

THE OUTSIDERS.

A GRAND YARN of St. FRANK'S

Introducing **NIPPER & TOMMY WATSON,**
SIR MONTIE TREGELLIS - WEST,
HANDFORTH & Co.,
THE BOYS
of **ROTtingham SCHOOL**
and their
EXTRAORDINARY MASTER
MR POTTS



And His Two Friends.



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THE OUTSIDERS

A Splendid Long Complete Yarn of School-boy Fun and Adventure at St. Frank's

INTRODUCING

Nipper & Co., Handforth & Co., Langley-Mostyn, and the Juniors of Rottingham School

By the author of "The Amazing Schoolboy,"
"The Master of the Remove," "The New
Boy's Secret," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

The Arrival of the Rottingham Fellows.

"We're not going to stand it!"

"We shall have to!"

"Rot!"

"Crowell's orders," said Nipper, the captain of the Remove Form at St. Frank's. "We can't disobey them!"

"Oh, can't we!" said Handforth. "We'll see about that!"

"Don't be an ass, Handy!"

"I'm not an ass!" said Handforth, with emphasis. "I'm showing some boss sense, and that's more than you can do! Crowell's orders, be blowed! For two pins I'd jolly well go and tell him what I think of them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A shriek of laughter went up from the group of Remove juniors gathered in the Hall of the Ancient House.

Handforth usually possessed any amount of cool cheek, but the idea of his telling Mr. Crowell, the Remove-master, what he thought of his orders seemed a little too thick, even for such a determined individual as Edward Oswald.

"I suppose if Crowell refuses to take any notice of your objections, you'll go and see the Head!" remarked Tommy Watson.

"Of course I shall!" declared Handforth. "Those Rottingham bounders are not coming here!"

"But they're on the way!" said Nipper, with a grin.

"Then they'll jolly well have to be sent back again!"

"Who's going to do the sending?"

"I will," said Handforth boldly, "if you chaps funk the job!"

A louder shriek than ever went up from the Remove juniors.

At that moment Reginald Pitt and Grey, the chums of Study E, arrived upon the scene.

"Hallo!" said Pitt. "What's the matter with Handy?"

"Oh, he's talking out of the back of his head, as usual!" said Nipper. "Says he's going to tell Crowell that he objects to the Rottingham fellows coming here."

"The Rottingham fellows coming here!" said Reginald Pitt, in surprise.

"Yes. Haven't you heard?"

"No. But——"

"You know Rottingham School; it's about ten miles from here."

"I believe I passed it on my bike a few weeks back," said Pitt. "Isn't it a school for orphans?"

"That's so," said Nipper. "Well, last night Rotttingham School was burnt to the ground. It's a wonder we didn't see the blaze. Of course, the fellows have got nowhere to go, so the Head's given permission for them to come here for a time, until other arrangements can be made."

"My hat!" gasped Pitt. "Where the merry dickens are we going to put them?"

"Crowell says we must manage somehow," said Nipper. "We shall be packed out a bit in the studies, but——"

"Oh, will we?" interposed Handforth indignantly. "I'm not going to be packed out for one! Why, the school's crowded out as it is! And how the dickens can we cram in another hundred or so?"

"There won't be a hundred of them," said Nipper. "In fact, I believe they've split them up so many to a school. River House has got some, and all the schools in the district have taken a number."

"Why couldn't they have sent us some Sixth-Formers?" said Handforth. "Then we shouldn't be bothered."

"It's unfortunate, Handy, old son," said Nipper, "but we're going to have some of the Fourth-Formers. I reckon it's jolly decent of the Head to offer to take them in, and it's up to us to give them a decent time."

"Supposing they are a lot of rotters like Fullwood & Co.?" said Handforth. "What are we going to do then?"

"Gin and bear it, I suppose!"

"Oh, rot—utter rot!" growled Handforth. "I'm going to see old Crowell, and——"

"Ahem!"

Handforth wheeled round quickly as he heard a deep-throated cough in his rear. And there, at the foot of the stairs, stood Mr. Crowell, the Remove-master, frowning portentously.

"Am I to understand from your remark, Handforth, that you wished to see me?" he asked quietly.

"Yes, sir," said Handforth. "We—er—that is, I think it would have been—er—better if some of the Sixth Form at Rotttingham had been sent here instead of the Fourth!"

"Indeed!" said the Remove-master. "But I fail to see what advantage that would have been."

"Well, I'm sure the Sixth would have been glad to have them," said Handforth. "As it is——"

"Do you infer that the Remove object to sheltering the Rotttingham boys for a time?" said Mr. Crowell.

"N-n-not exactly," faltered Handforth. "But we are somewhat crowded in the Remove, sir. There isn't a study without three fellows in it, and——"

"It will not hurt you to be crowded for a short time," said the Remove-master. "In any case, you must get on as best you can. I rely upon every boy in the Remove to make the visitors comfortable. You, too, Handforth, will do your share, and in future you will refer to me as Mr. Crowell, not old Crowell! A hundred lines will no doubt act as a reminder!"

With that the Remove-master strode out into the Triangle, leaving Handforth gasping.

"My hat!" exclaimed Nipper. "I have an idea that you've been told off, Handy!"

"Begad!" said Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "I reckon Handy got off frightfully easy!"

"Rot!" grunted Handforth. "You fellows don't know what

you're in for. For all you know these Rottingham fellows may be an awful lot of bouders. Suppose, for instance, they bung two idiots in my study like McClure and Church——"

"Who are you calling an idiot?" demanded McClure and Church in one voice.

"I suppose your names are still McClure and Church, aren't they?" demanded Handforth.

"Yes, and we've still got two fsts each!" said Arnold McClure. "If you're not a bit more polite, you'll soon feel them!"

"Look here——" began Handforth.

But he broke off abruptly as the discordant strains of some musical instrument or other came from outside the school.

"What the merry dickens is that row?" asked Nipper.

Blare! Bang! Snort!

The noise became louder, and the Remove juniors darted into the Triangle and dashed towards the gates.

They started down the lane, and the sight that met their gaze caused them to utter cries of astonishment.

They could plainly see marching towards them a number of juniors, some of whom held bugles to their mouths, whilst in the rear marched two or three fellows, banging away on kettle-drums.

The chief object of the musicians—if they could be termed such—seemed to be to make as much noise as possible.

The din was truly appalling.

"What ever are the silly idiots kicking up that row for?" remarked Nipper.

"Perhaps they're the Rottingham fellows," suggested Tommy Watson, "and they want to let us know they're coming."

"Well, they might have sent us a postcard instead of kicking up this frightful din!" said Nipper.

"Begad!" said Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "Do you really think they're the Rottingham fellows?"

"Who else can they be?"

Handforth snorted angrily.

"Look here," he said, "I'm jolly well going to rag the rotters!"

"Don't be silly!"

"But they've no right to come here kicking up that shindy!"

"Perhaps they're like you, Handy, and don't know any better!" suggested Nipper, with a grin. "You're not the only idiot in the world, remember!"

"Hallo! They've stopped!" exclaimed Church.

The newcomers had dropped their bugles to their sides about twenty yards from the gates of St. Frank's.

Next moment five of them went to one side of the road, and five to the other. Then they turned and faced each other.

"My giddy aunt!" said Tommy Watson. "It looks as though they're dotty! Why don't they come on, instead of standing there like a lot of lunatics?"

"Perhaps they are lunatics," said Handforth. "And just think of it! We've got to put up with them for—— My hat!"

Handforth's remarks concluded with an exclamation of surprise as an open carriage, drawn by six juniors, suddenly emerged from a side-turning some hundreds of yards or so distant.

"This beats the giddy band!" exclaimed Nipper. "I'm jolly well going to ask those duffers what the game is!"

With that Nipper rushed up to the juniors lined up so neatly at each side of the road.

The rest of the St. Frank's fellows quickly followed.

Nipper stood before a fair-haired, bright-looking youth.

"Look here," he said, "what are you fellows playing the fool like this for?"

The fair-haired junior looked somewhat uncomfortable, and glanced awkwardly at his chums.

"They're idiots—all of them!" said Handforth, with conviction. "They don't even know how to answer a simple question!"

"What are you chaps standing here for?" asked Nipper of the fair-haired junior.

"We—we're waiting for Mr. Langley-Mostyn," he said haltingly. "He's coming along now, and—"

"What! Is he dragging that blessed carriage?"

"N-n-no; he's in the carriage!"

"Great pip!" Nipper glanced down the road, and caught sight of a figure sprawled in the carriage. "And who the dickens is Mr. Langley-Mostyn—a master?"

"Nunno! He's in our Form at Nottingham, and—"

"In your Form?" gasped the St. Frank's juniors.

"Yes; he's our captain," said the fair-haired junior, "and— Oh, I say, don't let him see you talking to us! He'll be awfully wild, and—"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Nipper. "D'you mean to say you're doing all this to please your captain?"

"Yes; we have to do what Mr. Langley-Mostyn tells us!"

"What do you call him mister for?"

"He—he makes us, and—"

"My giddy aunt!" exclaimed Nipper. "I've never heard anything like this before! I suppose Langley-Mostyn is a sort of Kaiser junior, and—"

"Stand away, there!" came a shout from the juniors drawing the open carriage.

"Blessed sauce!" grunted Handforth. "Who do they think we are to stand aside and let them pass!"

"I say, you'd better!" said the fair-haired fellow. "Mr. Langley-Mostyn will be awfully wild, and—"

"Oh, will he!" said Handforth. "We'll see about that!"

Handforth stood his ground, as did most of the St. Frank's juniors.

"Stand aside!" came another shout.

The Removites did not shift. They waited; but next moment they were sent sprawling by the rush of the newcomers.

But the carriage did not travel much farther. As the two sets of juniors collided it rocked violently in the middle of the road, and finally came to a halt, with its sole occupant lying sprawling on the floor.

"My word!" gasped the fair-haired junior at the side of the road. "There will be a fearful row now!"

The St. Frank's fellows, looking extremely wrathful at the treatment that had been meted out to them, scrambled to their feet.

At the same moment the occupant of the carriage, his silk hat looking decidedly the worse for wear and forced down over his eyes, rose to his feet.

He was faultlessly dressed, and had a monocle hanging in front of his fancy waistcoat.

He dragged his hat from his head, and after flinging it down on the seat of the carriage, he fixed his monocle in his eye, and glared savagely at Nipper & Co.

"Bal Jove!" he drawled. "I've nevah been so badly treated in all my life! Perhaps you young fools will give an explanation of your behaviour!"

"My hat!" gasped the Removites.

"Perhaps you'll explain what you mean by your own ridiculous behaviour!" said Nipper.

"Boy," rapped out the newcomer, "do you know who I am?"

"Well, you remind me of a chap who's escaped from a lunatic asylum," said Nipper blandly.

"You insulting lot!" retorted the other. "I am Gerald Adolphus-Langley-Mostyn, and I'll trouble you to speak to me in a respectful mannah! D'you heah?"

The Removites fairly gasped with amazement. It was as much as they could do to utter:

"My hat!"

CHAPTER II.

Not Welcome.

"I'm going to smash that rotter!"

Edward Oswald Handforth was the first St. Frank's junior to recover his composure.

He gripped his hands hard, and strode towards the carriage, in which the lordly Gerald Adolphus was standing.

Two of Langley-Mostyn's supporters, however, stepped in between him and the carriage.

"Shouldn't advise you to tackle Mr. Langley-Mostyn," one of them said. "He's the best boxer in the school, and——"

"I don't care whether he's champion of England!" exclaimed Handforth. "We're jolly well not going to be insulted by an over-dressed dandy like him. I'll give him a thundering good hiding, and——"

"You be careful you don't get the hiding," said the Rottingham junior.

"Rot!" granted Handforth. He pushed the Rottingham juniors unceremoniously aside, and shook his fist at Langley-Mostyn. "Come out of that, you cad!" he shouted. "I'm going to jolly well smash you!"

Langley-Mostyn sniffed the air disdainfully, and screwed his monocle tighter into his eye.

"I refuse to have anythin' to do with such a low boundah as you!" he drawled. "Please stand away from my carriage, and I'll trouble you not to lay your dirtaw paws on the woodwork!"

"My hat! You—you——" faltered Handforth, flabbergasted.

"Stand away! D'you heah?" rapped out Langley-Mostyn.

"My giddy aunt!" exclaimed Handforth, his face red with rage. "I'll teach you to order me about! Come out of there, and put your fists up like a man!"

"I refuse to do anythin' of the kind!" said Gerald Adolphus languidly.

"Well, I'm going to drag you out!"

With that Handforth made a clutch at the handle of the door. But before he could drag it open, Langley-Mostyn had uttered a command.

"Keep that low cad away!" he exclaimed, with a gesture to his followers.

Next instant the Rottingham fellows rushed in a body at Handforth. The latter was grabbed by hands and legs and thrown to the ground.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Nipper indignantly. "We're not going to put up with this! Back up, you fellows!"

"What-ho!"

"Give the rotters beans!" sang out Nipper, dashing into the fray.

And the St. Frank's juniors promptly proceeded to carry out the command.

Thud! Smash! Thud!

There came the sound of fists meeting flesh, and the next moment a fierce tussle was taking place in the middle of the road.

There were about ten St. Frank's juniors to about fifteen

Rottingham fellows, but as several of the latter hung about on the fringe of the tussle, Nipper & Co. were able to hold their own.

It was noticeable that several of the juniors who had preceded the arrival of Langley-Mostyn were not at all anxious to take part in the fight.

They crept to the rear of the carriage, and cast nervous glances in the direction of their leader, fearful lest he should give them the order to join in the fray.

However, their fears were soon to be realised.

The fierce tussle soon turned in favour of Nipper & Co., and Langley-Mostyn did not look at all pleased.

"Thrash the rottahs!" he sang out. "Don't be afraid of them! Kick them! Do anythin' to—"

The Rottingham leader paused, and, glancing to the rear of the carriage, caught sight of at least half a dozen of his supporters.

"You beastly slackahs!" he roared. "I'll make you sit up for this! Get into it! D'you heah?"

The juniors certainly did hear, but they did not seem at all anxious to heed.

They crept slowly forward, and were just in time to meet a determined rush of Nipper & Co.

The latter carried all before them.

Thud, thud, thud!

The St. Frank's juniors hit out relentlessly, and very soon the Rottingham fellows were in recumbent positions on the ground.

Those who had managed to keep their feet were nursing bruised noses or damaged chins.

Langley-Mostyn stamped his feet in rage.

"Don't funk it, you fools!" he exclaimed. "Go for them! Don't lie theah like a lot of dummies! Barber, Berkley, Carter—get up, you cowards, and smash the rotters! D'you heah?"

But Barber & Co. had very little fight left in them. They did not move an inch to obey the command.

"Funks—cowards!" shouted Langley-Mostyn, his face red with temper. "I'll report you all to Mr. Potts for this! I'll see that you're punished! I'll—"

"You're going to be punished first, old bean!" exclaimed Handforth, striding towards the carriage.

"Don't talk to me, you impudent rottah!" said Langley-Mostyn.

"Are you coming out of there?"

"I refuse! I—"

"Lend a hand, you fellows!" sang out Handforth excitedly. "If this cad won't come out of his own free will, I'm jolly well going to tip him out!"

"Oh, rather!"

Nipper & Co. took hold of the wheels and shafts, whilst the colour ebbed from Langley-Mostyn's face as he realised what was about to happen.

"How dare you lay hands on my carriage!" he roared. "I'll report you for this! I'll—"

"Are you coming out quietly?" demanded Handforth.

"No. I—"

"Heave!" commanded Handforth.

And the Removites heaved with a will. Over went the carriage, and out shot the lordly Gerald Adolphus, to fall with a thud to the ground, and to roll slowly into the ditch at the side of the road.

The St. Frank's juniors moved away from the carriage, and gazed around them for sight of Langley-Mostyn.

"Where the merry dickens has he got to?" asked Nipper, a grin crossing his face.

"Begad!" said Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "I shouldn't be surprised if he's under the carriage, dear old boy!"

"Better lift it up and see," said Nipper.

The carriage was quickly raised once again, but there was no sign of the lordly one underneath.

Next instant, however, a series of dismal groans came from the ditch at the side of the road.

Then a shriek of laughter went up from Nipper & Co. as a head, smothered with mud and weeds and slime, emerged from the ditch, to be followed by the rest of the body of the lordly Gerald Adolphus Langley-Mostyn.

But Gerald Adolphus had lost his lordly appearance.

In fact, he looked a most disreputable sight. There was barely a square inch of his body that was not covered with mud and weeds.

He clambered to the top of the ditch, and shook himself like a dog.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tommy Watson. "Isn't he a lovely sight!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take your portrait, sir?" volunteered Reginald humorously. "If you care to wait a moment whilst I pop in for my camera——"

"I'll make you rotters suffer for this! Yaroooooh!" spluttered Langley-Mostyn. "I'll—groooh!—report you to the—yooooop!—police!"

"Report away, old bean!" chuckled Handforth. "We don't—Here, keep away from me! I don't want any of that filthy mud dropped on me!"

"I'll smash you for this!" roared Langley-Mostyn. "I'll give you the hidin' of your— Yooooop!"

A lump of mud slithered down the dandy's face and slipped into his mouth, causing him to splutter frantically.

The St. Frank's juniors roared with laughter.

A few of the Rottingham fellows were grinning, but the majority of them were looking deadly serious.

The fair-haired junior who had been the first to enlighten the Removites on the character of Langley-Mostyn stepped forward and touched Nipper on the arm.

"I say," he said quietly, "I do wish you fellows would stop. You don't realise the trouble Mr. Langley-Mostyn will make for you! He's an absolute terror, and——"

"My dear chap," said Nipper, smiling, "we're not afraid of him, or a dozen like him!"

"But you don't understand——"

"Yes, we do, old son," said Nipper. "We understand that your beautiful Langley-Mostyn is a miniature Kaiser. He wants taking down a peg or two, and we're the chaps to do it!"

"But——"

The fair-haired junior's protest was cut off abruptly, for at that moment the gowned figure of Dr. Stafford, the Head of St. Frank's, emerged from the gateway.

The Head frowned seriously as he observed the figures in the road.

Next instant he strode quickly towards the scene of the tussle, and started with astonishment as he caught sight of Langley-Mostyn.

"What—what— Bless my soul!" he gasped. "However did this boy get in that state? And—and——" He paused as his gaze lighted on the overturned carriage. "Has there been an accident?" he asked.

"Ahem!" coughed the Removites.

"Accident be hanged!" roared Langley-Mostyn. "I have been

handled in a most disgraceful mannah by these young hooligans. They had the audacity to overturn my carriage and pitch me into that filthy ditch!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Dr. Stafford. "But—but where is the horse?"

"There was no horse!" exclaimed Langley-Mostyn. "It was drawn by these boys!" He waved his hand in the direction of the Nottingham juniors, who were looking decidedly nervous and uncomfortable. "They were drawn' my carriage up to the school when these young hooligans set upon them!"

"Indeed!"

"Not satisfied with bruising boys younger than themselves," went on Langley-Mostyn, "they overturned my carriage and precipitated me—me, mind you—into the ditch. I have nevah been handled so roughly before, and I insist that every one of them is soundly thrashed!"

The Head looked very stern as he faced Nipper & Co.

"Is this boy's statement true?" he demanded.

The Removites made no reply, save to turn contemptuous glances in the direction of Langley-Mostyn.

As Handforth remarked afterwards, he felt at that moment as though he could have flung the lordly one into the ditch again.

Dr. Stafford coughed.

"I presume you boys are from Nottingham?" he said.

"Yes," said Langley-Mostyn quickly. "I am captain of the Form, and I demand that this mattah is inquired into. Unless these hooligans are punished sufficiently I shall report the mattah to the police!"

"Boy!" The Head looked sterner than ever. "Do you realise that you are speaking to the headmaster of St. Frank's?"

Langley-Mostyn was not in the least perturbed.

"I am aware of that," he said coolly. "And therefore it is your duty to inquire into this mattah!"

"I will certainly do so," said Dr. Stafford. "You had better make your way to the Remove dormitory, and change into clean clothes. You Remove juniors will report to me in my study in half an hour. Meanwhile you will look after these Nottingham boys, and if there are any further disagreements I shall be compelled to punish the delinquents most severely!"

Two or three of the Nottingham fellows moved towards the carriage with the intention of setting it upon its wheels.

Dr. Stafford waved them away.

"You may leave that carriage where it is," he said. "I will give instructions for it to be attended to. You may all enter the school!"

The juniors set off towards St. Frank's, Nipper & Co. remaining in a group.

They were not at all eager to commence the task of looking after the boys from Nottingham.

CHAPTER III.

Langley-Mostyn's Triumph.

"Cads!"

"Rotters!"

"Rank outsiders!"

The St. Frank's juniors were loud in their condemnation of the boys from Nottingham.

At least a dozen Removites were grouped together in the Hall, airing their grievances in a very forceful manner.

"I told you what they would be like!" said Handforth, with indignation. "That chap Langley-Mostyn is the rankest outsider I've

ever met, and the rest of the gang are either cads or utter cowards!"

"Well, I must say they're not a choice lot," admitted Nipper. "But we shall have a nice little job to tame them down!"

"Begad!" said Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "I can't say I'm frightfully keen on taking on such a job, dear old boy!"

"I reckon the cads ought to be bundled neck and crop out of St. Frank's," said Handforth. "In fact, they shouldn't have been allowed to come here. The Head ought to be ashamed of himself for taking them in. There isn't one decent chap amongst them."

"I don't know," said Nipper. "That fair-haired kid I spoke to first didn't seem at all bad, and— Hallo, here he comes!"

The junior in question entered the Hall, followed by two other fellows.

They stopped in the doorway, and seemed half-inclined to turn back as they caught sight of the Removites.

But the fair-haired junior appeared to pluck up courage, and stepped forward.

"I am sorry to interrupt you fellows," he said; "but—"

"Buzz off!" exclaimed Handforth. "We don't want to have anything to do with you cads!"

