

The Black Sheep
by T.F. Merton

Part I—1. Introduction

If you look at a map of England, in the Midlands about the latitude of Leicester, you will see a small space marked Rutland, and approximately in the middle of it, the town of Oakham. You will probably have never heard of the former, and you may have heard of the latter, for there is one thing there that makes its name known in almost any part of Britain, and that is a public school. Rutlandshire is the smallest county in England. At a leisurely pace you could walk across it at its greatest breadth in a few hours, and at its greatest length in a day, whereas in a motor car, if any main roads went through Rutland, it would scarcely be noticed—there are probably many travellers on the great north road, which passes near its eastern boarder that are quite oblivious of its existence. And Oakham, the county town, has barely four thousand inhabitants. But Rutland is a pretty little county and very quiet except perhaps in the hunting season, in fact if one wanted a rest cure it would be quite a good place to choose.

Oakham is a pretty town in ways—its street are wide and airy and here and there the houses still retain thatched roofs. The tall spire of the church, a landmark in the district towers above all. The most important part of Oakham, where most of the shops are, with the market place and the church, is strangely enough at the eastern extremity of the town, and it is there that the main block of Oakham school is to be found, for if you turn up Market Street, the School House can be seen with its three gables and its bell tower; then if you turn to the left passing the market cross, and enter Church Passage the Chapel will appear, but that is all you will see of the block of buildings, for the rest are hidden from view. Then, if you care to go down a pathway to a corner of the churchyard, you will see the old school, a long building with three great windows looking out on the church, and there towards the opposite side, and [*sic*] a door over which is an inscription in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Then, if you proceed still further, you will reach another part of the school, known as Wharflands where there used to be wharves by an old canal, now filled up, before the land was bought by the school, and a house, classrooms, laboratories and five courts were built there; and at Wharflands also are the playing fields, on 'Doncaster Close', further on.

Oakham lies in the middle of a wide valley, and on either side rise low hills—to the east towards Burley, to the west towards Brooke, and everywhere can be seen fields and woods, farms and villages, hardly anywhere anything to prove that Rutland isn't thoroughly unspoilt...

And now, after describing the setting of my story as briefly as possible, for the reader of today wants to get down to his story and dislikes being led up to it gradually, I will proceed to the story itself.

2. *The Curtain Rises*

A train was waiting by a platform in St Pancras' station and passengers were leaning out of carriage windows receiving parting words from relatives and friends. Among these was a boy, about fourteen years old, who was trying at the same time to answer a woman—obviously his mother, that his ticket was safe in his waistcoat pocket, and receive last minute advice from a military type of person who was doubtless his father. The same thing was going on at another window of the same carriage but there were a few more relations as well, the male ones endeavouring to slip a half crown into the palm of the boy's hand, those of the other sex very anxious about the ticket.

Finally the train decided to start off: there were last farewells, then a great deal of waving as it puffed slowly out of the station. It gathered speed outside, and after rumbling over many points, and passing through several tunnels, it reached a respectable speed which brought it out into the open country in a short time. Meanwhile, the two boys were sitting in compartments opposite one another eyeing one another furtively, each perfectly sure that the other was, like himself a new boy bound for Oakham, yet neither dared open a conversation.

Finally, however, one decided to break the ice and asked the other if he were going to Oakham. After that progress was fairly rapid, and by the time they had reached Kettering they were the best of friends. The first was a fairly tall youth, who looked quite strong for his age. He was fairly dark, as a contrast to the other who was fair. Apart from that there seemed little difference between them. They hurriedly changed at Kettering, and got into a carriage which was full of boys, all conversing, laughing and joking who didn't pay the slightest attention to them, to their immense relief.

The first boy, the dark one, was called, so he had said, Campbell. The other's name was Bradley. Campbell had come from a village in Hampshire, Bradley lived in Kent. He knew quite a lot about the

school and its life, because he had had a brother there for four years.

