disgraceful scene were either members of the Hotspurs' team or supporters of that team. For obvious reasons, therefore, this match cannot take place. Bannington is definitely out of bounds until further notice. The school will dismiss."

— —

CHAPTER 8.

Trouble for Nipper!

"**P**OOOR old Nipper!"

"He got it in the neck that time!"

"Good gad! Absolutely!"

"Rather!"

The juniors, crowding out into the Triangle, were jabbering sixteen to the dozen; and the general trend of conversation was indicative of satisfaction.

"Well, anyway, that's settled the point—finally," said Ralph Leslie Fullwood, grinning. "No match against the Hotspurs on Saturday afternoon!"

"If Nipper had had any sense he would have abandoned the match of his own accord."

"Of course he would!"

"He's off his rocker!"

Nipper, listening to these remarks, was in no way upset. Opposition always strengthened him. There was a determined set to his jaw, a hard light in his

eyes, as he faced a hostile crowd of Removites and Fourth-Formers.

"Well, you've had your way!" he said fiercely. "But you needn't look so jolly pleased with yourselves! The Head has come down with the chopper, but if it hadn't been for that complaint from the police——"

"What's the good of talking like that?" interrupted Boots, of the Fourth. "Bannington's out of bounds—and the game is off. That's good enough!"

"It's not half good enough," retorted Nipper. "You don't think I'm going to sit down under this, do you?"

"Thinking of defying the Head?" asked Corcoran dryly.

"It's not fair—that's what I'm thinking," shouted Nipper, flushing with indignation.

"This is one footer fixture we can easily miss!" said somebody.

"Yes, and supposing we miss it?" roared Nipper, exasperated. "What's going to happen? Those Bannington fellows will be more bitter than ever. What will they say? They'll say that we're too stuck up—that we're too snobbish! They'll even say that we're scared of them! Is that the sort of spirit we want? I tell you, the only way to put things right between the school and the town is for us to play that match in a friendly spirit, showing the town boys that we bear them no ill-will."

"Rats!" said Fullwood, tenderly fingering a puffy eye. "Do you think I'm going to forget this black eye? If I come within arm's length of any of those beggars, they'll feel the weight of my fists!"

"Same here," said Buster Boots aggressively. "I don't want to be friendly!"

"Aw, gee!" chimed in Ulysses Spencer Adams. "I guess this guy is all washed up! Now, if you elected me as skipper, I'd show you some real nifty——"

"Dry up, Adams!"

"We don't want any of your hot air!"

"Say! I'm telling you——"

"You're telling us nothing," roared Handforth. "Go and eat coke! Go and eat flap-jacks—or corn-on-the-cob! Nipper's right."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Travers, in wonder. "Are you preaching peace, too?"

"I'm not preaching at all," bellowed Handforth. "And I don't want peace, either! War on these town blighters! That's what I say! But as for this footer match, it ought to be played. Footer, after all, is footer, and you can't deny it. Let's have the game—and if there's a free fight after the game, all the better!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Handy!"



"Go and eat coke!" blazed Nipper angrily to Nelson Lee, and then walked out of the room, slamming the door after him.

"Well, there's no sense in arguing," said De Valerie. "We did enough of that last night. The Head has now come down with this ban, and that settles the whole question. Bannington is out of bounds, and we can talk ourselves hoarse without making any difference to the situation."

This was sensible enough, and most of the fellows realised it.

But during the morning the feeling of satisfaction underwent a change. The boys began to realise that there was something more in this than a mere football match. Their plans were being seriously interfered with. Lots of them wanted to go over to Bannington to do shopping; others had arranged to visit the talkies. A feeling of resentment affected the majority of the juniors. And, unreasonably enough, they directed their resentment towards Nipper.

It was grossly unfair; but excited schoolboys are not, as a rule, very particular. Nipper had had nothing whatever to do with the beginning of that quarrel; he had not joined in until the last minute. He was in no way responsible.

But the rank and file did not look at it in this way. Nipper, they declared, was championing the town boys. He wanted to be friendly with them. He wanted to take his team over for that football match. Therefore, Nipper was to blame!

His unpopularity increased. The lot of a Junior captain, at a big school, is not a happy one. He has but to make one unpopular move, and he comes hurtling down from his perch.

Nipper was very worried, not because of the growing feeling against him—he had sufficient confidence in himself to feel that he could weather that storm—but because he would be compelled to break faith with Sam Becke. He had given his promise, and Sam, who was as keen on peace as Nipper, would be let down.

Directly after morning lessons Nipper came to a decision.

Without saying anything to the other boys—without even telling Tommy Watson or Tregellis-West, his own study chums—he went off to the headmaster's house. He considered that this was no time for formalities. He did not even request an interview with the Head. He marched

straight in, walked to the Head's study, knocked, and entered.

"I want a word with you, guv'nor," said Nipper.

Nelson Lee was sitting at his desk; fortunately, he was alone. He looked up in some surprise.

"Did I invite you to enter—Hamilton?" he asked, and there was an ominous note in his voice.

"I'm sorry, sir," said Nipper gruffly. "But I thought you'd be alone, and——"

"There was no reason why you should take it for granted that I would be alone," interrupted Nelson Lee curtly. "It seems to me, young man, that you are grossly impertinent towards your headmaster."

Nipper looked at him hard. Lee was uncompromisingly stern. There was not even a twinkle in his eye.

"It's—it's about Saturday's match, sir," said Nipper eagerly. "Can't you rescind that decision of yours?"

The headmaster shook his head.

"I am afraid——" he began.

"But it's not fair, sir," burst out Nipper. "It's a League fixture—an important match! I'm not suggesting that you should abandon the inquiry, or anything like that. Although I'm jiggered

if I can understand why an inquiry is necessary," he added. "Still, that's your affair. Can't you lift the ban just for Saturday afternoon? You needn't make it general. If you'll grant me special permission to take my team over——"

"No, certainly not," interrupted Lee. "I see no reason why eleven boys should be specially favoured. If I lifted the ban, it would be general. But I shall not lift the ban. After what took place yesterday I am justified in placing the town out of bounds. Indeed, I have no other course. So you can get all these ideas out of your head."

"And football doesn't count for anything with you?" asked Nipper bitterly.

"On the contrary, I am grieved that my position as headmaster of this school compels me to interfere with one of the Junior League fixtures," replied Nelson Lee quietly. "But you must understand, Hamilton, that I am looking further than a mere football match. I have the good name of this great school to think of. Yesterday's fight was disgraceful enough; if another took place, and a second one would be much more violent, St. Frank's would be in utter disgrace. You must write to the Hotspurs' captain and arrange for the match to be postponed—

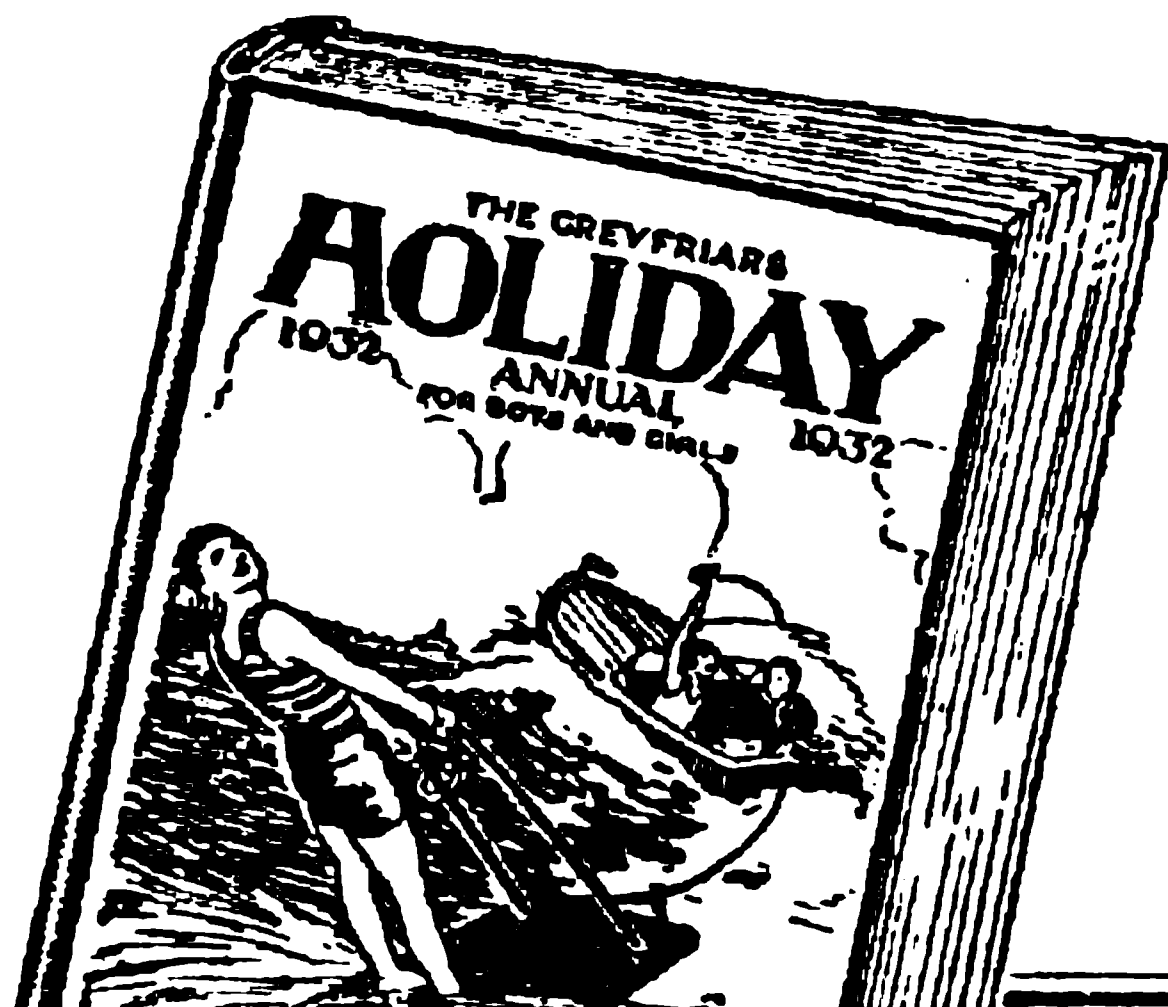


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until this unpleasantness has completely blown over. That is my final decision, Hamilton."

"But, sir——"

"I have said all I intend to say. You may go."

Nipper walked to the door calmly enough, but inwardly he was burning with fierce resentment. Suddenly, as he reached the door, he spun round.

"Well, I'm not going!" he said thickly. "And now, guv'nor, you're going to listen to me!"

CHAPTER 9.

Nipper Loses His Temper!

NELSON LEE did not move a muscle. He merely looked Nipper straight in the eye, but the boy returned look for look.

"Until now, guv'nor, you've been the Head, and I've been the Junior skipper," said Nipper, with deadly calmness. "But we'll wash that all out."

"I must remind you, Hamilton——"

"Don't 'Hamilton' me, for goodness sake, guv'nor!" begged Nipper. "Hang it, we're alone! I'm 'Nipper' to you, aren't I? Forget that you're the Head for once!"

"If you wish to speak to me on a purely personal and private matter, all well and good," said Lee. "But I was under the impression that you had come to me in your capacity of Junior skipper—that, in fact, you were regarding me as your headmaster, and that you wanted me to rescind a certain decision——"

"Why must you talk like that, guv'nor?" asked Nipper. "Forget you're Head, and forget I'm the Junior captain!" He went over and sat on the side of Nelson Lee's chair. "Be a sport, sir," he pleaded. "Do let's have a heart-to-heart talk."

A twinkle came into Nelson Lee's eyes.

"Go ahead, young 'un," he said kindly. "But I'd better warn you that any form of wheedling will be unsuccessful."

"When I start wheedling, you can tell me so," retorted Nipper. "All I want, guv'nor, is that you should thoroughly understand the position. You've heard a lot of exaggerated reports, and you've got a wrong idea of the whole affair. Trust old Jameson to come here with a wild and woolly story."

"You are not denying, I suppose, that the police were compelled to put a stop to the fighting?"

"Yes, they were, sir," admitted Nipper promptly. "As far as I can understand,

the whole trouble happened by a sort of fluke. You know how these things are, guv'nor; two or three of our chaps fell foul of two or three of the others. A bit of a scrap started—which, if it had been left to itself, would have been next to nothing."

"Yes, I can see that; but that initial scrap was not left to itself. And that's the point you are deliberately overlooking."

"Some more of our chaps came up, and the town boys pelted them with oranges and apples and things," continued Nipper. "Then more town boys arrived, and in next to no time the whole beastly thing had developed into a free fight. But that's all, sir—nothing else. It was just an unfortunate incident."

"Such incidents are apt to lead to far graver incidents," said the Head, pursing his lips. "That's why I must be very careful, Nipper. It's no good beating about the bush. You're doing the best you can, but I am quite sure that the feeling in the Junior School is against you. The majority of the boys are definitely hostile towards the town."

"And the more you ban the town, the greater will become their hostility," said Nipper quickly. "Dash it, I had a chat with Beekle directly after this scrap. Beekle is the Hotspurs' captain, and a decent chap. We shook hands, and I promised him that the match would be O.K., and he said he would do his utmost to calm his own men. Don't you see, guv'nor, if we go over on Saturday we shall take a big step towards restoring complete harmony. If we can fight down the ill-feeling——"

"That is a very big 'if,' Nipper," Nelson Lee pointed out. "You have placed your finger upon the vital spot. If this and if that! I quite agree that it would be far better to restore peaceful relations. But we must look at the other side, too. Supposing you take your team over? You know the kind of feeling that can develop at a football match. We may take it for granted that the Hotspurs' supporters are extremely partisan. If one of your players happens to foul a Hotspur, there can be no guessing at the result. The spark has already been fired, and a second clash would be like an explosion. St. Frank's would find itself in absolute disgrace."

"But you're 'if-ing' now, sir," protested Nipper.

"With very good justification," replied Lee. "Frankly, young 'un, I can't allow you to take the risk. No; I sympathise with you, and I am sorry for you. But I'm not going to alter my decision."

Nipper arose from the arm of the chair, and his eyes were gleaming.

"Do you mean that, guv'nor?" he asked fiercely.

