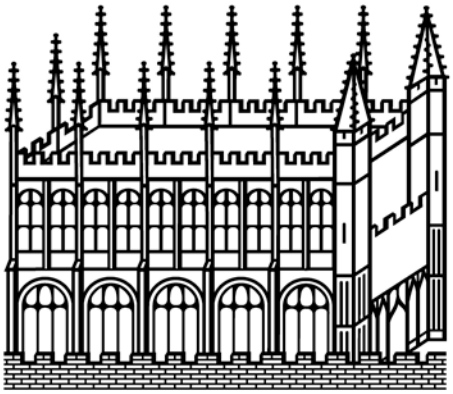

THE BOYS OF

WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL

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WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL.

'"What a queer way you are going on in this business with old Flavelle!" I said to Alick that evening as we were getting up our Virgil.'—WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL, page 65.

FRONTISPIECE

THE BOYS

OF

WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL

A TALE

BY

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WILLIAM P. NIMMO

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CONTENTS.

WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL;

OR TRUE HEROISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW FRENCH MASTER.

'I SAY, chaps, have you heard the news about old Dupont?' said Fred Lankester as he came up to Tom Driscoll and myself, who were standing leaning against the front school-gate.

'No, what is it?' we asked together.

'He's not coming back, and you 'll not guess why. He's been left a lot of tin by an old friend in France, and he's going back there as fast as he can.'

'Phew! the lucky old boy!' exclaimed Tom Driscoll. 'Then of course we 'll have a new French master. Do you know if Mr. Cubitt has got one yet, Fred?'

'Yes; I was asking Mr. Bennet just now. The new fellow's name's Flavelle. That's all he could tell me about him. But to-morrow's French day, so we'll see him for ourselves then.'

It was Thursday afternoon in the first week of the new half. I had better give a few words here, in beginning my story, in the way of description of Willoughby House School. I think that boys at least like to know a little about the place where events they are reading about take place. Besides, it is really necessary in this case, to make you understand the story. But I shall try and be as short as I can.

Most of my readers, I suppose, know where Sydney is; that it is the capital of New South Wales; but I daresay that the most of English readers, whether grown-up or boys, seldom hear of the Parramatta river. The Parramatta river flows into Sydney harbour. It is really rather a long arm of the harbour, than a river, for the water is salt, except at the very top, and its whole length is not more than twelve miles.

Willoughby House stood on the Parramatta river, about a quarter of a mile back from the water. It was a large building of stone and brick, with a garden in front, fields and paddocks behind, and behind

those the bush, which is the name given in Australia to woods or forest.

Willoughby House was a private boarding-school. The principal and head-master was Mr. Cubitt, and he was assisted by two other masters, Mr. Butler and Mr. Bennet, besides French, German, and Drawing masters, who came each twice a week.

Tom Driscoll, Fred Lankester, and I were in the fourth or head form, and Tom was captain of the school. He was a chum of mine. Our parents were acquainted, and we had known each other for a long time. His father was rich; had made a lot of money out of his sheep stations. He was a stout red-bearded jolly gentleman, who had given me tips so long back as I could remember almost, whenever he visited our house.

Tom was not like his father in appearance. Perhaps he resembled his mother, whom I cannot remember. She died when Tom was quite a little fellow. Tom was dark, with black curly hair and bright dark eyes. He was no doubt a striking and good-looking fellow, and decidedly clever. I liked him in a good many ways, but he wasn't exactly a popular boy. His father kept him very liberally supplied in pocket-money, which he would spend among his chums with a free and careless hand. But he

hadn't his father's frank jolly manners. He was apt to be a little 'stand-offish,' to use a familiar phrase, and sometimes a trifle contemptuous.

He was an only son, you see, and had had things pretty much his own way all his life. The influence of a mother, if she is just an average good mother, is, generally speaking, to soften a boy, and Tom had missed this training in his life. He had a sister, it is true, but she was younger than himself. On the whole he was more admired at school than liked, though he had not a few points about him that you could like him for too. But I shall not describe his character any further here, for I hope and prefer that the reader shall discover it for himself, as my story goes on.

Fred Lankester was another of the boys at Willoughby House who was one of my chief companions. His appearance might in a way be called striking, as well as Tom Driscoll's, though not from his being handsome. He was tall and lanky, with long legs and arms, a long lean face, and a thin long nose. He had a droll, wonderfully flexible mouth, that he could turn and twist about into all kinds of shapes with astonishing ease, and yet his face when he chose was capable of assuming an expression of the severest gravity. No judge that ever put on a wig could

look more solemn when he liked than Fred Lankester.

On the day following the short conversation just given, we had our first French lesson with the new master. He was waiting for us in the class-room, and as we filed into our places of course all eyes were turned upon him to take stock of him.

Well, he wasn't particularly imposing to look at, Monsieur Flavelle. He was a short gentleman, approaching fifty years of age I guessed, of a spare build, but pretty active and tough-looking. He had whiskers, turning grey, round his cheeks and chin, a rather large head getting bald at the top, a large funny drooping nose, not unlike Mr. Punch's as he is drawn on the frontispiece of the periodical that bears his name, though not of course quite so *prononcé*, as Monsieur Flavelle himself would have said. His mouth was rather droll too, for whenever he smiled, the corners, instead of turning up as most people's do, turned down, which had an odd effect, especially at first.

He was dressed in a black frock-coat and dark cloth trousers and waistcoat, and it didn't require a very sharp eye to detect that his clothes were far from being in their first youth and glory. His coat was beginning to get decidedly shiny about the seams

and cuffs. But he was very neat and tidy, and his shirt front, though it showed traces of having had the needle and thread applied to its edges more than once, was smooth and clean.

It must not be supposed that I discovered all these characteristics of Monsieur Flavelle's outward appearance just at once, but before the day's lesson was over I think I had noted most of them, and so I expect had nearly all the rest of the class.

Monsieur Flavelle spoke English very fluently and well, much more so, we soon saw, than our former master had done, who had never got rid of a strong accent. Monsieur Flavelle's accent was very slight, just enough to tell that he was not an Englishman.

He had a brisk lively manner, was not at all embarrassed by this being his first day with a new set of boys, as I have known to be the case with some masters, but began to make acquaintance with us off-hand and at once. He commenced to question us as to the amount of progress we had made in French.

'What books have you been accustomed to use?' was one of his first questions.

'We generally use the old gray mare for one,' Fred Lankester answered gravely, pronouncing the words exactly as I have spelt them.

There was a titter round the class. This was the way that old Monsieur Dupont had always pronounced the word grammar, and it had become one of the standing jokes of the school.

'The old gray mare!' Monsieur Flavelle repeated with a slightly puzzled look, 'I do not quite understand. Ah! I see now: grammar, that is what you mean—eh? the old grammar. Your pronunciation is not quite perfect yet, sir; but we shall improve it by and by, I hope. Well, let me see what grammar it is that you use.'

One of us handed him a book.

'Ah, I see, Monsieur Hall's. I know it, though it is not the one I have generally used. But it is a very fair book, and will do as well as another.'

Then he set us to translating, to see what hand we made at that. To tell the truth, we were not, as a class, or as a school, any great things either in French or German. Like many other schools, we, the boys, paid but very scanty attention to the modern languages. We seemed to regard them as by-studies, as it were, and thought that we were not under the same necessity to pay attention to them as to our other work, Latin, Greek, Mathematics, and the rest.

Even fellows that worked pretty well at these subjects were indifferent about their German and

French, and those that were careless about their work generally were doubly so with their French and German. I daresay this was a mistake on our part—indeed, I am pretty sure it was, and perhaps boys will come to see this some day. But such was the case at Willoughby House. There were not more than three or four boys in the whole school who were decent French scholars.

Whether Monsieur found us below the average in our knowledge I can't say. He didn't say anything to make us conclude so at any rate, whatever he may have thought.

The lesson went on, and it became pretty clear to us that Monsieur Flavelle was a master that was disposed to take pains with us, if we would just meet him half-way. But before the lesson was over we had found out one of his weak points too, and that was that he was inclined to talkativeness, and that it did not require a great deal to lead him off the main track of the lesson into gossip upon all kinds of subjects.

Boys are not slow at discovering a master's peculiarities, if he have any, nor in endeavouring to turn them to their own account. When we found that our new master was apt to drift into yarning on general subjects, we at once saw fruitful opportunities of future entertainment during our French studies.

We saw that our hours with Monsieur Flavelle, if we only managed matters adroitly, might be made much more varied and less dull by taking proper advantage of this weak point in his character as a teacher. What we had to do was as innocently as possible to lead Monsieur off the subject of the lesson by some ingeniously constructed question or remark, and prevent him returning to it as long as we could.

By and by, too, we would no doubt find out his favourite hobbies of talk, and that could guide us in our plans. If any grown-up reader thinks that we showed a precocious amount of craft and depravity in harbouring such thoughts and designs as I have just described, let him look back upon his own school-days, and try if he can't remember having ever been a party to much the same kind of thing. If he can honestly answer that he never was, then all I can say is, that he must have been a pattern boy, a pattern, that is, not of what boys are, but of what they perhaps ought to be.

We began our experiments upon what we felt pretty sure we had discovered to be one of Monsieur Flavelle's weaknesses this very afternoon. Fred Lankester was the leader—he generally was, in this sort of thing. By a series of questions, put with

much seeming innocence and great gravity, he got Monsieur to talking about himself, and his past life and experiences. During the last quarter of the hour he never once got back to French.

In the course of Monsieur's talk, we learned that he was not a Frenchman born, but that his native place was the south of Switzerland. But he had spent many years in France, and also some time in Germany, and could speak German as well, he said, as he could French. He had studied for a year or two at a German University, Heidelberg, and a great part of his talk this afternoon was about his student-life in that town.

Fred went on asking him about this place and that place, and whether he had been in this town and that town, ranging all over Germany, Switzerland, and France, and taxing his memory to recall all the places he knew by name. In a good many of them Monsieur Flavelle had been, and he seemed to have travelled a great deal in certain parts of Europe.

And so he span away, varying his talk by occasional jokes, at which we took care to laugh most sympathetically. And really Monsieur's talk was not at all bad fun, at any rate to boys, and a deal better, to say the least, than French verbs, and translating Florian's fables, 'The Monkey that showed the Magic Lanthorn,'

'The Rabbit and the Widgeon,' and the rest of them. Monsieur talked with great spirit and 'go,' and told a story in fine style, half-acting it, with many shrugs and much gesture.

Fred had about exhausted his knowledge of Continental towns, when Tom Driscoll suggested another to him. 'You haven't asked him about Cologne yet, Fred. Try him with that for a last one,' whispered Tom.

'Have you ever been in Cologne?' asked Fred.

'Ah! Cologne is it? Yes, I was there once, just for two nights. You know what it is celebrated for, I suppose? For two things, its grand and beautiful Cathedral, and its—well, something else that is not so grand and beautiful, ha! ha! I think you must know what I mean. It is a curious old place Cologne, but not so nice in some ways. It is not a very clean town, no! and yet the people are most luxurious in some of their habits. You will hardly believe it when I tell you that the poorest person in the town, whenever he washes his face, washes it in *eau-de-Cologne*, and whenever one takes a bath it is in *eau-de-Cologne!*'

We received this joke with great acclamation, most of us seeing it quickly enough.

'In *eau-de-Cologne*—water of Cologne—you see, eh?'

Monsieur explained, thinking perhaps that there were some of us who did not take his joke.

'Thank you, sir, but the explanation is unnecessary. The fun is visible to the naked eye,' said Tom Driscoll. Tom could talk in this grand sort of style when he wished.

'"Oh my prophetic soul, my uncle!"' exclaimed Fred Lankester, in a half-whisper, and a theatrical manner. We did not understand the point of his quotation then, but we were to, shortly.

A few minutes after Monsieur Flavelle's joke, which, whether it may appear good or bad to the reader, was about the best he made during the lesson, the school-bell rang, Monsieur set us our work for next day, and we separated.

The French lesson was the last in the day's work, the school going out in the afternoon at four o'clock. A knot of us gathered together to discuss our new French master.

'What did you mean by that quotation of yours just now, Fred—"Oh my prophetic soul, mine uncle!" —from *Hamlet*, I think it is?' I asked of Fred.

'Yes, that needs explanation,' Fred replied. 'It's the funniest thing possible, I think you'll say. Some of you know Ned Peak; he goes to the Grammar School. Well, he was staying with me for a short time

in the holidays, and he was telling me something about the masters at the Grammar, and, among the rest, about the French master.

'He didn't tell me a great deal about him, but one of the things was, that he was fond of a pun now and then, and that he had a number of pet ones that he repeated whenever he got a chance. One of these was a joke about the people of Cologne always washing themselves in *eau-de-Cologne*, the very joke, in fact, that Flavelle made just now. So I have not the least doubt that he is the French master at the Grammar School too. Ned Peak did not mention his name, or of course I would have remembered it when I heard Monsieur Flavelle's, but I think this proves, beyond a doubt, that they are one and the same.

'You see the point of my quotation now, I hope? It is, as you very rightly observe, John Warde, from *Hamlet*, a play composed, it is perhaps hardly necessary to remind the present company, some three hundred years ago, by one William Spokeshave, or as it is sometimes written Shakespeare. But isn't it a good joke that on his very first day with us Flavelle should get a chance of slipping one of his pet *bon-mots*, as he would call them!'

We all laughed greatly when Fred had done.

'Yes, it is a lark certainly,' said Harry Coote—'that

is, if Flavelle is really the French master at the Grammar School.'

'Oh, he must be!' I said; 'this couldn't be a coincidence.'

'Not likely,' said Tom, adding, in a tone rather of disgust, 'But fancy his thinking it necessary to explain his pun!'

'Oh, everybody's not so sharp as you at picking up a thing, Tom; there may have been some fellow in the class who didn't see Monsieur's joke at once,' said Joe Coote.

'Yourself for instance—do you mean that, Joe? Well, I forgot you, old man,' replied Tom.

'Well, what do you think of Flavelle, as far as he's gone?' I asked of the fellows generally.

'"Beware of hasty judgments," says my grandmother!' said Fred. 'It's rather too soon to form an opinion of Monsieur yet perhaps; but one thing, I think, is pretty certain, and that is, that we may get a good deal of fun out of our two hours a week with him, if we manage things properly.'

In this opinion we all agreed.

CHAPTER II.

SANDY FULLARTON.

THE half-year had been gone a fortnight. It was Saturday afternoon. As I was entering the house from the garden a little before tea-time, Mr. Cubitt came out with a boy by his side, a stranger.

'John,' he said, 'I want to speak to you for a moment. Let me introduce you to Alick Fullarton. But he brings you a letter from your father, which I believe is, in some sort, one of introduction, so I need not say any more. Read your letter, and then you two can become friends as soon as you like.'

The new boy handed me a letter, while Mr. Cubitt went into the house again. The letter ran thus—

'MY DEAR JOHN,—The bearer of this letter is Alick Fullarton, whose father I have lately become acquainted with. Mr. Fullarton has but recently

arrived in the colony. He comes from Aberdeen. Until lately he was a prosperous man, connected with a large shipping business in that city. But he lost nearly all his means through the failure of a London firm who were his agents, and has now emigrated to this country. He brought me a letter of introduction from an old and esteemed friend in Scotland, and I have used what influence I have with the Metropolitan Bank, in which you know I am a director, to get him a pretty good post as manager of a branch at Kendall. I am sure that he will be an acquisition to the staff of the Bank, for he is a clever and experienced business man. Mr. Fullarton has put his son at Willoughby House on my recommendation. I have not seen very much of him, but he seemed a pleasant intelligent fellow. I want you to be friends, if possible, and hope you will take to each other.—I remain, your affectionate father, JOHN WARDE.'

Alick Fullarton seemed about my own age. He was rather shorter than I, sturdily built, with marked features, a large mouth, a somewhat freckled face and light hair; not good-looking, but with a pleasant honest expression.

'My father says you have just come to Sydney,' I said, by way of beginning our acquaintance.

'Yes, we arrived a little more than a month ago.'

Directly he spoke I saw that Fullarton talked with a decided Scotch accent, which, though I knew it well enough to recognise it as Scotch, was sufficiently strange to my ears to sound odd.

We sat next to each other at tea, and during the evening I showed Fullarton about the place, and let him into the ways and rules of the school a bit.

I felt sure that Alick Fullarton's Scotch way of talking, which his voyage out didn't seem to have rubbed off much, would not fail to draw upon him the notice of the fellows in a special manner. And there were other things about him besides his accent, which made him appear to some a good mark for experimenting upon in the way of chaff and humbugging.

On the first day he appeared among us he wore a Scotch cap, an uncommon thing among boys in Australia, with a buckle on it in the shape of a thistle.