'We probably won't be noticed at all for a bit' he had said 'but we've got to go slow all the same, at least that's what my brother said. What will happen is they will see what sort of a chap you are, and then they'll know what to do to you. My brother said that there was a new fellows' ragging after about the first week for all of them but the cheeky ones got it hot...'

A cheer went up when the train moved out of Kettering station. A great many boys evinced distinct surprise at it moving at all. It passed through many miles of pretty country, and finally passed over a great viaduct which took it over the valley of the Welland into Rutlandshire. It was not long, then, in getting to Oakham; as it pulled up in the little station doors were flung open and boys poured out on to the platform.

'Do you know which way to go?' asked Campbell as they emerged from the station.

'Yes, rather: you did say you were in School House? I think I can remember the way pretty well; I came up several times when my brother was here.'

They started off up the broad high street, where there were several groups of boys, also going in the same direction as they were. As it happened, Bradley's memory did not fail him and they soon arrived at the School House, or rather Hodge Wing, which is part of it—as Bradley had explained. School House is divided into three parts, namely Jackson's, Hodge Wing and School House proper. Younger boys are put into Jackson's or Hodge Wing and gradually work up to School House proper. Bradley had decided, upon information from his brother that they had better try Hodge Wing as the most likely place for them to be put in: they accordingly found their way to the matron's room, where Bradley's decision was found to be correct. They were shown their dormitories and their study—for they were in the same study although in different dormitories. The study was a fairly large room, furnished with a table, two forms and several deck-chairs, but the latter unfortunately belonged to the former occupants of the study along with a great quantity of pictures which adorned the walls. The owners were not long in coming to claim their belongings, and so the study was left very bare indeed.

Now Bradley and Campbell were not the only occupants of the study there were several others, new boys like them, and these were not very long in appearing. One was a very fat individual who looked cheerful enough, another was the exact opposite of him, small and thin and pale, in fact very delicate looking indeed the third was a

more normal looking sort of person, but he wore glasses, and looked extremely clever. In fact 'swot' was written large all over him.

They had not been together long before they were as familiar as if they had known each other for years.

3. *The Play Begins in Earnest*

'Now look here, you!' The speaker was a boy of Campbell's age, or a little older perhaps. There were several others, about his size around him. Darkness had fallen; they were gathered together in the yard around which rise the buildings of Hodge Wing, known as 'Bank House Quad'. The centre of the group, as it happened, was Campbell.

'You're the worst specimen of a beastly little puffed up beggar that's ever come here' he paused to let this sink in—or thinking of something else to say.

'Pretty good, oily!' sniggered someone at the back of the crowd. 'You go about the place just as if you'd bought it with your Saturday sixpence.'

'To start with, "new boys" aren't in the habit of strolling about with their hands in their pockets and their books under their arm—'

'I didn't think it was wrong' answered Campbell.

'You've no business to think or not to think here' stormed the so called 'oily'. He then went on to enumerate all Campbell's faults. He was then made to sing a few songs and tell some jokes, which were rewarded with groans, then kicked by everybody, and told to go away and send Bradley down instead.

When Bradley returned, he appeared to have received exactly the same treatment, with a slight variation of epithets. After that, the term began in earnest.

Campbell's first efforts at rugby football were decidedly amusing—Bradley's were emphatically more so. Neither had so much as seen a rugby match in their lives. Bradley held that any game involving team work was a waste of time, and that swimming or skating, or riding were much more worth while. Campbell's views were very similar except as regards cricket. The fifth lot, which was the lowest lot of over fourteen boys, was destined to count Campbell and Gregory among its odd thirty boys. About a week after the beginning of term, the fifth lot assembled on the playing fields, where the rudiments of the game were subsequently pounded into them. All the new boys were put among the forwards—that is those who had never played before, and after much trouble they were shown how to form a

scrum. Campbell and Bradley were put in the front row, and bumped their heads together hard before they realised what had to be done, whereupon they proceeded to hack each other's shins for a short time until they were finally told to get up and have a rest. After that, there were several more 'scrum', then some dribbling practice—at the end of all that, they felt sore and tired and by no means disposed to look upon the game of rugby with a favourable eye. After a week or so of games, however, they soon began to fall into the spirit of the game, and it was not long before they decided it was 'corking good sport'.

