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HERO - AND CAD !

An amazing long complete yarn of schoolboy sport and adventure, introducing the famous chums of St. Frank's.

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HERO—AND CAD!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

CHAPTER 1.

Bernard Forrest's Bluff!

"WELL, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth, staring. The famous leader of Study D at St. Frank's was on the steps of the Ancient House, and, needless to say, Church and McClure were with him. It was a blustery October evening, and dusk was already falling. The redoubtable Edward Oswald was staring across the Triangle in the direction of the shrubbery, a fairly thick belt of trees which almost concealed the old monastery ruins from view. A figure in Etons had just staggered out of the shrubbery, and was now moving uncertainly and waveringly into the open.

—Featuring the Cheery Chums of St. Frank's and Bernard Forrest!



To all outward appearances, Bernard Forrest has repented of his former evil ways, and it now seems that he is a good sportsman. But he has a deep and cunning motive in becoming popular, for at heart he is just as big a cad as ever!

"It's Gulliver," said Church.

"I can see that, fathead!" exclaimed Handforth. "But what's the matter with him? Great Scott! I believe he's tipsy!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" protested McClure.

"Well, look at him!" went on Handforth in a loud tone. "By George! If that cad Forrest, is at the bottom of this—"

"There's certainly something wrong with him," interrupted Church.

Gulliver, of Study A, was reeling about in a dazed manner.

"He's either had something too strong to drink, or a pretty hefty crack on the head," said McClure keenly. "Hallo! Here's Bell now!"

Bell came into view hurriedly. He half ran, half staggered, and he was holding one hand over his left ear, and he was gasping with pain.

"All right! You needn't be so confoundedly rough!" he was protesting. "Why can't you keep your fists to yourself, Forrest?"

"He's half slaughtered me!" moaned Gulliver.

Handforth's face cleared, and he grinned.

"It's all right," he said contentedly. "Only those cads getting something they deserve."

Another figure came into view—a well set-up, elegant figure, which lounged along

with supreme self-possession. It was the figure of Bernard Forrest, of the Remove.

"I wouldn't bother with you, only you happen to share the same study as me," he said contemptuously. "And I won't stand it. Understand? I'm not going to have you giving Study A a bad name. If I catch you at it again, I'll give you something that you'll remember for weeks!"

"How were we to know that you'd chucked smoking?" demanded Gulliver hotly.

"Easy!" said Bell, looking round. "Somebody might hear you!"

"I don't care!" said Gulliver recklessly. "This chap comes back to St. Frank's, and he thinks that he can do as he jolly well likes!"

"There's no need to be bad friends about it," said Bernard Forrest smoothly. "It's over now. I've chucked your filthy cigarettes away, and I've given you a pretty hard sloshing. Let's forget the whole thing, and go into the shop for a snack."

"That's all very well," grumbled Gulliver. "You've ruined a whole packet of cigs—"

"And I'll ruin any other packet that I see in your possession!" broke in Forrest grimly. "Smoking is a fool's game—for schoolboys, anyhow. I used to do it myself at one time, but I've got more sense now. We all learn in time."

They went off towards the school shop, and the tiff was apparently made up.

"**D**ID you hear?" asked Handforth, amazed by what he had heard.

Nipper and Travers, Archie Glenthorne and one or two others had collected near the Ancient House steps by this time, and Handforth addressed them generally.

"A bit of a change, dear old fellow," said Vivian Travers dryly.

"Too much of a change to be believed!" grunted Handforth. "My only sainted aunt! Forrest biffing Gulliver and Bell for smoking! Give me water!"

"It certainly wants some believing," said Nipper thoughtfully.

"Hang it! We can't always be suspecting the fellow," put in Harry Gresham. "The Head told us that Forrest is totally changed now, and, as far as I've seen, he's certainly right."

"We'll give him a chance, anyhow," said Nipper generously. "When he was here before, he was the biggest cad under the sun. If ever a fellow deserved the sack, he did."

"And he got the sack!" put in Handforth bitterly. "And now he's back again! Never heard of anything like it in all my life! The Head ought to be boiled for allowing it! It's never been done before!"

In this, Handforth was undoubtedly right.

It was true that Bernard Forrest had been expelled from St. Frank's by the late headmaster, Dr. Malcolm Stafford. He had been readmitted by Dr. Morrison Nicholls, who was now ruling the destinies of the old

school. Dr. Nicholls was much more modern in his ideas than Dr. Stafford. He was a man with up-to-date ideas, and every St. Frank's fellow was bound to admit that the Head had proved himself to be a sportsman, a gentleman, and a man worthy of their highest respect.

But he had taken a novel step in readmitting an expelled boy into the school.

Bernard Forrest had been back in the school for two days now, and during these two days he had been a model of everything that was good. Apparently, he had dropped every one of his old, vicious ways.

But the Removites in general had not forgotten the old Bernard Forrest.

He had been a cad, a rotter, a scheming young blackguard. Betting, lying, plotting, and every sort of infamy had come natural to him. And when, one day, he had overreached himself, he had been expelled. Worse than that—he had been drummed out of St. Frank's by his own Form-fellows.

Now he was once again in Study A, with all his old assurance.

He had arrived at St. Frank's masquerading as his own cousin, and he would certainly have been sent away for good—his masquerade having been soon detected—but for the fact that he had saved a girl from drowning at the risk of his own life.

Dr. Nicholls had seen this affair with his own eyes, and he had been convinced that Forrest was not so bad as he had been painted. The Head had succumbed to Mr. Forrest's persuasions, and he had promised to give the boy another chance. At least, he had recommended this course to the school governors, and the governors had expressed their willingness to leave the matter entirely in the Head's hands.

Thus it was that Forrest was back. For three days he had been kept quiet in the sanatorium—to recover from the effects of that adventure in the river. But now he was once again in the Remove, and he had even succeeded in getting back into Study A.

The majority of the Removites had been indignant when they first heard the news; but after Dr. Nicholls had explained Forrest's bravery, they had good-naturedly changed their minds. Perhaps, after all, the chap had learnt his lesson. Perhaps he would be different now.

Handforth was about the only one who steadfastly refused to believe in this reformation—he couldn't swallow it. He maintained that the leopard could not change its spots.

"There's something fishy about it," he declared darkly. "Forrest can't fool me—even if he can fool the rest of you chaps. He's just playing a game—and a deeper game than usual."

"Be a sport, Handy!" said Church. "Give the chap a chance!"

"One of these days I'll bowl him out, too!" said Handforth, with conviction.

Reggie Pitt smiled.

"There's really no reason why Forrest shouldn't have turned over a new leaf, Handy," he said. "We've all heard that yarn about the leopard, but circumstances alter cases. Look at me, for example!"

"Eh?" said Handforth, staring. "Why should I look at you?"

"I'll admit it's a bit of an ordeal, and I apologise for straining your eyesight," said

Reggie. "But, you know, I was a pretty awful sort of rotter when I first came to St. Frank's."

"Well, you're saying it yourself," growled Handforth. "No need to boast about it."

"I'm not boasting," said Reggie smoothly. "In fact, I prefer to forget my shady past."

"Oh, shut up, Reggie," said Nipper uncomfortably.

"I was such a young black-guard that I became known as 'The Serpent,'" continued Pitt. "Since those days, thank goodness, I've learned sense. And I'm only saying this now to give you an example of how an out-and-out rascal can turn over a new leaf. I don't say I'm much of a saint now—I shouldn't like to be a saint, anyhow—but, at least, I know the value of being reasonably truthful and of playing the game. As far as I can see, Forrest is a thoroughly decent chap now. Why not accept him as such? Let's give him a fair chance."

"Of course," said Nipper promptly.

"We'll believe in his reformation until he does something to shatter our faith."

Handforth grunted.

"But Forrest was always a rotter!" he protested. "You're mad, Pitt! You were never such a cad as Forrest."

"I rather think, old screams, that it would be a dashed good idea to change the sub," put in Archie Glenthorne gently. "How about greasing along to the shop, and sampling a spot of chocolate éclair, or something of that order?"

"We're with you, Archie," said Reggie Pitt promptly.

"What ho," beamed Archie. "This way, laddies."

As they were approaching the school shop, Forrest & Co. came out. They had evidently made up their little squabble, for they were on the very best of terms.

"It's no good, Forrest," Gulliver was saying. "You won't have any chance in the football. Nipper won't even look at you."

"Well, here he is," said Forrest, coming to a halt. "May I have a word with you, Nipper?"

"Go ahead," said the Junior skipper.

"It's about the football," said Forrest slowly. "Will there be any chance for me?"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Handforth.

"Surprised, eh?" said Forrest, glancing at him.

"What are you trying to do, Forrest—pull our legs?" asked Handforth bluntly. "What's this rot about football? You can't play!"

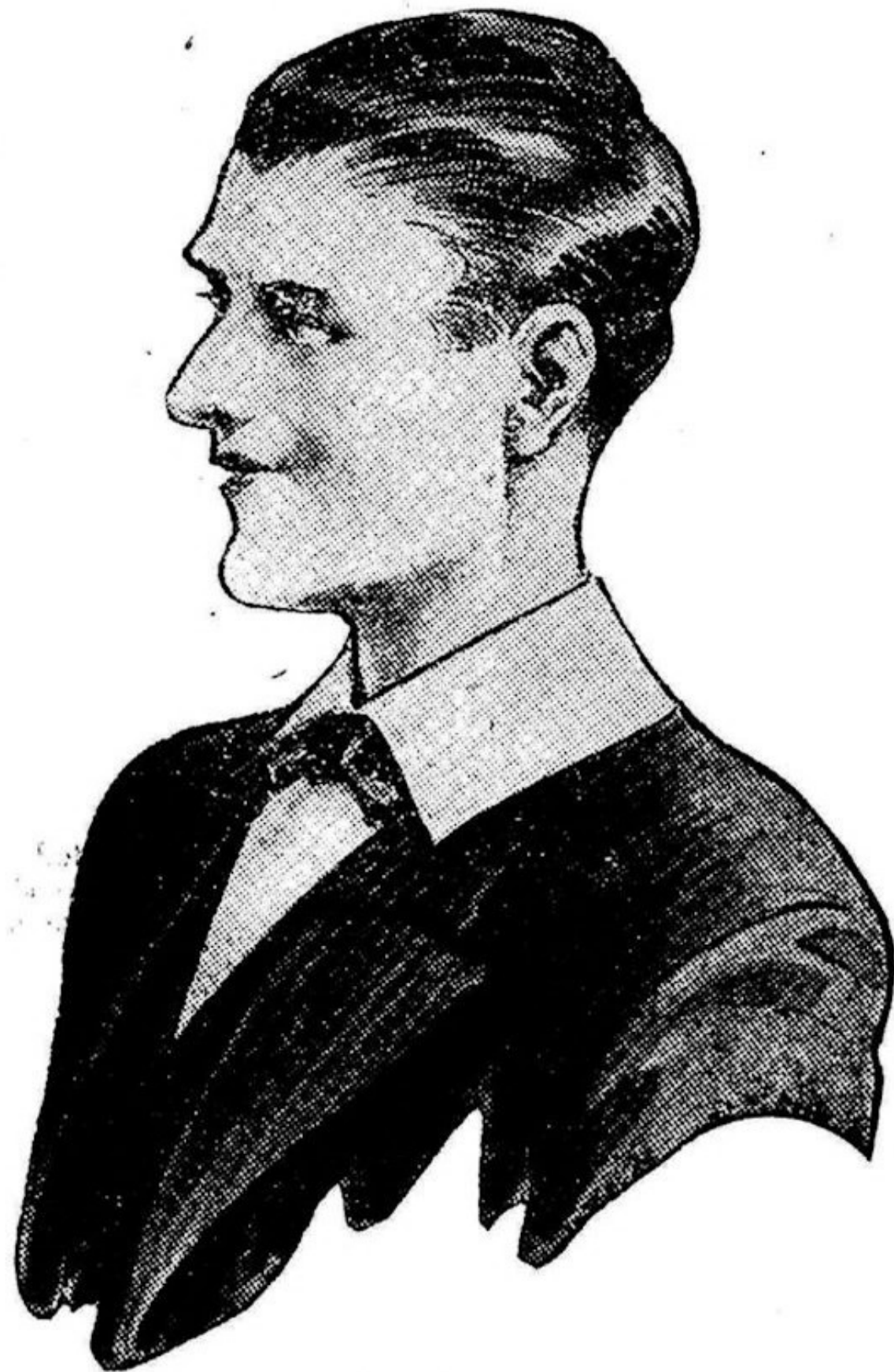
"I can—a bit."

"Rats! I don't believe you know the difference between a goalpost and a touchline," retorted Handforth.

"I'm hoping that I shall be able to convince even you, Handforth, that I'm not quite the same as I used to be," said Forrest quietly. "I've even learned how to play football. I'm keen on the game, too."

Handforth, of course, didn't want to

WHO'S WHO AT ST. FRANK'S.



REGINALD PITT.

The popular leader of the West House juniors and a staunch supporter of Nipper. A very fine footballer; plays outside-right for the Junior School eleven.

be deliberately unpleasant. It was not in Handforth's nature to be unpleasant. But, for the life of him, he could not swallow this sudden change in Bernard Forrest's character.

"Well, Forrest, you'll have as much chance as any other fellow," said Nipper. "If you're keen on football—and prove it—you'll certainly get a look in. We'll see how you shape at practice."

"I'm not barred, then?" asked Forrest eagerly.

"Barred? Great Scott, no!" laughed Nipper. "Why should you be barred?"

"Well, after my old games, I thought——" Forrest paused, flushing. "Well, I wasn't very hot on football when I was at St. Frank's before. Thought it was a dotty sort of game. I've changed my opinion since then. And I really would like a chance to show you that I'm in earnest."

"That's all right," said Nipper. "Nobody will be better pleased than I, Forrest, if you are in earnest. The more good Junior footballers we can get, the better."

"Thanks," said Forrest.

He walked on, and Gulliver and Bell accompanied him to Study A. They said nothing until the door was tightly closed. Then Forrest found his study-mates staring at him somewhat blankly.

"You didn't mean that rot about football, did you?" asked Bell.

"I meant it—and it wasn't rot."

"But you're not going to play, are you?"

"I shall if Nipper gives me a chance."

"But you're mad!" said Gulliver, aghast. "You've always reckoned that football was a mug's game. You know jolly well that this 'turning over a new leaf' of yours is only a spoof."

Forrest nodded.

"Yes, it's only a spoof," he said coolly. "But if I'm going to make this spoof a success, I've got to put my back into it. Half-measures won't do at all. I'm going to hood-wink these idiots as they've never been hood-winked before."

A great change had come over him. Now that he was in the privacy of Study A, with only his two pals to look on, he allowed that old cunning expression of his to enter his eyes. He was the real Bernard Forrest now.

"There's such a thing as going too far," grumbled Gulliver. "Things are going to be pretty rotten for Bell and me if you keep up this idiotic 'goody-goody' stunt."

"I'll do as I like!" replied Forrest curtly. "I only got back into St. Frank's because of this 'goody-goody' business, as you call it. And now that I'm here, I mean to stick here. But, by gad, there's no reason why I should keep it up all the time. In this study, thank goodness, I can relax a bit."

He threw himself into an armchair, and lit a cigarette.

"That spoof in the shrubbery went down all right, I think," he continued coolly. "Most of the chaps believed it. If anybody comes along now, and niffs tobacco smoke, I shall have to punch one of your heads."

"Oh, will you?" said Gulliver and Bell, in one voice.

"Don't worry—I shan't be violent," grinned Forrest.

"After talking such a lot about cigarettes, you're an ass for smoking in here," said Bell.

"Yes, I suppose I am, really," admitted Forrest, throwing the cigarette into the fire.

"And if I'm going to play football, I must be careful. Cigarettes don't do your wind any good."

Gulliver and Bell were not altogether pleased with their old leader. They thought it was a great idea of his to fool the Remove; but when it affected them personally they were inclined to kick.

"Handforth isn't bluffed," said Bell shortly. Forrest sat forward, scowling.

"Handforth was always an obstinate blighter," he snapped. "But, by gad, I'll make him change his tune before long! Not that I'm altogether sorry about his attitude. It's helping me, in a way."

"Helping you?"

"Of course," said Forrest cunningly. "The more Handforth spouts about me being insincere, the more the other chaps turn in my favour. That's human nature. So I mustn't really grumble."

And Bernard Forrest lay back in his chair again, and smiled contentedly.

He was playing a part. He was, in fact, living a lie. His very presence in the school was due to a piece of unscrupulous trickery—and trickery, moreover, in which his own father had helped. That rescue affair—in front of Dr. Nicholls' own eyes—had been a put-up job. It had been arranged by Forrest senior. A fourth-rate cinema actress and her husband had been engaged for that stunt, and they had merely played their parts. Dr. Nicholls, unsuspecting, had believed the rescue to be genuine.

Now Bernard Forrest was back at St. Frank's, and the majority of the fellows were inclined to be friendly.

Only Edward Oswald Handforth maintained his attitude of scepticism. And the redoubtable Handforth, for once, was right!

CHAPTER 2.

The Early Birds!

NEXT morning, Forrest was out long before the rising-bell sounded.

"Come on, my sons—up you get!" he said briskly, as he shook Gulliver and Bell into wakefulness.

"Eh What's the idea?" asked Gulliver, blinking. "What's the time? I didn't hear the bell."

"It hasn't gone yet."

"Hasn't gone?" said Gulliver, amazed. "Then what are you getting up for?"

"Footer practice," said Forrest briefly.

"He's dotty," said Bell blankly.

"You fellows needn't practise unless you want to, but it'll look better if you turn out with me," said Forrest. "As I've told you before, I believe in doing a thing thoroughly."

And when I told Nipper that I'm going in for footer this term, I meant it. Before long you'll find me playing for the school in one of the big matches."

"You're worse than dotty," said Bell. "You'll never get a ghost of a chance in a big game, whether you play well or not."

"We'll see," said Forrest. "In the meantime—get out of bed!"

"Look here——"

"I'll give you ten seconds," went on Forrest. "You fellows have promised to help me in this game, and I'm relying on you."

Gulliver and Bell began to wish that they had stuck to Claude Gore-Pearce—whom they had deliberately kicked out of Study A, to make room for Forrest. Gore-Pearce was now in Study B, with Teddy Long and Arthur Hubbard, and his feelings towards Gulliver and Bell were the reverse of friendly.

"WELL I'm jiggered!" said Handforth, in amazement.

"Surprising, isn't it?" said Nipper nodding.

"Forrest—in footer togs—practising on Little Side in the early morning!" said Handforth dazedly. "By George! I thought the sun looked rummy this morning!"

"The sun?" said Church. "What's the sun got to do with it?"

"The world's coming to an end!" said Handforth, with conviction.

The Junior footballers had just arrived on Little Side for early practice. Nipper was very keen on football this term, and he was intent upon getting his men into good shape. Early morning practice was quite a usual thing whenever the weather was fine.

Forrest and Gulliver and Bell were in possession of the Junior playing field, and they were punting a football about with some vigour. At least, Bernard Forrest was. Gulliver and Bell were making very much of a mess of it.

"Glad to see you down here, Forrest," said Nipper, as he came up.

"Thanks!" said Bernard coolly. "I took you at your word, you see, and I thought I'd get down here early."

"Are Gulliver and Bell going in for football, too?" asked Handforth, with a stare.

Forrest laughed.

"I hardly think so," he replied. "I dragged them out, but I'm afraid they won't be much good."

"We don't want to play football," said Gulliver. "It's not compulsory at St. Frank's, and I don't see why we should——"

"Keep your hair on," interrupted Nipper. "If you don't want to play, you needn't. I only require enthusiasts in the team. A fellow who hasn't got his heart in football will never make much of a player."

Forrest was inwardly contemptuous of this statement. His heart was not in football—he didn't care a rap about the game—but he had made up his mind to play it now. He had, indeed, been practising a good deal—

for the sole purpose of getting into the St. Frank's Junior Eleven, sooner or later.

His main aim, indeed, was ambitious.

He had vowed to himself that he would not only ingratiate himself with the Remove, but that he would usurp Nipper's place. Captain of the Remove! That was Bernard Forrest's aim! Then, and not until then, would he be able to have the real laugh over Nipper.

"SHAPES well," remarked Buster Boots critically.

"Rather!" said Corcoran. "Looks like being a first-class man."

"But I can't understand it, even now," added Boots, shaking his head.