Fred Lankester at once had a name for him—Sandy Thistle-cap—which, as it was rather long in full, for general use, was soon abbreviated into Sandy alone. Henceforth, when any one wished to call Alick 'out of his name,' as the saying is, he called him Sandy.

'Haven't you got another cap that you could wear?'

I said to him on the second night after his arrival. If he was to be a chum of mine, I didn't much care that he should figure as a kind of butt in the school; so I thought I was justified in giving him a hint on one or two things.

'Yes, I've got a felt hat,' he answered; 'but I mean to wear this out first. I got it just before we went on board the ship, and I wore the bonnet very little during the voyage. It's not likely I'm going to put it aside yet.'

Alick spoke in a perfectly decided tone, as though his mind was quite made up. And so it proved. He wore his bonnet, as he called it, almost daily, and no amount of humbugging him about it had any effect upon him.

Besides speaking with what sounded to us, at best, a very broad accent, Alick had a lot of Scotch words which he used in daily conversation. With some of the fellows it was thought a grand joke to repeat these with exaggerated emphasis, whenever the object was to imitate Alick. He nearly always spoke of a thing being 'ben the house' for in the house; he said 'bonny' for pretty, and 'wee' for little, very often. He generally called a cap a 'bonnet,' and sometimes spoke of pennies as 'bawbees,' and used twenty other words and phrases

which sounded strange and odd to us. I remember he once called a frog a 'puddick,' a word which I suppose not one of the chaps had ever heard before, and which we certainly would not have understood if the frog had not been there before us. It raised a great laugh.

Alick, by degrees, got out of the way of using Scotch expressions; but it wasn't, I'm sure, that he felt the least ashamed of them, or because he tried particularly to unlearn them; but just because he was among people who did not use the same kind of phrases; and so of course he came gradually to use other ones himself.

'I say, Jack, is your friend Sandy going to join the cricket club?' said Fred Lankester a few days after Alick Fullarton came to the school.

'I don't know, I'm sure,' I answered; 'but I'll ask him if you like.'

'Just do that, then, and let me know.'

Fred was secretary of the club, and his duties of course included that of being on the look-out for any fresh members among new boys.

That night, just before going to bed, I said to Alick, who had been given a bed next to mine, at Mr. Cubitt's direction, in the fourth-form dormitory—

'The fellows are paying in their cricket club sub-

scriptions for this half. Do you think of joining the club?'

'What's to pay?' he asked.

'Five bob.'

'Then I can't join. Five shillings is more than I can afford, Jack.'

Alick spoke in the short, quiet, decided way he had when he meant a thing.

I stopped a moment or two before I spoke again.

'I'm pretty well off for cash at present,' I said; 'if you like, I'll give the money for you now, and you can pay me back any time; or if you don't at all, it doesn't matter. My aunt gave me a liberal tip just before the half began, and I'm quite a Crœsus for tin just now.'

Alick caught hold of me by the arm.

'That's jolly good of you, Jack Warde,' he said; 'but I can't take the money, thanks. I hate going into debt, and I've no likelihood of being able to pay you back at any time, as far as I can see at present.'

'Oh! never mind about that,' I said.

'But I do mind, Jack. Five shillings is too much to take as a gift by a deal.'

'No, it isn't. It'll only go in some other way that I'll never know any good of, most likely,' I con-

tinued; 'don't be proud about it, Alick. You'd do as much for me, I know. Nearly every one joins the cricket club. It's the principal game we play, you know, by a long way!'

'Don't press the matter, Jack, please,' he said in an earnest kind of way; 'I would rather not take the money, though I'm very thankful to you for the offer all the same. And it won't be much disappointment to me not being able to join the club.

'The fact is, I'm not much of a hand at cricket. At the school I was at in Aberdeen we didn't play it nearly so much as you do in Australia; the fine weather doesn't last so long, you know, up north there.

'I'm afraid my style of playing wouldn't come up to your ideas at all, and the fellows are inclined enough already to take their fun off me; not that I mean to mind that much, or at least to show them that I do. But I suppose you have some football in the winter, and I'll perhaps be more up-ends with you in that, and in shinty, too, if you ever play that.'

'What on earth's shinty?' I asked.

'Never heard of shinty! Well, I suppose you haven't it here. It's played with a ball and a hooked stick.'

'Oh, you mean hockey, I expect,' I said.

'Is that what you call it? Well, do you ever have it?'

'A little in the winter, but not much. Football we have here often. But you may as well just call it hockey, if you ever have to speak of it again.'

'All right, I'll try and remember,' he replied, with a slight laugh. 'I'm ready to take any hints you like to give me, Jack, about my talking, though I don't say I'll stand it so well from every fellow.'

'So you'll not join the club in any way?' I said. 'You'll find it pretty dull work when all the fellows are at cricket, don't you think?'

'I must just put up with that somehow, if that is the case. But perhaps I'll learn to play better after a bit, if you give me a little coaching in private, for instance; and by that time I may have enough money of my own to pay the subscription.'

'All right, then; so be it, if your mind's made up. I'll be glad to help you all I can in the way you say. I daresay we may get plenty of chances of a game by ourselves, now and then.—There's old Kelly putting the lights out. Good-night.'

I shall not try to put in the Scotch words and pronunciation which Alick Fullarton used for some time after he came to Willoughly House, and which disappeared only by degrees, because I couldn't do it properly. And then, to make things quite natural, and as they were, I should have to make his talk

become gradually less and less Scotch, as my story went on, which would be a more difficult business than I care to attempt.

I told Fred Lankester that Alick did not intend joining the cricket club.

'Why, what a screw he must be!' he said. 'The subscription isn t a large one; it 's much more at some schools.'

'I don't think that it 's because he 's a screw. He just said right out that he couldn't afford it,' I said.

'He said that, did he? well, he 's a curious chap in some ways. Lots of fellows wouldn't just have said that out, even if it had been the case.'

Alick Fullarton stood the chaffing and humbugging of the fellows better than I think I ever knew any one do, under similar circumstances. He had a cool sort of temper, and an amount of self-control that kept him from being easily put out. Not that it required no effort on his part to keep his temper sometimes, for I am sure it must have and did. But it seemed as if he said to himself, 'Now, these fellows want to rile me, and the more I am put out the better fun it will be to them, but I bet they shan't succeed.'

Alick could generally hold his own, too, in the way of retort. At first he wasn't well up in our particular

phrases, and catch or slang expressions, and so was often not very ready with a reply. But as he got accustomed to these, we found that he could sometimes give as well as take.

One Wednesday afternoon he and I were having a game of cricket by ourselves, in a quiet corner of the cricket-ground. He seemed to want to learn to play a bit better than he did, and so I used sometimes to bowl at him for a half-hour or so. He was batting now, and I was pegging away at him as hard as I could, round-arm. He had got little Ned Price to back-stop for us.

Presently Tom Driscoll, Fred Lankester, Coote, and a couple of other fellows, came up to where we were playing. They seemed in an idling mood, and stretched themselves down on the grass, and began watching us. After a little, Joe Coote evidently thought he saw a chance of some fun, and commenced. Joe, I must here say, was a short thickset boy, with legs rather short for the length of his body, and a little bowed, enough to be noticeable.

'Giving Sandy a little private coaching—eh, Jack?' he said. 'Good boy, stick to it, and you 'll turn him out a Lilywhite yet.'

'Shut up, Joe, will you, please? We 're not asking your advice at present,' I said.

'Don't get scotty, Jack.—Well cut, Sandy. What a crack cutter you are; a regular Aberdeen clipper in fact, one may say!'

Joe's joke, for such it was intended to be, raised a laugh from the rest. Joe was one of those who were most inclined to make game of Alick, and I had noticed that the latter had taken his chaff with rather less patience than that of any other of the fellows.

The laugh had hardly ceased when Alick, dropping his bat, walked up to where Joe was lying stretched at full length on the grass. He took hold of him by the arm, and with a quick sharp jerk forced him upon his feet.

'I say, what are you about!' exclaimed Joe, a little astonished. I daresay he knew pretty well that he was not so strong as Alick, but he had always had the majority with him, and this had made him confident, as it does many fellows.

'What am I about?' said Alick in a quiet tone, 'why, just this. I want you to drop your name-calling as soon as you like, or you'll perhaps hear more about it. And since you're so fond of nicknames I'm going to try if I can't find a suitable one for you. Do you know what you ought to be called?'

There Alick made a slight pause and gave a look

down at Joe's legs, to give the more emphasis to his words, as it were.

'Your name 's Coote,' he went on; 'well, you ought to be called Bandicoot!'

A loud laugh from Tom, Fred, and the other two boys, followed Alick's words, and Joe Coote turned first red and then white. It is perhaps necessary to explain to English boy-readers that the Bandicoot is a little animal like a small kangaroo, and found only in Australia, I think.

'Well done, Fullarton!' cried Fred.—'You got it rough that time, Joe, old man; and it was a fair hit. You 're no match for Sandy, after all, I guess.'

It was a fair hit. Under some circumstances the name with which Alick had christened Coote would have no doubt been a rather savage one. But in this case, where Joe had been the provoker, and when it is remembered that his attack upon Alick was only one of many similar, I think you 'll agree with me that he got no more than he deserved. And you 'll understand, too, why I said a little ago that Alick Fullarton could come down on an opponent sometimes with a pretty heavy hand.

As long as I was at Willoughby House Joe Coote's name stuck to him. Whenever an antagonist wanted a weapon to use against him in a fight of words, he

was pretty sure to resort to calling him Bandicoot. But I don't remember his ever venturing to measure himself with Alick again, or, to use a more schoolboy phrase, trying to take a rise out of him.

CHAPTER III.

A LITTLE JOKE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

MONSIEUR FLAVELLE'S good points as a master were that he was ready to take a great deal of pains, and that he could throw great spirit, animation, and even enthusiasm, into his teaching. His weak points were the one that I have already mentioned,—the ease with which he could be led to string on for almost any length of time upon subjects as far removed from the lesson as the North Pole from the South, and the very small ability he had of keeping order in his classes.

We soon found out what subjects he was most fond of talking about. Chief among these was his own past life,—to tell us where he had been, what he had seen, and what he had done. Our plan was to go on pretty steadily with our French till rather more than

half the hour was over, and then for some one to ask Monsieur two or three questions—sometimes thought of and arranged beforehand, sometimes suggested at the moment—with the object of leading him away from the lesson in the direction we desired.

It was seldom that he suspected anything. Generally speaking, he swallowed the bait, and was soon off on a long yarn about some event or incident in his past life, when he was a boy in Switzerland, or when he was a student in Heidelberg, or studying medicine in Paris,—for he had once intended being a doctor, and had gone to medical classes in Paris for two years after he left Heidelberg.

Meanwhile we sat and listened in great glee while he spun on. Often his talk was quite interesting, and at times rather long-winded. In any case we thought it better than French, and we could listen just as much or as little as we liked. If a fellow didn't care about attending to what Monsieur was saying, he could bring out any book that he happened to be reading at the time and study it, or finish an imposition, or get up a part of next day's work, or anything in fact that he fancied most to do. He was quite safe from detection, for Monsieur was far too absorbed in what he was himself saying to notice what was going on around him. You might have

written out your French exercise for the next day almost under his nose.

After what I have written it will have been gathered that there was a good deal of vanity about Monsieur Flavelle's composition. And so there was—not a doubt of it. But he wasn't vain in an unpleasant kind of way either. It amused rather than annoyed you. For while he was decidedly vain he was equally good-natured and good-tempered. He laughed at his own jokes, and he laughed as heartily when any of us attempted a witticism.

One day he was telling us a story of how he once lost his way in a forest in Switzerland during a holiday walking tour. As night approached a dreadful storm came on, an *orage* as he called it, and the trees rocked beneath the wind like the masts of a ship in a gale.

He passed the whole night in the forest, now lying down for a little while and trying to go to sleep, now getting up and running about to keep himself from becoming chilled with the cold, until he fell fast asleep through sheer weariness, and did not waken until next day's sun was high in the heavens, when he found that the storm was over.

'And weren't you afraid at all?' some fellow asked when he had finished.

Monsieur drew himself up to his full height,—he

was rather below the middle height, as I have said,—and after a short pause, with the most majestic look you ever saw, replied, in tones of severest dignity—

'I know not what fear is.'

This I have given as a specimen of Monsieur's vanity. At least we thought it that, whether it strikes you in the same way or not.

When I said that these were the weak points in Monsieur Flavelle as a teacher, of course that was speaking from a master's point of view. We boys didn't object to them, I need hardly say.

He had hardly any system in the matter of keeping order. Every now and then it would seem to strike him that the class was getting rather noisier than was the correct thing, and he would start up suddenly and command silence. He did it with a little impetuous burst; for a few minutes there was comparative quietness and attention, but very shortly matters were going on just as before.

Under such circumstances, what generally happens among a class of schoolboys I need hardly ask my boy readers, or those that recollect their school days. What happens in the great majority of cases is, that the boys take every advantage they can of their master. And so it was with us. We were much the same as other boys, I expect; certainly I don't

think we were any worse, taken as a whole. Well, we did impose upon Monsieur's easy disposition, his simplicity in certain directions, and his want of suspicion; we imposed upon it about as much as it was possible to do, and that's the plain truth.

At last, so secure did we feel in the thought that we could go almost any length with Monsieur, that the day came when we went too far. That's always the way with boys. In cases like this they become bolder and bolder, one eggs on the other, and they never know when to stop. Easy and readily hoaxed and hoodwinked as Monsieur was, we were to find out that there must be a limit to our hardihood.

When I first introduced Monsieur Flavelle, I ought to have mentioned that he took snuff, for he had the habit to an extent that was marked. I have noticed that when a person is very strongly given to taking something stronger than pump ale, he is always called a 'confirmed' tippler, while a great tobacco consumer is termed an 'inveterate' smoker. Drinkers are always confirmed, and smokers always inveterate. I don't remember having ever heard it put the other way, though the meaning seems to be about the same. But I am afraid this is a digression, and I don't know how I have been led into it; but Monsieur Flavelle was a confirmed or inveterate snuffer, which you prefer.

Sometimes we called him Snuffy, in allusion to his habit.

He kept his snuff in a little box of dark-coloured tortoise-shell. And here I think I ought to mention what was a rather remarkable thing in so great a snuff-taker as Monsieur, and that was, that in spite of his frequent applications to his snuff-box, he always managed to keep his waistcoat and shirt-front unsoiled. I have mentioned this because you remember that I said he was always neat and clean in his dress, and the two things don't often go together, as everybody must have noticed.

Periodically Monsieur Flavelle held short examinations on the work of the preceding few weeks. He wrote up sentences on the black-board, and we translated them into French on paper. He took the papers home with him, and brought them back corrected the next day he came.

One afternoon we were having an examination of this kind. He was standing before the black-board with his back towards us writing sentences. He had left his snuff-box on the table. Now was the opportunity for Fred Lankester's putting in execution a device he had thought of during the day, and which he had communicated to most of us.

The table stood close to the front row of desks, at

which Tom Driscoll, Fred Lankester, I, and several others among the first boys in the class sat. Fred stretched over the table and got hold of the box. Having emptied what snuff there was in it into a piece of paper, he took from his pocket a small paper packet, the contents of which he poured into the box.

This was coffee mixed with a very little black pepper. You couldn't have told the colour from that of snuff. Some one, when Fred told us of his idea, had suggested a much larger proportion of pepper than Fred had put in; but we hadn't any wish to be as savage as that came to, and decided that there was enough.

When Monsieur had finished writing on the black-board he sat down at the table, and began to look over the exercises that had been given in that day, while we set to work translating the sentences he had written out. But those of us who were in the plot weren't so absorbed in our work as to prevent our watching curiously for the upshot of our experiment.

Presently Monsieur took up his snuff-box, tapped the lid, opened it, and took a good pinch.

There was a loud sneeze, followed by a coughing,

and a gasping, and a spluttering, that drew the attention of the whole class. In a moment every one was shaking with suppressed laughter, which now and then exploded in an only half-smothered guffaw, or chuckling giggle.

For a few moments Monsieur could do no more than sneeze, and cough, and gasp. When he had recovered a little, he took up his snuff-box again, and, without speaking, began to examine the contents. He took out a little in the palm of his hand, peered at it in the light, and then smelt it with great caution. Then he turned to the class again. His face was flushed, and his eyes flashing.

'What is this that you have done? It is a trick, and it is shameful and abominable. I will not say one word more about it, but I will report the class this day to Mr. Cubitt. It is a thing he should know.'

He said no more, but sat down at the table again, and continued the correcting of the exercises.

Our experiment had answered quite as well as we had expected. We had had a fine joke, and no more serious consequences had come of it than a threat on Monsieur's part to report our conduct to the headmaster. We had hardly any fear that Monsieur's

words were anything more than a threat, for the reason that he had once or twice before said the same thing, and we had never heard anything more about it.