They were both fairly fast, had enough weight and dash, and also used their heads to a certain extent, and thus they were not long in reaching the front of their lot, and when half term had come, they had played in the fourth and even third lots several times. So in games, they showed a fair promise of turning into something good later on; but it was different as far as work was concerned.

They had been put into the lower fifth—lower five B to be exact, as they had not done so very badly in their entrance examinations. Their form master was an old man, a great classic, and said to be the severest master in the school. As it happened he took a dislike to Campbell, and incidentally to Bradley.

'What's your name?' he had asked the latter, and, upon hearing it 'Well, let me tell you that if you aren't any better than your brother you'll get it thick. I shall keep my eye on you.'

Incidentally Latin was, with mathematics, Campbell's weak point. Bradley, fortunately, was a bit better.

A week of term had gone. 'Georgie' as their form master was called entered the Lower V B form room, with a frown, and put his books down on the table. 'Now I'm going to give you a piece of translation, and anyone that doesn't get half marks will pay a visit to my room. It's a piece from the Aeneid. What's the Aeneid, Campbell?'

'A—a poem!' stammered Campbell.

'Of course it's a poem you little fool! Do you think Virgil ever wrote prose—what's it all about?' Campbell was tongue tied. 'Doesn't know a single thing' grumbled Georgie. 'Campbell, let me tell you that I won't have any of your laziness in this form, you had better just work a bit more in future'. He then proceeded to explain what the Aeneid was, and then to set the paper. Campbell, meanwhile was not so sure whether 'Georgie' would carry out his threats or not; if anything, he rather felt that he might have to 'pay a visit to his room' if the translation was not satisfactory. He waited dismally, watching Georgie write

out the work on the board. He groaned inwardly at the couplets. What on earth could it mean. 'By gum I'll catch it now!' thought he. He gnawed the end of his pen in mortification, then put down a few words. He blundered through the first few couplets, and then came to a dead stop before a formidable array of words. Several times he made an attempt to start the sentence, but he met with no success. He glanced at Bradley in the desk next to him, writing away as fast as ever. Then he had an idea. He scribbled the passage that was proving such a stumbling block on a bit of paper, and tossed it over to his friend. The latter glanced at it, wrote the answer on the other side and sent it back to the eager Campbell, but alas! Just as he was opening it, he heard the voice of Georgie: 'What have you got there, Campbell?'

The wretched boy went pale. 'That's done for yours truly' groaned he to himself, then he showed up the note.

'Ah yes' said Georgie softly, reading it over. 'You were afraid of a beating, were you? decidedly foolish. You will of course be much worse off now. Bring me your work, will you?'

'He's gloating, the beast!' thought Campbell, obeying.

Georgie read the translation through, then tore it up. 'It wasn't a perfect translation even then, Campbell', said he. 'And among other things I should like to point out that "*Dentibus in freudens gemitu*" does *not* mean "picking his teeth with a bone". You may sit down now.'

Later in the day, Campbell emerged from Georgie's study, feeling very sore in certain parts of his body, and in his mind as well, whereas Georgie himself had developed a decided dislike for him—not because he 'cribbed', for he had beaten many boys for that in his time, and felt no ill towards them for it, but for some unexplicable reason. He disliked the boy, but could never have explained why.