He and the Fourth Form skipper were standing beyond the touchline, watching the Remove fellows at practice. Lionel Corcoran was something of an expert in football—although he had not played a great deal himself. This term he was proving himself to be a keen, brainy player. Considering that he was the sole owner of the famous Blue Crusaders Football Club—which was in the First Division—it was only right that he should know something about the practical side of the game.

"Of course, I don't know much about this fellow, Forrest," he admitted. "He was sacked before I came to St. Frank's. Couldn't he play football in those days?"

"The fellow puzzles me," said Boots, frowning. "I'd like to believe he's sincere, but it's a bit too thick. I can't quite swallow it."

"Yet he's showing good form," said Corcoran.

"That's just it," said Boots. "He's quick on his feet, and he kicks thundering well, too. I never dreamed he could play football like this. Forrest, the cad! Forrest, the smoky gambler! It only shows you that you can never be sure of a chap!"

Nipper was delighted. He had been plainly



doubtful about Forrest. He had imagined that Forrest would be quite hopeless on the field.

But Forrest was a surprise packet.

He was as quick as lightning on the ball, and he had sent in one or two first-time shots which had completely beaten the redoubtable Handforth, much to Handforth's dumbfounded amazement. This shooting of Forrest's, in fact, had struck Nipper more than anything else. The fellow was showing every indication of becoming a brilliant forward.

"I think I must be still dreaming in bed!" said Handforth, after he had picked the leather out of the net from one of Forrest's drives. "Did you see that one, Churchy?"

"I did—but I'll bet you didn't," replied Church.

"Like a giddy bullet!" said Handforth. "And Forrest, you know! What's come over the chap?"

"You thought he was only spoofing, didn't you?" said McClure.

Handforth frowned.

"He is spoofing, too—when he tries to make out that he's turning over a new leaf," he said. "The leopard—"

"Never mind the leopard!" said Mac hastily. "If Forrest wasn't different, he couldn't play footer like this. Good luck to the chap! I believe he's really in earnest."

The fact of the matter was, Bernard Forrest was an exceedingly clever youth.

He was of a totally different stamp from Claude Gore-Pearce—who, for a time, had taken his place in Study A. While Gore-Pearce was a thorough young rascal, he was not possessed of a large amount of brain-power. He was cunning rather than clever.

But Forrest was brilliant. There was, unhappily, an evil kink in his mind. And while this kink existed, there was little or no chance of him becoming genuinely honest.

He was not only clever, but he possessed determination and adaptability, and his will-power was strong.

He has promised his father, before the latter had consented to take part in the unscrupulous trick which had resulted in his being back at St. Frank's, that he would establish himself soundly. And Forrest's idea of establishing himself soundly was to get into the captaincy of the Remove.

Firstly, then, he must prove himself to be a good footballer. Brilliance on the field would win him a host of friends; the old days would be forgotten. He would be hailed as a fine fellow. And Forrest was taking particularly keen delight in practising his deception.

However, at football he was in real earnest. But only so that he should gain his own ends. In this alone, Forrest was proving himself to be immensely strong.

By the time the juniors knocked off he had given everybody a big surprise. Handforth, most of all, was staggered. For Handforth, in goal, had been quite unable to deal with some of Forrest's shots. And nobody could deny that Edward Oswald was the best goalie the Junior Eleven had ever had.

"First-class, Forrest," said Nipper, after the practice.

"Any chance for me?" asked Bernard, in an eager voice.

"Plenty of chance—if you keep up this form," said Nipper. "You've surprised us, Forrest. We didn't know that you had it in you."

"I've been playing a good bit lately," said Forrest. "Of course, I've been at school since I left St. Frank's, and I went in for football wholeheartedly."

This was mainly true. Forrest thought it unnecessary to add that he had an ulterior motive.

"This chap's going to make a fine centre-forward," said Travers approvingly. "Some of his shots were regular pile-drivers."

"As good as Nipper's," said Gresham, nodding. "That last one, Forrest, was a beauty. Handforth didn't even see it."

"Yes, I did!" said Handforth. "I saw it all right, but there wasn't time for me to get across the goalmouth. I can't be in two places at once!"

"That's the whole art of scoring goals, Handy," said Nipper. "A good forward tries to place the ball out of the goalie's reach."

"Are you trying to teach me football?" asked Handforth indignantly.

"I'm awfully sorry, Handforth, if I've upset you," said Forrest earnestly. "I've only been doing my best—"

"Chuck it!" growled Handforth. "Some of those shots of yours were corkers. They had to be, to get past me!"

Nipper was really impressed. As Junior skipper, it was his job to select the most promising players. And it was undeniable that Bernard Forrest was a find.

"Look here," said Nipper suddenly. "How would you like to play against the Fourth to-morrow, Forrest?"

Forrest looked up, his eyes gleaming.

"Do you mean it?" he asked tensely.

"Yes, of course."

"By gad! I never hoped for anything so good—"

"Are you off your rocker, Nipper?" demanded Handforth. "You don't trust this chap, do you? Goodness knows, I don't want to be unpleasant, but—"

"I think it's only fair to look upon Forrest as a new chap," said Nipper. "We'll forget the past. Let bygones be bygones."

"That's awfully decent of you, Nipper," said Forrest, in a tone of gratitude.

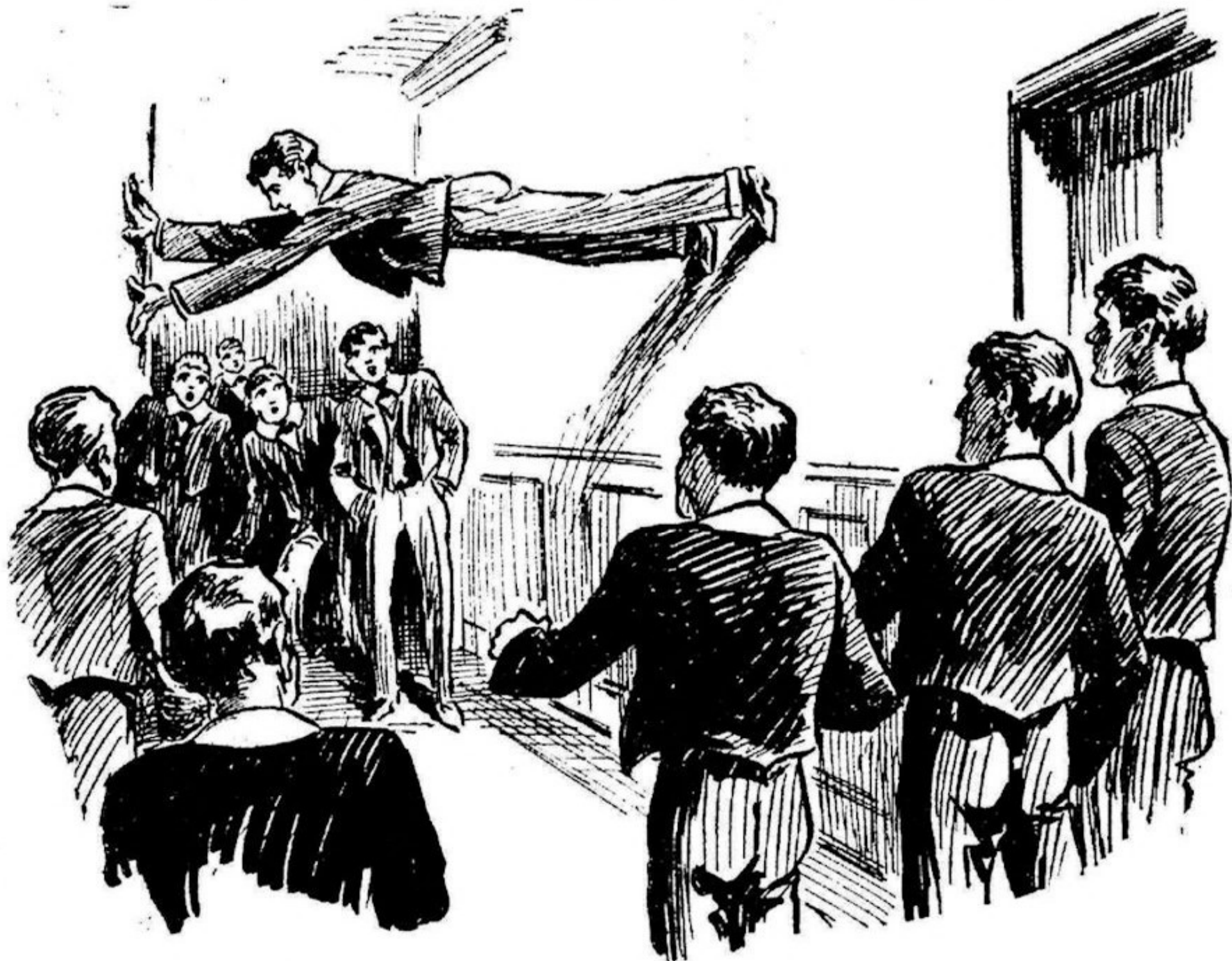
"There's a match to-morrow evening against the Fourth," continued Nipper. "I'm playing all sorts of possibles, just to give them a trial. And I'll put you down as centre-forward, Forrest."

"Thanks awfully!"

"I had one or two other fellows in mind, but they can't shoot as you've been shooting this morning," continued Nipper. "And as it's my policy to use the best men—without any hint of favouritism—the place is yours. Do your best in that match, Forrest, and you might get a really big chance later on."

"I'll play a good game, Nipper," promised Forrest. "More than anything else, I want to show you that I'm different."

"You've shown me that already," replied Nipper promptly.



Up went Waldo, calmly and deliberately, his feet moving on one wall and his hands moving correspondingly on the other. Stretched rigidly across the corridor, he was now well above the juniors' heads. "Coo!" gasped Gates of the Third, greatly impressed.

CHAPTER 3.

Popularity!

NIPPER was quite open-minded about Forrest.

Nevertheless, he could not help sharing Handforth's doubts; somewhere at the back of his head he had an inkling that Forrest was playing some deep game. Yet it was only fair to give the fellow the benefit of the doubt. And, as Junior captain, Nipper was only doing his duty in selecting him to play centre-forward for the Remove in the Form match.

There were one or two fellows Nipper had had in mind, but they did not possess Forrest's sharp-shooting abilities. And a centre-forward, after all, needs to be a sharp-shooter if he is to score goals.

This Form match was to be quite interesting as the team would mainly consist of possible players, who were to be given a trial. Nipper himself would not be playing, and neither would Handforth, or any of the other Remove stalwarts.

The Fourth, after all, was not a hard nut to crack, and the Remove reckoned to win easily—even with a sort of scratch team.

Lionel Corcoran and the other Fourth-Formers were of the opinion that they were

going to give the Remove a sharp lesson. It was like the Remove's check to play a dud team against them! They'd score a big victory, and show the Remove how football should be played!

This was exactly the spirit Nipper wanted. It would make his trial players keen; it would cause them to play their best.

In the privacy of Study A, that evening, Forrest gloated.

All day long he had kept up his pretence. It was easy now. He was getting used to it. And it was gratifying to find how many of the prominent fellows chatted amiably with him, accepting him as one of themselves. Little did they guess that Forrest held them in complete contempt. Inwardly, he had not changed one bit; he was as supercilious and as snobbish as ever. But he was clever.

He loathed the decent fellows because they were "down" on betting and gambling and smoking. He was very keen on these sort of pleasures himself, and his sudden conversion to football had made no difference to his tastes. He was only a footballer now because it suited his purpose to be one.

"I'm hanged if I can understand you, Forrest," said Gulliver bluntly.

"No?" drawled Bernard.

"You told us that you were going to spoof the chaps, and it isn't a spoof at all," objected Gulliver. "This football, for instance. You're going in for the game as though you liked it."

Forrest nodded.

"That's the art of doing a thing well," he replied coolly. "It may surprise you chaps to learn that I hate football. An infernally rotten sort of game. But unless I played it pretty well, what chance would there be for me to get into a big game?"

"Why bother about getting into a big game, anyhow?" asked Bell.

"Because I'm as keen as mustard on grabbing Nipper's place," replied Forrest in a low voice. "I can't do it yet—I shan't try for weeks. Perhaps not until next term. It all depends. An opportunity might crop up, and then I shall be able to grab it. But I'm not going to rush things."

"And you'll play football all the term?"

"I'll play football until I've got what I want," replied Forrest. "You can't understand a chap being so much in earnest that he learns a game he hates, eh? But that's just the essence of being thorough."

AND the next afternoon Bernard Forrest went on the field with only one object in mind.

That was to score goals—to play the game with all the vigour of a professional. His object was to consolidate the position he had already established. A big success on the football field would not only dissipate the doubts that still lingered in some fellows' minds, but it would actually make him popular.

Not that it was possible to score much of a triumph in a game like this. Form games at St. Frank's were not considered much. They were even below the dignity of House matches. This one, for example, was being played on an ordinary school afternoon, when lessons were over. The Remove team was made up as follows: Waldo; Russell, Johnny Onions; Goodwin, Burton, Duncan; Brent, Nicodemus Trotwood, Forrest, Castleton, Evans. Stanley Waldo, who was quite a new fellow, had already proved himself to be valuable as a goalkeeper. His own peculiar characteristics—and Waldo was really an extraordinary sort of fellow—did not prevent him from being a keen footballer.

Evans was a new chap, too, and, being Welsh, he had a leaning towards Rugby. But as no Rugby football was played by the juniors of St. Frank's, he had to content himself with Soccer; and he looked like being a good player.

Nipper and Travers and Handforth and all the other junior eleven men were collected round the ropes—ready to cheer or criticise.

The Fourth-Formers were supremely confident as they took the field. Corky had quite a strong team out, and he was certain of victory. Bob Christine was playing centre-forward, with Corcoran himself, and Clapson

and Yorke and Talmadge also in the front line. Buster Boots was the pivot, and Oldfield the goalie.

"Well, we're ready when you are," said Corky cheerfully. "Where's the referee? There's none too much light these days, and the sooner we start the better."

"Old Browne promised to referee for us," said Castleton. "He said he'd be here—Good egg! Here he comes!"

William Napoleon Browne, the lanky skipper of the Fifth Form, came striding on to the field, looking even taller than usual in shorts. He gave his whistle a preliminary blast as he strode over the turf.

"Ready, brothers?" he inquired. "Good! Let us, then, commence this titanic struggle."

"We've been waiting for you, Browne," said Castleton.

"In that case, Brother Castleton, you were obviously here before time," replied Browne promptly. "For I, with my usual punctuality, arrived on this field at the appointed minute. I might mention, in passing, that, were I a betting man, I would undoubtedly wager a humble bob on the Fourth."

"We're going to win hands down!" declared Boots.

"I trust, at all events, that you will keep your hands away from the ball," replied Browne. "Remember that my eagle eye will be upon you, and that any breach of the rules will be promptly and drastically dealt with. Come! I can perceive that the hounds of the Remove are straining at the leash."

The game began, and Bob Christine, starting with tremendous dash, succeeded in forcing his way through the Remove defence. He got in a good drive, but Waldo, leaping out with extraordinary agility, reached the leather and swung it back into midfield with apparently no difficulty.

Burton trapped, kicked swiftly up the field to Brent, and the latter went speeding along the wing. He centred just as one of the Fourth Form backs was upon him, and Forrest, tearing forward, secured the ball.

He looked round swiftly. Castleton was in an ideal position for scoring. Without hesitation, Forrest tapped the ball forward, and Castleton, running in, sent in an oblique shot which had the goalkeeper guessing all the way. Unluckily, however, the leather struck the post, rebounded into play, and was scrambled clear.

"Oh, hard luck!" roared Handforth.

"Forrest ought to have tried for that goal," said Tommy Watson.

But Nipper shook his head.

"Forrest played the game properly," he said. "It must have been a tremendous temptation for him to shoot just then—but Castleton was better placed, and Forrest was unselfish. I'm blessed if I can understand it, but he's playing football as it should be played."

Three minutes later, Forrest had another chance. By dint of sheer hard work, he

secured the leather again, and this time he ran clean down the field, dodging Boots with comparative ease. He swerved round one of the Fourth backs, steadied himself, and took a shot.

Zing!

It was a stinger. It swerved all the way, and seemed to be going well clear of the goal. But there was such a twist on the leather that it curved in, and, before the keeper could quite realise it, the ball was at the back of the net.

"Goal!"

"Oh, well kicked, Forrest!"

"Good man!"

"Bravo, Remove!"

"That was a first-class goal, if you like," said Church keenly. "Now what about it, Handy? What have you got to say about Forrest?"

Handforth removed his cap and scratched his head.

"There was no luck about that goal," he admitted. "It was a regular beauty!"

DURING the first half, Forrest got better and better. He played a really superb game, and it was obvious that he was in his right position as centre-forward. He led the whole line brilliantly, feeding his forwards unselfishly, and inspiring them all to do well.

By the time the whistle went after the first forty-five minutes, the Remove was one goal to the good. The score stood at three—two. And two of the Remove goals were Forrest's. This alone was remarkable enough.

But there was even greater excitement in the second half.

Forrest opened with a tremendous bang, scoring within the first minute. And again it was with one of those first-time shots of his—a low, fast shot which Oldfield had no chance of saving.

"The man's a marvel!" said Gresham. "Football comes natural to him."

"And until now we've never known that he could play!" said Reggie Pitt, shaking his head. "But, then, Forrest was always a bit of a dark horse."

"He's had it in him all the time," said Nipper, nodding. "Only, until now, he hasn't chosen to interest himself in football. Look at that! Oh, pretty! Did you see the way he got the ball out to Evans just then? Go on, Evans! Good man!"

Evans, the Welsh boy, centred neatly, and Nicodemus Trotwood, pouncing upon the ball, scored with a hard drive.

The Fourth-Formers were getting a bit demoralised now. They had started so full of hopes—but after Nick had scored, from that centre by Evans, Corky and his men began to lose hope. And they felt rather humbled when they realised that it was Bernard Forrest, in the main, who was instilling the Removites with such vim and determination.

It was Forrest's game which was beating the Fourth.

In the finish, the Removites were easy winners by six goals to three. It was a result which none of the juniors had anticipated. Forrest was responsible for three of those goals, and he had played a part in at least one of the others. Without question, he had been the outstanding man on the field.

"Well done, Forrest!" said Nipper, as the players came off, and clapped him heartily on the back. "Bravo! I didn't think you had it in you!"

"Thanks," said Forrest, his eyes gleaming. "A word of praise from you, Nipper, is worth a lot to me."

"Rats! It's not praise," said Nipper. "You played a jolly good game—that's all. I don't mind telling you that I'm surprised."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Forrest!"

"Where's the sharp-shooter?"

"Bravo, Forrest!"

The fellows came crowding round, and Bernard Forrest experienced something which was quite new to him. Never before had he been the centre of so much excitement. He was popular for the first time in his St. Frank's existence—popular, that is, with the majority.

And there was something else which not only gave him pleasure, but amused him. Irene Manners & Co., of the Moor View School, came pressing round, apparently eager to congratulate him.

The girls had been watching the match, and they had been much impressed by Forrest's performance. Many of them knew him of old; they remembered him as an utter cad. But they now had reason to think that he was different. One of the girls, her bright eyes gleaming, was pulling at Doris Berkeley's sleeve.

"Introduce me to that chap, Doris, won't you?" she murmured. "I mean, the boy who played centre-forward. I thought he was marvellous."

Doris smiled.

"Of course, you've never met Forrest, have you?" she asked. "Perhaps it's just as well. All I've got to say is—don't get too friendly with him. I don't think he's to be trusted."

Phyllis Palmer looked sceptical.

"But he's a first-rate sportsman," she declared.

Phyllis was comparatively new at the Moor View School, and she knew nothing of Forrest's record—except from the small talk which had been going round during the past few days. And Phyllis, now seeing Forrest for the first time, was much impressed by his prowess, and by his personality.

So she was introduced to him, and Forrest had some little difficulty in escaping. When, at last, he got indoors to change, he was inwardly gloating.

"Well, it's a good start," he told himself. "A thundering good start!"

CHAPTER 4.

Rough on Travers!

SIR JAMES POTTS, BART., of the Remove, regarded Vivian Travers in a puzzled way.

It was Travers who shared Study H with Jimmy Potts, and the two juniors were quite intimate chums. Yet, although Jimmy knew most of Travers' moods, he was puzzled just now. For the cool, level-headed, self-possessed Vivian was looking thoroughly frightened.

He was lurking against one of the buttresses of the Ancient House, almost as though he wanted to hide himself. His face was rather flushed, his whole demeanour was shrinking, and his gaze was fixed upon a slim, neat figure near the fountain.

Jimmy grinned.