"I do."

"But, for my sake——"

"For your sake, Nipper, I would do a lot," said Lee quietly. "Now, don't let's have any misunderstanding over this. I am in a responsible position, and I must think of the school——"

"Yes, you can think of the school, but you don't care twopence about me," said Nipper bitterly. "Here I'm asking you a personal favour and you turn it down flat!"

"I should advise you to control your temper——"

"I'm blowed if I will," roared Nipper. "You're mean, guv'nor! I never thought——"

"Now you are becoming impertinent," said Nelson Lee curtly. "I think you had better forget that I am your guardian, and regard me again as your headmaster."

"I won't," panted Nipper. "I'm surprised at you, guv'nor! I always thought you were a sportsman! And now, when it comes to the point, you're just as obstinate and stubborn as any other schoolmaster!"

"I think I shall have to make you write five hundred lines——"

"Oh, do you?" snapped Nipper. "Try and get me to do them!"

Nelson Lee rose to his feet.

"Making all allowances for our relationship, Nipper, you mustn't think that I will stand that sort of talk," he said grimly. "Nor will I permit you to lose your temper. I've a good mind to cane you."

Nipper laughed mirthlessly.

"Cane me, eh?" he retorted. "I'd like to see you try! Blow you! Do you think I'm afraid of you? Go and eat coke!"

And Nipper stormed to the door, flung it open, and marched out. He was in a blazing temper. He expected to hear Lee commanding him to return; and he resolved to do no such thing. He had slammed the door hard, and now it was closed. But no voice came through.

Nelson Lee, as a matter of fact, was standing quite still, and his eyes were gleaming with a hard light. He even opened his mouth to shout a command, but he checked it. He went back to his chair, sat down, and became thoughtful.

He was worried. He was unhappy. It was so unusual for Nipper to "go off the deep end" that Lee came to the conclusion that there must be some justification for his attitude. He had been grossly impertinent—and for that he should suffer—but the other matter was more important. Nelson Lee came to a decision.

BY the time Nipper had crossed Inner Court and reached Big Arch, he was horrified.

His temper had vanished as quickly as it had come. And as he remembered his unwarrantable insolence to his headmaster he went hot and cold all over.

"Oh, my hat!" he muttered miserably.

He was disgusted with himself. It was bad enough for him to have spoken to his headmaster like that; but he had been treating Nelson Lee as his guardian—and, presuming upon that advantage, he had openly defied him. He had been cheeky—he had been downright insolent—to his beloved guv'nor! He was filled with dismay at his own guilt.

He knew he was in the wrong; and, filled with remorse, his impulse now was to rush back and apologise. He did rush back, but when he reached the Head's study, Nelson Lee was no longer there. Nor could Nipper find him. He went back to the Ancient House pale and miserable.

Many fellows noticed the change in him; but they did not sympathise. They wrongly concluded that Nipper was worrying over his unaccustomed unpopularity. Well, serve him right! He shouldn't be so jolly cocksure! It was about time he came off his perch!

That afternoon was one of the unhappiest Nipper had ever spent. It seemed endless, and he skimped his work badly, getting into trouble with Mr. Crowell, the Form-master. But he didn't care. Such things were trifles compared with the enormity of his offence against his good old guv'nor!

CHAPTER 10.

Nelson Lee Investigates!

IT was with a troubled brow that Nelson Lee, headmaster of St. Frank's, drove into Bannington that afternoon.

He was a just man, and the possibility that he was being unfair to the Junior School worried him.

He knew Nipper better than anybody else on earth; he loved Nipper. A father could have had no greater affection for his own child than Nelson Lee had for his cheery young ward. Seldom, indeed, was it that Nipper lost his temper so completely as to be grossly impertinent. Lee could forgive him for that—if his justification was sufficient.

And it did strike Nelson Lee that Nipper knew more of this quarrel than anybody else. So troubled was the great detective that he was going into Bannington to make personal inquiries.

(Continued on page 24.)

Even the office cat's whiskers wobbled when it saw this week's issue of



HANDFORTH'S Weekly

No. 30. Vol. 2.

**EDITOR'S
CHIN-WAG**

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

November 14th, 1931.

POET'S CORNER

SOLO

By Teddy Long.

A CHUM named Percival Piffell writes the following letter of friendly criticism:

"You big fathead,—I have been a reader of your putrid paper since the first number made its regrettable appearance. You call it three pages of laughs, do you? Well, we're still waiting for the laughs.

Unless you inject some humour into your magazine immediately, I propose to come down to St. Frank's by Cheap Day Ticket and plaster you all over the school. I enclose my photograph. That will show you the kind of chap I am.

Yours in contempt,

PERCIVAL PIFFELL."

After reading this letter, I immediately turned as white as a sheet, and my knees knocked like a jazz drummer. By George, I'm in such a state of funk that I can hardly write this column. 'S'fact!

The only thing to do, of course, is to obey the warlike Piffell's instructions. I must get some humour into this paper somehow. But how?

For hours I pondered on the problem before the solution struck me.

But I know now. I know how to get the biggest laugh of the term. I know how to set my readers all over England rocking with mirth.

Yes, Percival, I will provide some humour for my readers. And it is easily done, too.

I will publish your photograph, old bean.

If that doesn't make even a cat howl with laughter, I'm a Dutchman. They say Sects-men have no sense of humour, you know, but directly McClure caught sight of your map in that photograph, he gave one yell and fell out of the window.

So look out, Piffell! One more yip from you, my lad, and your photo will be published in black and white on the front page of this WEEKLY. By George! I'll show you if I get no humour into it.

E. O. HANDFORTH.

YOU fellows say I have no pluck,
And often call me funky;

You say that I am still a sly
And cunning little monkey;
I'll prove my courage, if you like,
At dark and desperate fighting,
And you'll behold me brave and bold
(At any rate, in writing.)

So bid me do some fearsome feat
To win your approbation;
You'll see me try with courage high
To grasp the situation;
Bid me ascend Mount Everest
And photograph the summit;
Or else explore the ocean floor—
I'll dive there like a plummet.

Bid me journey to Ceylon
Where every prospect pleases;
Or bid me crawl to far Bengal
Upon my hands and knees;
Bid me explore a savage land
And carelessly stroll through it;
Bid what you choose, I won't refuse
But straightway go and do it.

CHORUS.—By the Remove.

We'd like to take you at your word,
And, as you seem so keen, it
Would be a shame to spoil your game;
But tell us—do you mean it?
If so—right-ho! We'll bid you go
(That's if you know the way there.)
To a little place called Jericho,
And when you get there—stay there.

A thrilling story to make your hair stand on end.

The Secret Spider

A Trackett Grim master-masterpiece by E. O. HANDFORTH

FOR years a daring criminal called the Secret Spider had defied the police and detectives of this country. None of them could bring the rotter to justice—and as a last resource, they applied to Trackett Grim.

The great detective, assisted by Splinter, soon picked up dozens of clues. For instance, in one of the banks which the rotter burgled, Trackett Grim found a blow-pipe and a tube of oxygen in one corner, which had not been noticed by the police.

It would be futile (good word) to follow out all the reasoning of the great detective, as he trailed clue after clue in his relentless search for the Secret Spider. But at last, one morning, he went to Scotland Yard with Splinter, and asked to see Detective-Inspector Fossill.

"What news?" asked Fossill, bursting into the room. "Have you discovered the Secret Spider?"

"I have," replied Grim. And then he gave the inspector a grim look. "The game's up, Fossill!" he snarled. "I know that you are the Secret Spider! Are you going to come quietly?"

"You're mad!" laughed the inspector, and Splinter looked on in bewilderment. "What bee have you in your bonnet now?"

Grim jumped to his feet.

"Come, Splinter," he said harshly, and he rushed out into the passage. Splinter followed wonderingly.

Grim flung open a door on the opposite side of the passage, and strode in. Inspector Dodder was in the room, and he nodded genially to the great detective.

"Hallo, Grim! What's the matter?"

"The game's up, Dodder," said Grim quietly. "I know now that you are the Secret Spider. Put up your hands!"

Dodder gasped.

"You're potty!" he roared. "What on earth are you talking about?"

Grim spun round.

"Come, Splinter," he snapped, and tore into the next room, where Sergeant Barmie was examining finger-prints.

"Stop!" cried Grim sternly. "The game's up, Barmie! I have discovered that you are the Secret Spider. Put your hands up—quick!"

"Is this a new game, Grim?" asked the sergeant wonderingly. "Or have you gone quite cuckoo at last?"

"Come, Splinter!" snapped Grim, and rushed into Detective Dimwit's room.

"Dimwit!" he said harshly. "The game is up at last. I have found out that you are the Secret Spider."

"What's the joke?" asked Detective Dimwit, puzzled.

"Come, Splinter," said Grim.

Outside in the passage they ran across Captain Shifley, the Chief of the Yard. Grim covered him with his revolver.

"The game's up, Shifley!" he snapped. "I know that you are the Secret Spider. Are you coming quietly?"

Shifley's face went as pale as a sheet.

"How—how did you find out?" he gasped.

"No matter," snapped Grim. "I have my methods."

"You rotter!" hissed Shifley, as various coppers put gyves and things on him. And the Secret Spider—alias Captain Shifley of the Yard—was biffed off to a cell.

"Guv'nor!" gasped Splinter. "How on earth did you guess the Secret Spider was the Chief of the Yard?"

"I didn't," smiled Grim calmly. "But I deduced the fact that the criminal was somebody at the Yard. I couldn't find which one, and the only thing to do was to bluff the right man into a confession. Which is what has happened."

THE END

PRESS OPINIONS

of "Handforth's Weekly,"

THE DAILY DREADNOUGHT. "This schoolboy paper is the last word in journalism. It will go far—the farther the better."

THE HALFPENNY HORROR. "Among other school journals is a magazine, edited by a certain Edward Handforth, which has created a profound sensation. The editor of "Handforth's Weekly" is destined for a big career—unless it is cut short in its prime by overwork. We do not think that this will happen, but there is no harm in hoping."

THE BRITISH BRUISER. "We were under the impression that St. Francis' College was a school—not a home."

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARGUS AND NEO-PLENDERTHAL NEWS: "Subscribers should save their copies of this school magazine, and have them bound and locked up—a fate which, no doubt, will soon overtake the Editor."

NEWS FROM

JUNIORS that Nip drawing-Forrest's successful. Forrest never he reaches the reason to believe will do so in future.

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Arithmetic thirty-three will have the forth will learn notes.

HOW TO MAKE IT

Our Unreliable Expert tells you how to make an aeroplane.

IN making an aeroplane, the first thing to be remembered is that the vehicle has got to fly. The toy aeroplanes which you purchase from the shops are all right up to a certain point. They fly, but they don't keep it up. After a few yards they come back to earth, and before they will condescend to ascend, it is necessary to put in some energetic work on a small propeller and a piece of elastic.

What every fellow wants is a toy aeroplane which will fly, and will keep flying until told to stop. This may be achieved in two ways, i.e. :

By a petrol engine : or

By application of the rules of nature.

The first must be discarded, as a petrol engine is too costly for the average fellow. The second method, however, is quite easy, if you follow these expert directions :

Procure a fairly large box, and let that represent the engine of the aeroplane. Tie or stick two wings to it, together with a tail and other things, the names of which I forget. Inside the box make a small hatch, controlled by a sliding bottom and a length of string. This hatch should be arranged in the middle of the floor of the box, so that when one half of the sliding panel is exposed, the other is covered by the hatch.

Now we must instal our engine, and to do this we must find the necessary lifting power required. Our engine will be composed of flies. A fly can lift twice its

own weight, and by weighing the aeroplane and dividing the result by the weight of a fly, you will find out how many flies must be put in the box to make the aeroplane ascend.

Catch the number of flies necessary by scooping them off the wall with your hand. As you catch each fly, slip it into the interior of the aeroplane until you have sufficient flies to lift the total weight. Your aeroplane will not fly yet, however, or the insects will merely sit on the floor of the box and refuse to budge.

Next catch a large spider and tie him securely to one side of the sliding panel. Put him under the hatch, and drop a little heap of honey on the other half of the panel. Now you are all ready.

All the time the honey is exposed and the spider hidden away, the flies will squat on the floor of the box, wolfing the honey. But directly you pull the string, in goes the honey and out comes the spider. The flies will immediately sail up to the roof of your box, and your aeroplane will sail up with them into the sky. A long length of string is still attached to the panel, and when you want the aeroplane to descend, all you have to do is to pull the string. In goes the spider, out comes the honey, and down comes the aeroplane. Simplicity itself.

By fixing up a swivel to change the direction of the spider, it is possible to control the flight of the 'plane. If your spider is anchored due north, the aeroplane will go due south, and so on.

(Another helpful article next week.)

OUR DICTIONARY By REGGIE PITT.

(Being extracts from the new dictionary which will cause a world-wide sensation.)

ACE. A very cold, cream-like substance served in cornets or wafers by the refined young lady in the Bellton Dairy.

ACRE. A hollow tooth.

ADENOIDS. A disease which seems to affect every public speaker.

ADVICE. One of the few things which it is more blessed to give than to receive.

ADVERTISEMENT. A good excuse for blowing one's own trumpet.

AIR. A substance which is like "nothing on earth."

ALGEBRA. The practice of substituting letters for figures in order to make arithmetic more difficult for boys.

ALICE. The name of the girl whose whereabouts are uncertain, and enquired after by every singer.

ALMANAC. A chart which comes in useful for timing the length of certain Test Matches.

AMBUSH. The scales of certain tradesmen are said to be in ambush when they are "lying in weight."

AENEAS. A famous after-dinner speaker who bored Dido to tears with his tale of Troy, and has bored every boy since.

ANCHOR. A slang term for a mud-hook.

ANGER. A state of mind which, in a boy, is called a vile temper, and in a master, proper indignation.

ANONYMOUS. The name of a person who writes interesting letters.

APPETITE. That reminds me—it's dinner-time. Good-bye.



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ST. FRANK'S IN DISGRACE!

(Continued from page 20.)

He went to the police first, and Inspector Jameson fussily repeated his complaint of the previous night.

"Disgraceful—that's what it was, Mr. Lee," said the inspector. "The whole traffic of the High Street disorganised! A riot, that's what it was. And if your boys are permitted to come into the town again I don't dare to prophesy what will happen."