4. *In Which the Hero Does Not Improve his Condition*

The chastisement did not make Campbell mend his ways and become a studious and well-behaved young member of society. If anything, he considered that he had a right to look upon himself as a 'black sheep', after having been 'whacked' as an initiation to that class of people. He now became a great deal lazier, much more carefree, and with his 'nonchalance' he made his lot a great deal worse than it might have been. He would begin the day fairly normally as far as conduct was concern[ed], then begin to get a bit more 'cheerful' as the hours went by. He began to be quite a handful in afternoon school, and his high spirits usually reached their climax in Preparation. The

boys of Hodge Wing and Johnson's house not in the upper school, as well as all new boys, used to do 'Prep.' in the 'Old Hall' of School House, a great long room with a timbered roof, great windows, and a large fireplace at one end, its wall adorned with photographs of past cricket teams, old prints of the school or [of] celebrities of days gone by. Campbell would finish his written work in remarkably short time, cast a passing glance at the lessons for the next day, then prepare for a little recreation.

If Bradley who usually sat next to him had finished, they would begin some surreptitious game. If not, he usually had a novel with him, one of the magazines that abounded in the hall and would read that. In idler moments he would indulge in a conversation in deaf and dumb language with someone on the other side of the room. The most amazing occupation in the last part of 'Prep' however, was a battle, in which small balls of paper served as ammunition. This amusement was fraught with danger, and had to be practised with great care.

One evening about half term, Campbell looked around him, rather bored. A Prefect was taking 'Prep', and he looked a mild sort of fellow. Besides, he [was] deep in thought over some hard piece of Greek translation. A battle seemed indicated. Campbell, therefore sought out an old copy of a Latin Prose, and began to prepare ammunition. It was not long before he had declared war against a dark haired youth of Four 'A' who was usually responsive enough on such occasions. He did not fail to answer the volley of small balls of paper. The battle soon began more or less in earnest, in fact it got so heated that neighbours of the two sides got peppered, and began to expostulate. The prefect heard, and uttered a mild reproof, which however, passed unheeded. The battle went on in all its fury. The Prefect began to get quite annoyed. Campbell finished off the work of making him angry by sending a piece of paper almost to his feet.

'Who threw that?' asked the Prefect. 'Right!' said he to the culprit, 'you can come to me tomorrow morning.'

'Two whackings in a couple of weeks isn't so bad' said Campbell to Bradley about noon the next day, 'one wouldn't have thought old "froggy" so easily made "sweaty".'

Campbell, [sic] apparently was bent on getting some more beatings, for he did not reform, or even show any signs of improvement. His activities however were usually restrained during 'prep' as he began to have impositions to fill up the time.

Not long after his chastisement for misbehaving in Prep, he began to make himself a nuisance in the dormitories, apparently to make up

for time lost in prep. Apart from a few pillow fights, which cost him several hundred lines, which did not amount to much, he got himself into far more trouble in the following way:

The Matron's cat had a tiresome habit of sitting outside the window of Campbell's dormitory, or else on the window of the Matron's room, which was opposite; the fact that the wretched animal sat there was not in itself tiresome, the annoying part about it was that it made its presence known by a great variety of howls and other noises; The occupants of the dormitories did not enjoy the serenade. 'Oh why doesn't some one drench that cat', someone said drowsily one night, 'no one can get to sleep'. As it happened that night, the cat was putting a little extra vigour into its efforts. Nobody did however for a long time. Campbell was beginning to dislike the noise however. After enduring it stolidly for a quarter of an hour, he decided to try his hand at throwing water at the animal. He got out of bed and filled a mug with water, then climbed onto the windowsill. There was puss, a great grey beast, on the windowsill opposite. Campbell emptied his mug in its direction; The contents fell short of the windowsill and splashed noisily into the yard below. 'Hard luck, have another try,' said someone. The cat ceased its serenading for a moment to gaze at Campbell in mild surprise; Then it went on, as bad as ever. The boy filled the mug again and tried once more. This time he was nearer, and the cat got splashed, evidently, for it got up and moved to another part of the windowsill. The third time, however, the water shot over the space intervening between the two windows, and hit the window pane just above the cat: the animal was decidedly drenched, for it arched its back and spat angrily at Campbell, who was about to retire to his bed again, in satisfaction, when up flew the matron's window, and the head of the matron appeared. She was very angry by the look of things, as may well be guessed, for her cat was her most prized possession—she cherished it beyond all limits of understanding. She saw Campbell's head just as it disappeared, and shouted across to him as she gathered the cat into her arms: 'What do you mean!—What do you mean!' she was speechless for a moment, then burst out again 'I shall report you to Mr Benson tomorrow morning you nasty, wicked little ruffian!' She rushed off for a towel, uttering soothing words to the cat. A titter arose in the dormitory. 'You're in for it now Campbell,' said some one. 'She doesn't half get "sweaty" if you even look at her blooming cat'.