"Oh, so that's it?" he murmured, enlightened.

It was Phyllis Palmer whom Travers was furtively looking at. Phyllis was certainly worth a second glance. She was quite pretty, slim, graceful, and her blue eyes were full of the joy of life. Her wavy chestnut hair was being blown into her eyes by the wind, and she kept pushing it back. This little movement seemed to fascinate Travers to the exclusion of all else.

Jimmy Potts strolled over to his study-mate, looking solemn and careless.

"Hallo!" he remarked casually.

"Well, well," said Travers, pulling himself together with a start.

"What are you doing here, old man?"

"Eh? Oh, nothing," said Travers. "Just admiring the view."

"Rather a restricted view, though," said Jimmy Potts pointedly.

Travers looked at him keenly.

"The Triangle, and all the people, dear old fellow," he observed. "Getting a bit dark now, what?"

"Why don't you go over and speak to her?" asked Jimmy bluntly.

Travers gulped.

"Speak to her?" he repeated. "What the dickens are you talking about?"

"Phyllis Palmer."

"Yes, but I mean— That is—"

"She's a ripping girl," declared the school-boy baronet. "Great Scott, Travers, you don't mean to tell me that you're nervous?"

Travers was as red as a beetroot; and this fact alone caused Jimmy Potts to stare at him in open-eyed astonishment. As a general rule, Travers was absolutely imperturbable. It had always seemed impossible to disturb his equanimity. Yet now he was acting like a shy, self-conscious simpleton!

"Well I'm jiggered!" said Jimmy blankly. "I never knew that a girl could change a chap so much! Pull yourself together, Travers!"

"My dear old fellow—"

"You can't spoof me," went on Jimmy. "You're rather keen on Phyllis, aren't you? And why not? Handforth is keen on Irene

—and Nipper has a special soft spot in his heart for Mary. So what's the matter with you chumming up with Phyllis? You don't mean to tell me that you're afraid to speak to her?"

Travers breathed hard.

"N-no!" he stammered. "I—I mean— Jimmy, dear old fellow, I feel most frightfully wonky. I do, indeed! Isn't it absolutely potty? I wouldn't dream of telling any other fellow, but you've guessed it, anyway. Jimmy, I'm scared."

"Scared of that girl?"

"Scared stiff," confessed Travers miserably. "Did you ever hear of anything so mad?"

Jimmy Potts looked at him with frank interest. He had long suspected that Travers was attracted by Phyllis Palmer. Now he knew! He knew, also, that Travers was positively afraid to go and speak to her—and this aspect of the matter took Jimmy completely by surprise.

"Look here, Travers, are you sure you're not pulling my leg?" he asked suspiciously.

"Dear old fellow, I only wish I were!"

"But there's nothing in it!" protested Jimmy. "She's very much the same as the other girls—"

"So you think," interrupted Travers, shaking his head. "To me, all girls seemed alike until Phyllis arrived. I could speak to them as coolly and calmly as I am speaking to you."

"Well, that's not saying much!"

"But with Phyllis, it's different," said Travers, in an awed voice. "Honestly, dear old fellow, I'm rocky at the knees."

Jimmy Potts looked like breaking into a shout of laughter. It was so ludicrous—so utterly absurd. Yet there was such an expression of agony on Vivian Travers' face that he would have bitten his tongue sooner than have laughed. He held himself in check with difficulty. Again the thought flashed through his mind that his study-mate was spoofing.

Travers was a past-master in the art of leg-pulling. He could keep his face as solemn as an owl's, and make any kind of ludicrous remark. Nobody could ever put him out of countenance.

But one searching inspection of Travers' face was enough for Jimmy. There was no fooling here. Travers was genuinely "smitten." It was apparently a hard case, too.

"My dear chap, there's nothing in it at all," said Jimmy encouragingly. "Let's stroll across, and—"

"No!" broke in Travers, horrified. "For the love of Samson, no!"

"Why not?"

"I haven't the nerve."

"But you've got to break the ice some time," said Jimmy. "Dash it all, you can't go on like this, Travers! You've never been introduced to her, have you?"

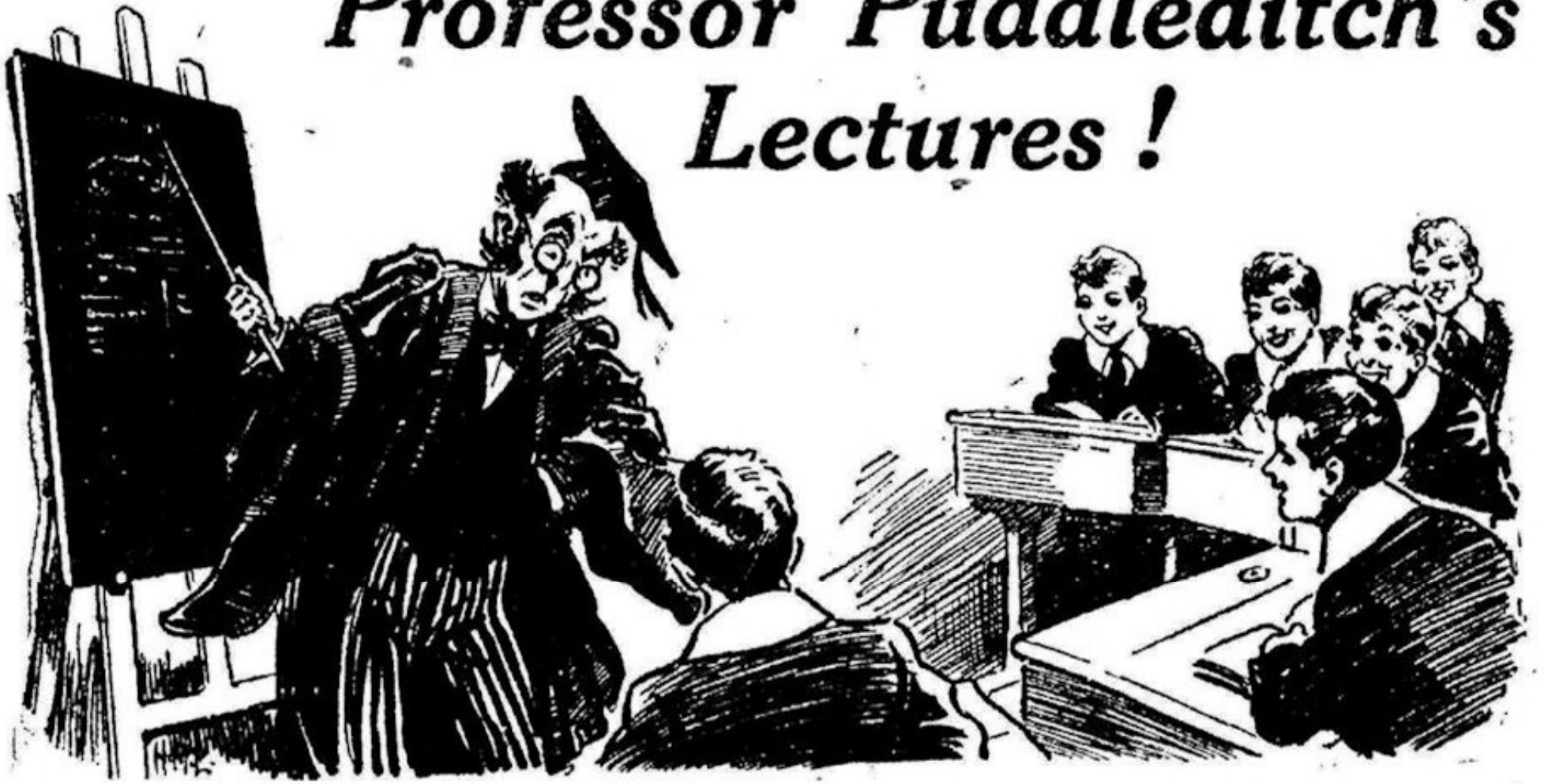
Travers shook his head.

"And you'd like to be introduced, eh?" went on Jimmy.

Travers nodded.

(Continued on page 14.)

Professor Puddleditch's Lectures!



In Professor Puddleditch's second lecture on "unnatural history," the subject of his talk is the "Kipper." And he has some very unusual—and mirthmaking—things to say about this "popular, breakfast-table dainty."

By Reggie Pitt

Lecture 2.—THE KIPPER

IN the Hall of the Fourth at St. Sycamore's, Professor Puddleditch turned the pages of his outsize in dictionaries, and, finding his place, beamed at the assembled Form.

"Now, boys," he began in his antique and high-pitched voice, "to-day we are to look into the ways and habits of that popular breakfast-table dainty, the kipper. The word 'kipper' seems to be a corruption of the old Norse 'kheep herr,' meaning 'memento.'

"In some small fishing towns it was the custom on the public betrothal of a couple of young people, to present the swain with a pair of these flat fish, which he was supposed to keep in his room as a memento of the occasion. Every time he looked at the gift, he recalled the fate of his betrothed.

"After a time, especially when the hot weather set in, there was no need for him even to look at the memento; their aromatic perfume pervaded the atmosphere. In modern times it is found that lavender is more widely used, and has displaced the old fisherman custom. Thus does progress destroy the picturesque ceremonies of the past."

The professor waggled his whiskers sadly and cast his eyes upwards, as if endeavouring to recall his own youth. A pellet from Skinner's peashooter stung his ear and brought him back to earth with a jolt. He recovered his wobbly spectacles from the table, adjusted them and rubbed his ear.

"Something bit me," he remarked.

The Form, having been somewhat aroused by this slight diversion, lapsed into its usual state of inertia as the professor continued his drone.

"The kipper," he said, "can almost be classified as a bi-valve, the same as a haddock, to which it is closely allied. It has many bones, stuck all over it—I was about to say indiscriminately, but this is untrue of anything in Nature. Everything has a purpose. The only purpose of a kipper bone, of which I am aware, is to stick in the throat of the unwary.

"The skin of the kipper is exceedingly tough, and this property is widely exploited by the South Sea Islanders, who strap a pair of the fish on their feet and used them as sandals.

"This method of using the fish as footwear recalls how, on one occasion, they were a great boon to our Tommies when waging war with Afghanistan in the middle of the last century.

"After a weary march of many days, the soldiers came to a pass in the mountains, but were unable to continue unless a fresh consignment of boots came along. The officer in command was unwilling to waste time waiting, and yet he could not proceed with his men all barefooted.

"A brainy young subaltern suddenly hit upon the idea of using kippers as sandals, and the officer in command, scenting the

(Continued on page 41.)

HERO—AND CAD!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Well, if you won't come over, I'll bring her here—"

"I'd like to be introduced—but I haven't the courage," said Travers hastily. "Leave it until another time, dear old fellow. On another day, perhaps, I'll have more courage."

"Rats! You'll be exactly the same—and perhaps worse," said Jimmy. "There's no time like the present!"

"I know it, but— My hat!" gasped Travers. "She's looking at us!"

He was panic-stricken; he looked about him for some way of escape. Phyllis Palmer was not only looking at them, but she was having a word with Doris Berkeley, too. And Doris was smiling and talking—and looking at the Study H chums.

"Telling Phyllis about us," nodded Jimmy, grinning.

"I rather think, dear old fellow, we'd better get away from here," muttered Travers hoarsely.

"No, you don't!" said Jimmy Potts.

THE groups of boys and girls had separated. Doris and Phyllis were now walking over towards the Ancient House wall. Jimmy Potts was more amused than ever. Phyllis, it seemed, was rather keen upon being introduced to Travers. Perhaps the feeling between them was mutual.

At that moment an elegant figure emerged from the Ancient House, and stood on the top of the steps, looking round at the scene in general. Bernard Forrest had changed, and he did not fail to observe Travers' embarrassment. He stood watching, a glint of amusement in his eyes.

"Jimmy, unless you take your arm away, I'll be infernally wild," said Travers, in a low voice. "I've just remembered an appointment—"

"Whatever it is, it can't be as important as this," interrupted Potts calmly. "You can't struggle, Travers; these two girls are looking at us. Dash it, man, pull yourself together!"

Travers tried, and he looked awful. There was no fear of him escaping now, for he seemed to be rooted to the ground. Doris Berkeley and Phyllis Palmer came up, smiling.

"Hallo, you two chaps," said Doris cheerfully. "Travers, I want you to meet Phyllis. She hasn't been at the Moor View School long, and—"

She paused, struck by Travers' expression. All his colour had now fled, and he was looking very pale.

"Aren't you feeling well?" she asked concernedly.

"He's all right," said Jimmy, giving her a meaning look.

A twinkle came into Doris's eyes. She could now see that Travers was gazing fascinatedly at Phyllis.

"Travers, this is Miss Phyllis Palmer," she said demurely. "Phyllis, meet Vivian Travers."

Travers gulped, put his hand out, and he fumbled for Phyllis's. They shook, and Travers appeared to swallow something.

"Awfully pleased to meet you," he muttered incoherently.

"I've heard a lot about you from the girls," said Phyllis, smiling. "Do you play football? I was awfully interested in the game this afternoon, but I understand that it wasn't a really big game. I suppose you're in the junior eleven?"

"Yes—that is to say, no!" stammered Travers. "I mean, the fact is— Great Scott! What's the time?" he added, gazing up at the school clock in a panic. "Awfully sorry, but I think I shall have to be going."

He found it impossible to look into her merry blue eyes. He had taken one glance, and he was almost petrified. He had seen many blue eyes in his time, but these were the bluest, the clearest, the most sparkling he had ever seen. They absolutely reduced him to a condition of terror.

"Oh, must you go?" asked Phyllis, disappointed.

"Sorry, but I—I— Awfully important," said Travers hoarsely. "Can't wait. I mean, quite impossible! Hope I shall see you again, though."

He managed to turn away, and a second later he was fairly running like mad into West Arch. And as he ran he told himself that he was a fool; that he had made himself look utterly ridiculous. And now, just when he had been introduced to the girl, he was bolting! It was the silliest, maddest thing imaginable. And yet, in spite of this, Travers kept running.

Bernard Forrest, on the Ancient House steps, chuckled. He rather approved of Phyllis Palmer. She was a pretty-looking girl. And if Travers was fool enough to bunk like this, there was really no reason why he—Forrest—shouldn't take advantage of the situation. A conquest here, too, would fit in well with his plans. It would be rather good to do Travers in the eye.

"Well, I never!" said Doris wonderingly. "What ever has come over him, Jimmy?"

"Never known him to act like it before," said Potts, shaking his head. "I think it must have been Phyllis's blue eyes."

Phyllis flushed.

"What silly nonsense!" she protested. "Why, I hardly spoke to him."

"But you looked at him," said Jimmy, who had no shyness of his own. "Travers is a good chap, though. He'll soon be back, I expect—"

"Hope I'm not butting in?" said Forrest, lounging up. "I was wondering if you girls would care to come to the shop with me—for a ginger-pop, or a bun, or something?"

Forrest was easy and cool. And there was no doubt that he looked quite impressive. He was out to make himself agreeable, too.

"Thanks!" said Phyllis. "I didn't have much chance of speaking to you before, Forrest, but I think you played marvellously in that game. Those goals of yours were topping."

"If I know you're watching the next time I play, I shall do better," declared Forrest gallantly. "Nothing on earth could inspire me to play so much as the knowledge of your presence. Well, what about strolling to the shop? Will you join us, Potts?"

"Thanks all the same, but—" began Jimmy.

"Oh, do come," said Doris.

"Well, all right, then, thanks!" said the schoolboy baronet. "I was just wondering what had happened to Travers, to tell you the truth."

He was dumbfounded by Travers' sudden escape. The whole thing was extraordinary. Travers, usually so cool, had behaved like a mere kid! And now, probably, he was hiding away somewhere—lest he should come across Phyllis again!

In the meanwhile, Bernard Forrest was taking full advantage of his opportunity. He was making himself exceedingly agreeable to Phyllis; and the girl was undoubtedly impressed by him.

Jimmy Potts was bitter. He could see that Forrest was going to cut Travers out. And, although the whole thing was trivial, Jimmy took it to heart. Travers was his chum, and he hated the idea of Forrest butting in, and practically stealing the girl like this.

"Oh, well, it's Travers' own fault!" he told himself gruffly. "The silly ass! Being scared of a mere girl! Rummiest thing I've ever known!"

CHAPTER 5.

Up to His Old Game!

"YOU'LL let me see you home?" asked Bernard Forrest agreeably.

"Oh, you needn't trouble—really!" said Phyllis.

"But the other girls have gone, and I wouldn't dream of allowing you to walk back to your school alone," replied Forrest.

"I suppose somebody will run away with me?" laughed the girl. "Why, we girls are always running down to the village alone. What do you think we're made of? But, really, I shall have to hurry. It's nearly time for our calling-over."

Forrest had been making hay whilst the sun shone. After leaving the tuckshop, he had suggested a little round of the school. For Phyllis, although she had been to St. Frank's before, had never been actually shown over the old school.

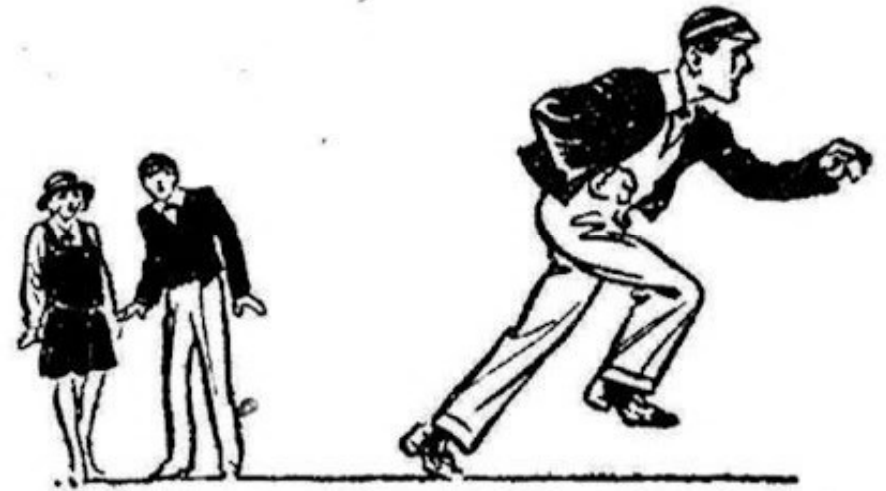
"There you are—look what's happening!" said Jimmy Potts, as he stood in the Ancient House lobby with Vivian Travers. "For-

rest's been taking that girl all over the show—and now he's going out into the road with her. Escorting her home, I suppose."

"Kick me!" said Travers miserably.

"You deserve to be kicked, too!" growled Jimmy. "I could understand some other fellow acting like this. But you! Have you lost your nerve?"

"I'm fearfully afraid, dear old fellow, that I have," confessed Travers. "I don't know of any other girl who could have made me so confoundedly tongue-tied. It's an awful



feeling. I don't think I've ever felt such a fool!"

"It'll be too late to mend matters unless you're pretty quick," said Potts. "Forrest is getting in some good work just now."

"When he comes back I'll smash him!" said Travers, with sudden vehemence.

"Rats! You can't do that," objected Potts. "That wouldn't be fair. You had a chance to escort Phyllis home—but you threw it away. You can't blame Forrest for—"

"All right—all right!" grunted Travers. "I suppose you're right, dear old fellow. I shall have to pull myself together."

It was strange to hear the cool-headed Travers talking in this way. Bernard Forrest's activities; however, had undoubtedly steeled him; and henceforth, perhaps, he would pluck up his courage when Phyllis came on the scene.

Meanwhile, Forrest was continuing to make himself extremely pleasant as he escorted the blue-eyed girl home. Outside the gates of the Moor View School, they parted.

"Thanks awfully for coming with me!" said Phyllis, smiling, as she held out her hand. "Perhaps we shall meet some other day, Forrest?"

"There's a pretty big football match down for Saturday, I think," said Forrest casually. "Our junior eleven against Bannington Grammar School."

"Will you be playing in that game?"

"Well, I don't know," replied Forrest. "I might—but I don't think so. No such luck."

"Well, you're bound to get your chance sooner or later," said the girl. "Good-bye. Thanks again for seeing me home."

She went in, and Forrest grinned to himself as he commenced walking back in the dusk. Actually, he did not care two straws about Phyllis Palmer; but the mere knowledge that he was cutting Travers out made the game worth while.

He heard the toot of a motor-horn, and glanced round. A two-seater car was bowling towards him, and he stood aside, for the lane just here was not particularly wide.

The car's brakes were suddenly applied, and a cheery, boisterous voice sounded.