The hour went on and came to an end without any further reference to what had just taken place. But every now and again, through the whole hour, a smothered laugh might have been heard from some quarter of the class as the figure of Monsieur after the effects of that pinch of a new and novel snuff-mixture recurred to his mind.

During the whole lesson Monsieur hardly spoke a word more than was absolutely necessary. Had we reflected a little we might have gathered from his unusual silence that he had taken the matter more seriously than we at first thought; but this did not occur to us.

For once we had calculated too much on Monsieur Flavelle's forbearance. He kept his word, as we were not long in learning. That evening the class was summoned before Mr. Cubitt, and we got as serious a talking to as the fourth form ever received during my stay at Willoughby House.

I need not tell you all Mr. Cubitt said to us. Some of the things were pretty cutting, as that the nature of our conduct was such as he would hardly

have expected from first-form boys, that he had been as much surprised as vexed and pained at hearing it, so trivial and childish was it, as well as unworthy and wrong. In short, he made us one and all feel precious small, and he had a knack of being able to do that when he wished.

The upshot was that we all received a good round lot of imposition-work, and in addition had our privileges as fourth-form boys suspended for a fortnight. Two of these were that we were never kept in, and that our punishments were allotted by Mr. Cubitt himself only. To be deprived of these privileges was looked upon as one of the most marked forms of disgrace with which we could be visited.

We were all now as wild as could be at Monsieur Flavelle. The fact that we had never hardly for a moment anticipated his really reporting us to Mr. Cubitt increased our anger and indignation.

But the most incensed of us all by a good deal was Tom Driscoll. He was Captain of the School, you see, and so it was perhaps natural that he should be the most sensitive in the matter, and take Mr. Cubitt's censure, and the disgrace of the form, to heart most keenly.

He had never counted on this as a result of

our little joke upon Monsieur Flavelle, and I think he was inclined to be a trifle sore and out of temper even with Fred Lankester as its originator, from one or two words he dropped to me. But he said very little on this point to the rest. I never knew him more put out, however, and I felt sure that his resentment against the French master was deep, and would take some time to wear off.

'The fourth form dormitory presented an unusual appearance . . . In a corner of the room a half-dressed group of boys were gathered in a circle, some squatted on the floor, some seated on pillows and boxes that had been drawn out from under the beds.'—WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL, page 44.

CHAPTER IV.

A MIDNIGHT COUNCIL.

On the night following the events just narrated, between eleven and twelve o'clock, when the rest of the inmates of Willoughby House were sunk in deep slumber, the fourth-form dormitory presented an unusual appearance. Every bed wanted its customary occupant, while in a corner of the room a half-dressed group of boys were gathered in a circle, some squatted on the floor, some seated on pillows and boxes that had been drawn out from under the beds. The light from a couple of candles, stuck in two bottles, shed a somewhat faint and glimmering radiance on our faces and figures.

In the centre of the circle sat Tom Driscoll, raised on a chair a little above the rest. He had been

moved into the chair on the motion of Fred Lankester.

'It is hardly necessary for me to state, gentlemen, the object for which this meeting has been summoned,' Tom began. 'That is known to you all; what we have now to do is to decide upon the best plan by which our object may be carried out. This is an open meeting. The freest liberty of speech is granted to all. Anybody may say what he is moved to say, and we shall be glad to hear whatever proposals or suggestions any one may have to bring forward. It is desirable that the subject in hand should be as fully discussed as possible, so that we may get at the general opinion of the meeting.'

'Hear, hear!' from several voices.

There was a short pause, and then Fred Lankester rose. Fred's father was a member of Parliament in the Legislative Council or Upper House of the Colony; and Fred having pretty often been present at debates in both the Upper and Lower Houses, was tolerably familiar with the way in which discussions were conducted, as well as with the sort of phrases used by public speakers.

'Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,' began Fred, with a preliminary clearing of his throat.

'I have in my mind a motion which I intend proposing to this meeting. But before doing so I should first like to hear the opinions of other gentlemen present. There are several honourable members of the class, any suggestions from whom, I am sure, will be valuable. I shall therefore defer bringing forward my motion till later on in the meeting. But meanwhile, with your permission, sir, I should like to say a word or two on the object itself of this conference. I would like to state the reasons, as they appear to me, why I think we have just cause for the course we are at present taking; and if there are any present who have doubts upon this point, I hope before I have done to be able to convince them, and to bring them over to the opinion held, I am sure, by the majority here.

'We consider, then, that we have suffered injustice, and been treated in an ungentlemanly and unworthy manner, at the hands of Monsieur Flavelle. We played a trick upon him,—granted; but I consider that it was a harmless kind of trick, not devised out of any ill-feeling towards Monsieur Flavelle, but merely out of fun; there was nothing of malice in it, we consider. This joke of ours, or trick, if you prefer to call it so, Monsieur Flavelle has thought fit to resent

in a manner out of all proportion to its gravity. That is the point, you perceive.

'Of course, we might have expected that he would get a little hot and waxy over the matter, and perhaps given us something extra in the shape of work to do. But that he would have reported us to the head-master, no doubt, putting the matter before him in a more serious light even than was actually the case, is what none of us ever looked for, and is a thing that cannot be passed lightly over by us.

'Another point I wish to refer to is this. Monsieur Flavelle has been, generally speaking, easy enough with us, no doubt, and we thought him, on the whole, a good-natured sort of fellow; and it might be argued that in playing off this trick upon him, we were imposing on his forbearance. But then this very easiness of disposition of his has deceived and led us on. We are but mortal, mortal boys moreover. Monsieur Flavelle has led us to believe that he could stand more than we have found him able to stand. I very much suspect that he is not so good-natured a person as we have innocently supposed him to be.

'In fact, you will see that it has been our trustfulness and unsuspicion that has betrayed us. After Monsieur's whole behaviour in class hitherto has

been such as to lead us to suppose that we might safely indulge in such a joke as we did, he has revealed himself all at once in a new character; or rather, what I am afraid is his real character,—has, in fact, gentlemen, twined suddenly upon us like a snake, and bitten us severely. Shakespeare has said somewhere, I forget at this moment exactly where,

> "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child."

'Slightly altering the great bard's words, may we not say with equal truth,—

> How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a deceitful French master?

And now I hope that I have clearly shown that the fact that Monsieur Flavelle has been, as a rule, easy and apparently good-tempered with us, does not excuse his present conduct. That very jolliness and smoothness has been our undoing, gentlemen. I very much fear that Monsieur's true character is as deep and dark as a Chinee's.

'Being then quite decided as to the justness of our cause, we have now to determine upon the best plan to be pursued, in order to carry out our object. As I said before, I have myself a suggestion to make, but would first like to hear the opinion of others. It

may be that some one may have thought of a better plan than that which I have to propose, in which case I shall very gladly give up mine.'

Great applause followed Fred's speech. When I say great applause, I do not mean that we made much row. It would have been dangerous doing that, for fear of disturbing the house. Our applause, therefore, was confined to 'hear! hears!' spoken under our breath, and a sort of muffled hand-clapping; but it was very general and unanimous.

At first we thought that the meeting was quite unanimous in its approval of Fred's way of putting the case, and that there was to be no dissent from it. We were therefore a little surprised when Alick Fullarton rose and said—

'Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I am sorry that I cannot agree with the opinions just expressed. I know that what I have to say will be very unlikely to find favour with this meeting, but I am going to say it nevertheless.

'I think, then, that we are altogether wrong in this matter. Fred here has admitted that Monsieur Flavelle has been very easy and indulgent with us hitherto. Well then, let us remember that before we do anything hasty, that we would perhaps be sorry for afterwards. We have had our joke, if you like to call

it so, at his expense, and he has taken it more seriously than we looked for. Supposing the punishment we have been given is greater than the offence demanded,—supposing that, I say; well, we have had many a bit of fun and lark at Monsieur's expense, which he has passed over, and only laughed at. Let the one thing be set against the other, and let us allow this matter to drop here.

'Fred has just made a very clever speech, no doubt. Some of you may remember that, the other day, when we had the word *callidus* in our Virgil lesson, Mr. Cubitt said a good translation of it in that place was *subtle*. Well, it seems to me that Fred's speech is just that. It is out-and-out subtle,—ingenious, you know, and deep. But its logic is weak for all that, and I hope it won't persuade you to his way of thinking. What I say again is, that we should let this affair drop, and go on with Monsieur Flavelle as if nothing had happened.'

Fred rose again.

'I am sorry,' he said, 'that there has been a voice to disturb the harmony which I trusted would have prevailed in this meeting. I thought that we were unanimous in regard to the *object* of our conference, and that what we now had to determine merely, was how that object might best be carried out.'

'Tom told us that every fellow was allowed the freest liberty of speech, and so I have said what I thought,' said Alick.

'Mr. Chairman,' said Fred quickly, 'I rise to a point of order. I beg to submit that our honourable friend who has just spoken is out of all order when he addresses the chairman as "Tom." I am surprised at the honourable gentleman's disrespect.'

'I beg the chairman's pardon,' said Alick; 'I am not so well up in the forms of public meetings as my learned and eloquent friend; I am ready to admit that.'

'We haven't all got governors in Parliament,' said a voice from a corner.

'Order, gentlemen, order!' exclaimed Tom; 'I beg that there will be no indulgence in personalities. 'It is both unbecoming and distracts the attention of the meeting.'

'Go ahead then,' from the same voice.

'Order! order!' from several voices.

'Perhaps our honourable friend who has made this objection to our proceedings had better put his objection in the form of a motion,' said Fred; 'we shall by that means soon see to what extent he is supported in his opinion by the rest of the meeting.'

'All right,' said Alick. 'I beg to propose, Mr. Chairman, that this matter be now dropped, and the meeting dissolved.'

'Does any one second that motion?' asked Tom.

No one spoke. Tom put the question again, and when, after a pause, still no fellow rose to speak, he said—

'The motion, for want of a seconder, must fall to the ground, and the meeting will proceed.'

Fred gave a short laugh of half triumph.

'I expected that you were all of one opinion,' said Alick. 'But I say again, that, for myself, I entirely disagree with what you are about.'

'I submit that our friend is again out of order,' said Fred. 'He has put his motion and found no supporter. He has now no right to say anything further in the way of objection, but must be content to let the meeting proceed.'

'Hear! hear!'

'As it is getting late,' said the chairman, 'any one who has any proposal to make had better do so as quickly as possible. If nobody has anything to say, I shall call upon Fred to bring forward his motion, and take the opinion of the meeting upon it, whatever it may be.'

No one seemed to have thought of any particular proposal which he wished to make. Perhaps Fred's grand style of putting things—for to us at least his talk seemed to sound as like as two pins to the speeches in the newspapers—had impressed the fellows with the idea that anything any one else could say would sound weak after it, and that it would be best just to let him bring forward whatever he had to propose. That was my own idea at any rate, and so I said—

'I beg to propose, Mr. Chairman, that we now hear Fred's motion.'

'Yes, that's it!' said Joe Coote; 'and don't be too long-winded, Fred, old man. Cut it short; it's getting jolly cold. I've got nothing but my trousers and night-shirt on.'

'In compassion for Mr. Coote's feelings, then,' said Fred, 'I shall be as brief as possible. What I have to propose is, that the duty of determining the manner in which we shall endeavour to show Monsieur Flavelle that his recent conduct has seriously offended and wounded us, and that we are not disposed to pass it by unnoticed, be left to the management of a committee chosen by the meeting. It is clear that we cannot fix upon any proper plan now, for our time

is too short, and the meeting has been summoned too hastily. But if we appoint a committee to undertake the matter, they will have full time to consider and devise the best means by which our object may be carried out.

'I beg to propose, then, the following names as a committee, which the meeting may add to as they think fit:—Tom Driscoll, Jack Warde, Joe Coote, and the mover of the motion.

'I beg to add the name of Charley Webb,' said a voice.

'Gentlemen, you have now heard Fred's motion. It requires a seconder.

'I beg to second that motion,' said the speaker who had proposed the name of Charley Webb to be added to the committee.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

'Might I ask when the committee are expected to report to the rest of the class the result of their deliberations?' said Charley.

'Some time to-morrow will be soon enough,' said Fred. 'And now there is one other thing to be done before the meeting closes. I beg to propose a vote of thanks to our chairman for the very able manner in which he has performed his duties.

'Hear, hear! to be sure! all right!' from all sides.

'I suppose that's all now,' said Joe Coote. 'I vote that in future we hold meetings in the day-time. It's all very grand, perhaps, having them at this unearthly hour, but it's jolly uncomfortable sitting out here at midnight without any stockings, even in summer. There's a risk too of being nabbed, for I am sure old Kelly often takes a prowl round the bedrooms after we're all asleep.'

'Shut up, Joe; what a growler you are!' said Fred, 'you needn't be afraid of losing an hour's sleep, you old owl, you take enough generally.'

It was rather amusing to hear Fred drop so suddenly from the grand style of talking he had been keeping up into common speech.

'Well, I'm off to bed now anyway,' growled Joe. 'Those who fancy sitting up here and cooling their heels another hour or so are at perfect liberty to do so,' and Joe shuffled off in his slippers to his bed.

His example was quickly followed by the rest, and the meeting, which we had endeavoured to carry on as much as we knew how after the fashion of our elders, broke up in a rather hasty and undignified manner. There was a few minutes' shuffling of slippered feet over the floor, and every boy was in his bed again;

the room returned to the darkness and quiet which usually reigned over it at this hour, and very soon nothing could have been heard save the measured breathing of the sleepers.

CHAPTER V.

RETALIATION.

THE next day the committee met, and after a talk of some length we fixed upon a plan to carry out the object discussed in the last chapter. The reader will see shortly what that plan was.

It is only necessary to say here that we decided that it would be safest not to do anything extreme, nothing, that is, that we could be easily called to account for, or that could be easily fastened upon as a ground for serious punishment. At the same time it was resolved that we must let Monsieur Flavelle clearly understand what we meant him to understand.

The result of the committee's council met with the approval of the rest of the fourth form. On the next French day we put our scheme into execution. Monsieur Flavelle began the lesson as if nothing had ever occurred between him and us since we last met.

We thought he was inclined to be particularly conciliatory. He was bland and chirpy and smiling. Evidently he wanted all that had occurred between us to be forgotten as quickly as possible. Perhaps he had already repented of what he had done. But we were not to be smoothed down and imposed upon in this way.

Fred had assured us that it was possible that Monsieur would meet us in this very fashion, and that if he did so we must be prepared for it. We must not be taken in and soft-sawdered by his smooth manner, but must steel our hearts against it. No doubt he would like to let the past slip by in this easy way and be forgotten. But he must first learn his lesson. He had had his little revenge upon us. He was to find out that we were disposed to assert and maintain our dignity.

Our exercises that day were one and all—with the exception of Alick Fullarton's, who had not been made acquainted with our plans, as we knew he was determined to take no part in them—a tissue of mistakes from beginning to end.

But Monsieur Flavelle passed this by with hardly a remark, as though he did not notice that they were any worse than on other days, and the lesson proceeded. Thus, the first part of our plan to mark the

displeasure which we harboured against Monsieur Flavelle had very little effect.

He seemed determined to be as gay and good-tempered as possible, and this very thing was all the better for our purpose. All his attempts at re-establishing a friendly understanding between himself and us we were resolved to resist. We received his jokes and sallies at first with almost perfect silence, and without a smile, and by and bye in a way that still more decidedly marked our entire want of sympathy and appreciation. One by one his little jokes dropped flat and dead. But still he appeared to notice nothing.

At last he told us a story of his student days at Heidelberg, about an old house near the town that was said to contain a haunted room, and which no one could be persuaded to rent. A number of his fellow-students having dared him to pass a night in the haunted chamber, he determined to do so. The story was that every night, when there was any wind blowing, a voice was heard in the room, uttering in hoarse tones the words, 'Will you have a shave?'—in German of course. On the first windy night young Flavelle was ready to sleep in the old house, having had a bed and a few other things placed in the haunted room.

He lay down on his bed at his usual time, and soon fell asleep. But he was awakened after a little by the noise of the wind, which had greatly increased, and which was now blowing almost a gale. He lay still and listened to the noise and hubbub outside, as the wind whistled and moaned round about the gables and chimneys, and under the eaves of the rickety old house.

Presently he heard a noise distinct from any other of the various sounds which the wind was making; a low, hoarse, rather peculiar sound. To a disturbed and terrified imagination, he said, it might have appeared not unlike the deep growl of a surly man out of temper. But he never for a moment mistook it for a human voice, and as to finding in the sound any resemblance to the words, 'Will you have a shave?' he thought it would have required not only a very frightened but a very ingenious person to do so.

But he was curious to find out what it really was that was causing the noise, for it certainly was a somewhat strange one, and different from the noises made by the wind. It came from the direction of one of the two windows, so he rose and went to that one.