Nelson Lee interviewed many shopkeepers, and their opinions were conflicting. Some were hot and angry, accusing the schoolboys and the town boys impartially. Others were inclined to laugh at the whole affair, passing it off as nothing worse than a high-spirited rag.

"After all, they were only youngsters," said one man. "If the senior boys had been involved in such a scrap it would have been different. But, my dear sir, mere kids! Nobody takes any serious notice of a dust-up between kids! Personally I believe they thoroughly enjoyed themselves—and I can assure you the dust-up was well worth watching."

Finally, Nelson Lee sought out Sam Becke. And Sam Becke, he saw, was certainly not a "mere kid." Nor were the other town boys. Lee had noticed more than one puffy eye and swollen lip during the course of his inquiries. The town boys, on the average, were a year or two older than the St. Frank's juniors.

"Want to speak to me, sir?" asked Sam Becke respectfully.

He had been excused from his work; he was employed by a market gardener, and his horny hands were smothered with soil. The market gardener, incidentally, had put in a very good word for Sam, assuring Nelson Lee that the lad was hard-working, honest, and reliable.

"Yes, Becke," said Lee. "You don't know me, do you? My name is Lee. I am the headmaster of St. Frank's College."

Sam hastily tugged at his cap.

"Yes, sir," he said, in a startled voice.

"Now, Sam," smiled Nelson Lee, "I don't want you to think that I've come here prying, but if you can give me your own account of what took place yesterday, I shall be glad."

Sam looked unhappy.

"That there fight, you mean, sir?" he asked. "A rare silly business, it was. Master Nipper—he's Junior football captain—was as fair as fair. I ain't denyin' that we had words, but we shook hands in the end, like real friends."

"I must tell you, Sam, that I have forbidden the boys to come over here on Saturday afternoon to play that match," said Lee quietly.

"Forbidden 'em?" asked Sam, aghast. "Gosh! You mean that the match is off, sir?"

"I am afraid so."

"Lumme! There won't be half a row," said Sam, scratching his head. "I've promised the chaps that everything will be all right. Young Nipper gave me his word—"

"You must not blame Nipper," interrupted Lee. "With Bannington out of bounds the Junior team, naturally, cannot keep the fixture."

"Well, it's real hard luck on him, sir," said Sam stoutly. "As for my chaps, they'll be thumping wild. I can hear 'em now. 'Too stuck up, I s'pose,' they'll say. 'Afraid to come over ag'in an' face us,' they'll say. 'Tain't for me to say, sir, but there'll be more trouble than ever if you forbid the match. Leastwise, that's what I think. An' it ain't as if them St. Frank's boys was the cause of the trouble. Seems mighty hard on 'em."

"I was given to understand, Sam, that the St. Frank's boys *did* start the trouble."

"Well, that's as it may be, sir," replied Sam. "I ain't sayin' nothing, one way or the other. I believe Tim Grigson knocked over a motor-bike, or somethin'. Quite an accident, it was, but some of your boys thought different. Anyway, there was a misunderstanding, and, what with all that fruit lyin' on the ground, the temptation was too great. It was our chaps who started throwin'. That scrap wasn't really the fault of your schoolboys, sir, so it doesn't seem kind of fair to punish 'em. I wish you'd change your mind, sir," he added earnestly. "We're lookin' forward to that match on Saturday. Mighty proud, we are, to be in the St. Frank's Football League, an' secin' as this is the first game against St. Frank's, well——"

"I'll think about it, Sam," said Lee, patting the burly youth on the shoulder. "Perhaps I'll change my mind. I certainly have a better understanding of the position now."

When his car arrived back at St. Frank's an agile figure raced after it. Nipper, breathless, clutched at his arm as he stepped out of the car.

"Guv'nor!" exclaimed Nipper.

"You wish to speak to me, Hamilton?" asked Nelson Lee, in his most schoolmasterly manner. "Come into my study."

They went in, and Nipper looked at Lee straight in the eye.

"Guv'nor, I've been horribly miserable all the afternoon," he said huskily. "I'm—I'm ashamed of myself for losing my temper like that. I apologise, sir. You oughtn't to forgive me, really, but I hope you will."

He was so repentant that Nelson Lee softened. He had intended to be very stern, but Nipper's obvious remorse made him relax.

"You certainly did let fly, young 'un," he said dryly.

"I—I don't know what was the matter with me, guv'nor," muttered Nipper, hanging his head. "You said something about a caning, didn't you? Perhaps you'd better get busy, sir. Give me a good, sound whacking—and that'll knock some respect into me."

"You have apologised, Nipper, and that is sufficient," said Lee quietly. "We'll say no more about it. I am more inclined to forgive you because I feel that you were justified in your request. I have just come back from Bannington; I have seen Sam Beekle."

"Oh!" said Nipper happily.

"And at evening prayers I shall have something to say to the Junior School," added Nelson Lee. "I won't say any more at the moment—but you can hope for the best."

"Guv'nor!" gasped Nipper, pressing Nelson Lee's arm. "By Jove, sir, you're a brick!"

AFTER evening prayers Nelson Lee made his announcement.

"What I am going to say concerns only the Junior School," he said. "Upon due consideration I have decided that there shall be no prolonged inquiry into the unhappy incident of yesterday afternoon."

There was a mild sensation.

"I am satisfied that the clash was caused by an unfortunate misunderstanding," continued Nelson Lee. "It is against the best interests of the school that such ill-feeling should be harboured. Bannington, therefore, will remain out of bounds only until Saturday."

"Hurrah!"

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

Nipper's supporters were bubbling with joy and excitement; the others were excited—and, indeed, dumbfounded.

"From Saturday morning the position will be 'as you were'—but I feel it necessary to give you this warning," went on Nelson Lee, his tone becoming grave. "I am trusting the Junior School to keep the peace. I shall not ask you to pledge your word; but I do urge you to be on your

very best behaviour. Do nothing to incite the town boys. Keep steady heads. Keep your tongues well under control. A rash word might well lead to another outbreak—and that would be deplorable."

He paused, and the school was impressed.

"I am lifting this ban deliberately—which should convince you all that I am relying upon you to behave as gentlemen," he continued. "If the town boys attempt to incite you, do not be drawn. I am giving you a chance to heal this breach permanently. It would be a thousand pities if that foolish incident of yesterday were allowed to develop into a long and bitter feud. These things come upon us suddenly, unexpectedly, and we must deal with them with common-sense. It is not desirable that all the boys of this school should be indefinitely barred from visiting our local town."

There were many murmurs of approval and assent.

"But let me repeat that warning," concluded Nelson Lee, with a touch of grimness in his voice. "If there is any repetition of yesterday's disgraceful disturbance, every guilty boy will be heavily punished, and the town will again be placed out of bounds. So it is up to you to prove that my present leniency is justified. That will be all. You may dismiss."

And the school dismissed—thoroughly excited.

CHAPTER 11.

Football Foes!

IT was something of a triumph for Nipper, and many of the fellows who had been against him now rallied to his banner.

Boots, Gresham, and the other members of the XI who had refused to play, now apologised, and requested Nipper to let their names stand. Nipper was only too glad to agree. He wanted to take the best possible team to Bannington; furthermore, he was not the kind of fellow to keep up a quarrel.

There were plenty of boys, however, who were still bitterly against him. They prophesied all sorts of catastrophes for Saturday afternoon.

"If you're going over to Bannington with the intention of making yourself nasty, there's bound to be trouble," pointed out Nipper. "The only way for us to go is openly—and in a friendly spirit. We'll show the town boys that we bear them no ill-will. A clean, honest game of football will make all the difference."

"Well, it's taking a big chance," said Armstrong, of the Fourth. "That's my opinion—and I'll stick to it. Don't forget what this means, Nipper! If there's another row with those town hooligans —"

"There's no need to call them hooligans."

"Some of them are all right, perhaps," growled Armstrong. "But what about the others? You know as well as I do that there are heaps of rotters there who will be only too willing to start a riot!"

This was true, and Nipper had already considered the point.

"They can't start a riot unless we give them cause," he replied. "Anyhow, it's a chance that we shall have to take."

"You know what it'll mean if there's another fight?" asked Armstrong truculently. "You'll jolly well be kicked out of the captaincy! That's a cert! If the Junior School is punished because of Saturday's game—because of your obstinacy—you'll have to pay the piper!"

"Hear, hear!"

"That's right, Nipper."

"Good enough—I'm willing to take the risk," said Nipper promptly.

And he meant it. As Junior skipper, he was firm. It was his firmness, in fact, which had given rise to all the bitterness in the Junior School. Even now over half the fellows considered that the Hotspurs match should be abandoned.

However, by the time Saturday dawned, there was a much calmer feeling at St. Frank's. There was a feeling of confidence, too. Naturally, everybody was curious, and everybody was excited.

By the afternoon, Removites, Fourth-Formers, and Third-Formers had unanimously decided to go over with the team. At any rate, the XI should have plenty of support!

But it wasn't exactly support. Many of the juniors were against the match, and they were only going out of sheer curiosity. They were drawn as though by a magnet.

It is to be feared that many of them were secretly hoping that there would be trouble—so that Nipper would come a cropper. This whole unfortunate business had now settled itself into one definite issue. If this match came off all right, and if friendly relations were restored with the town boys, Nipper would score a great triumph. But if the opposite happened—Well, the Junior skipper would come the biggest purler of his career!

Nipper himself was not exactly comfortable. He had an uneasy feeling that many of his "supporters" were hostile; that, in fact, they were spoiling for a fight. Yet he hardly believed that they would deli-

berately start any trouble, for they themselves would be the first to suffer. So, for their own sakes, they would do their utmost to keep the peace.

They went over by motor-cycle, by cycle, by bus, and on foot. It was a general exodus of the Junior School.

Baunington was mildly astonished—and just a bit scared.

It was commonplace enough to see St. Frank's boys in the town on a Saturday afternoon; but to-day there were scores and scores of them. The town seemed filled with the familiar caps. And they were all passing in the same direction—down to the lower end of the town.

As was to be expected, the town boys soon got to know; and, unfortunately, the town boys got a wrong impression. Somebody started a rumour that St. Frank's had come over in force—looking for trouble. The town boys promptly took up the challenge, saying that they would provide all the trouble that was necessary—and plenty that was unnecessary!

It was in this spirit, therefore, that the Saints and the Hotspurs met.

Sam Becke was glowing with delight when he met Nipper.

"Good man," he said heartily. "Jolly glad you chaps have come over."

"Let's hope we have a good game," smiled Nipper.

"May the best team win," grinned Sam. "I ain't sayin' that I like the looks of some of our chaps. Our supporters, I mean. Rare rough crowd, you know." He paused awkwardly. "There seems to be an idea that you fellers have come along to stir up trouble."

"Don't you believe it, Sam," said Nipper. "It's just the opposite. We want to show you all that we're out for peace. You don't think we want our liberties restricted, do you? A feud against the town will mean a lot of hardships for us."

"Why, then, everything's going to be all right," beamed Sam. "Crikey! We'll have a record crowd to-day, and no error! Well, it'll put some zip into us, hey? Nothin' like playing before a good crowd, is there? It makes a chap do his best."

There was plenty of electricity in the air, so to speak, as the onlookers gathered round the ground. Nipper and his team changed in the little railway-carriage pavilion. When they took the field cheers greeted them from the St. Frank's juniors; but quite a few hoots went up from the locals. It was a bad sign. This extreme partisanship was not healthy.

It was an unfortunate fact, too, that the St. Frank's supporters clumped together. They were all in a big bunch, occupying



Jerry Hurst had been accidentally injured, but sight of him lying inert on the ground made the Bannington supporters see red. Waving and shouting, they surged on to the field threateningly.

practically one side of the ground. Opposite them, and at both ends, the town boys were collecting in their hundreds. Grocers, greengrocers, and other tradesmen that afternoon were minus quite a lot of errand boys! There was a curious tension in the air—and Nipper deplored it.

He was hoping that the clean, manly game would arouse an enthusiasm in both factions, and thus pave the way to permanent peace. But a game of football, after all, is a two-edged sword. The clean sport of it will arouse the best instincts in any crowd. But woe betide if there should be any foul play! In such circumstances, there is nothing like a football match for arousing a crowd's *worst* instincts!

Thus this fateful game began.

CHAPTER 12.

The Calm Before the Storm!

"IT'S going to be all right!" said Handforth comfortably.

He was feeling relieved. Yet, at the same time, he was rather disappointed. A born fighter, he would not have been averse to another scrap. He owed these town boys one or two swipes which he would like to pay! However, like the good fellow he was, Handforth was wholehearted in his support of his skipper.

The teams had just lined up, and everything was quiet. There had not been an angry word spoken. The Saints, for their part, had kept their tongues well in check. The town boys, having no justification for starting trouble, remained at peace. But the fact that everything was calm—unusually calm—seemed ominous.

"Don't you be deceived, Handy," said Church in a low voice.

"Eh?"

Church and McClure were the regular backs of the Junior XI, and they were close enough to Handforth to have a word with him.

"Everything's going to be all right, is it?" muttered Church. "Don't you believe it! According to the looks of things, this match will be as hot as pepper."

"You're dotty!" said Handforth, staring. "These town chaps are as mild as milk! Look at 'em! And look at our chaps! Smiling at one another like long-lost brothers."

"You can't see any further than your nose—and that's quite a good way, I'll admit," said Church tartly.

"Look here——"

"It's the calm before the storm," put in McClure. "Churchy is right, Handy. We'd better go easy. One false step and we're sunk! I'm beginning to believe that Fullwood and those other chaps were right in suggesting that this match should be scratched."

"You're both crazy!" said Handforth in amazement.

There was no further time for talking. The referee—Sam Beckle's uncle, in fact—was on the point of blowing his whistle.

Phееееep!

"Come on, the town!" went up a mighty roar from the locals.

"Play up, St. Frank's!" came an answering yell from the Saints.

Nipper and his men started off with a rush. Nipper, receiving the ball, passed neatly and accurately to Reggie Pitt on the wing. In a flash the brilliant Reggie was off.

Like a streak he ran along the touchline—what there was to be seen of it—but before he could make his usually neat pass to the centre he stumbled, catching his foot against one of the inequalities of the ground. A burly Hotspur back, rushing down, cleared, and his heavy boot came perilously near to Reggie as he was picking himself up.