"Be quiet, Handy!" said Nipper.

"Shan't!" snapped Handforth. "The cads have no right to be here! Let them go back where they came from!"

The fair-haired junior reddened, but still he stood his ground.

"I—I say," he faltered, "I'm awfully sorry for what happened just now, but—"

"What's the good of being sorry now?" demanded Handforth.

"Shut up, Handy!" said Nipper. "Now, what is it, kid? You needn't take any notice of Handforth! He's often taken like this!"

"I know it's cheek on my part to talk to you fellows after what has happened," said the Nottingham junior. "But I am sorry—jolly sorry! If I could have prevented that scene I would have done so!"

"Why, you didn't even try!" snapped Handforth.

"I couldn't—in fact, I daren't!" said the fair-haired junior.

"That rotter Langley-Mostyn would have had his revenge on me!"

"What rot!" said Handforth. "You're not frightened of the cad, are you?"

"Well—er—I suppose I am a bit frightened," admitted the Nottingham fellow. "And so would you be if you were in my position. Look here, I'll explain the position to you!"

"Go ahead!" said Nipper.

"First of all, I might tell you that my name is Bob Weston," said the Nottingham junior. "These two chaps here are my chums, Hope and Davis. I'd like you to understand that we're not supporters of that bully, Langley-Mostyn."

"That's worth knowing," said Handforth.

"As no doubt many of you know," went on Bob Weston, "Nottingham is a school for orphans, and therefore most of us have very little money."

"D'you mean to say that that rotter Langley Mostyn has no money?" demanded Handforth.

Bob Weston grinned ruefully.

"He's the one exception," he explained. "Langley-Mostyn has pots of money, and it licks me how he ever got into the school. The fact remains that he's there, and it's his money that's obtained for him the position of captain of the Fourth. He simply buys his support, and fellows like Barber, Berkley, and Carter will do anything for him, providing he pays them well enough!"

"The rotters!" grunted Handforth.

"They're not the only ones," said Bob Weston glumly. "He's got about a dozen supporters altogether, and they toady to him for all they're worth, so as to get some of his money!"

"But you've got some supporters, haven't you?" said Handforth.

"Yes; about ten."

"Well, why can't you band together and knock the stuffing out of Langley-Mostyn and his gang?"

Bob Weston shook his head sadly.

"That's impossible," he said. "For one thing, Langley-Mostyn is the best boxer in the Form, and there isn't a fellow who can touch him with the gloves. He's simply got to threaten a chap with his fists, and he has to do as he's told. Oh dear! You don't know that cad! He makes us call him 'sir,' and address him as Mr. Langley-Mostyn, and he even makes us wait on him!"

"The utter rotter!" exclaimed Nipper indignantly. "But surely you can appeal to the masters!"

"I wish we could!" said Bob Weston. "But here again we're up against it. Potts—he's our Form-master—is as thick with Langley-Mostyn as he possibly could be. To tell you the truth, I shouldn't be surprised if Langley-Mostyn gives him money occasionally. We daren't say anything to him about the rotter, for he won't listen to a word against him!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Nipper in amazement. "I didn't know this sort of thing would occur at any school!"

"Well, now perhaps you'll understand our position this afternoon," said Bob Weston.

"I jolly well do," said Nipper, "and I'm sorry for you chaps. But I tell you this—we'll take that rotter Langley-Mostyn in hand if he stays here for long, and I shall be jolly surprised if we don't knock some of the stuffing out of him!"

"What-ho!" said Handforth. "As soon as I set eyes on him again I'll—"

Handforth paused as Fenton of the Sixth came down the stairs.

"You Remove fellows are to go straight to Dr. Stafford's study!" he said.

"Right-ho, Fenton!" said Nipper cheerily. "Is the Head in a wax?"

"You'll know very soon!" said Fenton non-committally. "But I advise you not to hang about!"

"Come on, you fellows!" said Nipper. "We'd better go and get it over!"

The Removites made their way to the Head's study.

Nipper tapped on the door.

"Come in!"

The Removites entered Dr. Stafford's study with Nipper at their head, to find that the lordly Langley-Mostyn, once again in immaculate attire, standing in the centre of the room, with a cynical grin on his face.

The Head was seated at his desk, whilst at his side stood a very thin-faced man, whose features bore a smooth, oily expression, and whose thin, pointed nose was no less prominent than his grey, spiteful-looking eyes.

Needless to say, this individual did not impress the Removites at all favourably.

"I have sent for you boys," said Dr. Stafford, "as I wish to inquire further into the disturbance which took place in the road this afternoon. I am given to understand that you deliberately attacked this boy, Langley-Mostyn, and that, in spite of the fact that he pleaded with you to desist, you precipitated him into the ditch! Is that true?"

"Ahem!" coughed the Removites.

Nipper & Co. could see that Langley-Mostyn had told a very convincing story, but their code of honour prevented them from disturbing the true facts of the disturbance.

"I am waiting for your answer!" said Dr. Stafford.

There was no reply.

"Very well," said the Head. "I conclude that this boy's statements are perfectly true!"

"Of course they're true!" said the Nottingham junior.

"Oh, yes, Dr. Stafford!" said the smooth-faced individual, rubbing his hands together. "You can rely upon the truthful nature of Langley-Mostyn's statements. A more truthful boy I have never met! He is always just to his enemies. He——"

"Thank you, Mr. Potts!" said Dr. Stafford, with a gesture. "You have told me sufficient concerning Langley-Mostyn's character." The Head turned to the Removites. "I am surprised at you!" he said severely. "I consider you should have done your utmost to give the boys from Nottingham a hearty welcome! I am always willing to make allowances for high-spirited behaviour, but your conduct this afternoon cannot be excused! You will each do me two hundred lines!"

"Oh, I say!" protested Langley-Mostyn. "Aren't you goin' to cane them?"

"Yes, Dr. Stafford," said Mr. Potts meekly; "the punishment is far too lenient! I really consider that each delinquent should be soundly thrashed!"

The Head fixed a steely look on the Nottingham master.

"I am quite capable of administering adequate punishment to the boys under my charge!" he said coldly. "I should therefore esteem it a favour if you would refrain from offering advice! You boys may go!"

Nipper & Co. took their departure, each one of them simply boiling with indignation.

"The rank outsider!" exclaimed Nipper, as they reached the end of the passage. "I bet he told the Head some cock-and-bull story!"

"My hat! Wouldn't I like to smash the rotter!" said Handforth.

"And wouldn't I like to dot that bouncer Potts on the nose!" said Tommy Watson. "The oily old rotter! He wants boiling in oil, and——"

"Does he, really?"

The Removites started as they heard a meek voice in their rear—the voice of Mr. Potts. They turned round quickly, to find the Nottingham master standing before them, rubbing his hands in the same irritating way as he had done in the Head's study.

Nipper & Co. were too flabbergasted by Mr. Potts' sudden appearance to make any reply. It seemed almost impossible to them that he had crept towards them without being heard, but that was exactly what had happened.

"May I trouble you to follow me to Dr. Stafford's study?" said Mr. Potts, with exceptional politeness.

"But—but you're not our master!" protested Handforth. "You've no right to order us about!"

"I do not order you," said Mr. Potts suavely. "I merely ask you to follow me to Dr. Stafford's study. I am sure— Ah, here comes Dr. Stafford!"

The Head came striding towards the scene.

"Excuse me bothering you once again, Dr. Stafford," said Mr. Potts, "but I think it necessary for me to inform you that these young—er—gentlemen were talking about me in a most disrespectful manner! This boy here"—he indicated Tommy Watson—"made

the statement that I was an oily old rotter, whilst he even suggested that I required boiling in oil! These two boys"—he pointed to Nipper and Handforth—"referred to Langley-Mostyn as a rank outsider, and expressed the desire to smash him. I think you will agree with me that, although I am a stranger to them, they had no right to insult me in such a gross manner!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head. "Have you boys any answer to this charge?"

Nipper & Co. made no reply. They were inwardly seething with anger.

"Very well," said Dr. Stafford. "I conclude that Mr. Potts' statements are perfectly true, and once again you have disgraced yourselves and your school! Nipper, Handforth, and Watson, you will go to my study and await my return!"

Nipper & Co. went.

And five minutes later the three juniors were going through a trying time. The Head could lay it on very hard when the occasion demanded, and he probably considered the present occasion suitable for the administering of a severe punishment, for each of the Removites received the soundest wiggling he had had for many a long day.

CHAPTER IV. An Absolute Bounder.

"We'll make things so hot for them that they'll be jolly glad to clear out of the school!" said Nipper, as he was talking over things with his chums next day.

"We'll make that cad Langley-Mostyn sit up, at any rate," said Handforth, with determination. "He's the worst rotter I've ever come across!"

And the rest of the Remove concurred readily with:

"Hear, hear!"

At least a dozen juniors were gathered in the Common-room at St. Frank's, and each one of them was looking extremely indignant.

"Well, we'll take the rotters in hand to-morrow," said Nipper. "The Head can say what he likes about making things pleasant for the cads, but—"

"Begad!" drawled Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "I'm thinkin' that things will be frightfully unpleasant, dear old boy!"

"They will," said Handforth. "And I vote we start making things unpleasant for them at once!"

"Can't do it now," said Nipper. "The cads are with old Crowell, who's arranging about the studies they're to share. We'll tackle them to-morrow!"

"Why not wait for them, and—"

"My dear Handy," said Nipper, "I've got some prep to do, and so have you. Unless you want a row with Crowell to-morrow, you'll take my advice, and get on with it!"

Handforth grunted and followed Nipper & Co. in the direction of the Fourth Form passage.

They did not meet one of the Rottingham juniors on the way; no doubt Mr. Crowell was detaining them.

Nipper and his chums, Sir Montie Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson, entered Study C, and a few moments later were engaged in doing their prep.

It was not long, however, before footsteps were heard in the passage, and Nipper & Co. gave one another meaning glances.

"Here come the Rottingham cads!" said Nipper.

"Well, all I hope is that they don't put that rotter Langley-Mostyn in here!" said Tommy Watson. "I wouldn't object to that kid, Weston, and his pals!"

"Hear, hear!" said Nipper. "They didn't seem at all bad, but—"

Nipper paused, as voices could be plainly heard outside the study.

Next moment the door opened, and in strode Mr. Crowell, the Remove-master. Behind him stood a number of Nottingham fellows amongst whom was the lordly Langley-Mostyn.

"Ahem!" coughed Mr. Crowell. "I suppose you boys are aware that the Fourth Form at Nottingham School, which was burned down in the night, is staying here for a time?"

"Yes, sir," said Nipper & Co. politely.

"Well, Dr. Stafford has decided that each study shall take at least two of the Nottingham boys," went on the Remove-master. "This room is one of the largest in the Remove, and, therefore, I am putting three boys in here." Mr. Crowell referred to a slip of paper. "Langley-Mostyn, Berkley, and Barber will share this study."

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Nipper.

"Oh dear!" sighed Tommy Watson.

"I trust," said Mr. Crowell, turning to the Remove juniors, "you will do your best to make these boys comfortable. You may be a little overcrowded, but I am sure you will not mind a little inconvenience until other arrangements can be made for sheltering the Nottingham boys."

With that Mr. Crowell took his departure, leaving Nipper & Co. staring blankly before them.

Langley-Mostyn fixed his monocle into his eye, and, stepping into the study, gazed around.

"Bai Jove!" he drawled. "That old buffer was right when he said we should be ovaherowed. Why, there isn't enough room here to swing a cat round!"

"Poky little hole!" sniffed Berkley. "Why the dickens couldn't they have sent us to a decent school? It's a perfect disgrace that they should expect you, Mr. Langley-Mostyn, to be cooped up like this!"

"Hear, hear!" agreed Barber. "Why don't you complain, Mr. Langley-Mortyn?"

Langley-Mostyn sniffed disdainfully.

"Tisn't worth it," he said. "I guess there are othah means of makin' oneself comfortable—what! Don't think much of this beastly chair!"

Langley-Mostyn sat down in the easy-chair, whilst Nipper & Co. fixed indignant glances on him.

"Pah!" said the Nottingham leader. "I don't think much of this!"

"You needn't sit in it!" said Nipper blandly.

Langley-Mostyn looked up sharply.

"Bai Jove!" he exclaimed. "I must sit somewheah!"

"There are several other chairs in the study!"

"What!" cried Langley-Mostyn. "Do you think I'm goin' to sit on those beastly wooden affairs? I must have somethin' comfortable. This thing will do for to-night. I'll get a new one to-morrow. In fact, you might get it, Berkley."

"Yes, Mr. Langley-Mostyn," said Berkley civilly. "Is there anything we can do for you now?"

"Yaas," said the Nottingham leader languidly. "Fetch Woods, and Baker, and Matthews. You'll find them in one of the rabbit-hutches along the passage."

Berkley darted off in search of the three juniors. He returned with them in a few moments, and, to judge by the meek expressions on the faces of Woods & Co. when they entered Study C, they were not at all pleased with the summons.

Langley-Mostyn gave them a sharp look.

"Why haven't you been along before to know if I wanted anythin'?" he demanded.

"We—we didn't think!" faltered Woods.

"Pah! You nevah do!" said Langley-Mostyn. "I shall have to ask Mr. Potts to give you a hundred lines each. Now get me somethin' to eat!"

"Wh-where are we to get it from, Mr. Langley-Mostyn?" asked Woods meekly.

"How the dickens do you expect me to know?" snapped the Nottingham leader. "I've had nothin' to eat since we left Nottingham, and I'm jolly hungry!"

"Supper will be ready in another hour," said Nipper.

"Anothah hour!" grunted Langley-Mostyn. "I can't wait all that time. I must have somethin' now. You kids can get somethin' from the tuckshop. D'you hear?"

"What about the money, Mr. Langley-Mostyn?"

"Bai Jove!" Langley-Mostyn pulled a wallet from his pocket, and opened it, to reveal a wad of notes. "You kids are always wantin' money! Here, take this ten-bob note, and get me a decent spread!"

"Yes, Mr. Langley-Mostyn!"

"I'm afraid you'll have to wait for your spread," said Nipper. "The tuckshop's closed!"

"Oh, hang!" growled the Nottingham leader. "What the merry dickens am I to do?"

"You'll have to wait till supper-time!"

Langley-Mostyn fixed his monocle tighter into his eye, and stared hard at Nipper.

"I refuse to do anythin' of the kind," he said. "When I want anythin' I usually get it. It might be just as well for you to undahstand that. You will go down to the tuckshop, Woods, and demand to be served!"

"But—but supposing they won't serve me?"

"Then help yourself," said Langley-Mostyn. "The tuckshop has no right to be closed at this time of night. Hurry along, and don't keep me waitin'. You heah?"

Woods & Co. walked slowly out of the room.

"You might just as well have saved the kids the trouble of going downstairs," said Nipper. "The tuckshop's closed, and they won't get served!"

"They'll have to get served!"

"You silly ass!" said Nipper disdainfully. "Don't you understand that if the shop's closed they can't get served?"

"Well, it will be a bad look out for them if they come back without anythin'," said Langley-Mostyn, with a cynical grin. "They've got to obey orders, or else I'll know the reason why."

"Why should they obey your orders?" demanded Nipper.

Langley-Mostyn gave the Remove captain a sharp look.

"Don't you understand that I am Gerald Adolphus Langley-Mostyn?" he asked.

"I don't care who the dickens you are," said Nipper. "You've no right to make servants of those kids!"

"Pah!" said the lordly junior, with a gesture. "There isn't a kid at Nottingham who has a penny to bless himself with. They're all a lot of paupers, and—"

"All the more reason why you should treat them decently!"

"Bosh!" sniffed Langley-Mostyn. "I pay them for what they do for me."

"I expect they would rather be without your money," said Tommy Watson.

Langley-Mostyn grinned in a sickly manner.

"Don't you believe it," he said. "You're always pleased when I give you money, aren't you, Berkley?"

"Yes, Mr. Langley-Mostyn!"

"I always pay you for what you do for me?"

"Oh, rather!"

"There you are!" said Langley-Mostyn. "There's nothing stingy about me! Everybody who does somethin' for me gets paid well. If at any time you fellahs care to do somethin' for me, I'll pay you handsomely."

Nipper's eyes blazed.

"You utter cad!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"What?"

"If you ever suggest giving us money," said Nipper hotly, "we'll jolly well duck you in the fountain!"

"Hear, hear!" agreed Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West.

"Pah!" said the Nottingham leader. "Paupers always talk like that! I don't suppose one of you could show a tanner. Look here, I don't quite like the idea of being cooped up here! Suppose I buy this study from you?"

"Don't talk rot!"

"I'll give you ten pounds for it."

"Booh!"

"Twenty!"

"Look here!" said Nipper. "You're going the right way to get that ducking!"

Langley-Mostyn sniffed, and picked up the poker from the fender.

"Why, the stuff in this blessed room isn't worth havin'!" said he. "It's only a lot of rubbish. The bookcase is almost fallin' to pieces, the chairs are as rickety as they can be, and look at those blessed ornaments!"

Langley-Mostyn pointed to the mantelpiece, on which rested several vases.

"You keep that poker away from there!" said Nipper.

"What? Afraid that I might break one or two!" said the Nottingham captain. "Bai Jove, I'm hanged if I don't!"

Crash!

The poker came into contact with a vase, with the result that the ornament fell to the fireplace and broke into a hundred pieces.

"My hat!" exclaimed Nipper. "We're not going to put up with this! What do you mean by it, you cad?"

"Want another one broken?" said Langley-Mostyn.

Crash! Another ornament fell to the fireplace.

"Collar the rotter!" exclaimed Nipper angrily. "Bump him for all you're worth!"

Before Langley-Mostyn realised what was happening, he was grasped by three indignant juniors, who bundled him out of the chair on to the floor.

"Ow! Help, Berkley! Grooogh! Help!" spluttered the lordly one.

But Berkley had no chance of going to the rescue. A straight left from Tommy Watson landed him on his back. Barber was about to go to his leader's assistance, but the sight of Tommy Watson's clenched fists caused him to draw back.

"Now bump the rotter!" sang out Nipper excitedly.

Bump!

"Yow-ow! I'll make you suffah for—yarooogh!—this!" shrieked Langley-Mostyn. "I'll— Yoooooop!"

"And again!"

Bump! Bump!

"Dear me! Whatever is the meaning of this disgraceful behaviour?"

Nipper & Co. looked up as they heard a voice in the doorway. "My hat!" exclaimed Tommy Watson. "It's old Potts!" "Yes, it is I," said the Nottingham master. "I demand to know why you are bullying that poor fellow! I demand, too, to know what right you have to refer to me as old Potts!"

CHAPTER V. Another Injustice!

Nipper & Co. could not do more than gasp. Mr. Potts rubbed his hands together, and smiled at them in a most sickly manner.

"I am waiting for your answer," he said. "Perhaps, however you are somewhat ashamed of yourselves, and would prefer not to explain."

"Not at all," said Nipper. "We——"
"Don't you listen to the young hooligans, Mr. Potts!" exclaimed Langley-Mostyn, rising to his feet. "They'll only tell you a pack of lies! I'm jolly glad you came in when you did, othahwise they might have done me a very serious injury!"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Potts, his little eyes glinting evilly.
"Just because I was put into this study by old Crowell——"
"Mr. Crowell, if you please!" said Nipper sharply.
"I was not talkin' to you, you cad!" said Langley-Mostyn savagely. "You speak when you're spoken to!"
Nipper's face flushed with anger, and he gripped his hands hard. If Langley-Mostyn had been wise he would have kept a silent tongue.

"As I was sayin', Mr. Potts," he went on, failing to observe impending danger in Nipper's expression. "These young hooligans didn't like my bein' put into this beastly room! Without any provocation at all——"

"Don't tell lies!" exclaimed Nipper indignantly.
"There you are, Mr. Potts!" said Langley-Mostyn. "You see the type of fellows they are. I am sure you can quite undahstand what I have had to put up with. I feel that they ought to be severely punished for——"

"They shall be punished—most severely!" said Mr. Potts. "It is not fair that you boys should be treated so disgracefully. I will see Dr. Stafford, and give instructions for your tormentors to be soundly thrashed!"

Langley-Mostyn fixed his monocle tighter into his eye, and gave the Removites a triumphant sneer.

"I'm sorry for you young fools!" he said. "But you've only got yourselves to blame, you know! If——"

"Why don't you tell the truth?" demanded Nipper.
"My dear old idiot," said Langley-Mostyn irritatingly. "I've told the beastly truth! Do you think I could tell a lie?"
"You've told nothing but lies!" said Nipper.

Langley-Mostyn turned to the Nottingham master.
"Do you heah that, Mr. Potts?" he said. "They're provin' themselves to be worse hooligans than ever, aren't they? They—— Ow! Stoppit! Wow-ow-ow!"

Unable to restrain himself any longer, Nipper had driven his fist into Langley-Mostyn's face.

The latter reeled backwards, but next instant his monocle fell from his eye, and he turned a face full of rage towards Nipper.

"You young hooligan!" he roared. "You've struck me! I'll make you suffer for this! I'll give you the hidin' of your life!"

Next instant the Nottingham leader rushed at Nipper, but Nipper was ready for him. He met the Nottingham leader with a straight left, and there was a loud yell from Langley-Mostyn as his nose came into contact with the Remove captain's knuckles.

"Dear me! This must stop!" said Mr. Potts, who did not like the situation in the least.

"It shall stop!"

The juniors turned round quickly, and, to their amazement, they saw the figure of Mr. Crowell, the Remove-master, in the doorway. For once in a way, Mr. Crowell was looking very severe.

"Perhaps it is fortunate that I happened to glance into this room," he said. "I am amazed to find a bout of fisticuffs taking place in the presence of a master!"

Mr. Potts coloured slightly. Mr. Crowell's inference was not lost upon him.

"You do not understand, Mr. Crowell," said the Nottingham master haltingly. "I had no chance of stopping the fight. This boy here"—he indicated Nipper—"is entirely to blame!"