The noise became more distinct as he approached the window. He opened the wooden shutter and

looked out. It was very dark, and for a few moments he could make out nothing.

Suddenly something brushed against his face, striking him pretty sharply. It was the branch of a tree, and now he saw that a tall poplar tree grew quite close to the wall of the house, so close that whenever the wind was high, its stem rubbed against the stone.

Flavelle held his head for a few seconds out of the window, and heard now with greater distinctness than ever the hoarse grating sound. He had not a doubt that it was made by the rubbing of the poplar tree against the wall, and that he had solved the mystery of the haunted room.

At any other time we should certainly have laughed at and applauded this story. Even now one or two fellows so far forgot themselves, and the agreement among us, as to give way to a faint giggle or two. But these were quickly reminded of what was expected of them, and almost complete silence for a few moments followed Monsieur's story. It was broken by Fred Lankester saying—

'Most remarkable! Did ever any one hear the like?'

This Fred uttered in the gravest manner he was capable of, without a movement of any kind in his face.

'Beats cock-fighting to smithereens, my word!' said Joe Coote.

'So touching, and yet so true!' said Fred again.

'Such unexampled courage!' said Tom Driscoll, looking straight ahead of him at the opposite wall.

'Gulliver never met with anything more astonishing,' said Charley Webb.

'Nor Baron Munchausen,' said I.

'Nor Peter Parley,' said a voice from the back seats, from one of the younger boys in the class.

This very nearly upset our gravity, and it was with difficulty that we restrained a guffaw.

'Had you no emotion of terror whatever when you first heard that grim sound?' said Fred.

'Monsieur knows not what fear is,' said Tom.

We had never forgotten Monsieur Flavelle's telling us that he had never known what fear was. It had become a catch saying among us.

During the last few minutes Monsieur Flavelle's face had been undergoing a change, which was presently apparent to all. At first he looked perplexed, then astonished, and at last, when Tom uttered his last speech, the expression of his face was most evidently one of great anger.

Our plan was at last having the effect we desired. Monsieur Flavelle was feeling now the weight of our

displeasure. All the good humour he had been endeavouring to keep up since the beginning of the lesson was thrown aside. We had roused him at last, and made him feel that we could sting as well as he.

For a few moments he didn't speak and we didn't speak. There was sudden silence in the room. He stood staring at us. His face was quite white now, his lips tightly pressed, his frame stiff and erect, his eyes gleaming,—a very different figure indeed from the cheerful, smiling gentleman of ten minutes back.

'Ha! methinks he winces now,' said Fred in a tragic whisper.

When Monsieur Flavelle spoke, his voice had changed as much as his face. It was low, measured, and distinct; but with a slight shake in it nevertheless.

'What is this?' he said, 'I do not understand. Are you young gentlemen? or are you animals, monkeys without hearts or senses? It is not since I have been a master that I was so treated, mocked, insulted—'

'Pardon me, Monsieur. Such terms—' interrupted Fred.

'Will you be silent, sir!' cried Monsieur Flavelle. 'I say mocked, insulted. The words are too good

for your conduct this day. But I see how it is. I have been too easy with you, too indulgent always; yes; and you have taken advantage of me. That is how you return my indulgence. But I do repent it all—'

'That is all we want, sir,' broke in Tom Driscoll coolly, wilfully taking up Monsieur Flavelle's words in a different sense from that intended.

Monsieur Flavelle was about to speak again, when another voice was heard. It was Alick Fullarton's.

'Here! that's about enough, I think. Drop it now, like good fellows; and if Monsieur Flavelle will just—'

Alick was not allowed to get further. A hoot of derision mingled with hisses interrupted his speech, and 'sneak,' 'turn-coat,' 'traitor,' was groaned from all sides.

'Neither sneak nor traitor!' exclaimed Alick rather hotly. 'You know I had nothing to do with this from the first.'

'Then shut up, can't you, as you have nothing to do with it?' interrupted Tom Driscoll hotly.

'Yes, it's like his cheek to interfere!' exclaimed another voice, and there were fresh hisses and groans.

'Thank you, Fullarton,' began Monsieur Flavelle

again, his voice showing that he was making a strong effort to keep calm. 'But if you will allow me to manage—'

At this moment the school-bell rang, announcing that it was four o'clock, and that school was over for the day. We did not wait a moment to hear Monsieur Flavelle conclude his speech. We had succeeded in our object as completely as we could have wished. Unceremoniously we turned our backs upon the French master, and in a few minutes he was left standing in the room alone.

A little later, on the dismission of the school, a number of us were discussing the events of the afternoon.

'Well, we've taught him a lesson he won't quickly forget, I bet,' said Tom Driscoll.

'My word, no! What a face he had when you said that about his not knowing what fear was!' said Joe Coote. 'He tried hard to keep calm, but it was easy to see how set up he was.'

'And there's nothing that he can well fasten on, that's the beauty of it all,' said Fred Lankester. 'We were just coolly impudent, and supposing he was inclined to report us to Cubitt again, he wouldn't exac ly know what to report. Besides, to make the matter clear he would have to say that he had been

first yarning to us, and it isn't likely he'll care to tell that.'

'No, we've done far better than if we'd tried to play off another trick on him by way of revenge,—something that we could have been come down upon for,' said Charley Webb.

'And a more dignified way too!' said Tom, with the rather grand air he sometimes had.

'But what cheek it was of Sandy Fullarton putting in his say in that style!' said Joe Coote.

'Yes, confound his impudence!' said Tom. 'He's taken up a high and mighty air about this business. But he'll perhaps find out before long that it's best for him not to get too stuck-up, but just to do as the majority do. And now, who's for cricket?'

'Crown I first bat!' cried Joe.

'Crown as much as you like, old chap, but Fred and I weren't out yesterday, so we go in first again to-day,' said I; and we all made for the cricket-ground, Charley Webb and I carrying the bag.

'What a rum way you're going on in this business with old Flavelle,' I said to Alick that evening as we were getting up our Virgil together. 'Why can't you just go in with the rest?'

'Because, as I said before, I think you're all wrong, and that it's a jolly shame; and I'm sur-

prised at your taking part in it, Jack,' he replied in his sturdy way.

'Pooh! what a fuss you make about it!' I answered. 'It's only a lark. It'll soon blow over, and Monsieur will be all right again, and things go on in the class the same as before.'

'Maybe,' said Alick. Alick often answered just with that one word 'maybe,' spoken in a short way. It was a kind of answer that told you very little, and generally closed further conversation.

CHAPTER VI.

A TALK WITH ALICK.

To a certain extent I was right in what I said to Alick. Things did soon return in some degree to what they were before the outbreak between Monsieur Flavelle and the fourth. We felt that we had done sufficient to assert our dignity, and convince Monsieur that we were not to be played fast and loose with.

We did not wish to push matters further, unless he showed himself aggressive, in which case we were resolved not to shrink from the contest. We would not take any further offensive measures, but we were quite prepared to act determinedly on the defensive, on the first sign of attack on Monsieur's part.

But he made no such sign. On the French day after that last described, he received the class without a reference to the incidents of our last meeting.

But the difference in his manner towards us was at once observable, and that changed manner continued. He was cold, stiff, and formal, and spoke little more than was required by the lesson. He stuck close to the work in hand, and there were no more digressions in the way of general gossip and story-telling. So that when I said that matters returned to the old way in some degree only, this was chiefly what I meant.

Perhaps this new condition of things ought to have been better for us, in regard to our French work. But I don't know if there was much difference in that respect, and the relations between us were certainly not so friendly and pleasant. But we, on our part, felt sure that this was entirely Monsieur's fault, and not ours. He had taken a sulky turn, and by and by, perhaps, he would come out of it. So we reasoned.

Soon it began to be noticed that Alick Fullarton seemed to be getting very thick with Monsieur Flavelle. He was several times seen walking with him, after the school was dismissed, down to the landing-place at the river, where the steam ferry-boat touched, on her way to Sydney.

Then it was observed that Monsieur always addressed Alick in class with an amount of polite-

ness and attention that he did not bestow upon the rest. His new manner was to be polite, in a stiff, formal kind of way, to all of us, but when he spoke to Alick there was a friendliness in his tone, and he sometimes actually smiled,—a thing which he rarely did now. All this was quite marked enough to be noticeable.

'How thick Monsieur and Sandy Fullarton are getting!' said Tom Driscoll to me, one evening of a French day. 'You're his closest chum, Jack; what's it mean—eh? Is it gratitude on Monsieur's part for Sandy's standing up for him that day?'

'I'm sure I don't know, Tom,' I replied; 'Alick has said nothing to me about the matter, and I haven't questioned him.'

'Scotchmen are deep—deep, and long-headed; I suppose you've heard that, Jack? Shouldn't wonder if Sandy was keeping an eye on the first French prize, and thinks it won't be against his chance to keep well in with old Flavelle?'

'Well, I wouldn't go sucking round a master for the three French prizes put together,' said Fred Lankester, who was with us.

'I'll bet Alick's not doing that, Fred,' I answered. 'I'm pretty sure he's not that sort of fellow.'

'I don't say what sort of chap he is. But it looks

a *leetle* like it, you'll admit? Appearances are against him, as they say in the trials.'

'Pooh, you're getting jealous of Fullarton, Fred, because he's pushing you hard in History,' I answered a little impatiently.

Fred was a cool fellow, not easily ruffled, able to answer with every appearance of composure, even when you hit him pretty hard.

'Don't get huffy, old man,' he said, 'I ain't attacking you. What says the poet, whose name, I think, is no other than the honoured one of Watts?—

> Good children, you should never let
> Your angry passions rise;
> And always recollect to hit
> A fellow your own size.'

Tom and I both laughed heartily enough at Fred's impromptu.

'A slight improvement on the original, don't you think?' he said.

'Of course,' said I. 'But it doesn't apply to you and me, old Long-shanks.'

'Not lengthways, perhaps. But broadways, Jack. Consider me broadways—take us both for all in all, as the immortal William says, and you're more than my match, Jack. But come on! Don't think I'm afraid of you, Jack Warde.'

Fred and I made a pretence of sparring at each other. We closed, and Fred getting my head under his left arm, began to make belief to pummel it with his right, while I gripped him round the waist.

'There, that'll do, you two,' said Tom. 'Let's go for a swim.'

'He ought to think himself much honoured in being thus treated,' said Fred. 'He's quite an important person at this moment.'

'How's that?' asked Tom.

'Why, don't you see I'm making him a *Warde in Chancery?*'

'Oh, I say, that's pretty far-fetched, old man. I bet Jack hardly understands your joke. Your *pater* has something to do with the law, I think; so I suppose that's how you know about Wards in Chancery.'

'Well, I do just happen to understand the pun, Mister Tom,' said I, as I disengaged myself from Fred's clasp.

'Why shouldn't I, if you do?'

'Well, I shouldn't have myself a few days ago,' answered Tom good-humouredly; 'but I was reading something about wards in Chancery in a story the other day.'

'Well, so was I—in one of Dickens's novels,' said I;

'but as you're punning on names, Fred, I'll cap yours. If I'd got you in Chancery just now, I'd have made your phiz as red as a *Lankester* rose.'

'Oh! come, that's atrocious, Jack; that's enough for one afternoon!' said Tom.

'It's not quite up to Fred's, I'll admit; but it's plainer anyway.'

That night I said to Alick Fullarton—

'Alick, the fellows are noticing how thick old Flavelle and you are getting.'

'Well, what of it, supposing we are?' replied he.

'Oh! nothing; only some chaps will talk, you know. Some of them are saying you're sticking up to him for some reason or other. I don't think so, you know, Alick—don't think that.'

'I know you don't, old fellow; but let them talk. It won't harm me. But I'm going to tell you something, Jack. Perhaps it will explain things to you a bit. Only you must promise not to say anything about what I'm going to tell you to any of the other fellows.'

'All right, I promise; *ignis via!*'

'I've learned something more about Monsieur Flavelle lately, and what I have learned makes me the more certain that the fellows have been treating him very badly. He's come to live quite near us,

in Victoria Street, you know, and I met him when I was at home the other day. He has two daughters, one quite an invalid and the other a teacher in the public schools.

'My mother has become acquainted with them, and she says that the oldest girl is quite above the general run of public-school teachers in education, and fitted for much higher work, only she has not been able as yet to get a better situation.

'They are pretty poor these Flavelles, I expect, and the invalid daughter requires a great deal of care and attention, and whatever spare money they have must go to buy things for her, wine and other delicacies like that, you know.

'I have met Monsieur Flavelle again since I first met him in the street. The *mater* asked him and his daughter to tea the last Saturday night I was at home. He is not a bad fellow at all, and the more you see of him out of school the better you like him.

'I know that he has his weak points. He is vain, no doubt, an out-and-out vain old chap in fact, about some things, and likes to tell you what he has seen and done. But who hasn't got his weak points, I should like to know? Monsieur Flavelle is thoroughly good-natured, I feel sure, and wouldn't bear a grudge against a fellow long, if he thought you

were at all sorry for having been cheeky to him, or riled him in any way

'And now when I know he is poor, and has to work hard, I say once more that I think the chaps have been hard upon him, and that he feels it.'

'But the others don't know anything about what you have just been saying, Alick. Perhaps it would change their opinion of Monsieur Flavelle a bit. Don't you think I ought to tell some of them?' I said.

'Not just yet at any rate, Jack. They'll maybe find out for themselves by and by that Monsieur Flavelle is not exactly the kind of man they believe him to be, but a much better; and it will be best, I think, that they should find it out for themselves. Then they'll perhaps come to see more clearly that they haven't been using him well lately.'

'But we're willing enough to forget what's past,' I replied. I didn't quite see as yet the full force of Alick's line of reasoning, and was inclined to defend the course adopted by the fellows generally,—the more so, no doubt, as I myself had had a part in it.

'It's Monsieur himself who is now in the wrong, surely; because it's pretty plain, I think, that he's now turned sulky. I fancy most of the fellows would be ready enough to meet him half-way, in the matter of making it up again; but he doesn't seem to be

inclined to come the other. Too proud or something, I suppose.'

'It isn't sulkiness, Jack, but a little pride it may be; and is that anything wonderful? But he has taken up this new manner chiefly, I think, because he doesn't know now how far it would be safe for him to go with the class in the way of being free and familiar, and he fears exposing himself again to anything like what took place a few weeks ago, which he felt more, I am sure, than most of the fellows can understand. They thought that he was just set up at the time, and that it would pass off. But the thing cut deeper than that comes to, and now you see he seems determined to be on his guard, as it were, for the future.'

'Well, perhaps things will come all square between the fellows and him by and by,' I said. 'I would like to see it now after what you have told me. But if they don't, I think the rest should be told of this too.'

'Well, we'll see; but keep what I have said to you to yourself as yet, Jack, as you promised,' replied Alick.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. CUBITT'S SCHEME.

AT Willoughby House we had a Cadet Rifle Corps, embracing the whole school. Every boy that came to the school joined it as an understood thing. Of course we had a uniform, and a very fine one too; at least we thought so—dark slate-coloured grey, with an edging of scarlet down the front and round the cuffs and collar, and caps to match, with a scarlet band. We had dril twice a week—the 'awkward squad' composed chiefly of new boys—generally oftener.

Mr. Bennet was the captain of the corps. Of course we were on terms of rather greater equality with Mr. Bennet than with Mr. Cubitt and Mr. Butler, both because he was a good deal younger than either of the other two masters, and because he mingled much more with us out of school.

Besides being our captain in the Cadet Corps, he joined us frequently in many of our sports, especially

in cricket. Of course we always called him either 'Sir,' or 'Mister,'—for though he took part in our games freely and heartily, and wasn't at all stiff and careful of his dignity as a master, out of school, at the same time he wasn't the sort of fellow you could take liberties with.

He knew how to make a chap that attempted anything like that feel small very soon. But he was frank and jolly, and as I said just now, never thought it necessary, out of school, to remind you every now and then that he was a master, and you were boys.

It was very shortly after that conversation between Alick Fullarton and myself about Monsieur Flavelle, that Tom Driscoll and I were seated one afternoon under a tree in the garden, trying to rebind the handle of an old cricket-bat, and not making a very neat job of it.

The twine was too thick, and not well enough waxed;—but this has nothing to do with what I am going to tell about. Engaged in our work, we did not notice the approach of Mr. Bennet until he was close beside us, and speaking.

'Driscoll and Warde, I want to talk to you about something,' he said.

'All right, sir, what is it?' we said, discontinuing our work.

'Something that I think will interest you. I have just had a pretty long talk with Mr. Cubitt, who has been unfolding to me a plan he has been thinking over for some days back, in regard to the Cadet Corps. He wants to know what you would think of a general camping out of the whole corps, for a couple of nights or so, with a sham fight, a night attack and defence, or something of that sort.'