"Well, this is a surprise!" said the man at the wheel. "I thought you'd left this part of the country, young Forrest?"

Forrest stepped forward, and peered at the man.

"How goes it, Mr. East?" he said. "Haven't seen you for months."

Mr. Monty East, well known on most of the racecourses of Great Britain, grinned.

"What's the idea?" he asked. "I thought you'd been expelled from this school?"

"I'm back again," replied Forrest. "I'd like to renew the old acquaintance—but it's a bit risky. I'm supposed to be an awfully nice fellow now, and if any of the masters saw me talking to a racing man, they'd faint with horror. Where are you staying?"

"At the Wheatsheaf, in Bannington."

"Down here for the races?"

"Yes," replied Mr. East. "If there's any little business you'd like attended to, I'll—"

"You may see something of me to-night," broke in Forrest, glancing up and down the dusky lane. "Any chance of a game if I pop along later on with a couple of my pals?"

"Got any money?" asked Mr. East coolly.

"Heaps."

"Then you'll be welcome," said the other. "You'll probably find me in the billiards-room, or the bar-parlour."

"Good," said Forrest. "Well, cheerio!"

The car drove on, and Forrest chuckled. It was good to see one of his old acquaintances. Being a model schoolboy did not please him—except for the sake of the deception he was practising. He was bored. He longed for something in the old line. And here, unexpectedly, was a chance.

Forrest was doubly pleased that he had escorted Phyllis home; for, but for that fact, he would not have met Mr. Monty East so opportunely. He had been studying the papers with regard to the races at Bannington, and he was quite keen on having a little flutter. He had already decided that it would be too risky for him to run down to the White Harp, in Bellton. But the Wheatsheaf, in Bannington, was a different proposition. Not much risk in that.

When he got back to the school, he lost no time in going to the bicycle shed. He took out his dazzling motor-cycle, jumped into the saddle, and prepared to leave.

"Better not go far, Forrest," said Gresham, who happened to be near. "Calling-over soon, you know."

"I shan't be long," replied Forrest. "There are one or two adjustments needed on the old jigger, and I'm taking her down to the village. I think I'll leave her there, and walk back."

"Well, you'll have to hustle," said Gresham.

Bernard Forrest hustled. But when he was opposite Bellton Wood, he apparently changed his mind. For he got off his machine here, pushed it through a gap in the hedge, and entered the wood. About ten yards from the road, he came upon a little grassy hollow, almost entirely surrounded by thick bushes.

He shoved the motor-cycle through, leaned it against the bushes, and left it there. He cautiously went back to the lane, made sure that he was unobserved, and then he started walking back to the school.

"She'll be safe enough there," he murmured. "Not one chance in a thousand that anybody will spot the jigger. Anyhow, she's insured."

He was just in time for calling-over, and later he made a point of going into the junior Common-room, where he chatted enthusiastically about football.

Then he suggested a game of chess with Fullwood, and the latter accepted. It was a novelty to see the one-time cad sitting there, in the Common-room, concentrating intently upon a game of chess. He had always held chess in contempt.

He had not changed—but he knew how to play, and he made a great pretence of being interested. And it was characteristic of him that he should concentrate wholeheartedly upon the play.

"You wouldn't think he was the same chap," remarked Church, as he and Handforth and McClure stood watching. "Before he was sacked he wouldn't dream of playing chess. Now he's not only playing as though he likes it, but he's beating Fullwood hollow."

Handforth grunted.

"Well, I'm not convinced," he said darkly. "Forrest's a cunning, scheming bounder. The other chaps can be fooled if they like; but I'm going to keep my eyes well open. I'm just waiting to see what Forrest's real game is."

"Cheese it, Handy," said McClure. "We all suspected Forrest at first; but he's showing us that we were wrong. His football alone is an eye-opener. If he had still been the old rotter, he couldn't have played as he did."

"Something in that, I'll admit," said Handforth grudgingly. "Still, I maintain that he needs watching."

FORREST beat Fullwood handsomely, and after that he joined in a friendly discussion concerning the respective merits of various motor-bicycles.

Nipper and Travers and Forrest all owned motor-bikes—much to the envy of the other fellows—and as they had different makes, the discussion was lively.

Travers had completely recovered his usual composure now. He bore no grudge against Forrest for "stealing" Phyllis. He realised that the fault had been entirely his own. And he was full of determination to make up for lost time on the morrow—or, perhaps, the next day. He could think of Phyllis now without turning a hair. It might be different when he came face to face with her again—



With a sudden, low dive Bernard Forrest threw himself at Nelson Lee's legs, and the Housemaster crashed heavily. Gulliver and Bell looked on stupefied. Forrest slewed round on them and breathed one word: "Bolt!"

perhaps he would be able to regard her then just as he was regarding her now.

Having made himself thoroughly agreeable to everybody in general, Forrest went off to Study A to see about his prep. He was creating a very good impression. The majority of the boys were already forgetting that Bernard Forrest had been, in the old days, a rank outsider.

"Well, everything's going well, my sons," said Forrest, to Gulliver and Bell, within the privacy of the study. "Haven't you noticed what a good little boy I am? Playing football and chess, and getting on friendly terms with everybody. They'll be telling me all their troubles next!"

"Was it necessary to play chess?" asked Gulliver sourly. "Of all the dud, slow, rotten games—"

"Must keep up appearances," said Forrest, with a chuckle. "Don't worry, though. We'll have something a bit more exciting later on to-night."

Gulliver and Bell stared.

"What do you mean?" asked Bell.

"Remember a fellow named Monty East?"

"The bookie, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"What about him?"

"He's staying at the Wheatsheaf, in Bannington," said Forrest. "Down here especially for the races."

"That's not news," said Gulliver. "Monty East always comes down for the Bannington Races—with heaps of other bookies, too."

"I happened to meet him out in the lane," said Forrest casually. "After lights-out, we'll pop along to the Wheatsheaf and have a spree."

"Are you trying to pull our legs?" asked Gulliver suspiciously. "You can't do anything like that!"

"Why not?"

"Supposing you're spotted, and caught?"

"I'm not supposing anything so idiotic," said Forrest. "It's safe enough to get out after lights out if you're careful. It only needs a little common sense."

"But you mustn't even attempt it!" said Bell, in alarm. "Why, you crazy lunatic, you'd be kicked out like a shot if the beaks got to know. After your past record, you wouldn't stand an earthly. You'd be bundled out on your neck."

"I know that," said Forrest. "But I must do something to counteract this stainless existence of mine. I couldn't keep it up unless I had some sort of fallback."

"I don't think you ought to do it," said Gulliver uneasily. "The risks are too great."

"I can see that it's high time I came back," said Forrest. "You fellows are getting nervous. You're losing all your pep. You need me to buck you up. We'll slip out at about eleven o'clock, and by twenty past we'll

be in the Wheatsheaf—cosy and comfortable.”

“How the dickens do you think we could get to Bannington within twenty minutes?” asked Bell.

“I’ve taken my motor-bike down to the wood,” explained Forrest coolly. “We’ve only got to yank it out, start her off, and we can do the trip in about ten minutes. You two fellows can easily squash on the pillion.”

His pals stared.

“Do you mean to say that you left your jigger in the wood especially for this trip?” asked Gulliver.

“Of course. There’s nothing like being ready.”

“My only hat!” said Gulliver. “What a fellow you are, Forrest!”

“Yes, aren’t I?” said Bernard Forrest coolly.

CHAPTER 6.

Something Unexpected!

“COO!” said Gates, of the Third, in an awed voice.

Eric Gates was not a particularly prominent fag. Owing to his habitual expression of amiable imbecility, he was known amongst the other fags as “Soppy.” At the present moment he was standing in the upper corridor of the Ancient House with a number of other juniors. It was bedtime, and the Remove and the Third were crowding into their dormitories.

There had been some larking about amongst the Removites—a common enough occurrence this—and Stanley Waldo had been persuaded to give an exhibition of his own peculiar abilities.

Waldo was really an extraordinary youth. He inherited most of the astounding qualities of his famous father, Rupert Waldo—known as the Peril Expert.

Although Stanley looked very much the same as any other Removite, he was possessed of uncanny strength. His muscles were different from another fellow’s muscles; they seemed capable of standing any amount of strain. His eyesight was keener, his hearing more acute, his sense of touch highly developed. The most remarkable thing about him, perhaps, was that he was incapable of feeling pain. From a school-boy’s point of view, this was an ideal condition.

When Stanley Waldo was swished, he didn’t mind in the least. He could receive a six-hander without turning a hair—simply because he felt nothing. His hands might be puffy afterwards, but he suffered no real discomfort.

“Coo!” said Gates again.

At the present moment, Stanley Waldo was indulging in an unusual form of exercise. He was, in fact, walking up one of the walls of the corridor. His feet were flat on the wall, and his whole body, perfectly straight,

was horizontal. And he walked up the wall with an ease that made everybody gasp.

Not that Stanley Waldo was a magician.

He could not accomplish the impossible. And since it was quite impossible for any human being to walk up an ordinary wall in that attitude, Waldo was obliged to have some kind of help. The corridor, at this point, was not particularly wide. Lying down on the floor, Waldo had found that, with his feet against one wall, he could reach the opposite wall with his hands. His arms were slightly bent, which enabled him to gain a certain amount of purchase.

But when it had been suggested that he should shift himself horizontally upwards, most of the Removites had laughed with scorn. The thing seemed impossible.

One or two of the other fellows had tried, and, of course, they had collapsed after raising themselves a few inches from the floor. The weight of their bodies had been sufficient to render the experiment a failure.

But with Waldo it was different.

His feet moved on the wall, and his hands moved correspondingly on the other wall. And up he went, calmly, deliberately, and with a certainty that was awesome to watch.

He was stretched there, across the corridor, as rigid as a rod. His extraordinary muscles enabled him to perform this feat with ease.

“You’d better chuck it, Waldo,” said Nipper. “If you lose your grip for a second, you’ll probably fall on your head.”

“That wouldn’t hurt me,” said Waldo. “My head’s pretty solid.”

He went up higher—until, indeed, he was seven or eight feet from the floor—and well over the heads of the watching juniors. He turned sideways, and proceeded to walk up the corridor. Then he turned round, looking down upon the staring Removites and fags.

“Coo!” said Gates, for the third time, vastly impressed.

A footstep sounded farther down the corridor.

“Now then, you kids,” said the voice of Biggleswade, of the Sixth. “What’s all this commotion here? You ought to be in your dormitories—Why, what on earth—Great Scott! Who’s that up there?”

“Only me,” said Waldo with a chuckle.

“But what are you doing?” demanded Biggleswade, aghast. “You silly young chump! You’ll break your neck! How did you get into that position? What’s holding you up?”

“Try and do it, Biggy,” grinned Church.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Waldo slithered down the wall, and in a moment he was on his feet again. Biggleswade looked relieved.

“I’d forgotten that you’re a kind of human spider,” he said. “This isn’t the time for such tricks. Get into your dormitories, blow you. I thought I was seeing things when I came along the corridor just now.”

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The juniors were obliged to get into their bed-rooms. The Removites did not possess one dormitory to themselves; they slept in separate bed-rooms, two or three in each. It was this arrangement which made it so easy for such fellows as Forrest & Co. to sneak out in the dead of night.

Handforth was disappointed. He had had an idea of emulating Waldo's stunt, with perhaps some improvements. Handforth was a born optimist. But the sudden advent of Biggleswade was fortunate—although Handforth did not realise it. The prefect had certainly saved Handy from making himself a laughing stock.

BUT there was another youngster who had plenty of optimism, too. Eric Gates, of the Third, was looking very excited when he went into the Third Form dormitory with the other fags.

"I'd like to do that trick, you know," he was saying. "How about having a try in the big recess, here? The walls are just about the right distance apart."

"Don't you be a clump, Sippy," said Owen minor. "That chap Waldo is different from the rest of us. I've never seen anything like it! It was uncanny, the way he walked up that wall."

"If he can do it, so can I!" said Gates.

"Have a try, if you're so set on it," grinned Chubby Heath. "Why, you fathead, you couldn't raise yourself a couple of inches from the floor."

"Couldn't I?" said Gates excitedly. "I'll soon show you!"

"Be sharp about it, then," said Juicy Lemon. "Willy ought to be here in a couple of minutes—and if he finds you fooling about like that he'll punch you on the nose."

Willy Handforth was the autocrat of the Third, and he was quite capable of punching Gates on the nose. In fact, he had punched Gates on the nose many a time. It was one of his favourite pastimes. Gates possessed a nose that positively asked to be punched.

"There's a lot of spoof about Waldo's strength," said Gates knowingly. "It's not so much strength as knack. You have a look at me."

He went over to a wide recess in one corner of the dormitory. That recess was not quite as wide as the corridor outside, and it suited Gates' purpose perfectly. Laying on the floor he found that he could just reach the opposite wall. But when it came to walking up the wall, as Stanley Waldo had done, he hit a snag.

"Funny!" he panted. "I can't seem to get a start."

"Anybody got a pin?" asked Bobby Dexter casually.



"Hi! You keep your pins to yourself!" gasped Gates, twisting round.

"He doesn't need a pin—he needs a helping hand," said Owen minor generously. "Come on, you chaps!"

Gates found that when he tried to walk up the wall, his feet moved, but his body would not follow. He strained and struggled, but all to no purpose.

"We'll hoist you up, Sippy, and that'll give you a good start," said Owen minor. "When you're ready, we'll let go, and you can show us how the thing's done."

"Good egg!" grinned Chubby Heath.

"No larks, mind," said Gates suspiciously.

"My dear chap, this is going to help you," said Owen minor. "You think you can stretch yourself out between these two walls, and we want to see you do it. But it's only fair that you should have a start."

Gates, being a very simple youth, was now no longer suspicious. But Owen minor and the other fags were out for a bit of fun. They wanted to see Gates collapse when they released their hold. It would probably be rather funny.

They seized Sippy, and raised him up until he was over shoulder-high.

"That's it!" panted Owen minor. "Now then, Sippy, plant your feet firmly on that wall, and push against the other one with your hands. That's what Waldo did. Press as hard as you can—and when you say the word we'll dodge away. Then you can stay there for a bit, just to show us how Waldo did it."

While the other fags were supporting him, Gates had no difficulty in imitating Waldo's stunt. In fact, it seemed quite easy.

"All right!" he said breathlessly. "I've got a firm hold now. You can let go."

"All together!" yelled Owen minor.

They released their hold and dodged back. And, of course, Gates simply shut up like a knife, and fell with a terrific thud to the floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The other fags howled with laughter. Eric Gates sat up, his face pale and drawn. He was clutching at his left hand, and fairly gasping.

"Oh, I'm hurt!" he groaned. "My hand! I fell on it, and it seemed to double under me, and— No, no! Don't touch it! I'm hurt, I tell you!"

"Don't be so jolly soft," said Owen minor. "It was only a knock."

"I—I believe something's out of joint," said Gates, with nearly a sob in his voice. "Oh, it's hurting awful! I fell with all my weight on this hand. I tell you, something seemed to crack, and—"

"What's the matter here?" asked Willy Handforth, bustling in.

He pushed through the other fags, and looked down upon Gates. In a second he saw that Gates was in a pretty bad way. The pallor of his face had increased. Willy had been delayed, owing to one of his pets having a touch of illness.

"What have you fatheads been doing to this chap?" he asked, looking round. "My hat! Unless I'm here all the time, you get up to these tricks—"

"It was his own idea," said Chubby Heath defensively. "He wanted to walk up the wall."

"Is that all?" asked Willy tartly. "What does he think he is—a spider? Let's have a look at that hand, Gates."

"Be careful!" sobbed Gates. "I believe something's broken!"

"Silly young cake!" said Owen minor.

The fags pressed round, and Willy, on his knees, took Gates' left hand and gently felt the fingers. Suddenly he caught his breath in sharply, and Gates fairly shrieked.

"Don't—don't!" he gurgled. "It hurts terribly!"

"I don't wonder!" said Willy, in a grim voice. "Your third finger's broken."

"Broken!" gasped Owen minor.

"Yes, broken!" snapped Willy. "You idiots ought to be ashamed of yourselves for playing a trick on this poor chap. You know he hasn't got much sense. One of you had better run and fetch Mr. Lee."

"But—but—"

"Don't waste any time—fetch Mr. Lee!" repeated Willy. "I tell you, his finger's broken. He'll have to be taken to the doctor—and this finger must be set."

Gates was moaning dismally. The injury was serious enough, although, of course, it was by no means grave. However, a broken finger can be exceedingly painful. And the mishap was serious enough. The fags were frequently grazing themselves, and inflicting

THE ST. FRANK'S QUESTIONNAIRE!

Here are twelve testers for you, chums—questions which refer to St. Frank's and its members. Give them the "once-over," jot down the answers to those which you know, and then compare them with the correct list which will be given, together with another set of questions, next week.

1. Who is the junior captain of Bannington Grammar School?
2. What is the name of the Caistowe sportsman who owns racing motor-boats?
3. Who is the matron of the East House?
4. Who is the master of the Fifth Form?
5. Who are Hal Brewster's study-mates at the River House School?
6. Who are the backs of the St. Frank's Junior Eleven?
7. Which Moor View School girl is Stanley Waldo's particular chum?
8. What is the name of Willy Handforth's monkey?
- ...9. Who is the Irish boy in the Fourth Form?
10. What is the name of the man who owns the big garage in Bannington?
11. Who is the Scottish junior at St. Frank's?
12. How far is the village of Midshott past Bannington?

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUESTIONS.

1. *Rodgers.* 2. *Lumpy Bill.* 3. *Vivian Travers and Sir James Potts, Bart.* 4. *Bannington 79.* 5. *Mr. Barnaby Goole.* 6. *Phipps.* 7. *Clarence Fellowe.* 8. *Yung Ching.* 9. *Winnie Pitt.* 10. *Nicodemus Trotwood.* 11. *Johnny Onions.* 12. *Mr. John Hewitt and his aged mother.*

all sorts of bruises; but they seldom broke any bones.

NELSON LEE soon arrived, and he was looking grave after he had examined Eric Gates' hand.

"I'll inquire into this matter later," he said, his voice cold and stern. "This boy's finger is broken, and it is obvious that there has been some very rough horse-play in this dormitory."

"It wasn't our fault, sir!" protested Owen minor frantically. "He wanted to climb up the wall—"

"That will do, Owen minor!" interrupted Nelson Lee. "You'll have to come with me, Gates. I shall have to take you down to the doctor."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir," muttered Gates.

He was now getting over the shock of it. Nelson Lee had rigged up a kind of sling, and the boy's injured arm was resting in it.

"Well, who'd have thought it?" asked Owen minor, after Gates had been taken away. "The silly young ass! Breaking his finger like that!"

"If he had to break a finger, why couldn't he break one on his right hand?" asked Chubby Heath. "He'd have got out of lessons for weeks if he'd done that!"

And that's all the sympathy the fags felt for Gates.

DR. BRETT, who was the school medical attendant, did not live at St. Frank's. He had his home in Bellton—and he had quite a large local practice, too. He only attended at the St. Frank's sanatorium during certain fixed hours of the day.

Nelson Lee thought it would be quicker for him to take Gates down to the surgery. It would be better than fetching Dr. Brett up to the school. As it happened, too, Nelson Lee had his car in the Triangle, for he had just returned from Bannington when somebody told him that he was urgently needed in the Third Form dormitory.

So it was only a matter of minutes before Gates was in the car, and was being driven down to the village.

Dr. Brett made a swift examination when the youthful patient was in the surgery. Gates was looking thoroughly scared, and he fairly panted with agony as the doctor dealt with him.

"Yes, this finger is broken," said Brett. "It's all right, young 'un—nothing to be afraid of. We'll soon have it right. Just sit here for a bit, and I'll get your finger in splints."

"Will it hurt much, sir?" breathed Gates fearfully.

"Not much—you'll hardly feel it," promised the doctor.