"But I saw Langley-Mostyn make a rush at Nipper," said Mr. Crowell.

"Ah, yes!" Mr. Potts grinned in a sickly manner. "That was after Nipper had struck the first blow. You cannot expect any boy to take a blow in the face without retaliating. Moreover, Langley-Mostyn had been badly treated before then. I came into this room to find your boys holding him down on the floor, and bumping him in a most dangerous manner!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Crowell, looking severely at Nipper & Co. "I fail to understand why there should be so much disturbance. I have already settled an argument in Study D, and—"

"Good old Handy!" muttered Nipper.

"Nipper!" exclaimed Mr. Crowell. "You have no right to praise Handforth. He was entirely to blame for the disturbance! I presume, too, that you are to blame for the disturbance in this study. Have you anything to say?"

Once again Nipper & Co. could not exonerate themselves, excepting by "splitting" on the lordly Langley-Mostyn.

"Very well," said Mr. Crowell, "you will each do me two hundred lines!"

"I say, aren't you goin' to thrash them?" demanded Langley-Mostyn.

"Yes, I really think they deserve a thrashing, Mr. Crowell!" said Mr. Potts. "Do you think—"

"I do not require any assistance in the administering of punishment to my own pupils!" said the Remove-master bluntly.

Clang! Clang!

"That is the bell for supper, Mr. Potts," said the Remove-master. "I have arranged for a special table to be set apart for your boys."

"Thank you!" said Mr. Potts brusquely.

With that Mr. Crowell took his departure, followed by Mr. Potts and the three Nottingham juniors.

CHAPTER VI.

An Interrupted Feast—And Its Sequel.

"Bal Jove! Have I got to sleep in beah?"

It was Langley-Mostyn who asked the question as he gazed round the Remove dormitory.

Fresh beds had been placed in the room to accommodate the Nottingham fellows, and there was no doubt that the dormitory bore an overcrowded appearance.

Some of the Nottingham juniors had been put in the Third Form dormitory; but at least ten, including Langley-Mostyn and his satellites, had been booked for the Remove dormitory.

Mr. Crowell, on whom had fallen the task of seeing the Nottingham fellows to their sleeping quarters, gave Langley-Mostyn a sharp look.

"Of course, you have to sleep here," he said.

"But, the idea!" said Langley-Mostyn. "There are about thirty beds in heah! The room is ovahcrowded, and——"

"I am aware of that," said Mr. Crowell coldly. "The St. Frank's boys are willing to put up with the inconvenience, and you must do the same. Now, let me hear no disturbance in this dormitory to-night, otherwise I shall be compelled to punish the delinquents most severely."

"Bai Jove!" said Langley-Mostyn, as Mr. Crowell took his departure. "This is intolerable! I cannot think of sleepin' in such an ovahcrowded room!"

"There's plenty of room on the roof!" suggested De Valerie.

"And there might be a few inches to spare in the cellars!" added Hart.

There was a roar of laughter from the Removites.

Langley-Mostyn sniffed the air disdainfully.

"I suppose I shall have to put up with it," he said. "But I shall lodge a complaint in the mornin'. I'll see that an alteration is made!"

"Yes, there'll be an alteration made to your face, if you're not careful!" muttered Handforth, as he started to undress.

Langley-Mostyn did not hear the remark, however. He fixed his gaze on Berkley, his leading satellite.

"Did you bring that hampah up?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Langley-Mostyn!" said the subservient Berkley.

"Are you going to have that feed?"

"Of course," said the Rottingham leader.

There was a buzz of conversation amongst the Rottingham juniors, as they hurriedly undressed. Evidently the prospect of a feed supplied by their lordly leader greatly appealed to them.

It was not long before the two sets of juniors were in bed, but soon after Fenton of the Sixth had turned out the light Berkley jumped out of bed, and, placing a candle on the washstand, applied a match to the wick.

Several of the Removites watched him in surprise as he took the pillows and bolsters from several of the Rottingham fellows' beds, and placed them in a neat heap by the side of the washstand.

"Ready!" said Berkley softly; and at the word the Rottingham juniors, with the exception of Bob Weston and his chums—Davis and Hope—stepped out of bed, and formed themselves up in two lines, with the pile of pillows at the end.

A moment later Langley-Mostyn walked slowly between the two lines of juniors, and sat down on the pillows.

"My giddy aunt!" exclaimed Nipper, who had witnessed the scene. "Anybody would think that that cad was some Eastern potentate by the way he behaves!"

"It's all a lot of rot!" growled Handforth. "Those kids ought to be jolly well ashamed of themselves!"

"Now, are we all heah?" drawled Langley-Mostyn, gazing around. "H'm! I cannot see Weston, Hope, and Davis. D'you heah? If you do not take your position before I count ten, I shall have to report you to Mr. Potts!"

The threat was sufficient. The three juniors unwillingly tacked themselves at the end of the line.

"You may sit down," said Langley-Mostyn. "And you, Berkley, will bring forth the hampah!"

Berkley promptly obeyed the order, and placed the hamper at the feet of his leader. Langley-Mostyn cut the cords, and spread the contents of the hamper on the floor.

The eyes of Fatty Little, of the Remove, glistened as he saw the array of eatables, and, much as he would have liked to have joined in the feast, Fatty had too much dignity to accept hospitality from such a rank outsider as Langley-Mostyn.

Teddy Long, the sneak of the Remove, was feeling the same longing as Fatty Little, and was hoping to receive an invitation to the feast.

Langley-Mostyn dug his monocle into his eye, and surveyed the row of beds occupied by the Removites.

"If any of you St. Frank's kids care to come to my feast, I guess you're welcome," he said. I— Hallo! What do you want, young Dalton?"

"Please can I have some tarts?" said a meek Nottingham junior.

"That's not the way to ask for them!" snapped Langley-Mostyn.

"Please, Mr. Langley-Mostyn, can I have some tarts?" asked Dalton.

"Yes, but you'll only have two for not askin' properly the first time," said Langley-Mostyn. "Now, then, you St. Frank's kids, hurry up if you're comin'!"

Teddy Long slipped quickly out of bed, and joined the feasters. Merrell, Little, and Hubbard followed slowly.

"No more coming!" said Langley-Mostyn gazing around. "Oh, well, all the more for us! Now, you fellows, you've only got to ask for what you want, and I'll pass it along!"

"Right-ho!" said Merrell. "I reckon I'll have some meringues and a glass of that currant-wine!"

"Well, if you ask properly you shall have it!" said Langley-Mostyn.

"Futhead!" said Merrell. "I have asked for them!"

"Yes, but you forget somethin'," said the Nottingham leader.

"Now, you listen to this kid! Would you like some cake, Wiggins?"

"Please, Mr. Langley-Mostyn!"

"See what I mean?" said Langley-Mostyn, turning to Merrell.

Merrell glared.

"D'you mean to say that you want me to address you as mister?" he demanded.

"Most decidedly."

"I'll see you hanged first!" said Merrell. "You can keep your blessed feed! I'm going back to bed. Come on, you fellows!"

Hubbard and Little followed Merrell's example. Teddy Long, however, remained seated.

"Please, Mr. Langley-Mostyn, can I have some meringues?" he asked.

"Stop that, Long, you silly chump!" sang out Handforth.

"Mind your own business!" snapped the cad of the Remove.

"You're not to address that outsider as mister," said Handforth.

"I shall do what I like," said Teddy Long independently.

"Please, Mr. Langley-Mostyn, would you mind if I had some currant-wine?"

"Help yourself!"

Teddy Long did as he was bid. All the same, he was only able to take a couple of sips at the wine, before the glass was knocked out of his hand by Handforth.

"That's enough of it!" said the leader of Study D. "We're not going to allow you to disgrace the Form. Get back to bed!"

"Leggo my arm, you silly idiot!" shouted Teddy Long. "I shall please myself what I do!"

"You're going to please me this time," said Handforth, lifting the cad bodily from the floor, and carrying him towards his bed. "You ought to be jolly well bumped for addressing that rotter as mister!"

Thump! Teddy Long landed in the middle of his bed.

"Ow! I'll do as I like!" he yelled. "I'll jolly well— Yarooogh!"

Handforth stuffed a pillow into Long's face, and put an end to his yells.

"Bai Jove!" said Langley-Mostyn, surveying the scene through his monocle. "I've nevah seen such an exhibition of hooliganism before!"

The remark was, to Handforth, like a red rag to a bull.

He made a grab at a pillow, and dashed up to the lordly Langley-Mostyn, seated on the pile of pillows.

Swipe!

Handforth's pillow caught Langley-Mostyn on the side of the head, and bowled him completely over.

"I'll knock some of the nonsense out of you!" exclaimed Handforth.

"Bai Jove! I'll smash you for this!" roared Langley-Mostyn; and dashing forward, he managed to come to grips with Handforth.

Locked in each other's embrace, the two staggered amongst the feasters, causing several of them to sprawl full-length on the floor.

At last Nipper succeeded in separating the two juniors, with the assistance of Tommy Watson.

"Now get back to bed, Handy, old son!" he said. "We don't want—"

"I'm going to fight this cad first!" declared Handforth. "Fetch out those gloves from under my bed!"

Nipper came forward with the gloves, whilst the rest of the Removite stepped out of bed, eager to witness the fight.

"Give him socks, Handforth, old son!" said De Valerie.

"Leave that to me!" said Handforth, with confidence, as he slipped on his gloves.

"Ready, you cad?" he added, turning to his enemy.

"Yes, you hooligan!" said Langley-Mostyn.

"Then come on!"

Right from the start the St. Frank's juniors realized that the fight was not to be a walk-over for Handforth.

Langley-Mostyn had turned up the sleeves of his pyjama-jacket, to reveal a pair of strong, muscular arms, and, moreover, it was apparent to everybody that, judging by his guard, he knew a good deal about boxing.

Handforth realised this, too, when several of his left leads were cleverly countered, and he received two sharp blows on either side of the face.

He stood up to his opponent, and managed to get in two blows on the body. But it was a difficult task to get through Langley-Mostyn's guard. Wherever Handforth aimed a blow, the Nottingham leader seemed to have a hand ready to guard it.

Smash!

Handforth had shot his left at his antagonist's head. Langley-Mostyn side-stepped neatly, and drove his left full in the Removite's face.

Handforth went to the floor with a thud, and Nipper, who was acting as timekeeper, counted seven before the leader of Study D clambered to his feet.

Langley-Mostyn grinned cynically. He was confident of his man, and for the next few minutes he fairly played with Handforth. The Removites uttered cheering remarks, and Handforth tried his utmost to make up the ground he had lost.

But it was no good. If the Removite aimed a blow at Langley-Mostyn's head the latter always managed to side-step in time, and if he shot a punch at his antagonist's body his arm was always there ready to guard.

Then suddenly the fight underwent a complete change. Langley-Mostyn went in to attack. He drove his left into Handforth's face, and hooked him under the jaw with the right.

Handforth was forced back. He tried to recover, but another straight left caught him in the body, and before he could raise

his guard again to defend his face, Langley-Mostyn had driven his right on to the point of the Removite's jaw.

Thud!

Handforth staggered under the weight of that powerful blow, and then fell on his face to the floor.

Nipper counted, but there was really no necessity to do so, for Handforth was down and out.

Langley-Mostyn grinned triumphantly at the Removites.

"I suppose you're satisfied?" he said, in aggravating tones.

"Oh, if you like!"

"You've no objection to our proceedin' with our feed--what!"

"Get on with it!"

"Thanks awfully!" drawled Langley-Mostyn, flinging his boxing-gloves on the floor. "I'd just like to tell you, howevah, that I shall be only too pleased to treat any of you fellahs as I have treated that chap down theah, if you think fit to interfere with me!"

"All right, you rotter!" said Nipper, as he bent down to tend the beaten Handforth. "You can crow now, but you'll be made to sit up yet. We've had quite enough of your nonsense, and we're not going to put up with much more of it!"

And the rest of the Remove concurred with:

"No fear!"

CHAPTER VII.

A Caddish Action.

"You fellows ready?"

Handforth, the leader of Study D, in the Remove at St. Frank's, asked the question, as he poked his head round the corner of Study C, which was occupied by Nipper & Co.

Nipper, attired in spotless flannels, was engaged on the task of slipping a new rubber handle on to his cricket-bat. Sir Montie Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson, also in flannels, were looking on, giving advice on how it should be done.

Nipper gave Handforth a cheery nod.

"Sha'n't be a minute," he said. "I might even be less if these silly duffers would keep their advice to themselves!"

"Begad!" drawled Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "I was only trying to help you, dear old boy!"

A week had passed since the arrival of the Nottingham fellows. For the past few days things had been fairly quiet.

Langley-Mostyn had had his own way all along the line. But such a state of affairs could not continue much longer. Mr. Potts was lying in the sanatorium, suffering from a severe chill.

No longer could Langley-Mostyn complain to the Form-master; no longer could he secure severe punishments for any juniors who refused to become victims to his autocratic rule.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Nipper, as the Removites neared the end of the passage. "What's that row going on?"

"Sounds as though it's coming from the Common-room," remarked Tommy Watson.

"May as well go and see what's happening," said Handforth, and he pushed open the door of the Common-room.

There were about fifteen juniors in the room, but they all belonged to Nottingham. There was not a single St. Frank's fellow there.

Bob Weston was standing on a chair, and he was in the middle of a stirring speech. He broke off abruptly, however, as he caught sight of Nipper & Co.

"Go ahead, old son!" said Nipper cheerily. "Don't mind us! We only looked in to see what all the rumpus was about!"

"I suppose you've heard old Potts is ill—influenza?" Weston said. "Well, we're taking the opportunity to score off Langley-Mostyn!" He grinned, and turned to his audience.

"Now, I ask you fellows once again, are we going to put up with Langley-Mostyn's tyranny any longer?" he exclaimed.

"No!" came in a roar from the juniors.

"Are we going to allow him to order us about just as he thinks fit, and to make slaves of us?"

"Not likely!"

"The rotter has had the whip-hand of us all along," went on Bob Weston fervently. "He's been able to report us to old Potts, and to get us caned."

"But he can't do it now," said Hope, one of Bob's strongest supporters.

"Hurrah!" burst out the Nottingham juniors.

"We can fight Langley-Mostyn on level terms now," continued Bob Weston. "I vote that we back one another up, and defy him for all we're worth."

"What-ho!"

"Look here, you kids!" sang out Tommy Watson from the doorway. "Here comes Langley-Mostyn!"

"Let him come!" exclaimed Bob Weston. "We're quite willing to deal with him!"

Langley-Mostyn, the captain of the Nottingham Fourth Form, attired in well-creased cricketing flannels, and wearing an expensive silk shirt, strode into the Common-room.

He fixed his monocle tightly into his eye, and bestowed an indignant look on the group of Nottingham fellows.

"Bal Jove!" he drawled. "What are you beastly kids doin' in heah?"

"Minding our own business, if you want to know, old bean!" said Bob Weston.

Langley-Mostyn gave a startled gasp.

"Wha-a-at!" he cried. "Did you refer to me as 'old bean'?"

Nipper grinned.

"That's the stuff to give him!" he said approvingly.

"Look heah, you little hoeligans!" roared Langley-Mostyn. "I'll put up with no more of this! When you speak to me you're to call me Mr. Langley-Mostyn!"

"Supposing we don't?"

"I—I shall——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bob Weston. "You can't report us to old Potts and get us a wiggling!"

"I'll—I'll——" spluttered Langley-Mostyn, his temper rising.

"Look heah, you're all to come down to the nets, and take turns in bowling to me! D'you heah?"

"Do you want our answer?" demanded Bob Weston.

"Theah is no ansawah," said Langley-Mostyn. "I mean, you're all to——"

"Well, there is an answer," broke in Bob Weston. "And we'll give it to you now. Ready, you fellows?"

Bob Weston glanced at his supporters, who promptly dug their hands into their pockets. Langley-Mostyn gazed at them, utterly bewildered by their actions.

"Fire!" sang out Bob Weston.

Instantly the Nottingham fellows drew their hands from their pockets, and before Langley-Mostyn could think of retreating, he was simply pelted with oranges.

Oranges, juicy and soft, flew to the right of him and to the left, but, unfortunately for the lordly junior, many struck and burst on his immaculate clothes, whilst some, more accurately thrown than others, caught him full in the face.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going out of this," said Nipper, making for the door. "I don't want any dud oranges in my chivvy!"

"No fear!" responded the rest of the Removites, and they promptly followed Nipper out of the room.

"Well, I'm jolly glad to see those kids are kicking at last," said Handforth, as they strolled in the direction of the playing-fields.

"I told you they would," said Nipper. "There's a lot of grit in that chap Weston, and he'll fairly squash Langley-Mostyn before he's done with him."

"They've made a jolly good start, anyway," said Tommy Watson. "Langley-Mostyn will have to change his clothes before he can come down to the nets."

"Let's hope he doesn't come," said Nipper. "We can quite well do without his company."

Nipper & Co. arrived at the nets to find the grass in splendid condition. It had received special attention during the last few weeks, and had been rolled and rolled until it was almost as level and smooth as a billiard-table.

De Valerie and Hart and Somerton and several other Removites were already playing, and they nodded cheerily to Nipper & Co. as they came up.

De Valerie's stump was knocked out of the ground just as Nipper and his chums arrived. He picked it up, and grinned.

"I guess I'm a bit out of form," he said.

"I expect we shall all be the same," said Nipper. "We shall have to buck up and get in form, though, for the River House match is coming along soon. Slip on a pair of leg-guards, Handy, old son, and we'll send you a few down."

"Right-ho!"

Very soon the practice was in full swing. The nets were constructed so that four batsmen could be playing at one time, and every pitch was occupied.

After a time Nipper took a turn with the bat. He was one of the best bats in the Remove, and he proceeded to show his chums that he would require very little practice to get in form.

Handforth bowled his fastest, but he could not beat Nipper. Full pitches, yorkers, leg breaks, off breaks—they all came alike to him. He played the bowling with absolute ease, and rarely was he in difficulties.

"Bai Jove! A poor lot of stuff you're sendin' him down!"

Nipper & Co. looked round to see Langley-Mostyn, with a sullen, bad-tempered expression on his face, staring at them. They had been so keen on the cricket practice that they had not observed his approach.

"Well, you're welcome to send down better stuff," said Tommy Watson, and then he added: "If you can."

"Give me a ball," said Langley-Mostyn. "I'll jollay soon knock his stump out of the ground!"

The Nottingham leader picked up a ball as it came towards him. Then, running up to the stump, he sent the ball hurtling down the pitch.

Nipper lifted his hat, and—

Crack!

The ball landed right in the centre of the bat, and sailed high over the bowlers' heads. Langley-Mostyn gritted his teeth.

"Bai Jove!" he said. "I'll get him with the next!"

But Langley-Mostyn's hopes were not realised.

Nipper played his bowling with the utmost ease—in fact, at times he almost treated it with contempt. Langley-Mostyn sent them down faster and faster, but it made no difference.

"Pitch them up!" said Tommy Watson.

Langley-Mostyn growled something under his breath. He was

thoroughly annoyed at not having been able to beat Nipper, and his temper was rising rapidly.

He took a longer run than ever up to the stump, and threw the ball rather than bowled it.

"Look out, Nipper!" shouted Handforth.

Nipper ducked in the nick of time, and the ball flew straight to the net at the back, without first touching the ground.

Handforth & Co. turned on the lordly dandy.

"You can jolly well buzz off now!" said Handforth hotly. "You won't bowl another ball at this net!"

"What the dickens do you mean?"

"We'll jolly soon show you if you stay here another minute!"

Langley-Mostyn caught sight of the clenched fists of the Removites. He was about to make some sort of protest, but evidently realising what was in store for him, he turned on his heel and slunk off.

CHAPTER VIII.

No Luck for Langley-Mostyn.

"Hallo! What do you chaps want?"

Nipper & Co. had returned from cricket practice as hungry as hunters. They were engaged upon the task of preparing tea when the door of Study C opened to admit Berkley, Barber, and Carter, three cronies of Langley-Mostyn.

"We've come for Mr. Langley-Mostyn's belongings," said Berkley.

"Why don't you silly asses stop calling that rotter mister?" said Nipper.

"Begad! It's frightfully silly!" added Sir Montie Tregellis-West.

"Oh, is it!" said Berkley. "We believe at Rottingham in respecting our captain."

Nipper smiled.

"What do you want Langley-Mostyn's belongings for?" he asked.

"He's leaving this study," explained Berkley.

"My hat! That's ripping!" said Nipper. "You fellows going, too?"

"Yes."

"Begad!" said Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "That's the best bit of news I've had to-day, dear old boys!"

"What-ho!" said Nipper. "Where are you chaps going?"

"In with Fullwood, Gulliver, and Bell."

"They're welcome to you!" said Nipper. "Come on, Tommy, and you, too, Montie. We'll give them a hand to find their belongings!"

"Oh, ruther!" said Tommy Watson. "Here's a pair of boots belonging to Langley-Mostyn. Catch hold. And here's one of his coats, and walking-stick, and—— My word, this study will look tidy in a minute!"

"It'll jolly soon look untidy again!" growled Berkley. "You've got somebody else coming in here."

"Who?"

"Weston and Hope and Davis!"

"Good biz!" said Nipper. "We don't mind Bob Weston. In fact, we'll welcome him with open arms! Now, have you got all you want?"

Berkley & Co. were loaded with things. They gazed round the room, and, in doing so, bestowed indignant looks on Nipper & Co. The way in which the latter had received the news of their departure had not at all pleased the Rottingham juniors.

"I don't think there's anything more," said Berkley. "But if you find anything else belonging to Mr. Langley-Mostyn, you'd better take great care of it. He'll be awfully wild if you damage his property!"

"He'll look wilder still if we damage his chivvy!" said Nipper.

"And that's what will happen if we have any more of his nonsense. You might give him that message with our compliments. Now you can buzz off!"

Berkley & Co. promptly "buzzed off."

A few minutes later there was a tap on the door, and in walked Bob Weston and Hope and Davis.