'Splendid!' Tom and I burst out in a breath. —'Every fellow will be delighted, sir, I bet!' continued Tom.

'Where does Mr. Cubitt think of going?'

'Don't get too excited, boys,' said Mr. Bennet, smiling. 'As to the place, Mr. Cubitt has not quite determined yet, but I think it will be Long Bay. It ought to suit our purpose well enough, and as it is a good way off from here, it will be a greater change for everybody than a place nearer.'

'Of course,' I said. 'The further away the jollier, and Long Bay is a first-rate spot for a camp-out. When will it be, sir? not long, I hope!'

'In about a week from this, if all goes well. It will take till then to get everything ready.'

'We 'll go in 'busses from Sydney, I suppose?' said Tom.

'Yes, Mr. Cubitt will try and secure as large ones as he can, and will go down to Sydney to-morrow or next day for that purpose. We are to pick up Monsieur Flavelle, who will wait for us at some appointed place in town.'

'Is Monsieur Flavelle to go with us?' asked Tom, in a voice that decidedly showed surprise.

'Yes. Mr. Cubitt has already spoken to him about the matter, and he is willing to go with us. He thought that Monsieur would enjoy the outing and the change, and would like to be asked to join us. Besides that, he may be useful to the expedition. You know he has studied medicine and surgery, and he still understands something of it. Well, in the case of any accident or sickness befalling any one during our camp,—which I hope will not be the case,—it will be as well to have some one by who knows how to treat it.

'Then again, Monsieur Flavelle can do something in the fencing way. All German students learn to fence, you know, and I think Monsieur must have been rather a crack hand in his youth. Now he may be inclined to give some of you older boys a few lessons in fencing, and we might have one or two fencing and single-stick matches for small prizes. It would vary our proceedings a bit.'

'I suppose we may mention this matter to the others, sir?' I said.

'Oh, yes. If anything occurs to prevent our going, that will speak for itself.'

What Mr. Bennet had just told us put the business of the bat-stringing quite past our mind for the present. When he had gone, Tom exclaimed—

'My word, Jack, this is the jolliest notion we 've heard of for a long time!'

'It is so. I just hope nothing happens to prevent its being carried out,' I said.

'Don't go suggesting that now. What should prevent it, when Mr. Cubitt's going to arrange it all himself? But that 's rather a rum start, asking old Flavelle to go with us. I don't think he 'll be much addition to our fun, if he 's going to be as sulky and grumpy as he 's been for some weeks back. I wonder he cares about going with us himself, considering the coolness there still is between us!'

'Perhaps he doesn't really care much about going, but didn't like to refuse when Mr. Cubitt asked him.'

'There 's something in that. But I would like just as well that he wasn't to be with us. It isn't as if he was like what he used to be, when he at any rate talked and was pretty jolly. Now he 'll just be a wet blanket to the affair.'

'You needn't see more of him than you like; you'll not be obliged to talk to him.'

'Doesn't Mr. Bennet propose his giving us some fencing lessons? Won't that throw us together a good deal? Hang his fencing lessons! We could have got on well enough without that. And as to his being a sort of doctor to the camp, it isn't likely his services will be much required in that way. Mr. Cubitt will be too careful, you may bet, for anything very serious to happen, accidents or that.'

'Well, he's to go, so we'll just have to make the best of it; and I daresay his presence won't make so much difference as you seem to think, Tom.'

'I'm only judging from the sort of temper he's shown ever since our flare-up with him. Why doesn't he forget it like a man, now that it's all past, and not go on in that spiteful mean-spirited way? But I expect all foreigners are more womanish and revengeful than Englishmen.'

'If that is the case, perhaps we ought to make more allowance for him.'

'No, it doesn't excuse him. He's among English now, and he ought to have learned their ways by this time.'

I didn't think Tom's argument very strong, but we said no more about the matter then.

Tom and I told two or three of the fellows about Mr. Cubitt's plan of the camping out; they told others, and before the evening was over the matter was being discussed through the whole school.

During the next few days little else was talked of at Willoughby House. All other sports were forgotten in the one absorbing topic of interest. Whenever you saw two or three or more fellows talking together in or out of the house, you might safely have given long odds that they were speaking about the coming expedition of the Cadet Corps. If the truth were known, I am afraid that it occupied the thoughts of most of us pretty often, when they should have been given to school-work. But you see it was a thing that was only to occur once, so perhaps we may be excused if we were taken up with it, to the exclusion of almost everything besides.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAMP-OUT.

WHEN Mr. Bennet first spoke to Tom Driscoll and me about the proposed camping-out it was on a Monday afternoon, and it was arranged by Mr. Cubitt that if everything was in readiness by that time, we were to start on the following Monday. Everything was ready when the Monday came, and moreover the morning broke fine and bright.

When we reached Sydney in the Parramatta steamer we found the omnibuses waiting for us at the wharf. They were the largest that Mr. Cubitt had been able to procure, and I daresay he must have paid the proprietors pretty handsomely before they took them from their regular traffic to let us have them.

There was some rushing and scrambling before we got into our places, for everybody wanted to be outside

of course, and the interference of Mr. Bennet was necessary to settle who should ride inside, and who out. But in a little we were all fairly seated, just filling the 'busses comfortably, and off we started. You may be sure we made some small stir as we drove through the streets. Nearly everybody stopped to look at us as we passed; shopmen came to their doors, clerks poked their heads out of office-windows, and envied us, no doubt, and small boys waved their caps and hurrahed.

As long as we were in the town, our pace was, at best, slow—too much so by a good deal for our tastes. But when we got out into the suburbs, the drivers shook up their reins, gave their horses a slight taste of whipcord, and we bowled along at a good smart trot. We could now do a little in the hurrahing way ourselves without hindrance or restraint, and every group of men we passed at work on the roadside, every toll we went through, every old lady trudging along with her market-basket, everything, in fact, that we met and that afforded us an excuse for doing so, we saluted with a volley of cheers, until we had somewhat tired our lungs.

No doubt it was very silly and childish, in the opinion of grown-up people, but remember the day was bright and splendid, we were in unusually high

spirits at the prospects before us, and that it doesn't take much to make a boy noisy at any time.

When we got beyond the suburbs we were fairly in the country; driving along a good road with low hills covered with short grass and scrub, with here and there a clump of trees, blue-gum or wattle, on each side. The distance from Sydney to Long Bay is about ten miles, and the road is good until the last two miles or so, when it becomes rather uneven and sandy. At this part of the road we got out and walked a bit of the way.

The majority of us had been at Long Bay at least once before, and some knew it well; but there were others to whom it was quite new. On arriving at the bay the first business was to get out all our things from the 'busses—our *impedimenta* or baggage, as Mr. Cubitt said an old Roman would have called them. The next was to pitch our tents. These were four in number, the circular kind, with a pole in the centre.

We placed the tents in the form of a square. One tent was allotted to each class, our corps being divided into four divisions, according to the classes. This made the number in each tent about the same, rather less in those occupied by the two upper classes.

Then, under Mr. Bennet's directions—for he superintended all our movements—we dug a trench in the shape of a cross in the middle of the camp, in which

we intended to kindle our watch-fires at night. Round each tent also we made a narrow trench or ditch to drain off the water in the event of its coming on to rain.

By the time all this was done, and the encampment looked in ship-shape order, it was close upon two o'clock. We intended to have had dinner at one, if possible, but we hadn't been able to get through our work in time, and wanted to see everything fixed and trim before we left off. But we had fairly earned our dinner now, and sat down to it with uncommonly keen-set appetites, even for school-boys. We had chosen a nice level space of grass backed by some trees on which to pitch the tents, and on the grass under the trees we dined.

Dinner finished, after a short rest we had a general muster, inspection, and drill. After that we were free to do what and go where we pleased until tea-time. Most of us went for a bathe and a swim. But not in the open bay. Had that been the only place for bathing we should have been obliged to do without that pleasure. Mr. Cubitt had issued the strictest orders that no one was to bathe in the open sea, as Long Bay bore an evil reputation for sharks.

But, luckily for us boys, there was no actual necessity for bathing in the open. Long Bay, according to its

name, is a long and narrow inlet, the rocks on each side stretching far out into the sea. On one side there was a spot where the sea ran in among the rocks and formed a large deep basin of smooth clear water, so transparent that you could see every pebble, weed, and shell at the bottom. It was the grandest natural swimming-baths you can fancy, and you could get the most splendid dives from almost any point on the rocks surrounding it.

The basin was large enough for the whole of us to bathe in with the greatest freedom. After we had had about half-an-hour of swimming we heard the bugle summoning us to get ready for tea.

We were divided into four messes, each tent having its separate mess. A fire was built in front of each tent, and a kettle slung over it from three sticks—not set up as you may have seen in pictures of gipsy encampments, with the top ends meeting, but two forked sticks driven into the ground, and a third laid across them from which the kettle was suspended.

How good the tea tasted made in this way, to be sure! though we had to be sparing with the milk where there were so many to be supplied. We drank it out of pannikins, that is, tin cups or mugs. Before we had finished our meal the sun had set, and the twilight, a short time in Australia even in summer,

was creeping over the land. The fires leaped and crackled and threw long trembling shadows of all sorts of queer shapes over the grass, and the trees seemed to gather themselves closer together in the gloom.

It was jolly sitting this way round the fires, for we had the feeling that we were doing things in real right style, that this was a genuine bivouac and no mistake. We could fancy ourselves trappers or hunters camping out by the side of a beaver stream in the backwoods of America, for we had all read dozens of stories of life and adventure in that country, and it was nearly always America that occurred to our minds when we thought of camping out; or we could imagine ourselves real soldiers in war-time bivouacking in front of the enemy's trenches.

The camp was divided into two guards for night duty, and these were again distributed in watches, each watch lasting two hours. The first guard consisted of the fourth and second forms, the second of the third and first forms.

We sat talking and telling yarns round the fires until about ten o'clock. Mr. Cubitt was in our tent, and sat and talked with us. Monsieur Flavelle was quartered with us too. And here I must mention the change that had come over Monsieur's manner,—a

change, I mean, from what it had been of late. He was now just like what he had been before this coolness between him and us had arisen. He talked and laughed and joked in his old way, and as if he had entirely forgotten that there had ever been any misunderstanding between us, or as if at least he was resolved to forget it for the time being.

Mr. Cubitt smoked a little, though he was not a great smoker, and Monsieur Flavelle apparently was as great a smoker as he was a snuffer—not a very common thing, I have heard. The two gentlemen now produced their pipes, and over his Monsieur Flavelle told us story after story, in his best style, and some of them were really very good and amusing. He seemed to enter into the spirit of our expedition like a boy, and to be enjoying it almost as much as we. He had certainly, for his years, a great deal of life and spirit and vivacity, which seemed to require very little to bring out.

But I set down Monsieur's pleased and jovial manner, for you might quite call it that, partly to the presence of Mr. Cubitt. I noticed that the latter seemed to be on very cordial terms with the French master, and to like him. He didn't treat him with any of the stiffness, nor yet with the slight air of superiority and condescension, that I have known

head-masters put on towards those under them or employed by them.

Mr. Cubitt, it was easily seen, treated Monsieur Flavelle as an equal, with frank and familiar friendliness. This of course was calculated to put Monsieur at his ease, and make him care less about the fact, if he was thinking of that at all at present, that the understanding between himself and us was not as pleasant as might be.

'My word! isn't Monsieur coming out strong to-night?' whispered Tom to me.

'He's quite like what he used to be,' said Fred.

'He's not such a bad old cove after all, perhaps.'

'Unless this is only temporary, because Mr. Cubitt's here, and he doesn't like him to know that there's anything amiss between him and his classes. He may be just the same as before when we get back to school, glum and grumpy as ever. He's deep, you know, as you once said, Fred.'

'Well, we'll see,' said I; 'at any rate, Tom, he's not going to be the wet blanket to our trip that you once thought.'

'No thanks to him though, I expect; I'm pretty sure it's just because Mr. Cubitt's here. He wants him to think he gets on all right and smoothly with us.'

This conversation was all spoken in undertone,

while Monsieur Flavelle was telling one of his stories. You will see that Tom's feeling towards Monsieur was still far from a warm or cordial one. He was in fact disposed to be harder upon him than any of the others. He had not yet got over Monsieur's reporting us to Mr. Cubitt, and so being the means of our having our privileges temporarily suspended, and still regarded him with suspicion and distrust.

Fred Lankester had regarded the whole matter of our misunderstanding with Monsieur more in the light of a joke, and had treated it so. He was quite ready to forget it all now, but Tom's feeling in the affair was of a deeper kind; and he was besides not naturally of so light and easy a disposition as Fred. You felt that he would be both a firmer friend and a more determined enemy.

Shortly after ten o'clock the camp turned in, and the first watch of the first guard went on duty. The watch-fires were now lit in the cross-trench of which I have spoken. The fires were already built, and only required the application of a match to kindle them.

It was not absolutely necessary for any practical purpose, of course, that we should have had watch-fires at all, only that we wished to do everything in proper form and order, as nearly as possible like a real military encampment. Why the fires were

placed in a trench became apparent when they were lit. It was that they might be the less easily seen by any approaching enemy.

The fellows composing the watch, wrapped in their cloaks, patrolled the camp, tramping slowly up and down, pausing every now and then, with grounded carbines, opposite the tent fires. The first watch at the end of two hours turned in and were relieved by the second.

Towards the small hours of the morning we put into execution a plan that had been arranged by Mr. Bennet. Half-a-dozen of us, all fourth-form boys, rose, and stealing out at the back of the tent so as to be unobserved by the guard then on duty, made a slight circuit through the bush, and crept up again to the camp.

The guard did not see us till we were close upon them. We wished to see whether they were all wide-awake, or whether we should catch them dozing, and effect an entrance into the camp unchallenged.

But they were on the alert and standing to their arms directly they perceived us. Immediately they gave the word—

'Who goes there?'

We returned the password, 'Advance Australia,' and were allowed to enter and regain our tent.

They were not caught napping that time at any rate. At about six o'clock in the morning we repeated the experiment upon a new watch, but with the same results. Evidently our fellows had a very creditable sense of the responsibility of their duties.

Shortly before seven o'clock the last watch went off duty, and at seven we all rose. We had slept wrapt up in heavy cloaks, or 'possum rugs, our beds being composed of dry ferns and brushwood, which were to be gathered in plenty in the bush close by. The first thing we did after getting up was, one and all, to bathe; and by the time we had returned from our swim we were ready enough for breakfast.

Tea and coffee, excellent cold corned beef, and as much bread and butter, or, if we preferred it, ship's biscuit—that was what our breakfast consisted of, and a very good one it was too. No luxuries, but what there was all the best of its kind.

During the forenoon of that day we first mustered for a short drill and a little manœuvring. The rest of the morning was free. Some strolled along the rocks and fished, some played cricket, some wandered about the bush and the beach collecting shells, cuttle-fish, sea-weeds, and star-fish, or hunted crabs among the rocks, endeavouring to spear them as they scuttled off under ledges and into clefts and crannies.

Every one did what pleased him best, and there was plenty to occupy and amuse all. As long as we gave our promise to get into no mischief, and to break none of the rules laid down by him before we started, Mr. Cubitt was willing and glad that we should enjoy, during our short outing, all liberty and freedom from restraint. Of course both he and Mr. Bennet kept an eye upon us, but that was only an advisable precaution.

After dinner that day we had some fencing and single-stick matches. Mr. Cubitt had provided a number of prizes,—coloured flannel cricket-caps, cricket-belts, some first-rate penknives, and the like. The first prize was a very jolly one, a pretty silver scarf-pin, and the second a handsome copy of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome.*

Monsieur Flavelle again came out strong in the fencing business. He took all the fourth form in turn and gave us each a short lesson with the foils. He threw himself into the sport with the greatest energy, taking off his coat and waistcoat, and slipping one of his braces over his shoulder so that his sword-arm might move the more freely.

It was really wonderful, and not a little fun to see Monsieur—how active and nimble he was for his years. He declared that he could hardly remember when he had last handled a foil, but he certainly had

not forgotten the use of them. Not one of us could make a point against him. He laughed a little, though quite good-humouredly, at our failure to touch him.

'Ah!' he said, 'I am getting slow and stiff now; I could fence a little once, at least I was told so; but I have nearly forgotten it all.'

Mr. Bennet was the only one who made any stand against him, and he was by no means his match. Though he said very little, and didn't at all boast, it was still evident that Monsieur enjoyed somewhat his superiority over us. But none of us minded this much; we were rather amused at his sprightliness and energy, and the way he skipt and leapt about like a boy himself.

Only Tom was inclined to resent a little Monsieur's triumph, and to feel a trifle sore at it.

'What a vain old chap he is!' he said to me. 'How cocky he is because none of us can hit him! I wish we could get him at cricket. I'd bowl at his old legs in a style that would make him skip and jump in a different way.'