Reggie Pitt knew that he was going to have trouble with that back. Reggie knew him by repute. He was a youth named Bill Stringer, and he was employed at the gas-works. He was a fairly good back, but he used his feet rather than his brains. He was one of those footballers who believed in playing the man rather than the ball.

His clearance took the leather well down the field, but Boots, at centre-half, trapped it and passed swiftly to Gresham on the left-wing. Gresham ran on, passed to Nipper, and in a flash Nipper was dashing through.

"Shoot!" went up an excited yell.

"Let's have one, Nipper!"

"Go it!"

Bill Stringer came running across. He jerked out one of his big feet in an attempt to trip the St. Frank's forward, but Nipper leapt lightly over the outstretched foot.

Slam!

Steadying himself, he shot—a real beauty. The goalie flung himself down, but he was just too late. The leather was through—beyond the posts, and rolling on into the crowd, for there were no nets.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Booooooh!"

Above the cheering of the Saints came hoots and howls from the more unsportsmanlike section of the town boys. Such an early reverse was a shock for them. In ordinary circumstances they would not have hooted. They would have accepted that goal in silence. But just now there was a tension in the air; they were all worked up.

"You'd best go easy, Bill," muttered Sam Beckle, as he ran up to Bill Stringer.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean," said Sam dangerously. "You play fair, Bill! We don't want any fouling."

Sam was always having trouble with Bill Stringer. The Hotspurs played a vigorous game—some called it a rough game—but the

team as a whole were true sportsmen. Only Bill descended to really questionable tactics.

That early goal, however, had badly rattled them all, and when the match re-started there was a change. The roughness of the 'Spurs became more pronounced. And usually, if one side adopts these tactics, the other side, in self-defence, follows its example. This game was no exception to the rule. As soon as the Saints found that the Hotspurs were playing roughly, they played roughly, too.

So within the first ten minutes the standard of play degenerated rapidly.

It was kick and rush all the time. Science dropped completely out of the game.

Round the ropes the crowds were yelling themselves hoarse. That ominous calm had broken. Schoolboys and town boys were revealing their true feelings under the influence of the game.

"Come on, the town!"

"Smash 'em!"

"Hooray!"

The Hotspurs' forwards looked as though they would break through, but by determined, forceful tactics Church and McClure broke up the attack. Handforth was merely an onlooker.

A mighty yell went up as one of the 'Spurs' forwards sprawled and fell. He had caught his foot in a rough tuft of grass, but many of the spectators believed that Church had tripped him. A howl of rage went up.

"Foul!"

"Yah! Dirty school rotters!"

"Hi, ref! Where's your whistle?"

The referee took no notice. He had seen that there had been no foul, and he waved his arms for the players to carry on. Some of the 'Spurs had paused, expecting a decision in their favour; and meanwhile the ball had swung out to Reggie Pitt once again.

"Go it, Reggie!"

Cheered by the shouts, Pitt dashed on. He was getting accustomed to the ground now; he knew its inequalities. He ran like a hare, swerving towards the centre of the field as he neared the goal. A burly figure charged down upon him; he side-stepped, but the burly figure side-stepped, too.

Crash!

It was a heavy charge—not with the shoulder, but with a knee, too. Pitt crumpled up.

"Boooooh! Dirty Hotspur!"

"Foul—foul—foul!"

The St. Frank's onlookers were shouting excitedly, and the town boys were yelling in defiance. The referee's whistle went, and the referee was pointing. He was awarding a free kick to the Saints.

The town supporters stared dumbly for a moment, and then they burst out into a veritable bellow of anger. They hissed and hooted and howled. Fists were shaken in the air.

It was obvious that matters were getting critical!

CHAPTER 13.

Over the Top!

FORTUNATELY, Reggie Pitt was not much hurt, and he was soon on his feet again. Goodwin took the free kick, and he dropped the ball well on the other side of the field, where Tregellis-West pounced upon it.

He was charged by a Hotspur, and went sprawling. The Hotspur, in turn, was charged by Fullwood. Eventually the ball was scrambled away by Gresham. Yells and catcalls were continuous now. The referee did not blow his whistle this time, for he considered that those charges had been fair.

The crowd didn't think so. It shouted itself hoarse. In one or two places, in fact, the crowd became so excited that it surged over the touchline, invading the playing-pitch.

Nipper was getting more and more worried.

If things went on like this much longer there would soon come a definite breach. And once two punches were exchanged—Nipper did not like to think of the possibilities.

To his relief there followed a period of fairly good play, during which both sides settled down. The excited crowds, too, became calmer. Perhaps it was because the Hotspurs nearly scored on two occasions. By forceful tactics they ploughed through the St. Frank's defence.

Handforth saved magnificently with all his old coolness and precision. One shot looked like a certain goal, but Edward Oswald, running out, met the ball with the toes of his right foot. That kick sent the leather well past mid-field, and Handy was vigorously cheered by the Saints. The town boys were disappointed, but they could find no excuse for hooting.

Then came another save, following a rough-and-tumble scramble in the goalmouth. Handforth, on the ground, managed to tip the ball round the upright, conceding a corner.

There were all sorts of cat-calls here, many of the spectators believing that the ball had already crossed the line before Handforth had grabbed it. The corner-kick was badly taken, the wind carrying the leather over the top of the bar.

Handforth took the goal-kick, and the ball fell just in front of Vivian Travers. He was on it smartly, just as one of the Hotspurs came up. Travers was off like a flash, and in passing to Nipper the toes of his boot caught against the ankle of a local man. It was a pure accident, but the Hotspur sprawled over.

"Foul!" howled the local supporters.

"Yah! Dirty!"

"Turn him off the field, ref!"

Wilder and wilder grew the shouts. The referee knew perfectly well that there had been no foul, but he awarded a free-kick. He was growing afraid of the crowd now; he had half an idea that they would turn on him next.

Nipper was so anxious that his own play had degenerated. He was watching the onlookers half the time instead of the game. He had already seen one or two scraps. A group of Fourth-Formers had been pushed by a gang of roughs, and the Fourth-Formers had pushed back. But for an exciting bit of play at that moment a fight might have been started.

It was the same in other parts of the ground. The tension was getting tighter and tighter, and presently something was bound to snap. The fatal moment was not long delayed.

It fell to Vivian Travers to be the unconscious cause of the catastrophe. Intercepting a wild pass, he trapped the ball, spun round and dashed for goal. He saw that he was unmarked; even the Hotspurs' backs were right out of position. Only the goalkeeper to beat! Travers dashed on.

"Shoot, Travers—shoot!"

The Saints yelled with enthusiasm; the town boys held their breath, dismayed. Travers was taking no chances. He ran clean through, intending to make certain of this goal.

Then something happened which he had not been prepared for. Jerry Hurst, the Hotspurs' goalie, ran out recklessly. There seemed no earthly chance of his saving, but in desperation he flung himself full-length at Travers' feet—just as Travers was kicking.

Crash!

The toe of Travers' boot struck Hurst's head instead of the ball, for Hurst had bumped the ball aside. There was a wild scramble. Nipper, running up, kicked the ball through the empty goal—and the referee's whistle sounded.

"Goal!"

"Two up. St. Frank's!"

But Jerry Hurst was still lying on the ground, and some of the other Hotspurs were shouting and dancing round the referee.

"Certainly not!" the ref was saying. "I can't disallow that goal. It was perfectly fair."

"But look at Jerry!" yelled one of the players. "That bloke kicked him in the head!"

"It was Jerry's own fault," said the referee. "The goal stands."

And dramatically he pointed to the centre of the field. That very gesture did the trick. A surging crowd of 'Spurs' supporters swarmed across the ground. They were in an ugly mood.

"Look out, uncle!" yelled Sam Becklo urgently.

He rushed at the crowd, waving and shouting.

"Hi! Clear off the field, you chaps!" he yelled. "What's the idea?"

He might as well have talked to a mob of Red Indians on the war-path. They swept past him. Fortunately the referee ran for it, or he would have been very severely handled. The crowd fell upon Travers, and that unlucky youth was immediately swamped.

"Hi! Help!" he gasped. "Rescue, St. Frank's! By Samson! What the——"

Crash! Thud! Biff!

Travers fought desperately, but the odds were all against him. Handforth, dashing across the field, was eager to join in. He did not even hear Nipper's urgent requests for him to keep back. But even Nipper knew that it would be useless now. The fuse had been lighted—the explosion had come! Players and supporters were hurling themselves at one another.

"Stop!" shouted Nipper urgently. "Listen, Remove! Remember the Head's warning! No fighting!"

"Don't be an idiot!" gasped Jimmy Potts. "What about Travers? They'll scrag him!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Nipper blankly.

He could see that Travers was in urgent need of assistance. And, much as Nipper wanted to keep the peace, the hot blood surged through him now. These town boys were to blame! It was all their fault. The Saints had kept their heads—and so had most of the 'Spurs' supporters. It was only this "tough" element which had started the trouble. Unhappily they gave the rest a lead, and in next to no time it was not only the "tough" element which was fighting, but the decent element, too.

Nipper grew angrier and more worried as he watched. The game, he saw, was a fiasco. Hardly knowing which way to turn, Nipper found himself swept up in the rush of yelling, fighting boys. He was compelled to fight

in self-defence. Through all the confusion he caught sight of Vivian Travers. Travers had been rescued from the mob; he was bleeding and dazed. On all sides other fights were developing.

"Well, that's done it, mate!" gasped a familiar voice.

Nipper spun round. Sam Beckle was next to him, and Sam was looking positively scared.

"Your chaps started it!" said Nipper breathlessly.

"Oh, did they?" roared Sam. "Well, see here—Lummel! I've got the jumps, too, mate! You're right—it was our chaps who started it. Blow 'em! Looks like a fine mess-up now!"

"Well, we tried, Sam," said Nipper soberly. "We thought we'd make things nice and friendly, but I'm afraid we've come an awful cropper."

CHAPTER 14.

The Rival Warriors!

FOOLS! That's what they are—fools!" said Sam Beckle bitterly. "All of 'em! Your chaps as well!"

"Hang it, our chaps didn't do anything until those roughs started!" protested Nipper. "They grabbed Travers, and you don't suppose that our chaps would leave Travers to his fate, do you? We came here in a friendly spirit, Sam, and——"

THE REASON.

Father: "My shaving brush is very stiff. I wonder what's wrong with it?"

Small Son: "Well, it was nice and soft when I painted the bird-cage with it yesterday."

(H. Lawrence, Walesby Lane, Newark, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

UNKIND.

1st Nigger: "Ah'se just taken a load off mah shoulders."

2nd Nigger: "What! Yo' ain't washed yo' neck, has yo'?"

(H. Galloway, 44, Worton Gardens, Isleworth, has been awarded a penknife.)

OR IT WOULD GO BANG.

A Scot was a bad sailor, and he was crossing the Channel. He went to the captain and asked him what he should do to prevent seasickness.

"Have you a sixpence?" asked the captain.

"Aye," replied Sandy.

"Well, hold it between your teeth."

(R. Price, 179, Sturt Street, Adelaide, Australia, has been awarded a splendid prize.)

SLIPPERY.

"Dad, what does the 'Yellow Peril' mean?"

"When a banana skin is left lying on the pavement."

(W. Bateman, Rise End, Middleton, Derbyshire, has been awarded a penknife.)



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 jokes; pocket wallet and penknives are also offered as prizes. Address your jokes to "Smilers," Nelson Lee Library, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

A PROBLEM.

Frank (to Teacher): "Please, teacher, can you move your brain?"

Teacher: "No, of course not."

Frank: "Well, how do you change your mind?"

(J. Cole, No. 4 Flat, 221, Mile End Road, London, E.1, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

A LONG WALK.

A prospective policeman was being questioned. "How far it is from London to York?" asked the examiner.

"Well," replied the applicant, "I don't quite know, sir, but if that is going to be my beat, I don't think I'll join the force."

(E. Carlisle, 77, Hollybush Street, Plaistow, London, E.13, has been awarded a penknife.)

"Yes, I know," groaned Sam. "Sorry, mate! I'm all on edge. Crikey! They've made a rare nasty muck of things!"

Even as they had been talking the battle had developed with startling rapidity. A number of the St. Frank's juniors—particularly the rank and file of the Fourth and Third—had attempted to get out of the danger zone. There was nothing cowardly in this move. Their one desire was to avoid trouble with the local boys; they were only obeying the headmaster's instruction.

But the town boys had completely lost control now. They had nothing to lose—like the St. Frank's fellows. For them this affair was just another brawl. Their hostility towards the schoolboys had been growing ever since the beginning of the game; and now they were out of control.

The St. Frank's contingents found themselves cut off. Superior forces—superior in number and in size—fell upon them. They found themselves cornered, and, being cornered, there was no alternative but to fight.

Nipper found himself looking upon a wild scene. No matter where he turned his eyes, there were struggling, swaying, reeling crowds.

"Well, this has finally done it!" he said sadly.

But he was scarcely conscious of his words. His mind was in a turmoil. Every instinct within him—every fibre of his being—urged

him to join in this scrap. It was something bigger than a mere fight now; his own Form-fellows were hard pressed. What was he doing standing here looking on? What kind of a skipper was he? The hot blood surged to his face. It was all very well to keep the peace, but these town boys, without any justification, had started this fresh trouble. Rats to them! Down with the town!

"Feeling queer, mate?" asked Sam Beckle, staring at him.

"I'm feeling—dangerous!" retorted Nipper thickly.

Before Sam could reply a knot of wildly excited youths barged into him, knocking the football, which he had rescued at the start of the trouble, out of his hands.

"Here, mind what you're doing!" roared Sam angrily.

He stooped to retrieve the ball, and it so happened that Nipper was pushed at that moment, too. Nipper's elbow jarred violently against Sam's jaw as he was stooping. He jerked himself to his feet, his eyes blazing.

"'Ere, that was dirty!" he shouted. "Bashin' a chap when his back was turned——"

"Don't be silly!" said Nipper, whose temper was raw. "You don't think I did that on purpose? These idiots——"

Crash!

Sam's fist thudded into Nipper's chest. Nipper reeled back, more surprised than hurt. Then he saw red. With clenched fists

NOT WHAT HE MEANT.