'At any rate, I hope that's shut it up for the night' said Campbell sleepily, and he tumbled over to go to sleep. He was not caned for this offence, nor did he receive anything but mild reproof from Mr

Benson the housemaster, who was not as fond of the matron's cat as the matron should have desired. In fact many thought that he would like to poison the beast himself, if he dared. What did happen was that Campbell joined the throng of the matron's deadly enemies.

5. A Bet

Campbell and Bradley had been chosen as fags, at the beginning of term, by two 'olympians', who had both highly impressed the two young boys. Both were 'Zephyrs' i.e. were in the school Football team, but neither had their colours.

Now both the boys had the greatest admiration for their respective fag-masters, and they had several heated quarrels as to which was the greatest. One day, when their 'lot' happened to be having a 'day-off', that is there was no game or run, the two were walking together along one of the roads leading from Oakham, when several great sturdy fellows appeared in running shorts, rounding a bend of the road in full swing. At their [head], were the two 'olympians' for which [*sic*] the boys fagged, just about level-head with each other and going at a fair pace. Campbell and Bradley stopped to watch them pass, in admiration. Several other groups passed them, then finally Bradley spoke: 'By Jove, I'll bet Chandler will get in first!' (Chandler was the prefect for whom he fagged.)

'I'll bet he won't!' exclaimed Campbell with animation.

'He's much faster!'

'He jolly well isn't!'

'But he was much fresher!'

'He jolly well was *not*, he was puffed much more than MacGregor' (that was his fag master).

'Well, he may have been, but he'll put in a sprint at the end that will leave MacGregor miles behind.'

'Get on, he can't sprint for toffee, you should have seen him at the match on Saturday, "Mac" is twice as fast as he is.'

'Talking about football' said Bradley changing the subject 'Chandler is miles better than MacGregor, he was in the team all last season and MacGregor only played once or twice.'

'That doesn't show he's any better' answered Campbell.

'It jolly well does!'

'Right, then, we'll soon see who gets his colours first, Chandler or MacGregor.'

'Very well, we'll see; I'll bet Chandler will'

'Will you? I'll take you on!' exclaimed Campbell excitedly.

'Sixpence?' inquired Bradley.
 'Sixpence' agreed Campbell.
 'Done!' ...
 And so the bet was made.

There were only three matches left in the term, and the first of these was a school match against a school in Worcestershire—the keenest match of the year some said; It was a grey afternoon of early December, and the field was damp, but not too slippery. Groups of Boys were trooping down the road, the continuation of church street, which leads down to 'Wharflands' from the group of Buildings around School House. Some wearing Straw hats, others, mistrusting the weather, which becomes an important factor when you are wearing a straw hat. Campbell and Bradley were going along together speculating on the match.

'They'll probably give colours this match' said Bradley.

'Well, we'll see if Mac or Chandler get theirs' answered Campbell. They passed Wharflands house and then the classrooms, and then crossed the cricket field to the first XV ground.

The church clock chimed half past two—the hour at which the match was due to begin. A moment later, the opposing team filed out of the pavilion, and applause rose from the crowd of boys. The clapping became louder, and cheers were raised as the red and black of the home team appeared—or rather the black, for the Oakham 'Zephyrs' or First Fifteen jersey is all black except for a red collar, and a crest for the 'colours'.