'Oh! I think he's rather good fun,' I answered.

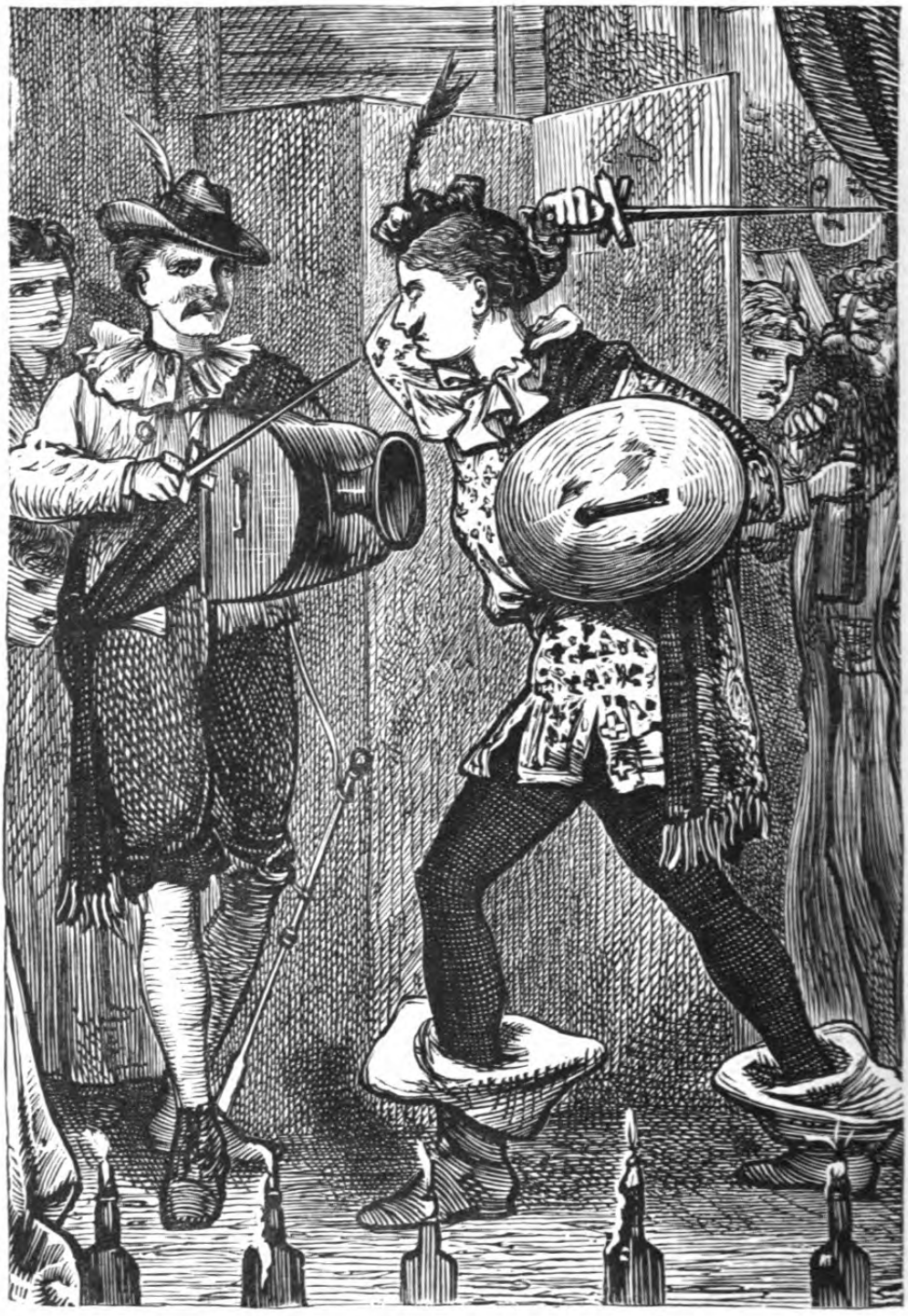
Tom got the first prize for fencing, and Alick Fullarton the second. I got one, a very good three-bladed penknife.

In the evening of that day, what was meant to be the most important part of our proceedings during the encampment took place, which was a sham attack and defence of the camp.

The fourth and second forms composed the attacking party, the third and first forms the defence. We stationed ourselves in the bush under the command of Mr. Bennet, and at the appointed time stole down upon the camp, trying to conceal our approach as much as possible among the trees and bushes.

When within a short distance of the camp we emerged from the cover of the bush, quickened our pace, and bore down upon the tents at a double march, and with a tremendous war-cry. I don't know whether this last was quite the thing a real enemy would have done in similar circumstances; but we thought it gave effect to our proceedings, and had ourselves suggested it to Mr. Bennet.

Our opponents were prepared for us, and answered our shout with another as loud and ringing. We closed with them, and engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter. There was a bright moon, which helped us to see each other clearly, and to distinguish friend from foe. The struggle was not a very long one, but stern and desperate while it lasted, every fellow doing his duty like a man.



'Older folks burlesque Shakespeare now-a-days.'—WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL, page 99.

At a signal from Mr. Bennet our opponents surrendered, and we effected an entrance into the camp. Of course this had been arranged beforehand. Though we had closed and wrestled man to man, we had only used our hands upon each other, so that no one was in the least hurt. Tumbled clothing, a torn necktie here and there, and a few slight scratches, were the most serious results of the fray. But we one and all felt that our mimic battle had been very life-like, so to say, and entirely successful.

After all was over, and each division was back again in its own tent, a small allowance of 'grog' was served out to each fellow. We called it 'grog,' but I should perhaps explain that it hadn't any spirits in it. It was just mulled claret, about half-and-half parts wine and water. Not a very strong tipple; but, sweet and warm, with a little spice in it, it tasted, we thought, very good.

It was too early for bed yet, and we passed the rest of the evening in much the same way as the previous one. Monsieur Flavelle told us plenty of more stories, and besides sang us a couple of Swiss songs with great spirit and fire. Some of the boys too sang, and we had a number of choruses.

Shortly before we turned in, and the first watch went on duty, Fred Lankester added to the diversions

of the evening, in a way we had not expected,—by a solo dramatic performance, namely. He got hold of a white sheet, and wrapping it round him, stood up in the moonlight, and gave us the Ghost's speech from *Hamlet*, in this style,—a slight departure, you may observe, from the original text :—

'I am thy father's spirit,
Doomed for a certain hour to stalk the light
(I think I should have said to walk the night),
And, for a day, confined to bask in wires
(By which, I mean to say, to fast in fires).
But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my pigeon-house,
(Stay ! let me see ! methinks it's prison-house)
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, grease thy young flood
(Ha ! surely it must be freeze thy young blood),
And make each separate hair to stand on end,
Like squills upon the spiteful porcupine
(Or rather quills upon the fretful porcupine).'

And Fred went on in this style for a number of lines further. But I won't give you any more. I know it was great nonsense, but, delivered by Fred with the most awful solemnity he could command, it made us all laugh. Mr. Cubitt laughed too, though I daresay he must have thought it rather irreverent to burlesque Shakespeare in this fashion. But as

older folks burlesque Shakespeare now-a-days, it's not wonderful that boys should not be very particular about doing the same, and no doubt Mr. Cubitt thought of this too.

I expect Fred's speech wasn't altogether impromptu, but that he had thought over it a bit beforehand. He had a knack at this sort of thing, as the reader has perhaps gathered.

CHAPTER IX.

TOM DRISCOLL'S PERIL.

THE next day was to be the last of our encampment. We were to return home that afternoon. The day was to be given up entirely to play and pleasure, for we looked upon our drill, and even the sham-fight, partly in the light of work and duty.

Now that we had gone through a fair amount of drill and manœuvring on the two previous mornings, and had managed our sham-fight to the satisfaction of every one, we felt that we should take the last as a complete holiday. It was to be just like a regular picnic day, and nothing more.

The two first days, though sunny and bright, had been tempered by a cool breeze, but to-day it began to get very hot early in the morning, and it was still and airless.

We had intended having a cricket-match, eleven

chosen from the fourth and first forms against eleven of the third and second. But seeing that it was going to turn out a 90°-in-the-shade day, or something like that, a number of the fellows declared their intention, at breakfast, of shirking cricket altogether, and so the plan of the match was given up.

'What are you going to do with yourself, Alick?' I said, a little while after breakfast.

'I haven't thought, Jack, now that the match is knocked on the head. But I don't feel inclined to go in for anything very exciting. Do you? Supposing we strolled along the rocks to the point there, and see what it 's like on the other side?'

Alick pointed with his hand in the direction of the southern headland of the bay.

'All right,' I answered. 'I wonder if Monsieur Flavelle would care to go with us. He 's been jolly good company the last two days, I must say, and we might get him to spin us some more yarns. Listening to yarns is suitable work for weather like this.'

'You 're getting to like Monsieur better—eh?' said Alick.

'Perhaps; but you 'll admit he 's been quite a different sort of fellow during our encampment; seems to have quite forgotten his stiff sulky kind of humour, and is like what he used to be. Tom persists

in saying that it's only because Mr. Cubitt's with us.'

'Tom's awfully obstinate in this matter, I consider, Jack. He seems so determined to be down upon Monsieur Flavelle.'

'Most of any of the fellows, certainly. He can't get over Monsieur's getting our privileges suspended that time. Being captain of the school, you see, made him more touchy upon a thing like that, perhaps, than any of us.'

'Well, I'm willing to make allowances for that. But I think he might forget the whole matter now. But come, let's go for an exploring round the rocks. We can't have Monsieur Flavelle with us now, because I saw him strolling off himself, with a book, a little ago.'

'There's Tom and Fred; they'll go with us,' I said, as the two came up.

They had as yet thought of no particular way of passing the morning, and were ready to join us.

We strolled slowly along the rocky shore, now stopping to chase a big crab, occasionally managing to catch one; now pausing a minute for a stone-shy at the sea-gulls, never, of course, hitting one by any chance. It was a very rocky and broken bit of shore, and as we approached the headland the rocks became

bigger in size, large rugged boulders, which it was sometimes pretty stiff work scrambling over.

At length we had rounded the headland, and on the other side we found another bay, somewhat similar in shape to Long Bay, that is, rather narrow than broad, but of much smaller size. As we came round the headland, just at the point, whom should we come suddenly upon but Monsieur Flavelle! He was seated on a flat rock close to the water's edge, in the shadow of another high perpendicular rock at his back. He held an open book in his hand. As we passed him he looked up, nodded and smiled.

'Who'd have thought of finding him here! What's he up to now, I wonder?' said Tom.

'Nothing very deep or deadly, I fancy. It looks very like as if he was reading, doesn't it?' said Alick, with a laugh.

'He's all smirks and smiles now. He wasn't much that way a week ago.'

'Oh, Tom, I think you're rather hard upon the old chap,' said Fred. 'You're determined to make him out a deep one.'

'So were you not so long ago. But wait till we get back to school. If he doesn't come out in his true colours again, then I'm ready to admit I'm all out about him.'

'Agreed, then, Tom; let it be that way,' said Alick. 'Wait till we get back again before we pass a final judgment upon him; for at least he's been jolly and good-natured enough with us during the encampment.'

By this time we were walking along the beach of the bay. We now saw that it was a much shallower one than Long Bay. The beach sloped out into the sea with a very gradual incline, and was composed of hard white sand.

'My word, what a jolly place for a swim!' said Fred.

'Supposing we have one? It's about the pleasantest thing one can do on a day like this,' said Tom.

'Against rules,' said Alick. 'Mr. Cubitt was very particular in forbidding us to bathe in the open sea.'

'I've no wish to break rules any more than yourself,' answered Tom a little sharply. 'But it isn't against rules, as I shall prove. Mr. Cubitt's command that we were not to bathe in the open sea applied to Long Bay, and to it alone; and his only, or at any rate his chief, reason for that was, as everybody knows, because Long Bay is supposed to be so full of sharks.

'Now, it's pretty clear that a small bay like this, where the water is so shallow, can't have any sharks.

Mr. Cubitt would have no fear about letting the older fellows at least bathe here. If he were with us I'm sure he would give us permission.'

'I'm not so certain of that,' replied Alick. 'The order was that we weren't to bathe in the open sea. There was nothing said about one particular spot more than another.'

'Of course not, because Mr. Cubitt had no other place but Long Bay in his mind. He was thinking especially of it when he made us promise as he did. Can't you see that, man alive?' said Tom somewhat impatiently.

'I think that's quite a fair way of putting it, Alick,' I said; for it seemed to me that Tom's argument was really pretty convincing.

'Well, perhaps so; I don't want to be pig-headed. I daresay when Mr. Cubitt made that rule he was thinking only of Long Bay; and this place looks safe enough certainly.'

'Of course. Why, the water's so clear that if there was a shark about we could see him time enough to get out of his way easily. Come along!'

And as Fred spoke he began taking off his coat and vest. The water looked very tempting, so clear and cool. The sea rolled in and up the sloping beach with a long smooth swell, each wave breaking

on the sand with a lazy ripple and a thin fringe of foam. We were soon all in the water. It was splendid bathing here—much better, we thought, than even in the big basin, our usual bathing-place. Here the roll of the surf was just sufficient to give a feeling of freedom and a touch of excitement to the pleasure. It was grand diving under the waves, breasting them, and letting them carry you back to the beach on their crests.

At first we didn't go beyond our depth, but soon we grew more venturesome. We knew that bathing in the surf like this required one to be a little cautious, but the swell was so long and steady to-day that we felt little fear, and gradually went farther and farther out till we were swimming in water much beyond our depth.

Tom was a capital swimmer, the best, in fact, in the school. He had been taught by his father when he was quite a little chap, and was very confident and bold in the water. He could take headers from a great height, and keep under the surface for a much longer time than any other fellow in the school.

'I think we're far enough out now,' I said, as we were swimming in a line with our faces turned towards the open sea; 'we may as well turn back now.'

'All right, in a minute,' said Tom; 'here's a fine

long wave coming up. Let's breast it. It'll carry us in in grand style.'

'You may if you like, Tom, you're a much stronger swimmer than I; but I don't fancy it, so I tell you I'm going to turn back.'

I was treading water while I was speaking.

'All right; you three can turn, and I'll wait for this wave. I'll be in on its top before you.'

Fred, Alick, and I began swimming backwards to the shore. We wanted to see Tom mount the advancing wave. As it approached he dived under it, and we expected to see him next moment on its crest. But when he rose to the surface again, he was not on the top of the wave but on the other side, and the wave had left him behind.

'He's just missed it. Dived a little too late, I suppose,' said Fred; 'he won't be in before us now.'

'Oh, we'll wait for him,' I said, and then I shouted—

'Come along, Tom, we'll wait for you.'

But he wasn't swimming towards us, but seemed going farther out.

'Why, what's he about? He doesn't mean to go any farther. I'm sure he's quite far enough to be safe,' said Alick; 'the swell may carry him out before he's aware of it, though he is a strong swimmer.'

'It may so,' I said, and then I shouted again—

'Tom, Tom! turn back, old man; you're out far enough.'

But he didn't turn. We thought he couldn't have heard my call; so the three of us shouted together. But still he made no motion of turning, and now we saw clearly that he was going farther and farther out.

'I don't believe he *can* get back,' said Fred in a frightened voice. 'The swell out there must be much stronger than here. Supposing it's drifting him out?'

The idea was a terrible one, but we all felt at once that it was only too possible. Again we shouted together with all the strength we could.

'Hush!' exclaimed Alick, 'I think I heard something.'

We listened. Yes, we each fancied that we heard a faint cry coming from Tom. It was very weak and faint, as though from a person spent and exhausted. Tom was now rapidly drifting farther and farther out. His head was rapidly becoming like a mere speck on the surface of the water.

'This is awful!' said Alick. 'I'm sure now that he can't get back; the current's too strong for him; it's carrying him away, and he'll drift out to sea. And he must be almost done up too, or his voice wouldn't sound so weak even at this distance.'

'What shall we do!' I said. We all spoke now

in strange terrified voices, as we each could notice. Alick did not answer for a few moments. He was straining his eyes in the direction of Tom. We were all treading water now.

'Do you see,' said Alick, 'that he's drifting to that left point there, where we came round out of Long Bay? The only chance now of saving him is to get to shore as quickly as possible, run round to that point, and swim out so as to meet him. If he can hold out till then, and we can get to the point in time, we may save him. It's our only chance. I think he'll pass quite close to the rocks there. He's drifting fast that way. There must be a strong current setting in that direction. Let's get back now as fast as possible!'

We swam back to land at our utmost speed, you may be sure. Then we set off as hard as we could run along the beach towards the rocks. In and out and over the rocks we rushed breathless, turning our eyes every now and then upon the black speck drifting faster and faster towards the point.