The two last-named were carrying their belongings in their arms. They hesitated before entering the study.

"Come in, you fellows!" sang out Nipper.

"You don't mind us coming in here?" asked Weston.

"Not a bit of it, old son!" said Nipper cheerily. "Dump your things in the corner. Tea will be ready in half a sec. The water's boiling. Montie, so you can make the tea!"

"Right-ho, dear old boy!"

A few minutes later the six juniors were seated at the table. At first Bob Weston & Co. were very quiet, but they were drawn into Nipper & Co.'s cheery conversation, and soon any doubts they had had on their reception were soon dispelled.

"Well, how are things going now, Weston, old son?" asked Nipper. "The fellows backing you up all right?"

"Jolly well, thanks!" replied Weston. "I've got about fourteen on my side. Langley-Mostyn's only got Berkley, Barber and Carter, and three other idiots who have got their eyes on the rotter's money."

"Good!" said Nipper. "You can defy him all right now. But, I say, what will happen when Potts recovers?"

Bob Weston pulled a wry face.

"We'll get it in the neck then, I expect," he said. "But what's the good of meeting your troubles half-way? If we can only sit on the rotter for a few weeks it'll be worth it!"

"Oh, rather!" said Nipper. "I say, have you been down to the nets yet?"

Bob Weston coloured slightly.

"We didn't exactly—er—like to," he said.

"You're welcome to use them any time you like, old son," said Nipper. "Come down with us to-morrow. And, I say, we shall have to fix up a match before you leave St. Frank's!"

"That's jolly decent of you!" said Weston. "We shall be jolly pleased, and we'll do our best to give you a good game!"

"Well, don't forget!" said Nipper. "You can use the nets as often as you like!"

The Rottingham juniors did not forget. Directly after lessons the next day they trooped down to the nets with the Removites.

Nipper & Co. watched them play for a time, and came to the conclusion that a match with Rottingham would not be a walk-over for the Remove.

Bob Weston showed himself to be good with both bat and ball, and both Hope and Davis were good bowlers.

The Removites left the Rottingham juniors to continue their practice, and went to their own nets.

A little later Langley-Mostyn sauntered up. He stopped before Bob Weston & Co.

"Give me a ball," he said. "I'll send a few down!"

"Sorry," said Bob Weston boldly; "but we haven't got one to spare!"

Langley-Mostyn strode up to the juniors, and was just about to plunge his fist in Bob Weston's face, when the rest of the Rottingham juniors observed his intention.

"None of that!" said Hope. "We'll jolly well bump you if you start any nonsense!"

Langley-Mostyn shot a fierce look at the juniors, thought of his spotless flannels and of what would happen if he was bumped, and decided not to run the risk.

He turned on his heel, and sauntered to where the Removites were practising.

"I suppose you fellahs do not mind my joinin' in?" he said, with an affable grin.

"Something wrong with your supposer!" said Handforth. "Just hop it while you're safe!"

"I say, I hope you don't bear any malice for what happened yesterday?" said Langley-Mostyn.

"Here, hand me that stump!"

Handforth made a grab at a stump that was lying on the ground. De Valerie and Tommy Weston did the same, and then they advanced towards the immaculate dandy.

Langley-Mostyn backed a few yards, and finally took to his heels.

"The cads!" he muttered to himself, as he at length pulled up some distance away from the nets. "They absolutely refuse to allow me to play! By gad, I've nevah been insulted so much before! I'll make them sit up! I'll——"

"Hallo, kid! What's the matter with you?"

Langley-Mostyn turned round quickly, to observe Fenton of the Sixth standing before him, with a cricket-bat under his arm. Fenton had just left Big Side, and was returning to the school.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Langley-Mostyn. "You're captain of the school, aren't you?"

Fenton nodded.

"I say, you might sling me a few down!" said Langley-Mostyn.

Fenton smiled grimly.

"My dear kid," he said, "I've got something better to do than to waste my time over you! If you take my advice, you'll alter your manner somewhat. I rather think I can see why those fellows refused to play with you, and I must say I'm not surprised!"

With that, Fenton took his departure.

Langley-Mostyn was soon the only fellow at the nets. He gazed around him with eyes that glinted savagely.

"Bai Jove!" he muttered, between clenched teeth. "I'll get my own back for this! I'll make them wish they'd never upset me—and pretty soon, too!"

CHAPTER IX.

The Outsider's Revenge.

Boom!

Twelve o'clock tolled out from the clock in the old tower at St. Frank's. It was midnight—the hour when the school was quiet and asleep.

In the Remove dormitory all was quiet but for the breathing of the sleeping juniors. A snore came from one end of the dormitory. Fatty Little always snored, possibly owing to the fact that he made a point of eating a hearty supper, which may have upset his stomach.

Suddenly a figure sat up in bed, and gazed around at the sleepers. It was Langley-Mostyn, and could Nipper & Co. have seen his face at that moment they would have observed an expression that was evil and revengeful.

The Nottingham leader crept noiselessly out of bed, and commenced to don his clothes.

Not a sound did he make, and the juniors went on sleeping, oblivious to the fact that Langley-Mostyn was about to break bounds.

The lordly dandy was fully dressed at last. He opened the door softly, and crept out of the dormitory. Then with considerable stealth he made his way downstairs, and, slipping back a window-catch, he passed through the opening into the dark and deserted Triangle.

In a few moments Langley-Mostyn had reached a shed, in which Warren, the school porter, kept all his tools.

The outsider had visited the shed earlier in the evening, and without the assistance of a light he knew exactly where to lay his hands on a garden-fork.

He slipped the fork under his arms, and sauntered towards the wall which surrounded the Triangle. A moment more and he had clambered over the wall, and was standing in the road on the other side.

He then turned in the direction of the playing-fields, and quickened his pace.

"I guess my little scheme will work a treat!" he muttered to himself. "Those young hooligans thought themselves jolly clever when they refused to let me play at the nets. Bai Jove! They're goin' to suffer for it! They'll have the surprise of their lives when they go down to the nets to-morrow!"

Langley-Mostyn chuckled softly to himself. He was very pleased with his scheme of revenge.

There was no doubt that the Removites—and the Nottingham fellows, for that matter—had scored off him, but Langley-Mostyn felt, as he approached the nets on Little Side, that the laugh would be on his side on the morrow.

He drew up by the practice-nets. Then, dropping the fork to the ground, he took off his coat and turned back his shirt-sleeves.

"Now for a little gardening!" he muttered, making a grab at the fork. "I guess those ruters up there"—he turned an evil glance in the direction of St. Frank's—"would like to see me now! Ha, ha, ha! They'll soon learn that it's not wise to cross the path of a Langley-Mostyn!"

Next instant the Nottingham leader started to dig. And he dug over the very piece of ground on which Nipper & Co. had been playing that afternoon.

A great deal of work had been spent on the ground on which the practice-nets were fixed. It had been rolled and rolled until it was as level and smooth as a billiard-table. Save the playing-pitch itself, there was not another piece of grass on Little Side that was in such a splendid condition.

But Langley-Mostyn very soon altered the appearance of it. Digging furiously, he piled clod after clod of earth in a heap, and it was not long before the first partition of the net was one long mound of earth.

"Bai Jove!" muttered the outsider, wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "I guess I've altered the appearance of that some! All the rollers in the world won't make that level enough to play on this season! Now for the next one!"

Langley-Mostyn continued with his malicious work. He was still digging when one o'clock tolled out from the old tower. At half-past his revengeful task was half finished.

Then he stopped for another breather, and, happening to look up at the sky, he noticed that the stars had disappeared, and felt a spot of rain on his face.

"Oh, hang!" he muttered. "I hope it's not goin' to rain. I——"

Langley-Mostyn paused, for the raindrops became more numerous. He slipped on his coat and hesitated. Should he continue with his fell work, or make tracks for the school?

"Confound the rain!" he ground out, at last. "I can't risk a soakin'. I shall have to get up early, and come out before those young hooligans get up!"

With that intention in mind, the outsider pelted for all he was worth in the direction of St. Frank's. By the time he reached the school it was raining hard. He slipped the fork into the shed, and, passing through the window on the ground floor, made tracks for the dormitory.

A few minutes later he was between the sheets and fast asleep.

As the clock struck five he awoke again, and, stepping to the window, he saw to his satisfaction that the rain had ceased and that the sun was rising in a cloudless sky.

He dressed himself hurriedly, and so anxious was he to get out of the dormitory that he did not observe one of the sleepers turn in his bed, open his eyes, and stare at him.

Neither was he aware of the fact, when at last he crept out of the dormitory, that his every action had been witnessed by Teddy Long, the cad of the Remove.

"I wonder what that cad's game is?" said Long to himself, as he crept over to a window and gazed into the Triangle below. "He must be going out, otherwise he wouldn't have dressed himself properly."

Soon Langley-Mostyn appeared in view down below, and Teddy Long watched him take the fork from the shed, and make tracks for Little Side.

"Surely the rotter isn't going to do any gardening?" said the cad of the Remove. "He— My giddy aunt! He's digging up the practice-pitches! I'm going to look into this!"

With that, Teddy Long hurriedly slipped on his clothes, and, creeping out of the dormitory, fairly ran to his own study in the Remove passage and took his camera out of the bookcase-drawer.

Then, still running, he made his way downstairs, passed through the open window on the ground floor, and was soon scudding towards the playing-fields.

He was careful to keep himself screened from view, and at length reached a hedge which bordered Little Side.

Langley-Mostyn was digging away furiously, and thus he did not hear the click of Teddy Long's camera, as he was snapped in the midst of his treacherous work.

Teddy Long turned the dark slide in his camera, and grinned to himself with satisfaction.

"I'll get a snap of the rotter as he's walking back to the school," he muttered softly, "in case he doesn't come out distinctly in this!"

And, so saying, the cad of the Remove crept towards another hedge, near to which Langley-Mostyn would have to pass to get back to St. Frank's.

Just as half-past six struck, Langley-Mostyn sauntered back, with the fork slung on his shoulder.

Click!

The outsider turned as he heard a faint sound on his left. But Teddy Long was well screened from view, and Langley-Mostyn strolled on, entirely unsuspecting.

He replaced the fork in the shed, and, clambering through the window, replaced the catch, and went up to the Remove dormitory.

After morning school the Removites, together with Langley-Mostyn, were marching towards the playing-fields.

At length they came in sight of the nets. Then Langley-Mostyn gave a startled gasp.

"Bai Jove!" he exclaimed, pointing ahead. "Look!"

The Removites followed the direction of the outsider's outstretched hand.

Then there was a chorus of startled ejaculations.

"My hat!" cried Nipper, in amazement. "Somebody's dug up our practice-pitches!"

"Surely——" began Tommy Watson.

"Every pitch has been ploughed up!" said Nipper, breaking into a run. "They're absolutely mucked up—ruined!"

"Great Scott!"

To say that the Removites were surprised was to put it mildly. They stopped before the nets, and gazed with wide-open eyes at the scene of destruction.

There was mound upon mound of earth. The ground that the previous day had been almost as smooth as glass now looked as though a plough had been over it.

"It's jolly rotten!" said Tommy Watson ruefully. "It'll take us longer to get into form, unless the Sixth will let us use their nets!"

"Not much likelihood of that," said Nipper. "We shall have to make the best of things."

"It's a jollay shame!" said Langley-Mostyn. "I must say I should like to meet the chap who did it! I suppose you've no idea who the rotiah could be?"

"None at all," said Nipper. "But whoever the chap is, he's an absolute scoundrel, and wants boiling in oil!"

"And he'll get boiled in oil," said Handforth, "if I catch him!"

CHAPTER X.

The Cad's Terms.

"I'd jolly well like to find out who dug up our practice ground!" remarked Nipper.

"Begad! So should I, dear old boy!" said Sir Montie Tregellis-West, adjusting his pince-nez.

At that moment Langley-Mostyn sauntered towards Nipper & Co. "Cheer-ho, old fellahs!" He greeted Nipper & Co. affably. "What the merry dickens are you lookin' so down in the mouth for?"

"Don't ask silly questions!" said Nipper bluntly.

"Bai Jove!" drawled Langley-Mostyn. "You needn't get your beastlay rag out with me! I suppose you're worryin' about the practice-ground bizney?"

"Well, we have been jawing the matter over," said Nipper.

"I'd jolly well like to get hold of the chap who dug up the grass! It wouldn't take me long to alter the appearance of his face!"

"I guess I'd like to lay my hands on him, too!" said Langley-Mostyn. "It's one of the most caddish tricks I've ever come across! I suppose you can't get the ground rolled out again?"

"Oh, it'll be rolled out again," said Nipper, "but it certainly won't be ready for cricket this summer!"

"How beastlay rotten!" said Langley-Mostyn, attempting to be sympathetic. "What are you goin' to do about practice, then?"

"They're getting another bit of ground ready," said Nipper; "but however much they roll it, they won't be able to get it so level as the pitch that has been dug up!"

Langley-Mostyn grinned in a cynical manner, and his grin was not lost upon Nipper & Co. They glared and gripped their hands hard.

"When do you fellahs think the new pitch will be ready?" asked the Nottingham leader jauntily.

"What do you want to know for?" demanded Nipper.

"Bai Jove! I want to get in some cricket practice!"

"Well, you won't practise with us!"

"What!"

"You heard what I said," remarked Nipper quietly.

"But Mr. Crowell told you you were to let me practise with you," said Langley-Mostyn. "I suppose you're goin' to obey his beastlay orders?"

"Well, you come down to the nets when we're practising!"

said Nipper. "We'll jolly well lay a few cricket-stumps round you, and you'll go back quicker than you come!"

"Bai Jove! I—"

"Coming up to the study, Montie, old son?" asked Nipper.

"Yes," said Tregellis-West. "This cad's conversation is frightfully boring! The more I see of him, the less I like him!"

"Same here!" said Tommy Watson.

The three chums strode into the Ancient House, leaving Langley-Mostyn gazing after them at the foot of the steps.

As soon as they had disappeared from view a gloating smile came over the Nottingham leader's face.

He strode in the direction of the old elms in a corner of the Triangle, and sat down in the shelter of the leaves.

"Bai Jove!" he muttered to himself. "I guess I've got a bit of my own back on those cads! They're quite upset because their beastly practice-ground has been churned up!"

Langley-Mostyn broke into a hearty laugh.

"They're goin' to alter the chap's face when they catch him, are they?" he murmured. "Ha, ha, ha! They'll nevah get the chance unless I tell them that I—"

The dandy broke off abruptly as he heard footsteps in his rear. He turned round, and found Teddy Long, the cad of the Remove, striding towards him.

Long gave the Nottingham leader a beaming smile.

"Good-morning, Mr. Langley-Mostyn!" he said.

"Confound you!" roared Langley-Mostyn. "What d'you mean by buttin' in on me when I'm—"

"Awfully sorry to interrupt!" said Teddy Long serenely. "Seeing you sitting here, I thought I'd like to come along and see how you're getting on."

"See what?" exclaimed Langley-Mostyn. "Bai Jove! It's like your blessed sauce to even speak to me! Buzz off! D'you heah?"

Teddy Long paid no heed to the command.

"I just want to have a little chat with you," he said. "You don't mind if I sit down, do you?"

"Bai Jove!" cried Langley-Mostyn. "What d'you mean by this impudence? I'll jolly well punch your nose if—"

"You won't do anything of the kind!"

"Oh, won't I!" roared the Nottingham leader, rising to his feet. "You buzz off, or—"

"Now, don't lose your blessed temper!" said Teddy Long, with a coolness that he rarely displayed. "I suppose you're not interested in photography?"

"Bai Jove! No!"

"You wouldn't like to look at a few photographs I've taken?"

"No fear!"

"But I must show you one," said Teddy Long. "It's come out splendidly." The cad drew a print from his pocket. "Look at this!" he added. "It's a photograph of the cricket-nets, and if you look at it closely you can see a chap digging up the ground!"

The cad's remark caused Langley-Mostyn to grow pale in the face, and to stagger back in amazement.

He snatched the print from Teddy Long's hand, and stared at it hard.

"You—you—" he exclaimed. "When did you take this?"

"When did you get up early and go to the nets for the purpose of digging up ground?" retorted the sneak of the Remove.

"You spyin' young hound!" roared Langley-Mostyn, screwing the print up in his hand. "D'you mean to say you followed me down to the nets, and—"

"I suppose I can get up early of a mornin' to do some photo-

graphy if I want to?" broke in the sneak of the Remove. "If I happened to take a snap of the nets, and you were digging up the ground at the time, you can hardly blame me!"

"You—you——"

"It's really quite a coincidence that you were there," went on Teddy Long. "I—— Look here, there's nothin' for you to look so wild about!"

"Have you shown that print to anybody?"

"Of course I haven't!"

"Well, I won't run the risk of your doin' so," said Langley-Mostyn. And he promptly tore the piece of paper into a hundred tiny pieces. "Now," he added, between his teeth, "have you got any more prints like this?"

"No," said the cad; "but I have another print that may interest you!"

With that, Teddy Long handed the Nottingham leader a print, on which was the figure of a junior carrying an ordinary garden-fork. There was no necessity to tell Langley-Mostyn that he was the junior in the photograph.

He promptly tore it up, and fixed an evil gaze on the cad of the Remove.

"I've a jolly good mind to smash you for takin' those beastly photographs!" he said. "What did you intend to do with them?"

"Just keep them out of curiosity," replied Teddy Long.

"You hadn't made up your mind to show them to that chap Nipper?"

Teddy Long grinned.

"Of course not!" he said. "But, I say, wouldn't he like to see them! He——"

"Don't talk so loud, you fool!"

"But he would like to see them, you know," went on the sneak of the Remove. He doesn't know who to suspect of having dug up the practice-ground. He may suspect you, but——"

"Shut up!"

"Well, he may, you know," went on Long. "But, all the same, he won't see these photographs I took. I'm not so over-fond of Master Nipper. I shouldn't be sorry if he couldn't play cricket at all."

"Bal Jove!" drawled Langley-Mostyn. "I thought you were one of his gang! I say, I'm heastly sorry if I said anythin' to upset you. I suppose you're fond of tuck?"

"Oh, rather!" said Teddy Long promptly.

"Well, what do you say to some cakes and ginger-pop?"

Teddy Long grinned, and smacked his lips.

"All right," said Langley-Mostyn. "Come—— Oh, I forgot! I've got to go across and see old Potts, our Form-master. He's able to see people now, you know. But I won't disappoint you. Here's five bob! Go and have what you like!"

Teddy Long promptly took the money, and whilst he strode over to the tuckshop presided over by Mrs. Hake, Langley-Mostyn tore towards the door of the Ancient House.

His supposed appointment with Mr. Potts had only been a ruse to get away from Teddy Long. Langley-Mostyn was particularly anxious to pay a visit to the sneak's study.

He entered the Hall, and started to climb the stairs two at a time. Bob Weston & Co. were, however, coming down, followed by Nipper and his chums.

Langley-Mostyn forced his way through the Nottingham juniors, punching one of them in the chest, and pushing another spitefully to the side of the stairs.

"That's enough, you cad!" exclaimed Nipper indignantly, making a clutch at the Nottingham leader. "What do you mean by——"

"Let me go, hang you!" exclaimed Langley-Mostyn, dragging himself free, and tearing on up the stairs.

"My hat!" said Tommy Watson. "I wonder what the dickens is the matter with the cad!"

"I've never seen him rush about like that before," said Nipper. "He's jolly excited over something or other!"

There was certainly no doubt that Langley-Mostyn was excited. He did not stop running until he reached the study occupied by Teddy Long. He breathed a sigh of relief as he found the room empty.

He rushed inside, and was soon engaged upon making a thorough search of the study.

"I must find those beastly negatives!" he muttered to himself. "If that young hooligan keeps them he'll make my blessed life a misery!"

Langley-Mostyn searched everywhere in the hope of finding the tell-tale negatives. Drawer after drawer he turned out, cupboards were overhauled, and every likely hiding-place was investigated; but Langley-Mostyn's search remained unrewarded.

His temper rose accordingly, and he became less careful in putting everything back in the correct place.

Suddenly he caught sight of a square wooden box in a corner of the room.

He snatched it up, and found, to his annoyance, that it was locked. Quickly he snatched up a poker, and started to bang away at the lock in the hope of bursting it.

He was in the midst of his task when the door of the study was flung open, and in rushed Teddy Long.

"You—you——" began the cad. "I—I thought you were going to see Mr. Potts! What are you doing to that——"

"Look here, you young hooligan!" roared Langley-Mostyn, his eyes gleaming with rage. "Where are those negatives? Tell me, or, hal Jove, I'll——"

"You won't find them there."

"Where are they?"

"I—I——"

"Tell me at once!"

"I don't know where—— Ow! Leggo! Yarooooogh!"

Beside himself with rage, Langley-Mostyn had thrown himself upon the sneak of the Remove, and was pummelling away at him fiercely.

"I'll teach you to trick me!" he roared. "Take that, and that!"

"Ow! Help! Yow! Help! Help!" shrieked Teddy Long frantically.

As it happened, Nipper & Co. had been quite surprised when Teddy Long had rushed by them in an excited manner in the Triangle, and they had followed him upstairs, just in time to hear him shout for assistance.

They burst into the study, to find Langley-Mostyn hitting away savagely at the cad's head.

"Stop that!" exclaimed Nipper. "Do you hear, you cad!"

"I'll smash him!" roared Langley-Mostyn. "I'll—— Yow-ow!"

Nipper wrenched the dandy away from his victim.

Langley-Mostyn glared round him fiercely, and then, to the juniors' surprise, darted out of the room.

"What was all the rumpus about?" demanded Nipper.

"Mind your own business!"

"Eh?"

"You weren't asked to come barging in here!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Nipper. "You were calling for help!"

"Well, I don't want your help!" snapped Teddy Long. "So you can buzz off!"

And Nipper & Co. went willingly enough. All the same, they

were somewhat puzzled by Teddy Long's behaviour. In the ordinary way the cad was only too willing to "split" on another fellow, and the chums could not quite understand his present manner.