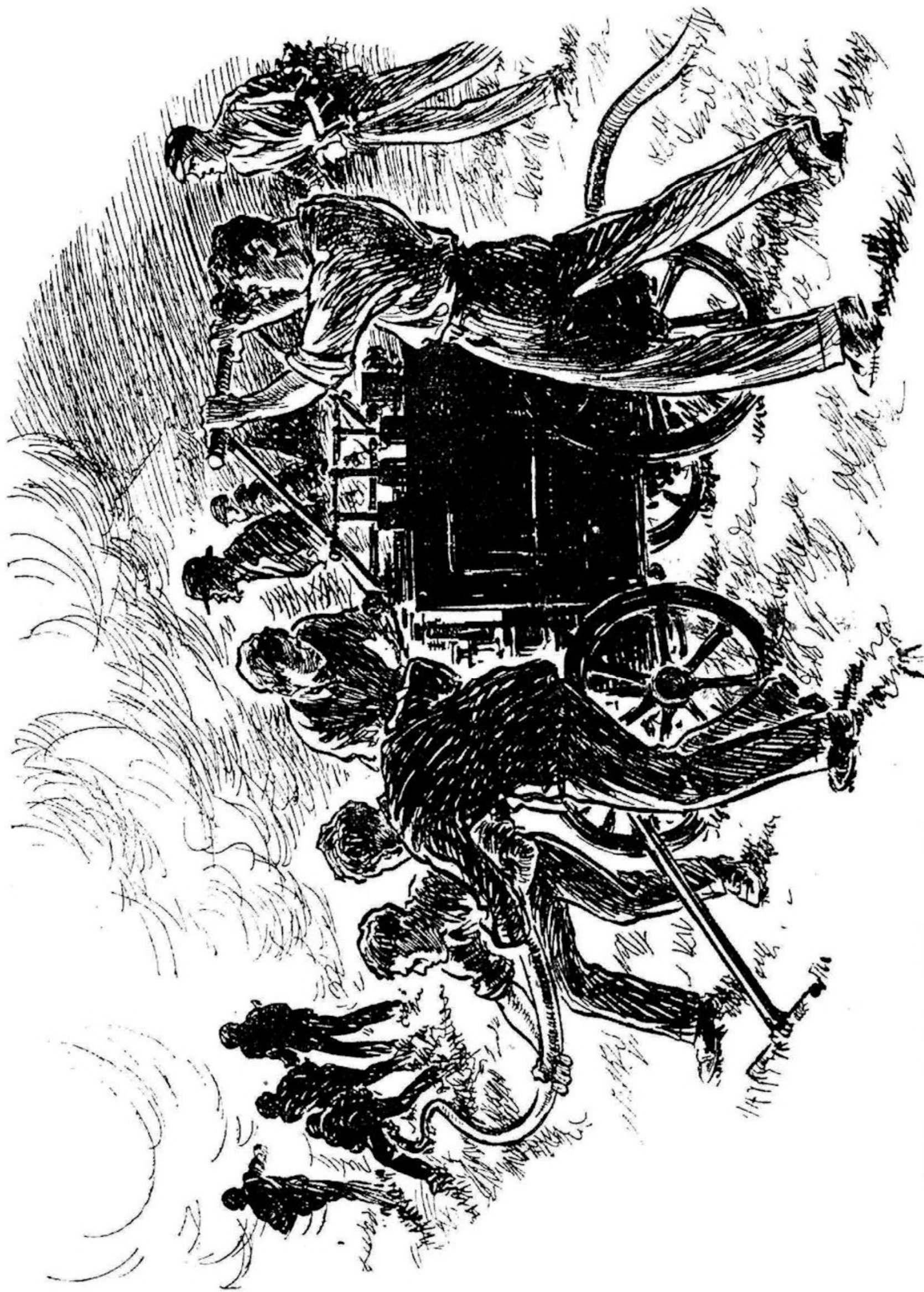
Out of Gates' hearing, he looked at Nelson Lee with some concern.

"Rather a nasty fracture, I'm afraid," he said. "It may give the boy a bit of a shock."

"It can't be helped," said Lee. "The injury must be dealt with, Brett."

WHEN it was all over the unfortunate Gates was so shaky that Dr. Brett suggested that he should be put to bed in a spare bed-room in his house.

"By all means!" said the Housemaster-detective promptly. "I was going to propose



“Put your backs into it!” panted Handforth, working with a will. Pumping water from a brook, and with the hose played on the burning haystack, the St. Frank’s Junior Fire Brigade worked vigorously to stop the flames from spreading to other stacks.

the same thing. He'll be a lot better tomorrow, and then he can return to the school."

"I think we'd better keep him in the sanatorium for a day or two," said the doctor. "You know what these boys are—they knock themselves about if they're allowed their liberty. In the sanatorium he'll be compelled to keep quiet."

It was just striking eleven o'clock when Nelson Lee went outside into the darkness of the night to drive back to the school. His car was standing just inside the grounds of the doctor's house, and the light from the front door was flooding on it.

"Hallo!" said Lee abruptly. "I believe I've got a flat tyre, Brett."

The car seemed to be leaning, and, sure enough, when Lee made an examination, he found that the off-side rear tyre was absolutely flat.

"I don't feel inclined to grovel about with the jack and wheel-brace, Brett," said Lee, after one glance. "In the time I'm changing that wheel, I can be home. You don't mind if the car stands here all night?"

"Not a bit," said Brett. "If you like, I'll tell the garage man in the morning to change the tyre, and then bring the car up to the school, with the tyre repaired."

"Thanks!" said Lee, nodding. "That will do admirably."

Thus it was that two factors entered into the affairs of Bernard Forrest. That mishap to Gates had been unexpected, and this flat tyre was just as unexpected.

And the two factors, combined, were causing Nelson Lee to walk home from Bellton to St. Frank's—shortly after eleven o'clock!

At that very minute, Forrest and his two pals were getting up, ready to break bounds. And, knowing nothing of Gates' accident, they had not the faintest inkling that their Housemaster was abroad that night!

CHAPTER 7.

A Near Thing!

"**T**HINK it'll be safe?" murmured Gulliver.

"Safe as houses," replied Bernard Forrest. "My dear chap, what is there to fear? It's past eleven, and everybody's in bed. Even the masters have turned in."

"But supposing we're spotted——"

"Suppose nothing!" broke in Forrest. "The trouble with you, my sons, is that you've become slack. You'll be scared of your own shadows next. Breaking bounds

after lights-out is as easy as shelling peas. And as safe, too. It's only fools who get collared—and it's always their own fault, too."

There was certainly nothing to alarm them as they stealthily made their way out into the night. Scarcely a light was showing anywhere. All the dormitories were dark, their occupants asleep. Here and there, in various upper windows of the Houses, a light would be seen. Some of the masters, perhaps, were



"Put your backs into it!" panted Handforth, w the burning haystack, the St. Frank's Junior Fire

reading in their bed-rooms. But Forrest was not afraid of these.

As he had said, getting out was supremely easy. The Study A trio reached the lane without incident, and by this time Gulliver and Bell were feeling safe.

"Quarter-past eleven," murmured Forrest as the clock chimed. "We'll be in Barning-

ton by half-past. We can have a comfortable two hours at the Wheatsheaf, and be back in bed by two o'clock."

"By gad! You're a cool card, Forrest!" said Bell admiringly.

They strode off down the lane. The night was intensely dark, for there was no moon, and the sky was completely clouded. A fairly stiff wind was blowing, but there was no indication of rain.

"Better not do any talking," advised For-

And it was just at this point that Nelson Lee came along.

The situation was interesting. The schoolmaster-detective, walking home from the doctor's, became aware of three dim figures just ahead of him, and approaching. He even heard one or two whispers. It was impossible for him to see the figures distinctly, but he judged, by their size, that they were schoolboys. And it was rather significant that they were coming down the lane from the direction of St. Frank's.

Forrest & Co. knew nothing of Lee's presence until they were practically upon him. Then, suddenly spotting the solitary figure ahead, they halted.

"Who is it?" asked Lee abruptly.

Gulliver and Bell nearly fainted on the spot. Bernard Forrest caught his breath in, and knew that instant action was essential—drastic action. He was staggered, but he was not completely at a loss.

Their own Housemaster! And no ordinary Housemaster at that! If Nelson Lee discovered their identity, expulsion would follow as surely as the sun rises in the East. Gulliver and Bell, perhaps, might escape the extreme punishment, but for Forrest there would be no quarter. He was being given his second chance at St. Frank's, and if the Head learned of this escapade, he would be decisive in his action.

All this passed through Forrest's brain in a flash.

If he turned tail and bolted, Gulliver and Bell would bolt with him. And Nelson Lee, without the slightest shadow of a doubt, would give chase. And, what was more, he would overtake them. Perhaps he would not grab Forrest, but he would certainly seize either Gulliver or Bell. And that would be sufficient. No, the only possible solution to this acute problem was to put Nelson Lee out of action for a brief spell, so that the three cads should have a chance of getting away before he could recognise them.

Another thought crowded into Forrest's mind. Perhaps Lee would flash an electric torch upon them—and then, indeed, the game would be up.

"I am waiting!" said Lee grimly.

And sure enough, at that moment, he pulled an electric torch out of his pocket. He already suspected that these three dim figures belonged to St. Frank's boys.

Then Forrest acted.

With a sudden panther-like movement, he shot forward. It was such an unexpected move that even Lee was unprepared. A



Pumping water from a brook, and with the hose played on vigorously to stop the flames from spreading to other stacks.

rest, as they walked. "There's not one chance in a thousand that we shall meet anybody, but it's always better to be on the safe side."

So they strode on in silence. And when they reached the black bulk of Bellton Wood, Forrest kept his eyes open for the gap in the hedge which he had previously used.

Junior schoolboy attacking his Housemaster! Such a thing had never before occurred at St. Frank's.

Forrest's rush was low. It was, indeed, a typical Rugger tackle. He simply threw himself at Nelson Lee's legs, and the next second Lee was down, his feet having been pulled from under him.

He crashed heavily, the side of his head hitting the hard road with great force. Gulliver and Bell, standing there, were stupefied. Forrest slewed round, without even waiting to see what damage he had caused, and he breathed one word.

"Bolt!"

Gulliver and Bell needed no second invitation. They simply ran for their lives. And Forrest, between them, seized their arms. He caused them to swerve off towards a gap in the hedge—opposite the wood.

"This way!" hissed Forrest. "He doesn't know who we are—he can only guess. But if we run to the school he'll have a clue. We'll dodge across the fields!"

They went tearing along, half expecting to hear Nelson Lee in full pursuit. But, as a matter of fact, that cowardly attack of Forrest's had had greater effect than Forrest himself had hoped for. For Nelson Lee had been half-stunned by that violent fall.

"Better stop here for a tick!" breathed Forrest, as they dodged round a haystack. "He's not coming. Confound him! Who would have thought that he would be prowling about at this time of night?"

"What did you do to him?" asked Bell hoarsely. "He went down an awful crash——"

"A good thing, too!" interrupted Forrest viciously. "If he hadn't gone down like that it would have been all up with us."

"It's all up now!" groaned Gulliver, shivering with fright. "You're mad to come this way, Forrest! He hasn't followed us, but I'll bet he's gone back to the school! It'll only take him five minutes to make a search, and he'll find our dormitory empty, and——"

"Gad! I hadn't thought of that!" interrupted Forrest, with a shock.

His brain acted like lightning.

"I've got it!" he muttered. "Stand back, you chaps!"

He pulled a box of matches out of his pocket, and struck a light. He allowed it to flare up, and then threw it deliberately at the haystack.

"What are you doing, you fool?" gasped Gulliver, aghast.

"You'll see," said Forrest coolly.

He struck another match; for the first one had gone out. This time he went nearer; he placed the lighted match on the ground near the stack, and pulled some hay out. It caught fire at once, blazed up, and Forrest jumped back.

In a moment, the flames spread, flickering over the stack. Then, as though by a miracle, a great sheet of flame shot up. The hay was dry. There had been no rain for a day or two, and the wind was a drying wind.

"You're mad—mad!" said Bell, frightened.

"This stack must be worth a hundred quid!" said Gulliver, even more terrified.

"Who cares a hang what it's worth?" snapped Forrest. "Quick! Follow me!"

They ran at top speed across the meadow, with the haystack flaring and flaming in their rear.

"Lee knows we came this way, and when he sees these flames he'll come along to investigate," said Forrest cunningly. "And while he's doing that, we'll get in, and we can be in our beds by the time he arrives. I set fire to that stack to give us time. Don't you understand? It's going to save us."

Gulliver and Bell were too scared to appreciate the crafty nature of Forrest's plan.

NELSON LEE, seeing that sudden blaze as he hurried towards the school, paused. He did not doubt that the boys whom he had seen, but had not recognised, were responsible for the fire. And it was quite natural that he should break through the hedge, run across the meadow, and approach the flaring rick. There was a nasty bruise on the side of his head, and he still felt a bit dazed. And he was grimly angry, too. Although he had absolutely no definite clue as to the identity of the three, he had a shrewd idea that they belonged to St. Frank's.

There was not a soul to be seen in the neighbourhood of the burning haystack. Lee saw at once that this stack was not the only one which might be involved. The meadow belonged to Holt's farm, and, quite close at hand, there were three or four other stacks.

FORREST and Gulliver and Bell got in doors in the nick of time.

Forrest had watched from a safe distance—until he had seen Nelson Lee's figure crossing the meadow. Then he had known that he was comparatively safe. He and his pals reached the school, got in, and they arrived in their own dormitory unseen by a soul.

"Oh, my goodness!" groaned Gulliver. "I thought we weren't going to do it——"

"Don't waste time, you fool!" snapped Forrest. "Get undressed! We're not safe, even now. We can't breathe freely till we're actually in bed."

Never before had the cads of Study A undressed so quickly. Gulliver and Bell were nearly exhausted with terror. Forrest himself was thoroughly unnerved. The narrowness of his escape had jarred him.

The POPULAR
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Handforth undertakes to answer, in his own unique fashion, any question "N.L." readers care to submit to him. But, although of a certainty the results will be amusing and entertaining, the Editor takes no responsibility for their veracity.

Write to Handforth, c/o the NELSON LEE LIBRARY, to-day.

"EVA" (Swansea).—What would I say if Teddy Long offered to lend me half-a-crown? I shouldn't say anything. I'd just faint.

F. W. (Bradford).—Sorry, but I can't answer your question here. I couldn't possibly print my full opinion of Gore-Pearce!

E. B. S. (Gravesend).—"When is a dog not a dog?" When it's a pup, of course. You can't beat me, old man!

"NEMO" (Reading).—Of course, I give Gore-Pearce a black eye every time I see him. The only caterpillar in the ointment is that I don't see him often enough.

A. GRIFFITHS (Runcorn).—You don't know what you're talking about, you fathead. You call me an elephant to start with, and later on you say I'm a donkey. First time I knew that an elephant is a donkey. Try and show a bit of common sense, even if you haven't got any. I'll lend you that half-crown you ask for when you show me a specimen of your elephant that is a donkey.

M. FRASER (Barmouth) says he's sorry at having to write me again. Well, I like that! It's what one might call a back-handed compliment, I'm thinking. Of course, I write better stories than Willy. I know that, and so does any chump. I was chucked out of the junior captaincy because nobody appreciated my extraordinary (very.—ED.) ideas.

LESLIE MAYCOCK (Clapton) asks why Study D is the noisiest study in the Ancient House junior passage. You've got the jolly old works wrong, Leslie. I'm in Study D, so how can it be the noisiest? And you seem to think that Church and McClure have a bad time of it. That's news to me. If it's anyone who has a bad time it's me. Of all the blundering, obstinate, aggressive, ready-to-fight fellows I know, they take the cake.

MARGARET GILES (Stratford-on-Avon).—You've got me beaten, Margaret, so you can congratulate yourself on a fine achievement. I've spent weeks trying to solve those Chinese or Japanese characters you sent me, and I'm afraid there's nothing doing. They look like a lot of jellyfishes stuck over the paper in queer attitudes—and that's the best I can do for you. I bow my head in shame!

B. P. (Godalming).—So your friend fainted when you showed her my portrait, did she? What a silly thing to do. Just think what she was missing.

JACK PITT (London).—Glad to hear—ahem!—I mean, I'm interested to hear that you're no relation of Reggie Pitt. I am keen on dirt-track racing. Unfortunately, my pater won't buy me a motor-bike. Says I'm too reckless. Ridiculous, isn't it? Me—reckless! Perish the thought. So I just content myself with broadsiding round the Triangle in my Austin Seven when the masters and prefects aren't watching.

LESLIE PINNER (Chiswick).—So you're the bloke who sent me that empty envelope last week, are you? I wish your second letter had been the same! Here's the answers to your questions. "Where's my study at school?" The doorway of it is in a passage. "Are Church and McClure your study-mates?" Church and McClure have the honour to be in my study. "Who is the best boxer in the Junior School? Why ask?" "Is Nelson Lee your Housemaster?" The answer is in the affirmative. "Do you play football and cricket—if so, what positions?" I play both games—I'm equally good in any and every position. "Would you play Rugger if you had the chance?" (Would anybody play with a hefty ass like Handy careering and charging about the field—that's the question you should ask, Leslie.—ED.)

EDWARD OSWALD.

HERO—AND CAD!*(Continued from page 24.)*

Exactly how narrow that escape had been, he realised a minute later. For shouts were sounding, and windows were being thrown up. Somebody had spotted the blaze in the distance, and the alarm was spreading. Only in the nick of time had Forrest & Co. got into their beds!

CHAPTER 3.**The School Firefighters!**

FIRE!" Some one sent the cry up, and others echoed it. In less than a minute the Ancient House was in a state of commotion; and the other Houses were waking up, too. Forrest, lying in bed, could hear people running up and down the corridor.

"Hadn't we better open the door, and look out?" suggested Gulliver.

"No!"
"But if we do that, it'll prove to everybody that we've really been in bed," said Gulliver. "If there are any inquiries later

"I've thought of that," interrupted Forrest. "Give them a minute or two, anyhow.

Somebody might come in, and it'll be a lot better if we're found in bed, asleep."

And, sure enough, the very thing that Forrest anticipated happened. Hubbard rushed in, switched on the light, and Forrest & Co. only just had time to duck their heads down, and pretend to be asleep.

"Wake up, you chaps!" said Hubbard excitedly. "There's a fire!"

Forrest sat up, bleary-eyed, yawning.

"Fire?" he repeated, staring. "What the— What's the time?"

"Blow the time!" gasped Hubbard. "The school's on fire! Everybody's yelling!"

"School's on fire!" ejaculated Gulliver, sitting up like a jack-in-the-box. "But—"

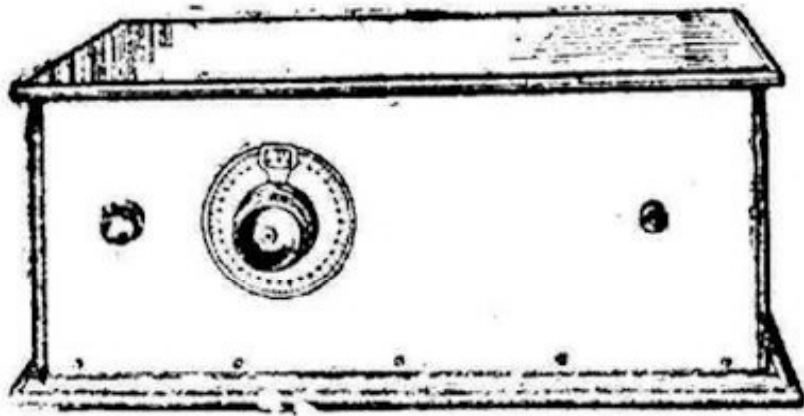
Fortunately, Hubbard rushed out again, and Forrest glared at his chums.

"The less you chaps say the better!" he snapped. "Hubbard's a lunatic! He's heard somebody shouting 'Fire,' and he thinks the fire's in the school! All the better!"

He got out of bed, put on his dressing-gown, and walked into the corridor. He was just in time to run into Nipper and Handforth and Travers, and one or two other prominent Removites.

"What's all the excitement?" asked Forrest, yawning again.

"Some silly chump started a panic," said Nipper grimly. "There's no fire in the

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school. It's over on Holt's Farm. A barn or something."

"Is that all?" said Forrest in a disappointed voice. "I thought we were going to have some excitement."

He was overjoyed to see, at that moment, the figure of Nelson Lee. The schoolmaster detective had just mounted the stairs, and there were some prefects with him, too. Lee came striding along the corridor.

"There's no need for you boys to be alarmed," he said. "The fire is not connected with St. Frank's."

"We understand it's on Holt's Farm, sir," remarked Forrest.

"How do you know?" asked Lee, looking at him sharply.

"Nipper just said so, sir," replied Bernard coolly.

He was quite comfortable. Nelson Lee could not have arrived at a better moment.

For he beheld Forrest in his pyjamas and dressing-gown. He beheld Gulliver and Bell in their pyjamas only. Many of the other fellows were half-dressed. In any case, this commotion at the school rendered Nelson Lee's search absolutely futile. He would never be able to discover now to whom those dim figures had belonged.

