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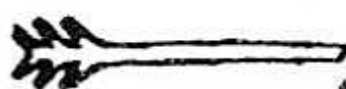
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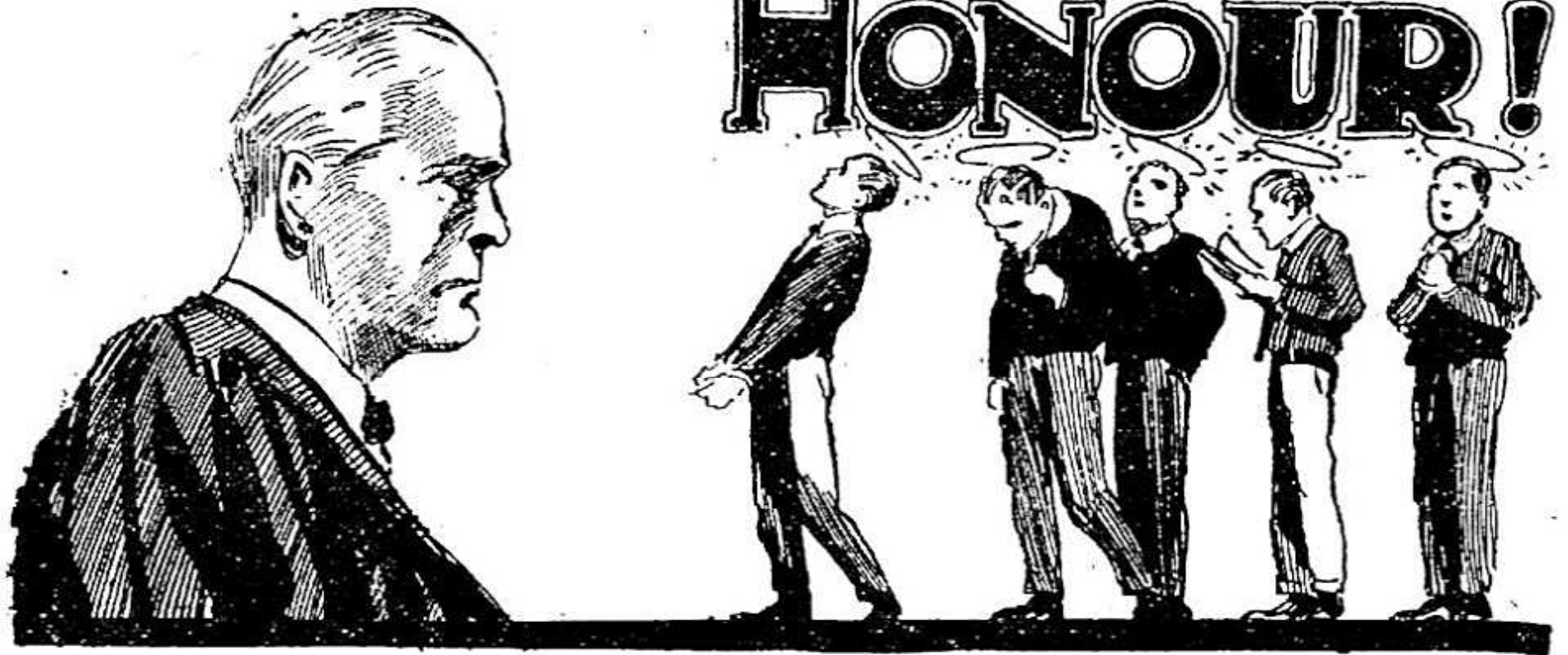
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# ST. FRANK'S ON ITS HONOUR!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

*This week's stunning long complete yarn of the Boys of St. Frank's is the opening story of a powerful new series. Get all your friends to read it!*

## CHAPTER 1.

### THE CRASH IN THE DARK!

"CHUCK it, Handy, you ass!" said Church, in alarm.  
"Chuck what?" demanded Handforth.

"You'll have us in the ditch at this rate!" gasped Church, clinging to the side of the car. "We must be doing forty!"

Handforth switched on the dashboard light, and glanced at the speedometer.

"Forty-eight, to be exact," he said complacently. "We're late enough already, and we can't afford to loiter. It's nearly eleven o'clock!"

Church wisely refrained from making any further remark. He knew well enough that if he urged Handforth to slow down, Handforth would only go faster. The famous chums of Study D were speeding towards St. Frank's College in the darkness of the autumn evening, and their journey from London was nearly over. They were only eight miles from Bannington—and then, of course, it was only another three to St. Frank's. Handforth reckoned to be home by eleven-thirty.

It had been a special occasion.

Edward Oswald Handforth had spent the day in London, at the express wish of his parents, who had, of course, fixed everything up with the Head. Handforth's pater had wanted both his sons to be in town that day to join in the welcome of an uncle, just home from the East.

Willy, naturally, had gone up by train, and had arrived back at the school in strict accordance with the permit. But his major had insisted upon going up to London in his Austin Seven, and he had succeeded in getting his two faithful chums included in the pass.

Of course, Handforth had started out from London with the strict intention of getting to St. Frank's by eight-thirty—the actual time-limit of the permit. It was just like this super-optimist to believe that he could do the trip without even a minute of margin. The possibility of minor mishaps never occurred to him.

On the whole, the run from London had been uneventful. True, a tyre had become flat after twenty miles of the journey had been covered, and Handforth had insisted upon repairing it, instead of utilising his

spare wheel. An hour had slipped dreamily while Handforth was searching for a puncture that didn't exist. In the end, he had discovered that the valve was faulty, and that he needn't have taken the tube out at all.

Then, a mile or two further along, he had run out of petrol. Running out of petrol was one of Handforth's pet hobbies. Church and McClure had warned him, they had urged him to carry a spare can, but, with his usual superiority, he had scoffed at their fears. And the car had run out of "juice" just in that spot where cars always *do* run out of juice—about five miles from anywhere!

Until that minute, they had been passing cars and lorries by the dozen, and Handforth had even remarked upon the crowded state of the road. But as soon as they ran out of petrol, there wasn't a car to be seen. The empty road mocked at them, and another half-hour passed gracefully.

At last a touring car had come in sight, and the genial owner had supplied the stranded schoolboys with a gallon of petrol. Handforth had insisted upon paying for it, and the genial motorist had insisted upon presenting them with the spirit. Net result—another half-hour wasted in argument.

In Helmford, in spite of Church and McClure's anxiety, Handforth had spent an hour in a tea-shop. How could they expect to arrive hale and hearty if they starved themselves on the way? A five-minute snack would make little or no difference, for this brief delay could easily be made up. But Handforth seemed to have a very peculiar notion of five minutes.

"Yes," he remarked, as he opened the throttle wider, "we can't afford to loiter, my lads! And you'd better prepare the yarn you're going to tell Mr. Lee! He'll probably want to know why we're three hours late!"

"Yarn?" said McClure. "What yarn? Are you trying to blame us for this? You know jolly well that we advised you to start hours before you did!"

"We shan't get home at all, by the look of it," said Church bitterly. "We're more likely to be picked up and taken to the hospital!"

Handforth was certainly speeding. The road was clear, and the little Austin was purring along valiantly. But in such a small car, a speed of nearly fifty miles an hour seemed positively terrifying.

"It's a pity if you can't trust my driving," said Handforth tartly. "All you've got to do is to sit behind there and take things easily. Leave the driving to me, and we'll be home in less than half an hour."

He changed his position, lolling back luxuriously behind the wheel. He even rested one of his feet on the face of the dashboard, for he had become rather cramped after his long spell of driving.

"I say, steady!" protested Church, peering forward through the gloom. "You're not an acrobat, Handy! You can't drive lying down! Don't forget you've got two pas-

sengers! We're not anxious to die, even if you are!"

Handforth laughed, and assumed an even more recumbent position. With one foot on the throttle, he was in perfect control, and, in an emergency, the same foot operated the brake, so he felt that he could afford to take his ease.

"I can drive this car blindfold!" he declared calmly. "If it came to it, I could drive her even if I was facing backwards. So you can take a nap and—"

"Ugh!" gasped his chums simultaneously.

The little car had suddenly gone over a deep rut, and she bucked so much that Church and McClure were jolted out of their seats. At the same second the car lights snapped out, and Handforth was rudely awakened from his case.

"Whoa!" he gasped. "What the dickens—"

It was a pitchy dark night, and the road was not particularly wide just here. The sudden extinction of the headlights was disconcerting, and Handforth only just managed to pull up in time—in the middle of the road, fortunately, but facing the off-side hedge. It was just on a bend, and but for the swift application of the brakes, the car would have met with a nasty accident.

"Here's a go!" said Handforth, as he climbed out. "The lights have failed!"

"Really?" asked Church, with sarcasm.

"Must be a loose wire—or the batteries might have gone west!" said Handforth anxiously. "Just our luck! These things always happen when we're in a hurry!"

"Wouldn't it be a good idea to look at the switch?" asked McClure.

"Don't be an ass," went on Handforth. "I didn't touch the switch! D'you think I don't know why the lights suddenly fail? It's because there's a wire loose somewhere. We shall have to undo the lamps."

"Yes, but—"

"I don't want any advice from either of you!" interrupted Handforth curtly.

He would have been far more sensible, however, if he had listened to McClure's common-sense suggestion. But he knew well enough that he had not switched off, so what on earth was the good of looking for the trouble in that quarter?

"We'll take the lamps to pieces!" he said briskly. "Where's the electric torch, Mac? Out with it, and show me a light!"

"I haven't got the torch!" growled McClure.

"Haven't got it?" roared Handforth. "Didn't I give it to you before we started?"

"Yes, you did—and then, on second thoughts, you said you'd carry it yourself, to be on the safe side," retorted McClure crossly.

"Great guns!" gasped Handforth. "I left it in the hall, at home!"

"I'll run and fetch it!" said McClure sourly.

"What the dickens are we to do now?" demanded Handforth, scratching his head.

"How can I take these lamps to pieces in the dark? We're miles from anywhere, and it's no good striking matches."

"Not a bit," said Church. "Especially as we haven't got any!"

"Oh, well, we might as well make a night of it," said McClure resignedly. "Let's shove the car into the grass, and go to sleep. Or, better still, have a look at the switch, and continue the trip."

"I didn't touch the switch, I tell you!" snorted Handforth.

"Hi! Look out!" put in Church, in alarm. "There's a car coming! Can't you see the lights showing on the hedge?"

"Bother the car!" said Handforth tartly. "Help me with these lamps!"

It didn't occur to him that his Austin Seven was obstructing the highway, particularly as there were no lights showing on it. And that bend made the position much more acute, for the oncoming driver would know nothing until it was too late.

Handforth bent down in front of his Austin, and wrenched at one of the headlamps. At the same second, a huge saloon came shooting round the bend, lighting up the schoolboys and the Austin with dazzling brilliance.

"Hi!" yelled Church frenziedly.

A shrieking of brakes followed, and the big car pulled up magically. But the driver, in spite of his uncanny skill, just failed to avert a collision. There was a crash, and the Austin was heaved sideways. Handforth was struck by the rim of his off-side headlamp, and he sat down in the road, dazed and bewildered.

The big car backed away slightly, and the solitary occupant climbed out, and looked rather grimly at the boys. Handforth struggled dizzily to his feet, and took no notice of the bruise on his forehead. Although his head was throbbing agonisingly, his thoughts were all for his car. There had been no mistaking that crash.

With his mind full of awful fears, he reeled round to the rear.

He took no notice of the big car, but rushed to his own, which stood in the full glare of the new arrival's great headlamps. And Handforth uttered a wail as he saw an ugly dent in the off-side rear wing. The enamel was chipped off, the wing was slightly buckled, and the dent was deep.

"My car's ruined!" hooted Handforth.

He danced about so madly that Church and McClure felt relieved. There was no doubt about their leader's recovery. He was himself.

The driver of the other car was elderly, but nevertheless upright and brisk, with a clean-shaven face, and iron-grey hair. There was an angry expression on his face.

"What is the meaning of this automobile standing in the road without lights?" he asked sharply. "Oh! You're schoolboys, eh? You ought to be thankful that there wasn't a serious smash."

Handforth gasped.

"There was!" he retorted. "Look at my car!"

"The fault was entirely your own——"

"Look at it!" roared Handforth, pointing. "It's ruined beyond repair! Couldn't you steer clear of it? This Austin isn't as big as a lorry! I want your number! I want your name and address!"

"Steady, my boy—steady!" said the stranger, in a quiet voice. "If you get excited like this, I shall refuse to speak to you at all. The mishap is only a slight one—the damage is trivial. You ought to feel very thankful that your machine was not smashed. Why did you leave it standing without lights?"

Handforth regarded the stranger grimly.

"You're an American, aren't you?" he asked suspiciously. "I can tell it by your tone! What are you doing in England? And it's like your nerve to come along this road at this time of night!"

The stranger, who certainly did speak with an American intonation, ignored Handforth's remarks.

"I think you boys belong to St. Frank's College, don't you?" he asked.

"What's that got to do with my car?" asked Handforth warmly. "If it's all the same to you, sir, I'd like to know your name," he said gruffly. "I've already taken the number of your car."

The stranger laughed.

And, without another word, he went back to his own car, climbed in, and started the engine. Before Handforth could realise his intention, he had glided on, and was swallowed up in the night.

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you had a bit of a nerve to speak to him as you did."

## CHAPTER 2.

THE END OF A PERFECT EVENING!

"E'S gone!" ejaculated Handforth, in alarm. "Quick! Call him back!"

"It's too late, old man," said Church. "After all,

"But look what he's done to my car!" snorted Handforth.

"Blow your car!" retorted Church, his patience entirely exhausted. "Anybody might think it was his fault!"

"Well, wasn't it?"

"Of course it wasn't!" snapped Church. "You hadn't got any lights on, and he was on us before he knew it. It's entirely your own fault for not switching on the lights!"

"Why, you—you——"

"Like this!" said McClure, pulling at the switches.

"Great Scott!" gurgled Handforth.

The lights had come on instantly—as McClure had known they would. But Handforth was startled.

"But—but I didn't switch them off!" he ejaculated. "I thought something had gone wrong with the wiring! Of all the mysterious goes! How on earth did those switches get turned off?"

McClure sighed.

"What else do you expect, when you drive with one foot on the dashboard?" he asked indignantly.

To the relief of his chums, Handforth climbed into the driving seat, and the rest of the journey was accomplished without any further delay. As they had expected, the great pile of St. Frank's was dark. All lights were out, except for a solitary gleam in the lobby of the Ancient House. And Mr. Nelson Lee, the Housemaster, was waiting up. He listened rather grimly while the long tale of delays was recounted.

"Fortunately, I know that you boys are truthful," he said at length. "Under the circumstances, I will excuse you—although you don't deserve it. Put your car up, Handforth, and then go straight to bed."

"Thanks awfully, sir," said Handforth.

The chums of Study D were feeling relieved as they put the car up, and then hurried back to the Ancient House. It was just like their Housemaster to be so jolly decent about the whole affair. As Lee had intimated, he knew Handforth!



### CHAPTER 3.

#### THE HEADMASTER'S GUEST!

R. MALCOLM STAFFORD smilingly shook his head.

"A very plausible theory, Professor Hudson, but I am afraid it would

fall to pieces in practice," he protested. "We, in England, are rather prone to cling to old traditions, and to mistrust these modern ideas from the New World."

"But you are quite wrong, Dr. Stafford," said the other. "This is no mere theory that I am propounding. It has been tried—it had been put into practice. And it has been proved successful."

They were seated in the headmaster's private residence. Breakfast was nearly over,

and the apartment was cheery with the flickering of a bright coal fire.

Dr. Stafford's guest was a refined-looking man—rather elderly, with iron-grey hair. He was clean-shaven, and very alert. A typical American. In short, the gentleman who had encountered Handforth & Co. on the road during the night.

He was quite an important person—being, in fact, a professor of Hale University, one of the most important seats of learning in the United States. He was in England for the purpose of investigating the British educational system at first hand, particularly in regard to the great public schools.

He had gladly accepted an invitation from Dr. Stafford to spend a few days at St. Frank's as the headmaster's guest. Previous to this, however, he had met the school governors, and had obtained their sanction to a certain rather revolutionary proposal.

"You say these theories have been tested?" smiled the Head. "I presume you mean in America?"

"Well, yes."

"America is a new country, Professor Hudson," said the Head. "It will put these things into practice more readily than Great Britain. And am I to understand that the experiment was tried in a great school?"

"It has been tried in schools, in prisons, and in many institutions," replied Professor Hudson. "While admitting that some of these experiments have failed, others have been successful. It all depends upon the type of individual. And here, at St. Frank's, you have the ideal material."

"From your point of view, perhaps—but not from mine," said Dr. Stafford firmly. "I don't want you to think that I have no sympathy with your theory, sir. On the contrary, it is a sound and admirable one—and I have not the slightest doubt that it would be partially successful. At the same time, I would not like to risk the experiment at St. Frank's."

They rose from the table, and went into the Head's study to enjoy a quiet cigar. Professor Hudson stood at the window for a few moments, looking out across the Inner Court towards the imposing Clock Tower and the graceful buildings which comprised the School House.

He sighed, and turned.

"I am genuinely sorry that you cannot see eye to eye with me," he went on, before the Head could speak. "It is all the more to be regretted, because I have the full sanction of the school governors."

"I am afraid they are too easily persuaded," said the Head coldly.

Dr. Stafford was not quite happy. He was a fine old gentleman—one of the real old school. He was the best headmaster that St. Frank's had ever had, and for years he had conducted the school admirably and ably. His name was almost a household word in the scholastic world. And he was a great lover of tradition. He regarded St. Frank's with something very akin to reverence.



While Handy was wrenching at the headlight a great limousine came tearing round the bend. "Hi! Look out!" yelled Church. There followed a shrieking of brakes, and then a crash, as the big car struck the little Austin in the rear.

"Yes, I am afraid the governors are too easily persuaded," repeated the Head thoughtfully. "Sir John Brent has written to me, professor. He has expressed the utmost confidence in your theories, and he and his colleagues are content to leave the matter in my hands. I can accept your proposal, or reject it, at my discretion."

"Sir John informed me that you would have a free hand."

"And I have," nodded the Head. "I cannot possibly entertain—"

"But one moment, sir!" urged Professor Hudson earnestly. "Is this proposition of mine so very appalling, after all? It can be explained in a word. Instead of binding your boys to rules and regulations, you place them on their honour. Won't that have a hundred per cent beneficial effect?"

"Perhaps I am too old-fashioned," smiled the Head. "But I cannot possibly see how any benefits could accrue. You propose that all rules and regulations should cease, and that the entire school should be placed on its honour to attend lessons, to keep bounds, to go to bed at the correct hour, and to arise without compulsion? My dear sir, it is a dream."

"But it cannot fail," insisted the American professor. "These boys of yours are honourable—they are steeped in the tradition, which you so rightly admire. The honour system has succeeded in prisons, among criminals! How, then, can there be any possible risk when that same system is adapted to an establishment such as this—where honour is the keynote of the school's very life?"

The Head pursed his lips.

"I should be sorry to give my consent—and that is all I can say on the matter," he replied. "If you can give me any indication that it might succeed, I would not be so—so—well, obstinate. But how can I receive that indication?"

Professor Hudson laughed.

"If it were within my power, I would do my best to enlighten you this very day," he replied. "Human nature is a wonderful thing, Dr. Stafford. Prohibit a certain thing, and people will want it. Let them have their fill, and their desire for it vanishes. Our own prohibition is a case in point."

"I do not quite see how that applies here."

"But, my dear Dr. Stafford, it is absolutely the same thing," declared the professor. "Your boys are prohibited in a

hundred-and-one ways which we need not enumerate. They are forbidden to do this, and forbidden to do that. They must obey these hidebound conventions—or receive punishment. What is the result? They break the school rules with impunity. Can you deny that not a single day passes without a score of minor rules being broken?"

"The delinquents are punished," said the Head firmly.