But Teddy Long had a purpose in keeping quiet!

CHAPTER XI. An Unwelcome Guest.

"Well, I suppose you told that fellah Nipper what all the row was about?"

Thus said Langley-Mostyn, as he came face to face with Teddy Long after dinner that day.

"Not likely," said the sneak of the Remove. "I'm not that sort of chap. In fact, I told Nipper off for interfering!"

"Gammon!"

"Honest Injun!" said Long. "I told him to clear out of the study. He's too fond of butting in when he's not wanted. If he knew I'd got those prints he'd——"

"Can't you forget about those blessed things?" demanded Langley-Mostyn. "But, look heah, I'm goin' to make you an offer! I'll give you a quid for those negatives!"

"That's jolly decent of you!" said Teddy Long. "But—but the fact is, I don't exactly know where I put them. If I find them I'll certainly let you have them!"

Langley-Mostyn sniffed disdainfully. He hardly knew whether to believe the cad or not.

"All right!" he said. "You bring them along to me, and I'll pay up!"

"That's jolly decent of you," said Long. "I suppose you couldn't let me have ten bob now. I'm rather hard up, and I could do with it!"

Langley-Mostyn gave the cad a hard look; but, all the same, he drew some money from his pocket.

"Here you are," he said; "but if I find that you've been foolin' me I'll give you the hidin' of your life!"

Teddy Long made no reply save to take the money, and incidentally his departure as well.

Langley-Mostyn strode on upstairs.

Reaching the landing leading to the Remove passage, he came upon Bob Weston and several other Rottingham juniors.

"Heah," he said, "I want one of you kids to run down to the village and get me some fags. You'll do, Weston!"

"I jolly well won't do!" said Bob Weston boldly. "If you want any cigarettes you'd better go and get them yourself!"

"What! You talk to me like that!" roared Langley-Mostyn. "You refuse to obey my orders!"

"We've had quite enough of your orders in the past," said Bob Weston firmly. "I thought we told you only the other day that we're not going to be ordered about by you any more!"

"You cheeky young hooligan!" said the Rottingham leader fiercely. "I'll make you sit up for this! You wait until Mr. Potts comes out of the sanitorium! I'll see that you're punished!"

"It may be a long wait," said Bob Weston coolly. "In the meantime you can keep your commands to yourself, for we're not going to take any notice of them!"

"You—you—— Look here, young Davis," roared Langley-Mostyn, "you go and get me those fags!"

"You go and eat coke!" came the cool retort.

"Bai Jove!" cried Langley-Mostyn. "I've nevah heard such impudence before! Look here, Fenwick, you can go. I'll give you a bob!"

Fenwick hesitated. He was a very nervous fellow, and half afraid

of the autocratic dandy. All the same, he was equally afraid of Bob Weston & Co.'s wrath if he did Langley-Mostyn's bidding.

"Fenwick won't go!" said Bob Weston determinedly. "We'll jolly well see to that!"

"What-bo!" agreed his chums.

Langley-Mostyn fairly spluttered with rage.

"You—you—" he began.

"Now, it's no good your arguing any longer," said Bob Weston, wagging his finger at the dandy. "There's only one way of getting those cigarettes—that is, fetch them yourself!"

"Bai Jove!"

Langley-Mostyn was almost too flabbergasted by Weston's coolness to utter more than an ejaculation. He cast his eyes round, and, catching sight of a fire-bucket filled with water, made a hasty grab at it.

Next instant he sent the water into the faces of the juniors who had defied him.

"Cave! Crowell's coming!"

A shout came from down the passage.

The Nottingham juniors promptly took to their heels in the direction of the Remove dormitory. One and all felt in need of a change of clothing.

Langley-Mostyn made a dart for the stairs. For obvious reasons he had no desire to meet Mr. Crowell at that moment.

All that afternoon Langley-Mostyn's face bore a savage expression. He was not in the best of tempers, and for answering Mr. Crowell in a most abrupt manner he received a hundred lines for his pains.

Moreover, the expression on the dandy's face had not altered by the time afternoon lessons ended, and he made his way to Study A, which he shared with Fullwood & Co.

"By gad!" exclaimed Fullwood, as Langley-Mostyn entered the room. "You aren't looking very fit, dear boy!"

The Nottingham captain grunted.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "If there's one chap here I'd like to smash it's that fellah they call Nipper! The young boogizan has incited Weston and a lot more fellows from Nottingham against me, and they even had the cheek this afternoon to refuse to go and fetch me some cigarettes!"

"That's just like him, by gad!" drawled Fullwood. "He always interferes in business that does not concern him. But cheer up, old bean! What do you say to a merry little card-party to while away the time?"

Langley-Mostyn brightened up.

"That's not at all a bad notion," he said. "I was goin' to suggest it myself. In fact, I was orderin' that chap Weston to fetch me some cigs, as I'd run short, when that old Crowell butted in."

"Don't worry about cigs, old man," said Gulliver. "I've got plenty."

"So have I," said Fullwood. "Fetch the cards, Bell, old man, and we'll start our little game. What about your pals, Langley-Mostyn?"

"Oh, don't bothah about them," said the dandy airily. "If they play I shall have to supply them with the tin, for they've nevah got a penny to bless themselves with. They— Bai Jove, I've got a toppin' idea!"

"What for?"

"Why, for gettin' my own bark on that chap, Nipper," said Langley-Mostyn. "Supposin' we hold our little card-party in his study?"

The Nuts looked up in surprise.

"What ever for?" demanded Fullwood.

"Why, so that we can fill the air with tobacco smoke," said Langley-Mostyn. "We'll contrive to bring old Crowell on the scene, and what luck for Nipper & Co. then!"

"By gad!" said Fullwood. "That's a toppin' wheeze! But—but supposin' the cads aren't goin' out!"

"I bet you anythin' you like they're going down to cricket practice," said the dandy. "At any rate, I'll soon find out!"

Langley-Mostyn darted to the door of the study, and looked out into the corridor. A moment later he turned back, and grinned at his companions.

"They're just goin' downstairs," he said. "We'll wait a few minutes, and pop into their study."

The rascals waited for several moments, and then adjourned to Study C.

"Better shut the window," said Fullwood, "otherwise the smoke will get out."

The window was promptly shut, and the Nuts were just about to draw their chairs up to the table when Teddy Long entered the room.

"Buzz off!" snapped Fullwood.

"I—I haven't come to see you, Fullwood," said the cad of the Remove. "I— My hat! You're going to have a card-party, eh?"

"That's no business of yours," said Langley-Mostyn, frowning at the cad. "What do you want me for? Have you—er—brought those—er—things?"

"I—I'm sorry!" faltered Long. "I—I can't exactly remember where I put them. But you shall have them all right, old man. I promise you I won't let you down."

"All right! You can go!"

"I say," said the cad, "aren't you going to ask me to stay and have a game? I'm awfully keen on cards!"

"You can jolly well hop it," said Fullwood. "We don't want you here!"

"Oh, Mr. Langley-Mostyn doesn't mind me stopping," said Teddy Long. "I can stay, can't I, Mr. Langley-Mostyn?"

The dandy hesitated. He certainly had no desire for the cad's company, yet he wanted to have those two negatives in his possession before he defied Teddy Long.

"I don't mind you stayin'," he said, with an indifferent air.

"Look here——" began Fullwood, in protest.

"Oh, let him stay!" said Langley-Mostyn, with a gesture. "Aftah all, if he wants to lose his beastly money it's not our fault."

And when, a moment later, the key was turned in the lock, Teddy Long remained in the study.

CHAPTER XII.

Their Just Deserts.

Thump! Thump!

"By gad!" exclaimed Langley-Mostyn. "Who's that knockin' on the beastly door?"

The card-party had been in progress for at least an hour, during which time Teddy Long had lost all his own money, and had borrowed ten shillings from Langley-Mostyn.

So interested had the rascals been in their game that they had failed to observe that rain had started to fall, and that the St. Frank's fellows had promptly left the playing-fields.

Nipper & Co. had made tracks for their own study, and, finding the door locked, had started to bang on the panels.

"Who's in there?" came Nipper's voice from outside the room. "Open the door, do you hear?"

"Oh, is that you, Nipper?" chuckled Langley-Mostyn. "You might run away for a little while. We're frightfully busy at the moment!"

"I say," said Teddy Long timidly, "hadn't we better let them in?"

"Not likely!" said Langley-Mostyn. "I'm just in the mood for a spree! We'll open the beastly door when we think fit!"

"But—but supposing old Crowell comes along?" asked the cad of the Remove.

"Crowell's gone out," said Langley-Mostyn. "I heard him tell some old josses—I believe it was the Fifth Form master—that he wouldn't be back till seven o'clock. We'll stay heah until about five to seven, and then we'll fetch Crowell on the scene—what?"

"I say, you've got some cheek!" said Fullwood.

"I'm not a funk, at any rate!" said Langley-Mostyn. "I'm always game to go the whole hog. Now let's get on with our little game. Your call, Fullwood, old fellah!"

Thump!

"Are you going to open the door?" shouted Nipper once again from outside the study.

No reply.

"The rotters!" said Nipper to his companions. "They're playing cards!"

"And probably smoking, too," said Handforth. "Look here, I'm jolly well going to barge the door down! Let's fetch that form from the end of the passage."

"No, I've got a better wheeze than that," said Nipper. "Listen!"

And, lowering his voice to an undertone, Nipper propounded his scheme to the Removites.

"But won't the water make a mess in your study?" asked Reginald Pitt.

"Oh, we'll soon clear that up!" said Nipper. "You fellows buck up and get the buckets of soot, and leave the rest to Montic, Tommy, and me."

With that the Removites dispersed, and the young rascals inside Study C proceeded with their game, utterly unconscious of the fact that trouble was in store for them.

Could they have seen the Remove chums a few moments later they would not have been so easy in their minds.

Reginald Pitt and Grey and Handforth & Co. secured three buckets and proceeded to fill them with soot obtained from the chimney in Study D.

Nipper & Co. paid a visit to Warren, the school porter, and persuaded him to lend them a ladder for a quarter of an hour. Warren did not seem at all eager to oblige until Nipper slipped a silver coin in his hand.

Then, having also secured a syringe and a bucket of water, the three chums marched across the Triangle with the borrowed articles.

It was still raining slightly, but Nipper & Co. had no intention of dropping their scheme.

They perched the ladder against the wall of the Ancient House, so that it reached to within a foot of the window of Study C.

"Up you go, Nipper, old man!" said Tommy Watson. "I'll follow with the bucket of water, and Montic can keep the ladder steady."

"Right-ho, dear old boy!" said Tregellis-West.

Nipper mounted the ladder carefully, and as he reached the ledge outside Study C he peered through the corner of the window.

A moment later he looked back at his chums.

"My hat!" he muttered. "The room's full of smoke!"

"Never mind, Nipper, old son!" said Tommy Watson. "Give them some of this water!"

Nipper filled the syringe with water from the bucket. Then, climbing to the topmost rung in the ladder, he quickly flung up the window.

There was a chorus of exclamations from the Nuts inside the study. They turned round in their chairs and stared at Nipper dumbfounded.

"What the dickens——" began Langley-Mostyn.

And then he broke off abruptly as he caught sight of the syringe in Nipper's hand.

"Buzz off, you cads," exclaimed Nipper, "before I douse you!"

Langley-Mostyn soon recovered from the surprise. With his eyes glistening with rage, he advanced towards the window.

"Bai Jove!" he exclaimed. "Let's push the young hooligan off the ladder!"

"You'd better not try!" said Nipper.

"I'll jolly well smash you!" roared Langley-Mostyn. "I'll—
Ow! Yow! Yooooooop!"

A stream of water from the syringe caught the dandy full in the face, and he was pulled up short.

"Anybody else like a dose?" said Nipper. "I may as well give you some, Fullwood!"

"Yarooooooogh!" shrieked Fullwood, as a stream came in his direction.

A moment later the Nuts started to shriek in turns as Nipper turned the syringe first at one and then at another. It was not long before the faces of the rascals were dripping with water.

"I say—yooo!—let's get out of this! Yarooooogh!" spluttered Fullwood.

"Yes; open the door, someone!" shouted Gulliver.

Bell was the first to reach the door. He darted out into the passage, quickly followed by the rest of the Nuts.

Before they had covered a couple of yards, however, the rascals received the surprises of their lives.

Handforth & Co. were standing in the passage, armed with buckets crammed with soot. This soot they proceeded to hurl at the Nuts, and, what is more, their aim was good.

Fullwood & Co. shrieked frantically as they were smothered from head to foot with the black substance.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Handforth. "What a jolly lot of nigger-boys they look! Sing us a song, Fullwood!"

But Fullwood had no desire to sing. All he could do was to utter a frantic "Oow! Yow! Yarooooooogh!"

Langley-Mostyn, smothered with soot, was staggering blindly from one side of the passage to the other, uttering threats of vengeance against the Removites.

Nipper, who had climbed through the window of Study C and put the cards and cigarettes out of sight, looked out of the doorway.

"Perhaps this will teach you cads a lesson not to fool about in other fellows' studies!" he said.

"Bai Jove!" said Langley-Mostyn, rubbing the soot from his eyes. "Where's that chap Nipper? I'll smash him for this! I'll——"

The Rottingham fellow lumbered towards the study.

"Ta-ta, old nut!" sang out Nipper. "You're not quite clean enough at present to stop to supper! See you presently!"

Slam!

The door of Study C closed with a bang.

"Bai Jove! Where are those cads who threw this muck at me?" demanded Langley-Mostyn. "I'll slaughter them! Oh, heah's one of them!"

The dandy caught sight of Handforth, and made a dash at him. Handforth promptly backed, and then took to his heels. He had no desire to be embraced by the sooty juniors; and, as the rest of the fellows who had taken part in the wheeze were of the same frame of mind, they, too, took their departure, leaving the discomfited Nuts to make their way to the bath-rooms as best they could.

A little while later, when Study C had been put to rights, Handforth & Co. and Reginald Pitt and Grey entered the room. There were thoughtful expressions on the faces of all the juniors.

Nipper greeted them with a cheery grin.

"Well, I reckon my wheeze worked jolly well, don't you?" he remarked.

"Oh, rather!" said Handforth. "But did you notice who was with that gang of rotters?"

"Teddy Long?"

"Yes," said Handforth. "But I can't make out how he's managed to get pally with them. Fullwood & Co. usually bar him, and——"

"I have an idea Langley-Mostyn has taken him up for some unaccountable reason," said Nipper. "I ticked him off a little while ago for talking to the cad!"

"I suppose he's after the outsider's money," said Handforth. "We shall have him slaving for the rotter like those Nottingham kids used to."

"Oh, will we!" said Nipper. "I'm going to find young Long, and have the matter out with him!"

Teddy Long was discovered in the Common-room, talking to a number of the Nottingham juniors. Very little of the soot had gone on his clothes, and it had not taken him long to tidy himself.

The cad of the Remove started as he caught sight of Nipper & Co.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"We want a word with you!" said Nipper firmly. "What do you mean by palling with that rotter Langley-Mostyn?"

"That's my business!" answered Teddy Long.

"My hat! Let me get at the cheeky cad!" exclaimed Handforth. "I'll punch his ugly chivvy for him!"

"Hold on, Handy, old son!" said Nipper. "This is my show! Now, look here, Long! You've got to stop speaking to Langley-Mostyn!"

"I shall do what I——"

"Oh, let's bump the cad, and knock some sense into him!" exclaimed Handforth impetuously.

With that, Handforth made a rush at Teddy Long, and threw him to the floor. In a moment the cad was collared hand and foot.

"Now let's bump him until he promises to have nothing to do with Langley-Mostyn!" said Handforth grimly.

Bump, bump!

Teddy Long was bumped again and again, until at length he gave the desired promise. The Removites released their hold on him, and, scrambling to his feet, Long fairly flew out of the Common-room.

Nipper & Co. strolled slowly out after him.

Teddy Long dashed up the stairs two at a time, and, catching sight of Langley-Mostyn climbing the stairs leading to the dormitory, he followed after him.

The sneak of the Remove entered the dormitory a second or so after the Nottingham fellow.

"I say, Mr. Langley-Mostyn!" he said quietly. "I——"

"Bai Jove!" The outsider turned round quickly, and there was an angry expression in his eyes as he faced the cad. "What—what do you mean by followin' me heah?"

"I—I only wanted to ask you to lend me another ten bob."

"Where are those negatives?" demanded Langley-Mostyn.

"I—I haven't found them yet."

"Bai Jove!" roared Langley-Mostyn. "I won't put up with any more of this! I'll jolly well make you give them to me!"

The Nottingham fellow made a mad rush at Long, and threw his arms round his body.

Then, forcing the cad backwards, he banged his head on a bed-rail.

"Ow! Stoppit, you cad! Yow-ow-ow!" shrieked Teddy Long.

"Tell me where those negatives are, or I'll——"

"Ow! Help! Yow!"

"Shut up that row, and——"

"Help! Yow! Help! Help!"

Teddy Long shouted in a frantic manner, and it was not surprising that the door of the dormitory was soon flung open to admit Nipper & Co.

Nipper dashed across to the combatants, and, pulling Langley-Mostyn away from his victim, hurled him across the room.

"You utter cad!" he said disgustedly.

"Let me get at that rotter!" shrieked Langley-Mostyn. "I'll——"

"Hold him, you fellows!" said Nipper, and Langley-Mostyn was promptly collared and held.

Teddy Long stood quivering by the bed, and rubbing his head ruefully.

"Now, perhaps, you will tell us what the row was about," said Nipper. "I—— Hallo! What do you want, young Weston?"

Bob Weston marched into the dormitory, followed by his chums.

Bob had two photographs in his hand, which he gave to Nipper.

"I found these in the Common-room," he said. "If you look at them you will probably see who it was who mucked up your practice-nets!"

Nipper gazed at the prints.

"My giddy aunt!" he exclaimed. "This is a photo of Langley-Mostyn, digging up the ground. He——"

With a terrific wrench, Langley-Mostyn had eluded his captors' clutches, and snatched the tell-tale prints out of Nipper's hands. He screwed them into a ball, and, putting them in his mouth, quickly swallowed them.

"You low-down rotter!" exclaimed Nipper angrily. "It was you, then, who mucked up our practice-ground! I'll see that you're kicked out of the school for this!"

"You can't prove anything!" said Langley-Mostyn, glaring savagely at the Removeites. "You——"

"I'll prove it, you beast!" cried Teddy Long. "Hold him, you fellows, and I'll show you the negatives!"

Langley-Mostyn was just about to make another fierce rush at the sneak of the Remove, when at least a dozen hands were laid upon him, and he was held—this time more securely.

"Where are the negatives, Long?" asked Nipper.

Teddy Long thrust his hand into his pocket, and as he did so a startled look entered his face. He pulled out his hand, and opened it to reveal a pile of broken glass.

The negatives had been smashed in the struggle in the Common-room.

Langley-Mostyn looked defiant once again.

"Now what are you going to do?" he demanded. "You can't

prove anythin'! If you complain to the mastahs I shall deny everythin'! I——"

"Oh, hang you and your denials!" said Nipper. "There's no need to complain to the masters. We'll jolly well settle with you ourselves! We'll frog-march the rotter downstairs, you fellows, and chuck him in the fountain!"

"What-ho!"

The next five minutes or so were very unpleasant ones for Langley-Mostyn. The frog-march was unpleasant enough in itself, but the ducking in the fountain completed what had by no means been a happy day for the Nottingham dandy.

CHAPTER XIII.

Unpleasant News.

"Crowell's going to be away to-day!"

"Gammon!"

"It's true. I've just got it from Fenton of the Sixth!"

"Then who's going to take his place?"

"That rotter Potts!" said Nipper. "He's quite fit again now."

At least a dozen of the juniors in the Remove at St. Frank's uttered a startled exclamation in response to Nipper's announcement.

"My hat!" exclaimed Handforth. "Here comes that cad Langley-Mostyn!"

Langley-Mostyn, the captain of the Nottingham Fourth, grinned in a cynical manner as he reached the juniors.

"I suppose you fellahs have heard the beastly news?" he said.

"Oh, rats!" said Nipper.

"Buzz off, you utter cad!" exclaimed Handforth. "We're done with you!"

"Go hon!" drawled Langley-Mostyn. "I shouldn't have thought so! But theah, I suppose you're feelin' jolly sick at the news. I'm not surprised, for you must be a bit afraid of meetin' Mr. Potts!"

"We're not afraid of meeting the rotter!" declared Handforth. "And if you say that I'm afraid I'll punch your silly nose for you!"

The dandy sniffed disdainfully.

"You're jolly plucky now," he said, "but I guess you'll crumple up like a bit of tissue-paper when Mr. Potts speaks to you!"

"I tell you I'm not afraid of the low-down rotter!" said Handforth hotly. "He's a crawling, sneaking worm like you, and he's no right to be a schoolmaster! He——"

"Dear me!"

The Removites turned round in a body as they heard a quiet voice in their rear. There, standing before them, was Mr. Potts, the Nottingham master. He was rubbing his hands together and smiling at the Removites in a very sickly manner.

"I am sorry to intrude in your very—er—interesting conversation," he said quietly, "but I really could not stand by and hear myself referred to as a crawling, sneaking worm. Dear me! What disgraceful language, to be sure!"

Handforth was red with indignation.

"If you had walked up properly, instead of crawling, you wouldn't have heard anything!" he said. "You've only got yourself to blame, and——"

"Boy!" Mr. Potts rapped out the word, and at the same instant the sickly grin vanished from his face, to be replaced by an expression full of rage and anger. "Do you realise that I am your master?"

"Mr. Crowell is our master," said Handforth boldly.

"Mr. Crowell has gone away for the day, and perhaps longer,"

snapped Mr. Potts. "You are under my control for the time being, and I intend to put an end to all your insults. Every boy here will do me two hundred lines!"