They might have been Removites or Fourth-Formers, or even Fifth-Formers. Half the fellows were out of their beds, and nobody would be able to tell if any certain three had been unlawfully abroad in the night.

It was not even possible for Lee to be sure that the haystack had been fired by those boys. Bernard Forrest's little plan, destructive though it was, looked like being remarkably effective.

"CAN'T we do something, sir?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"Yes, you'd better all go back to your beds," said Nelson Lee.

"But why, sir?" went on Handforth. "We had fire-drill only last week, and we know all the ropes. We've got our own special fire-engine, and it wouldn't take us long to trundle it over to the farm."

"Why not, sir?" said Nipper. "There's no proper brigade in Bellton, and we might be able to save a part of the barn."

"It's not a barn—it's a haystack," said Nelson Lee. "There are some other stacks near by, which might easily be involved. Yes, boys, I think it might be a good idea for you to get in some practice at fire-fighting."

"Good egg!" said Handforth boisterously.

"Only the members of the school fire brigade must take part in this expedition," ordered Lee. "All other boys must return to their beds."

"I say, gov'nor, what's the matter with your head?" asked Nipper suddenly. "I

hadn't noticed it before, but there's a big bruise——"

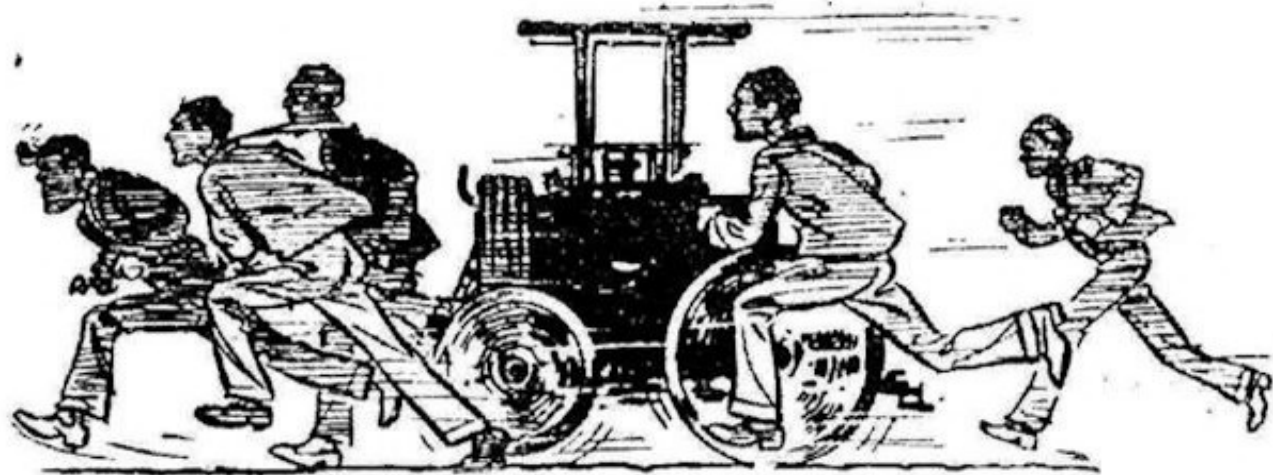
"Never mind that now," interrupted Lee. "I was attacked in the lane, and I have good reason to believe that the boys who attacked me also fired the haystack on Mr. Holt's property."

"The boys, sir!" echoed Nipper. "They weren't St. Frank's chaps, were they?"

"I believe so," replied Lee grimly. "But there is no time to talk of this now."

THERE was some quick work done by the St. Frank's Fire Brigade.

As soon as the word went round that the brigade was to get into action, the members of it hastened to their posts. There were two sections of the brigade—a senior section and a junior section. Handforth, of course, was a prominent member of the junior section. He and



Nipper and Gresham and Fullwood and a crowd of others, only half-dressed, went rushing to the engine-shed. Everything was done with speed and precision.

The engine was of the hand-operated variety; but quite modern and effective. The boys whirled it out of the St. Frank's grounds, and they were soon rushing down the lane towards a convenient gateway which led into the meadow.

"We've beaten the seniors, anyhow," said Nipper as they ran. "We got out about twenty seconds before the senior engine. They're coming down now, just behind us."

"We'll have the fire out before they get into position," declared Handforth breathlessly.

The whole meadow was filled with a flickering, lurid light. The haystack was now blazing with an appalling fury, the flames shooting up into the sky in livid masses. Sparks were roaring heavenwards, too, and the wind was carrying the fire towards the other stacks. One of them, indeed, was already involved.

Only a small number of villagers had arrived on the scene. They were mostly Farmer Holt's men, from the little row of cottages near by, at Pelton's Bend.

Mr. Jeremiah Holt himself was there, also Joe Catchpole, his foreman. And the juniors noticed Tom Belcher and Jim Potter. Mr. Holt was rushing about shouting, but doing nothing effective. Some of his men had brought buckets, but they had seen at a glance that these would be of little or no use.

"They'll all go—all them stacks!" Mr. Holt was shouting. "These schoolboys won't do any good——"

"Where is the nearest water, Mr. Holt?" asked Nipper, running up. "The river's too far, but there's a brook, isn't there——"

"Just down at the end of the meadow," interrupted the farmer, pointing. "But I don't s'pose you boys can do much. The fire's got too big a hold."

They took no notice of him. Mr. Holt was an unpleasant man at the best of times.

For a period he had left the farm. He had, indeed, sold it; but fairly recently he had bought it back again, and the land was being farmed as of old. The villagers were not particularly pleased, as Mr. Holt was unpopular.

"Ay, I'll warrant that somebody set fire to this rick a-purpose," said one of the Bell-ton inhabitants as he looked on. "There's many a man with a grudge against old Holt. Not surprising, either."

"Good thing these young gents from St. Frank's have come down," said one of the other men. "Mebbe they'll save them other stacks."

The boys were working with a will. The engine crew, with Handforth in command, was ready. It did not take Nipper long to get the supply pipe in the brook, and soon afterwards the pumps were going vigorously. Handforth, at one of the handles, was working with tremendous vim.

"Put your backs into it!" he panted. "No slacking, mind! We want all the water we can get!"

It was an impressive scene.

The senior fire-engine had come up by this time, and this was soon in operation, too. Seniors and juniors, with the hoses, were playing the streams of water on the blazing stacks. The original haystack was left severely alone; all the firefighters could hope to do was to prevent the flames from spreading to the other stacks.

Nelson Lee was there, of course, and he worked with the best of them.

"Do you think it was an accident, guv'nor?" asked Nipper, during a short period of relief.

"It was no accident," replied Lee. "The haystack was set on fire deliberately. I was in the lane at the time and I saw the first blaze."

"Did you see anybody near the stacks, sir?"

"Nobody," replied Lee. "I'm afraid this will be a police job. Mr. Holt is bound to make a complaint, and the police will be compelled to conduct an inquiry. Not that it will come to anything. I very much doubt if the culprit will be discovered."

"By the police you mean, sir?" asked Nipper. "But don't you think you'll discover him?"

"I'm doubtful," replied Nelson Lee slowly. "Look here, Nipper, I'll tell you something. When I was walking up the lane I met three figures, and I'm pretty sure that they be-

longed to junior schoolboys. One of them attacked me."

"Great Scott!" said Nipper, staring.

"I was not prepared for that boy's rush, and in falling over I hit my head on the hard road," continued Lee. "Those boys, I am convinced, set fire to this haystack in order to put me off the trail. Although I suspected what their game was—that they meant to draw me to the haystack while they bolted elsewhere—I was compelled to fall into the trap."

"You mean that you did so open-eyed, guv'nor?"

"I thought there might be a chance of putting the fire out before it became too serious," replied Lee. "But as soon as I arrived at the stack I found that any such hope was doomed to disappointment. Meanwhile, those three boys had eluded me. Now, Nipper, I don't want you to sneak, or anything like that. But you must realise that this matter is very serious. Do you know if any boys were absent from any junior dormitory in the Ancient House after lights-out?"

Nipper shook his head.

"As far as I know, sir, everybody was in bed," he replied. "The only fellows who might be idiotic enough to break bounds were certainly in bed. I saw them myself, immediately after the alarm had been sounded."

Nelson Lee nodded.

"I won't ask for any names," he said. "H'm! I'm afraid the young rascals will escape the punishment they deserve."

"They must have been chaps from some other House, sir," said Nipper.

"I imagine so," said Nelson Lee. "Well, come along. We've had our spell of rest. We must go and relieve some of the others."

OWING to the valiant efforts of the St. Frank's firefighters, most of the stacks were saved. The original haystack was completely burnt down, and another one was partially destroyed, and even the portion which had been saved from the flames was ruined by water.

However, the schoolboys were worthy of the highest praise. They had worked with a will, and Farmer Holt had every reason to be grateful. Not that he appeared grateful. He was full of grumbles and complaints.

When most of the excitement was over, Handforth, begrimed and dishevelled, approached a group of Removites near the fire-engine.

"Anybody lost a silver pencil?" he asked.

Nobody apparently had.

"I found it near one of the stacks," said Handforth. "It's a good one, too. No name on it, or initials, or anything, but I expect it belongs to one of the chaps."

"Never mind it now," said Nipper. "We'll inquire to-morrow. It may belong to the rotter who set fire to the stack."

"By George! I hadn't thought of that!" said Handforth, with a start. "A clue! If



Whilst Nipper was glancing at the paragraph Bell, was pointing out to him, there came a loud crack, and the junior skipper clasped his knee, his face screwed up in agony. "Something hit me!" he panted. Behind a nearby hedge, Bernard Forrest, with a catapult in his hand, grinned.

we find out who this pencil belongs to, we shall get the culprit!"

"Rats! You can't jump to conclusions like that, Handy," said Nipper, with a laugh. "The pencil may belong to one of the chaps here—one of the fire brigade."

But nobody claimed it. Nobody, in fact, had apparently lost a silver pencil. Nipper put a notice on the board next day, and in the meantime he displayed the silver pencil on the Common-room mantelpiece. But it remained there.

For, to tell the truth, that pencil belonged to Bernard Forrest. He had been alarmed at first, for its presence near the haystack associated him with the scene. And he had not been there during the fire-fighting activities. He was afraid that somebody would recognise it as his—and then he would find the situation very awkward.

But the danger passed, and the pencil remained on the Common-room mantelpiece, unclaimed.

There was quite a big inquiry. Dr. Nicholls called the whole school together, and he hinted that some St. Frank's boys were suspected of the outrage. But the inquiry came to nothing.

Nobody owned up, of course, and there was no direct evidence to prove that any of the St. Frank's fellows had been breaking bounds.

Inspector Jameson, pompous and important, came over from Bannington. Some officials from an insurance company, too. Their inquiries at the school, however, were only formal.

Even Nelson Lee's evidence was inconclusive. He had met three unknown figures in the lane; they had attacked him; and, at

about the same time, he had spotted the fire. He could not say, with any certainty, that the fire had been caused by those three unknown boys.

They might even have belonged to the River House School, or they might have been three village boys.

The affair gave the school something to talk about for a day, but after that it was allowed to drift into oblivion.

There was only that silver pencil case to serve as a clue—and Handforth, who had found it, was bitterly disappointed.

"It's a solid silver pencil, and a jolly good one," he declared. "The very fact that it hasn't been claimed proves that it belongs to the rotter who set fire to that stack."

"That's true enough," admitted Church. "But if he won't come and claim it, what are we to do?"

"He couldn't have been a village chap—with a pencil like that," said Handforth keenly. "I wouldn't mind betting a term's pocket-money that Forrest knows something about that pencil."

"Oh, draw it mild."

"In fact, I believe it's his," continued Handforth. "Naturally, he won't claim it, and we can't prove that it is his. He's up to his old games again. Breaking bounds, and —"

"Forrest's a different chap now," put in McClure. "Dash it all, Handy, give him a chance! It isn't fair to accuse him like this, without a shred of evidence. Didn't you make inquiries? Didn't Hubbard tell you that Forrest and Gulliver and Bell were in bed as soon as the alarm was raised?"

"Forrest's cunning enough for anything," replied Handforth obstinately.

"He may be cunning, but he's not a magician," said Church. "He couldn't be outside, setting fire to haystacks, and in bed, too."

CHAPTER 9.

The Hidden Hand!

ON Saturday morning Forrest was out before breakfast with the junior footballers, and he was so keen on the game, and he was so thoroughly decent in every way, that he was rapidly becoming well liked.

Even Nipper—who had had suspicions against Forest—felt inclined to put them aside. The fellow was showing every indication of running straight. And his football was improving, too. He was becoming more brilliant than ever in his shooting.

There was a big game on to-day. The Bannington Grammar School Junior Eleven was coming over for its first match of the season against St. Frank's. And Nipper had a very strong team, and the Saints were hopeful of winning by a good margin.

"Handforth's got his eye on you, Forrest," said Gulliver, in Study A, after breakfast.

"Really?" said Forrest. "What for?"

"He's still making inquiries about that rotten haystack affair," said Gulliver uneasily. "You know what a sticker Handforth is—"

"Oh, that?" broke in Forrest indifferently. "Do you think I care? The school authorities and the police haven't been able to find out anything. So what chance does Handforth stand?"

"All the same, it's pretty rotten having him suspicious of us," said Bell. "The worst of it is, he's right. We are the chaps who set fire to that haystack. At least, you're the chap, Forrest."

Bernard swung round on his two pals, his face evil.

"How many times have I told you not to speak of it?" he snarled, under his breath. "You fools! Don't you know that walls have ears? Forget the fire! Forget that we broke bounds on that night! Don't ever breathe another word about it! Understand?"

Gulliver and Bell backed away, scared.

"All right—don't eat us!" said Bell. "We were only trying to warn you."

"I don't need any warnings," snapped Forrest. "As for Handforth, I don't care a snap about him. He would have suspected us, even if we hadn't had anything to do with the affair. He's had his knife into me ever since I got back. But I'm proving to all the other chaps that I'm different."

"You mean, they think you're different," said Gulliver tartly.

"As far as they're concerned, it's the same thing," said Forrest, resuming his ordinarily cool demeanour. "Now, don't forget. That haystack business is finished. Let's talk about football, instead."

"We're not interested in football," said Bell sourly.

"I thought you might like to know that I'm playing in this afternoon's game," said Forrest.

"You're playing?" ejaculated Gulliver.

"Centre-forward," nodded Forrest.

"But Nipper's centre-forward!"

"At present—but he won't be soon," said Forrest. "We're going out for a bit more practice immediately after morning lessons. Or, at least, the members of the junior eleven are going to practice. I'm very much afraid that something will happen to Nipper."

Gulliver and Bell stared.

COMING NEXT WEEK! ~~~~~



"What are you getting at, Forrest?" asked Gulliver, in a frightened voice. "You can't do anything like that! You're not in the eleven, and you'll never get Nipper's place if you deliberately crock him. You'll be suspected at once."

"I don't think so," said Forrest calmly. "By the way, Gully, you're a bit interested in golf, aren't you?"

"What's golf got to do with this?" asked Gulliver. "Look here, Forrest, you'd better not get up to any of those tricks. I know what your game is. You're 'accidentally' going to kick Nipper at practice, eh? Well, I can tell you straight away that the other chaps will suspect you."

Forrest leaned back in his chair.

"About this golf," he said musingly. "It's rather a good idea for the authorities to provide St. Frank's with a private links. I shall

seriously have to think of taking up the game myself. What's it like, Gully?"

Gulliver grunted.

"I don't really play," he said. "Grayson of the Fifth is keen on it, and he took me round yesterday."

"Didn't I see you practising with some chubs?"

"I was only fooling about," said Gulliver. "They're Grayson's clubs."

"But he'll lend 'em to you if you ask him?"

"Of course."

“THE WHIP HAND!”

Feeling quite safe in the realisation that all his underhand villainy is unknown, Bernard Forrest continues with his unscrupulous designs to usurp Nipper the Junior captain.

But a shock awaits Forrest!

For somebody gets to know of his villainy—and that somebody is Claude Gore-Pearce; Claude, who has good reason to hate Forrest!

And Gore-Pearce, now that he holds the whip hand—well, he doesn't intend to lose this excellent opportunity of getting his own back!

Troublesome times are in store for Bernard Forrest!

Make sure you don't miss reading this grand long yarn next Wednesday, chums.

“THE ISLAND CASTAWAYS!”

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"Good!" said Forrest. "Well, Gully, I want you to help me in this little stunt of mine. Nothing in it. You don't have to do much. And it's as safe as houses."

"I don't know what you're getting at," said Gulliver uneasily.

"Listen to me—and you'll soon know," replied Bernard Forrest.

JUST before lessons, Handforth & Co. came across Gulliver in the West Square. Gulliver was practising with a putter, and Handforth & Co. paused to watch. Gulliver had two or three golf balls with him, and he was trying to knock them into a little hole in the ground, near the middle of the square.

"It's no good doing that," said Handforth critically. "You ought to practise on a proper lawn."

Gulliver looked up.

"I asked the Head to let me practise on his lawn, but he didn't think much of the idea," he said sarcastically. "You ass! Where is there a lawn I can practise on? There isn't time for me to go to the golf course now, and I'm trying to get in as much practice as possible."

"Are you really going in for golf?" asked Handforth curiously.

"Yes."

"Wonders will never cease," said Handforth. "Well, golf isn't much of a sport, in my opinion, but it's better than nothing. There's hope for you yet, Gulliver!"

The Study D trio walked on, and quite a number of other fellows saw Gulliver practising in the West Square. Nobody took much notice, for the golf fever had attacked many of the juniors since the St. Frank's links had been opened.

As soon as morning lessons were over, Nipper and Handforth and Travers and all the other members of the junior eleven dashed upstairs to change. There was an opportunity of getting in a final half-hour of practice. The day was fine and sunny, and the prospects were good for the afternoon.

On Little Side the junior footballers collected for the practice. Nipper was one of the first out, and he stood near the touchline, chatting with Reggie Pitt, of the West House.

"I think we ought to beat the Grammarians to-day," Pitt was saying. "We're all in good form, Nipper, and we shall be playing on our own ground."

"Yes, I fancy we'll pull it off," said Nipper. "But they're jolly keen, you know, and we shall have to go all out. Well, come on. Here are the others. Might as well be making a start."

He was moving off towards the centre of the field when somebody hailed him. He turned and saw Bell.

"Seen Forrest anywhere?" asked Bell.

"No," said Nipper. "He's not here. He wanted to change, but I told him not to bother. There was no need for him to practise."

"I wanted to show him a paragraph in the 'Bannington Gazette,'" said Bell. "Have you seen it?"

Nipper strolled over, and he and Bell stood together.

"Anything exciting?" asked Nipper.

"It's only about the Blue Crusaders," said Bell. "There's a big game on in Bannington to-day. Forrest is so jolly interested in football that I thought he might like to see it."

Nipper glanced at the paragraph. Suddenly, without warning, there came a loud "crack," and the junior skipper gave a startled yell. He toppled over, the paper flying away in the wind.

"Great Scott!" gasped Bell. "What's the matter? What the dickens—"

"Something hit me!" panted Nipper, his face screwed up in agony. "It's my knee—Why, look at this!"

There was a golf ball lying close to him. As a matter of fact, it had come whizzing through the air, and had struck him with terrific force on the knee-cap.

Handforth and Pitt and Travers and two or three others came running up, and they helped Nipper to his feet. The junior skipper was in considerable pain.

"Afraid I'm crocked," he muttered, as he gingerly felt his knee. "By Jove! That was a nasty crack, if you like! Didn't even see the thing coming—didn't know anything about it until it hit me."

"Who's fooling about with golf balls, anyhow?" roared Handforth, looking round.

On the far side of the field, Gulliver had come into view, carrying a wooden driver. He was grinning.

"Anybody seen a golf ball over here?" he inquired, as he ran on to Little Side. "I've been practising driving, and I sliced a ball just now, and I believe it came over this way."

"We haven't seen it," said Gresham, who happened to be near.

"Hi!" came a shout from Handforth. "Who's that idiot with a golf club?"

Gulliver ran across the field. "What's the matter?" he asked. "Oh, I say! I haven't hurt anybody, have I? It was an absolute accident, you know—"

"Is this golf ball yours?" demanded Handforth, displaying it.

"Yes," said Gulliver. "I was practising just now, in the meadow, and—"

"You hopeless chump!" said Reggie Pitt angrily. "You've crocked Nipper!"

"What!" gasped Gulliver, staring. "That ball of yours hit me on the knee," said Nipper ruefully. "It was coming at a tremendous pace, Gulliver. You must have hit it a big smack."