"Of course they are," said the professor. "But if there were no rules, there would be no desire to break them. A decent boy, when he is placed on his honour, will keep to his honour far more than he will keep to any regulation. That is the whole point of my argument."

"But with the regulations we are, at least, dealing with something that we know to be definite," retorted the Head. "No, Professor Hudson, we must agree to differ. Ah, the sun is generous to-day," he added, as he went to the window. "May I have the pleasure of conducting you round the school?"

"I shall be delighted," said the guest.

But there was a tone of regret in his voice, for the headmaster's abrupt termination of the argument indicated that he was rock-like in his decision.



#### CHAPTER 4.

##### HANDFORTH'S DISCOVERY!

McCLURE sat up in bed, and yawned.

"Rummy!" he murmured sleepily.

For some moments he had been awake, and he had a vague sensation that there was something different this morning. The rising-bell wasn't ringing, and his two chums were still asleep. But he had an impression that there was something wrong.

"Seems jolly light!" he muttered, as he got out of bed. "Sun's shining, too. Must be time to get up—"

He broke off, staring.

"What's this—eleven o'clock?" he ejaculated, aghast. "What the dickens— Rats! My ticker's gone wrong!"

He went to the window, and looked out. There wasn't a soul in sight in the West Square—proof positive that the school wasn't up yet. It was funny how a chap could get a false impression when he was half awake. All the same, the sun was higher than it ought to have been.

He had a thought, and went to Handforth's clothing. He took out Edward Oswald's watch, and stared. A minute to eleven! This was more than a coincidence, surely? And then, to clinch matters, the school clock chimed, and boomed out eleven strokes.

"My only hat!" said McClure blankly.

And then, of course, he remembered. They hadn't gone to bed until something like midnight, and so they hadn't even heard the rising-bell. And Nelson Lee, no doubt, had

given instructions that they were not to be disturbed. Morning lessons were in full swing, and they were missing them! The door opened, and Nelson Lee himself looked in.

"Ah, McClure, awake?" he asked smilingly.

"Yes, sir," said Mac. "I—I didn't hear the rising-bell, sir! Awfully sorry—"

"You needn't concern yourself, McClure," interrupted Lee. "I have excused you from lessons this morning. How is the patient?"

"The patient, sir?" said McClure. "Oh, you mean Handforth?"

Handforth sat up, probably disturbed by the voices.

"I wish you fatheads would dry up!" he grumbled, rubbing his eyes. "How can a fellow sleep through all this din? Your voice is bad enough, but that other chap's— Eh? Oh, crumbs!" he added, staring at the Housemaster in dismay. "I—I didn't know—"

"Feeling better, Handforth?" asked Lee discreetly.

"Better, sir?"

"I hope your head—"

"Oh, my head, sir," said Handforth, feeling it, and giving a yelp. "Corks! It hurts, sir! I'm all tender in front!"

"Your head's a tender spot, old man," said McClure.

"You ass! If you mean—"

"I think you are well enough to get up, Handforth," interrupted Nelson Lee drily. "But you must keep that plaster on, and if you feel any additional pains in your head—any dizziness, or any unusual symptoms, come and report to me at once. You will all resume your usual work this afternoon."

"Thanks awfully, sir."

The Housemaster went out, and Handforth glared at his reflection in the mirror. Church was awake by this time, and he and McClure were feeling happy. Only half the morning gone, and the rest was theirs! Handforth continued to stare miserably into the mirror.

"What a ghastly sight!" he said bitterly.

McClure glanced round.

"It's no good grumbling about it, Handy," he said gently. "After all, a chap can't help Nature—"

"Nature?" said Handforth, with a start.

"Weren't you talking about your face?"

"No, I wasn't!" roared Handforth.

"But you said something about a ghastly sight—"

"I meant this rotten plaster!"

"Well, you should say what you mean!" retorted Church. "You can't blame us if we jump to a natural conclusion. But you needn't worry about the plaster—it improves your appearance, old man."

"Improves it?" said Handforth. "How?"

"Well, it hides a bit of you up!"

"You—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Church and McClure yelled as they made a dash out of the dormitory for the bathroom. And Handforth, snorting, went on dressing. But he was very worried about that patch of



adhesive plaster on his forehead. He had a horror of being clipped by the other juniors.

Then another thought occurred to him—a thought that made him forget all about his personal appearance. What about his Austin Seven? It had been dark during the night, and he hadn't been able to examine the damage properly. But now it was light—and he had the morning to himself.

He had had a dream—and in it he had seen his little car smashed to a tiny heap of scrap iron. The whole car had been pulverised, and reduced to tiny fragments. It hadn't been a particularly unpleasant dream in other respects, but Handforth regarded it as a ghastly nightmare.

He dressed at a furious speed, and he was only partly conscious of a dull headache. But this, fortunately, was the only after-effect of that knock—except, of course, for a severe tenderness of the affected part.

Although Church and McClure had had a good start, Handforth was ready as soon as they were. And when they got down, they found the morning interval over, and the school back in its class-rooms. They went outside, to find everything deserted and uncannily quiet.

"It's all very well being excused lessons," said Church, "but there's not much fun in it. A chap can't enjoy himself when he knows that everybody else is working. I expect that's why Bank Holidays are such a success. Everybody knows that everybody else is having a good time, so they all feel happy. Blow it, I'd rather go into the class-room."

"I believe I would, too," admitted McClure.

"Then you can go—and good riddance!" said Handforth tartly. "I'm only too glad of this quiet hour. I want to examine my Austin, and find out what damage has been done. And if you chaps desert me, I won't speak to you for a week!"

They grinned, and followed him through West Arch, and out through the West Gate to the commodious bicycle sheds. Handforth kept his Austin Seven here—for it was such a handy little "bus" that it easily went in and out.

"We'll run her into the square," said Handforth. "Plenty of room there."

He started up, and the sturdy little engine answered on the instant. The car glided out, nipped through the gateway, and Handforth pulled it up in the square, where the sunshine was strong. He wanted a good light!

"Look!" he said thickly, as he went round to the rear. "Didn't I tell you the car was wrecked?"

"I can't see anything wrong," said Church.

"Look at that wing!" roared Handforth. "It's buckled, it's twisted and dented, and— Great Scott! The number-plate's cracked!" he added, aghast. "And look at my spare wheel, too! It's all askew on its fastening! Why, the car's nothing but a ruin!"



## CHAPTER 5.

PROFESSOR HUDSON PAYS UP!

MUCH as they wanted to agree with their leader—since agreeing was the only peaceful course—Church and McClure could not truthfully say that the Austin Seven was a ruin.

"Don't exaggerate, old man," said Church. "Substantially, the car's as good as ever. The wing's a bit wonky, the number plate's cracked, and the spare wheel seems to have had a kosh. Otherwise, she's all right."

"Otherwise!" raved Handforth. "It'll cost quids to have these things put right!"

His chums did not care to point out that it was his own fault.

"But she's insured," said Church gently. "You needn't get the wind up."

"Yes, she's insured!" said Handforth grimly. "But what about the other car? I've got to give all particulars if I make a claim. Besides, I don't believe in it—that American chap is responsible. Why should the insurance company pay, when it didn't cause the damage? It wasn't their fault!"

Church and McClure stared blankly.

"But—but what do you pay your premium for?" asked Mac.

"Premium?" said Handforth. "I don't pay anything!"

"Then you're not insured, you ass!"

"My aunt pays it," said Handforth coldly. "She gave me the car for a birthday present, and she pays the tax and the insurance. But why should I bother my head about these things? That American chap ought to pay. I've got his number, thank goodness, and I'll find out who he is!"

"I wish you luck!" said Church crossly. "The whole thing's simple. You've just got to make a claim, say what the damage is, and the insurance company will put everything right in no time. There's no need for all this fuss!"

"If I could lay my hands on the American bounder now, I'd absolutely get ten quid out of him for damages!" said Handforth, with a snort. "He oughtn't to be allowed to use the English roads! Who is he? Why can't he keep in America? Like his nerve, coming over here, and smashing up English cars with his silly recklessness—"

"My hat!" interrupted McClure suddenly.

He was staring through West Arch. A figure had just turned into it, and there could be no mistaking the man. It was the stranger who had driven that car during the night!

"He's here!" breathed McClure.

"Who's here?"

"Here at St. Frank's!" grinned Mac. "That American gentleman! Let's see you go up to him, and get your tenner, Handy!"

Handforth gave one look, and he uttered a shout of triumph.

"Yes, you're right!" he ejaculated. "It's him! Now you'll see whether I mean it or not!"

Professor Hudson was admiring the school—strolling round at his leisure, appreciating the architecture. The headmaster had been called away for a few minutes, and promised to rejoin his guest shortly. Handforth rushed up, and fairly pounced upon his prey.

"So you're here, are you?" he said triumphantly. "What about my car?"

"Ah, my boy!" said the professor. "Are you not the high-spirited youngster I met on the road last night? What's all this about your car?"

"It's wrecked!" said Handforth fiercely. "I don't suppose you're to blame—you're an American, and we can't expect you to control a car properly on the English roads. They run all the traffic on the wrong side of the road in America, don't they?"

"No, on the right," smiled Professor Hudson.

"Well, the right side is the wrong!" retorted Handforth firmly. "I don't want any fuss, you know," he added. "I don't want any bother. I've caught you now, so you'd better pay up and smile!"

"You don't want any fuss?" chuckled the professor. "Or any bother?"

"No, I don't!" retorted Handforth. "Come and have a look at my car! And if you don't pay up after that, I'll get my father to issue a prosecution! You needn't think you can come to England, and ride roughshod through everything, and smash people's cars just as you like!"

Church and McClure listened in an agony. Happily, the professor seemed to be taking his forceful statements in good part.

"Well, well," he said genially. "I'll forgive you, young man."

"Forgive me!" said Handforth, staring.

"I'll forgive your apparent insolence," said the visitor. "Somehow, I don't think you actually mean it. And, since I certainly did collide with your little car—although I don't acknowledge any blame—I'll pay up smilingly. Do you think twenty pounds will meet the bill?"

He held out a sheaf of fivers, and Handforth looked blank.

"You—you mean you'll pay?" he asked.

"Why, certainly."

"That's awfully decent of you, sir," said Handforth, his former arrogance fading like mist before the sunshine. "I—I didn't know you'd be such a sportsman. As a matter of fact, sir, the car's insured, and I don't think I need your money at all. Thanks all the same!"

"Water!" murmured Church feebly.

Professor Hudson smiled.

"Just another example, Dr. Stafford, of the point raised in our little discussion," he said. "When our young friend found that I was perfectly willing to pay up, he had no further desire for the money."

The juniors started, and looked round. The headmaster was there, and they all grabbed for their caps, and removed them.

"Morning, sir!" they chorused breathlessly.

"Let me see," said the Head. "You are the boys who were out so late last night, are you not? I hope your head is much better, Handforth? Mr. Lee told me what a nasty crack you had had."

"I'm all right, sir, thanks," said Handforth uncomfortably.

"This gentleman is Professor Hudson—my guest," explained the Head, much to Handforth's confusion. "Three of our junior boys, professor. I think you have already made their acquaintance?"

"Yes, fortunately," said the American. "We are already the best of friends, I hope. I am afraid I damaged their car——"

"Not a bit, sir!" said Handforth promptly. "Only a scratch or two, sir! Nothing to worry about at all. Please don't mention it, sir!"

"Give me air!" breathed McClure, fanning himself.

"I am rapidly coming to the conclusion, young man, that you are very much of a fraud," said the professor genially. "If there is any trouble over that insurance, let me know at once, and I will put it right. Shall we proceed, Dr. Stafford?"

"One moment, professor," said the Head, a grim little note coming into his voice. "Handforth, what is this car doing here, in the square?"

"Doing, sir? Nothing, sir!"

"I did not want you to take me literally," said the Head severely. "By whose authority did you bring the car here? You surely know that it is against all the school rules?"

"Yes, sir," said Handforth meekly.

"You admit that you knew it?"

"Yes, sir."

"And still you committed the breach—deliberately and knowingly?"

"I—I— Oh, well, sir, I'm ready to stand the racket, sir," said Handforth. "I'll take the car out at once, if you like. I'd forgotten that you had rather rummy ideas on the subject!"

"Rummy ideas!" ejaculated the Head. "Ahem! I—I should say— You will remove the car to the proper place, and as I do not think you deliberately defied the rules, I will say no more about it."

He nodded, and he and the professor left.

"Still another little indication of my points," said Professor Hudson quietly. "The boy broke the rules knowingly, but thought so little of it that he was surprised when you mentioned the fact. But if he had been put upon his honour not to bring the car into these precincts, he would never have done such a thing. Of that you may be sure."

"H'm!" said the Head thoughtfully. "Perhaps there is a certain line of argument in what you say, professor."

"I am glad, at least, that you are willing to make the concession," said the Head's guest. "You see, the boys know that they will be punished if they are discovered in a little misdemeanour. And that, in their way of thinking, puts things on a square footing again. They defy a rule—they receive punish-

ment—and it is over. But would they defy that rule if no punishment would result?"

"It is a very nice point," smiled the Head. "They would probably defy it to a far greater extent—"

"On the contrary, I think they would respect it religiously," declared the professor. "At least, the honourable boys would do so, and I really believe the majority are perfectly honourable. They would not defy the rule, for the simple reason that it would hurt their honour to do so."

And as they walked round, the professor continued his persistent arguments. Not that the Head showed the slightest sign of wavering.



CHAPTER 6.

THE BIG MAN OF THE EAST HOUSE.

**TIMOTHY ARMSTRONG**, the leader of the East House Fourth-Formers, came out into the East Square looking very

pleased with life in general, and himself in particular.

Armstrong was a junior—with a big idea of his own importance. He fancied himself as a leader, but the almost spiritless condition of the East House juniors was a much truer index of his real powers in that direction.

Armstrong had had a letter from his mother that morning, enclosing the enormous sum of three pounds, a little

fortune to Armstrong. It was his mother's birthday, and he was wearing a flower in his buttonhole to commemorate the occasion.

Mr. Pycraft, the master of the Fourth, had sent Armstrong out on an errand, and Armstrong was taking full advantage of the brief freedom.

He stepped out of the East House, and something came whizzing round the angle of the building. There was a hum, and Armstrong leapt about a yard into the air. He skidded, and crashed over. Handforth, in his Austin Seven, went by, and pulled up.

"What was that?" said Handforth, glaring round.

"You—you rotter!" gasped Armstrong, picking himself up. "Look what you've done! Look at my clobber!"

He was certainly muddy. Not that Handforth accepted the slightest blame. Handforth was taking his car away, according to the Head's instructions—and it was just like him to sail quite unnecessarily round the

East Square, instead of taking the shortest route.

"Look at me!" roared Armstrong aggressively. "I'm all muddy, and my buttonhole's ruined, and Mr. Pycraft's expecting me back. You—you dangerous ass, Handforth! Look what you've done!"

"If you weren't such a lunatic, I'd slosh you!" said Handforth darkly. "What do you mean—look what I've done? I didn't touch you! I was yards off!"

"Yes, but you came round that corner so jolly quickly that you startled me," complained the Fourth-Former. "Look at my flower! And I was wearing that because it's my mater's birthday!"

Handforth was unimpressed.

"Didums wear 'um's flower because it's 'um's muvver's birthday?" he said sarcastically. "I say, you chaps," he added, as Church and McClure appeared, "come and look at Armstrong with his 'ickle flower!"

Armstrong turned very red.

"Funny, aren't you?" he asked tartly.

"Handy, you ass, you'll get yourself into awful trouble unless you take that car away!" urged

Church, as he ran up. "You know what the Head told you—"

"That's all right—he's gone!" said Handforth. "I don't believe in taking too much notice of these unreasonable orders. A chap's got to maintain his independence, you know. We can't let these masters have all their own way."

"I shouldn't speak so loud," warned Armstrong. "Old Pycraft's knocking

about somewhere, I expect, looking for me. I shall catch it hot over this, you rotter!"

"Don't be a chump!" said Handforth with a grin. "How was I to know you'd come out just at that minute? And if you want to wear a flower, why don't you wear a decent one? You ought to wear a chrysanthemum."

"I know I ought," said Armstrong. "My mater's favourite."

"Go and ask Mrs. Poulter, over in the Ancient House," said Church. "She's got plenty in her flower-pots. And she'd give you one, too, if you asked her nicely."

Armstrong sniffed.

"I'd rather go and get one out of the Head's garden," he replied airily.

The Ancient House juniors grinned. They were well accustomed to Armstrong's brag. His was of a different brand to Handforth's. Armstrong was a genuine boaster; Handforth was merely an optimist.

"Yes, you can grin!" said Armstrong,

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stung by the spectacle. "Do you think I wouldn't go into the Head's garden and pick a chrysanthemum?"

"My dear chap, it's against the rules," said Church, appalled.

"That's the very reason I should do it!" retorted Armstrong. "If you say two pins, I'll go and get one, too!"

Handforth grinned wider than ever.

"You can do as you like, my lad," he said. "I've got two pins, but I want 'em. But if we find you wearing a chrysanthemum later on, we shall know where you got it."

The chums of Study D went off, chuckling. And Timothy Armstrong frowned as he watched the Austin Seven disappear. The Removites hadn't dared him. On the contrary, they had revealed an indifference which exasperated Armstrong vastly. Indifference always aroused his ire.

"The bounders!" he muttered. "They think I wouldn't borrow a flower from the Head's garden, eh? I've a dashed good mind to go and get one! Do they think I daren't?"

He made up his mind on the spot. Yes, by jingo! Then, when he met them again, he would show them. And he wouldn't hesitate to do any "daring"! He would make them do something to equal it.

It was just like Armstrong's pettiness. He thought it was a wonderful thing to venture into a spot that was strictly and rigorously out of bounds. And in mid-morning, too! How he would be able to brag afterwards!

He reckoned that it would only take him two or three minutes. And he could easily excuse himself to Mr. Pycraft, because he could say that it had taken him a long time to wipe the mud off himself. Armstrong would have no hesitation in blaming Handforth for the delay.

It was a perfectly silly idea, but Armstrong would have been startled if he could have realised what this seemingly trivial incident was to lead to!

He hurried round to the East Gate, and made his way along the private road which took a circular course completely round the school buildings. Farther along, this wall overlooked the Head's garden on one side, and the opposite wall separated the lane from Big Side.

Arriving at the desired spot, Armstrong leapt upwards and clutched at the top of the wall. There were plenty of trees here, and he could take a survey of the forbidden ground before venturing into it. There were some greenhouses on this side of the garden, too, and there would probably be heaps of chrysanthemums ready for the picking.

"Good!" murmured Armstrong.

He was conscious of a thrill. After all, there was a certain amount of dash in this adventure. Anything against the rules was more or less thrilling. And to break into the Head's garden like this, in full daylight, was the act of a hero.

Armstrong felt very brave.

His survey was satisfactory. There was nobody in sight, and he had the field to himself. Not even a gardener. And the Head's house was completely hidden behind the trees and shrubs which grew on the borders of the lawn.

With a rapid beating of his heart, the daring adventurer dropped into the Head's garden and crouched for a moment behind a bush. Then he ventured out, and ran like a hare towards the nearest greenhouse. He slipped in, and his eyes sparkled as he beheld hundreds of the flowers he desired.

"Good egg!" he muttered.

It was easy.

He hastily picked a prime blossom and turned to the door. Then he gulped. The Head's gardener was walking in, and there was an expression of indignation and anger on his ruddy face.

"Now then, young gentleman, you know you ain't allowed in here!" he said grimly.

"I say, don't sneak!" gasped Armstrong.

"You cut and run, me lad!" said the gardener curtly. "Interferin' with my flowers! Why, what's that in your hand? One o' my best chrysanthemums! You young rascal! The headmaster shall know about this, you mark my words!"

"They're not your flowers!" retorted Armstrong, with a big attempt at bluster. "Who do you think you are, anyhow? You've got no right to order me about, confound you!"