A lady with her young son was walking through the crowded toy department of a big stores.

"How would the little lad like a game of Ludo?" asked the shopwalker with an eye to business.

"Oh, he'd be delighted if it's not taking up too much of your time," replied the lady, beaming.

(*B. Morris, 13, Helix Gardens, Brixton, London, S.W.2, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

UP WITH THE LARK.

Butcher: "I need a boy about your age, and I will give him fifteen shillings a week."

Ambitious Applicant: "Will I have a chance to riso, sir?"

Butcher: "Oh yes, I want you to be here at four o'clock in the morning."

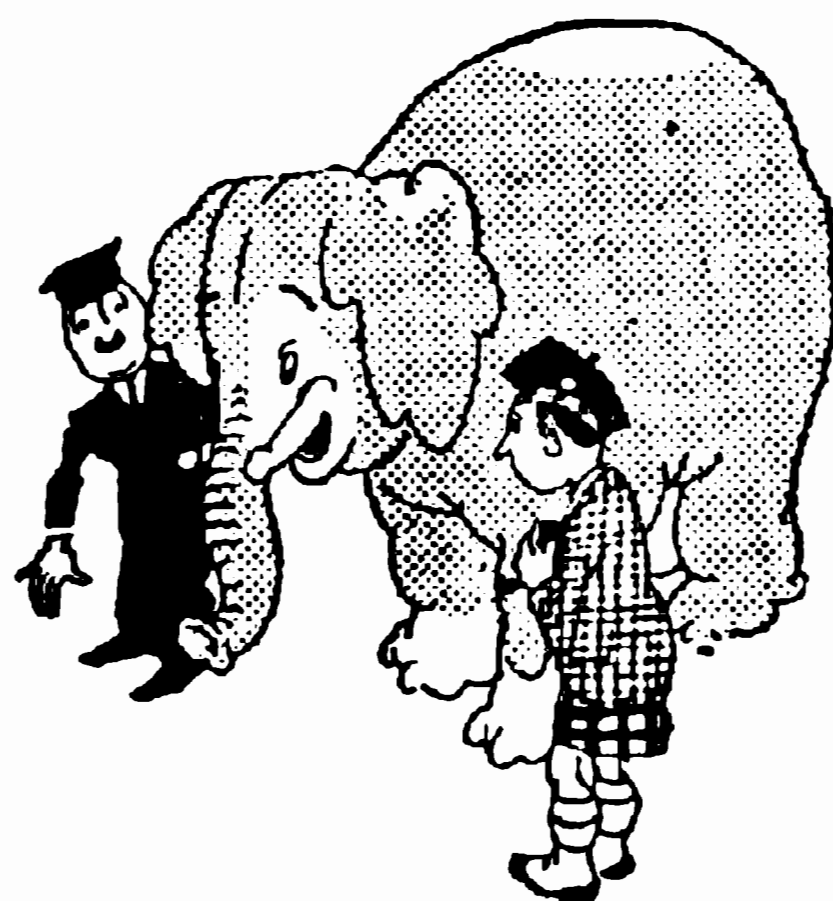
(*A. Allen, "Grange View," New North Road, Barkingside, has been awarded a penknife.*)

HARD LUCK.

1st Medico: "Old Jawkins always doctored himself with the help of medical books."

2nd Ditto: "Yes, and finally he died as the result of a misprint."

(*W. Wall, 1, St. Anne Street, Limehouse, London, E.14, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)



SALESMANSHIP.

Busy Man: "I really cannot see you."

Traveller (eagerly): "Then I'm the very man you want, sir. I'm selling spectacles."

(*Miss I. Little, The Manse, Sixmilecross, Ireland, has been awarded a useful prize.*)

A NEAR THING.

Passenger: "I suppose you've had some hairbreadth escapes during your seafaring career?"

Sailor: "Yes, indeed. I was nearly drowned once."

Passenger: "How thrilling. What happened?"

Sailor: "I went to sleep in the bath and forgot to turn off the tap."

(*G. Davies, 37, Sebert Road, Forest Gate, London, E.7, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

GENEROUS.

Scot: "Is the elephant allowed to have fruit?"

Keeper: "Yes"

Scot: "Well, can I give him a currant out of my bun?"

(*F. Weeks, 30, Dartmouth Cottages, Bexley Heath, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

he leapt at Sam, and the next moment they were swiping at one another hammer and tongs.

And after that, of course, the battle degenerated into one of the most disgraceful affairs Bannington had ever witnessed. The two captains—who might, perhaps, have influenced some of their followers—were fighting madly, and they set an example to the others—which the others needed no urging to follow.

"You'd bash me while my back was turned, would you?" bellowed Sam furiously.

"I didn't!" roared Nipper. "But I'll bash you now, you hasty idiot!"

Crash! Thud! Biff!

Sam was a good fighter, but he relied upon brawn rather than brain. Nipper, even in his present excited condition, used his brain. As a result, Sam soon exhausted himself with his wild rushes, whilst Nipper remained comparatively fresh.

Crash!

Nipper's right bored unerringly into Sam Beekle's face. Sam took the blow on the point of the jaw; he reeled back, staggered, and collapsed. He did not even attempt to rise; he found it impossible to rise. He was "out."

Nipper looked round wildly. Fairly close at hand, Handforth and Church and McClure were fighting valiantly. They were surrounded by a yelling mob of town boys—fully a dozen. They were outnumbered hopelessly.

Handforth was fighting as gamely as a giant. His mighty fists were doing tremendous destruction, and he was really enjoying himself. Church and McClure were good fighters, too, and they were giving a good account of themselves.

"Come on, Remove!" yelled Nipper. "Rescue!"

A number of stragglers, running at random, heard the call. They rallied round. Dashing up, Nipper and these others went to Handforth's assistance. The fight became more and more desperate.

"Good men!" panted Handforth, as he sent one hulking youth staggering. "Take that, blow you! And you can take this!" Biff! "I'm not particular!" Crash! "They all come alike to me!" Wallop! "I'll show you some fighting, now you've asked for it!"

With Nipper and the others joining in, the Saints gained the ascendancy. But not for long.

"Hi! Help!" howled one of the 'Spurs' supporters. "This way, chaps!"

"Come on, Bert! We've got a mob of 'em 'ere!"

"Lend a hand, Bill!"

Excited town boys came dashing up, and it was not long before the Removites were hopelessly beaten. There wasn't an earthly chance for them. Handforth was one of the last to go down, but he went down in the end.

All round in every direction as far as the eye could see other battles were taking place. Fellows were running for it, others were chasing them. It was an astounding scene.

"Where's that bloke with the ugly mug?" roared an aggressive voice. "Yes, that's him! I'm going to chuck him in the canal!"

Bill Stringer, the Hotspurs' left-back, was filled with rage. Handforth had hammered him considerably, and his face, at no time handsome, was now positively revolting.

"Lumme! That's a good idea, Bill!" gasped one of the others. "Come on! We'll chuck 'em all in the canal!"

"'Ear, 'ear!"

More reinforcements arrived, and Handforth, Church, McClure, Nipper and half a dozen others were seized by strong hands. They were half-dragged, half-frog's-marched. No matter how they struggled, it was impossible for them to get away.

The canal was not far off. The mob reached the bank, and with mighty heaves the victims were hurled upwards and outwards, and they splashed heavily into the cold, muddy water.

CHAPTER 15.

Remove on the Run!

"H A, ha, ha!"

"That'll cool 'em off a bit!"

"Not half it won't!"

The crowd which had performed this deed was composed of the worst element of the town. Only one of them—Bill Stringer—was a Hotspur. The others were young toughs who were merely out to cause trouble.

In all such affairs as this the useless young hooligans of a district will always join in—and do the most damage. Afterwards they generally escape scot-free, while the innocent always suffer for the guilty. The St. Frank's fellows and all the scores of decent town boys would be blamed for the outrages that were taking place. Yet in all truth they were blameless. The mob had taken charge now.

Fights were going on everywhere.

Reggie Pitt, Jack Grey and eight or nine other West Hous Removites, clustering together, were attacked on all sides. They were being pelted with lumps of mud and earth—even with vegetables torn up from the neighbouring allotments.

"My children, this is getting too thick!" said Reggie, as a hefty cabbage struck him on the side of the head. "Come on! We've got to move!"

"But—but we can't bolt!" gasped Dick Goodwin.

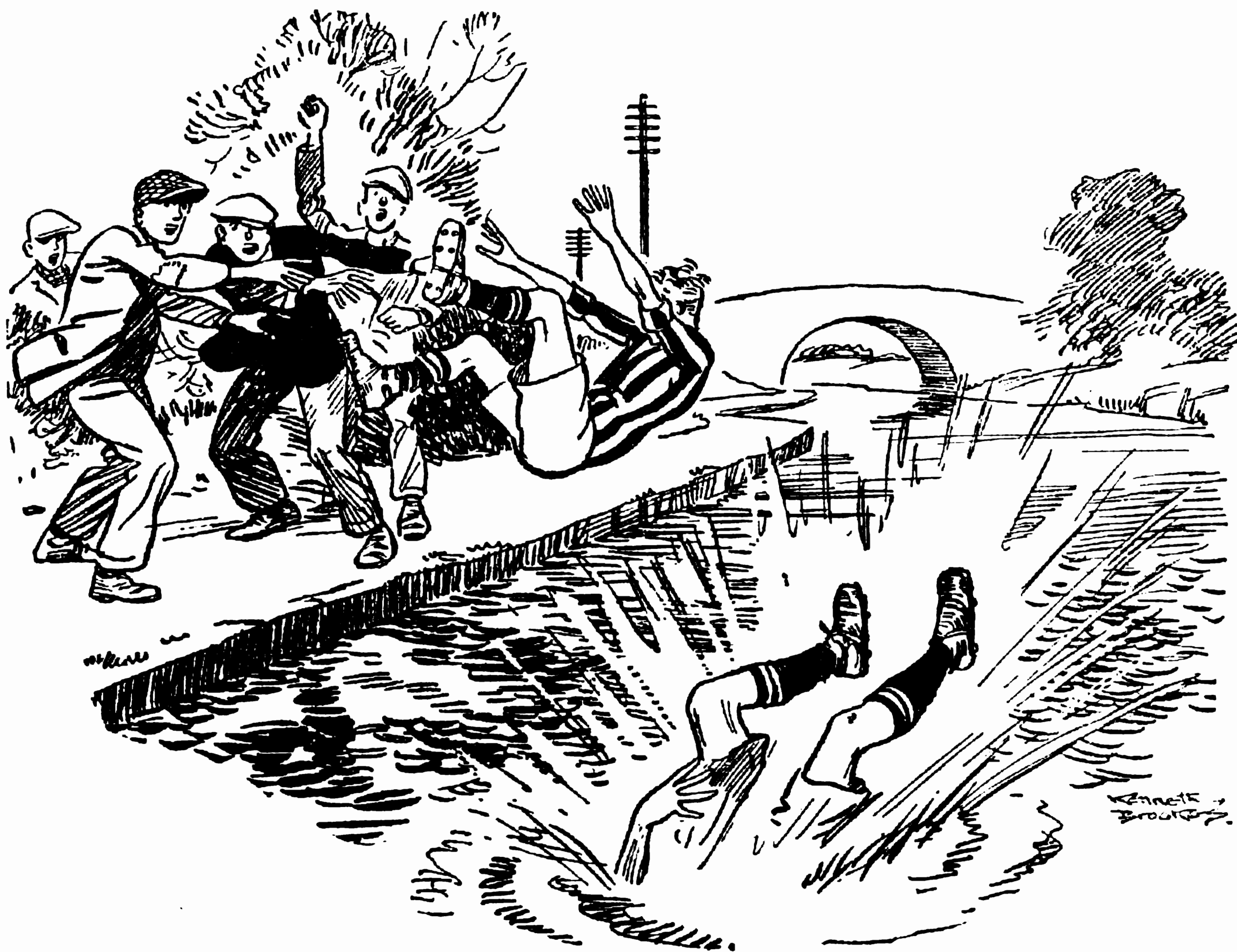
"Why not? Paralysed?"

"It's—it's an admission of cowardice——"

"O, Foolish One!" interrupted Pitt crisply. "That is the talk of folly! You saw what happened to Nipper and Handy and the others, didn't you? Chucked into the canal! Do you want to get chucked in, too?"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Jack Grey. "What a mess-up!"

"No good saying that, my lad. Let's bolt!" sang out Pitt. "There's nothing humiliating



Triumphantly the enraged Bannington boys dragged Nipper & Co. to the canal and hurled them into the cold, muddy water.

in it either. The sooner we can get out of this shindy the better!"

Crowds of town boys, led by roughs, were sweeping down on them. They took to their heels in the nick of time. Another bunch of the enemy cropped up in advance of them, and they were obliged to dodge, to zig-zag to and fro. They shot down one road, tore round a corner into a lane, and behind them came the mob.

In this fashion the Removites entered the town. Having started running, they were compelled to keep on running. Any that lagged behind would be pounced upon and roughly handled. The town boys were now utterly reckless and excited.

Dashing into the High Street, the fugitives presented an amazing sight. They were smothered with mud, their clothing was torn, and they were gasping for breath. Behind came the yelling pursuers.

The good people of Bannington were startled, staggered, shocked. They stared aghast. That affair in mid-week had been a mere picnic compared with this.

"The bus!" croaked Reggie Pitt, pointing. "Quick, you chaps! It's our only chance."

One of the big luxury coaches which operated between Bannington, Bellton and Caistowe was on the point of starting. It was nearly empty, too.

The Removites, in the last stages of exhaustion, just managed to reach it. They piled in, in spite of the angry shouts of the driver and conductor. The conductor, in fact, was swept right off his feet and hurtled backwards. Scarcely had the last junior struggled in than the pursuers were on the spot, striving to enter, too.

The driver behaved sensibly. Leaping to his seat, he drove off, and the mob, robbed of its prey, was left behind. It had plenty of work on its hands, for two or three constables had come running up, attracted by the terrific commotion. The mob scattered, running in all directions.

And Reggie Pitt & Co., a sadly wrecked and exhausted crowd, was on its way to St. Frank's. That crowd was lucky.