"I say, I'm very sorry," said Gulliver, with concern. "I was hitting in a different direction—down the meadow. I sliced it, and it shot over the hedge like a bullet. I didn't even see where it went."

"Well, I felt where it came," said Nipper. "Phew! I shan't be able to bend this knee for a week!"

Handforth glared at Gulliver. "I believe you did it on purpose!" he said hotly.

"Oh, I say!" protested Gulliver. "How the dickens could I do a thing like that on purpose?"

"All right, Gulliver—accidents are bound to happen," said Nipper good-naturedly. "But I wish you'd be a bit more careful when you're driving next time. You'll become a public danger. Dry up, Handy. It was a pure accident!"

"I'm not so sure," said Handforth suspiciously.

Gulliver looked startled.

"It was!" he protested. "I couldn't hit a ball again like that if I tried a thousand times!"

"Of course he couldn't," said Travers. "The cleverest professional golfer couldn't drive a ball deliberately at somebody's knee-cap two hundred yards away and hope to hit it."

"Of course," said Nipper. "Handforth's mad. All right, Gulliver—don't look so scared. I'm not going to punch your head."

"I'm really awfully sorry," said Gulliver. "I'd no idea the ball was coming over this way. It was a rotten hit of mine. I'll be more careful next time."

"If you must practise, you'd better go into the very middle of Bannington Moor," said Pitt. "And make sure that nobody is within a range of half a mile."

Gulliver took the ball, and went off with renewed apologies. And behind the neighbouring hedge, where it was thickest, Bernard Forrest grinned as he put his catapult away!

CHAPTER 10.

Forrest the Hero!

IT had been surprisingly easy.

Forrest, behind the hedge, safe from observation, had had that golf ball ready in his catapult. He had waited until Bell had come along with the newspaper. It was Bell's job to engage Nipper in conversation, and to get Nipper to read that paragraph. This ensured Nipper standing quite still for a moment or two.

And Forrest, taking careful aim for Nipper's knee, had released the golf ball from his powerful catapult. Quite an easy matter for anybody who could handle a catapult with a little skill; the distance was not far.

Nipper's sudden collapse had been the signal for Gulliver, a long distance away, to appear with the club, asking if anybody had seen his golf ball. How was anybody to know that Forrest had been concealed behind the hedge with a catapult?

It was a mean and underhanded way of crocking Nipper. There had been a distinct chance of Nipper's knee-cap being broken. As it was, the ball had struck him a glancing blow, and a severe bruise was the only result. Within two minutes of the "accident," Forrest was in the Triangle, leaning against one of the walls, casually reading a weekly periodical.

On Little Side, the junior footballers were anxious.

"You're not really crocked, are you, Nipper?" asked Tommy Watson anxiously.

Nipper cautiously bent his knee. "Well, I shan't have to use crutches," he replied. "But I'm afraid I'm no good for this afternoon's game."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What rotten luck!"

"This is going to spoil our chance," said Reggie Pitt. "Rats to Gulliver and his golf! Don't you think you'll be better by this afternoon, old man?"

"I may be better, but this knee is swelling," said Nipper, as he felt it. "No, I shan't be able to play. I'm out of it."

"It's a pity these chaps can't practise golf on the links!" said Handforth indignantly.

"I dare say Gulliver thought he was safe in the meadow," said Nipper. "He might not make another hit like that for months. Perhaps never. Just a piece of bad luck."

"Who are you going to play in your place?" asked Fullwood.

Nipper considered the point.

"Forrest," he replied, after a moment.

"Forrest!" echoed Handforth excitedly. "What rot! There are plenty of other fellows—"

"Forrest has proved himself to be a ripping centre-forward," said Nipper quietly. "He played a great game against the Fourth the other day. He's even better now. His shooting, this morning, was wonderful. There's nobody else with his form."

"You're right," nodded Pitt. "I noticed Forrest this morning. He's in great form. Nearly as good as you yourself, Nipper."

Nipper had easily fallen into Bernard Forrest's trap. Forrest had known that Nipper, as a conscientious skipper, would select the best available man for the centre-forward position. And Forrest knew well enough that he was the best available man. There was no favouritism with Nipper. He thought of the game first and last. But it was certainly beyond his comprehension—and everybody else's—that Forrest should have deliberately crooked his skipper so that he should secure the place!

"YOU'RE wanted, Forrest," said Duncan.

He had been asked to go and look for Forrest, and he had found Forrest in the Triangle, leaning against one of the walls, reading.

"Wanted?" said Forrest, looking up.

"What for?"

"Nipper wants you," replied Duncan.

"You're going to play in this afternoon's game."

Forrest laughed.

"Tell me another," he said lightly.

"But it's true," insisted the New Zealander. "Nipper's been crooked. That precious pal of yours, Gulliver, drove a golf ball and it hit Nipper's knee by accident."

"I say, this isn't true, is it?" asked Forrest, with concern. "By gad! There's a chance for me to play, then?"

"Perhaps you're glad that Nipper is crooked, eh?" asked Duncan tartly.

"I'm not glad, but I can't help being a bit selfish," replied Forrest. "Any fellow would be. I never dreamed that I should get a chance in a big game yet!"

He hurried off, and found Nipper on Little Side, still surrounded by the crowd of footballers.

"I want you to play this afternoon, Forrest," said Nipper.

"That's what Duncan told me, but I couldn't believe it," said Forrest, his face flushed and his eyes shining. "He said that you'd been hit with a golf ball, or something."

"You ought to know!" said Handforth coldly. "One of your precious studymates did it! Fooling about with golf clubs ought to be prohibited."

"I warned him," said Forrest earnestly. "I told him not to practise driving anywhere near the school. I thought he might break a window, or do some other damage; but I never dreamed he'd hit anybody."

"Well, never mind," said Nipper. "No good crying over spilt milk. How do you feel about it, Forrest? Do you think you can put up a good game this afternoon?"

"Try me!" he said eagerly. "I won't let the side down, Nipper."

"We want to win this match," said Nipper. "I shall rely upon you, Forrest, to lead the forward line. And we shall want one or two goals, too. It won't be such an easy match as that one against the Fourth. The Gramarians are keen—and they're top-hole players. It'll be a big test for you."

"I don't know what I can say, Nipper, to show you my appreciation," said Forrest, so earnestly and with such apparent sincerity that all the listeners were impressed. "It's really awfully decent of you to put me in the team like this. It's a— Well, it shows that you've got faith in me. You're letting bygones be bygones. I'll play like the very dickens to prove that I'm worthy. It really is awfully decent of you."

(Continued on page 34.)

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The way Forrest expressed himself seemed sincere enough, and even Nipper was impressed.

Handforth, obstinate as ever, hinted darkly to Church and McClure that there was something fishy about the whole business.

"I've said from the first that Forrest is playing a deep game," he declared. "Think of it! Bell comes up to Nipper with the newspaper, and it's Gulliver who sends that golf ball! And Forrest gets Nipper's place! Don't you call that a rummy sort of coincidence?"

"But it is only a coincidence, Handy," said Church. "You're not suggesting that Gulliver could deliberately drive a golf ball at Nipper's knee?"

Handforth frowned.

"No, that's impossible," he admitted. "But, all the same, there's something fishy about it."

It wasn't so much astuteness on Handforth's part as a "hunch" that Bernard Forrest was still the same rascal as of yore. Handforth maintained that the leopard could not change his spots. But, after all, Handforth was alone in these suspicions of his. Forrest had succeeded in fooling all the others.

And in Study A Forrest was grinning with triumph.

"Brains!" he observed coolly. "That's all you need, my lads! Brains!"

And Gulliver and Bell marvelled at the cunning of their unscrupulous leader.

"GOAL!"

"Oh, well kicked, Forrest!"

A roar of appreciation went up from the crowds of Removites and Fourth-Formers who were round the ropes of Little Side. The big game was on, and it was already ten minutes old. Bernard Forrest, playing tip-top football, had seized upon one of the earliest chances, and had converted it into a glorious goal.

Pouncing upon the ball, he had sent in a first-time shot which the goalkeeper had hardly seen. Nipper himself could not have done better. There were many fellows, indeed, who frankly declared that Forrest was better than Nipper.

The Grammarians bucked up considerably after that early reverse, and they pressed hard for the next ten minutes. Edgar Stanmore, the Grammarian skipper, inspired his men by his vigorous play, and there was a period when Church and McClure, the St. Frank's backs, were nearly run off their feet.

Twice they were completely beaten, and it was only Handforth's masterly play in goal that saved St. Frank's from disaster. Stanmore drove in a low shot which sent Handforth full length across the goalmouth. He only just succeeded in tipping the leather round the post.

"Well saved, Handy!"

"Corner!"

"Keep 'em out, St. Frank's!"

The corner kick was taken, and there was a tremendous lot of excitement as the ball bobbed about near the goalmouth. But one

of Handforth's fists came lunging out, and the leather was sent into touch. The immediate crisis was over.

Then came a period of hard play in mid-field, neither side gaining much headway.

It was Forrest who initiated the next St. Frank's attack. He sent out a long pass to Reggie Pitt on the wing, and Reggie was off in a flash on one of his lightning runs.

He centred, and Travers, taking the ball in his stride, took a shot at goal.

The Grammarian custodian leapt out, however, caught the leather on his chest, and succeeded in getting it away. Stanmore trapped it, passed out to his right wing, and the winger, after a brief run, centred, and Stanmore once again got the ball. He ran right in, and scored a brilliant goal. Handforth, leaping up, was deceived by the swerve of the leather.

"Goal!"

"Well played, Grammarians!"

THROUGHOUT the first half, it was a grim battle, with neither side actually gaining the mastery. Forrest played a truly magnificent game, leading his forwards well, and initiating attack after attack. But the Grammarians were keen, valiant defenders.

At half-time, the score stood one all. And everybody was talking about Forrest's play.

There was no spoof about this. Whatever the fellow had been in the past, he was different now. The very fact that he was playing such fine football proved that he had dropped his old bad ways. That was how the fellows argued. Little did they realise that Bernard was, if anything, worse than he had ever been in the past!

And towards the end of the game he scored the winning goal for St. Frank's.

The ball came in from the wing, and Forrest did not even pause to trap it. He volleyed it straight into the net, giving the Grammarian goalie no chance whatever of saving the shot.

"Goal!"

"Good old Forrest!"

"Well played!"

Forrest came in for a tremendous reception. And when the game was over the juniors crowded round him, patting him on the back, and shouting their congratulations.

He was one of the best! A jolly fine fellow! His popularity was meteoric. Already he was voted to be one of the finest sportsmen the Remove had ever possessed. A chap who could score goals like that was worth his weight in gold!

But only Gulliver and Bell knew the actual truth!

Bernard Forrest's game was a deep one, and, deliberately and evilly, he was driving forward towards that end which he had in view—the usurping of Nipper!

THE END.

("The Whip Hand!" is the title of the next yarn in this amazing series—and it's a real corker, chums! Order next Wednesday's issue of the Old Paper now to avoid disappointment.)

GOSSIP ABOUT ST. FRANK'S



Things Heard and Seen By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

HERE'S a reminder that I'm always glad to receive letters from readers dealing with the St. Frank's characters and the yarns in general. Such letters help me to do my best work, particularly if they point out my faults. Readers have only got to address their letters to: Edwy Searles Brooks, Editorial Office, "Nelson Lee Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. The Editor will take care of all such letters, and have them sent on to me, so that I can deal with them from my home

address. It doesn't require any sort of courage to write to me—as some readers would have me believe. Take, for example, the young lady whose photograph you see this week. She is Miss Alice M. Latham, of St. Helen's, Lancs. She begins her letter with these quaint words: "I have been a regular reader of your books for two or three years now, but never before have I dared to write to you." Since it is open to anybody in this country to write to the Prime Minister himself, if he or she wants to, surely there's no daring required to write to such an insignificant mortal as myself?

OUR READERS' PORTRAIT GALLERY



Miss A. M. Latham

I CAN see that I shall have to have a row with Handforth about those replies of his. A number of readers are taking it for granted that I'm guilty of these gems of wit and humour. Rosamond Woods, of St. Albans, for example, sympathises with me because she thinks I must be terribly busy writing the weekly story, Handforth's replies, and the various articles by chaps like Archie or Fatty, and these columns, too. Well, of course, there's no doubt about my writing the story and this Gossip—my name appears on both. So

if I tried to escape responsibility I couldn't. But Handforth and all these other chaps write their stuff without any help from me whatever; so don't give me any credit for work I don't do. Handforth was terribly indignant when he heard that I was being praised for his stuff, and he told me quite candidly that if I didn't make the whole thing clear in a special paragraph like this he'd do it himself at the top of his replies.

A. BLACKETT, of Stratford, E.15, tells me that one of his friends has solemnly assured him that lots of copies of the Old Paper are left over every week, and that they are thrown aside to rot. He'd better tell his friend that nothing could be further from the truth. And if his friend doesn't believe it, let him write up to the Publisher for some old back numbers. If he doesn't get the reply, "Out of print," I shall be very surprised. You can be quite sure that no copies of the Old Paper are thrown aside to rot. Back numbers

that are not too old are still obtainable, and are very carefully preserved by the Publishers until they are exhausted. Still, after the Publishers have sold out, it is generally possible to pick up ancient issues at old bookshops, or from fellow-readers. The more of these old copies that are raked up, the better the Editor likes it, for it generally means that some new readers are obtained. I have got an extraordinary number of letters in my files from readers who tell me that they first became regular subscribers by picking up an old copy at an old bookshop, or having an odd copy given them by a friend.

I HAPPENED to meet Miss Eileen Dare the other day, looking as charming as ever. Old readers will remember her as the young lady detective who assisted Nelson Lee in many of his earlier cases. I was particularly interested, because she tells me that Molly Dare, her niece, is soon to be sent to the Moor View School. Molly is younger than Irene & Co.—being, I believe, only about twelve, but, according to the gentle hints which Eileen dropped, I gather that Molly is a bit of a handful—a kind of feminine edition of Willy. I shall be very interested to hear how she gets on when she arrives at the Moor View School.

* * *

NELSON LEE tells me that he has his suspicions concerning several big robberies and frauds which have recently been engaging the attention of Scotland Yard—for you mustn't forget that Nelson Lee makes a point of keeping in close touch with detective work, although he is a schoolmaster at St. Frank's. He has a shrewd idea, I believe, that his old enemy, Professor Cyrus Zingrave, is at work again. In fact, he suspects that the League of the Green Triangle is being reformed; and, although it may be some months before it actually shows itself, he is convinced that some big trouble is brewing. This reminds me that Pat Byrne, of Maitland, Cape Town, South Africa, has wondered if Professor Zingrave will ever come into the stories again. Well, after my chat with Nelson Lee, I rather think he will—although it may be some months before there's anything doing. But Pat can be quite certain that if the Green Triangle *does* spring into prominence again, Nelson Lee won't be kept out of the scrap, schoolmaster or no schoolmaster. When all is said and done, he is a detective first, and a schoolmaster second.

* * *

WHEN it comes to conceit, I really think that Cuthbert Chambers, of the Fifth, runs off with the honours. He was a bit better for a while—after he had been sent down into the Third for slacking—but I understand that he is just as bad as ever again. He's got such a high opinion of himself that he harbours a permanent grudge against William Napoleon Browne, just because Browne is the Fifth-Form skipper. Chambers considers that he ought to have the job. The trouble is he's a hopeless ass, and always will be a hopeless ass; but, like most hopeless asses, he thinks he's just the opposite. So it's almost impossible to tell him the truth about himself. When he reads these lines—as he probably will—he'll go right off the deep end and rave all over the Ancient House until somebody squashes him. And I am reminded that Dora Cantor, of Krugersdorp, South Africa, has asked me to mention the most conceited fellow at St.

Frank's. Without doubt, Cuthbert Chambers is he. Dora also believes that her own school blazer has the same colours as those of St. Frank's. She doesn't tell me what her colours are. The Ancient House blazers are red and blue stripes; West House, mauve and yellow stripes; Modern House, green and gold stripes; East House, black and orange stripes. And these, naturally, are the colours of the caps, too.

* * *

WILFRED PONSFORD, of 34, Ardoch Road, Catford, London, S.E.6, is evidently a fellow of great courage, for he has asked me to give his name and address, so that other readers can write to him on that all-important subject of bookbinding. I think I'd better repeat his exact words: "I have now a little proposition to put before readers. It concerns binding the 'N.L.L.' I have practised this myself, and the results have turned out satisfactory. I have made out a plan of how to do it, and it can be had free by any reader enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. The total expenditure is about 6d., and with sixpennyworth of this stuff three sets can be bound. You might just publish this, thus enabling readers to save their money. The proper shop binding costs from 1s. 6d. to 6s." So all readers who want to hear more about this mysterious "stuff" to which our Catford reader alludes had better send him a line. I confess that I'm quite intrigued myself, and I shall be one of the first to apply. Needless to say, I shall *not* forget to enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Readers mustn't forget, either, or they'll probably get no reply from Wilfred.

* * *

A NUMBER of Irish readers—including Patrick Dockery, of Ok-on-Shannon—have asked me if there is an Irish junior at St. Frank's. Well, there's Terence O'Grady, of the Fourth, who shares Study No. 8, in the Modern House, with Herbert Vandyke, the South African junior. But I can't exactly blame readers for not knowing much about him, as he so seldom appears in the stories. I was quite surprised when I had a chat with O'Grady recently, to find that his brogue has almost vanished. Constant association with the other fellows has wrought this change. Not that he ever had very much of a brogue. Terence comes from a very fine old Irish family, and he naturally speaks with refinement. The most noticeable feature about Terence's English is that it is so perfect, which leads me to suspect that the Irish speak English better than we do.

Gripping Story of Adventure Among the Islands of the Southern Seas!

The ISLAND CASTAWAYS!

by ARTHUR S. HARDY



(Introduction on page 38.)

A Narrow Escape!

HURRIEDLY Dave pulled up the anchor, and casting a glance behind him, saw the savages racing towards them.

"A nice-looking lot they are—I don't think!" he murmured, as he pushed the boat into deep water and waded after. "And you saved the lass from them. You're a great boy, Tom!"

Dave swung himself up over the bows of the boat and took a dive into her, righting himself and striding aft to take the tiller as the boat rocked. As the tide took her, he swung her round.

"Up with that sail, Tom!" he ordered, and the boy sent it racing to the masthead. The brisk wind filled the canvas, the boat heeled over, and in a moment was speeding into the broad blue of the sea and leaving the reef behind at an amazing rate.

The savages halted, their furious cries echoing loudly. Again they waved their weapons, and Dave grinned as they began a wild dance of disappointment.

"It's sweet good-bye, mates!" he said. "We've got to give this island a miss from now on, but which one of them that lie

around here it's safe to choose I can't say. I reckon we're in for a long cruise."

The savages had turned and could be seen running back toward the clearing. They vanished with the speed of rabbits down a hole, and again Dave laughed.

They were half a mile from the shore, perhaps, when a bird could be seen flying rapidly after them. As it overtook the sailing-boat and fluttered down, Eva recognised it.

"It's Brutus," cried Eva, clapping her hands with delight.

The bird perched upon the seat beside her and, looking up wisely, uttered a loud screeching noise, and then began to preen its gorgeous feathers.

"Darn me," cried Dave as he lolled back lazily, "if that bird ain't almost human!"

They were sailing dead before the wind, and their course lay away from the lagoon. It would take a little time for the savages to launch their canoes and start in chase, and, even if they did, Dave assured the castaways the sailing-boat would easily outdistance them.

"Their arms will tire, lass," he declared. "Our sail won't."

As they tooled along, Dave raised his

Driven from their island home by savages, Tom Perry, Eva Hanway and Dave Sellwood sail to another island to find—what?

eyes to study the sky, where puffs of white cloud hung in the blue.

The boat ceased her heeling and ran on an even keel, and gradually the wind dropped. They could tell as they glanced shoreward that they were still moving, but only slowly.

"That's bad," growled Dave. "I hope those niggers won't come after us."

"The savages will think we have got clear away," said Eva. "I don't suppose they'll follow us, Dave."

"They're as weatherwise as I am, I don't doubt," growled Dave. "They can read the signs—and, by thunder, here they come!"

He was pointing over the sea, and as they glanced at the point which concealed the wide sweep of reef that ran inland to the entrance of the lagoon, three rakish craft, low down on the water, crept into view, one following closely on another. They could see the flash of the wet paddle-blades as strong arms drove them home. There was no need to ask whether the canoes were gaining. They were coming up hand over hand.

Tom looked from the craft to Dave, and smiled grimly.