The head gardener was a generous soul, and if Armstrong had only treated him with a little tact he could have got away without the slightest trouble. But Armstrong, being greatly imbued with his own importance, and being snobbish, too, adopted the wrong tactics.

"It's like your nerve!" he snapped. "Get out of my way!"

"You can't use them terms to me, my fine young gentleman!" said the worthy man angrily. "I'll trouble you for that flower! You can be gone, but you won't take any of my flowers with you!"

"They're the Head's flowers, not yours——"

"We won't argue about that. Hand it over, my lad!"

"Go and eat coke!" roared Armstrong, outwardly bold, but inwardly quivering.

He made a rush, and, more by luck than anything else, he succeeded in winning his way to the door. With the gardener in full pursuit, he raced off.

Then, abruptly, he checked, and his face went pale.

The Head and another gentleman were just in sight down the path. Fortunately, they hadn't seen him yet.

Armstrong's bravery vanished. He was in a blue funk, for he knew that it would mean a swishing if the Head caught him. There



Armstrong had been trespassing in the Head's private garden, and just then the Head, with a friend, appeared unexpectedly. In making a hurried exit over the wall, the startled junior lost his balance, fell backwards, and crashed into a cucumber frame!

was only one thing to be done—and Armstrong did it.

He left the path and dashed through a bed of vegetables. With one leap he clutched at the wall, and succeeded in hauling himself up. He reached the summit all right, and was in such a hurry to leap down on the other side that he lost his balance.

For a moment he clasped at the air, tottered in an effort to recover himself, and then fell. Unfortunately he fell back into the Head's garden.

Still more unfortunately, there was a big cucumber-frame immediately beneath him. And the sound he made as he crashed through it was like that of a bullock tearing through a china shop.

## CHAPTER 7.

### PROFESSOR HUDSON'S OPPORTUNITY.

ARMSTRONG was at least thorough.

He didn't make any mistake about that fall into that cucumber-frame.

As a sheer effort of destruction, it was masterly. He went clean through and smashed all the panes of

glass in a fiftieth of a second. He sat up in the ruins, dazed and nearly frightened out of his skin.

Down the garden, Dr. Stafford started violently. He had just been showing his guest some favourite fruit-trees, and Professor Hudson had been bravely assuming an air of absorbed interest. The crash that came to their ears was tremendous.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated the Head. "What was that?"

"Somebody has had an accident, I should imagine," said the professor.

Dr. Stafford hurried up the path, and found his head gardener standing near the cucumber-frame, looking very angry and alarmed.

"What was that noise, Daley?" asked the Head sharply.

"One of the boys, sir—through my frame!" said the gardener indignantly. "I found him in the greenhouse, sir, and he ran for it!"

The Head peered into the frame.

"Boy," he thundered, "come out at once!"

Armstrong emerged, trembling from head to foot, and quailing under the Head's stern gaze. He was hurt a bit, too, for he had sat down with great violence.

"You may count yourself extremely lucky



tion, it was masterly. He went clean through and smashed all the panes of

that you are not badly cut!" said Dr. Stafford. "You appear to be quite whole."

"The frame ain't, sir!" said Daley angrily.

"I—I— Pup-please, sir, I slipped!" faltered Armstrong inanely.

"I have not the slightest doubt of it," declared the Head. "I cannot believe that you deliberately jumped into the frame for the mere joy of it. What is your name?"

"Armstrong, sir."

"I thought so," said the Head. "You belong to the East House, do you not?"

"Y-yes, sir."

"I shall punish you very severely for this, Armstrong," said Dr. Stafford. "What were you doing in my garden, and how is it that you are at liberty at this hour of the morning?"

"Mr. Pycraft sent me on an errand, sir."

"Not, I take it, into my garden?"

"Nun-no, sir!" said Armstrong miserably.

"I—I came here for fun, sir."

"I regret, Armstrong, that I do not appreciate your idea of fun," said the Head, with a glance at the shattered cucumber-frame. "Mr. Pycraft sent you on an errand, and this is the way you take advantage of your Form-master! I am amazed, Armstrong!"

"Yes, sir," faltered Armstrong.

"Why did you come here?"

"Please, sir, I don't know," muttered the junior unhappily.

"You don't know?"

"No, sir."

"Boy, you will make matters no better if you add lying to your misdemeanour," said Dr. Stafford sternly. "You must have had some object—some definite reason—for unlawfully coming into my garden."

"I can tell ye, sir," said the head gardener. "The young gent came here to take one o' my chrysanthemums. He took it, too."

"Is that true, Armstrong?"

"Y-yes, sir."

"Upon my soul!" ejaculated the head. "It is almost beyond belief! These very flowers are growing in various parts of the school grounds. They are perfectly commonplace. Why should you come to my garden, Armstrong, just to pick a chrysanthemum?"

"Please, sir, I don't know," muttered Armstrong wretchedly.

"Were you goaded into it by any of your companions?"

"No, sir."

"Then, why, in the name of wonder, did you do it?"

"I—I thought it would be rather nice to have one of your flowers, sir," blurted out Armstrong. "I'm sorry, sir. I—I didn't mean to smash the frame, sir. I—I slipped, sir."

"I want to get to the bottom of this, Armstrong," said the Head grimly. "You know

of course, that this property is absolutely out of bounds? You are quite aware of that, are you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know that it is opposed to all the rules for you to come here without permission?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why did you do this extraordinary thing?"

Armstrong took a deep breath.

"I—I thought it was rather big, sir," he muttered. "It's against the rules, and all the chaps like breaking the rules."

"They like breaking the rules!" ejaculated the Head, amazed.

"Yes, sir—it's sporty!"

"Sporty!" repeated the Head, still more astounded. "Are you telling me, Armstrong, that most of the boys in the Lower School admire a boy who deliberately and wilfully breaks a regulation?"

"Why, yes, sir," said Armstrong. "There wouldn't be any fun in it if a rule wasn't broken. It's because it's forbidden that we feel like doing it, sir."

Armstrong was seeking to lessen his punishment by making his own case appear in the light of a general habit. He did not dream that his words were having a totally different effect upon the Head. The latter had cast a strange glance at Professor Hudson, who was keenly interested, but who was too well-mannered to take any part in the cross-examination.

"Your words have startled me, Armstrong," said the Head grimly. "I am greatly enlightened. So you deliberately came into my garden because it was a daring thing to do—because your companions admire a boy who breaks a rule, wilfully and knowingly?"

"There wouldn't be any fun in it, sir, if we could come here just as we liked."

"Fun!" ejaculated the Head.

"Yes, sir."

"You mean that if there was no rule making this garden out of bounds, you would have no desire to enter it?" asked Dr. Stafford. "A sidelight upon human nature! Tell me, Armstrong—if there was no restriction regarding this garden, but if you were placed upon your honour not to enter it, would you do so?"

Armstrong looked up, and the professor came closer.

"Of course not, sir," said the Fourth-Former, with rather more spirit.

"Oh!" said the Head. "And why not?"

"Well, I couldn't come, could I, sir, if I was on my honour not to?" asked Armstrong in surprise. "The fellows don't think much of breaking a rule, sir, but that's different. If they're caught, they know they've got to stand the racket. But if a

chap is on his honour, he just sticks to it, unless he's an unprincipled cad."

"Thank you, Armstrong," said the Head quietly. "Well, you have broken a very strict rule by coming here, but I shall not punish you as severely as I might have done ordinarily. I will regard the smashed frame as an accident, and I am thankful that you are unharmed. I will let you know what punishment you will receive later on. Come to me at five o'clock this evening."

"Yes, sir," panted Armstrong. "Thank you, sir. Can—can I go, sir?"

The Head nodded, and Armstrong scuttled off. And Dr. Stafford and his guest walked away up the garden-path with thoughtful expressions. The Head was the first to speak.

"Extraordinary!" he muttered, shaking his head.

"By no means," said the professor gently. "As a student of human nature, I am not in the least surprised. The boy has influenced you far more than my soundest arguments. For you have had a practical object-lesson in the very subject I mooted an hour ago."

Dr. Stafford nodded.

"And I will confess, Professor Hudson, that I am astonished," he said. "There can be no two ways of understanding what the boy said. He came into this garden because it was forbidden. That was the sole reason."

"But if he had been on his honour, he would not have come," said the professor. "And if that principle applies to the one thing, it applies to all things. You cannot accept any other viewpoint. In a word, Dr. Stafford, my case is complete. The truth of my theory is patent."

"I don't know," murmured Dr. Stafford. "I really don't know. I will confess that I am not quite so firm as I was an hour ago. One must learn by the lessons one receives. At the same time, my dear sir, it would be a very drastic step to make the general experiment you propose."

"Drastic, perhaps, but only an experiment," replied the professor quickly. "If it is not successful after a fair trial, the old order of things can be restored without the slightest difficulty. That is a point I wish to urge. What can the harm be, if the school is definitely given to understand that the new order will only be permanent if it is successful?"

"Yes, but I am very reluctant," said the Head dubiously.

"It rests entirely with you, sir," declared Professor Hudson. "You have a free hand in the matter, and it is left to your discretion to make this experiment if you will. I can only do my best to urge you on this course. Let me put forward some further arguments—"

And as they walked round the garden paths, the professor talked, and the Head listened.

Dr. Malcolm Stafford had lost his air of absolute, rock-like firmness. He was waver-

ing. And here was the professor's opportunity. He talked, and he used argument after argument—for he was very keen indeed to test his theories in a great British public school, the best of all possible fields for such an experiment.

## CHAPTER 8.

### A BOMBSHELL FOR ST. FRANK'S!



THEA was just over, and the entire school, congregated in Big Hall, was agog. What was the meaning of this evening assembly, by

the Head's special orders?

Three or four days had passed. Edward Oswald Handforth's head was as hard as ever, and Professor Hudson's presence in the school was taken as a matter of course. Indeed, hardly any of the fellows gave him a thought. He was only a guest, anyhow. The school little realised what the professor had already accomplished!

And the school, too, had no hint of the amazing bombshell which was just about to be exploded. When the Head came on the platform it was thought that he merely wished to say a few words on a commonplace subject.

One peculiar thing, however, was noticed. Professor Hudson was on the platform with him. And then Sir John Brent appeared—the chairman of the Board of Governors. The school metaphorically sat up. Evidently there was something on!

"I have an announcement to make of unusual importance," said the headmaster, his voice containing a note of gravity. "I want every boy to listen very carefully, and to appreciate the full significance of what I am now about to say."

The Head paused, and the school, wondering, stood motionless. During that moment, a kind of tremor had passed over the great assembly. There was a sudden feeling that this was something very, very special.

"First of all," continued the Head, "let me introduce Professor Grant Hudson, of Hale University, U.S.A."

Professor Hudson bowed, and the school acknowledged the introduction with a murmur of welcome, which rippled undulatingly throughout the Big Hall. St. Frank's was more puzzled than ever. Most of the fellows had seen the professor about for days past. Why was he now being publicly introduced?

"Under Professor Hudson's suggestion, I propose to conduct a very interesting experiment," continued the headmaster. "But I want you all to thoroughly understand that it is only an experiment. That is a very important point to remember. Professor Hudson is a keen student of human nature, and he has propounded some very remarkable theories. These theories I hope to prove in practice. Needless to say, the success, or

non-success, of the experiment will depend entirely upon the school."

Another murmur.

"You have all, no doubt, heard of the Honour System," proceeded Dr. Stafford. "If you have not, it doesn't matter. There is no need to go into the history of this subject. The Honour System has been tried in various forms—more particularly in the United States. And in the majority of cases it has met with great success."

The school had a feeling that something big was coming.

"What Professor Hudson proposes, and what I have agreed to adopt, is a modified form of this Honour System, as applicable to St. Frank's," went on the headmaster gravely. "Let me repeat that it is only an experimental measure, and that its future will depend upon the general behaviour of the school under the new regime."

"An Honour System, sir?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Here, at St. Frank's?"

"We don't understand, sir."

The Head raised his hand, and there was silence.

"I would like to be brief, but it is necessary that I should make the position very clear," said the Head. "Presently, Professor Hudson will address you, and any points that I have missed he will doubtless make clear. I will attempt to be plain and straightforward in my remarks. Firstly, then, you are all aware that there are certain definite rules and regulations to be respected. You know that if you break these rules, you are liable to punishment. You are all called upon to attend lessons at certain hours, to go to bed at a fixed time, to arise at a fixed time, and, in fact, to accomplish these hundred-and-one things daily, as a mere matter of routine. There is no need for me to tell you all this, for it is obvious."

The Head paused, and the school waited breathlessly.

"I now propose to remove every restriction," went on Dr. Stafford quietly. "From now onwards, there will be no compulsion whatsoever. From this minute there will be no punishment for a breach of the recognised rules and regulations."

"No punishment!"

"Great Scott!"

"All restrictions removed!"

"In a word, I am placing the school upon its honour," said the Head. "But perhaps it will be as well for me to amplify that statement. Before you leave this hall, I want you to have a thorough understanding of my meaning. I do not wish you to run away with the impression that you are at liberty to do just as you please, and to take it that there are now to be no restrictions. Every school rule, and every school regulation, remains intact. But it is for you to choose whether you obey them or not. I am placing you upon your honour to do so. If you break them, there will be no punishment—that is to say, no physical or moral punishment. It

is a matter that will rest with your own consciences."

"Oh!"

The school was utterly dumbfounded.

"Solemnly and seriously, I place you on your honour," continued the Head, his voice quiet and impressive. "You all know what that means. When you file out of this hall you will, in a way, be your own masters. You will attend lessons to-morrow if you please—and as you should, if you are honourably inclined. But if you neglect lessons, there will be no reprisals. Similarly, every other rule will come under the same treatment. You all know the time for calling-over. You all know the points that are out of bounds. You are well aware of the bedtime hour. You will hear the rising-bell to-morrow morning. *And you will be on your honour to respect and obey every school rule as it now exists.* If you fail in any of them you will not be questioned, and you will not be punished. You will merely be required to answer to yourselves."

"Oh!" said the school again.

"All of us on our honour!"

"And no punishments!"

"We can all do just as we please!"

The school couldn't grasp it all at once. For this, indeed, was a drastic change! Occasionally, in the past, there had been a rigid tightening-up of restrictions. There had been tyrannies. The school had been placed under severe and autocratic rule. And the fellows could understand such methods.

But this new order of things was rather beyond them.

It was exactly the opposite! There were to be no punishments at all, and every boy could do exactly as he fancied, and he need not fear a swishing, or expulsion! There was something staggering about this announcement—something which took all the breath out of the whole school.

The headmaster was speaking again.

"I must again remind you that this new order of things is strictly in the nature of an experiment," said Dr. Stafford smoothly. "It will rest entirely with you whether it becomes a permanency, or whether it is quickly abandoned. Remember, first and foremost, that I am placing you on your honour. Get that fixed into your heads, and let it remain there. You may break every rule with impunity—but, if you do so, you will have broken your honour to me."

"Trust us, sir!"

"We won't fail you, sir!"

"Hurrah!"

"Three cheers for the Head!"

"Hurrah!"

"Three cheers for Professor Hudson!"

"Hurrah!"

The school released some of its pent-up feelings by sending forth a wild, rousing cheer. Professor Hudson smiled, and waved. He was more than ever convinced that his theories would turn out to be successful in practice. St. Frank's was taking the announcement just as he had anticipated.



"There is little further for me to say," concluded the Head. "This system of honour will continue for two or three weeks, at the very least, and I shall be interested and anxious. I want this experiment to be a success. I want you to prove that Professor Hudson is right—that you will obey the rules and regulations just the same, whether you are liable to punishment or not. I trust every boy to take no mean advantage of the plan. And now, I think, it would be as well for Professor Hudson himself to address you."

"Hurrah!"

"We'll show you that we're to be trusted, sir."

"Hear, hear!"

"St. Frank's on its honour!"

"Hurrah!"

It was some moments before the great American professor could speak. When he did so, the school listened with rapt attention. The professor spoke easily and conversationally, as though he knew every fellow personally. And his words were very much on the same lines as the headmaster's.

"I want you all to help me in this proposition," he said earnestly. "I want you to justify my faith in you. Your headmaster and your Board of Governors have generously allowed me to test my theories here—and I have chosen St. Frank's of all the great public schools of England, because I feel that here we shall achieve certain success."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good for you, sir!"

"I want the world to know that St. Frank's College is the first great public school to carry on successfully without the slightest measure of restriction being employed," said Professor Hudson. "If you take advantage of your freedom in a mean-spirited way it will be a knock-out blow to me, and my faith in human nature will be shattered. Young folks, it is up to you to put this thing through, and make history."

And the professor continued in the same strain, working up an enthusiasm that had seldom been seen in that fine old hall.

"Hear, hear!"

"Three cheers for Professor Hudson!"

"Hurrah!"

"No more restrictions!" grinned Church. "No more punishments if we go out of bounds, or get home after calling-over! No compulsion to attend lessons! I say, it's too good to be true!"

"It's like a giddy dream!"

The Triangle was filled with crowds of fellows. Dismissal had come, and the bomb-shell had been exploded. The school was now endeavouring to recover from the devastating effects. And the school was still stunned. Never had St. Frank's been subjected to such a devastating blow.

The seniors were just as excited as the juniors. They gathered in groups, in the gloom of the evening, all talking animatedly and noisily. They were discussing how they should go on. And it was an indication of their various characters that the recognised cads should sort themselves out separately.

"Of course, everything will be carried on just the same as ever!" declared Dick Hamilton, as he addressed a large crowd of Removites. "Don't forget that, you chaps. When bed-time comes, up we go!"

"Hear, hear!" said Reggie Pitt promptly.

"But we shan't be scragged if we don't!" grinned Hubbard.

"Not by the masters, perhaps—but there are other people who can do scragging!" said Dick Hamilton grimly.

"Rats!"

"We can do as we like!"

"From now on, we're our own masters!"

"Rather! You keep out of it, Hamilton!"

"That's just what I won't do!" retorted Dick. "The Head made no mention of inside punishments. I'm the skipper of this Form, and this Form is on its honour. Those fellows who do anything to discredit the Remove will have to answer to me!"

"No fear! We all answer to ourselves now!"

While such fellows as Reggie Pitt and Ralph Leslie Fullwood heartily agreed with the captain, there were a great many who openly avowed their independence. The Head had been quite plain. Every boy was free to do as he willed individually, and he had only to answer to his own conscience. And, apparently, there were plenty of lax consciences about!

## "JOLLY GOOD!"

But the coloured cut-out figures are not the only things given away in this bumper issue—there's the

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE BADGE!

Read how to get it on page 42.

### CHAPTER 9.

THE SCHOOL ON ITS HONOUR! EDWARD OSWALD HAND-FORTH was looking excited.

"By George, and that's the man I called a rotter!"



he said. "He's the greatest chap under the sun!"

Three of them were over by one of the chestnut trees. Bernard Forrest was talking eagerly to Gulliver and Bell.

"We're on velvet, my sons," he was saying gleefully. "We're on down feathers and plush cushions! Ye gods and little fishes! I've never thought much of America, but now I raise my hat to the stars and stripes!"

"It's a great idea," agreed Bell excitedly. "No restrictions!"

"I say, let's miss lessons in the morning!" grinned Gulliver. "What a giddy lark! We can go by old Crowell, and give him the cold optic! And he won't be able to do a thing!"

Forrest eyed them coldly.

"Your petty minds can't rise above petty things!" he snapped. "I'm thinking of something bigger—something more in our line. We won't miss lessons—we won't be a set of fools. We've got to make old Crowell look upon us as three of the most honourable chaps in the Form. But after lights out—"

"What?" gasped Bell.

"A nightly flutter!" said Forrest gaily. "We're going to have the time of our lives!"

"But we can't do *that* without getting into hot water!" breathed Gulliver.

"You poor ass!" said Forrest. "Of course, we mustn't go up to the Head and tell him that we're off to play billiards at the Wheat-sheaf! Even if he didn't swish us, or sack us, he would send express letters to our people! No, you chumps, the advantage for us lies in the fact that we can go out any time during the evening, and roll home just when we please."