The teams lined up, face to face, there was a moment of suspense, and then the whistle blew, galvanising both teams into action; the ball rose high in the air, and was caught by an opposing forward, who made a short run before being tackled near the touch line. Then the game began in earnest; roars of 'O-o-o-akham!' burst from the crowds of boys by the touch line.

But each side is doing its best, and there are many scrummages near the half-way line. Each side makes attempts to get right away but do not get far. Meanwhile, Campbell and Bradley are both intent on the progress of their respective heroes, each is on tenter-hooks of suspense whenever his fag master gets the ball, and each sighs with relief if he has passed it well, or at least not done anything wrong, whereas great is their joy if they perform anything spectacular. But the opposing team is gradually driving the home side back into their twenty-five; there are several scrums dangerously near the line, when at last, the red and blacks push forward, taking the ball with them.

Their progress is checked however near the twenty-five yard line. Another scrummage; the 'maroons' (for such are the colours of the others) get the ball, and, much to the dismay of the Oakham supporters, their three-quarters make a dangerous rush for the line—Then there is a cheer and Campbell's spirits in particular rise from the deepest of depths to the highest of heights, for MacGregor had intercepted a pass and is running up the field like a hare, with two maroon men after him and several before him. He passes the twenty-five line then, as the maroon back is nearly upon him, he sends the ball soaring through the air to find touch beyond the halfway flag.

Another series of scrummages, then the red and blacks get away, into the maroons' twenty-five. The maroon fullback clears with a burst equal to MacGregors, and there is another tussle by the halfway line—then a maroon three-quarter gets away, and dashes off; he evades three men, then Chandler dives at his legs and brings him down, sending Bradley's hopes soaring. When, at half-time, the grizzled old butler of school house—a school celebrity, who had served for fifty years—appeared with lemons, neither side had scored at all.

The whistle blows again. Once more the teams line up and the maroons start by gaining twenty yards with the kick-off; Then Oakham's hopes are dashed to the ground, for a maroon forward has leapt for the ball as it is thrown in, got it back to the three-quarters, and they are invading the Oakham twenty-five. Then, the outside man has it, and he speeds along the touch line, with no one but the fullback before him; he dodges—no, the Oakhamian has just caught his legs, but alas! he is over the line. The try was not converted, and the sides lined up again; the maroons being three up on the red and blacks.

There are only two minutes left. No one has scored since the maroons' try at the beginning of the half. Campbell surveys his watch gloomily; all interest except for that of the team has now gone, although they are still glad when their 'heroes' bring off a spectacular tackle, or a good kick, or pass on a good run.

As usual, both sides are fighting it out near the centre, each gaining a little ground, only to lose it again afterwards. One minute left. There is a scrummage. Joy! Oakham heels the ball out—the half sends it out to his three quarters, and they're off; the cheers grow almost frantic; their speed almost seems superhuman: one by one they go down,—all except the outside man who has two men close on his heels—The nearer makes a dive, and misses—the other is too far behind to do anything: the shouts change into roars of applause as the red and black man crosses the line and touches the ball down between the

posts: hats and caps are flung high into the air.

The ball sailed neatly over the bar, and the whistle blew for time. Oakham had won, 5–3.

But what was more, that evening, a notice appeared upon the board in the entrance to the Quadrangle, announcing that Chandler and MacGregor had both been awarded their colours, and an enthusiastic crowd of boys chaired the two men around the quadrangle with shouts and applause after supper that night. Thus, neither Campbell nor Bradley had won the bet...

6. A Battle

The last day of term had come. The concert was over, the old Boys' match had been played—and drawn, and the boys were decidedly full of Old boys' supper when the curtain rises—in other words at about half past nine at night.

Five boys were assembled in the middle of a Hodge Wing dormitory, one of them being our young friend Campbell. They were holding a council of war—if such a high sounding name could be applied to the useless noise they were making. One, the general, an older boy, was attempting to divulge a plan. Unfortunately everyone else was trying to do so as well, a fact which made things decidedly complicated.