"If it comes to a fight," he said, "I'll account for some of 'em, Dave, before——" He stopped suddenly and looked at Eva.

The girl was sitting with her hands clasped, watching the rapid advance of the canoes. Her pretty face was set, and her eyes were hard.

"Look how the light clouds are moving, Dave," she said brightly, casting off her mood as she found Tom watching her.

"That's up there," the old salt reminded her. "Yet I believe the dropping of the wind is only temporary. But it'll have to come quick if it's to be of any use to us."

The canoes were within half a mile of them and coming on apace.

Dave was steering right out to sea. The point was away behind them, and they were able to see round the curve of the island now.

As she looked, Eva uttered a startled cry.

"Tom," she said, "there are more canoes!"

Dave jerked himself bolt upright and turned his head. Speeding close in to the shore, driven by strong arms and lusty strokes, were four canoes. The savages in them were singing a harsh, guttural, jangling melody to the strokes of the paddles. Then, as they caught sight of the sailing-boat, they ceased their singing and uttered a wild shout.

In a moment their course was changed, and they came in pursuit of the boat.

Savages were approaching them on both sides now, and still there was scarcely wind enough to fill the sail.

Tom snapped open his revolver to make sure that it was loaded. Dave's gnarled face was set in a ferocious scowl as he lifted the oar and poised it to feel the balance.

Swiftly the canoes closed in on the boat. They were near enough now for the three castaways to distinguish the painted faces of the savages.

Now the wind began to freshen and the water to race from the bows of the sailing-boat. The canoes still gained, but not so rapidly.

Dave brightened up. It only needed a breath more to give their boat the speed of their pursuers, and Dave reckoned that breath might come.

He scanned the sea for sign of a sail, but as ever it was empty. No ships ever came that way. They must rely upon themselves.

As the canoes closed in on the sailing-boat, they drew ever nearer to one another, the point where they would meet being the boat itself. Behind them the surface of the sea began to ripple.

"The wind's coming, Dave!" cried Eva excitedly.

"Mercy be and so it is!" cried the seaman with a laugh. "It's caught the canoes; look at 'em tossing. Here she comes—lower that sail a little, boy. That's right—steady."

The partly lower sail filled, and the boat heeled right over. Once more the sailing-boat had the speed of the canoes, and a wild shout from behind showed that the savages realised they had lost the race.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

THORNTON HANWAY, American millionaire and business magnate, is the owner of the yacht *Esmeralda*, which is touring among a number of unknown islands in the Southern Pacific. He is accompanied by

EVA HANWAY, his pretty daughter, and her chum,

TOM PERRY, a plucky, adventure-loving English boy. Tom's father,

GEORGE PERRY, a lifelong friend of Hanway's, is also on board. At the moment there is great anxiety on the yacht owing to the pilot,

DANIEL KEMISH, having developed a sudden illness. In years past Dan and his partner, David Sellwood, had owned a small vessel, which traded in these parts. Dan had been the cause of Sellwood losing his life—or so he thought—and since then the former has never forgiven himself. Sailing these seas once more has brought back old memories, and this fact, combined with the heat, has turned his head. Tom and Eva decide to visit a nearby island, but they are caught in a terrible storm, and the motor-boat is swamped. They are plunged into the mountainous seas, and finally are cast upon an unknown island, on which they meet David Sellwood. Later, unknown to the two chums, Hanway's yacht is set on fire by Kemish. One day the three castaways see a windjammer drifting towards the island. They go aboard and find the ship to be waterlogged, abandoned, and fever-stricken. Disappointed, they return to the island, and later find themselves attacked by savages. Hastily the three friends board their sailing boat, and, pursued by the enemy, prepare to make for the open sea!

(Now read on.)

They ceased to paddle, and watched the boat drawing away. Then suddenly the castaways heard the savages shouting to one another, and the two lots of canoes turned towards each other, the cries of the savages shrilling above the lap of the sea against the boat's side. Only one or two of the natives paddled now, the others standing up in the frail craft and launching their spears at one another.

Canoe grappled with canoe. The three friends could see the flash of knives and the whirl of tomahawks.

"It's a battle," cried the girl, awed by the spectacle; "they are killing one another. Look!"

Dark-skinned bodies tumbled out of the canoes into the sea, and Tom noticed that some of them rapidly vanished from

island at the best speed the survivors in her could muster, and while another remained on the scene of the battle, two more went in chase of the first. The battle was over, lost and won, and the three canoes had been beaten by the four.

How the race ended the castaways never knew, for the boats were mere specks now.

Presently they were lost entirely to view, and the sailing-boat was alone upon the heaving sea, moving with a strong wind and a fast current, her occupants knew not whither.

A thick line of black smoke streaked the sky, stretching back to the now distant island. It was smoke from the dying bonfire.

On An Unknown Island!

DAVE SELLWOOD sailed before the wind, the little boat heeling over as she bobbed like a cork upon the waves.

"We'd better make the best speed we can," he advised, "because, you see, missy, there may be other savages about. I somehow thought the lighting of that wood



Driven by lusty strokes, the four canoes, loaded with savages, swiftly approached the becalmed boat of the castaways. Nearer and nearer they came, and Tom and Dave could do nothing. Would the wind never freshen for their boat to carry them away from danger?

view. He shuddered when he thought of his own experience with a shark.

Still the battle waged, and a canoe overturned. They could see men clinging to her whilst enemies struck them down. Screams and wild cries echoed deafeningly. Another canoe overturned, but whilst Eva shuddered and turned her eyes away, and Tom watched in silence, Dave let out a shout of rejoicing.

"That's all the better for us, missy!" he cried. "They'll have had enough when they get through with their fighting, and won't pay any more attention to us."

A third canoe was upset, but they were now so far away that Tom could only just make out the bobbing heads.

Then one canoe began to make for the

pile would bring us trouble. It would need a gale almost to drive that smoke away."

They sailed for hours, it seemed, and still the smoke trail haunted them. An island loomed up on their port bow, but they steered clear, although it was covered with vegetation. Presently they sighted a second island, and Tom, who had relieved Dave of the business of steering, ran in close enough for them to make out an almost barren reef. An hour later it was far astern and rapidly receding.

After that they saw no land for hours. Eating sparingly of the scanty provisions they had brought with them, and scarcely touching the water, they kept upon their way.

"Supposing we cannot run ashore to-night, will it be safe to remain at sea, do you think, Dave?" asked the girl.

The old sailor cocked an eye at the sky.

"The weather seems set fair," he answered, "and it would be as safe for us out here as anywhere, I reckon," he replied. "Still, it's nothing for a hurricane to come unbidden in these parts, and for your sake, missy, I'd prefer we ran ashore."

"I say, Eva," said Tom, seating himself beside her, "are you still scared about those savages?"

"No," she replied, with a shake of her pretty head. "I was terrified, of course, when they sprang on me and tied me up. I was thinking of mother and dad, and—the others. Tom, I believe they are alive."

It was not chance that had made Eva's father a millionaire, and if he were alive, not even a thousand Pacific Oceans could have prevented him from finding them. Tom could only hope their parents were alive, though he could not believe it. But he did not want to dishearten the girl.

"Of course they are," he said. "And perhaps we are sailing to meet them."

Eva turned away, sweeping the sea with anxious eyes, and suddenly she pointed.

"Dave, there's land over there!"

Her keen eyes had picked up the low-lying smudge upon the horizon, even though David Sellwood and Tom had missed it. The man screwed his eyes beneath bushy brows.

"Why, so it is!" he cried. "And not afore time, mark you. The wind is dropping, and it will take us till dark, I reckon, to make it. We'll run in there and drop anchor for the night. Maybe, if we've time, we can explore the island and find out whether it's inhabited or not."

After their startling experience on Sellwood's island there would no doubt be a risk in landing on a strange island.

The sun was going down now. But the cloudless sky promised light enough for them to make the island, and they kept steadily upon their way.

Before the sun dropped beyond the horizon they were near enough to make out the land ahead of them. Dave Sellwood gave a grunt of disgust.

"There are no trees there," he growled. "We've drawn a blank, shipmates. It's hard luck. This place is no better than that other one we made when we first sailed from the island."

It was true. As they drew nearer to it, they could see the coral strand stretching wide on either side of the little boat. The barren island was of considerable size, and rose up from the sea-edge in undulating hill-like formation to a considerable height.

The strand shimmered gold-red in the rays of the dying sun, and on the rich earthy deposit grew a stunted and uninviting vegetation. Clustered upon the bank above the strand there were countless thousands of sea-birds that raised a continuous strident crying.

It was plain to see that the place would not afford them the shelter they sought, and yet, on the other hand, they would be as safe there as if they were sleeping at home in their own beds.

They sought in the fast-failing light for a sign of another island, but the open sea lay everywhere.

"Let's run her in here, Dave," said the boy. "We may find somewhere to sleep up there in a sheltered place above the beach."

David Sellwood grunted.

"Dunno!" he growled. "For my part I think I'd sooner sleep in this old tub if we can only find a place where we can anchor her with safety."

The sun dipped below the horizon, but they kept on a true course, the boy and the girl baling out water as they had had to do at intervals throughout the voyage.

As the moon shone more brilliantly, and the stars appeared in the sky, they ran the boat on to the sandy beach.

Dave jumped out, Tom after him, and together they pulled the boat high above the line of debris which marked the highest tide. They unshipped the mast and emptied the bilge, and safely anchored her.

"We can sleep up there," said Dave, pointing to a spot on a ridge a distance ahead of them. "I don't suppose we'll come to any harm."

Helped by the light of the moon, the three castaways trudged over the yielding and uneven surface until they reached the dry, sheltered spot indicated by Dave. They threw themselves down to rest and eat. A piece each of the dry bread Dave had made a day ago served them for food, and a draught of water quenched their thirst.

It stayed their hunger, even if it did not suffice, and in any case they all felt too tired to think about any more food.

"I'll keep watch and guard, missy, for four hours, or as near as I can calculate, and then Mr. Tom can relieve me till the day breaks," said Dave. "No harm can come to us then."

But his watching lasted a bare two minutes, during which he eyed the moon, the stars and the lonely earth through half-shut lids. A few moments later he was as fast asleep as Tom and Eva, and snoring loudly. But they did not hear him.

The hot sun wakened them the next morning, and as they sat erect and stared about them, the barren island did not seem so lonely. Sea-birds were screaming and cackling in the air or watching them from the rise above.

Eva blinked her eyes and sprang to her feet.

"It's quite safe. I'm going down to the beach for a swim," she said. "And don't either of you start breakfast until I come back."

"Don't you swim, missy; you be contented wi' a dip," advised Dave seriously. "Have you forgotten that there's sharks in

these waters. I'll stake my life there's hundreds of 'em around here."

"If I kept close in shore the current could never sweep me out," said Eva, "and at the sight of a shark I'll kick or come in."

With that Eva started to walk down to the beach.

"You mind the sharks, missy!" bellowed Dave as she disappeared. "Don't you go for swimming a long way."

A happy, silvery laugh floated back to him, but the girl did not answer.

"You'd better see she doesn't go out too far," said Dave, and, after waiting a while, Tom followed her.

On reaching the boat, Tom sat upon the gunwale and, folding his arms, waited for Eva to enter the water.

She soon appeared, wearing the cleverly made garment she called her bathing suit. As she saw Tom she waved her arm, entered the sea, and swam right out into the deep water, far from the shore, in defiance of Dave's warning. It annoyed Eva to think she couldn't do anything without someone watching over her.

The boy raced down to the lapping waters.

"Come back, Eva!" he shouted. "Come back! You know it's dangerous."

She heard him, and answered laughingly:

"All right, I'll just have a little swim, Tom, and then turn in shore."

Tom waited. After all, it was quite possible for one to bathe off this island shore for days on end without attracting the notice of a shark. The girl had always been a strong swimmer, but since they had been cast away she had improved out of all knowledge under Tom's tuition. Eva swam far out, and, as she went, she drifted far along the shore. Dutifully, she turned, and, after a while, began to swim in again. But, to the boy's horror, instead of making rapid progress, she drifted farther away. At a spot just ahead of her he could see a dangerous-looking whirlpool, the sea racing swiftly past it. It dawned on him in a flash that the girl could only make the shore a long way farther on, if ever she made it at all, and he raced as fast as he could back to the boat. As he reached it, Dave Sellwood topped the rise above him.

"Dave," shouted Tom, as he tugged at the anchor, "Eva can't get in! Help me. We must follow her!"

(Will Tom be in time to rescue Eva? Next week's instalment of this fine serial tells you—so don't miss reading it, chums!)

Professor Puddleditch's Lectures!

(Continued from page 13.)

possibilities of the project, immediately gave orders to buy up the whole stock of a fish merchant in the local bazaar. Shod thus the soldiers were led through the pass to victory, and the pass was named Khiber, in memory of the event. You have all heard of the Khiber Pass. 'Khiber' is, of course, Hindustani for 'kipper.'

"There is not much doubt that in pre-historic times the kipper was of a similar shape to the bloater, but whereas the bloater, through its voracious feeding, became bloated, the kipper, being very indolent, simply lay about on the sandy bottom of the sea, and gradually became flatter and flatter.

"'Don't flatter me,' was a phrase used in the time of William the Norman, and was a plea used by an opponent to his adversary, who, before challenging him to mortal combat, would swipe him round the ear with a kipper. This was considered an insult. In later years, throwing down the gauntlet was substituted on similar occasions."

At this juncture, the professor, apparently illustrating the action of swiping an opponent round the ear avec kipper, accidentally slung his spectacles into the air. They were neatly caught by the skipper of the Form, who happened to be seated at cover-point, and politely returned intact to the professor, who was still examining his hand and wondering where his glasses had disappeared to. Taking a drink of water to lubricate his vocal apparatus, the lecturer continued his discourse.

"And now," he said, "we come to an

important point in our study. The question, 'Does a kipper swim open or shut?' is one which has been much debated in recent years. Dr. Fryde Fisher, the brilliant zoologist, is the leader of the 'shut kipper' school, while Mr. Con Gereel is the champion of the 'open kipper' faction.

"A party of these diverse thinkers once attempted to solve the riddle by descending into the sea at Southend in glass diving-bells, with a view to watching the habits of the fish in its natural element. Unfortunately the tide went out before they could secure a view of their subject in action, and the quest was abandoned.

"It has never been found possible to catch and keep a kipper in captivity." The professor, pleased with the lilt of this phrase, repeated it, shrugging his shoulders and snapping his fingers. "Catch and keep a kipper in captivity. Hum! Most amusing example of alliteration. He, he, he!"

The boys, sensing the approaching end of the lecture, roused themselves enough to echo slowly, "He—he—hee!"

"And, lastly," quoth the professor, raising his hand to quell the very slight symptoms of mirth, "I would just mention that an attempt was made to use the kipper for a pocket-book. It was found, however, that the continued opening and shutting of the two halves quickly wore out the hinges, and it was reluctantly decided that the idea was not a commercial proposition.

"You may now dismiss."

Professor Puddleditch, gathering up his dictionary, turned and left the Hall, executing a slow dance to the rhythm of the phrase which had evidently impressed itself on his unsuspected musical mind. "Catch and keep a kipper—la, la, la—tra-la-la—in captivity."

HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM No. 115.

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 leave 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, 5, Carmelite Street, 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, providing that each pair of forms bears the same date and number.

Bronze medallists wishing to qualify for the silver 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 they have secured the requisite number of readers they can exchange their bronze medal for a silver one.

These Application Forms can be posted for ½d., providing the envelope is not sealed and no letter is enclosed.

A FEW OF THE ADVANTAGES OF JOINING THE LEAGUE.

You can write to fellow members living at home or in the most distant outposts of the Empire.

You are offered free advice on choosing a trade or calling, and on emigration to the colonies and dependencies.

If you want to form a sports or social club, you can do so amongst local members of the League.

You are offered free hints on holidays, whether walking, biking, or camping.

You can qualify for the various awards by promoting the growth of the League.

If you want help or information on any subject, you will find the Chief Officer ever ready to assist you.

NOTICE.

The St. Frank's League has now attained such proportions that we are compelled to discontinue the offer of gold medals in connection therewith. The silver and bronze medals will still be available, however, as heretofore, to those who qualify for them in accordance with the rules.

The ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE CORNER!



*The Chief Officer Chats
with his Chums.*

*Here's his address if you want to
write to him: The Chief Officer, "The
Nelson Lee Library," Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

The Winter Club!

IT is with great interest that I watch the progress of the many clubs—correspondence, social, sports, and others—which have been formed under the auspices of the St. Frank's League. Interesting to watch how some, starting in a small way, gradually soar to great heights; how others, starting as full of enthusiasm as their contemporaries, are unable to stand the pace and so fade into obscurity. I am pleased to add, by the way, that there have been very few of the latter.

One of those clubs which have soared to great heights is the Burton - on - Trent S.F.L. Winter Club. Excellently managed in the extremely capable hands of Mr. Desmond Richardson, this club has made wonderful progress since it was formed some years ago. Mr. Richardson, in fact, in his letter to me says that it has made quicker progress than any other club he knows of. A sweeping statement that, but there's certainly some justification for it.

Mr. Richardson goes on to tell me that he will be pleased to welcome into his club all readers of the Old Paper who are living in the Burton district. Those interested should

attend the club's headquarters, which are at the Glebe Schools, Stanton Road, Stapenhill, on Friday evenings at 7.10 p.m. Everybody is assured of a real entertaining and enjoyable evening. There are two billiard-tables, table tennis, darts, draughts, and other games.

THIS WEEK'S WINNING LETTER

DEAR CHIEF OFFICER. — *I am writing this letter to bring to your notice the "SOUTH MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SOCIETY."*

This society is a new one, and is in need of members. And I want you to help me get them. To start with, anyway, members will not be required to pay a fee. This is only fair, as there will be a limited number of members at first, and we cannot expect people to pay a fee in these circumstances.

I am aiming at extending the society, and to this end I have asked Mr. Koji Mohamed, who is starting a similar society in Malaya, if he would be agreeable to amalgamate. If he is, I think both societies would benefit by the additional members thus obtained.

You have my assurance that any members joining the S.M.I.C.S. who are NOT readers of the N.L.L. will be urged to read it, and I feel certain that, once they have seen a copy, they will "stick to it."

With best wishes to the N.L.L. and the S.F.L.,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J. HERBERT SULLIVAN, (S.F.L. No. 9071)

(For this interesting letter, J. Herbert Sullivan Cemetery House, Lime Road, Stretford, Lancashire, has been awarded a useful pocket wallet.)

Incidentally, last year this club had only one room for their weekly gatherings; this year there are to be two rooms.

That is the stuff to give 'em! That's what I like to see! My heartiest congratulations to Mr. Richardson for his enterprise and enthusiasm and untiring efforts on his club's and the Old Paper's behalf. Rally round, you readers in the Burton district, and help to make this club an even bigger success than it already is!

By the way, readers who wish to write should note that Mr. Richardson's address is: 53, Frederick

Street, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent.

A Branch in Canada!

THAT most enterprising and flourishing club, the Imperial Correspondence Club, has now extended its activities to Canada, and hopes to form a

All members of the St. Frank's League are invited to send to the Chief Officer letters of interest concerning the League. The most interesting will be published week by week, and the senders will receive pocket wallets or penknives. If you don't belong to the League, join immediately by filling in the form which appears on the opposite page.

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE CORNER

(Continued from page 43.)

regular branch "Out West." Readers living there and who wish to join should get into touch with Roland A. Beacham, 67, Edgewood Avenue, Toronto. Meanwhile, the London secretary of this club, F. W. Minde, 100, Dalston Lane, London, E.8., will also be pleased to hear from readers anywhere.

More Members Wanted!

I AM asked to draw readers' attention to the fact that the Wellington Correspondence Club also desires new members. Anybody who wants to join this live wire club is advised immediately to apply to Alec Singleton, 18, Nelson

Square, Castle Croft, Egremont, Cumberland, who will be only too pleased to supply full particulars.

THE CHIEF OFFICER.

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED.

Stanley G. Pickering, 26, Markeaton Street, Derby, wants correspondents, especially those keen on cycling.

Miss Gwendoline Williams, 1, Barnaby Street, King's Road, Chelsea, S.W.10, wants girl correspondents.

W. Warner, 56, East Grove Road, St. Leonard's, Exeter, wants correspondents.

William Kirchen, 33, South Avenue, Buxton, Derbyshire, wants correspondents overseas—especially Japan and China.

Albert Haddenham, 4, Wigwam Lane, Hucknall, Notts, wants correspondents interested in St. John's Ambulance work.



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