"You mean—after midnight?"

"Why not?"

"But—but they wouldn't allow it!" panted Bell. "I mean, there's a limit!"

"How can there be a limit when there are to be no punishments for any infringement of any rule?" asked Forrest. "Naturally, we shan't come back with torches flaring, and announce our arrival at one a.m.! But think of the sense of security! Even if we're spotted climbing through our window, we shan't be punished. My only hat!"

"It's—it's like a dream!"

"Being our own masters, we can break bounds after lights out as often as we please," chuckled Bernard Forrest. "Lots of other chaps will do it, too—fellows who haven't had the pluck previously."

"But if everybody does it, they'll bring back the old order of things," said Bell soberly. "I mean, we shall have to go easy, just the same as before. But it'll be ripping to know that we're safe!"

And thus, while the rotters of the school were planning to take a dishonourable advantage of the scheme, the decent fellows were urging the opposite tactics.

"There's going to be some trouble," said Reggie Pitt uneasily, as he stood with Dick Hamilton and a few others. "The idea's sound enough in theory, but will it be successful in practice?"

"Most of the fellows are honourable, I hope," frowned Dick.

"They're honourable enough in a general sort of way," agreed Reggie. "But this is more or less a question of will-power. I doubt if the rank and file will have strength enough to withstand the temptations."

"What temptations?" asked Jack Grey.

"My dear chap, they're bristling all round us," said Dick, nodding. "The temptation to miss lessons—the temptation to break bounds—the temptation to do all sorts of things that we haven't been able to do before. By Jove, it'll be a terrific test for everybody!"

And he was undoubtedly right.

A minority—in both upper school and lower school—already felt that it would be necessary to adopt drastic measures with certain factions. In an amazingly short space of time, ideas were being mooted to make the weaklings realise the extent of their responsibility. They were on their honour—and that was a great and sacred thing.

For any fellow who deliberately broke the rules was deliberately dishonouring St. Frank's itself. The masters were still there—the rules and regulations were still the same. Not a thing had been altered—except the all-important fact that punishments were abolished.

Every boy was his own master!

That was the keynote of the situation. And in the Triangle, in every House, up and down the passages, and in the studies, the fellows were wondering what would happen in the immediate future.

The school was on its honour!



## CHAPTER 10.

### THE REMOVE IN A FIX!

"Y jingo!" said Dick Hamilton, with a sudden start.

"What's up?" asked Tommy Watson.

"Why, what with all this excitement, and all the talking, we've forgotten about that special picture at the Bannington Palladium to-night!" replied Dick, glancing at his watch. "Good! There's still plenty of time. We've got a special permit for the whole Form, you know. It's all fixed up."

Tregellis-West grinned.

"But that was before the historic announcement was made, dear old boy," he observed. "Permits aren't necessary now, are they? Begad! We can go to the good old pictures as often as we please!"

"I'm surprised at you, Montic," said Dick severely.

"Oh, really, old fellow—"

"We're on our honour to keep to the rules!" continued Hamilton. "And that means that we've got to be more hot on them than ever. Still, as the Form's got a permit to go to the pictures this evening, we'll use it as a means of celebrating. It'll help to subdue some of the excitement, too."

The Remove was eager enough to agree,



The fog had no terrors for Handy. He was quite certain he knew the road perfectly and that it turned to the left. Unfortunately, the road at that juncture veered sharply to the right. "Look out, you fathead!" yelled Church. But it was too late. The Austin Seven leapt the bank and Handy was sent hurtling over the windscreen.

and even Bernard Forrest and his chums fell in with the suggestion. It suited them down to the ground.

Practically the entire Form went to Bannington by road—on their bicycles. Handforth insisted on using his Austin Seven. And, naturally, the chums of Study D were the first to arrive.

The picture proved to be highly entertaining—an Empire production of great merit. The juniors all felt that this outing was a commemoration of their new independence. Although they had an ordinary permit to be out of bounds this evening, they nevertheless experienced a sensation of unusual freedom. Besides, there was nothing to fear if they dawdled on the homeward journey! No punishments!

Dick Hamilton and his chums of Study C were the first out—for Dick, as Form captain, had his own ideas regarding the honour of the Remove. In point of fact, he was just a little sceptical about the rank and file, and he wanted to be out in the foyer in advance, to round up any possible strays.

"We've got to be firm, my sons!" he said briskly. "We're on our honour to get back as quickly as we can, and it would be a dirty trick to take advantage of the new scheme on the very first evening of its inauguration. So the Remove is going home quickly—and intact!"

They went towards the exit, and glanced out into the High Street.

"Fog!" said Tommy Watson blankly.

"Eh?"

"Fog—as thick as your giddy hat!" said Watson, staring. "Look out here!"

Dick Hamilton peered into the murk.

"Yes, by Jove, it's fog right enough," exclaimed Dick, with a grimace. "Not much fun in cycling home in this stuff! In fact, we'd better not risk it."

"Won't it be a frightfully beastly walk, dear old boy?" asked Sir Montie.

"There's the train," replied Dick Hamilton, as he stood on the pavement. "It's only a local, and I don't suppose it'll be delayed, as it starts from here. We'd better not cycle back in this pea-soup!"

St. Frank's was three miles off. A comfortable little cycle run ordinarily, but a different matter in a thick fog. And while the Removites had been in the cinema, the thick blanket of mist had rolled up from the sea, and had enveloped the town in an impenetrable murk. It was impossible to see half-way across the road, and even the edge of the pavement was scarcely discernible—in spite of the Palladium's great arc lamps.

"We'd better go back and tell the others," said Tommy Watson. "What time does that train go? We shall have to get a move on, shan't we? I suppose we'll leave our bikes here, and take them away to-morrow?"

"Yes, they'll be safe enough round at the back," replied Dick. "There's plenty of time for the train, too—twenty minutes, at least."

Still, it'll be just as well to give the other chaps the tip."

"No cycling home to-night, Reggie," said Tommy Watson, as Reggie Pitt and Jack Grey, of the West House, came out. "While we've been lolling at our ease inside, the weather's played a dirty trick on us. Fog as thick as the dickens!"

Reggie Pitt looked out through the exit doors.

"We can risk it, surely?" he asked. "I'm game, anyhow."

"It's not worth it," frowned Dick. "An ordinary cycle lamp doesn't give much light, and a fog only makes it worse. We should be running into one another, and falling into ditches, and goodness knows what else."

"Perhaps you're right," admitted Reggie. "I say, what a game!"

The rest of the juniors were all coming out, and Dick Hamilton shouted to them to keep in a body—as it would be quite a simple matter to get separated from the main contingent.

"Hang together, you fellows!" sang out Dick. "This fog looks like lasting, and we'll go home by train. Don't forget, everybody, that we're on our honour to get back immediately after the show."

"Yes, but this fog makes it different!" said Owen major.

"It does!" agreed Dick grimly. "It makes it more imperative than ever that we should keep faith. Come on, the Remove! Back me up in this, you know! Let's show the Head that we're to be trusted!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Right you are, Hamilton—we'll back you up!"

"Hallo! What's this?" demanded Handforth, as he came bustling out. "Who's talking about fog? Where is it?"

"Everywhere, by the look of it," said Watson. "We're going back by train, Handy. We can leave our bikes—"

"Rot!" interrupted Handforth. "I came in my Austin Seven! Do you think I'm going to leave my car in a garage? Not likely! Blow the fog! Do you think I'm afraid of a bit of mist?"

"It's no good, Handy," put in Dick. "We're on our honour to get back quickly, and the train is the only way—"

"The train!" snorted Handforth. "That slow local? By George! That's the very reason I'm going back in my Austin! I'm on my honour to return by the quickest possible way, and I'm not taking any chances with that giddy train!"

"My dear ass—"

"The Austin Seven for me!" interrupted Handforth curtly. "And that's final!"

He went outside, and Church and McClure, his faithful chums, accompanied him. They stood looking at the wreaths of fog which swirled across the pavement in ever-increasing density. The picturegoers leaving the building were swallowed up as though by magic.

"I say, Handy, those chaps are right," said Church, shaking his head. "We can't go

back in the car. It's impossible to see half across the road!"

Handforth snorted.

"The nerve!" he said indignantly. "We can't be in the giddy pictures for more than two hours before this happens! I call it a piece of confounded cheek!"

"You'd better write to Father Neptune about it!" said McClure, with heavy sarcasm. "This is one of his tricks, I expect."

"Father Neptune be blowed!" snapped Handforth. "This fog's come off the sea! What's Father Neptune got to do with it? And what's the idea of gassing about fables at a time like this? It's a pity you chaps can't drag yourselves out of the fairy-tale stage!"

His chums thought it useless to argue.

"Well, it doesn't matter whether the fog came off the sea, or whether it developed inland," said Church practically. "It's here, and we've got to go home in it. All the chaps are going by train, so we'd better do the same. Motoring isn't safe in a fog, Handy."

"I'm not afraid of a fog," retorted Handforth. "The other fellows can do as they like, but I'm not going to leave my car in the garage to be biffed about, and probably driven without my knowing it! Come on, my lads! We'll make a start at once."

"Half a minute, Handy," said Dick Hamilton. "Take my advice, and chuck it up."

"Thanks all the same, but—"

"The fog is a thick one—not just a mist," said Dick. "You had your little Austin in the summer, and you've never done any night driving in a fog, have you?"

"Well, no," admitted Handforth.

"Then don't try it," said Dick. "I have!"

"You have what?"

"Driven in a fog."

"What's that got to do with it?" said Handforth, staring. "We're not talking about you driving in a fog, are we? Naturally, I don't expect you to make much of a success of it. But I'm different. I can take my little Austin Seven anywhere. I don't care if it hails and snows!"

"You silly ass—"

"Besides, if you can drive in a fog, so can I!" interrupted Handforth. "By George, I'm not going to be beaten by you, my lad! It's no good arguing," he added firmly. "My mind's made up, and there's an end of it!"

The Remove skipper was rather cross.

"Do you think I care a brass farthing how you can drive?" he asked. "I'm giving you this advice for your own good, you chump! Cycling in a fog is bad enough, but driving in a car is simply awful. I've had some of it, and I know! Be sensible, and chuck it up."

"Yes, Handy," urged Church. "Let's go by train."

This united opposition was fatal.

"We're going by car!" insisted Handforth. "Every motorist ought to practise fog driving. He's not a proper driver until he can take his car through anything. My headlamps are powerful, and we shall be home

hours before that crawling old local gets half-way there! Don't forget we're on our honour."

And without any further argument, Handforth dragged his chums away through the fog towards the local garage. Dick Hamilton frowned, and turned to the other fellows near him.

"The hopeless ass!" he said indignantly. "He won't take any advice, and he'll probably smash his car up. We ought to drag him back. I'm responsible for this party, in a way, and—"

"Nobody can be responsible for Handy!" interrupted Pitt firmly. "Besides, it's too late now—he's gone. And if we start messing about in this fog we shall lose the train."

This was quite true, and it was obviously impossible to get Handforth & Co. back now without going to a lot of trouble. So Dick Hamilton gave a growl, and turned to the main crowd, which had collected outside.

"Everybody here?" he asked. "We'll go to the station in a body."

Nobody questioned the wisdom of Dick Hamilton's advice—with the sole exception of Handforth. And he questioned everybody's advice as a mere matter of course, since he always preferred to do differently to everybody else. The rest realised how risky it would be to go home by road in this dense fog.

And there was no time to be lost, either. The local train would probably start on time, no matter how much time it lost on its journey. Besides, it was the last train in that direction.

There were three juniors who lagged behind somewhat. Two of them wanted to hurry on, but they were held back by their companion. Bernard Forrest seemed to be in no particular hurry to get to the station, and Gulliver and Bell were puzzled by his attitude.

"Take it easy!" he urged coolly. "Don't go mad!"

"But the train's due to start in three minutes!" said Gulliver, in alarm. "We don't want to walk home, I suppose?"

"We shan't walk home," declared Forrest. "And there's no hurry about this train, my sons. That picture gave me the blues, and we need something a little more livening to take off the effects."

"Yes, it was a pretty dead affair!" said Bell.

The cads of Study A considered it rather beneath them to give praise to a purely instructive film. They had been glad enough to take advantage of the late pass, but they had affected an air of boredom throughout the entertainment. They regarded the show with supercilious superiority—although, as a matter of fact, it had been highly interesting from start to finish.

"By gad, the train's just about to start!" said Gulliver, when at last they got to the station. "Everybody's up on the platform, too. Buck up, Forrest, for goodness' sake!"

"Quick!" shouted Bell. "We can't stop for tickets—let's make a rush!"

But Forrest still seemed disinterested.

"There's no hurry," he grinned. "They won't start the train on time to-night, in this fog—"

"Better look sharp, young gents!" said a railway official, as he paused in the booking-office. "They're just closing the barrier."

"Come on!" gasped Bell.

They rushed up, and were just in time to be confronted by the closed gate. The guard's whistle was blowing.

"Sorry, young gentlemen—too late," said the collector.

"But we've got to catch this train—it's the last!" shouted Forrest urgently.

"Can't help that!" said the man. "She's going."

They could hear the clanking of the engine through the fog.

"Confounded nuisance!" snapped Forrest, glaring. "This means we've got to walk home in this fog! It's a pity you can't make a few allowances!"

He turned away, and the collector grinned. Gulliver and Bell failed to understand their leader's attitude. And they told him so—plainly—when they got outside.

"You're a fine chap!" said Gulliver bitterly. "Clever, aren't you? Taking your time like that, and then being dished at the last second!"

"Jolly smart!" said Bell, with a snort.

Bernard Forrest chuckled.

"Yes, I pride myself it was pretty smart," he said coolly. "My dear idiots, I did that deliberately, and I timed it to the second. That collector will be ready to swear that we lost the train by the skin of our teeth. Evidence, my sons."

"Evidence?" said Gulliver, staring.

"Of course," grinned Forrest. "We're going to have a little game of billiards at the Wheatsheaf, and then we can cycle home in the fog, and have a perfect excuse for being late. We don't often get a chance like this to have some sport, and do it openly! You can trust me to know my way about!"

"But we're on our honour!" protested Bell.

"You're improving, old man," grinned Forrest calmly. "It's the first time I knew you were a humorist!"



## CHAPTER 11.

### HANDFORTH'S REWARD!

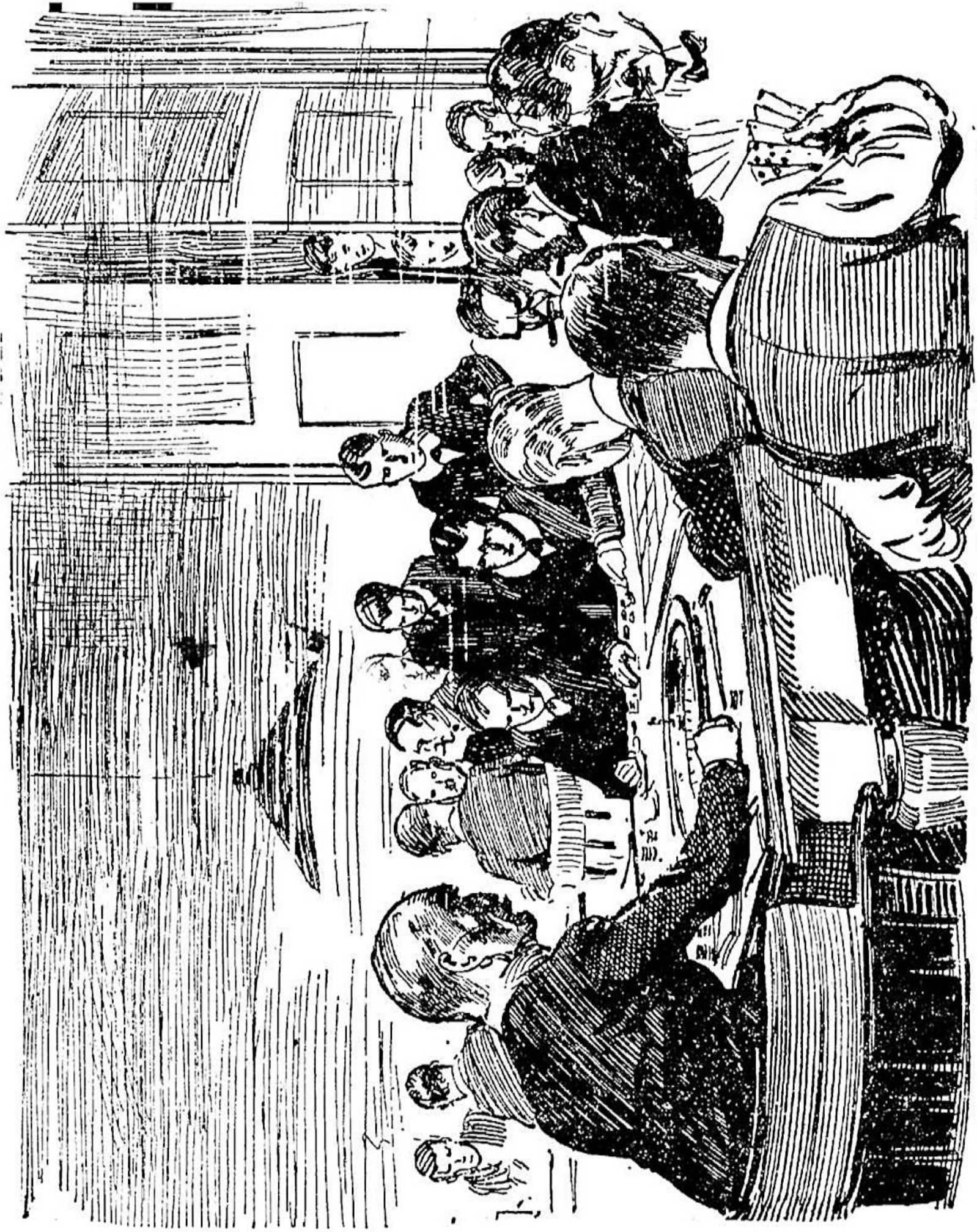
THE garage mechanic shook his head dubiously.

"You ain't chancin' it in this fog, are you, young gent?" he asked.

"Why not?" said Handforth.

"Well, I wouldn't, anyhow," replied the mechanic. "Not me—not in a fog like this! It's rare dangerous, sir. Take my advice, and leave the car here until to-morrow. Safety first—that's my motto!"

Handforth had felt a few qualms during the



Without making a sound, Church and McClure peered into the brilliantly lighted room. Amid the fumes of tobacco, roulette and cards were being played, and a glance round told the chums that this was a gambling den. And, sure enough, they spotted the ends of Study A busily engrossed at the roulette table. Forrest and Co. were taking full advantage of the new Honour System at St. Frank's.

last few minutes. He and his chums had found the garage, after walking right past it in the fog, and nearly getting lost beyond. And yet they knew every shop in the High Street by heart. This alone should have warned Handforth, and it partially did.

But his obstinate nature was such that he would not confess that he had made a blunder. He and his chums had missed the train now, anyhow, so it was either taking the car or walking.

"You needn't worry about me," he said to the mechanic. "I've driven this Austin in the rain, and at night—"

"But not in a fog!" interrupted Church grimly.

"These 'ere fogs ain't any too pleasant," said the mechanic. "There ain't many gents as would risk it to-night. Of course, it ain't my business, Master Handforth. Do as you like. But I'm tellin' you straight, it's a risky business. I 'opes you're insured."

"Insured?" said Handforth, with a start.

"Because you'll need to be!" said the garage man. "Not the car, I don't mean—I expect that's insured, anyhow. But when it comes to a broken leg, or a few cracked ribs, it's just as well to be insured."

"Cheerful, aren't you?" snapped Handforth, glaring.

"It's a lucky thing there ain't no dangerous bits o' road on the way to Bellton," said the mechanic. "As long as you go slow, an' take the corners easy, I dassay you won't do nothin' worse than run into a ditch."

"You howling ass, I shan't run into anything!"

