

given the junior cricket team to supervise.

He was a deft hand with a cricket ball, and could wield a bat a little better than the next man, and that impressed some of the junior school, even if it had no effect on the Dean.

What was best of all was that for two weeks Matt had managed to get on top of his appetite!

Apart from one or two sharp pangs of hunger he had managed to push thoughts of solid meals right out of his mind. He had even forced himself to enjoy some of the fancy, weak-blooded efforts that the school chef sent up to the dining hall under the name of food.

Yes, Matt was beginning to believe that under those stiff upper lips, and behind those cold, unseeing eyes, the St Michael's boys were just like any other boys. With, of course, the exception that they were all dukes or earls or barts and spoke as if they'd got particularly sour cooking plums in their mouths!

Matt was, therefore, on top of the world one day as he came back through the town after going to the public library to look up a scientific book.

It was very unfortunate that he happened to pass within a hundred yards of a fried fish and chip shop—on the down-wind side!

The air was richly laden with the beautiful aroma of smoking oil, of glinting golden chips, and cod fillets encased in gleaming, crisp batter.

Matt paused in mid-stride! He half-turned. His hunger fought with his new resolution to give up such things.

He strode firmly out of smell-range.

But once re-awakened, the demon inside him would not lie quiet. After all, there was nothing wicked about fish and chipped potatoes. Dash it, if the chef at the school had an atom of gumption, he'd serve them often.

Come to think of it, what on earth was wrong with Matt cooking his own fish and chips? Or anything else he fancied? Sausages and eggs, for example?

But where? Of course, the laboratory! The ideal spot, Matt's very own kingdom. Dr Granite and the other masters were unlikely to enter the science laboratory!

Already Matt was sold on the idea. Before he reached the school gates on the outskirts of the town, he was carrying the materials he required.

A can of best cooking oil, a small sack of spuds, several nice cod cutlets, and the makings for a small bowl of batter! In addition, he had a box of eggs and a few pounds of sausages.

He sidled in through the postern gate by the cricket pavilion, and deposited the food-stuffs in the lab. The bell was ringing for the end of morning work, and they would be going in to lunch shortly.

Matt sought out Carruthers, and told him he would not be in to lunch. Matt muttered something about an experiment that required watching, and how he would have to put up with a ham sandwich. Then he dashed off again.

St Mike's was a very rich school. When they did something, they did it well! When the governors had decided to put in a laboratory, they put in a first-class one!

It stood by itself in a shrubbery. A neat building consisting of a classroom where boys could write up their notes and a "practical" section, where they could do the experiments on the benches laid out there.

Matt took a careful look round. There was no one in sight. He went into the lab, closed the door and got to work.

There was a metal tray which was just the job for frying sausages and eggs. He set it up on a stand and concentrated four Bunsen burners underneath.

Soon an appetising aroma filled the lab. As soon as the sausages turned golden, Matt put out the Bunsens and tucked

in. He polished off the grub and got down to the task of making fish and chips. He filled the tray with oil and lit the burners again.

While the oil was heating up, he crossed to one of the sinks, and with his penknife he rapidly skinned the spuds, chipping them to just the right size.

He searched round and found a test-tube rack of wire mesh that would be ideal for holding the chips while they were in the fat.

Deftly he whipped up the batter, and dipped the cutlets of cod in it. He made sure that there was plenty of batter—almost more batter than fish. That was the way he liked it!

The oil was giving off a fine blue smoke, and not a bubble disturbed its deep brown depths. Matt grabbed the chip basket and plunged it into the fat!

The tremendous sizzle that went up when the wet chips hit the boiling fat was good to hear.

He lifted the chips out once or twice to look at them. They began to turn a rich gold. The time was just right for the fish, and he dipped each of the cutlets in without a splash.

The time for bringing the whole lot out was very near. The hot oil continued to smoke, but now there was no sizzling sound. The great moment would arrive any second now.

LANKY FRANKY

HE MEDDLES AND MUDDLES