"But, sir," said Nipper, "that is rather severe! Mr. Crowell wouldn't—"

"Three hundred lines!" ground out Mr. Potts. "Langley-Mostyn, you will take the names of all the boys here, and let me have the list presently."

"Certainly, Mr. Potts!" said Langley-Mostyn, with exceptional civility.

Mr. Potts strode off, and, taking out his notebook, Langley-Mostyn started to write down the names.

"What's your beastly name?" he asked, jerking his pencil towards De Valerie.

"Put that book away!" exclaimed Nipper.

"I was not talkin' to you!" said Langley-Mostyn jauntily. "Speak when you're spoken to!"

"My hat!" cried Nipper angrily. "I'm not going to put up with any of your cheek. I thought we'd tamed you, but apparently we haven't. Put that book away!"

"I sha'n't do anythin' of the kind!" said Langley-Mostyn. "Now, you, what's your beastly name?"

Regardless of any punishment they might receive from Mr. Potts for handling Langley-Mostyn in a drastic way, the Removites threw themselves upon the dandy.

"Run up to the study, Tommy, old son," said Nipper, "and get a few cricket-stumps. We may want them!"

"Right-ho!" said Tommy Watson, and he dashed off.

"Now, you fellows," said Nipper, "carry this rotter out into the Triangle!"

Struggling and kicking furiously, Langley-Mostyn was carried out of the school.

In spite of his struggles, however, the dandy could not break free. At Nipper's direction he was carried up to an old water-butt which stood by a side wall of the school and was half-full with water.

There was a board, about nine inches in width, lying across the top of the water-butt.

"Lift him up there!" said Nipper, pointing. "We're going to make him apologise for the way he's spoken to us. We've got to teach him that he can't ride the high horse with us!"

"Hear, hear!"

Langley-Mostyn was lifted on to the board, which rested on the top of the butt.

He stood there, glaring fiercely at the juniors.

"Now, then, you cad!" exclaimed Nipper determinedly. "You've got to apologise for being an utter cad, and—"

"I won't!" shouted Langley-Mostyn, breathing hard.

"Well, we'll give him a chance," said Nipper. "If you don't take it, then we shall merely pull away this board you're standing on, and you'll fall into the water!"

"You young hoodligans!" ground out Langley-Mostyn. "Let me get down!"

"Apologise first!"

"I won't! I—— Mr. Potts!" shouted Langley-Mostyn at the top of his voice. "Help! Help!"

"Rap his knuckles with the stump, Tommy!"

Rap, rap!

More than one junior obeyed the command, and Langley-Mostyn uttered a yell as his knuckles were rapped—hard.

"We're not going to stand any of that nonsense!" said Nipper.

"And the sooner you understand that we're in earnest the better it will be for you!"

The dandy cast anxious glances to right and left, in the hope of seeing a chance of escape. But he was hemmed in, and there was nobody in the Triangle to rush to his assistance.

Cra-a-ack!

There came a cracking sound from beneath Langley-Mostyn's feet, and he did not need telling that the board on which he was standing was giving way.

"You'd better hurry up, and say that you're sorry," said Nipper. "That board will soon give way, and——"

"Mr. Potts! Help! Help!" shrieked Langley-Mostyn once again.

"Mr. P—— Yarocooogh!"

Langley-Mostyn received another stinging rap on the knuckles. He swayed and——

Cra-a-ack!

"Look out!" sang out one of the Remove juniors.

"He's falling!"

Splash!

The board had given way under Langley-Mostyn's weight, with the result that he fell feet-first into the butt, sending up a volume of water, which caused the Remove juniors to back away.

Next instant the dandy's head appeared above the edge of the butt.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Removites.

"My hat! Doesn't he look a sight?" said Nipper. "Now, you rotter, don't you wish you'd apologised?"

"You young heoligans! I'll report you to Mr. Potts for this! I'll——"

Clang, clang!

"Hallo! There's the bell for morning lessons!" said Nipper. "Come along, you fellows! Can't waste any more time over that cad! He can get out the best way he can!"

And that is exactly what the lordly Langley-Mostyn had to do.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Bit Too Thick.

"You'll find Potts a rare terror!" said Bob Weston, as he hurried along to the Remove class-room with Nipper & Co. Bob Weston was not looking at all pleased with himself.

Nipper patted him on the back, and smiled good-naturedly.

"We've already found old Potts to be a rare terror!" he said. "But we're quite prepared to deal with him. He's already given us three hundred lines a-piece!"

"My word!"

"He told Langley-Mostyn to take down all our names," went on Nipper. "But we weren't going to stand any of that nonsense! We've dealt with Langley-Mostyn!"

They reached the class-room at last. Mr. Potts was standing by his desk, and stared at the juniors as they entered, with eyes that glistened savagely.

"Hurry up, there!" he rapped out. "You're wasting time!"

The Removites made no attempt to walk any quicker.

"D'you hear me?" shouted Mr. Potts angrily. "Move a bit quicker!"

Nipper turned round.

"Did you speak to me, sir?" he asked serenely.

"Of course I spoke to you!" growled Mr. Potts. "I told you to hurry up. Anybody would think you were going to a funeral. No doubt, however, Mr. Crowell has allowed you to get into backadalsical ways. But I will soon make an alteration!"

And, as if to add emphasis to his statement, Mr. Potts banged his cane on the desk.

The temporary master turned his attention again in the direction of the door, through which juniors were still entering.

Fatty Little came in, breathing heavily from running. Fatty had been in the tuckshop when the bell had sounded. And as at the moment Fatty had had three whole tarts on his plate he had stayed to finish them.

The fat junior was munching a piece of toffee as he rushed into the class-room, and this fact did not escape the eagle eye of Mr. Potts.

He clutched at Fatty Little as the Removeite was about to walk by his desk.

"Boy," he rapped out, "what have you got in your mouth?"

"Mmmmmmmmmmmmm!" mumbled Fatty Little. More he could not say, as the lump of toffee was firmly fixed between his two rows of teeth.

Mr. Potts stamped his feet in anger.

"Answer me immediately!" he roared. "What have you got in your mouth?"

"Mmmmmmmmmmmmm!" muttered the fat junior, trying hard to dislodge the toffee.

"Disgusting!" ground out Mr. Potts, swinging his cane through the air. "You have filled your ugly mouth with toffee!"

"M-m-m-mmm!" mumbled Fatty.

"I say you have!" said the master. "Disgusting! The tuckshop should not be opened so early in the morning. By George! I wish I were headmaster here! I'd soon make a few alterations! Hold out your hand, boy!"

"My giddy aunt!" said Handforth, in amazement. "He's actually going to cane Fatty for eating toffee!"

"The rotter!" said several Remove juniors.

Fatty Little backed away in astonishment at the master's command. Mr. Potts reached out and dragged him forward again.

"Hold out your hand!" roared the master.

"M-mmmmm!"

"Do as you're told, you disgraceful boy!" exclaimed Mr. Potts.

"M-mmm! Oh dear!" sighed Fatty Little, as with a last tremendous effort he managed to dislodge the toffee. "Mr. Crowell never caned me for eating toffee!" he added.

"I don't care a rap for what Mr. Crowell did!" snapped the Rottingham master. "You're under my control now, and I'm certainly not going to stand any nonsense! Hold out your hand!"

Fatty Little held his hand out very gingerly.

Swish!

The fat junior promptly received a stinging cut.

"Now the other one!"

Fatty Little hesitated, and turned a pleading glance in the direction of the Removeites.

Nipper stood up in his seat, and, with his brows knitted, faced the tyrannical master.

"It isn't fair to thrash Fatty for——" he began.

"Boy," rapped out Mr. Potts, "what right have you to interfere? I am sole judge of what is fair. Sit down immediately!"

"Mr. Crowell wouldn't have dreamed of caning Fatty for eating toffee," went on Nipper, making no attempt to obey the master's command. "He——"

"I will deal with you presently," said Mr. Potts, with a gesture. He faced Fatty Little once again. "Hold out your hand!" he thundered.

"Great cokernuts!" gasped Fatty Little; but, all the same, he obeyed the order.

Swish!

Once more the fat junior received a stinging cut on his hand.

"Now go to your seat!" roared Mr. Potts. "And let this be a lesson to you. If I ever see you with toffee in your mouth again, I will punish you more severely. I—— Bless my soul! What is that boy there doing with his arms on his desk?"

The boy addressed happened to be Cornelius Trotwood, who was rather deaf. Thus it was not surprising that he did not hear Mr. Potts' remark, and made no attempt to remove his arms from his desk.

Mr. Potts stepped between the rows of desks.

"Boy," he thundered, "didn't you hear me speak?"

Cornelius Trotwood started back in surprise.

"Been here a week?" he said quietly. "No; I have only been here a few minutes!"

"Boy, you insult me!"

"No, I have not had tea," said Cornelius simply. "We don't have tea till the afternoon!"

"You young rascal!" roared the master. "I will soon put an end to your nonsense! Come out before the class!"

"Excuse me, sir," said Tommy Watson, who sat next to the deaf junior, Trotwood is very deaf!"

"Deaf?"

"Yes, Mr. Crowell always makes allowances for him."

Mr. Potts grunted.

"Oh, does he?" he said. "Well, I'm not going to! The boy has no right to be deaf!"

The tyrannical master grabbed the deaf junior by the sleeve of his jacket, and dragged him out before the class.

"Now, hold your hand out!" he roared.

"No, I shouldn't think of indulging in a boxing bout," faltered Cornelius Trotwood. "I——"

"Hold your hand out!" bellowed Mr. Potts, putting his mouth close to the deaf junior's ear.

Cornelius Trotwood could not very well help hearing this time. He held his hand out meekly.

Swish!

"Now the other one!"

"The brute—the utter brute!" exclaimed Handforth angrily.

"He ought to be jolly well boiled in oil for this!" said Nipper.

"You were talking, Nipper, and you, too, Handforth!" said Mr. Potts, swinging round towards the class. "The lines I gave you this morning are doubled. By the way, Langley-Mostyn, have you got that list of names?"

Mr. Potts stared in the direction of the Rottingham juniors.

"Where is Langley-Mostyn?" he demanded. "Weston, have you any idea where Langley-Mostyn has got to?"

"No, sir!" replied Bob Weston.

"Dear me! I wonder——"

Mr. Potts broke off abruptly as there came a spluttering voice from outside the class-room.

All eyes were turned in the direction of the doorway. Next moment the door was flung open, and in strode a figure, dripping water at every step.

It was Langley-Mostyn!

The Removites grinned, the Rottingham juniors stared at the newcomer in amazement, whilst Mr. Potts staggered back, astonished.

"Dear me! Have you met with an accident, Langley-Mostyn?" he asked.

"Accident!" exclaimed the dandy. "I have been hurled into a filthy water-butt by a lot of young boogigans!"

"Surely——"

"Look at me!" roared Langley-Mostyn. "I'm soaked to the skin! Look at my clothes! They're absolutely ruined! I demand that you inquire into this mattah, Mr. Potts!"

"I will certainly do so," said the master. "Have you any idea who your assailants were? Did they belong to the village, or—"

"Village be hanged!" cried Langley-Mostyn. "The hoodlums are sitting in this room now. I was dragged into the Triangle by some of those St. Frank's rotters, and hurled into the water-butt!"

"Bless my soul!" Mr. Potts' eyes glinted savagely. "This is almost beyond comprehension! Perhaps, Langley-Mostyn, you would not mind pointing to the boys who maltreated you!"

Langley-Mostyn did so very willingly. He pointed first to Nipper and Tregellis-West and Watson, and then to Handforth, McClure, Church, Pitt, Grey, De Valerie, Hart, and Somerton.

"Eleven against one!" said Mr. Potts, between his teeth. "It is disgraceful that so many boys should band together for the purpose of torturing one solitary boy! I believe Mr. Crowell mentioned something about St. Frank's always playing the game. H'm! It seems like it. Now, then, you boys, stand out before the class!"

The eleven St. Frank's juniors left their desks at a sign from Nipper, and stood in a line before the whole class.

Mr. Potts gripped his cane hard, and stood before Nipper.

"I am going to punish you all very severely," he said, "as I feel that your conduct is thoroughly deserving of such punishment. Your attitude towards a poor, inoffensive boy like Langley-Mostyn is most reprehensible. You have behaved worse than a band of hoodlums, and, in my opinion, you have disgraced your school. I will now proceed to teach you a lesson. Hold out your hand!"

Nipper made no attempt to obey the command. He held his hands behind him, and stared hard at the angry master.

"D'you hear me?" thundered Mr. Potts. "I order you to hold out your hand!"

Still Nipper did not move.

Mr. Potts ground his teeth in his rage, and turned to Handforth, who was next in the line.

"Hold out your hand!" he commanded.

"I'm not going to do anything of the kind," said Handforth boldly. "You've no right to punish us, and I'm jolly well going to see that you don't cane me!"

"Boy!" Mr. Potts fairly spluttered with rage. "You dare to defy me? You dare to refuse to hold out your hand?"

"Yes, I do refuse," said Handforth. "We only gave Langley-Mostyn the punishment he deserved. The fellow's an utter cad, and he's not fit to be at a decent school!"

"Oh, I say, Mr. Potts," said Langley-Mostyn cringingly, "please don't let him slander me like that! Punish him severely, and—"

"I will see that he is punished!" ground out the master. "Boy, hold out your hand! D'you hear?"

"You needn't shout so much," said Handforth. "I'm not deaf! I can hear quite plainly, and I may as well tell you that I've no intention of holding out my hand—not if you shout the roof off the building!"

"Good man, Handy!" said several of the Removites approvingly.

"Stick it!"

Mr. Potts was beside himself with rage. He moved restlessly from one foot to the other, and in turn he tightened and loosened his grip on the cane.

Suddenly, however, he shook his fist at the row of defiant juniors.

"You wait!" he said. "I will tolerate no more of this nuisance! I will see that you are all punished most severely for your disgraceful behaviour!"

Next instant the master swung out of the room, and was quickly followed by Langley-Mostyn. The dandy evidently thought he was safer outside than in, and there was no doubt that he was right.

"I wonder what the old rotter's game is?" mused Tommy Watson. The Removites were soon to know!

CHAPTER XV.

From Bad to Worse.

"The Head!"

The words were uttered in a whisper by the chums of the Remove as they caught sight of the gowned figure of Dr. Stafford coming along the passage.

Next moment the headmaster of St. Frank's strode into the classroom, followed by Mr. Potts, who was looking as angry and revengeful as ever.

"These are the boys who have deliberately insulted me and ignored my orders, Dr. Stafford!" said the temporary master, in fierce tones. "I decided to cane them for the brutal way in which they handled one of my boys, Langley-Mostyn by name; but they all refused to hold out their hands. It is mutiny—rank mutiny!"

Dr. Stafford's brows came together in a severe frown, and he fixed a stern gaze on the Removites.

"I need hardly say that the report I have just received from Mr. Potts has upset me considerably," he said austere. "What reason have you for refusing to accept punishment?"

"We considered, sir, that the punishment was undeserved," said Handforth. "We only gave that rotter—I mean, Langley-Mostyn—what he deserved!"

"Indeed!" said the Head. "That is your opinion! But I understand that Mr. Potts took an entirely different view of the matter, and, personally, I consider he was perfectly justified in doing so! I am amazed to think that eleven of my boys should have seen fit to handle one poor boy in such a brutal manner! That offence is bad enough in itself, but to defy a master and to refuse to accept punishment is a more serious offence still. I am disappointed in every one of you! You have disgraced your Form and your school!"

The Head paused to allow his words to impress themselves upon the juniors' minds.

"Now, Mr. Potts," he said, at length, "I will wait until you have administered the punishment!"

The tyrannical master's eyes gleamed with satisfaction. At last he was going to obtain his revenge on the Removites—at last he was going to make them "toe the line."

He proceeded to punish the juniors in turn. This time the Removites made no attempt to defy the tyrant. For the Head's stern eye was fixed on them, and they knew only too well that severer punishment still would await them if they made any attempt at defiance.

Two stinging cuts on each hand the juniors received, and at length, with a sigh of satisfaction, Mr. Potts hung his cane down on the desk.

The Head moved towards the door.

"Do not hesitate to send for me, Mr. Potts," he said, "if you have any more trouble with these unruly boys!"

"Very good, Dr. Stafford!" said the tyrant smoothly. "But I do not think the necessity will arise. Boys," he rapped out, turning to the Removites, "return to your places!"

Feeling sore both in body and mind, Nipper & Co. went back to their seats, and the lesson proceeded.

There was no further disturbance during the morning. Mr. Potts

proved himself to be an absolute tyrant, ever eager to "jump on" the Removites at the slightest provocation.

Lines were awarded by the hundred, and by the time lessons finished several of the Remove chums had a thousand lines booked against him.

"Thank goodness this afternoon's a half-holiday!" said Nipper, as the juniors made their way to the Hall for dinner. "I don't think I could stand another afternoon with that blessed tyrant!"

"I'm jolly well sure I couldn't!" said Handforth. "It was as much as I could do to keep my hands off the rotter! If he hadn't gone off to see the Head when he did I should have punched him on the giddy boko!"

"Jolly good job for you that you didn't, Handy!" said McClure. "You'd have got it pretty hot then!"

"Look here, Arnold McClure," said Handforth, "if you mean to suggest that I should have been afraid of the consequences——"

"Not at all!" said McClure. "But you'd have got a fearful wiggling, for a cert!"

"Well, I could have stood it!" said Handforth. "If you chaps are afraid of a rotter like Potts, I'm blessed sure I'm not! If the brute goes for me again, I shall jolly well hit out at him!"

"I don't suppose you'll get the chance, Handy, old son!" said Nipper. "We shall all be down at the nets this afternoon, and we're not likely to see anything of Potts there. And no doubt by the time we get back to the school Crowell will have returned."

Nipper was, indeed, very hopeful, but things were not to turn out as he surmised.

Directly after dinner the Removites left the school in a body, and wended their way in the direction of the playing-fields.

Owing to the fact that Langley-Mostyn, for the sheer sake of revenge, had recently dug up the ground on which the practice-nets had been pitched, a fresh piece of ground had been prepared.

The new pitch, however, was now ready for play, and the juniors were looking forward to a pleasant afternoon's cricket.

The practice started, and continued for at least half an hour. Then Handforth happened to glance in the direction of the school. Next moment he uttered an exclamation of amazement.

"Look, you chaps!" he cried. "Here comes that rotter, Langley-Mostyn, with the rest of the Rottingham kids!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Nipper. "He's got the whip-hand of those fellows again. I say, don't they look jolly sick!"

There was no doubt that the Rottingham juniors did look "jolly sick." During the time that Mr. Potts had been laid up they had defied Langley-Mostyn, and refused to play cricket with him.

Now, apparently, they were in the dandy's clutches again, and were compelled to obey his orders, in fear of being reported to Mr. Potts, and receiving a severe punishment.

Langley-Mostyn strode up to the nets, and took his place at the wicket.

"Now, then, you kids," he said, "you can start bowlin'! And mind you pitch 'em straight! If you start any tomfoolery, I shall report you to Mr. Potts. D'you heah?"

The Rottingham juniors muttered amongst themselves, but, all the same, they started to bowl to Langley-Mostyn.

The St. Frank's fellows proceeded with their practice, and took very little further notice of the other set of juniors.

After about another half an hour Nipper glanced round, and observed to his surprise that Langley-Mostyn was still batting.

He walked across to the Rottingham juniors, and nodded genially to Bob Weston.

"Has that rotter been batting all the time?" he asked.

Bob Weston nodded.

"He won't let anybody else have a whack for a long while yet."

he said. "He'll have about an hour's batting, and then let each of us have about five minutes each!"

"The rotter!" burst out Nipper. And then he turned to Langley-Mostyn. "I say, you cad," he shouted, "why don't you let one of these chaps have a turn?"

"You mind your own business!" snapped Langley-Mostyn. "I'm boss of the show heah! Now, then, young Weston, no slackin'! Bowl up!"

"Don't you, Weston!" said Nipper. "Make the rotter do some bowling!"

"It's no good," said Bob Weston, with a sigh. "The cad will make it jolly hot for us if we make any attempt to defy him!"

"But——"

"Oh, dear!" sighed Weston. "Here comes old Potts! Now we sha'n't get any batting! Langley-Mostyn will stick in all the afternoon for the sake of showing off!"

"The utter rotter!" said Nipper indignantly. And he stood by the net whilst Mr. Potts approached.

The tyrannical master clapped his hands as Langley-Mostyn sent a ball from Hope sailing high over the bowler's head.

"Well hit, Langley-Mostyn!" he said. "You appear to be in splendid form!"

"Oh, that's nothin'!" said Langley-Mostyn, with a superior air. "I'm merely playin' with the howlin'! I suppose you wouldn't like a turn with the bat, Mr. Potts?"

The master smiled in a sickly manner, and shook his head.

"No, thank you, Langley-Mostyn!" he said affably. "I'm rather afraid my cricketing days are over!"

"Well, you're welcome to a turn at the wicket, if you'd like it," said the dandy.

Nipper returned to the Removites. He had nothing but contempt for the fellow who, for the sake of currying favour with Mr. Potts, would offer to give up his bat to the master, but who would absolutely refuse to do the same thing for his own Form-fellows.

Nipper picked up a ball, and started to bowl to Tommy Watson, who was batting in the Remove net. It was not long before he turned round, and observed Langley-Mostyn in deep conversation with Mr. Potts.

"Hallo!" he said. "Those two rotters are planning some scheme, for a cert!"

"What rotters?" asked Reginald Pitt.

"Langley-Mostyn and Potts," said Nipper. "Look! They are pointing here! They——"

"My giddy aunt!" exclaimed Handforth. "They're coming over here! I wonder what the merry dickens they want!"

Handforth was soon to know.

Langley-Mostyn, with his bat tucked under his arm, came sauntering towards the Removites, accompanied by Mr. Potts.

The master was the first to speak.

"Ahem!" he coughed. "I presume you have no objection to Langley-Mostyn practising at your net?"