"Ah, it's easy enough to say!" replied the mechanic, shaking his head. "But these 'ere fogs are tricky. What looks like the road ain't the road at all! An' before you know where you are you're upside down. An' it don't take much to overturn one o' these little buses!"

"Let's walk, Handy!" said McClure.

"It'll be just as quick, in the end," urged Church. "It's not worth chancing your ripping little car for the sake of three miles. All right, Jim," he added to the mechanic. "We'll leave the car here, and walk home."

"Oh, will we?" snapped Handforth. "Whose car is it?"

"Yours, I suppose—"

"Well, I don't suppose anything about it—I know it's mine!" said Edward Oswald curtly. "When I start a thing, I finish it! We came out on the Austin Seven, and we're going back on the Austin Seven! And blow the fog!"

The mechanic grinned.

"That won't do much good to it, Master Handforth," he said. "Still, if you're determined, there's an end of it. But don't say I didn't warn you. I 'opes you get 'ome with nothin' worse than a busted radiator, or a smashed wheel!"

They were in the garage—and even here the fog was swirling in mysterious eddies. Outside, through the wide-open double doors,



Without making a sound, Church and McClure peeped into the den. Of tobacco, roulette and cards were being played, and, sure enough, they spotted the Forrester and Co. were taking full advantage.

the High Street was completely obliterated by the dense, impenetrable vapour.

The Austin Seven was open, and Handforth decided that it would be unwise to raise the hood. He bade his chums climb in at the back, and he started the engine. Then he switched on the headlamps, and nodded to the mechanic.

"Well, good-night, Jim," he said briskly. "I'm not going to have you saying that a fog scared me!"

"I never said it would scare you, young gent—but you'll be lucky if it don't break your neck," said the mechanic. "I wouldn't take a car out in this fog, not for a 'undred pounds!"

And, with this cheerful piece of information, Jim strolled to the back of the garage to inspect a few petrol cans.

Handforth engaged the low gear, and eased in the clutch. The Austin Seven purred



into the brilliantly lighted room. Amid the fumes and a glance round told the chums that this was a room of Study A busily engrossed at the roulette table. the new Honour System at St. Frank's.

serenely out into the road, and in about three-tenths of a second Handforth had lost all sense of direction. And anybody who has handled a car in a fog will know what this means!

"My hat!" said Handforth, jamming his brake on, in alarm.

He was startled. They were hardly into the road before he was lost. He had fondly imagined that driving in a fog would be similar to walking in a fog. Being a boy, with no particular regard for his lungs, he had always enjoyed wandering about in a thick fog. There was a certain thrill in it.

But he found it was a very different matter being at the wheel of a car!

"It's all right!" he said, a moment later. "I can just see the edge of the pavement. It's a rummy thing, but I was nearly lost for a tick."

"We can't do it, Handy!" said Church. "Let's put the car back, and walk!"

"No fear!" retorted Handforth.

They proceeded with extreme caution, and the electric light standards served as a guide. The bunches of lights along the High Street came into view, one after the other, and the pavement edge helped, too. And a little further down the fog was thinner.

"Can't drive in a fog, eh?" said Handforth mockingly. "It's likely I'm going to be beaten by the weather! I don't suppose there's any mist at all outside the town. We'll be home in no time."

"I shouldn't speak too soon," said Church dubiously.

Handforth was putting on speed now, and even got into top gear. His headlamps worried him, for instead of penetrating the fog, they only seemed to throw it back, with the effect that he was dazzled.

"It's easy!" he said, as they purred merrily along.

"Look out!" yelled Church. "We're on the pavement!"

There was a bump, a rattle, and Handforth applied the four-wheel brakes in the nick of time. They were fairly on the pavement, and almost into a gatepost.

"Great Scott!" gasped Handforth. "I could have sworn I was on the other side of the road."

"You ass!" snapped Church. "You'll smash us up before you've done! Come on, Mac, we'll walk, and leave him to break his own neck! Why should we die?"

McClure hesitated.

"We'd better stick it!" he grumbled. "We can't leave him in the lurch, the poor idiot."

"When you chaps have done mumbling, perhaps you'll jump out and lend a hand," said Handforth tartly. "We've got to get back on to the road, and I want to know how deep that pavement is. Besides, there might be something coming."

They found the road again without difficulty, and Handforth gained a little more confidence as they proceeded—mainly because the fog was thinner here. He could see the pavement distinctly.

But it wasn't quite so easy after they had got out of the town. There were only hedges here—with treacherous ditches, too. And there weren't any street lamps to loom out of the fog as a guide. And although the swirling mists were thinner, they were quite bad enough for Handforth's nerves. He was beginning to find out that driving in a fog at night is one of the motorist's worst ordeals.

They climbed a rise, and the fog vanished like magic, leaving them in comparatively clear air. Handforth gave a laugh of relief and triumph.

"What did I tell you?" he shouted. "We shall have the grin over those other fatheads when we get to St. Frank's. Fancy being afraid of a local mist! Now we can buzz!"

Church and McClure made no comment—



they didn't want to count their chickens before they were hatched. The Austin hummed forward with ever-increasing speed, and plunged gaily down the decline. A few wreaths of fog came up, and in another moment the car was in the midst of the stuff again. Handforth throttled down, but made no attempt to apply his brake. He was going much too fast.

"Steady, you ass!" said Church, in alarm.

"My dear chap, I know this road like a book!" said Handforth. "It's straight down, and then gradually round to the left——"

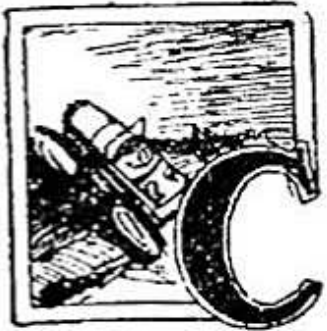
"You fathead!" roared McClure. "That's the next hill! This one makes a sharp turn to the right—— Look out! You idiot, we shall be over——"

"Hi!" howled Church desperately.

Handforth, certain that he had to bear to the left, was quite unprepared for the sharp right-hand turn. He saw it too late. The road, instead of continuing onwards, vanished into the mist.

The Austin Seven plunged headlong for the hedge.

There was a wild lurch, the little car leapt upwards, and then sagged over sideways. It came to a full stop, and Handforth, who had half risen in his alarm, was sent clean over the low wind-screen, to crash in a heap beyond.



## CHAPTER 12.

### THE JOYS OF MOTORING.

CHURCH and McClure were thrown into a heap, but, except for a bruise or two, they were unhurt. They managed to tumble out, wild with alarm over the fate of their leader.

They had seen him take his headlong dive, and couldn't understand why he hadn't smashed the glass of the wind-screen, with dire results. True, it was one of those small wind-screens which sports models favour, but if Handforth had shattered it, he might have sustained ugly cuts.

But the screen wasn't even cracked. Handforth had taken a header right over the bonnet, and now there was no sign of him. A complete stillness reigned. The engine had stopped dead, owing to the gear being left in. Church and McClure stood there, filled with apprehension.

The little car had gone clean through the low hedge, and had then tipped sharply downwards, sagging over on one side. The meadow beyond the road was at a lower level, and Handforth must have come a very severe cropper. The fog was swirling round thickly.

"Handy!" panted Church desperately.

There was no reply.

"He's broken his neck!" sobbed McClure. "We warned him——"

"Come on—it's no good jumping to conclusions!" interrupted Church, in an unsteady voice. "I expect he's fooling! The car isn't even damaged! Quick! Let's go and find him!"

They struggled round to the front of the car, where the headlamps were cutting through the fog and the darkness. And there, in the long grass, lay the huddled form of Handforth. He was still and silent.

"Handy!" shouted Church, dropping beside him.

"Is—is he alive?" asked McClure fearfully.

Gingerly they rolled Handforth over, and they uttered simultaneous gasps of relief as they heard him breathing heavily. But his eyes were closed, and he gave no sign of consciousness.

"He's alive, thank goodness—but he's knocked out!" muttered Church. "No wonder! He must have hit the ground with his head—— I say, look here! He might have been killed outright!"

In the light from the headlamps, an angry, ugly bump was showing on Handforth's forehead. The ground was strewn with heavy stones, most of them nearly hidden in the tangled grass. Obviously, Handforth had struck one of these with great violence, and he was stunned.

"Talk about luck!" said Church, aghast. "That's the exact spot where he was hit the other day! Look! And the other place was hardly healed."

Church was right. By one of those unlucky coincidences, Handforth had hurt himself twice in the same place—but this second blow was evidently more serious. The skin wasn't broken, but he had hit the ground with such force that consciousness had deserted him.

"And we're on our honour to get back quickly!" went on Church bitterly. "Oh, why did the idiot insist upon coming home by car? But it's no good standing here and looking at him! We've got to do something!"

"Perhaps he's got some bones broken," said McClure anxiously.

Being boy scouts, they were well acquainted with the art of first aid. And it only took them a minute or two to satisfy themselves that the unfortunate Handforth was whole. Except for that bruise on his forehead, and a grazed left wrist, he seemed all right. But the affair was serious enough, anyhow.

"What the dickens can we do?" asked Church breathlessly. "Poor old Handy! He might be seriously injured! We can't leave him here, either—this grass is wet. We'd better put him in the car."

"That's no good," said McClure. "We can't drive, and he needs attention. Isn't there a barn just here?" he added, with a start. "Yes, of course there is! Just on this corner, a few yards——"

He paused, and stared into the murk.

# ANSWERS

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"There it is!" he continued, pointing. "Can't you see it just through the mist? Come on—lend a hand! We'll carry him into that barn, and lay him in the straw. There's bound to be plenty of it in there. I say, I've got the wind up! Handy! Wake up, old man!"

But their usually noisy leader was silent. Lifting him with tender care, they carried him through the grass to the barn, which, as McClure had said, was only a few yards away. The boys knew practically every inch of this road between Bannington and Bell-ton.

The door of the barn was unlocked, and only needed a heave to pull it open. Feeling their way, they carried Handforth in—or, rather, dragged him in—and laid him down in the loose straw which littered the place.

"I'll go and fetch the electric torch!" panted Church. "There's one in the car—Handy always keeps it there now. You try and bring him to. We shall have to get some water, and fetch a doctor—"

"Let's have the light first," urged McClure.

Church raced to the car, and crashed heavily over an un-seen ridge. He picked himself up limping, reached the car, and found the torch. He t h o u g h t f u l l y switched off the headlights before going back to the barn—for there was no sense in discharging the battery for nothing.

With the torch they found that the barn contained a great heap of hay in one corner. And the unfortunate Handforth was soon resting luxuriously in the midst of it. His stillness and his silence alarmed his chums more than they dared admit. They had often seen him bowled over in a scrap, but they had never known him to be absolutely "out" like this.

"It's concussion," said Church huskily. "What's that?" "Something to do with the brain," said Church. "It may be jolly serious, or it may be a trifle. We can't tell. Anyhow, the only thing is to fetch a doctor."

"Yes, but where from?" "We're not far from the town," said Church. "There's bound to be a doctor in one of those big houses just on the outskirts. You stay here while I run back. Poor old Handy! This is awful!"

Handforth sat up. "Doctor?" he mumbled. "Don't be such asses!"

"Handy!" they gasped. "What's happened?" mumbled Handforth.

"Where am I? Keep that light away from my eyes, Church, you ass! Oh, crumbs! My head feels rummy! I can't see straight—"

"Thank goodness you've come to yourself, old man!" said Church fervently. "We—we thought terrible things! You went clean over the wind-screen, you know, and it's a wonder you weren't killed."

Handforth looked at them dazedly. "The wind-screen!" he panted. "By George, I remember! Something ran into us, didn't it?"

"No, you took us into the hedge!" said McClure, becoming wrathful now that Handforth was so much better. "You reckless ass! What did that garage chap tell us? He warned you about driving in a fog, and you wouldn't take any notice. And we told you about that corner—"

"Corner!" muttered Handforth. "Then—then I made a mistake? We went through the hedge, didn't we? Is the car hurt? I say, is my Austin smashed up?" he added fiercely. "It doesn't matter about me!

What about my Austin? Lemme get up—"

"Steady, you ass!" said Church. "The car's all right—not even scratched! But it's a lucky thing it's not in bits! You stay where you are, Handy, and rest for a bit. You're not fit to drive now."

Handforth grunted. "Rats!" he said. "I'm all right!"

He insisted upon getting to his feet, only to find that his knees sagged, and

that he felt terribly dizzy. His head was throbbing with agony, and he was forced to fall back into the hay.

"My goodness!" he murmured. "I feel rotten!"

"Well, lie here for a bit," said Church. "We're jolly thankful that you've come to yourself, and that there's nothing seriously wrong. An hour's sleep will do you a lot of good—and the fog may have lifted by then."

Handforth was in too much pain to protest, and he allowed himself to relax. In less than a minute he was asleep.

"I say, what about getting home?" whispered McClure. "It's long past ten, you know—"

"Hang it all, we've got a good excuse, haven't we?" interrupted Church. "It doesn't matter how late we are to-night, after this accident. Nobody can accuse us of inventing a yarn while Handy's got a lump as big as an ostrich's egg on his forehead. We'll

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let him sleep for an hour, and that'll be doing the honourable thing."

And they crept out, and made a further examination of the Austin Seven by the aid of the torch. The car was sagging badly, and for a moment they thought that either the springs were broken, or that something underneath was smashed.

But a more careful inspection showed that their first examination was right. In spite of the hard jolt the car had received, it seemed to be in no way hurt. But, in spite of their united efforts, they failed to shift it. It was jammed somehow, half in the hedge, and half in the meadow.

"Never mind," said Church, at last. "We can't do anything until Handy comes. We shall just have to mooch about for an hour. The fog's getting worse, and there's only one thing to be done. As soon as Handy's a bit better, we'll walk him home between us. No more motoring for me in this fog!"

"Hear, hear!" said McClure, nodding. "Enough's as good as a feast!"



### CHAPTER 13.

SOMETHING NEW FOR  
FORREST & CO.

"HAT'S five bob you owe me, Mr. Snagg," said Bernard Forrest genially, as he chalked his cue. "How about another hun-

dred up?"

"Sure you've got time, young 'un?"

"Heaps of time," said Forrest. "With a fog like this, we've got a fine excuse, even if we don't get back until one o'clock in the morning! We can always say we got lost—and we can prove that we lost the train by an accident."

"Cunning young blighter!" said Mr. Snagg, grinning.

The cads of Study A were in the billiard-room at the Wheatsheaf, in Bannington. There were two tables in the apartment, and the other was occupied by a party of noisy men who rather looked like third-rate members of the "profession." The St. Frank's juniors and Mr. Snagg were alone in their part of the room.

Mr. Snagg was not exactly a bookmaker, although he had often accepted bets from Forrest. He wasn't a tipster, and nobody could exactly say how he earned his living. But he always seemed to have plenty of money. He was a dapper gentleman, scrupulously attired, with a genial face which seemed to radiate good-natured honesty. Which only goes to prove how deceptive appearances can be. For none of Mr. Snagg's friends had ever accused him of being honest.

He agreed to play another hundred up, for a small bet of five shillings. In the last game he had given Forrest twenty points, but in this one they started level.

"You're too smart for me to give you any

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points, young Forrest," he said genially. "Besides, I want to get that five bob back. I can't afford to throw my hard-earned money into your worthless pockets."

"I don't want your mouldy five bob," said Forrest. "We've only got it on the game to give it a bit of interest."

"You're pretty flush, then?" asked Mr. Snagg.

Forrest produced a bundle of notes, and put them into his pocket again.

"I had two winners yesterday," he said contentedly. "If you'll give me ten points, I don't mind raising that five-bob stake to a quid. Hang it, I'm not playing billiards morning, noon and night, like you are! Be a sportsman!"

"Sportsman," said Mr. Snagg, "is my middle name. You're on!"

"Good man!" said Forrest.

He liked to be on equal terms with these racing experts. Somehow, it gave him a feeling of being much more important than he was—and he never realised that such men only associated with him for the sake of what they could get. Bernard Forrest was in the position of being supplied by a doting mother with plenty of cash. And although he sometimes won a lot of money by betting on horses, this was only because he backed heavily. In the long run he was always on the wrong side. Gulliver and Bell were just onlookers, being much less fortunate in the way of pocket-money. At the most, they would only have a flutter of five or ten shillings when Forrest was in possession of an extra good tip.

"Wait a minute!" said Mr. Snagg thoughtfully.

Forrest had his cue ready, and he was just about to break. Mr. Snagg was looking rather reflective—his mind, perhaps, dwelling upon the big sheaf of notes that Forrest had so unwisely displayed.

"Wait a minute?" said Forrest. "What for?"

"Well, I'll play the hundred up if you like—especially as we've got a quid on it," said Mr. Snagg. "But I was thinking you might care for something a bit more novel."

"If you're trying to get out of it—"

"Confound your nerve, I'm not!" snapped Mr. Snagg. "Do you think I want your dirty pound?"

"There's no need to get nasty—"

"Well, keep a civil tongue in your head, and don't make insinuations!" said Mr. Snagg gruffly. "I'm hanged if I'll say what was in my mind now."

"I'm sorry," said Forrest grudgingly.

"Oh, well, in that case we'll forget it," said the other, smiling. "Have you ever heard of the game of roulette?"

"Heard of it!" said Forrest. "What do you take me for—an infant from a kindergarten? Of course I've heard of it! Played it, too."

"We can't teach you anything, can we?" said Mr. Snagg, with a slight touch of sar-

casm. "I thought perhaps you'd care for a bit of roulette to-night—"

"By gad, do you mean it?"

"Yes."

"But where in the name of all that's marvellous can we find a roulette table in Bannington?" asked Forrest, staring. "I didn't know they had such things here! I thought they only played snap and ludo!"

"To say nothing of tiddley-winks!" grinned Mr. Snagg. "But, seriously, this is a fact. Mind you, it's absolutely secret, and I wouldn't take you into my confidence if I couldn't trust you. But I've got a free hand to introduce people who can be trusted as sportsmen. Are you ready for a little gamble?"

Forrest laid his cue aside.

"Lead me to it!" he said coolly.

"Then get your coat on, and we'll go," said the other. "Your friends can come, too—but you'll have to give me your word of honour that you'll keep mum. Roulette isn't billiards—and there might be trouble if anything came out."

Forrest grinned.

"You needn't worry about us," he replied. "We should be the first to suffer—if anything came out! It would mean the sack for all three of us, and you needn't think we're keen on that! For our own sakes, we'll keep our mouths shut."

He went off to put his overcoat on, and Gulliver and Bell, who accompanied him, were looking rather scared.

"I say, Forrest, this is a bit thick!" muttered Bell. "It's getting late, you know. We'd better get to St. Frank's as quickly as we can. If we go to this roulette place, we might be kept for hours."

"Yes, and then it would mean the sack, anyhow," said Gulliver nervously. "Don't be an ass, Forrest! Just because we missed that train, we can't stay out half the night."

Bernard Forrest regarded his cronies with complete indifference.

"What about the honour system?" he asked. "We can roll in at any old hour we please—and no questions asked! This new regime is going to be jolly handy for us, I can tell you."

"We shall get black marks," said Bell uneasily. "I think we ought to go."

"My dear idiots, you can get back to St. Frank's as soon as you like," retorted Forrest.

"Don't wait for me. But if there are any questions asked, say that you lost me in the fog, and that I'm probably wandering about somewhere like a lost lamb. Then I shall know what to say when I roll in."

"Hang you, we're not going home without you," said Bell.

"Then shut up, and don't growl!" said Forrest. "I haven't seen a roulette table for centuries. I feel like a flutter to-night. And what a chance—with this fog! We can spin any old yarn, and they're bound to believe it."

"Oh, all right, if you think it's safe," said Gulliver, his little eyes glittering with excite-

ment. "But I say, you know! Roulette! Going the pace, isn't it?"

"It suits me down to the ground," grinned Forrest. "With any luck I'll double this money I've got, and then I'll give you fellows a quid each for luck. That's me! Large-hearted Bernard!"

"Cheese it!" said Bell, with a snigger.

