

## THE RIVAL SCHOOLS.

CONTINUED FROM No 1.

## CHAPTER 1

*Shows how learning does not always beget good manners—How Thrasham stood on his dignity, how Crammer laid on his back, and how the feud began between the schools.*

“Do you dare to insinuate,” now shrieked Thrasham “you—you scoundrel—”

Another titter from the boys.

“Give it him!” called out Hurler, diving his head behind the back of his next schoolmate, and pretending to pick up a book from the floor.

“You—you low-bred fellow, you shall pay dearly for this!” cried Thrasham. “Accuse me of purloining the spoons and towels!”

“I did not accuse you,” said Crammer.

“I say you did.”

“I say I didn’t.”

“You’re a—story-teller, sir.”

“And you’re a contemptible, little man,” retorted Crammer.

“I’m big enough to defend myself from an aspersion on my character,” cried Thrasham, “and I’m half a mind to—”

“To what?” asked Crammer.

Pull your nose in the presence of your scholars.

“What?” roared Crammer, raising his cane.

“Pull your nose!”

“Pull away, you mannikin!” roared Crammer, quite forgetful of his dignity; “and now if, you don’t leave my school, I’ll pitch you out of it.”

A murmur ran through the school.

Half a dozen boys rose to their feet, in happy anticipation of a scene.

“You thrash me?” cried Thrasham.

“Yes I; now go.”

“I shan’t.”

“You shall.”

And Crammer placed his left hand on the other’s shoulder.

Thrasham’s little fist beat it off.

Up went Crammer’s cane, and down it came—not on the shoulders of Thrasham, as it was intended, but on the brim of his hat.

Off went his hat amid a shout of derision.

The little man sprang back, looked at his assailant for a moment, as if he would

swallow him, cane and all.

Then he sprang forward and planted a blow in the pit of Crammer’s stomach.

The blow caused Crammer to drop his cane, place both hands on his waist, and bring his head down towards his knees. All discipline in the school was now at an end.

The boys rose from their seats and shouts and laughter greeted the combatants.

The little man looked proudly and defiantly around, and then turned furiously upon Crammer, whose form, being doubled up, was no taller now than his own.

Delays are dangerous, and this proverb Thrasham bore in mind, despite his rage and he struck another blow at Crammer.

Now Mr Crammer had a large nose, and this feature being so very prominent, it was no wonder that it stopped the blow before it reached any other portion of his face.

As his proboscis came in contact with Thrasham’s fist, he raised his drooping head and revealed a stream of blood pouring from each nostril.

The dismay of the scholars was great, but the pride of Thrasham was excessive.

He raised himself off his heels on to his toes, threw himself into a gladiatorial attitude, and bade his adversary come on.

“I’ll—I’ll crush you?” cried Crammer, wiping the blood from his chin with a red cotton handkerchief.

“Do it—do it—do it!” exclaimed Thrasham, tauntingly. “I’m not afraid of you big as you are. What do you think of the mannikin now?”

“Leave my school this instant!” thundered Crammer.

“Turn him out if you can,” said Thrasham. “I defy you—before all your boys I defy you!”

“Well, we’ll see,” cried Crammer, flapping upon him with all the grace of a Newfoundland puppy, and seizing the little man by the shoulders. “Snooks, open the door.”

A tall, overgrown, attenuated lad of sixteen, who could bear a resemblance to nothing else than a ghost in consumption, sprang to obey.

Before he reached it, however, a stop was put to his career,

Thrasham had begun to peg away with all his force at his adversary’s stomach, and Crammer, smarting with the pain, flung his whole weight on the little man, and over they went, carrying Snooks with them to the floor.

Here all three struggled together, and Jack Hurler, anxious to add to his laurels seized the ink cup out of one of the desks and emptied its contents down the neck of Thrasham.

Having completed this feat, he sprang back behind his companions, a greater hero in their estimation than ever.

Crammer was the first to rise, Snooks followed and then up sprang Thrasham. As he gained his feet, a yell broke from the lips of the boys.

The white front of his frilled shirt was streaked with ink, and the same liquid was smeared all over his face.

Nor was the appearance of Crammer any the less laughable.

The blood which continued to flow from his nose had been smeared over his cheeks in the struggle on the floor.

The fright Snooks had received had paled his face to a milky white; and there they stood, black, white, and red, a comical illustration of the truth that education does not always destroy the passions of men.

“Make a ring,” cried one, named Tom Brown.

And a ring was instantly made by the boys crowding round the two.

“Give it him master,” shouted another. “Snooky will back you.”

Snooky, like his master, having become quite forgetful of the fact that a school-room, and in school hours, ought not to be turned into a boxing floor, went down on one knee; and placing his arm around Crammer’s waist, drew him on to the other. This done, he commenced wiping his face with the red handkerchief which he picked from the floor.

“You shall suffer for this” said Thrasham, gasping for breath, and looking at his soiled shirt frill.

“Time,” cried Snooks.

“Time!” echoed a dozen voices.

Snooks gave a hitch of his knee, and at the same time a push with both his hands, and Mr. Crammer was precipitated fairly on to the bosom of Thrasham.

The little man paying more attention to his damaged linen than anything else, received the first intimation of the onslaught from the shock, beneath which he instantly sank.

And with his fall sank Crammer who forgetful that he required a larger space than the master of the academy, omitted to draw in his head, which came in contact with the leg of the desk, and which, proving harder than his skull, put a stop to the