"He can practise at this net if he likes," said Nipper. "We'll take the next one!"

"Boy, you misunderstand me!" snapped Mr. Potts. "Langley-Mostyn wishes to practise at this net, and to play to your bowling."

"Well, he can jolly well go on wishing," said Nipper boldly, "for we absolutely refuse to play with him!"

Mr. Potts' eyes glinted fiercely.

"Ahem!" he coughed. "You are attempting to defy me again! Very well, I order you to play with Langley-Mostyn! Langley-Mostyn, take your place at the wicket! Now, then, you boys, start bowling!"

The Removites did not move.

"We're not going to bowl to the rotter!" said Nipper. "Langley-Mostyn is an utter cad, and we decline to have anything to do with him!"

"Do you wish me to report your impertinence to Dr. Stafford?"

"I don't care if——"

Nipper paused as Handforth tapped him on the arm and drew him aside. Handforth whispered something that brought a grin to Nipper's face.

"Oh, all right!" he said. "We'll bowl to the cad!"

Nipper sent down the first ball. Langley-Mostyn made an attempt to hit it, but he could not reach the ball, for the simple reason that it was well off the stumps.

The next ball was sent down by Handforth, but this was also a wide.

The rest of the Removites entered into the spirit of the affair, and proceeded to bowl wides that flew out of the reach of Langley-Mostyn.

De Valerie varied the bowling slightly by bowling over the dandy's head. The colour rose rapidly in Langley-Mostyn's face. It was plain to him that he was being ragged and his temper rose accordingly.

"Bowl properly, you young hooligans!" he shouted. "Mr. Potts, they're bowlin' wides deliberately! Make them stop it!"

"Yes; bowl properly, you young rascals!" snapped the master. "What do you mean by bowling wides?"

"Wides?" said Nipper meekly. "It's Langley-Mostyn's bad batting! He doesn't know how to play!"

"Langley-Mostyn is a splendid cricketer!" said Mr. Potts. "Bowl straight, and he will soon show you whether he can play!"

"Right-ho!"

Nipper took a lengthy run, and by this time he sent down a perfectly straight ball.

Crack!

Langley-Mostyn was clean bowled. His middle stump lay in a horizontal position on the ground.

* The dandy replaced the stump, but he had no better luck with the next three balls. He was clean bowled in quick succession by Tommy Watson, Eric, and De Valerie.

He hit the ground fiercely in his rage, and made up his mind to hit the next ball at all costs.

As it happened, the next ball he received was a very simple one. He caught it fairly in the middle of the bat. The ball shot swiftly through the air in the direction of Mr. Potts.

The master backed to avoid being hit; but, unfortunately for him, he backed until his heels came into contact with a cricket-bag that was lying on the ground.

Thud!

Mr. Potts measured his length on the earth. The Removites grinned as they watched him fall, but the smiles soon vanished from the juniors' faces as they observed Dr. Stafford coming towards them.

"The Head!" breathed Tommy Watson.

"Great pip!"

Mr. Potts clambered up as the Head neared the scene.

"I am extremely glad you have come over here, Dr. Stafford," said the tyrant. "No doubt you saw me fall to the ground?"

"I did," said the Head; "and I wondered——"

"Well, I will tell you the reason of my fall," said Mr. Potts. "I came here to inform these boys that they had failed to do the impositions I gave them this morning. What did they do? They pushed me against that bag, and caused me to measure my length on the ground!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head astounded.

"My hat! What a lie!" muttered Handforth.

"This is disgraceful—preposterous!" said the Head sternly. "The behaviour of you Remove juniors seems to go from bad to worse! You will all return to the school, and wait for me in my study!"

"But, sir——" protested Nipper.

"Silence!" rapped out the Head. "Return to the school instantly!"

And the juniors, smarting with righteous indignation, took their departure.

"The rotter!"

"The low-down cad!"

"The benstly outsider!"

The Remove juniors, their hands sore from the caning they had received from the Head, were loud in their condemnation of the tyrannical Mr. Potts.

"Thank goodness Crowell's coming back this evening!" said Tommy Watson. "One day of that rotter Potts is quite enough for me!"

"Crowell's not coming back to-night," said Nipper.

"What!" gasped the Removites.

"He's gone to see a brother who's ill," explained Nipper. "A wire has just come through to say that he won't be back until to-morrow night. I know it's the truth, because Fenton of the Sixth told me!"

"Great Scott!"

The Removites groaned dismally. One day of Mr. Potts was quite enough for them, but to have to put up with another——

The prospects for the near future were certainly not bright ones, from the point of view of Nipper & Co.

CHAPTER XVI.

All Through the Tyrant.

Scratch! Scratch!

Nipper & Co., the chums of Study C, in the Remove passage at St. Frank's, were hard at work.

In fact, they had been working for fully an hour, during which time the only sound to be heard in the study was the scratching of pens.

Nipper, Sir Montie Tregellis-West, and Tommy Watson were writing at top speed, and had no time to speak.

Suddenly, however, Nipper flung down his pen and sat back in his chair.

"Oh dear!" he muttered dismally. "My hand fairly aches, and still I've got another hundred to do!"

"Begad!" said Tregellis-West. "I must say I'm pretty well fed-up. I reckon that rotter Potts wants a jolly good bumpin' for saddlin' us with such a whack of lines. What do you say, dear old boys?"

Tommy Watson snorted.

"Bumping!" he growled. "Bumping isn't bad enough for the rotter. He wants tarring and feathering and boiling in oil!"

Tommy Watson paused as the door of the study opened and in walked Reginald Pitt and Grey, each of whom was frowning portentously.

"Hallo, my sons!" sang out Nipper. "Got through your impets?"

"Finished them half an hour ago," said Pitt. "We strolled down to the Common-room, and what do you think we saw there?"

"Well, a table and chairs and fireplace, and——" began Tommy Watson lightly.

"Fathead!" cried Reginald Pitt. "This isn't a time for joking."

"You're right there, old son," said Nipper. "It's a jolly serious time. We've all got some more lines to do, and we've got to look forward to another day of that rotter Potts!"

"And another day of Langley-Mostyn, too," said Reginald Pitt.

"Hallo! What's Langley-Mostyn doing now?"

"He's carrying on something frightful in the Common-room!" said Pitt. "He's making all those Nottingham kids slave for him, and he's threatening to report them all to Potts."

"Oh dear!" sighed Nipper. "Potts is a rotter—there's no doubt about that—but I feel that Langley-Mostyn is a bigger rotter!"

"We had to leave the Common-room," said Reginald Pitt. "We simply couldn't stand there and watch Langley-Mostyn behaving like a miniature Kaiser and ordering those kids about as he thought fit. We came along to see you, thinking we might all do something to take down that blessed dandy."

"Well, we might," said Tommy Watson; "but——"

"But we've still got about a hundred lines each to do," said Nipper. "Old Potts says they've got to be done to-night, and I'm hanged if I feel inclined to upset the rotter again to-day. We've each had two canings, and I'm not hankering after any more!"

"Begad! I must say I agree with you, dear old boy," said Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "But, look here, suppose we hurry along with our lines, and then pop down to the Common-room?"

"Right-ho!" said Reginald Pitt. "I expect you'll find Langley-Mostyn still carrying on when you get there."

"Oh, we'll soon put a stop to his little game," said Nipper. "Come on, you fellows, let's peg away again!"

Scratch! Scratch!

Nipper & Co. wrote furiously, and, save for the sound of scratching pens, silence reigned in Study C for some time.

Tap!

There was a knock on the door of the study.

"Come in, fathead!" sang out Nipper, without looking up.

The door opened, and in walked Mr. Potts, smiling in that sickly manner that so annoyed the St. Frank's juniors.

"Dear me!"

The three chums started as they heard the familiar voice, and stared at the tyrant in surprise.

"You may well look amazed," said Mr. Potts smoothly. "May I ask, Nipper, why you thought fit to refer to me as a fathead?"

"I—I didn't think it was you," faltered Nipper. "I—I thought——"

"I don't care what you thought!" rapped out Mr. Potts, the smile vanishing from his face. "You have again insulted me. I will not tolerate your insults! Understand me? You will do me another two hundred lines by midday to-morrow. D'you hear?"

Nipper did not reply. He was too flabbergasted by the unfair punishment to answer the tyrant.

"Now, where are the impositions which are due to be finished this evening?" demanded Mr. Potts.

"We've nearly finished them," said Tommy Watson.

"Nearly finished them!" snapped the tyrant. "Why, they should be finished by now. You have been wasting time!"

"We've not——" began Tommy Watson.

"Boy," thundered Mr. Potts, "how dare you bandy words with me! You will do me another two hundred lines by to-morrow. And if the impositions you are now engaged upon are not finished before supper they will be doubled. I will stand no more nonsense!"

With that Mr. Potts turned on his heel and strode out of the room, leaving Nipper & Co. fairly flabbergasted.

"The low-down rotter!" said Nipper, after a few moments' silence. "He only came in here so as to give us some more lines!"

"There's no doubt about that," said Tommy Watson. "It's a pity we can't take him in hand as we have Langley-Mostyn!"

"Well, we shall have to get our own back on Potts somehow," said Nipper. "We'll have a pow-wow presently, and see if something can't be done. Now let's polish off these blessed lines and go down and see what Langley-Mostyn is doing. It'll ease our feelings a bit to take that cad down another peg."

"What-ho!"

It did not take the chums long to finish their impositions. Then, gathering up the papers, they took them along to Mr. Potts' study and left them there.

"Now for Langley-Mostyn!" said Nipper, clenching his hands hard.

The three chums strode along in the direction of the Common-room. Just as they neared the room there came a burst of laughter from inside.

"Sounds like Fullwood & Co.'s chuckle!" remarked Tommy Watson.

The juniors entered the Common-room, to find Fullwood & Co., the Nuts of St. Frank's, chortling merrily.

The cause of their chortles was not hard to find.

Langley-Mostyn was lolling back in an easy-chair, which had evidently been brought from his study, whilst standing around him were a number of Rottingham juniors.

"Now, then, young Fenwick," drawled the dandy, "just put that beastly cushion behind my head! You, Davidson, can take off my boots, and put on my slippers—d'you heah?"

Davidson hesitated. He was half-inclined to refuse, but he knew that Langley-Mostyn would report him to Mr. Potts if he did.

"Bai Jove," said the dandy, "there's a spot of mud on my trousers! Brush it off, young Weston!"

Bob Weston made no attempt to obey the command.

Langley-Mostyn glared at him.

"Did you heah me speak to you?" he snapped. "Brush the mud off my beastly trusaks!"

"Brush it off yourself!" said Weston defiantly.

"What!" cried Langley-Mostyn. "You defy me! You refuse to obey my orders! By gad, I'll report you to Mr. Potts for this!"

"You can jolly well report on!" said Weston boldly. "I'd sooner be caned by Potts than knuckle under to a cad like you!"

"You—you—" spluttered Langley-Mostyn.

And, catching sight of his boots lying at his side, he picked one of them up. Next moment he hurled it with terrific force at Bob Weston's head.

Thud!

Weston was quite unprepared. Before he could dodge, the boot caught him a severe blow on the forehead, causing him to stagger backwards.

"Perhaps that will teach you not to defy me!" said Langley-Mostyn, red with rage.

"Oh, you cad—you utter cad!" exclaimed Nipper.

Langley-Mostyn turned round.

"Bai Jove! You here?" he said languidly. "Of course, you would butt in where you're not wanted!"

"As far as I can see, we are wanted!" said Nipper.

"What for?"

"Why, to stop you behaving like a low-down cad!" exclaimed Nipper hotly. "Only a rotter would hurl a boot at another chap's head! I've a jolly good mind to give you a thrashing!"

"Bai Jove, you'd better not touch me!" said Langley-Mostyn. "I'm standin' no nonsense now! You lay a hand on me, and I'll see that you receive a thunderin' good hidin' from Mr. Potts!"

"You sneakin' cad!" cried Nipper indignantly.

"Oh, run away!" said Langley-Mostyn. "I can't waste my beastly time talkin' to a lot of young hoodligans!"

"You—you— Let's rag the rotter, you fellows!" said Nipper, advancing towards the dandy. "He's jolly well asked for it, and he's going to get it!"

Langley-Mostyn rose in his chair as Nipper & Co. moved towards him. In doing so he stepped with his left foot on the edge of a stool. The stool over-balanced, and, missing his footing, the dandy went sprawling to the floor.

"Oh, you young hoodligans!" shrieked Langley-Mostyn. "Don't you dare to touch me! Don't you—"

"They shall not touch you, Langley-Mostyn! I will see to that!"

The juniors flushed round, to find Mr. Potts, cane in hand, standing before them.

Mr. Potts fixed his eyes upon Nipper & Co.

"Once again I have caught you in the act of bullying!" he said.

"Hold out your hands!"

"What for?" demanded Nipper.

"For bullying Langley-Mostyn, of course!" said the tyrant.

"Perhaps you are not aware that I saw you send him to the floor?"

"Why, he slipped on the stool," said Nipper, "and—"

"How dare you argue with me!" roared Mr. Potts. "Hold out your hands at once!"

But—

"It's true, Mr. Potts," said Bob Weston, determined that Nipper & Co. should not suffer if he could help it. "Langley-Mostyn did slip, and—"

"You will do me two hundred lines for interfering in business which does not concern you, Weston!" said Mr. Potts fiercely.

"You St. Frank's boys will hold out your hands immediately, otherwise I shall report you to Dr. Stafford!"

Nipper & Co. stared at one another helplessly. They were cornered; they knew that. Mr. Potts was already responsible for their being in the Head's bad books, and Dr. Stafford was more likely to believe a statement made by the tyrant than by Nipper and his chums.

There was only one course to be taken, and the Removites promptly took it.

Swish, swish!

Mr. Potts plied his cane with the utmost vigour, and Nipper & Co. were feeling sore both in body and mind when at length they left the Common-room for Study C.

They were feeling more revengeful towards the tyrannical master than ever; but was it possible for them to devise some scheme for getting their own back on Mr. Potts?

CHAPTER XVII.

At Dead of Night.

"It's worth it!"

Thus said Nipper an hour or so later. He was sitting in Study C with his chums, Tregellis-West and Watson. Handforth & Co. were also there, and so were Reginald Pitt and Gray.

"Look here," said Handforth, a very thoughtful expression on his brow, "why don't you leave everything to me?"

"For the simple reason that we want the wheeze to work properly," said Nipper. "We know what you are for mucking things up, and—"

"Oh, do you?" grunted Handforth. "Let me tell you, Nipper, that I'm quite capable of working any wheeze, and if you say I'm not, I'll jolly well dot you one on the nose!"

"Dry up, Handy!" said Tommy Watson, with a grin.

"You go and eat coke!" growled Handforth. "I'm talking to Nipper! Now, look here, Nipper, I can make a success of this jape on old Potts!"

"So can I," said Nipper.

"But I'm sure to make a bigger success than you, and——"

"It's your conceit, Handy, that makes you think so!" said Nipper, with a smile. "It's our wheeze, and we're going to carry it out. You can keep cave in the dormitory, if you like, and give us the tip if anything unforeseen happens."

"Bosh!" said Handforth. "That's not good enough for me!"

"Then I'm afraid you'll have to go to sleep, old son," said Nipper. "If you want to get your own back on Potts, then you'll have to think of a stunt. We've got our wheeze, and——"

Nipper paused, for at that moment the door shot open, and there came the sound of footsteps retreating down the passage.

Nipper made a dart for the doorway, and peered down the passage in each direction. Then he looked back into the study.

"Somebody was listening at the keyhole," he said.

"That's what I thought," said Tommy Watson; "but did you see who it was, Nipper?"

"No; there was no sign of anybody in the passage."

"Now you're done," said Handforth. "Somebody's heard your scheme, and is bound to tell old Potts. You'd far better let me carry out the wheeze."

"What difference will that make?" demanded Nipper. "If Potts gets to hear what we're going to do, you're just as likely to make a mess of the wheeze as I am."

"Piffle—utter piffle!" said Handforth. "I never make a mess——"
Clang clang!

At that moment the bell rang out for supper, and Handforth had no further chance of emphasising his claims to carry out the jape on Mr. Potts, for the simple reason that Nipper & Co. darted out of the study, and made tracks for the dining-hall.

During supper Nipper happened to glance across at Langley-Mostyn, seated at the Nottingham table.

The dandy was looking more lordly than ever, and every time he caught sight of Nipper & Co. staring at him he grinned in a cynical manner.

Langley-Mostyn looked very pleased with himself, and Nipper & Co. little realised the reason for his self-satisfaction.

The fact was Langley-Mostyn had listened at the keyhole of Study C, and had overheard Nipper & Co.'s plot for getting their revenge on the tyrannical master.

Langley-Mostyn had not told Mr. Potts. No; he had a better scheme than that, and he intended to carry it out at the most opportune moment.

And thus it happened that directly after supper, when Nipper & Co. crept stealthily in the direction of Mr. Potts' bed-room, Langley-Mostyn made his way to Study C.

He made a quick search of the study, and grinned with satisfaction as he observed a handkerchief, bearing the initial "N," lying in the easy-chair.

The dandy picked up the handkerchief, and, thrusting it into his pocket, strode out of the study.

Meanwhile, Nipper & Co. were very busy in Mr. Potts' bed-room.

The three chums had a large ball of string with them. They cut off several yards, and tied one end to the sheet on the bed. Then they passed the string under the counterpane, over the back of the bedstead, under the rug on the floor, and out into the passage.

The string was practically all hidden, and only a search would have discovered its presence.

"As soon as old Potts gets into bed," said Nipper softly, "we'll all give a tug outside, and the clothes will all shoot off him!"

"Begad, I'm thinkin' he'll have a frightful shock, dear old boys!" said Sir Montie Tregellis-West.

"Serves him right!" said Nipper. "But that won't be the only shock he'll get! We'll tie another bit of string to the bolster, and carry the other end outside the door."

This was soon done. Then another piece of string was fastened to the cords of a big picture on the wall, and another piece was tied to the tongs in the fireplace.

"I say," remarked Tommy Watson, as he was attending to the fastening of the fireirons, "we can't hide this piece of string very well!"

"Well, we must run some risk," said Nipper. "After all, if old Potts spots this, he's not so likely to observe the others."

"That's so," said Tommy Watson; and he went on with his task.

Nipper fastened another length of string to a rug at the side of the tyrant's bed, and, after placing several prickly brushes between the sheets, the three chums took their departure in gleeful moods.

If everything went well, it was pretty certain that Mr. Potts would not fall asleep directly he placed his head on the pillow that night.

Nipper & Co. went downstairs, and were just in time to join the rest of the Removites as they wended their way in the direction of the dormitory.

They met Langley-Mostyn on the way. The dandy was grinning.

"What the dickens has that rotter got to grin at?" remarked Nipper.

But the only one that could answer that question was Langley-Mostyn himself, and he certainly did not feel inclined to enlighten the chums on the matter.

Nipper & Co. were soon in bed, and apparently fast asleep. The rest of the Removites dropped off to sleep one by one, but Nipper and his chums remained awake.

Even Handforth succumbed; Nipper's offer that he should remain awake and keep cave had not appealed to the leader of Study D.

Boom!

Eleven o'clock tolled out, and before the chimes had finished Nipper & Co. were sitting up in bed, and carefully extracting their top sheets.

Then each of them, with a sheet tucked under his arm, crept stealthily out of the dormitory, and as they made their way to Study C they had no reason to suspect that Langley-Mostyn had witnessed their departure, and was at that moment grinning to himself with satisfaction.

Arrived in Study C, Nipper and his chums took three black masks from the bookcase drawer, and proceeded to cover up the top portion of their faces.

Then they passed the sheets over their heads, draped them round their shoulders, so that they covered their pyjamas, and kept them in position by means of lengths of string tied round their chests.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tommy Watson, catching a glimpse of himself in the looking-glass. "Won't old Potts have a fit when he sees us?"

"He's going to have several fits before he gets to sleep to-night!" said Nipper. "But the rotter deserves 'em all! Now, let's get along. Potts goes to bed at eleven, and we shall catch him nicely."

With stealth worthy of Redskins, Nipper & Co. crept in the direction of the passage leading to the tyrant's bed-room.

They paused at the end of the passage as they heard footsteps at the other end.

"We're in luck!" whispered Nipper. "The rotter is just coming along!"

Utterly unsuspecting of the juniors' presence, Mr. Potts entered his bed-room, and closed the door without locking it.

Nipper & Co. crept quietly up to the door, and listened intently whilst Mr. Potts prepared for bed.

At length the light disappeared from under the door, and a moment or so later a fearful shriek rent the air.

"Hallo!" muttered Nipper. "He's found the brushes!"

There was no doubt that Mr. Potts had. He had plunged his feet between the sheets, and as they had come into contact with the bristles of the brushes, he imagined for the moment that there were thousands of needles piled in a heap in his bed.

He sat up almost terror-stricken, and before he could move again the bedclothes gradually disappeared towards the back of the bed.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Potts at the uncanny happenings. "What—what—what—"

The tyrant was too flabbergasted to do more than splutter. Nipper & Co. heard the creaking of the mattress, and came to the conclusion that Mr. Potts was stepping out of bed.

Tommy Watson pulled the string tied to the mat, just at the moment that the Nottingham master placed his feet on it.

"Ow-w-w-w!" yelled Mr. Potts, as he felt his feet drawn from under him.

He staggered backwards, fell against a chair, and dropped in a heap to the floor. There he lay quivering, utterly at a loss to account for the mysterious happenings.

Nipper & Co. grinned to themselves. They felt that their wheeze was succeeding beyond all expectations.

"He's jolly quiet all of a sudden!" remarked Nipper, after there had been a few moments of complete silence. "I wonder—Hold on to the door, Montie!"

Nipper's command had been called forth by the fact that a light had suddenly appeared beneath the door of the room. Evidently Mr. Potts had plucked up courage to turn on the switch.

Sir Montie Tregellis-West gripped the handle of the door with both hands.