Overcoated, they went out and joined Mr. Snagg, who had also wrapped himself up well. He was looking smarter than ever, with a silken wrap and an expensive, close-fitting top-coat and bowler.

"Are you sure this is on the square?" asked Forrest. "You're not just having a lark, I suppose?"

Mr. Snagg chuckled, and dug Forrest in the ribs.

"I'll tell you when I feel like a lark," he replied. "You wouldn't catch me going out in this fog if there was any chance attached to it. Come on, we shall have to walk—and it's well over a mile."

"Which way?" asked Bell anxiously.

"You needn't worry—it's along the Bell-ton Road—on your way home," said the other. "And, remember, this thing has got to be kept absolutely private."

Mr. Snagg would say nothing further, and they walked down the deserted High Street in the thick fog, and eventually found themselves on the outskirts of the town, where there were some big private residences, set back from the road in their own grounds. They were comparatively modern villas of the more expensive type. But all of them were now hidden in the impenetrable mist.

Mr. Snagg was well aware, of course, that he could introduce these schoolboys to any questionable place with perfect safety. For they would keep their mouths tightly closed for their own sakes. The slightest hint of such "goings-on" would mean swift and drastic punishment in the shape of expulsion. But for this safeguard, Mr. Snagg would never have breathed the word "roulette."

"Here we are," said the dapper gentleman, as he fumbled at the fastening of the gate. "At least, I think this is the house. Confound this fog! Who's got a match? Oh, it's all right—I recognise the knobs!"

The gate was distinctive, being an iron one, with ornamental work and curiously shaped knobs along the top. But there was no sign of a house. Forrest & Co. were becoming more and more curious.

They felt that they were walking up a drive, and then, almost before they knew it, a lighted hall door loomed up immediately ahead. They mounted some steps, and Mr. Snagg admitted himself by means of a latch-key. And yet it seemed fairly obvious that he did not actually live here.

They entered the hall, and it was a strange contrast to the murk outside. Bright electric light was gleaming, and the hall was tastefully furnished. A kind of footman was in attendance, and he regarded the new arrivals curiously.

"Terrible night, Mr. Snagg," he remarked. "I see you've brought some young gents with you?" he added questioningly.

"That's all right, Withers," said Mr. Snagg. "Friends. St. Frank's youngsters, you know. Quite in order."

The man nodded and said no more.

And Mr. Snagg, having shed his overcoat and scarf and hat, waited until Forrest & Co. had done likewise. Then he led the way down the hall, and turned into a short corridor with a door at the end.

"We have to be pretty careful," he explained. "You saw Withers, didn't you? Well, you're introduced now, so if you'd care to come here any other time he'll let you in without question. My introduction was good enough."

"That's awfully good of you, Mr. Snagg," said Forrest eagerly.

"Don't mention it," said Mr. Snagg.

He opened the door, and the St. Frank's juniors found themselves in a big room, an apartment which had been designed, probably, as a ball-room. But now it was being put to a very different use.

There were a number of men present, and they all appeared to be strangers. That is to say, they were not local residents, but racing men, commercial travellers of a questionable order, and such like. There were two or three card-tables, all of them occupied. And in the centre stood a full-sized roulette-table, with the wheel spinning to the accompaniment of a musical clicking.

"By gad!" muttered Forrest, his eyes gleaming.

He moved forward, rather awed. As a matter of fact, he had never played roulette in all his life, except on a toy table. Gulliver and Bell had, but they scarcely counted. They had no money for a real gamble.

Bernard Forrest was inwardly gloating. What a piece of luck this fog was! Without it he would never have learned of this wonderful place.

He didn't know to whom it belonged, or how it was they could gain such ready entry. He saw only that roulette wheel, and the fascination of the infernal thing gripped him.

## CHAPTER 14.

THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE OF CHURCH AND MCCLURE.



CHURCH shivered slightly, and looked at his watch by the torch light.

"I say, it's half-past eleven!" he muttered.

"We'd better give Handy another shake and get him home. They'll be sending out search parties soon."

"All right, let's rouse him, poor old chap," nodded McClure. "It's a pity, you know, he's sleeping like a top."



Feeling their way, Church and McClure bore their chum into the barn. Handy, for once, was quite silent, and his chums were getting terribly alarmed.

"He'll sleep all night if we don't do something," replied Church.

Edward Oswald Handforth had been asleep for well over an hour, and twenty minutes earlier Church and McClure had shaken him. But he had slept so soundly that he hadn't been roused, and they hadn't the heart to continue their efforts. But now—at eleven-thirty—they began to get anxious. Besides, they were cold and tired.

"Come on, Handy, old man," murmured Church.

He took Handforth by the shoulder and shook him, with no result.

"My hat!" said McClure. "He's sound!"

"We shall have to punch him a bit," growled Church. "He's always a job to wake, but I didn't know he'd be like it after that biff on the head."

They bent over Handforth and shook him vigorously.

"What's the matter with him?" muttered Church. "We can't wake him."

"My goodness!"

They renewed their efforts, this time with even greater violence than before. But still Handforth slept. And it was such a quiet, heavy sleep that there was something uncomfortable about it. As a rule he snored. But now his breathing was almost silent and regular.

"It's that bash," said Church huskily. "It isn't really sleep, he's unconscious again. Oh, my hat! We'd better rush off and get a doctor. We ought to have got one at first. What a couple of idiots!"

"Shall we both go?" asked McClure doubtfully.

"We might as well. There's nothing to hurt him here—he's in this hay, and he won't be disturbed. And, if one of us gets lost, the other can still fetch the doctor. Come on!"

"Let's have one more try first!"

But it was impossible to rouse the unhappy leader of Study D. Once he muttered something, and seemed to be on the point of awakening, but it came to nothing. His chums desisted.

"It's no good!" panted Church. "We've got to fetch a doctor."

They hurried off without any further delay, and nearly lost themselves in trying to find the road. The heavy mist was no better, and it was lying over the countryside like a thick blanket. All sounds were stilled, and the night was uncannily silent. Church and McClure seemed to be in a world of their own.

Once on the road there was no trouble in keeping to it, especially as they had the electric torch to guide them. They proceeded along the road at a sharp trot, and they were soon warmed up.

It was a mile to the outskirts of the town, to the nearest houses, and they ran the distance in seven minutes. In fact, they were among the houses before they knew it, having kept to the centre of the road.

"Hold on!" said McClure, pausing. "Isn't that a light?"

He pointed. For a brief spell the fog had

thinned. It was patchy, and was constantly shifting. And just at this particular moment the light from an illuminated hall penetrated the mist.

"This'll do," said Church.

"But it may not be a doctor's——"

"There's not one chance in a thousand that it's a doctor's, but they can probably tell us where to find one," said Church. "Anyhow, there's somebody up, or the hall light wouldn't be on. Let's inquire."

All their thoughts were for Handforth, for they were genuinely worried about their leader. They had heard of people dying from concussion, and after apparently being quite recovered. And Handforth's refusal to awaken had frightened them considerably.

They knocked at the front door of the house and waited. Rather to their surprise the door was opened on the instant, and they found themselves looking at a rather shifty-eyed man, who appeared to be the butler or footman.

"Can you tell us——" began Church.

"O-ho!" said Withers grinning. "Another couple of you, eh?"

The man's mistake was pardonable. This house, by a curious coincidence, was the very one that Forrest & Co. had entered a short time earlier. And yet it wasn't such a coincidence, after all, for it was the only house hereabouts with a light shining. Church and McClure had made for it as a matter of course.

And Withers had jumped to a pardonable conclusion. Having admitted three St. Frank's fellows less than half an hour before, he assumed that these other two were just as eligible. Probably friends of the first three. Their caps told the man that they belonged to the same school and the same House as Forrest & Co.

"Another couple of us?" repeated Church, in surprise.

"You'd better go straight through, young gentlemen," said the man, pointing. "You'll find your friends down the hall. Turn into the corridor and straight ahead."

A bell rang somewhere, and Withers went upstairs. Church and McClure looked at one another in amazement.

"Mad!" said Mac, touching his forehead.

"It seems rummy, anyhow," admitted Church. "What did he mean—we shall find our friends down the corridor? What friends?"

"Goodness knows," said McClure. "And he's gone now, so we can't ask him any questions, or find out about a doctor."

Church thought swiftly.

"He's made a mistake, of course," he said. "But there's somebody in that room he spoke about, and they'll probably be able to tell us where we can find a doctor. Let's go and see, anyhow."

It was a perfectly natural thing for them to do, particularly as they were in urgent need of finding a medical man. They went down the hall, turned, and saw the big door at the

end of the corridor. They walked up to it, and hesitated.

"I say, this seems wrong to me!" muttered Church. "I feel like a giddy burglar!"

"But he told us——"

"Yes, I know; but he must have mistaken us for somebody else."

However, it was no time for politeness or conventional methods. Church opened the door and looked in. He opened it quietly and took a peep, being half-afraid that he was about to make an unwarrantable intrusion upon a quiet family circle.

Then, as he looked, he caught his breath in.

"Great Scott!" he breathed, amazed.

McClure was looking, too, bending low so that he could get a clear view beneath his companion. They watched a curious scene, and so quietly had they opened the door that nobody had heard them.

The air was heavy with smoke and the smell of spirits. Men were playing cards at two or three tables, and there was the constant chink of money. But the most curious sight of all was the strange table in the middle of the room.

Church recognised it at once—a roulette table!

He had seen one in a film some weeks ago. And there, at this table, were Bernard Forrest, Albert Gulliver and George Bell—of the Remove! So these were the "friends" the man in the hall had referred to!

"Quick!" muttered Church tensely.

He closed the door without a sound, and they went back into the hall. The footman was still absent, and the two juniors swiftly let themselves out and closed the door with a click. They ran down the steps and vanished into the fog.

"Well, what do you think of that?" panted Church at last.

"Those cads of Study A!" muttered McClure. "Well, I'm jiggered!"

"The rotters! So this is the way they're regarding the honour system!" said Church fiercely. "On the very first night they're on the razzle!"

"We shall have to do something about it!" declared Mac. "The dishonourable cads!"

"In there—gambling," went on Church. "And roulette! Why, it's—it's like a giddy miracle! We went to that house by the merest chance, and that man let us in without a word!"

"Don't you see?" asked Mac swiftly. "He'd already let Forrest & Co. in, so he thought we were two more shady characters. The dirty rotters! They ought to get the sack!"

"They'll get it, right enough, if they play these games often!" growled Church. "Well, we can't do anything now, can we? We can't sneak on them, and it's none of our business, anyhow. Thank goodness they didn't see us."

"Nobody in that room saw us," said

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McClure. "That's the rummy part of it. I think we ought to tell Handy, and get him to smash Forrest & Co. to pulp. Oh, goodness! I'd forgotten! What about Handy?"

"Yes, we've got to find a doctor," declared Church. "Let's forget about this other affair for the time being."

They tried a house farther along, but rang the bell and hammered upon the knocker in vain. They tried again somewhere else, with the same result. And then, while they were at a third house, they heard a clock chiming midnight in the hall. And still their search was fruitless!

**CHAPTER 15.**

STILL ANOTHER ADVENTURE.  
**C**HURCH breathed hard with exasperation.

"It's no good, we can't go on all night like this," he said. "Everybody's

gone to bed, and we can't wake them up.

And it's midnight. Look here, let's go back to Handy."

"But the doctor——"

"It's no good, we can't find one," growled Church. "We're only wasting time. If Handy isn't any better one of us will stop with him and the other will pelt for St. Frank's. We ought to have done that at first."

They ran back along the road even faster than they had come. The fog was showing no signs of lifting, although it was as patchy as ever. They reached the fateful corner, and found the Austin Seven still lying drunkenly in the hedge.

They pushed past it, and floundered towards the barn over the rough ground.

"Listen!" muttered McClure, halting.

They pulled up.

"Hi! You fatheads!" came a voice. "Where the dickens are you? What's the idea of leaving me in the dark——"

"He's awake!" shouted Church gladly.

They ran into the barn, and Church cast his light upon the figure of Handforth, who was



standing up and groping round him helplessly. He glared into the eye of the electric torch, and the very aggressiveness of his expression was reassuring. Handforth was recovering!

"Is that you?" he demanded warmly.

"It's all right, Handy, we've been trying to find a doctor," said Church, going forward and holding his leader's arm. "But we couldn't find one, and— Lean on me, old man!"

Handforth gave an expressive snort.

"Is that the way you look after me?" he asked tartly. "I wake up, and find myself alone—without a torch, or a match, or anything. You just go off, and leave me in the lurch!"

"But we went to find a doctor——"

"Then you ought to have had more sense!" interrupted Handforth, with all his old arrogance. "What the dickens do I want with a doctor? Can't I have a biff on the head without you chaps rushing all over the place for doctors?"

"But we couldn't wake you up!" said Church protestingly.

"Rats! You didn't try hard enough."

"You—you ungrateful rotter!" roared Church. "Here we've been worrying ourselves sick over you, and running like mad for a doctor, and all you can do is to bark at us. We tried to wake you up until we were tired. But you wouldn't budge, and we got the wind up."

"Don't be so jolly mean, Handy," said McClure.

Handforth gingerly touched his forehead.

"This is nothing," he said. "I shall be all right to-morrow. It was only a hard biff, and I'm getting used to 'em on this spot. Runny why you couldn't wake me up, though. I expect I must have injured the brain a bit. But that's nothing," he added briskly. "I'm not afraid of my brain. It'll stand more knocking about than this."

"Do you think you can walk home with us now?" asked Mac.

"No, I don't!"

"But it's past midnight——"

"I'm not going to walk home with anybody!" said Handforth. "What's the matter with my Austin Seven?"

His chums stared at him.

"But you're not going to try to drive it again?" asked Church.

"Of course I'm not," replied Edward Oswald reassuringly.

"But you just said——"

"I'm going to drive it—not try to!" interrupted Handforth, with cold emphasis. "The fog's a bit better now, and I'm feeling as right as ninepence except for a bit of a headache. It feels as though somebody were bashing at my forehead with sledge-hammers. But I can still drive the car."

"You'll kill us next time!" shouted McClure. "Oh, my hat! Can't you be reasonable, Handy? This fog——"

"If you don't like to come with me you can walk," interrupted Handforth curtly.

This, of course, was impossible. Handforth's chums felt that it was their plain duty to stick to him now that he was injured. And, even though they risked their lives, they would have to go in the Austin Seven with him. But Church resolved to sit in the front seat, where he could have his hand near the emergency brake. He decided, however, to make no mention of this to Handforth.

"Come on!" said Edward Oswald. "We've wasted enough time. Past midnight, eh? Well, we shall be home in twenty minutes."

He was very anxious as he inspected the car. His strength and theirs combined proved sufficient, and the Austin was got out upon the road. And then Handforth went all round, examining it afresh. Surprisingly enough, there was no damage. The near side front wing was a trifle bent, but Handforth didn't notice this.

"What a bit of luck!" he said, with relief.

"Of course, we didn't come much of a cropper, you know. All the same, it just shows what these Austin Sevens can go through. Jump in, my sons!"

"Go easy, Handy!" said McClure. "Take it at a crawl, you know. In fact, I think I'd better walk in front with the electric torch."

"Then you can think again!" declared Handforth coldly. "We're all going to ride. The fog's lifting a bit now, anyhow—and I'm not going to be beaten by a mist and a biffed head!"

Although Church and McClure felt utterly helpless in face of this edict, they could not help admiring their leader's indomitable spirit.

"If we had gone home by train with the other fellows we should have been fast asleep by this time," went on Church indignantly. "And instead of that, look at us! And all through your pig-headed obstinacy! It's getting on for one o'clock, we're all tired and peevish, and you've got a bruised head. This is what comes of being so cocksure!"

Handforth suddenly lost his arrogance.

"By George, you're right!" he admitted gloomily. "I say, what an ass I was to come home by road! What a fatheaded, idiotic thing to do!"

"I'm glad you realise it!" said McClure tartly.

"It's all your fault!" said Handforth.

"Our fault?"

"Why didn't you stop me? Why didn't you drag me to the train by force?"

"Why don't you dry up?" said Church darkly. "We can go on arguing like this all night! Are we going to get home, or shall we sit down on the top of a gate, and have a chat? I don't mind! I'm past caring now!"

"Oh, let's get on with it!" growled Handforth irritably.

They entered the car, and Handforth was relieved when the engine started with all its usual smoothness. There was an added feature of satisfaction. The fog was decidedly thinner, and after the first hundred yards—

taken very cautiously—driving was comparatively easy.

Familiarity with the road was a great help, and once Bellton was reached, the rest was easy. Rather to the satisfaction of the juniors, St. Frank's itself was fairly enveloped in thick fog. It would have been rather bad if there had been no fog at all—for the Head, if he was waiting up, might have discredited the story of a thick and impenetrable fog.

They had hardly entered the Triangle—the gates being wide open—before a figure loomed up.

"Who is that?" asked a sharp voice.

"It's us, sir," said Handforth. "We've got back, sir."

Mr. Nelson Lee, the Housemaster of the Ancient House, came close to the Austin, and looked at the juniors with rather a concerned expression on his face.

"I shall be glad of your explanation, Handforth," he said. "Do you know that we have been very anxious about you?"

"We've had an accident, sir, and Handforth is hurt," said Church quickly. "He was unconscious for over an hour, and Mac and I were at our wits' end."

"An accident—again?" repeated Nelson Lee. "You have, at least, arrived home with the car quite sound? The accident could not have been very serious?"

"But it was, sir!" declared Church.

"It was nothing at all, sir," said Handforth grimly.

"It was an awful affair, sir," said McClure.

"A mere trifle, sir!" broke in Handforth obstinately.

The Housemaster was justifiably puzzled.

"In face of these contradictory statements, I can see that I shall have to leave my curiosity unsatisfied," he said. "You will drive your car just to the left here, Handforth, and leave it."

"Leave it, sir?"

"Yes."

"In the fog, sir?" shouted Handforth rebelliously. "My Austin Seven?"

"In the fog, Handforth—your Austin Seven!" replied Lee.

"But—but it'll be ruined——"

"I will put it in the garage immediately you have gone to bed," interrupted the Housemaster. "But I do not fancy standing here in the fog, in the small hours of the morning, talking to you. Come indoors at once."

They entered the Ancient House, where the lights were dim, but did not proceed to the Housemaster's study. Lee switched on the lobby lights, and conducted the interview then and there. A complete silence reigned throughout the great school—for everybody else, of course, had gone to bed long since, and were fast asleep.

It did not take the juniors long to explain, and Nelson Lee listened gravely. They were relieved when they found that he was satisfied.

"Under the circumstances, I will forgive you for keeping me up," he said, smiling. "And I am quite convinced that you attempted to get back to the school as quickly as possible, in order to keep faith with the Headmaster's wishes. But I must have a look at that head of yours, Handforth——"

"Not likely, sir!" objected Edward Oswald. "You plastered it up once, but I don't want to go through that business again! I'm all right now, sir!"

"Well, we'll see," said the Housemaster soothingly.

"I'm worrying about my Austin, out there in the fog——"

"It will be safely garaged within ten minutes, Handforth, I can assure you," interrupted Lee drily. "So you can go up to bed in a perfectly satisfied frame of mind. Oh, by the way," he added. "There are three other boys still absent."

"Still out, sir?"

"Yes—Forrest, Gulliver, and Bell," said Lee. "Have you seen anything of them?"

"Not since we left the picture theatre, sir," said Handforth, looking very suspicious. "They were with the rest of us then, but I haven't seen them since. The rotters! Up to their tricks, I'll bet!"

"What tricks, Handforth?"

"Eh? Oh, nothing, sir," said Handforth hastily. "But some chaps always like to be tricky, sir."

"I do not fancy any boys would deliberately remain out to-night—knowing that a master is awaiting their return," replied Lee. "I have telephoned the station, and it appears that the three boys just missed the train. But they should have been home hours ago."

He nodded, and the chums of Study D went upstairs.