Besides the noise made by the 'council-of-war' the windows were rattling, the doors were also rattling, and dull thuds could be heard on the ceiling, announcing warlike activities in the dormitory above.

The occupants of Campbell's dormitory had pushed a bed up against the door, to ensure safety against attacks from other quarters during their council, and it was this perfect unconsciousness of danger that brought about their undoing. While they were making the noise above referred to, a group superior in numbers to them were gathered together outside. These were decidedly better organised, for only one of them was speaking: he was their leader.

'Look here!' he was saying. 'When I give the word, we'll all rush in and jump on them. Chuck their beds over if possible.'

This was followed by a brief pause, during which could be heard the voices of the four arguers, blissfully unconscious of the presence of those against whom they were planning an attack.

'The horse' to refer to a popular film of Charlie Chaplin's, was about to blow first.

'Now' whispered the leader, and 'the horse blew' (to speak metaphorically). The door was flung open, and in rushed the invaders,

flinging off bedclothes, dislodging mattresses and arming themselves with pillows as they came. With these, they fell upon their startled victims, who had most of their breath knocked out of them before they realised what was happening. By that time, it was no use, as they were outstretched upon the floor being sat upon heavily.

'What do you want you fools?' grunted the leader of the vanquished forces; he received no answer however, for the two invaders not occupied by exerting 'hydraulic pressure' on their vanquished foe were busy stripping all the beds, tying the sheets in knots rolling up blankets and mattresses in a hopeless jumble, and otherwise wrecking the dormitory. Finally they piled everything they could on top of their prisoners and made off with chuckles and taunts, leaving them to extricate themselves as best they could. They did so, angry and puffing. When they were all out of the pile of blankets, their leader pronounced a brief harangue, after which they all set out, lusty for vengeance. They burst into their 'enemies' dormitory brandishing pillows, and were awarded a warm reception. Their leader however made for the water jugs, and proceeded to empty one over an adversary and another over a bed. Then it was the enemy's turn to become angry, and the fight became very fierce indeed. Campbell and another dropped pillows and came to grips in the middle of the room; they stood swaying for a time, then went down with a crash, landing in a pool of water. Campbell was on top. Another came to the rescue of his discomfited comrade, and between them they got him down and proceeded to smear toothpaste all over his face. The others seemed to be faring rather badly as well. Two were having it out with their fists. Two more of the enemy had succeeded [*sic*] in humbling another of Campbell's dormitory, and were administering sharp blows on a certain part of his body with a slipper which caused him to howl very loudly and struggle for all he was worth. Campbell, meanwhile, spluttering and gurgling, had managed to dislodge both his attackers, and to go for them again. Just as he looked as if he were going to go down again, however, steps were heard outside in the passage, and a dark, huge form loomed up against the window in the passage outside. The noise miraculously ceased. The figure advanced. Two loud smacks were heard, and cries [*sic*] of pain, two more people were seized by the collars of their pyjamas and a boot was applied to them with no gentleness. Two of Campbell's friends tried to slip out of the door unnoticed, but were seized in the same place, and hustled to their dormitory where they also received a sound kick each. By the time the prefect—for such was the apparition had returned to the other dormitory, all was still. 'Don't think you're going to do what

you like because it's the last night' he warned 'If I hear any more of this, there *will* be a row!'

When his steps had died away, the beds were made again at the cost of much trouble, but no more attacks took place.

The next day, at a quarter to nine, a train left Oakham station, and when the spire of the old church was out of sight, two boys settled down in a empty compartment, and one slyly produced a packet of obnoxious looking cigarettes of the cheapest looking type, and the two proceeded [*sic*] to enjoy the forbidden fruits. But as the train ended its journey at St Pancras station, the same two boys were decidedly paler, and more shaky than when they started out.

'It is funny' remarked Campbell's mother in the train down to Kent. 'You don't look nearly as well as when we came to see you at half term.' Mr Campbell, however, coughed discreetly and smiled to himself.

7.