Nipper and Handforth and the others who had been flung into the canal had managed to drag themselves out. But even then their ordeal was not over. They were hooted and jeered by a crowd which outnumbered them five or six to one. They were hustled, pushed, knocked over, and generally manhandled.

Fortunately for them Travers hove in sight, and Travers had collected a big group of Removites and Fourth-Formers. As he had told them, there was safety in numbers. Keeping together in a big crowd, they were not attacked.

They dashed to the rescue of the soaked Removites. Another fight took place—a desperate affair—and at length the town boys were scattered.

"Thanks!" panted Nipper. "We've had an awful time."

"And so you jolly well ought to have an awful time!" said De Valerie. "This is all your fault, Nipper!"

"Rot!" came a croak from Handforth. "Don't be an idiot! Nipper didn't start the riot!"

"But he brought us to the Hotspurs' ground, didn't he?" said Val. "We warned him——"

"Is this quite the time for recriminations, dear old fellow?" asked Travers mildly. "Let's go while the going is good."

Meanwhile, John Busterfield Boots, of the Fourth, accompanied by Bob Christine, Roddy Yorke, Bray and others, were having a pretty hectic time of their own. They had been cut off from the main force, and, running in a different direction from the others, they found themselves beset by two or three mobs.

Like Pitt & Co., they bolted. It was the only safe thing to do. Turning down various side streets, Boots and the other Fourth-Formers at length found themselves clear of the chase. They moderated their pace, breathing hard.

"The brutes! The rotters! The cads!" said Buster Boots hotly. "By Jupiter! We'll get our own back for this, you chaps!"

"No good talking like that," groaned Bob Christine, who could hardly see owing to two black eyes. "If we're collared we'll be half-slaughtered!"

"It's the town's day to-day," admitted Boots aggressively, "but another day's coming, don't forget!"

"Yes, there'll be a reckoning!" said Bray thickly.

"It's war to the knife after this!" went on Boots truculently. "Peace, eh? I don't think! Blow Nipper and his peace talk!"

"Look out!" muttered Yorke suddenly.

They had turned another corner, and in front of them they beheld half a dozen of the roughest Bannington element. Buster Boots' eyes glowed as he saw that these six toughs were alone.

"Come on!" he muttered. "Now's our chance to get a bit of our own back."

The Fourth-Formers rushed down on the town group. The town group saw them coming, yelled with alarm and scattered, but they were just a shade too late. Before they could get away, the Fourth-Formers were on them, and down they went.

"Good egg!"

"Good old St. Frank's!"

"Hurrah!"

But their victory was short-lived. Yells sounded down the road, and soon a great crowd of town boys came sweeping along. Police also appeared on the scene. Boots & Co. gave them one look, and bolted.

CHAPTER 16.

The Folly of St. Frank's!

IN all the confusion and excitement, Handforth was even arrested!

When he arrived in the High Street, with lots of the other battered school-boys, he became mixed up in another free fight. It wasn't his fault. He happened to see his minor—the redoubtable Willy of the Third—in the hands of five or six young roughs. Handforth saw red. He charged and so determined was his charge that the roughs scattered, and Willy sat down abruptly on the pavement—dazed.

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



He and his valiants of the Third had given a good account of themselves; but, like the Removites and the Fourth-Formers, they had been outnumbered from the first. So they had fared just as badly.

Handforth, in chasing the enemy, had run into a policeman. The policeman promptly grabbed him, and began marching him off to the station.

Just as promptly, Willy, yelling to Church, McClure, and others, dashed up. The policeman was bowled over, and Handforth was rescued. By the time another policeman arrived on the scene, attracted by his fellow officer's whistle, the culprits had vanished.

But it was another incident which went down as a black mark against St. Frank's.

The scandalised townspeople of Bannington, not knowing all the circumstances, blamed the school for this latest outbreak. At St. Frank's itself, practically every telephone in the various buildings was ringing at once. People were calling up the different Housemasters—they were insistently ringing up the Head. Everybody was full of dramatic information concerning the desperate and shocking battle which had been taking place.

So, when the warriors, muddy and battered and bruised, began to trickle back to the school, the masters and prefects were ready.

"PEP FOR THE SAINTS!"

By E. S. BROOKS.

Ulysses Spencer Adams—the Big Boss of the Remove!

With the downfall of Nipper, Adams is elected to the captaincy. Like a human cyclone the hustling American junior sets out to pep up the Remove. And gives it the pip. His startling ideas cause sensations—and ructions!

Look out for this lively complete school yarn next week. It's a wow!

"Outlawed!"

David Goodwin gives you more thrills in the next gripping instalment of this magnificent highwayman-adventure serial.

"HANDFORTH'S WEEKLY!"

"Our Round Table Talk."

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

This was an exceptional case—in fact, a unique case—and all the Housemasters were lined up just inside the main gates. As the boys came in they were given their instructions.

"All you Ancient House boys will go straight indoors," Mr. Wilkes was saying repeatedly, as he recognised his own boys. "Go to the bath-rooms, wash yourselves, change, and then go straight into Big Hall."

The boys were dumb for the most part.

They all recognised the stupendous nature of this situation. It was unprecedented. When they reached the Ancient House they found Form-masters and prefects awaiting them. They were spread out on the steps, through the lobby, two or three even being upstairs on the landing. There was no possi-

bility of any boy dodging off to his own study, or anywhere else.

As the war-scarred warriors came in, so they were marched straight upstairs. And it was exactly the same in every House.

It was the greatest sensation St. Frank's had "enjoyed" for many a term. The seniors, generally speaking, were shocked and angry. Everybody was talking about the "good name of the school," and the irresponsibility of these juniors who had brought such a scandal upon St. Frank's.

More than two hours had elapsed before the last of the stragglers came in.

Meanwhile, the first to arrive had long since dressed, and had gone into Big Hall, according to instructions. They looked very different now—although there was scarcely a boy who did not show some mark of battle. They were all scared, too—badly scared.

It was a wearisome wait for the early arrivals. But all things come to an end in time, and at length the entire Junior School, with two exceptions, had turned up. Even then nothing definite was known. The prefects and the masters called the roll, and every name was answered—excepting for those two.

Then it was rumoured that Doyle of the West House and Billy Nation of the Modern House were in the Bannington Hospital.

Doyle was unconscious, suffering from concussion. He had evidently been hit hard in one of the struggles, and, in falling, he had struck the back of his head on the pavement—and the roughs who had attacked him had bolted. Doyle had been found by a policeman. Billy Nation was suffering from a broken arm—but, as it turned out, the fracture was comparatively slight. Considering the nature of the battle, it was a wonder that the casualty list was not ten times larger.

On this occasion, not only Inspector Jameson visited the school, but also the Mayor of Bannington himself, accompanied by at least three town councillors. In a heated interview with the Head they expressed their indignation and demanded an inquiry. Nelson Lee needed all his tact and diplomacy to placate the irate gentlemen.

Finally, when the whole school was assembled in Big Hall, the headmaster himself came upon the platform.

"There is no need for me to make any reference to what has happened in Bannington this afternoon," said Nelson Lee, his voice as cold as ice. "I am shocked and grieved that my trust in the Junior School has been so grossly abused."

There was a faint murmur of protest.

"It wasn't our fault, sir!" Handforth managed to say. "We didn't start it."

"I gave you permission to play a football match this afternoon," continued Nelson Lee. "I shall not make any reference to the cause of the disgraceful riot which took place at that match. I am not in a position to make any statement until the most stringent inquiries have been conducted. But I do know that the Junior School has brought disgrace upon the good name of

St. Frank's. Bannington is out of bounds indefinitely."

The school was silent; it had expected this piece of news.

"Does that mean for everybody, sir?" one senior plucked up courage to ask.

"It applies only to the Junior School," replied the Head. "But I must take this opportunity of warning the Senior School that it would be well advised to keep out of the town. For their own safety, the boys of the Senior School had better leave Bannington severely alone."

There were murmurs of protest in the Senior School.

"For the rest, St. Frank's will carry on as usual," said Lee. "All boys will return to their Houses; and those with injuries will report immediately to their House-masters. I have decided that all boys of the Junior School are equally guilty for this afternoon's orgy of fighting. Every junior boy will, therefore, receive an imposition of one thousand lines."

It was the final blow—the stunning knock-out. Battered and bruised as they were, the juniors felt positively groggy at this pronouncement. A thousand lines each!

If Nipper had been unpopular before, he was now hated—not by a mere section of the Junior School, but by ninety per cent of it.

CHAPTER 17.

Knocked Off his Perch!

FOR Nipper, unjustly enough, was blamed for everything.

It was he who had insisted upon the Hotspurs fixture being kept. It was he who had insisted from the first that friendly relations with the town boys could be restored if only the match was played.

And what was the result?

The boys had gone over for that match; the match had developed into a riot, and they had come home battered wrecks. Bannington was out of bounds, and every boy in the Junior School had to do a thousand lines!

And all through Nipper!

Pandemonium was let loose after the school had been dismissed. Fully half the boys had decided to go straight to bed, so exhausted had they been feeling, but now they never thought of bed. They had even forgotten tea.

The worst trouble was in the Ancient House. The Removites, crowding into the Common-room, were all shouting at once. Nipper, listening, felt bitter. What had he done to deserve this?

"Where's Nipper?"

"Yah! Turn him out!"

"Resign—resign!"

"Down with Nipper!"

"A thousand lines each!"

"Good gad! I mean to say, chuck it, dash you!" protested Archie Glenthorne, as he was being hustled about. "It's fright-

fully rotten, having to write a thousand lines I mean, but, odds injustice and piffle, why blame Nipper?"

"Good man, Archie," roared Handforth, who had recovered all his old aggressiveness. "Why blame Nipper? He didn't start that riot, did he?"

"Just what I'm saying, old thing," nodded Archie brightly.

"I'm not talking to you—I'm talking to these fatheads!" said Handforth, glaring at the crowd. "Nipper took the team over to Bannington to keep that fixture. He'd given his promise—and all honour to him for taking the risk. Look at me! I'm pretty battered, aren't I? I enjoy a scrap as much as anybody, but I've got sense enough to see that Nipper was doing his best for the Form—for the whole Junior School! And any rotter who runs him down——"

"Yah! Shut up!"

"You're as bad as he is!"

Handforth was shouted down, much to his astonishment and anger.

"Nothing can alter the fact that it was Nipper's idea to go to Bannington," said De Valerie. "Plenty of us warned him—to or three chaps even resigned their positions in the team, although they were dotty enough to play, after all."

"Not so dotty," said Fullwood, with a glare. "I was against Nipper at first—but I was an ass. I'm with him now."

"Thanks, Fully, old man," said Nipper quietly.

"Rats! Nothing to thank me for," replied Fullwood. "You just did your duty as Junior captain—and because you did your duty, these thoughtless fatheads are turning on you."

Automatically, instinctively, those fellows who rallied round Nipper now took their stand by his side. They included such stalwarts as Handforth & Co., Travers, Fullwood, Archie Glenthorne, Tregellis-West, Watson and Jimmy Potts. Most of the others kept to the opposite side of the Common-room.

"I want to say a few words——" began Nipper.

"Yah! Shut up!"

"We don't want to hear any words from you."

"You rotters!" bellowed Handforth. "He's your captain, isn't he? Give him a hearing!"

So violent was his tone that the rank and file calmed down.

"All I want to say is this," said Nipper quietly. "If you fellows expect me to admit that I was in the wrong, you'll have to go on expecting! That fight this afternoon was none of my making. I insisted upon taking my team over because the fixture was a League one, and it had to be played. In addition to that, I wanted to show the town that we, for our part, were not anxious to keep up the quarrel. In that respect I succeeded. The town itself is responsible for what happened to-day. Why blame me?"

Nipper was aggressive in spite of his quietness. The unfairness of his antagonists riled him—and hurt. It made him sad to think that the Form was so ready to turn against him.

Before the trouble could spread any further, deputations arrived from the West House, the Modern House and the East House. They all told the same story. Nipper was blamed; his resignation was demanded.

"I can't see how you can get out of the responsibility," said Armstrong of the East House. "What about those meetings we held the other day? Didn't we all decide that it would be madness to play football against the 'Spurs? We knew what kind of blighters they were, and we came to the conclusion that they weren't worthy of being included in the St. Frank's League. The best thing we could have done to show what we thought of them was to scratch the match."

"Hear, hear!"

"Of course!"

"But Nipper is Junior captain," went on Armstrong sarcastically. "He's the Big Noise! He came out with the edict that the game shall be played! Well, you know what happened! Was it played?"

"I'll tell the world it wasn't!" said Adams. "Listen to me, boys! I've got a dandy notion! What you guys need is a nifty, peppy leader."

"Yes, rather!"

"Good old Adams!"

Nipper listened bitterly. He knew why so many of the boys were ready to rally round Ulysses Spencer Adams. Practically all the fellows who could lead the Remove were on Nipper's side. The rank and file, in short, were leaderless. And of them all, Adams was perhaps the strongest. They naturally turned to him.

"I've heard enough," said Nipper suddenly, his voice unusually harsh. "There's no need to take a vote. The majority of you want me to resign, don't you?"

"Yes!" went up a mighty roar.

"Very well, then—I resign," said Nipper.

The announcement was greeted with derisive cheers.

So it came about that Nipper, the once universally popular captain of the Junior School, was cast overboard. He, like St. Frank's, was in disgrace.

Who would be elected the new captain?

Everything pointed to Ulysses Spencer Adams of New York, U.S.A., achieving that honour. He would need all his peppy American ideas—and not a few English ones—to carry him through!

THE END.

("Pep For the Saints!" is the title of next week's rollicking St. Frank's yarn. Read how Adams becomes captain of the Remove; how the hustling American junior sets out to pep up his Form-fellows. Don't miss this corking story, chums.)