"The rotters!" said Handforth drily, as they reached the dormitory corridor. "I couldn't say much, or it would have looked like sneaking. But I'll bet those beastly cads have been at one of the Bannington pubs, playing cards, or something."

Church and McClure were looking rather serious.

"We could have told Mr. Lee something about those Study A chaps," said Church gruffly.

"Eh? What the dickens do you know?"

"Never mind now," said Church. "We've got to get to bed, Handy."

## CHAPTER 16.

BY THE SKIN OF THEIR  
TEETH!



BERNARD FORREST  
paused in the foggy Tri-  
angle, and seized Gulliver  
and Bell by either arm.

"Remember, leave all the talking to me," he said softly. "We've had a ripping spree, and I don't want everything spoilt by you chaps. If you're asked questions, just back me up."

"We'll never do it!" muttered Bell nervously. "Do you know it's getting on for two o'clock?"

Forrest didn't even reply. He was feeling inwardly excited. It had been a difficult task to drag himself away from that roulette table, but he had done so at last, realising that there was a limit to the elasticity of any story. But he had plenty of confidence in his own ability to "put it over" with an air of conviction.

He had won no less than five pounds at roulette, and he was filled with a feverish desire for more of the same unhealthy sport. And he was determined, moreover, to get it!

The chums of Study A reached the door of the Ancient House, and found that it was unlocked. Gulliver and Bell were about to speak in excited whispers—to propose a silent dash for their bed-room. But Forrest was more cunning. He knew that such a move would be fatal. He set an example by dragging himself wearily into the lobby, and breathing a great sigh of thankfulness.

"Well, we're home!" he said, with intense relief. "I hope there's a master about somewhere, so that we can tell him what's happened. Oh, my hat! I'm aching in every limb! What a beastly time we've had!"

"It's a wonder we're still alive!" groaned Bell.

The necessity for Forrest's caution was obvious, for Nelson Lee himself suddenly appeared. Bernard's eyes glittered beneath his lowered lids. He was glad that Lee had overheard those words of his. They had had a ring of truth—particularly as Forrest had apparently uttered them merely to his chums.

"So you have returned?" said Nelson Lee quietly. "What has happened, boys? Why have you been absent for so many hours?"

"Oh, I'm awfully glad you're here, sir," said Forrest thankfully. "We're terribly sorry to have kept you up, but it's this confounded fog, sir! We missed our train."

"By the skin of our teeth, sir," said Gulliver miserably. "We had to walk home, too—"

"One moment," said Lee. "You missed your train, you say? That train left Bannington well before ten o'clock—and it is now close upon two. What have you been doing during these four hours odd?"

At least, the boys had verified the statement that Lee had elicited from the station officials.

"It was our own fault, sir, I suppose," said Forrest penitently. "At least, it was mine—and I've had to pay for it, too! I thought there was heaps of time for the train. I made sure it would be late—and then we just got there as the gate was closed. It was pretty awful for us, sir!"

"And what happened subsequently?"

"We started to walk home, sir—and got lost."

"Oh, you got lost?" repeated Lee. "Was not that a very singular misadventure, Forrest? You boys ought to know the road by this time, surely?"

The Housemaster-detective was suspicious. He knew something of these boys' characters. In fact, he was not merely suspicious, but he was convinced that they had deliberately taken advantage of the fog for ends of their own. But unless he could find a flaw in their story, he could do nothing but give them the benefit of the doubt. And in face of the honour system, he could do nothing, in any case.

"That's just it, sir," said Forrest, with a grimace. "It was my fault again! I was so sure that I knew the way home that I decided on the short cut, round by Edgemore. And we must have gone wrong somewhere in the fog, and we somehow got on to the moor. And in five minutes we were hopelessly lost."

Lee pursed his lips. A plausible story, and one that it was almost impossible to pick to pieces.

"Although hopelessly lost, you nevertheless found your bearings again?" he asked.

"That was an accident, sir," replied Forrest promptly. "After wandering about for hours, and probably going round in circles, we saw the old ruined mill. I can tell you we were pleased, sir! We were able to get our bearings from that, and we found the road. We're awfully sorry, sir," he added, looking utterly dejected and weary.

Nelson Lee nodded slowly.

"All right—go to bed at once," he said. "If the rising-bell awakens you, you need not obey. I shall give instructions to have you called later. Good-night, boys. I am sorry you have had such an ordeal."

"Good-night, sir," chorused Forrest & Co.

They went upstairs, and Nelson Lee locked up. There was a grim glint in his eye as he did so.

"A lie from start to finish," he murmured. "Upon my word! I knew that Forrest had a vast amount of effrontery, but he has surely eclipsed himself to-night. And I can do nothing but accept the story—although I am perfectly convinced that it is a mere invention!"

Upstairs, Forrest was gloating.

"What did I tell you?" he breathed, as they prepared to enter their dormitory. "He swallowed it whole! The super-detective! By gad! Always trust your Bernard, and he'll see you through!"

"It was only by the skin of our teeth, though," muttered Gulliver. "There was a rummy look on his face. I believe he thinks you were lying!"

"He can think what he likes," grinned Forrest. "What does it matter? He can't prove anything. That's where we've got him on toast. This is what I call the end of a perfect evening! Every chap his own master, by gad!"

A door opened near them, and Handforth looked out.

"I thought I heard your mouldy voices!" he said gruffly. "Where have you been?"

(Continued on page 41.)

# SONS OF THE MEN OF MONS!



By

ROGER FOWEY

## CHAPTER 1.

## THE FIRST SHOT!

**M**R. PALMER, master of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, looked at his watch.

"One minute to go, boys," he said gravely, and the fellows could see that some of the colour had faded from his face.

There was dead silence in the Form-room. Standing on the side of the master's desk was the black, gaping mouth of a loud-speaker; wires from it ran out through the doorway to the big wireless set in the hall.

From his own desk by the Form-room window, Tom Lee nudged his chum, Jack Bennett.

"Old Palmer looks a bit groggy, doesn't he?" he whispered.

"Enough to make him," Jack hissed back. "He was in the last war, that's why. He'll be called up if the— Gosh, only a minute to go now, and we might be at war!"

Jack's eyes lit up at the thought, and he grinned a little. At his side, Tom grinned, too, and just for a moment their eyes met as both tried to realise what war might mean to them. For Germany had threatened a war of revenge. Her ultimatum to Britain had been rejected—and in a matter of seconds, now, Germany would either have withdrawn her demands—or would have declared war!

"Lucky we're in the cadets," Jack whispered through the silence. "We'll be able to—"

"Fat lot they'll let us do," Tom answered. "But if it does come to a scrap—well, my pater fought at Mons!"

"So did mine!" exclaimed Jack. "If only we get a chance—"

"Sh-s-s-s!" somebody hissed behind them. "Old Palmer's got his eye on you!"

From his stand near the loud-speaker, the Fourth Form-master was frowning. More than any of the fellows, he realised what the next few seconds meant—war, guns, soldiers, men rest and torn by screaming shells; machine guns stammering their death-rattle, the livid glare of battle slashing the purple of night and scoring

the light of day with the ruddy tongues of mighty artillery.

Out of the window, Tom Lee looked across the Close. Beyond the tree-lined wall he could glimpse wind-blown grass, where the shore sloped down to the sea. Only a broad strip of sand divided the grass from the blue waters of the Channel. To his left, he could see the roofs of Hythe, with the Dymchurch road running along the shore.

Far out on the horizon, there was the long, grey shape of a warship riding 'twixt sea and sky, and Tom got a thrill as he saw it. He was just about to draw Jack's attention to it, when a harsh, grating sound came from the loud-speaker, and every other voice in the room died away.

"Daventry calling," came a voice from the horn.

"It's just twelve o'clock!" said Mr. Palmer, and on the heels of his words, the school clock boomed twelve sonorous strokes. It seemed as though the wireless announcer must have heard them, for it was not until the old clock had ceased chiming that he went on:

"Germany has refused to withdraw her demands. The British consul was handed his passport at eleven o'clock this morning. This means only one thing. We are now awaiting—one moment please!" Silence for a few seconds, and then—dramatic, without further preliminaries: "Germany has declared war on England and France!"

"Hooray-y-y-y-y!" Every fellow in the Form-room was on his feet at the announcement, yelling madly.

"We'll give it to 'em!"

"We'll fight 'em!"

"Hooray-y-y-y-y!"

Wild-eyed juniors jumped on their desks the better to yell. Somebody produced a Union Jack and waved it madly. Tom and Jack, carried away by the excitement of the rest, cheered with the others. The only one in the room who remained still and silent was Mr. Palmer. He stood looking at the boys, his level eyes sombre, his face white and a little strained.

He lifted his hand to still the uproar, but it made no difference. For long minutes it continued—and then silenced as abruptly as it had arisen!

It seemed as though every fellow saw, at the same moment, the khaki-clad figures which turned in at the gates on the far side of the Close.

An officer marched in at the head of a small company of men. He halted them just inside the gate, then started towards the school with a sergeant at his side. Upright, soldierly figures the two were. The officer had a revolver at his hip; on his back was a pack, and in his hand he carried a walking stick. The sergeant wore a pack and carried a rifle, while Tom Lee's quick eyes noticed that the webbing pouches of his equipment were packed tight with ammunition, the sunlight glinting on the grassy end of a clip of cartridges where a pouch-flap was undone.

"They're in fighting kit!" he gasped to Jack. All of 'em! They don't— My hat, look at that!"

Out where the lane swept round the playing-fields at the far side of the Close they saw soldiers marching solidly, dust rising as they moved, their sacking-covered, steel helmets looking strange and grim. The sun gleamed on rifle barrels, and clearly into the Form-room drifted the steady tramp of marching feet.

Back of the soldiers, cantering across the grass beyond the lane, Tom could just see the bobbing heads of horses, khaki-clad men riding postillion—and then the grey gleam of gun barrels! A battery of field-guns, with wrappings removed—stripped for action!

Now, through the open gates of the school came a mounted officer at the gallop, his field-boots smothered in dust, the red band round his cap denoting his rank as a staff officer. He raced up to the two crossing the Close, and they saluted as he pulled his mount up on its haunches.

A swift sentence, another salute, then he swung his horse round and went back at the gallop—while the officer and the sergeant ran towards the school at the double.

"What—what's up?" gasped Tom. "Gosh, this—this looks like business!" And though he tried, he couldn't keep a timbre of something akin to nervousness out of his voice.

By this time, the whole Form was crowding to the broad windows, and they saw the Head standing at the top of the School House steps, his gown billowing in the wind. As the two who were approaching broke into a run, he descended the steps and went to meet them.

The officer pulled up, and his hand went to his cap in a salute, while he spoke quickly. Tom and Jack saw the Head start, he stepped back a pace and stared at the officer aghast. The soldier said something else, made a quick gesture, and then the three of them came on to the School House—all running!

And as they ran, from out across the sea, there sounded a stirring, deep-throated "Boo-o-o-om-m-m-m!"

The fraction of a second later and something sailed overhead—so low that it seemed to scrape the creeper-clad chimneys of the old school—something that wailed with a deep, throbbing note: "Zow-w-w-w—" and then ended with a terrific, shattering, devastating crash!

The reverberating explosion seemed to shake the very floor of the Form-room. Tom and his chum looked at one another; they became conscious that the boys about them had paled—though they tried to grin bravely.

"That—that was a—a shell!" somebody whispered hoarsely.

And then they saw, out at sea and barely half a mile from the coast, the grey-blue bulk of a submarine that had split the surface of the water. The faintest haze of bluish smoke surged from the muzzle of a forward gun.

In that same moment, from the shelter of the copse near the school gates, there came the answering, challenging voice of the field-guns that had passed the soldiers—four smashing reports in quick succession, and four towering founts of water spouted from around the menacing bulk of the enemy vessel.

And while the Fourth-Formers watched from the window, and saw the splashing water fall back to the sea, the Form-room door was abruptly crashed open. The dusty, grim figure of the officer they had seen was framed there, and he addressed himself to Mr. Palmer.

"Get all your boys out of here immediately, sir! Don't stop for anything! The Germans are trying to land—that shell you heard was the first shot of the war!"

## CHAPTER 2.

### ENGLAND INVADED!

**F**OR perhaps ten seconds there was a tense silence in the Form-room, then Mr. Palmer asked:

"You mean they're—going to—invade us!"

"Yes, sir! Don't stop for a thing!" the officer exclaimed. "Don't stop for kit or clothes. The Germans will make a mark of this building and smash it before they do anything else. We tapped wireless messages from somewhere round here—some spy was directing a fleet of submarines. They're followed by troopships and— Hear that?"

From away out to sea, they caught the rolling thunder of mighty guns. Splitting the horizon were black specks strung out in a line, moving towards land—and the submarine that Tom and Jack had first seen had now been joined by three more. Another shell screeched overhead—another—another—and then—

It seemed to come from the far end of the building, a stupendous, cataclysmic explosion—the jarring clatter of falling brickwork, and then across the Close rolled a cloud of thick, oily smoke.

"That one hit the building!" grunted the officer. "Now, sir, get these boys away as fast as you know how. Get 'em on to the Maidstone road, but keep clear of it, because they'll probably try to shell it if they can get more ships in and—"

"Come on, boys! Keep your heads—follow me, every one of you!" Mr. Palmer was quiet and cool, and he led the boys out of the door.

Tom and Jack remained at the window, fascinated by the spectacle outside. The soldiers had almost disappeared. Here and there, they could catch a glimpse of a prone khaki form amidst the shore-land grass. They could just see one of the guns in the copse, soldiers in shirtsleeves working on it; they watched the muzzle belch a streak of ruddy flame and a faint haze of smoke, while the weapon kicked back, then jerked forward again as the gunners pounced on it. They whipped open the smoking breech, slid in a glittering shell, and a second later the gun roared once more.

Out at sea, those speeding black specks grew larger with every passing second—racing unmolested, it seemed, for the shore.

"They'll be the troopships!" Tom exclaimed, "Bringing—"

"Lee—Bennett! Come along—don't stand there, you young asses!" Mr. Palmer's voice from the doorway woke the chums to the fact that the rest had gone. They started for the door, and, as he saw them coming, the master hurried ahead.

They reached the passage; a door at the far end was open, and fellows were streaming through. Little Side beyond was dotted with boys hurrying for the wall which showed across the grass, helping one another over it in reckless haste.

Excited shouts drifted back to the passage. The school was being abandoned—completely abandoned! No one was stopping for anything whatever; boys and masters were leaving just as they stood—hurrying from the menace of the invader.

"Gosh, fancy this!" Jack gasped. "One minute we were in class, and then——"

The "Zow-w-w-w!" of a shell came like a forceful comment to his own words. Far beyond the wall of Little Side, a gout of brown earth and yellow smoke struck up to the sky. Behind them, rapid rifle-fire formed a background to the crackling, snapping reports of the field-guns.

"We're cadets!" Tom turned to his chum. "We ought to—ought to be in this, instead of bunking with the——"

"Hi—young 'un! Which is the way up to the clock tower?" Both spun round as the clump of heavily-booted feet came to their ears. Two soldiers were running along the tiled corridor towards them. One carried a pair of white signalling flags, and both had revolvers at their hips. Strange figures, they looked, in the mellow light that came through the stained-glass windows of the corridor—strange, dusty, and grim.

Blood showed on the cheek of the soldier with the flags—blood from a gash at one side of his brow, and he rubbed the hurt with the back of his hand as he went on:

"Which is the way—quick? I got to——"

"Come on!" At a run, Tom led the pair down the corridor, shot around the corner into a passage at the end with the two soldiers and Jack at his heels, then he dived across a small hall from which a narrow, iron-studded door at one side gave to the spiral staircase which led to the top of the clock tower.

"It's through here!" Tom exclaimed. "But the door's locked!"

"Would be!" growled the man with the flags. "Whose got the key?"

"Old Bates—the porter, you know—but he——"

"He's bunked, I bet a quid! Shoot the lock off, that's the only thing!" exclaimed the soldier.

His companion had already drawn his revolver. An instant later, the ear-splitting roar of the weapon sounded in the little hall. Watching with wide eyes, Tom and Jack saw woodwork splinter as the man fired four shots around the keyhole; he thrust with a brawny shoulder and the door gave, splinters dropping to the ground.

"Got it! Now we'll be——" The man broke off. The soldier with the signalling flags was swaying on his feet, while his right hand wandered shakily to the wound on his head. Ere either of them could do anything, he reeled sideways and dropped to the floor.

Tom and Jack stood staring down at him, while the other soldier bent above him, turning him on his back.

"He's out—the shell that hit the school knocked him over! A bit must have copped him on the head!" He jerked upright, and stared at the two boys. "He'll be all right in a little while—can't stop for him, anyway. Are you two game to gi'e me a hand? There's a battalion o'

the Kents layin' by Appledore. I got to flag 'em over here for reinforcements, an' fetch more guns up. Know anythin' about signallin'—can you observe for me?"

"I can!" Tom exclaimed. "We're cadets. We've both done a signalling course, and we——"

"All right—come on!" The man snatched up the flags that the other had dropped and shot up the narrow stairs. Two at a time he went up them, the boys at his heels. One last reluctant glance they cast at the wounded man on the floor, but they noticed that he was stirring a little even as they followed his mate.

The narrow staircase led them to a broad room above the small hall; from this more stairs led upwards—but on the threshold of the room the three stopped dead. A man was crouched at the window; at his side a stout bench was covered with wireless apparatus, dull-emitter valves glowing faintly in the light that came from the ivy-wreathed, mullioned windows.

Earphones were clamped over his head, and on his chest rested an ebonite mouthpiece. One hand was hovering over a dial set in a black panel that glittered with instruments—and in his right hand was the black, evil shape of an automatic.

He was not looking at them, he was talking into the mouthpiece—talking swiftly—talking in German!

The boys recognised him as M'sieu Gaubert, the French master—but not the M'sieu Gaubert they knew. This man was white of face, tense and grim; his short, bristly hair seemed to stand up on his square-shaped head—he was a German! They could see it now; they had never liked him—and now they knew why.

And that wireless—that was not the set they had seen in the room before! It was bigger—twenty times bigger, and more powerful. There was a giant frame-aerial close against one wall—and he was speaking rapidly, swiftly. They got snatches of it:

"One battery in the little wood!" Both the boys knew enough German to grasp the import of what the spy was saying. "Three more getting into position on the road. That is all! A-ha!"

He listened for a few moments, nodding his head the while, his free hand playing at the dial on the instrument-board. As they watched, both the boys and their companion realised that they were looking at the man who had guided the fleet of submarines to that spot—the man who was responsible for this swift and sudden invasion after the declaration of war.

"Ja! It is still Stutz speaking. I go now. Be swift! *Au' weidersehen!* Ja!"

He snatched the 'phones from his head—and it was in that moment that, from the tail of his eye, he glimpsed the three in the doorway.

What followed, happened with the speed of light. The signaller dropped the flags and he lifted the revolver which he still held in his hand and with which he had shot away the lock of the door below.

He fired. The fraction of a second before the bullet left his roaring revolver, Stutz—for that seemed to be the name of this German spy—hurled himself aside. He came plunging towards them, firing in the moment that the soldier's bullet missed him and brought shattering havoc to the wireless set.

The signaller gasped, threw up his arms, and pitched over. Both boys flung themselves to one side as the German leaped forward. Tom saw the smoking muzzle of the automatic flick towards him; the red sear from the weapon blazed across his eyes as the man fired anew—

and then Tom was on the floor, his nostrils full of smoke and his hair thick with plaster that had been smashed from the wall as the bullet struck just above his head.

Next instant, and Stutz was flying down the stairs.

The whole thing had happened so swiftly, and the amazing revelation had come so suddenly, that Tom and Jack stared at one another in blank amazement—then they looked at the soldier on the floor.

He lay very still. In the middle of his forehead there was— But they did not give the wound more than a glance. He was dead. That was certain—dead!

Eyes wide, they backed to the door. This was war! The room, reeking with exploded cordite, thick with the pungent, acrid odour—the smashed wireless set—the roar of guns and rifles outside—the scream of shells—this was war!