'Whew', exclaimed Campbell after breakfast one morning. The Easter term had begun some time ago, and he was sitting in the study which he shared with Bradley and another boy, reading a letter.

'What's up?' inquired his friend.

'My "pa" has promised me five bob if I win a race or something at the sports!'

'Not much hope of that' answered Bradley doubtfully.

'I'll have a jolly good try!['] said Campbell nettled.

'It'll mean lots of practising you know, and you'll have to run, when there are runs, and not get rides on carts and that sort of thing.'

'Pooh! that's easy enough!' answered Campbell scornfully.

'Well, I wish you luck! and I'll bet you chuck it after the first three runs.'

'Well just to show you, I jolly well won't' exclaimed Campbell angrily.

'All right, All right, keep cool' answered his friend calmly 'but I shouldn't think you would win anything all the same'

'Oh shut up!' growled Campbell.

That afternoon, many people were surprised to see Campbell, instead of walking leisurely most of the way, running as if most of the prefects of the school were after him to keep him going. When he came in from the run, he was approached by amazed friends in the bathroom, but by then he felt sick of running. In fact, he felt very much like giving it up, when in strolled Bradley, swinging his towel,

and inquired cheerfully whether he felt like giving it up.

'No!' he answered fiercely—

And so he went on in spite of stitches and so forth, until he was in quite good training, and then he was glad to have 'stuck to it'.

Finally came sports day.

It was a bright windy early March day, and the sun was shining quite brightly, but the wind was cold and Campbell could feel it where he stood on the field just apart from a small group like himself. With him was the inseparable Bradley, also in running shorts—for by luck he had managed to get 'left in' after the heats he was doing the junior high jump and the hundred yards. But Campbell had done better, for he was in the junior quarter-mile, the hundred and the long and high jumps—a fact of which he was quite proud.

He had been taken aside by his father a short time before, and told of all that he was expected to do. He was then waiting for his first race—the junior hundred yards, in a great state of excitement, and Bradley was with him. They watched the exciting senior race with little interest—and then they were called upon to line up. They felt very much afraid of defeat. There were two other Hodge wingers and a Greylander and a day boy, all looked like better runners.

The pistol cracked, and they all bounded forward[.] Campbell could see that two people were a little in front of him, out of the corner of his eye, but he did not know who they were. The others were approximately level. The tape loomed up, nearer and nearer, then it fluttered away, just as he was a foot away from it. He looked around to see who it was, and the first person that met his eye was Bradley surrounded by admiring Hodge wingers patting him on the back. The Greyland boy had come in second, and he himself was third. After this race, their qualms vanished, and they forgot about their forthcoming trials in watching the senior events.

Two School House men and two Wharflanders were fighting it out in the high jump, until the prize at last fell to one of the latter, at five foot six with the School House representative close behind him.

Appendix

The person I write about is the one I know best in the school—

He is a funny sort of chap, and a most tremendous ass at times he delights in making up wars, and is always ready to join in rags, provided he does not incur too much danger in doing so. His main idea in doing this, however, is the lust of fame. He only does it so he can

be talked about. It is his weakest point. He is prone to flattery, and rather sensitive. At many times, he does not know his own mind. He will be the best friend of anybody who chats with him; if anyone says anything against him, he is decidedly hurt, and hates that fellow—but soon forgets his hatred. He wants to be a decent fellow, and sometimes he knows how to but he has not the will to keep himself in the 'straight + narrow path'. He is immensely proud of himself sometimes, but often, he hates the sight of his face in the looking glass. His great ambition is to be really fit and strong, and if possible a good rugger player—Alas! I shouldn't think that would ever be brought about!

Character

(a) T.B. he is a strange sort of fellow. He behaves fairly normally on getting up, and then gets worse and worse during the day. He reaches a climax in Prep. There, he proceeds to roll up all the paper he can get his hands on and fling it about the room. At present, the objections made by several of his masters have checked his tendencies to a certain extent. His chief delight is making puns.