At that instant, however, Mr. Potts was gazing about his bed-room in utter amazement. There was no sign of any intruder, and his courage began to return to him.

He was about to return to his bed, when all of a sudden the picture on the wall rocked from side to side.

Mr. Potts uttered another startled shout, and then his attention was drawn from the picture as the tongs in the fireplace commenced to clang.

The tyrant gazed in the direction of the grate, and fairly held his breath as he saw the tongs jumping up and down.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped. "This pup-pup-place must b-b-be haunted. I c-c-cannot understand what—"

Mr. Potts broke off abruptly as the door of the room was flung open, and three figures, attired from head to foot in white, entered.

Nipper closed the door, and then the three juniors faced the tyrant. Mr. Potts fell back against his bed, his breath coming in short gasps.

"Wh-wh-who are you?" he managed to stutter at length.

"We are the Avenging Three!" replied Nipper, in a low, deep voice, that was certainly not recognisable to the tyrant. "We have come to inflict punishment upon you for all your misdeeds!"

"M-m-m-my what!"

"Your misdeeds!" said Nipper, in a deeper voice than ever. "You have proved yourself to be a bully, a tyrant, and a scoundrel, utterly unfit to be a master at a public school!"

"I—I—I——" faltered the tyrant in terror.

"The Avenging Three," went on Nipper, "have come to order you to leave this school within twenty-four hours!"

"I—I won't!" muttered Mr. Potts, as boldly as possible.

"Then beware!" said Nipper. "The Avenging Three will not rest until you have shaken the dust of St. Frank's from under your feet. If you stay, then the Avenging Three will return here night after night, and will torment you until you see fit to take your departure. That is so, brothers, isn't it?"

"A'j, brother!" responded Tregellis-West and Watson in low voices.

"Sleep will be denied you," continued Nipper. "The Avenging Three are aware of your atrocious behaviour at this school, and they consider it their duty to rid St. Frank's of your presence. Now, make your choice. Depart within twenty-four hours, or the Avenging Three will visit you again!"

"I—I——"

Mr. Potts cast a terrorised glance about him, and, snatching up a chair, hurled it at the juniors.

Nipper & Co. managed to duck in the nick of time. Then, at a sign from Nipper, they darted out of the room. They felt it best to depart then, fearing that a struggle might ensue, the masks be torn from their faces, and that they would be recognised.

They had given Mr. Potts a shock; that was all they wished to do. If he cleared out of St. Frank's in consequence of their threats, so much the better.

Thinking that the tyrant might give chase and follow them to the Remove dormitory, Nipper & Co. turned in the opposite direction, intending to make their way to their sleeping-quarters.

It was as well for them that they did, for Langley-Mostyn had followed, and placed a number of fire-buckets, filled with water, across the passage between Mr. Potts' bed-room and the landing.

The dandy had hoped that the three chums would collide with the buckets and be sent sprawling; but in making their escape in the opposite direction, Nipper & Co. had avoided falling into Langley-Mostyn's trap.

As it happened, Mr. Potts proved to be the victim.

Recovering slightly from his shock, the tyrant had left his room, and walked hurriedly in the direction of the fire-buckets.

The passage was unlighted, and therefore Mr. Potts did not see the buckets. But he soon felt them.

"Ow! What the—— Yow-ow-ow-ow!" he shrieked, as his shin came into contact with a bucket.

He lost his balance, and fell with a heavy thud to the floor, his head colliding with the rim of another of the buckets.

Mr. Potts was startled, and, moreover, hurt. It was some time before he was able to scramble to his feet, and crawl dejectedly back to his bed-room.

Meanwhile Nipper & Co. had reached the Remove dormitory, and as they crept towards their beds Nipper whispered:

"I reckon the wheeze worked a treat!"

And his chums responded with:

"Hear, hear!"

But they little realised what the morrow had in store for them!

CHAPTER XVIII. Worse Than a Tyrant.

"Well, how did the wheeze work?"

It was Handforth who asked the question, directly after breakfast the following morning. It was the first opportunity he had had of speaking to Nipper & Co. on their own.

"A treat, my son," said Nipper. "Everything went off like

clockwork! Old Potts was fairly scared out of his life. I bet he's never had such a shock before!"

"I expect you made a muck of everything!" said Handforth disparagingly. "Now, if I'd have been there——"

"The wheeze would have gone wrong!" broke in Nipper. "As it is, it was a great success!"

"Bosh!"

"But it was!" insisted Nipper. "Didn't you notice old Potts wasn't at breakfast?"

"That's nothing," said Handforth. "He probably overslept himself!"

"Well, we threatened to do all manner of things to him if he didn't leave St. Frank's," said Nipper; "and if the truth is known, he's probably packing up at this moment."

"How do you know he didn't recognise you, and——"

"My dear fathead, he couldn't have done," said Nipper. "We were covered with sheets, and he couldn't see our faces because of the masks!"

"Suppose he recognised your voices?" said Handforth.

"Oh, dry up with your supposing!" said Nipper. "The wheeze was a bowling success, and that's all that matters. I—— Hallo! Here comes Fenton. I wonder what he wants?"

Fenton of the Sixth strode towards the juniors, and gave them a grim look.

"What have you kids been doing?" he asked.

"Just having a little chat, Fenton, old man!" replied Nipper cheerfully.

"I mean, what were you doing during the night?" said the captain of St. Frank's.

"Sleeping like good little boys," replied Nipper. "But——"

"H'm!" Fenton smiled grimly. "I wouldn't care to be in your shoes. The Head wants to see you in his study at once. And you, too, Tregellis-West and Watson!"

"Phew!" gasped the juniors, as Fenton took his departure.

"There you are," said Handforth. "I knew the wheeze hadn't worked properly. You've been found out, and——"

"My hat! It looks like it," said Nipper, with a rueful grin. "But I wonder how the dickens——"

"Oh, come along, Nipper," said Tommy Watson. "We'd better hurry up and get it over!"

Nipper & Co. strolled off, and at last reached the door of the Head's study.

Tap!

"Come in!" sang out Dr. Stafford, in response to Nipper's knock on the door.

Nipper & Co. entered, and they stopped dead on the threshold as they observed Mr. Potts standing by the Head's desk, with his head swathed in bandages.

Dr. Stafford was looking exceptionally stern.

"Close the door, Nipper," he said, "and stand in front of my desk!"

The juniors obeyed, and waited for the Head to speak again. Dr. Stafford was gazing at them very sternly.

"I wish you boys to tell me whether you left your dormitory last night after 'lights out,'" he said slowly.

"I told you they must have done, Dr. Stafford," said Mr. Potts, with a gesture. "I know they were the young boogigans who attacked me, and——"

"Pray be quiet, Mr. Potts," said the Head austere. "Now, Nipper, I am waiting for your answer. Did you leave your dormitory last night?"

"Yes, sir," admitted Nipper.

"And you made a brutal attack on Mr. Potts?"

"No, sir; we——"

"The lying young rascal!" cried Mr. Potts vehemently. "I know they——"

"Silence, Mr. Potts!" exclaimed the Head. "Please leave this unpleasant business in my hands. Now, Nipper, I suggest that you made a brutal attack on Mr. Potts last night."

"No, sir," said Nipper; "there was nothing brutal about what we did. We merely japed Mr. Potts in quite a harmless manner."

"Do you consider it a jape to place a number of buckets across the passage in order that Mr. Potts might fall over them?" said the Head. "Mr. Potts has a wound on his forehead, caused by falling on a fire-bucket. Surely you realised what the consequences might be when you transferred the buckets from the landing to the centre of the passage?"

Nipper & Co. started. They had certainly not moved the buckets.

"We—we——" began Nipper.

"Bless my soul," broke in Mr. Potts, "the young rascal is going to deny having touched the buckets!"

"I do deny it," said Nipper boldly. "We certainly japed Mr. Potts in his bed-room, but we had nothing to do with the buckets."

Mr. Potts held forth a handkerchief bearing the initial "N."

"Then how do you account for this being found by the side of the buckets?" he demanded. "Now perhaps you will say that this does not belong to you, you lying young hooligan!"

"That is sufficient, Mr. Potts," said the Head severely. "I will not allow boys under my charge to be referred to in such terms." Dr. Stafford turned to Nipper & Co. once again. "I am extremely sorry you should have seen fit to deny the charge levelled against you. You admit having frightened Mr. Potts in his bed-room, and yet you deny having placed the buckets for him to trip over!"

"We do deny it, sir!" declared Nipper.

"Then I am sorry I can take no notice of your denial," said the Head. "The finding of your handkerchief by the side of the buckets is, in my opinion, proof of your guilt. I regard your behaviour as disgraceful in the extreme. A harmless jape is one thing, but a jape with such dangerous possibilities as you played last night is quite another matter. I am determined to put an end to pranks of this sort. I therefore propose punishing you most severely!"

The Head reached for his cane, and for the next five minutes he was engaged upon the task of wielding it with all the strength he could muster.

Nipper & Co. received three swishes on each hand. It was one of the worst punishments they had ever received, and their hands were tingling.

Clang, clang!

The bell for morning lessons rang out.

"Oh dear!" groaned Nipper. "To think that we've got to go into lessons and to put up with that rotter Potts after all this! I suppose we shall get another thousand lines from him, and——"

"Begad!" said Tregellis-West. "I shall be jolly glad when old Crowell comes back! We seem to be frightfully unlucky all along the line. No matter what we do, Potts always finds out!"

"I'd jolly well like to know who put my handkerchief near those buckets," said Nipper.

"Well, when we find out who put the buckets there," said Tommy Watson, "we shall find out who was responsible for putting the handkerchief beside them."

"Hallo, you fatheads!" said Handforth, as the three chums neared the class-room. "Did you get it hot?"

"Br-r-r-r!" snorted Nipper. He had little politeness to waste on Handforth at that moment—or on anybody, for that matter.

Lessons were an agony to Nipper & Co. that morning. Not only did their hands continue to smart, but Mr. Potts "jumped on" them for the slightest offence, and doled out lines until each of the chums had nearly a thousand each.

Mr. Potts was in a towering rage most of the time, and many other juniors suffered from his wrath. Fatty Little was caned for eating toffee. De Valerie was given a hundred lines for gazing out of the window. Reginald Pitt also received an imposition for allowing his pen to fall to the floor, and several others received some form of punishment for the most trivial of offences.

It was a great relief to the juniors when morning lessons came to an end.

"Let's go and get some cricket practice," suggested Nipper, as they left the class-room. "We must do something to—"

"My hands are almost too sore to hold a cricket-bat," said Tommy Watson ruefully.

"So are mine," said Nipper. "But we must do something to buck ourselves up. We shall only fall foul of that rotter Potts if we hang about the school."

"That's true."

"Well, come on, then."

The three chums secured their cricket-bats, and were just striding across the Triangle when they observed Langley-Mostyn running after them.

"You fellahs goin' to the cricket-nets?" he asked.

"Mind your own business!" snapped Nipper.

"Bai Jove!" cried Langley-Mostyn. "You're still as cheeky as evah, then! I guess Mr. Potts will soon tame you down, though. By the way, Mr. Potts told me to tell you that he wants to see you. I shouldn't advise you to hang about, because you'll only get a worse thrashin'!"

"Potts wants to see us?" demanded Tommy Watson.

"Not you," said Langley-Mostyn. "He wants Nipper only."

"Don't you go, Nipper!" advised Watson.

"Oh, I'd better pop in and see what the rotter wants," said Nipper. "You fellows wait here. I'll soon be back!"

Nipper entered the Ancient House and made tracks for the Remove class-room. The door was open, and he rushed in. Nipper was certainly not prepared for the reception he received.

Just as he entered the class-room Mr. Potts rushed upon him, and, throwing a rope over his shoulders, tied his hands to his side.

Nipper was about to shout for help, when Mr. Potts thrust his hand over his mouth.

"By George! I'm going to make you suffer now for the way you've treated me!" he raved. "I'll teach you to play tricks on me, and to try to scare me! Take that—and that—and that!"

Mr. Potts brought his cane down heavily on Nipper's shoulder.

Slash! Slash!

The tyrant's temper was soon out of control. He struck Nipper across the legs and body and face. There was soon a weal on the junior's face about three inches long, but Mr. Potts did not desist.

The tyrant's hand was held firmly over Nipper's mouth, but after much struggling the captain of the Remove managed to utter a cry for assistance.

"Help! Help! Help!" he shouted, but his action only made Mr. Potts more savage.

He lashed away unmercifully at Nipper, and thus he did not see Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson come to the window of the class-room.

"Look at the rotter!" cried Tommy Watson. "He's torturing Nipper! Come on, Montie!"

The two juniors started to climb in at the window, but before they could dash to the rescue, the door of the class-room had opened to admit Dr. Stafford and another gentleman of similar build.

The latter uttered a cry of astonishment as he caught sight of the tyrant.

"Mr. Potts!" he exclaimed. "What is the meaning of this? What do you mean by thrashing that boy in such an unmerciful manner?"

Mr. Potts fell back. He had recognised the newcomer as Dr. Richards, the headmaster of Nottingham School.

Dr. Richards stepped across the room, and he held his breath as he observed the figure of Nipper, and caught sight of the sweat on the junior's face.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped. "I am amazed to think that you should see fit to thrash a boy in such a brutal manner!"

"The young hooligan——" began the tyrant.

"Enough!" said the Nottingham headmaster, with a gesture. "I will listen to no excuses! You will go to your own room immediately, and make arrangements for leaving this school instantly. No longer are you a Nottingham master!"

Mr. Potts slunk out of the room. He knew from experience that nothing was to be gained from arguing with Dr. Richards.

He had gone too far, and he was to suffer the disgrace and punishment that he so richly deserved.

Nipper was assisted to his feet and unbound. He was white with pain, and aching in every limb. His chums looked after him, however, and took him to their study.

The knowledge that Mr. Potts was to leave the school bucked Nipper up wonderfully, and very soon he was almost his old self again.

CHAPTER XIX.

Conclusion.

"One of them's gone," said Tommy Watson next day. "I only wish the other one was going, too!"

Mr. Potts had already left St. Frank's. But Langley-Mostyn still stayed, and so far they did not know when the Nottingham fellows were going to leave.

"It's too thick!" grumbled Nipper. "I vote we tell the cad he's jolly well got to leave! Who'll come along with me to find him?"

Both his chums went with Nipper to the cad's study, but Langley-Mostyn was not there. A passing fag told them he was in the gym.

Off to the gym the three went. Nipper spotted the cad at once, and walked straight up to him.

ANSWERS

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"Look here," he said, "the Remove's sick of you, and you've got to go!"

Langley-Mostyn said nothing. Instead he took a step forward, and, before Nipper had time to guard it, gave the leader of the Remove a stinging tap on the nose. At once the fellows in the gym clustered round. There was to be a fight. Honour demanded it. A ring was quickly formed. Tregellis-West offered to be judge. The two contestants faced one another.

Tregellis-West looked at his watch.

"Time!" he announced.

The two antagonists rose from their corners, and at the same moment the Removites cheered lustily.

"Go it, Nipper!"

"Give him socks!"

"Knock him into the middle of next week!"

Thud!

It was Langley-Mostyn who got in the first blow. After dodging a left lead, he had swung his right to the side of Nipper's head.

The Remove captain winced slightly, and a hush fell upon the St. Frank's juniors, Berkley & Co., however, crowded with delight.

"Well done, Mr. Langley-Mostyn!" cried Barber. "Give him a few more like that!"

But Langley-Mostyn did not hurry matters in the least. In spite of his bravado, he knew that his opponent was an accomplished boxer, and he did not intend to take any risks—at any rate, not at present.

At length Nipper managed to get a blow in at Langley-Mostyn's body, which he followed up a moment later with one at the head.

Just before the round concluded, however, Langley-Mostyn broke through Nipper's guard, and gave Nipper two stinging blows in the face, which levelled matters up.

There was no doubt that honours were even at the end of the first round, but at the commencement of the second Langley-Mostyn proceeded to put a different complexion on things.

He forced the pace, and twice sent Nipper staggering from stiff upper-cuts. The Removites held their breath. They were beginning to wonder whether Nipper would win, after all.

Supposing Langley-Mostyn proved victorious! It was an awful thought, and yet—

"Bravo, Mr. Langley-Mostyn!"

Once again the outsider had got in a telling blow. Nipper reeled, but just managed to retain his balance.

He boxed more carefully after this, and on more than one occasion stopped a stinging blow that was intended to send him to the floor.

But Langley-Mostyn was determined that the fight should not be a long one. He was not breathing quite so easily as at the commencement of the round, but he continued to take the fight to Nipper's corner.

He swung his left at Nipper's head, but the blow was guarded off. Then he crossed with his right. This was also stopped, and it was as much as he could do to elude Nipper's counter.

But Langley-Mostyn pegged away, and at length he got in a stiff upper-cut at Nipper's jaw. The Remove captain staggered, and then, losing his balance completely, fell with a thud to the floor.

"Oh!"

There was a chorus of groans from the Removites, and they stared at their fallen champion in open-mouthed astonishment.

Langley-Mostyn stood with his gloves on his hips, and grinned in a cynical manner as he gazed at Nipper.

Tregellis-West proceeded to count. At "Four!" Nipper stirred slightly, at "Six!" he was on his knee, and the Removites gave him a cheer as at "Eight!" he clambered to his feet and faced his adversary.

Langley-Mostyn went in with the intention of landing another telling blow, but before he could deliver the punch "Time!" was called.

Nipper was assisted to his corner, and Tommy Watson did his utmost to restore his strength.

"What's the matter, old son?" asked Tommy concernedly.

"It's all right," replied Nipper quietly. "The rotter forced the pace a bit! But I'll hold him next round!"

"You must, old son—you simply must!" said Tommy Watson. "We shall never hold the cad if he wins!"

"Time!"

Langley-Mostyn rose from his corner in a most jaunty manner. He was looking very confident, and no doubt already considered that the fight was his.

He adopted the same tactics as in the previous round, and took the tussle to Nipper's corner.

This time, however, he did not find it so easy to get through Nipper's guard. Nipper seemed to be prepared for his moves, and stopped attack after attack of Langley-Mostyn.

The colour began to rise in the outsider's face. He was not having things entirely his own way, and he was getting riled. He swung his left fiercely at Nipper's head, and was a fraction of a second late in bringing up his guard to stop Nipper's counter.

Thud!

It was one of the most telling blows Nipper had landed. Langley-Mostyn reeled, and came back again to receive another stinging punch in the face.

"Bravo, Nipper!" shouted the Removites.

"Give him some more like that!" chimed in the Nottingham Juniors.

And the sound of their voices, raised in support of Nipper, caused Langley-Mostyn to flush scarlet with anger.

The outsider was losing control of his temper. He began to leave his guard open, and suffered in consequence. Two stinging blows on the body were followed by a terrific punch on the head. Only by sheer luck did he retain his balance.

But Nipper was fairly warming to his task now. He got in again and again at his opponent's body, and at length there was a loud shout of praise from the Removites as Nipper sent Langley-Mostyn to the floor with a terrific blow on the head.

"He's out!" exclaimed De Valerle excitedly.

"No, he's not!" said Reginald Pitt. "He's moving! He—My hat! He's up!"

By a superhuman effort Langley-Mostyn had managed to clamber to his feet. But he was breathing heavily, and one of his eyes was discolouring rapidly.

He had almost lost all control of his temper by this time, and he rushed at Nipper like a bull at a gate. Nipper waited for him, knocked his fists unceremoniously aside, and dealt him two stinging blows on face and body.

Langley-Mostyn uttered a loud gasp under the weight of the punches. But still, instead of acting on the defensive, as he should have done, he endeavoured to strike a knock-out blow.

He did contrive to hit Nipper in the chest, but there was very little weight behind the punch. The captain of the Remove hit his antagonist on the nose, then followed it up with blows on head and chest—blows that caused Langley-Mostyn to weaken rapidly.

The outsider was now fighting a losing battle. He was beginning to realise it, and try as he would to get in a telling blow, he could not do so.

Nipper simply rattled blows on his opponent. Twice in quick succession he landed his left on Langley-Mostyn's body, and then his right came up with tremendous force, and caught the dandy on the chin.

Langley-Mostyn staggered as though he had been shot, and then his legs seemed to give way under him, and he sank to the floor.

Thud!

"Well done, Nipper!" shouted the Removites.

"One—two—three—four——" counted Tregellis-West.

Langley-Mostyn lay as still as a log.

"He's licked to the wide!" cried Reginald Pitt delightedly.

"He'll never get up from the last blow!"

"Five—six—seven—eight——"

"He's moving!" exclaimed Grey. "Surely he's not going to——"

With a sudden bound Langley-Mostyn jumped to his feet. He had not been as badly hurt as he pretended.

He rushed at Nipper, and landed a stinging blow to the face. Nipper was not expecting it. It took him squarely, and down he went.

And then Langley-Mostyn completely forgot himself. While Nipper lay on the floor the cad kicked him with all his might. Immediately a loud howl of anger arose from all sides. Watson sprang forward to pull the cad away.

But he was too late. Another figure had entered unperceived, and now pushed forward. It was Dr. Richards, the Nottingham Head. All were silent. Even Langley-Mostyn hung his head. Dr. Richards walked up to the cad.

"I can scarcely credit my senses!" he said. "First, I find you fighting here! And then you disgracefully foul a boy when he is knocked down! Come! Follow me!"

Without another word, the Nottingham Head turned, and, followed by Langley-Mostyn, passed out of the gym. Nipper was able to stand up by now, and with his chums returned to their study.

And that was the last they ever saw of Langley-Mostyn. Next week the rest of the Nottingham fellows returned to their school. But Langley-Mostyn was not with them. His schooldays were over. He had been expelled.

And no one was sorry for that, except perhaps his particular cronies, and they did not count for much.

THE END.

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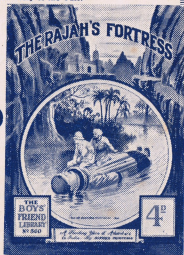
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