'He'll be past before we can get there,' said Alick, panting hard. 'We'll be too late, and it's our only chance!' Neither Fred nor I answered. We were all three straining every nerve and muscle. If we could but reach the point before he drifted past!

No! we would not. We saw the dark speck

approaching swiftly and more swiftly to the point, and we were still some fifty yards from it. We were too late!

Just as this thought forced itself upon us, filling us with terror, despair, and misery, we saw a figure start suddenly up from behind a rock close to the water's edge. It was a man. One moment and we beheld him throwing off his coat and vest, and in the next saw him leap out from the rocks and plunge into the sea.

'It's Monsieur Flavelle!' cried Alick. 'He's seen Tom. Oh, I hope he's in time!'

In a few moments more we had reached the point, and oh! what a weight was lifted suddenly from our hearts when we saw Monsieur Flavelle swimming back to land supporting Tom. As soon as the two were near enough for us to reach them, we stretched down, and, catching Tom by the arms, dragged him on shore. Then we helped Monsieur Flavelle out of the water, for the rocks here ran down steep into the sea, and were besides slippery with clinging sea-weed and barnacles.

'I just saw him in time,' said Monsieur Flavelle, when he had recovered his breath. 'One more minute and he was drifted past. The current runs very strong here. It sweeps round the point like a

whirlpool. I could hardly make way against it with my burden. But how is he? Let us see.'

We had laid Tom down on a flat rock. His face was as white as a sheet.

'He has fainted,' said I.

'Yes,' said Monsieur Flavelle. 'When I reached him just now he was quite conscious, though very much exhausted, and hardly able to keep above water, I think. But this is only a faint. I don't think it is anything serious. We will wrap him in my coat, and get him back to the camp as quickly as possible. Now, you three run back to your clothes, and dress as quick as ever you can. I will stay here by Master Driscoll, and we will carry him back between us.'

We hurried to the beach, tumbled on our clothes, and hastened back to Monsieur Flavelle.

'This is how we will carry him,' said he. 'We will lay him upon my coat; then two will hold one end, and two the other. I can think of no better way.'

We did as Monsieur Flavelle instructed. It was rather an awkward way of carrying our burden, but no other better was within our reach. We made pretty slow progress too, among the rocks and broken ground, but when these were passed, and we got upon grassy ground, we moved much quicker. I think it

must have taken us nearly an hour in getting back to the camp.

Almost as soon as we were in sight of it, we saw Mr. Cubitt, Mr. Bennet, and several boys coming hurriedly forward to meet us. They had evidently noticed the unusual appearance we presented as we advanced carrying Tom between us.

'What is it? What has happened?' Mr. Cubitt cried as he approached.

'The boys have been bathing, and Master Driscoll has fainted,' said Monsieur Flavelle.

'Bathing! fainted! You don't mean that he is drowned?' exclaimed Mr. Cubitt, stooping over Tom, and looking into his face, with an expression of dread coming into his own.

'No! no! not that, I think; it is only a faint,' Monsieur answered. 'But we must restore him as quickly as we can. Will you bring some brandy, sir?'

We had now laid Tom down on the ground before one of the fires. We took off the clothes which we had hastily thrown about him, and wrapped him in warmed blankets. We poured nearly a wine-glassful of brandy down his throat, three of us meanwhile rubbing and chafing his body with our hands. For a little he remained still, very white and cold. Mr.

Cubitt knew that he was not dead, for when he placed his hand upon Tom's heart he felt it beating.

After a time Mr. Cubitt declared that he could feel Tom's heart and pulse beating stronger. Then, a little after, his eyes opened, his lips gave a quick convulsive quiver, and a faint colour came into his face. We poured a little more brandy between his lips, his eyes opened again, and looked at us with a dazed expression ; we felt his body and hands growing warmer to the touch, and in a few minutes more we knew that he was saved.

'Thank God!' exclaimed Mr. Cubitt, with a great sigh of relief.

We raised Tom to a sitting position. He looked round him again, still in that dazed confused way, opened his lips as if to speak, and then fell back again upon Mr. Cubitt's arms. In another moment he had sunk into a sound sleep. We saw at once that it was sleep now, and not a faint.

'That is the very best thing that could happen now,' said Mr. Cubitt.

We placed him in the tent upon a bed of grass and ferns, and covered him well with a 'possum rug, warm as the weather was.

'When he wakes from that sleep I hope and think he will be himself again,' said Mr. Cubitt, who now

turned to Monsieur Flavelle and Fred, Alick and myself, for some explanation of what had taken place. We told him the circumstances in every detail.

'My attention was first attracted from my book,' said Monsieur Flavelle, 'by seeing the three boys running along the rocks towards me as hard as they could. For a moment I wondered why there was only three, but when I saw that they were naked I formed some idea of what must have happened. I turned my eyes from the boys towards the bay, and then I saw something black on the surface of the water drifting rapidly past the point where I was seated, about twenty yards from the land.

'I guessed that it was one of the boys. I thought I was already too late, when I jumped into the water. Another minute, and I should have been,—for the current was sweeping and swirling round the point very fast, and if he had once got fairly past, he would have been quite beyond my reach. He would have been quickly carried out to sea. I think it was with difficulty that he was keeping himself above water when I reached him.'

All the other circumstances Mr. Cubitt learned from us. We did not try or wish to conceal anything. That Mr. Cubitt was deeply grateful to Monsieur Flavelle for what he had done was very easily seen,

though he did not say much in words at present. But I saw him press Monsieur's hand with such a warm wringing grasp, holding it in his own for a long time.

And no wonder! Think what Mr. Cubitt would have felt if anything had happened to Tom, or indeed to any of us. I know he felt the responsibility of taking so large a number of boys out on an expedition like this of ours, but he had hoped that by the most careful management everything would go right. And he had been careful. No one could have been more so. He had personally overlooked every arrangement and detail of our encampment.

And, besides the real sadness and sorrow that would have come upon Mr. Cubitt if any serious accident—far less death—had overtaken any of us, it might have been a serious matter for him in regard to the school. It would have been almost certain to damage the school in the eyes of the public, and inflict upon it a blow from which it might never have recovered. No wonder, then, I say, that Mr. Cubitt felt deep gratitude to Monsieur Flavelle for being the means of averting a catastrophe which would have sunk himself, and I may say the whole camp, to a greater or less extent, in the deepest sadness and

gloom. What an ending it would have been to our hitherto happy and successful expedition!

When we reached the camp preparations were going on for dinner, the last meal we were to take before starting for home. We did not of course wake up Tom for it. We hurried through it somewhat quickly. Mr. Cubitt was anxious now to get back home as soon as possible, and there was a good deal to be done before we would be ready to start.

Every one worked as hard as he could in getting the things together, and properly packed away in the 'busses, and in about an hour after dinner was finished the horses were put to, and all was in readiness for our return journey.

Tom still slept. We lifted him with great care and placed him in one of the 'busses, on some straw upon which a rug had been previously laid. His sleep seemed a very deep and sound one. It lasted on nearly all through our journey home. Not until we reached the wharf in Sydney, and were about to go on board the steamer, did he waken. Probably the brandy, of which he had had a large quantity for a boy, had tended to make his sleep so deep,—this, in addition to the great exhaustion he must have been feeling.

When we reached home he was put to bed, and some hot tea was given to him. Mr. Cubitt did not think it advisable that he should have much food in his present condition. Shortly after he had taken the tea he fell off to sleep again. He had been placed in the spare room which was kept as a sick-room for any of us when we were ill, and a servant was left with him, who was to sit by his bedside through the night.

Of course Alick, Fred, and I had to repeat the story of the day a number of times, for it was occupying the thoughts of all.

Just before going to bed, the only time during that evening when Alick and I found ourselves alone, he said—

'Well, Jack, this has been an eventful day; enough excitement in it to last one for some time to come.'

'My word, rather! Just a little too exciting,' I answered.

'What do you think of Monsieur Flavelle now? We've had to say so much to other fellows that we haven't had time to talk the matter over between ourselves.'

'What do I think of him? Why, that he's a regular brick, and no mistake!' I replied.

'Ah, I thought you would acknowledge that. Yes, he 's proved himself a brave and plucky old chap to-day beyond a doubt. And I 'm not sure that all the fellows can fully understand what a really plucky thing he did, as much as we who saw it.

'You must consider too Monsieur's age. He 's by no means a young man now, though not an old one, and there was more risk in what he did than may appear at first sight. I looked pretty closely at the water at the point there. The current was awfully strong, and my opinion is that none of us three, if we had been in time, and jumped in to try and save Tom, would have been able to withstand the current, for we were all pretty tired and out of breath.

'If Monsieur Flavelle had not been a strong and active swimmer even now, he would have been carried away too, for Tom Driscoll 's a good heavy weight to support in the water. And of course he couldn't be certain when he jumped in whether he would be able to stem the current or not.

'So I consider that Monsieur's act was a regular noble and courageous one. I have always been ready to admit that he is rather a vain old chap, and can boast a bit sometimes, but for all that you see he is a bold and brave man too.'

'What a splendid swimmer he must have been once when he was a young man! My word, how he struck out to-day! He's still tough and wiry, you see! No, I don't think we could have saved Tom even if we had been in time. Monsieur is a better swimmer that any of us yet.'

'If he hadn't been on the spot, Tom Driscoll would not have been where he is to-night, I haven't a doubt about that,' said Alick in his quiet decided tone. 'I wonder if Tom will see that as clearly as we do?'

'I think he will,' I answered. 'He wasn't so far spent, I fancy, when Monsieur Flavelle reached him, as not to recognise who his preserver was, and when we tell him the rest, I'm pretty sure he'll not undervalue what Monsieur has done for him to-day. Tom isn't by any means an ungenerous fellow, generally speaking—far from it. I have reasons for knowing that better than you, Alick.'

'I didn't say he was. I haven't known him so long as you. He's been pretty obstinate in regard to Monsieur Flavelle, and determined to see things in a wrong light.'

'Yes, we've been all in the wrong more or less about him, except you, Alick; only Tom's held out longer than the rest of us. He's a high proud sort

of spirit sometimes, Tom has; I always knew that. But he'll see the whole matter in a very different way now, I'm pretty sure.'

'He ought to. If anything will make him do so, the events of to-day should,' Alick replied.

CHAPTER X.

THE BEST WE COULD DO.

NEXT morning Tom declared, when questioned by Mr. Cubitt, that he felt all right—just a little languid and tired, but that was all. Mr. Cubitt had intended sending for a doctor if it should be necessary, but he now thought that it was not, and Tom himself would not hear of it.

He was not allowed to do any kind of work that day, and in the evening he seemed to me the same as ever. So the following morning found him in his place in class as usual.

This was Tom's account of what had so nearly turned out fatal to him. I give it as far as I can in his own words, as he told the circumstances to Fred, Alick, and me. Of course he had to repeat the same several times to others :—

'I just missed that wave; dived a little too late, as you thought, Fred. When I rose to the surface again I found that I was on the other side of it, and saw it rolling in to the shore. Just then I suddenly felt a strange stiff kind of pain in my right arm,—it was like when your foot goes to sleep. My whole arm from the wrist to the shoulder was numb and dead, so that I couldn't move it.'

'I knew at once what it was—cramp. At first I felt a little frightened. All the stories I had ever heard about chaps getting cramp while bathing, and the danger of it, rushed into my mind in a moment.

'But I tried to keep cool; I thought that it was only in one arm, and that I could get along with my left easily enough. I struck out to follow you three back to the beach.

'But it wasn't such easy work as I had expected. There was a pretty strong back-flow, as it were, from the waves, that you couldn't notice much, farther in where you were swimming. Besides this, I found that I was more tired than I thought; we had been in the water a good time, you know. In short, I very quickly discovered that I was making no progress at all, but that I was being drifted out.

'It was not a pleasant discovery, I can tell you. It nearly took away my presence of mind altogether.

But I tried hard to keep my senses; I knew that if I lost them all hope was gone. I made one more desperate effort to make way against the current, but it was no go.

'Then I heard your shouts, and tried to answer. You say you scarcely heard me; I didn't think you would at all, but even if you had, I knew that you could do nothing to help me. I felt that my voice was very weak and faint. I was fast becoming done up.

'Then I noticed the direction in which I was drifting—towards the point, and the idea occurred to me that if I floated and just let myself drift, I might pass near enough to the rocks to be able to reach them by swimming, so I lay over on my back and floated, and I saw that the current was taking me every minute nearer to the point.

'The nearer I approached the point the faster I drifted. When I was nearly opposite I turned over on my front again and struck out for the shore. But I couldn't make a yard of headway; all I could do was to keep myself from being carried farther out. The current was sweeping past the point at a tremendous rate.

'The floating on my back had rested me a little, but I hadn't much strength left. I felt that I was

growing weaker and weaker, and that I couldn't last out much longer; I was losing consciousness. A cold lifeless feeling was creeping all over my body, I thought I was taking cramp all through.

'An awful feeling of despair was coming over me, but I still struggled feebly on with my face turned towards the land, when I saw some one start up straight out of the rocks, as it seemed to me, and leap into the water. I didn't try to advance now, I just trod the water and kept myself above the surface. It was the very most that I was able for, and I couldn't have done that for five minutes longer.

'When Monsieur Flavelle reached me I could just recognise him; I felt so dazed and queer in the head; and by the time he got me to land, I was gone altogether, as you know. I don't remember anything more until I woke just before we reached the steamer. You say I opened my eyes for a few moments a little while before I fell asleep, but I have no recollection of it.'

A few days later Tom said to me one evening when we were alone together—

'Jack, old chap, I want your advice about something. What can a fellow do for Monsieur Flavelle? I have written the whole story to the *pater*—told him that there couldn't be a doubt that I owe my life to

Monsieur Flavelle, and he writes back to me to say that he will do anything in his power for him that I like to mention. But I can't think of anything; one couldn't ask him to accept a money gift, could one? and I haven't the least idea what he should like in the way of a present.'

'Perhaps a present wouldn't be the best thing at all,' I answered, and then I stopped to think a moment. 'I'll tell you what I think you should do,' I continued; 'Alick Fullarton's people have got to know Monsieur Flavelle and his family, and Alick has been at his house once or twice. He knows more about him out of school than any of us. Suppose you take him into your counsel. He might be able to suggest something.'

'Very well,' Tom said, after a short pause. 'I would as soon have thought of something myself. But of course I want to find out what would be most likely to please Monsieur Flavelle best, and if Alick Fullarton can help us, I'm quite ready to follow his suggestions if I can.'

I think it cost Tom a little effort to say this. He would have liked to be able to hit upon some scheme himself, or would have readily enough followed any that I might have suggested, but Alick was not just the first person he would have sought assistance

from in his present difficulty. The two had never exactly drawn together. Tom had not given Alick much encouragement to chum with him when the latter first came to the school, and Alick wasn't the sort of fellow to court another's friendship who didn't seem to care much about it, or who wasn't ready to meet him half-way.

'Suppose you first let me mention what we have just been speaking about to Alick,' I said, 'and if he has anything to suggest the three of us can then have a talk over the matter together.'

'Very well; let it be that way; only see about it as soon as you can, Jack.'

Next day I told Alick the conversation that had passed between Tom and myself. He didn't answer anything immediately. After a little he said—

'I think I can see a way by which something might be done which would both please Monsieur Flavelle and benefit him and his family too. It is the best thing I can think of. You have heard me say, Jack, that the Flavelles have just as much as they can manage to get along decently, with the invalid girl to support, and you may remember my telling you that the eldest daughter has only a situation in one of the Public Schools, and that she is fitted for much higher work, that would bring in a better salary.

'Well, now, don't you think Mr. Driscoll could find her some better situation than her present one,—some place as a governess in a nice family, who could afford to pay her well? Mr. Driscoll is a rich man, I know, and must have a good deal of influence. Bertha Flavelle is a clever girl, knows French and German nearly as well as her father, plays the piano first-rate, and sings too. She is fit for any governess's situation almost.'

'That seems to be a jolly good idea,' said I; 'we'll let Tom know of it at once.'

Later on in the day, when afternoon school was done, Alick, Tom, and I talked the matter over. When Tom had heard Alick's idea, it seemed quite to take his fancy.

'Thanks, old chap,' he said in the frank hearty way he had when he liked, 'I like your plan. I'll just write and tell the *pater* about it to-night, and will see what he says. He might be able to manage the matter without much difficulty, I fancy.'

In a day or two Tom got an answer to his letter, and a very satisfactory one it was, though Mr. Driscoll met the suggestion made to him by his son in a way that none of us had thought of—not even Tom himself. His proposal was that Miss Flavelle should be asked to become governess to Tom's sister Ellen.

Ellen Driscoll had hitherto been attending a ladies' school, but now it seemed to have occurred to her father that he would like her to have a governess. Whether he had been thinking of this at all before, or whether it was only suggested to him by Tom's letter, I don't know. Perhaps it was both; I mean that he might have been turning over such an idea in his mind, and that his son's letter may have clinched it.