"Old Gaubert!" Jack gasped. "And he's a German—his name's Stutz! I heard him say it! He—"

The rest was drowned in a terrific explosion which sounded above them. The plaster from the ceiling dropped in great lumps; they heard the rushing rumble of falling masonry as dust and loosened bricks came spilling down the stairs from above. The windows were suddenly obscured by falling debris from above.

"They've hit the clock tower!" Tom exclaimed. "Let's get out of it—quick!"

They made for the stairs, stumbled over rolling bricks, and gained the hall below. The wounded soldier had gone; there was absolutely no trace of him—but there was someone else lying across the threshold of the passage beyond.

It was the body of a man in a blue uniform with red piping—old Bates, the school porter. He was propped up against the wall in a sitting posture, one hand to his chest and blood showing on his fingers. He was staring at them, and he tried to speak when he saw them appear. In a moment, both were bending over him.

"Thank goodness—there's—someone about!" he gasped, and his voice was half a whistle. "He got—me! Can you—boys take a—message to—to—"

He broke off, and his eyes closed for a moment, while both looked at him with wonder in their eyes. It was old Bates all right—and yet it wasn't Bates. His hair was no longer grey, and there did not seem to be so many wrinkles on his face; it was the same Bates they had known for the last year or so—only, in some mysterious way, he seemed to have grown much younger.

His eyes opened, and he read the amazement on their faces. Just for a moment, a faint smile curved his lips, then he roused again.

"Bit surprised—eh? Stutz got me—you know, Gaubert! He's a spy, and—I'm in the Secret Service—been posing as porter here—to watch Stutz. He's been using wireless and— But that doesn't matter! I want—" It seemed to the boys that he roused himself to some supreme effort, because his voice grew steadier. "Find Brigadier Gordon; he's round here somewhere. Tell him that Stutz is Chief of the German Intelligence over here! Say that simultaneous landings are being made at Walmer and the French ports as well as at Pevensey Bay! Tell him that he must get hold of Stutz at any cost! He's a dang—dan—dangerous—"

That was all. His head rolled on his shoulder and his body went limp—but he still breathed in that queer, whistling fashion.

Tom and Jack, bending above him, looked at one another, and each noted that his chum was white of face. Things were happening with

amazing swiftness—old Gaubert a spy and old Bates a Secret Service man!

"We can't leave him here like this!" Tom exclaimed. "He's wounded and he—"

"We'll have to carry him out and find an ambulance!" Jack answered. "What about that stretcher up in the cupboard by the dorm? We could put him on that and—"

"Good idea! We'll do it—and then find this Brigadier Gordon! Did you hear what he said—they're going to invade us at Walmer and Pevensey Bay! Gosh, Jack, this is— Crumbs!"

Through the inferno of tumultuous sound that was rising all about the school, there came the shuddering crash of another exploding shell and the tearing rumble of falling brickwork. It seemed to come from the School House steps, and as they reached the stairs that led to the dormitory, they saw smoke rolling about the broken main doorway.

The Fourth Form dormitory was on the floor above, and the door was open. As they passed it, making for the cupboard where the stretcher stood, they glimpsed a figure moving swiftly at one bed.

"It's Buster!" Jack exclaimed, and both pulled up.

Buster Kirk was a short, fat junior, and nobody had ever seen him in anything but a cheerful mood. Just now, his face was white and drawn, and he was dragging on his khaki cadet's uniform as fast as he could grab the garments. On his bed lay a Morris tube rifle, with a little package of small cartridges broken and spilled against the white of the sheets.

"Hallo, Buster!" called Tom, and both stepped into the dormitory.

The fat junior swung round, and stared at them, his eyes wide and round.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he said jerkily. "The others have all gone, and—"

"What's the idea?" asked Jack, and he nodded to the uniform.

"Idea!" Buster laughed in a hard sort of way. "Idea—I'm going to try and shoot a few of those Germans, that's the idea! My brother's—my brother's dead!"

He buttoned his tunic with fingers that shook, then went on:

"He was getting over the wall on Little Side and—a—a shell burst by the pond. Then he fell over, and when I—when I went to him there was a—a big hole in his head and he was—dead!"

His voice was a whisper now, and the chums stared at him in horror. Little Fatty Kirk—dead! It seemed incredible!

"I'm going out with the soldiers on the other side of the lane," Buster told them. "I'm goin' to make those Germans pay for what—"

"Gosh! Fatty—dead!" gasped Tom. He couldn't realise it; they both knew the happy, cheery little Third-Former, and now he was—

"We'll come with you!" growled Jack, and he leaped for his own locker. "Good idea! We'll put on our uniforms, else we might get sent away—and we've got to find that brigadier, Tom!"

"We'll find him, give him that message, and then join with Buster and—and get our own back for what they've done to little Fatty!" Tom exclaimed. Then he, too, jerked his uniform out and started to change.

As they got into the uniform of the Cliff House Cadets they told what had passed in the last half an hour, and Buster forgot something of his own grief as he listened to their amazing story, then he picked up the rifle on his bed and clicked open the bolt.

"This won't be much good," he said. "Still,

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it'll do until I can get a proper rifle. The bullets—"

"They don't carry far enough," Tom said grimly. "Leave it behind, Buster. We'll soon pick up proper rifles when we get outside—and we've got to carry old Bates out, too. My hat!" he exclaimed, as he hooked the collar of his tunic. "I never thought we'd be actually fighting before— You ready, Jack?"

Within a couple of minutes they got the stretcher from the cupboard and raced downstairs to where they had left the Secret Service man. He was still unconscious, but they managed to get him on the stretcher, and then lifted him up.

"Better go out the back, across Little Side to the road," said Tom. "We'll get more shelter there, and we may find an ambulance!"

The piercing shriek and whine of shells filled the air as they reached the open and crossed the grassy space beyond. They could see where one end of the wall had come down, and could just make out a crumpled, twisted little figure lying near.

It was Fatty Kirk, and Buster did not look that way.

"I'll come back and get him presently," he said. "Can't leave him there to—"

"There's an ambulance!"

They saw the big motor vehicle standing by the open door at the other end of Little Side, and hurried towards it. Two Red Cross men were standing by it, and both hurried forward when they saw the three boys and their burden.

"Where's he got it?" one of them asked, as they came up. "Who— Hallo!" He stared at the three lads in their cadets' uniforms. "Who the dickens are you?"

"We're Cliff House cadets," Tom answered him, as he helped gently to lower the stretcher. "We—"

"You are, are you!" the Red Cross man looked at him grimly. "Well, you three get away from here good and lively, an'— Duck!"

The group flung themselves prostrate as something shrieked above with a tearing whine that ended in a fearful crash just the other side of the wall. They were smothered by fragments of earth that came flailing down as they got to their feet.

"Gettin' too warm here—better shift the wagon!" one of the Red Cross men said, as he jerked calmly to his feet. "They must be makin' a mark of this building. Get hold o' this stretcher, Sam—right! Up!"

In a matter of seconds the stretcher bearing the wounded Secret Service man was slid smoothly into the ambulance; inside, a man in



shirtsleeves was tending another casualty. The Red Cross man who had first addressed the boys turned to them again.

"Cut along this road until you're clear of the wall," he said. "There's a little river or something at the end—wade along that an' keep your heads down. There's going to be some dirt flyin' about here in next to no time—you ought to ha' gone off with the other non-combatants. Get away 'fore you get hurt!" And a jerking thumb up the road enforced his remark.

The ambulance rolled heavily away, and the three stood a moment crouched in the shelter of the wall as they watched it go.

"Non-combatants!" growled Buster. "I'll show him—non-combatants! Come on, let's get round to where the soldiers are at the front of the school—then we'll ask one of 'em for that brigadier you chaps heard about."

"We ought to try and get hold of him quickly, too!" Tom said. "I expect—"

He broke off as they hurried along in the shadow of Little Side wall. It ended and gave place to a fence that bounded the back of the playing fields. They climbed it together, dropped to the other side, started to run forward—and then all three pulled up and stood gazing in horror at the sight before them.

A field-gun lay on its side; in the tangled harness at the front was what was left of the team of six horses. The grey barrel of the gun was shattered, and the weapon lay at one side of an enormous shell-hole. Plainly, a shell from the enemy ships at sea had caught it fairly.

Thrown clear of the dead horses were the three drivers—still, khaki-clad figures that merged with the yellowish-brown of the torn earth. The wrecked gun—the dead men—the killed horses—it all formed a picture which told, more than anything else had done, the reality of the war which had come with such suddenness.

It was Buster who moved first. His chin was set as he stepped forward. At one side of the gun limber he had seen the canvas-shrouded shapes of three rifles, held in stout, leather-covered clips. The rifles evidently belonged to the drivers of the gun team, and in a moment Buster had lifted the heavy weapons free.

He partly stripped the cover from one, disclosing a rifle which was exactly the same in weight and external appearance as the one which he had left up in the dormitory—but this had no Morris tube and would fire a proper service bullet.

"These are what we want!" he said grimly. "One each—now we want some ammunition." He glanced at the still figures of the drivers and at the ammunition-filled bandoliers which each carried, but Buster did not go near them. "I expect we'll be able to borrow some," he said, and then, each carrying a rifle, they started across the field at a run.

The lane beyond was bordered by a hedge. It was not until they pushed their way through it that they got a really full impression of what was happening.

In the shallow ditch on the other side of the lane showed the figures of soldiers, each with

his cheek cuddled close against the stock of his rifle. Every few seconds their shoulders jerked, and the snapping crack of their shots came to the ears of the three boys.

Soldiers seemed to be everywhere, half hidden in the grass and—on the right—running forward in little bunches, doubled-up figures that appeared and disappeared with startling suddenness.

To the left showed the school; the clock tower had gone, and only a broken, ivy-tangled stump struck upwards to the sky. There were gaping holes in the walls, and every few moments the red-green clad front was pierced by a shell that smashed through in a smother of smoke, dust, and debris.

The grass-grown slope down to the sandy beach before the chums continually erupted in founts of brown earth and yellow smoke—and all the while the air shuddered with the detonation of guns, rifles and the vicious screech of shell fragments.

Somewhere near them, a machine-gun was firing with a jerky, shattering roar. Over by the little copse, the trees were almost hidden by the continuous spurts of bursting shells—the fire that Stutz had directed before the boys had discovered and stopped him.

And out at sea—

Out on the blue waters of the Channel, the sea was alive with vessels. The submarines had been joined by the black shapes from the horizon. One was close in-shore—beached. From it men were dropping to the sea—Germans!

They dropped to the water, and came wading to the shore. From other vessels, flat-bottomed boats were streaking in, to beach and disgorge hordes of steel-helmeted, grey-clad figures.

A dozen of those big boats seemed to beach at the same moment, and the grey figures swarmed forward over the sand. Many fell as they came, the others raced on. And then, from the ships there came a very inferno of blazing guns, dropping a point-blank barrage in front of the invaders. Bursting shells formed a veritable screen of fire, lifting as the invaders advanced. Until at last the barrage dropped away, and the three chums in the hedge found themselves face to face with the leaders of the invading army.

Twenty yards from them was a row of running figures—grey and menacing, the morning sunlight glinting on their rifles and bayonets, gleaming on their leather equipment and tinting the grey paint on their steel helmets.

From the ditch on the other side of the lane, a khaki wave leaped to meet them. Through the vicious rattle of machine-guns and the fierce whine of shells, through the guttural shouts of the invaders and the booming thunder of artillery came the thrilling, deep-toned, challenging roar of a British cheer.

That cheer was echoed by three boyish throats, as Tom, Jack and Buster leaped from the shelter of the hedge and raced forward to meet the enemy.

*(More thrilling adventures of the three chums of Cliff House will be related in next week's instalment of this stirring war serial.)*

**A LAST REMINDER!** .....

**DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS**

**NEXT WEDNESDAY!**



(Continued from page 34.)

"Mind your own business!" retorted Forrest.

"You tricky rotter!" snapped Handforth. "Missed the train, eh? Got lost in the fog, eh? My hat! Do you think you can spoof me with an invention like that? I've a good mind to smash you up!"

Forrest glared.

"You're a nice chap to talk!" he sneered. "You're only just in yourself, by the look of it! We got lost in the fog, and Mr. Lee had the good sense to believe us."

"Wait!" said Handforth darkly. "I'm going to investigate this affair to-morrow—and if I can prove that you've been on the ran-dan, I'll smash the three of you to pulp!"

Another door opened, and Ralph Leslie Fullwood appeared.

"What's this—a slanging match?" he asked plaintively. "How can anybody sleep with all this noise going on?"

Forrest did not trouble to answer. He and his chums went into their own room, and closed the door. And Fullwood followed the chums of Study D into their dormitory.

"So you've got home?" asked Fullwood. "You didn't happen to take a ride to London and back, I suppose? You've been time enough on the way!"

"We had a bit of a mishap," growled Handforth. "But I'm not going to tell you about it now—too tired. I'd like to know what happened to Forrest and those pals of his! Lost in the fog, eh? They can tell that to the marines!"

Church grunted.

"Dry up about Forrest, Handy," he said. "You needn't make any investigations, old man. Mac and I know what happened to Forrest & Co.!"

"Get it over, Church," chuckled Fullwood. "You'll never get any sleep unless you trot out the yarn. You know Handy!"

"Yes, worse luck!" said Church resignedly.

And as he undressed, he related the extraordinary adventure which had befallen McClure and himself. Mac supplied one or two details here and there, and Handforth listened with frank astonishment. Fullwood was distinctly curious, too.

"You've been dreaming!" said Handforth, at last.

"Don't you believe us?"

"I should think not," retorted Handforth.

"It's all piffle! You two must have had a nap in that barn——"

"Cheese it, Handy!" interrupted Fullwood. "There's nothing unbelievable in the yarn. We know that Forrest & Co. have just come back, so it's certain they were out. And roulette would just about suit them."

"You know something about roulette, don't you?" asked Handforth.

Fullwood winced, and compressed his lips.

"I did—but I've forgotten it," he replied quietly.

He did not quite like this reminder. In the old days he had been as much a "goer" as Forrest, and had thought it very manly to gamble, and to bet on horses, and to indulge in similar foolish practices. He had learned better sense since then, and had almost forgotten the folly of those times. The expression on his face became rather set.

"Oh, I say—sorry!" muttered Handforth contritely.

"That's all right!" said Ralph Leslie awkwardly.

"It makes me sick!" said McClure, as he got into bed. "They go to that rotten gambling place, and swank in even later than us, and they're still looked upon as honourable! And we can't do anything, either."

However, the cads of Study A did not go unpunished. Ralph Leslie Fullwood saw no reason why they should escape scot-free—and as Handforth was in much need of sleep, he took on the job himself.

Gathering a number of Removites round him—rudely awakening them, in fact—he explained that Forrest & Co. had already broken faith. Details were quite unnecessary. An invasion of Forrest's bed-room was the next move.

"What's all this?" asked Forrest, in alarm.

"You can't spoof us that you got lost in the fog!" said Fullwood curtly. "We haven't come here to talk, Forrest. We've come here to act!"

And the invaders acted.

In fact, they acted so drastically that the Housemaster was aroused—just as he was having a word with Dr. Stafford and Professor Hudson. They all came up in time to intercept the little party as it emerged from Forrest & Co.'s bed-room.

"What is the meaning of all this noise?" demanded the Head mildly.

"Nothing much, sir," said Fullwood coolly. "Just been teaching one or two chaps the right Code of Honour! We're rather keen on keeping the Remove's record clean, sir."

And the Head said not a word.

"If they all have that spirit, Dr. Stafford, we need have no fear of the future," remarked Professor Hudson softly.

But there were some rough times ahead, nevertheless.

THE END.

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# HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE

**ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION**
**FORM No. 55.**
**SECTION**
**A**
**READER'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.**

I desire to become enrolled as a Member of THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE, and to qualify for all such benefits and privileges as are offered to Members of the League. I hereby declare that I have introduced "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" and THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE to one new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. Will you, therefore, kindly forward me Certificate of Enrolment with the Membership Number assigned to me, and Membership Badge.

**SECTION**
**B**
**MEMBER'S APPLICATION FOR MEDAL AWARDS.**

I, Member No..... (give Membership No.) hereby declare that I have introduced one more new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. This makes me..... (state number of introductions up to date) introductions to my credit.

**SECTION**
**C**
**NEW READER'S DECLARATION.**

I hereby declare that I have been introduced by (give name of introducer) ..... to this issue of "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY."

(FULL NAME).....

(ADDRESS).....

**INSTRUCTIONS.**

**INSTRUCTIONS.—Reader Applying for Membership.** Cut out TWO complete Application Forms from Two copies of this week's issue of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY. On one of the forms fill in Section A, crossing out Sections B and C. Then write clearly your full name and address at bottom of form. The second form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his name and address at bottom of form. Both forms are then pinned together, and sent to the Chief Officer, The St. Frank's League, c/o THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4. **Member Applying for Bronze Medal:** It will be necessary for you to obtain six new readers for this award. For each new reader TWO complete forms, bearing the same number, are needed. On one of the forms fill in Section B, crossing out Sections A and C, and write your name and address at bottom of form. The other form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his name and address at the bottom of

the form. Now pin both forms together and send them to the Chief Officer, as above. One new reader will then be registered against your name, and when six new readers have been registered, you will be sent the St. Frank's League bronze medal. There is nothing to prevent you from sending in forms for two or more new readers at once, provided that each pair of forms bears the same date and number.

Bronze medallists wishing to qualify for the silver or gold medals can apply in the same way as for the bronze medal, filling in Section B. Every introduction they make will be credited to them, so that when the League reaches the required number of members, they can exchange their bronze medal for a silver or gold one, according to the number of introductions with which they are credited.

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## THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE

### THE CHIEF OFFICER'S CHAT

(All LETTERS in reference to the League should be addressed to the Chief Officer, The St. Frank's League, c/o THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Lond., E.C.4.)

#### GOOD NEWS!

It is a matter of immense satisfaction to me that the facilities granted by our League Correspondence Column are being more and more appreciated, and utilised by chums all over the country. All requests sent in for the publication of a correspondence notice are dealt with as received. Make your paragraphs brief, please, as space is necessarily limited.

By the way, I have a very pleasing bit of intelligence concerning the rapid increase of membership. At the rate we are now travelling, the day will soon arrive when all those members eligible for the Silver Medal—which means a membership total of five thousand—will have to make application for the higher award. There will be due notice about this.

#### CORRESPONDENTS WANTED.

Sydney G. Hamilton, 11, Ballance Road, South Hackney, London, E.9, wishes to hear from members in the Colonies.

Sinclair R. Dobic, 22, Grand Parade, Eastbourne, wishes to hear from readers in Eastbourne who are willing to join the St. Frank's League.

William D. Denby, 213, Berkeley Street, Sandyford, Glasgow, C.3, wishes to hear from readers overseas who would like to join the Mermaid Club.

William C. H. Matthews, 22, Edmund Street, Camberwell Road, London, S.E.5, wishes to correspond with readers who know French; also with chums in the United States, especially New York.

Stanley G. Lenton, 86, Boldmere Road, Wyde Green, Birmingham, wishes to correspond with members in Manchester.

James Singleton, 28, Orleans Road, Old Swan, Liverpool, wishes to hear from members in his district. He is forming an S.F.L. Football Club.

Ernest Sydney Blake, 19s, Leucha Road, St. James Street, Walthamstow, E.17, wishes to correspond with an Australian chum, age 16-17, interested in athletics and cars.

J. Roche, 177, Albert Road, Jarrow, Co. Durham, wishes to correspond with members in India, Africa, America, Australia, or anywhere overseas, with a view to exchange photographs and chat about sports, camping, etc.

F. V. Barber, 40, Park Road, Congleton, Cheshire, wishes to hear from readers in his district.

W. H. Coomb, 57, Ranelagh Road, Dublin, wishes to hear from any Leagueites in his district who play any musical instrument, with a view to form a band. He also desires to start a club.

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