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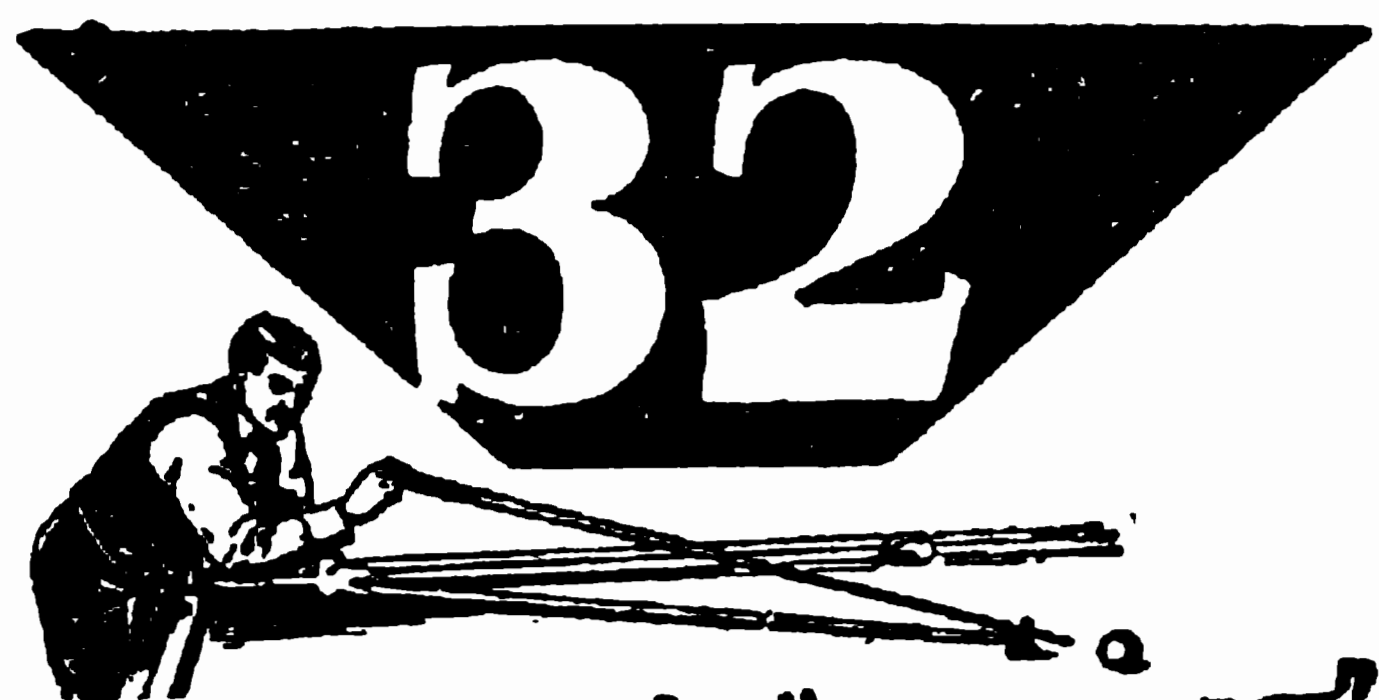
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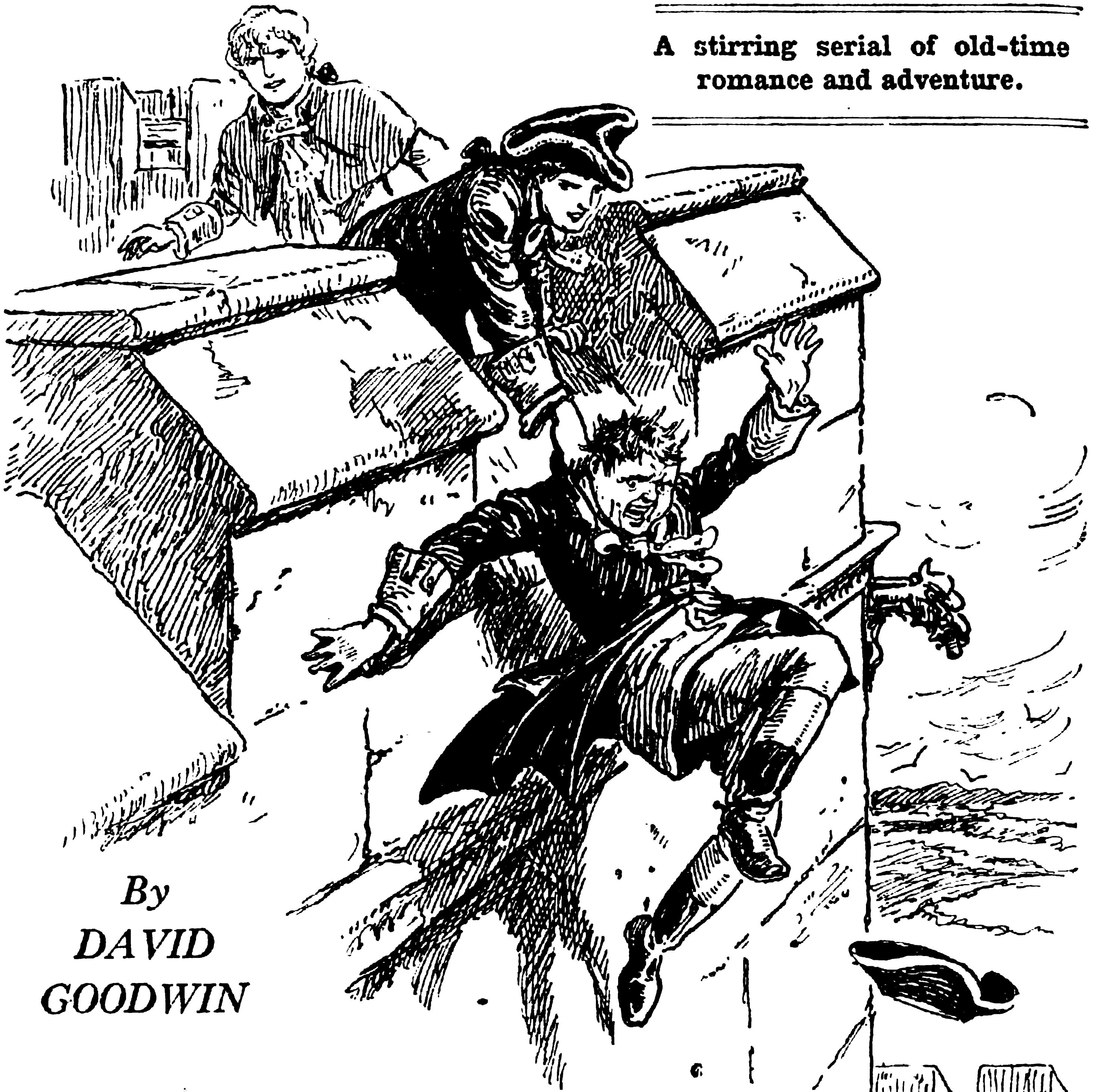
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FREE

Dick Forrester forces a sheriff to eat his own words.

Outlawed!

**A stirring serial of old-time
romance and adventure.**



By
**DAVID
GOODWIN**

Forced to Flee!

"**E**COD, 'tis mighty intriguing! I wonder where this business is leading me?" muttered Dick Forrester to himself, as he rode through the park of Tolleshunt Towers in the morning sun. "Not that I care the snap of a finger—but what I fear is that my presence may bring harm to Durisdeer. And what of King James and his chances?"

Dick had sat long with Durisdeer the night before, and heard much, and the upshot of it all caused him to wonder

what sort of a leader James Stuart might be. He had made but a poor show in '15. Rightful King of England in the direct line he might be, but Dick was a man of action, and he was not anxious to ride under a prince who would never strike a strong blow for his own. The Forresters were fighting men first and plotters after, for all their quick wits.

"'Od's blood! Were I James I would not be skulking in Italy, but rallying good swordsmen round me," thought Dick. "If he's one of that mind, here's a horse and a sword for him; but to lie low and plot and plan is too weary work for me. I'll leave that to others, but I'll pledge Durisdeer to be by his side in twelve hours when James Stuart lands, though he have but twenty men to march on to London."

"But for the rest, I am here on false pretences. Durisdeer does not know me for Dick the Highwayman, and burn me if I could tell him while his daughter is here! I never saw a prettier maid, nor a prouder. 'Twould hurt my pride beyond healing to see her scorn when she learned I was a knight of the roads. Nay, this is a passing pleasant house, but I will go back and pledge myself to Durisdeer, and trouble him no more till my sword is needed. But who comes yonder, heading for the little gate?"

A stealthy looking fellow came up the lane, and was making for the gate that opened upon a small path leading by the longest way to the Towers. When the man saw Dick he shrank back into the hedge.

"Yonder goes one who is not wishful to have his errand spied upon," said Dick to himself. "Whatever it may be, I will ride by and give no sign that I have seen him, whereby I may learn the more."

From the corner of his eye Dick saw the fellow, who was clad in russet jerkin and breeches, come furtively from his hiding-place again and make for the park gate. Plainly he was bound for the Towers.

"Yonder knave means no good!" muttered Dick, and he was just about to ride forward and ask the fellow his business, when suddenly two mounted men came thundering round the corner, and, riding down the furtive person in the russet jacket so that he rolled head-over-heels in the dust, sprang from their horses and held him down.

Never had Dick seen anyone fight so desperately. The prostrate man drew a dagger and stabbed one of his captors in the arm, and when that was taken from him, he bit and kicked and struggled and scratched like a wild cat. But the two men knelt on him and searched his clothes diligently. They found in his jacket a sealed letter, and when it was taken from him the fellow resisted no more.

"'Od's fish!" said Dick, riding to the scene. "What midday drama is this that I have happened upon?"

The man who held the letter looked up and, seeing the well-dressed horseman, touched his hat.

"Order o' t' sheriff, sir," he said, and at the same moment Dick heard the sounds of galloping horses swiftly approaching.

"Zounds!" thought Dick. "This is no place for me then. Yet if yonder be the sheriff coming, and I so near Durisdeer's house, 'twould have a very ill appearance if I were to gallop off at the sound of his name. Perchance he will not know me."

Round the bend came a stout little man on an iron-grey horse, with two more men behind him, all riding like the wind. The little man was the Sheriff of Hensleydale. Purple in the face with hard riding, he pulled up with a jerk alongside the prisoner.

"Have you found it? Had he it about him?" he cried.

"Here it be, y'r worship," said one of the men, handing up the sealed letter.

The sheriff tore it open and read the contents.

"Ah!" he said fiercely. "'Od's wounds! But a man is a fool to traffic with treason in my district. I am not to be tricked. Egad! My Lord Durisdeer's head stands shaking on his shoulders. Would that King George had such a man as me in every county!"

He broke off and stared ferociously at Dick, whom he saw now for the first time. The little man swelled like a frog with

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 next 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. They are pursued by Riders, but make their escape after a fierce fight. Turpin goes off on a mission, arranging to meet Dick three days later. Sweeney makes numerous attempts on Dick's life, but every time the young outlaw eludes him. Searching for Turpin, he falls into an ambush laid by the footpad leader, and is rescued only just in time by Lord Durisdeer. Accepting his hospitality, Dick discovers that Durisdeer is a Jacobite who is secretly plotting to put the exiled James upon the English throne.

(Now read on.)

pompousness and wrath. Dick, cool and smiling, returned his gaze.

"Ah!" exclaimed the sheriff. "Who are you? What do you here amid these treasonable matters?"

"I humbly admire the zeal and courage of King George's Sheriff of Hensleydale," said Dick.

"You do well, sir—you do well," said the sheriff fiercely. "And I trust you do no worse, or ill betide you! Mount, men, and follow me. You, Jack Grant, ride back and call up the rest of the posse. Give them my orders as I instructed you."

And the sheriff moved swiftly away with his men. Dick remained where he was, smiling gently, till they were out of sight round the corner.

Then, looking grave indeed, he wheeled Satan quickly round, and, galloping along the grass by the side of the lane to deaden the sound, he made a wide circle of the park at full speed. Clearing a high fence in magnificent style, he raced towards the north side of Tolleshunt Towers, hoping to get there before the sheriff. He found his host by the north door.

"Up, my Lord Durisdeer!" he cried. "The sheriff has taken the messenger with a Jacobite letter meant for you, and he is even now coming up the park with his men!"

"Ah!" said Lord Durisdeer, and his face grew grim and white. "So soon? Then this means my ruin before even I strike a blow for my prince. The groom there! Saddle my horse and Mistress Phyllis' instantly. We must ride for our lives!"

"Nay, burn it, sir! You have forty stout fellows about the house," said Dick. "Surely we can make a stand for it."

"And they can pin us here and bring five hundred of George's men against us," said Durisdeer bitterly. "To attempt it is madness."

"Ay, that is what I did with Fernhall!" muttered Dick.

"Our only chance is to fly. Then I may be able to settle matters abroad, and so save our ruin. Will that groom be all day? Ah, here are the horses, and here is Phyllis!"

Very pale, but calm, the girl came down the steps. She cast a glance of gratitude at Dick. In a moment she and her father were in the saddle.

"Ride to the eastward," cried Dick. "Spur and spare not. If you can win to Hull and take ship, all will be well. I will hold the sheriff and his men as long as I may!"

Dick Turns the Tables!

WITH a farewell salute, Lord Durisdeer and his daughter galloped away, and Dick rode round the house to meet the sheriff. But when he reached the front there were but two of the horsemen, and no one else to be seen. Dick trotted down the main road through the park, but met nobody. What had become of the posse?

Wondering greatly, he rode all round the park and lanes, seeing no one save a sheriff's man here and there. They looked at him curiously, but did not challenge him. He turned back and rode again towards the Towers.

"'Od's death!" he exclaimed, and his heart sank like lead as he stared before him.

The sheriff and six men were riding slowly back to the Towers from the northward, and in their midst rode Lord Durisdeer, pale, bareheaded, his face bleeding, his clothes torn and dusty from a heavy fall. Four of the six horsemen each held a pistol levelled at his lordship, and, outside the posse, weeping piteously, rode Mistress Phyllis.

"Zounds!" muttered Dick, reining back beside the wall of the house. "He is in the toils at last. Yonder sheriff is less a fool than I thought. He has cut my lord off and ridden him down. I see little hope here. If I ride in to attempt a rescue, they will shoot him and myself, too."

"So, my lord, we have you fast!" snorted the sheriff, as the posse halted before the door. "As fast as though you were in Hensleydale Gaol. Fear not, you shall be there anon, and I'll stay you from the executioner."

Durisdeer made no reply.

"Dismount from your horse," said the sheriff. "John Foster, bring up the rest of the men, and then ride on to Henleysdale and call out a troop of Dragoons. Whether they will be here before night, I know not; so till then, my Lord Durisdeer, I will imprison you in your own tower! I move not from here without the Dragoons. I have suspicions of other Jacobite gentry in these parts, and there shall be no chance of rescue given, I promise you."