Ellen herself seemed very much pleased with the plan. Of course she knew all about what Monsieur Flavelle had done for her brother, and I have no doubt she was almost as desirous as her father and Tom himself of finding out the best way of thanking and as much as possible benefiting him. Besides, I suppose girls, generally speaking, like the idea of having a governess to themselves, if she is at all a good sort.

Mr. Driscoll mentioned in his letter the salary he was prepared to offer Miss Flavelle. It is not necessary to state here the exact sum; it is sufficient to say that it was a liberal one. Tom read his father's letter to Alick and me.

'That 's first-rate,' said Alick, when it was finished; 'couldn't be better. And are you going to speak about this matter to Monsieur Flavelle yourself, Tom?'

'Well, no, I think not. I thought of asking Mr. Cubitt to mention it to him. I don't much care about doing it myself, somehow.'

'Mr. Cubitt will manage it all right, we may be pretty sure,' I said; 'I suppose you 'll see him about it soon?'

'To-night, I meant to,' answered Tom.

Tom had a talk of some length with Mr. Cubitt in his study that evening, and the latter very willingly agreed to lay Mr. Driscoll's proposal before Monsieur Flavelle. Tom told us that Mr. Cubitt himself seemed very much pleased with the idea.

'The only thing I 'm in doubts about,' said Tom, 'is that it isn't doing enough for him. But whatever one did you couldn't repay another for saving your life. But perhaps some other way may turn up of serving Monsieur Flavelle besides this.'

'I am almost certain he will be pleased with this plan at any rate,' said Alick; 'I know he is very fond of both his daughters, and proud of the Bertha one, and I am sure whatever happened to benefit her would delight him far more than if it was done to himself.'

Alick was right. Monsieur Flavelle accepted Mr. Driscoll's proposal that his daughter should become Ellen Driscoll's governess, at once. He was quite

safe to do so without first consulting Bertha, for he knew that she could only be of the same opinion in the matter as himself. Mr. Cubitt of course told him that both Mr. Driscoll and Tom were most anxious to prove how much they felt the debt they owed him, and that this plan had seemed to them a way of showing their gratitude which they thought would be acceptable to him, though they were aware that it was a very small recompence indeed for what he had done.

Monsieur Flavelle did not make any pretence of denying that what he had done had really been the means of saving Tom Driscoll's life. He knew that everybody was convinced of that, and that for him to try and disclaim it would only look like affectation.

But he affirmed that he had only done what any other person would do in the same circumstances, who could swim as well as he, and that Mr. Driscoll's offer amply repaid him. A day or two after, Mr. Driscoll received a letter from Bertha Flavelle herself, thanking him for his offer, and saying that she would be ready to begin her duties with his daughter as soon as she was released from her present situation, which would be very shortly.

Of course what had been done by the Driscolls for Monsieur Flavelle was nothing like a repayment for

his act of courage and promptitude. He may perhaps have thought that it was, but we all knew almost as well as Tom himself that it wasn't. But as Tom said, how could one hope to make up fully to a person for a service such as that? It wasn't a thing that money could repay.

But Tom wanted to do something more, and what was now done was his own suggestion. He proposed that the fourth-form should subscribe and give Monsieur Flavelle a little present of some kind. Perhaps you may think that it was entirely Tom's own business—the testifying of his gratitude to Monsieur Flavelle, I mean. But Tom knew that all of us, more or less, had been very hard upon our French master, had taken unfair advantage of him in many ways, had acted towards him in a wrong-headed, thoughtless, and mistaken way, and that every one of us, with the exception of Alick Fullarton, owed him some reparation.

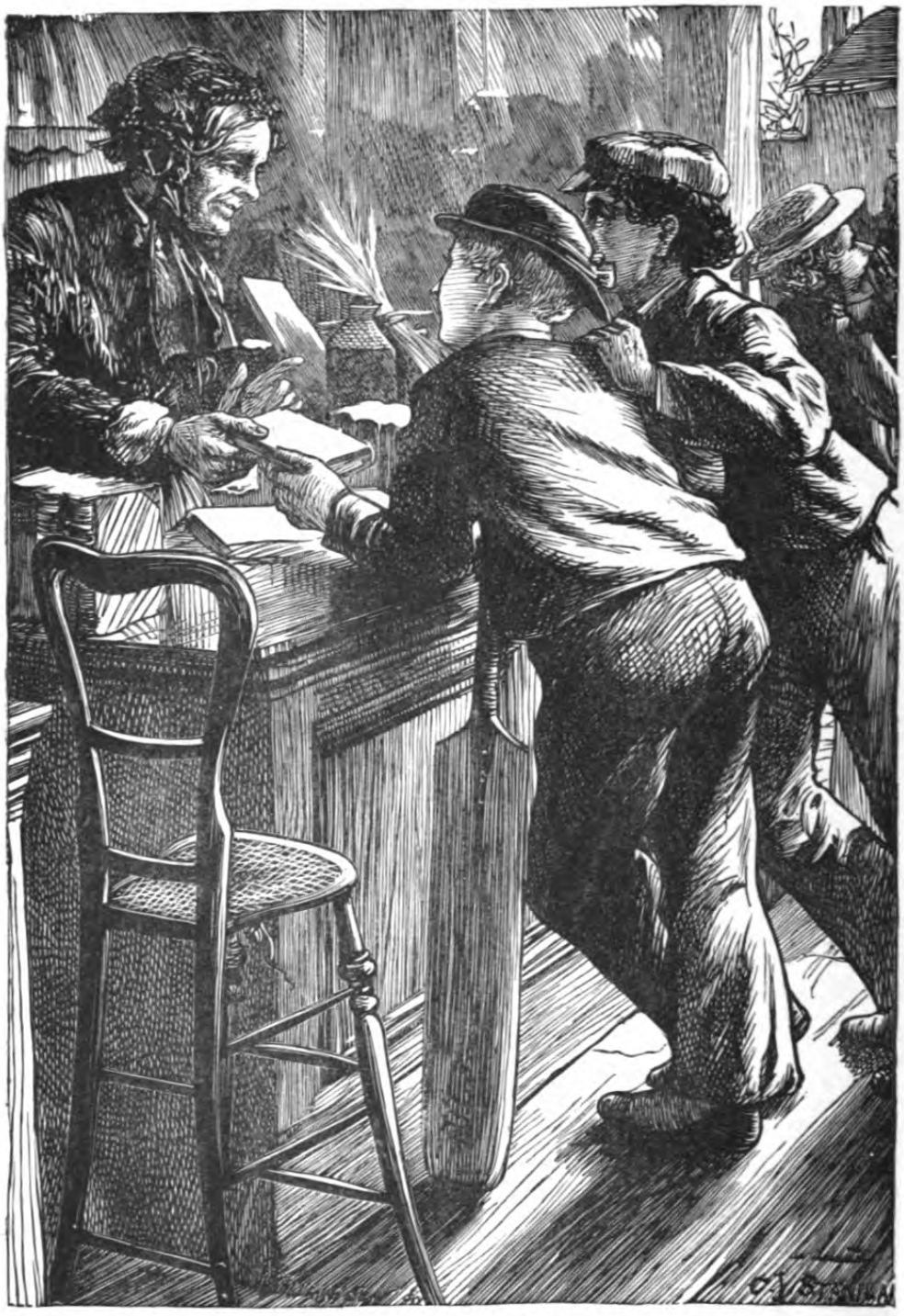
All the fellows, I am glad to say, were ready enough to acknowledge this when it was put to them, and quite willing to agree to Tom's suggestion. But Tom felt at the same time that he himself had been, of all of us, the most obstinate and wrong-headed in regard to Monsieur, and he insisted upon subscribing by far the largest share of the sum to be collected.

We told Mr. Cubitt what we were doing, and he not only greatly approved of the idea, but asked if he might give his share to the subscription like the rest. We hadn't expected this, and some of the fellows were inclined to think that the present we proposed giving to Monsieur Flavelle should come entirely from the boys.

But the majority were in favour of Mr. Cubitt's joining us. It wouldn't have been a very gracious thing to make any objections to his doing so when he had himself asked us in the frank pleasant way in which he did. It was evident that he wished an opportunity of showing his gratitude and respect to Monsieur Flavelle too, and that this seemed to him a suitable one. So his name headed the subscription-list with a handsome sum, Tom Driscoll's following with an almost equal one. In fact the two together gave about a third of the whole amount.

We had a meeting to decide as to what was the most suitable present that we could give Monsieur Flavelle. It was not a long conference. Tom had been thinking over the matter.

'Mr. Cubitt's subscription has made the sum a much larger one than we at first expected it would be,' he said, 'and we have now enough to get a very good gold watch. You all know that Monsieur



'Three of us went down to Sydney to negotiate the business.'—WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL, page 135.

Flavelle's is only a silver one, and no great shakes at that.'

'Yes, it 's rather an ancient piece of machinery,' put in Fred, 'but I've seen a ship's compass not so much smaller.'

'Well, I don't think we could do better than give him a new gold watch,' continued Tom; 'what do you say?'

'Couldn't be better. I second that,' said Alick. One or two other suggestions were made, but none met with such general approval as Tom's, and so it was agreed to adopt his proposal. Mr. Cubitt had desired to have no say in this matter, but to leave the choice of what we were to give Monsieur Flavelle entirely to ourselves.

Tom, Alick, and I were chosen as a committee of selection to purchase the watch, and on the day succeeding that on which we had held the meeting the three of us went down to Sydney to negotiate the business. We went to Macardy's the crack jeweller, and asked him to show us the spiciest things he had in his shop in the way of gold watches. We found that we had money enough to get one of his very best, a tip-top 'hunter,' compensation balance—one that would go equally well in any climate, whether at the North Pole or under the equator, as Mr. Macardy assured us.

We took the watch back with us; we wanted to give it to Monsieur Flavelle on the next day; and all the fellows were delighted with it. Every one declared that he had never seen a watch more after his own heart.

There had been some discussion and difference of opinion as to whether we should present Monsieur with a written address along with the watch. Some thought it would be less stiff and formal if Tom Driscoll were just to say a few words in handing the watch to Monsieur. Others thought that he would value the gift all the more if it was accompanied by some kind of written paper bearing all our signatures, to which it was answered that this was mere sentiment, and something like sticking ourselves up besides, as if our signatures were of so much consequence and value. But our party, that which wanted an address, had a decided majority, and carried our point.

But we made the address quite a short one—just a few lines. What we chiefly wished was that Monsieur Flavelle should have all our names. Mr. Cubitt headed the list. I fancy he at first intended that his name should not appear at all in the matter, but seeing that we would like it, he yielded. We hinted to him too that we would be glad if he would read the address and present the watch to Monsieur Flavelle,

but he seemed resolved not to meet our views here, although I am quite sure he saw what we meant. I think that we were right in regard to the first point, and that he was right in the second.

We had got Charley Webb, who was a crack hand at this sort of thing, to print the address. He did it in his best style, in Old English print, on thick vellum, with any amount of flourishes and ornamental work. It was a perfect marvel of art in its way, I can assure you, and as difficult to make out as hieroglyphics or a cipher puzzle.

Tom, who, failing Mr. Cubitt, was, as captain of the school, the best entitled among us to deliver the address, and whom we had therefore appointed to that duty, did not trust himself to read it, short as it was, but learned it off by heart. When each fellow had signed his name at the foot, according to his place in the class, the document was complete and in proper form, and we contemplated it with unmixed satisfaction.

On the day arranged for our little business with Monsieur Flavelle, directly on the conclusion of the lesson, we asked him to wait a few moments. Then Tom drew forth the address, which he had been keeping concealed somewhere about his person during the whole hour, and fired it off forthwith, somewhat

rapidly and unceremoniously it must be admitted, but in a clear and distinct enough voice that every body could hear. Directly he had done he placed the open case containing the watch in Monsieur Flavelle's hand.

You can hardly fancy a person more surprised and taken aback than he looked. He gazed first at the watch,—which lay glittering in its velvet-lined case like a spot of bright light, and seemed to throw out rays on all sides,—and then at us, and then at the watch again.

It was some little time before he could speak, but the expression of surprise was giving place to one of keen pleasure, and a bright look broke over all his face. When at last he found voice, his speech was low and hesitating, and his words came very slowly.

'My dear boys,' he said, 'I am so surprised that I cannot find the proper words to tell you how I feel; how much, I mean, I feel your very great kindness and generosity to me this day. I cannot thank you as I should like for this beautiful present, and for the kind words that have accompanied it. But you must please understand that my speech does not express at all how pleased and glad I feel—and how very proud too. You may be sure that I shall for ever regard this handsome gift among the most valu-

able things which I possess. But I shall not try to say any more, but simply again to thank you from my heart and—'

Here Monsieur could get no further, and as we thought he had done very well, and all that was necessary, we relieved him by bursting out into three hearty cheers that shook the whole room, in the midst of which he sat down on his chair.

He was no doubt a good deal touched and affected. I was not sure, but I thought I noticed his eyes wink and glisten a little. When I mentioned this afterwards to Tom, he said he hadn't observed it, and that it was very likely only my fancy. Tom has told me sometimes that I am given to fancying things that never strike other fellows, but I think I was right in this case for all that.

When the cheers had subsided, Tom stood up again and said—

'I'm afraid, sir, that some of us haven't always acted towards you in class in a right and proper way, or like gentlemen. But if you will please forget anything in our past conduct that may have displeased you, we shall be very glad, and try and act differently for the future. I can't promise that we shall always be good boys'—and here Tom laughed a little, and the whole of us followed, Monsieur himself smiling—

'but we shall try at least to behave ourselves properly, and as much as we can like gentlemen.'

'Say no more, if you please, Master Driscoll,' Monsieur Flavelle answered. 'We shall understand each other better from this day, I am sure. I know your hearts are all in the right place, and I shall never expect perfection from you, any more than I should from old people. But we will say no more. I want to get home as quickly as I can to show your beautiful gift to my two little girls, who will be as delighted with it as their father.'

Monsieur was smiling now like a sunbeam. He had almost quite recovered his self-possession, and spoke in very much his usual voice and manner.

'Three more cheers for Monsieur Flavelle!' cried Alick, and again we made the room shake with our shouting. As the sound died away, we moved in a body towards the door, and out of the room, slowly followed by Monsieur Flavelle.

Here my story might fitly end; but perhaps my boy-readers at any rate, for whom of course this narrative is chiefly intended, would like to hear a few words more.

Miss Flavelle and Ellen Driscoll got on capitally together. Notwithstanding the difference in age between them—some ten years or so—they did not long

remain to each other merely governess and pupil, but soon became firm friends, and are likely always to continue so.

And I don't wonder at it, for when I came to know Bertha Flavelle I found her to be as nice a girl as one generally meets anywhere; good-natured, cheerful, and obliging, with not a bit of pretence or affectation of any kind, and clever without being conspicuously so—not your clever kind of young lady, all eyes and ears to pick you up every few sentences, and who seems to take an abominable kind of pleasure in catching you tripping.

And for Ellen Driscoll—but Tom chaffed me the other day about his sister, saying that I always thought her right in everything, and a good deal more to that effect, so I shall say nothing more about her here.

Shortly after the events above narrated, Tom, Alick, Fred, and I were invited to take tea and supper with Monsieur Flavelle, and spent a very jolly evening with him and his two daughters. We repeated our visit during our stay at Willoughby House, and now that we have all four left the school, we continue to go and see him every now and then. When we visit him all four together, as we usually do, he likes us to come on an evening when Miss Bertha

is at home, because she can help to entertain us with music and singing. But Monsieur himself is a capital host.

Bertha Flavelle lives at her pupil's house during the most part of the week, but returns home every Friday, remaining till the Monday morning following. Mr. Driscoll thoughtfully proposed this arrangement, as he said it might be dull for Bertha's sister, who had been accustomed to see her every day, being left so much by herself as she would be if Bertha were always to reside at her pupil's home. Of course both the sisters were very glad that matters should be so arranged.

The liberal salary which Bertha receives makes things much easier and brighter for them all at home, as they have now no need to be continually calculating and economising, as I suspect they had once often to do. Their means are now quite sufficient for their wants, and leave a margin over besides, for little comforts and luxuries for the younger daughter, such as were out of their reach before.

Tom and Alick became much closer companions during the remainder of their stay at Willoughby House. As so often happens, it only required that they should know and understand each other better, to sympathise with and to like each other better. We

three are now firm chums; but our companionship is shortly to be interrupted, for a time at least. Tom, who has been studying for the last year with a private tutor, sails for England in a month or two. He is going to Oxford, where he intends to take his degree, which I have no doubt he'll do, at the least creditably.

THE END.

EDINBURGH: T. AND A. CONSTABLE,
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