Durisdeer dismounted, slowly and painfully.

"But for my daughter," he said, "you would not have taken me alive, Master Sheriff!"

"Brave words," sneered the sheriff. "Think not that you could have prevailed against me, daughter or no daughter. There lives not in England the man who

can worst me, be he lord or highwayman. Now, march before me into the tower. I know the strong-room at the top, and there you shall lie till I am ready to move you. Man, give me one of those pistols, and remain to guard the house."

He took one of his underling's pistols and marched my lord into the tower. Durisdeer might have been the captor and the pompous little sheriff the captive, so tall and dignified did the old peer look, despite his hurts.

Dick, seeing how matters were going, slipped away to the back, walked Black Satan into an open stall in the stable, and then returned to the turret. One of the sheriff's men was pacing up and down on sentry-go. Dick waited till his back was turned on the forward march and slipped into the tower.

Walking softly on the old stone steps, he followed captor and captive up the stairway, and the sheriff's throaty voice drowned the sound of Dick's footsteps. Dick, having risen early that morning, had explored the old tower, and knew every part of it.

"You little thought to be made a prisoner in your own strong-room, my lord," sneered the sheriff, as they came to the last storey of the tower. "Here is the door. Enter without delay."

"I beg your pardon, Master Sheriff," said Dick.

The sheriff wheeled round with a startled oath on hearing the voice. Instantly he clapped the muzzle of his pistol to Dick's chest.

"Who are you?" he roared. "What do you here? Speak, or I fire!"

Dick smiled blandly.

"My admiration and respect for you, Master Sheriff, have drawn my otherwise unwilling feet up these stairs. I thought it my duty to inform you that you are about to put my Lord Durisdeer in a very unsafe prison."

"'Od's death! What is that to you?" shouted the sheriff. "Do I not know this

house as I know my own? Unsafe, quotha! Down the stairs with you, sirrah, or I shoot! This is some trick."

"Your pardon," said Dick. "My meaning was that Lord Durisdeer might escape, which would be a very lamentable thing. Nay, hear me! I do not mean that any man could get the better of the only and unequalled Sheriff of Hensleydale. But consider. There may be secret passages and traps in this old tower which my lord, having lived here all his life, should surely know. I speak as one who knows the house. I desire but to give your worship a hint that might be of service. How tragic would it be were my lord to escape!"

Lord Durisdeer and the sheriff stared at Dick in astonishment. So solemnly and warningly did he utter the words that the sheriff grew uneasy.

"Secret passages?" he snapped. "Bah! Then if the strong-room be unsafe where may one be certain? What other cell is there?"

"Through the small arch to the left and up those stairs," said Dick, "one may come upon a much more desirable spot. May I have the honour of showing you?"

The sheriff reflected.

"Do you lead the way then," he snapped, "and my lord next. Remember that I walk behind with my pistol."

Dick bowed solemnly and led the way up the narrow stair. Durisdeer came next, and after him the sheriff. They found themselves not in a room nor a cell, but on the platform of the turret itself, forming the very summit of Tolleshunt Towers, with the battlements for a railing, a forty-mile view over Yorkshire on every side, and a sheer drop of ninety feet to the ground. The moment the sheriff saw this he stamped his foot.

"Fool," he cried savagely, "what is this? We are on the turret."

"Master Sheriff, you say truly," said Dick, and, like a flash, leapt forward.

The next instant the sheriff found the pistol knocked flying from his hand, his coat-collar seized in an iron grip, and himself hanging over the battlements by the scruff of his neck, with ninety feet between his boot-soles and the ground.

"And now," said Dick blandly, "by your worship's leave, we will discuss the situation!"

A Sheriff Eats His Evidence!

THE sheriff gave a shriek that echoed all down the walls of the tower, causing frightened sparrows to flutter away from their nests in the ivy.

"Help! Treason! Murder!"

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He struggled wildly for a moment, and then turned a round, terrified white face up to Dick, who smiled down at him benevolently. The young highwayman was leaning easily against the battlements, holding his worship's collar with a firm grip, while the fat little man dangled helplessly over space.

"Pull me up!" cried the sheriff wildly. "Oh, excellent young man, pull me up! Would you drop me to my death?"

"Not for worlds," replied Dick. "I hope, nevertheless, that your coat is of good, stout cloth. Listen! Did I not hear it tear a little?"

His worship uttered a low moan.

"Pull me up!" he gasped.

"You have already said that," remarked Dick. "I pray you think of something new."

"I shall be dashed into a thousand pieces!" wailed the sheriff. "How can I jest?"

"I did not ask you to jest," replied Dick. "The situation is most serious. What think you, Durisdeer?"

"I humbly conceive," said Lord Durisdeer, "that his worship is of that opinion."

"I am undone," moaned the sheriff.

"I trust your coat is not," said Dick, "or you will descend the tower more rapidly than you mounted it. And now, Master Sheriff, we will come to business of State. In your breast-fob is a letter which, in my opinion, will hang Lord Durisdeer."

"I will never give it up!" cried the sheriff desperately. "You shall not have it from me!"

"There is nothing on earth I desire less," said Dick, swaying the sheriff gently to ease his arm. "I admire your zeal. The letter you won by great endeavours, and it shall be yours. Eat it!"

The sheriff gasped and squirmed. He stole an appealing look at Dick, but the young outlaw's face was set determinedly.

"It is close upon noon," said Dick, "and you should be hungry. Also, you weigh more than I thought, and I feel my grasp slipping. Ah, you have the letter! I wish you good appetite."

"I cannot!" panted the sheriff.

"I give you but twelve ticks of the clock for your luncheon," said Dick, "after which, if the letter is not eaten, I fear you will spoil my lord's gravel walk."

"Pull me up! My lord shall go free," wailed the sheriff.

"My fingers are weakening," said Dick, "and the twelve seconds are nearly up."

Frantically his worship took the fatal letter, tore at it with his teeth, and swal-

lowed it with gaspings and splutterings. In five seconds the whole of it had gone.

"There was no need to be so greedy," remarked the young highwayman, with a faint smile; "but no matter, you shall rest after the meal."

And raising himself he heaved the sheriff up and over the battlements again, and set him on his feet upon the turret's top. The fat man panted and wheezed, looking from Dick to Lord Durisdeer and back.

"Here come your men, Master Sheriff," said Dick pleasantly, as the sound of footsteps were heard on the stone stairs.

"Ay, and there are by now thirty more below!" cried his worship furiously. "And the pair of you will be safe in Hensleydale Gaol within the hour."

Dick smiled serenely.

"With all my heart," he said. "Come, my Lord Durisdeer, let us go with Master Sheriff. We shall there relate the story of how his worship, to stay his avaricious stomach, devoured the king's evidence. All Yorkshire shall revel in the tale."

My Lord Durisdeer bowed to the sheriff and laughed softly. He held out his hand to Dick, and they shook hands warmly. His worship paused and stood thinking.

"Gentlemen," he said slowly, "I have no wish to be hard on you."

"Nay, we shall enjoy it," returned Dick, beaming. "'Tis not every day one has such a tale to tell."

"The letter is gone——" began the sheriff.

"Ah," said Dick, "what letter? My Lord Durisdeer, have you heard of any letter?"

"Nay; surely there was no letter," said my lord.

"I agree most cordially," cried the sheriff, cheering up. "We were all mistaken. There could have been no letter."

His round fat face cleared. After all, none from the courtyard could have seen him when he was dangling from the battlements. A sheriff lives upon his dignity. It must be preserved at all costs. What a tale to go the round of the Ridings!

"My Lord Durisdeer," he said, coughing, "I take my leave. I—hem—I trust I may have no future occasion to thrust myself upon you for disloyalty."

"You overwhelm me," said my lord, bowing low.

So the sheriff gathered his men together and rode forth. The sturdy serving-men of Tolleshunt, who had armed themselves for a fight, saw them go in amazement. Lord Durisdeer turned to Dick.

"I am your servant to the death, sir," he said. "Your ready wit and quick

(Continued on page 44.)

Chums, don't delay—write to the Editor to-day.



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I WONDER how many readers of the Old Paper can equal your fine record, James E. Tweed (Peak Crossing, Queensland)?

A reader for fifteen years! It's only a little over sixteen years since the first number appeared, and less than fifteen years since the first St. Frank's story appeared in it. So you are well qualified to sit at this Round Table of ours. In fact, quite near to my own chair, amongst the old-timers. No, Mr. Brooks and Mr. Brearley are not one and the same. Neither is Mr. Kenneth Brookes, the artist, in any way related to Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks, the author.

* * *

Nipper has occasionally piloted an aeroplane, Jack Godden (Hilton, South Australia) on account of the excellent tuition given him by his guardian, Mr. Nelson Lee. He is one of the youngest people in England to be granted an official pilot's certificate. There is no other boy at St. Frank's with that proud possession. Bellton is not quite two miles from Bannington. There are no Australians in the Sixth Form at St. Frank's—at least, none has appeared in the stories—but Gilbert Kingsford, of the Ancient House, hails from Queensland, and is a hundred per cent "dinkum Aussie."

* * *

Three final pen sketches of Sixth-Formers. **CEDRIC TAYLOR.** An unobtrusive senior who scarcely ever ventures out. Very studious. Has an idea that he is an invalid, and keeps indoors six days out of the week. Unsociable to a degree, but not because of any unpleasant streak in his nature. He just loves solitude; but on the rare occasions when he does join his fellow seniors, he is amiability itself. **HILARY VICKERS.** Very much of a silly ass. A senior edition of Archie Glenthorne, except that Vickers is really a chump, and Archie isn't. Other

fellows play practical jokes on him with impunity. An amiable fellow, always good-natured, but far too simple ever to shoulder the responsibilities of a prefect. **GEORGE WILSON.** A terror to the fags, owing to his passion for orderliness. A learned senior is Wilson, and he likes his study and everything belonging to him to be "just so."

* * *

Mr. Horace Pyecraft, the master of the Fourth Form, presides in the East House, G. H. Ballard (Mitcham). Mr. Alington Wilkes is the Housemaster of the Ancient House, and, naturally, lives there. You may rely upon Mr. Brooks to bring Willy Handforth to the fore at fairly frequent intervals. Edward Oswald Handforth, of course, is always throwing his weight about, and won't let himself be kept out of the stories.

* * *

Yes, Harold Ellis (Bradford), "Robert W. Comrade" is a pen-name which is sometimes used by Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks. Archie Glenthorne is not the richest junior in the school, although he always has plenty of money to throw about. The Hon. Douglas Singleton, who was once known as "The Spendthrift," is considerably richer, since he has a great deal of money in his own right, whereas most of the other "rich" fellows are dependent upon the generosity of their wealthy parents or guardians.

* * *

The headmaster at St. Frank's prior to Mr. Nelson Lee's appointment, Philippa Foote (Deal), was Dr. Morrison Nicholls. Nipper's girl chum is Mary Summers. Willy Handforth is not so fond of fighting as his elder brother, but the majority of the Third-Formers can vouch for his fistic abilities. As a rule Willy prefers strategy to violence. But he is always ready for violence if strategy fails.

OUTLAWED!

(Continued from page 42.)

courage have saved me, my life, my daughter my title and fortune."

"I rejoice to have been able to pay some part of my debt to you," said Dick. "And now, by your leave, I will make my most cordial farewells, and ride forth from Tolleshunt."

"Ride forth!" cried Durisdeer, as they descended from the stairs. "No, by heaven, you shall not! My house is yours, sir, and unless you scorn my poor hospitality, I beg you to stay."

"I must go onward," said Dick, "though I would give much to remain. It is rather you who would scorn me, did you know who I am."

"Can you think me so base?" cried Durisdeer hotly, as they reached the gravel. "Were you a forfeited felon I would welcome you the more."

"You are not so far out," said Dick, whistling for Satan, who came trotting towards him from the stables. "Do you not call to mind hearing of this horse? He is called Black Satan."

"Black Satan?" cried Phyllis, my lord's daughter, who had just joined them. "Then you—"

"I am Richard Forrester of Fernhall, known to wayfarers as Galloping Dick! A highwayman and an outlaw—no more!"

"Ah, something more!" cried the girl, her eyes flashing. "A gallant gentleman, to whom we owe our lives! Father, do not let him go like this!"

"Nay, he shall not go were he Dick Turpin himself!" vowed Durisdeer. "Shall I lose my preserver and King James a good sword?"

"As to King James," said Dick, "when there is something better to do than drink his health, I am his man. I promise you, Durisdeer, that the day he lands to march on London and fight for the throne, I will join you for the venture. I am fain to own to you that I care not a rap whether Stuart or Hanover reigns at St. James', but I will ride with the king who will show the best sport, and has the longest odds against him."

"With regard to the name you mentioned, Turpin is my comrade, and I go to seek him now. I have too much regard for you to remain and bring trouble on your house, for did the fat sheriff know who I was he would soon be down on you again. So farewell, my Lord Durisdeer and Mistress Phyllis. Should you ever need a good sword or a pair of ready pistols against your enemies, tell it to the gipsy folk of the woodlands, and Dick Forrester will be beside you before the need is past."

And, despite all they could do to detain him, Dick swept off his hat and galloped away down the park, leaving them to regret the loss of an outlawed highwayman.

(More stirring adventures befall your highwayman pal in next week's enthralling instalment of this popular serial. Order your copy now.)

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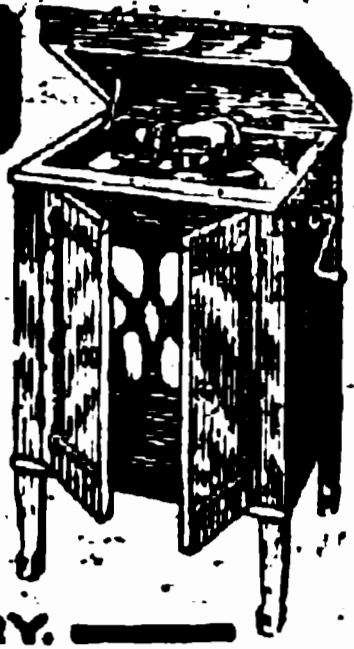
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