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WALDO'S FOE !

An enthralling long complete yarn of schoolboy adventure,
featuring the famous chums of St. Frank's.

New Series No. 177.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY

September 21st, 1929.

MAGNIFICENT SCHOOL and ADVENTURE STORY.

WALDO'S FOE !



By
EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

CHAPTER 1.

Sam Wilkes' Opportunity!

"HERE we are!" said Claude Gore-Pearce, in a satisfied tone. There were three dim, overcoated figures standing outside the back door of the White Harp Inn, near the outskirts of Bellton Village. It was just after half-past ten, and the inn was officially closed. The night was cloudy and chill, with a sharp, blustering wind coming over from the sea.

The "sporty" youths of the St. Frank's Remove were on the razzle. They had had little difficulty in breaking bounds after lights-out. Gore-Pearce happened to know that there was something special on at the White Harp this evening—a kind of party, and there would be one or two card games, billiards, and so forth. Jonas Porlock, the landlord, had tipped him the wink that he and his pals would have a good time if they could manage to slip down for an hour or so. Mr. Porlock had an eye to business; he knew

“Waldo got me sent to quod, and I’m going to be revenged—through his son!” That’s what Sam Wilkes, the rascally escaped convict, has vowed. And this week he strikes! Little does Stanley Waldo, the new boy at St. Frank’s, realise his peril!

that the cads of Study A were generally good for a pound or two. And their money was just as good as anybody else’s.

“Safe as houses!” grinned Gulliver. “By gad! I can just do with a little gamble to-night. We haven’t had a spree for weeks—not a really good one.”

“We ought to win a bit of money,” said Bell optimistically.

“Well, anyhow, let’s get in,” said Gore-Pearce.

He rapped on the door, and it was soon opened by Jonas Porlock himself. The landlord greeted them warmly, and escorted them into the comfortable bar parlour.

“Make yourselves at home, young gents,” he said genially. “If there’s any drinks you require, just say the word. And don’t forget that I sell cigarettes.”

The three Remove juniors nodded to various men who were already in the room. Two or three of them were of the betting fraternity, and the others were more or less respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

It was cosy and warm in that bar parlour. A fire crackled merrily in the grate. There was an air of cheeriness about the place which appealed to Gore-Pearce and his com-



panions. The haze of tobacco smoke, the chink of money, and the rattle of glasses. From the billiard-room came the sound of cannoning balls. Altogether, everything was first-class.

“This is good,” said Gore-Pearce comfortably.

He sat back on one of the lounges, prepared to spend ten minutes or so looking on. Later, perhaps, he would join in one of the games. The sheer satisfaction of being in this place was sufficient for the moment. Gulliver and Bell sat with him, equally entertained.

There was one man who looked at the three St. Frank’s fellows with more than ordinary curiosity. He was a smartly-dressed man, but there was something about him which was somehow repellent. His manner was too easy, his smile too friendly. And after a glance at the three schoolboys he casually turned and made his way through a door into an adjoining room.

“Seen ‘em?” he asked briefly to the man who occupied this inner room.

"Yes," said the other. "I thought you'd come in, Jim."

Jim Newton nodded.

"Well, you told me to keep my eyes open for any of these St. Frank's kids," he said. "I suppose you want me to get busy on that stunt straight away, Sam?"

"The sooner the better," replied Sam Wilkes grimly.

He had seen the arrival of the three juniors through the glass top of the communicating door. There was a curtain stretched over it, and Wilkes himself was not visible from the other side. It was rather necessary that this man should not show himself to the ordinary patrons of the White Harp.

He was, in fact, an escaped convict. And although he had grown a moustache and had altered his appearance in other ways, he considered it expedient to remain in cover. Porlock had a vague idea that Wilkes was lying low for some reason, but the landlord was not a particular man. These guests were paying good money for their rooms, and they were welcome to stay.

Sam Wilkes was a small, wiry man, and there was an evil glitter in his eyes as he stood looking at his companion.

"We've been waiting for some days for this chance," he said in a low voice. "These kids may not come again for a week. Now's your time, Jim! Porlock said they would come sooner or later—and he was right. Get busy!"

"I hope they'll fall for it," said Jim.

"They'll fall all right," replied Wilkes. "You've got the gift of the gab, Jim, and you'll put it over good. Don't forget, though, that they mustn't suspect that they're being used as tools. See? Their part in the affair has got to be innocent. We don't know them particularly well, and, although they're in this place when they ought to be in bed, they might jib at anything too tricky."

"Leave it to me," said Jim Newton.

He returned to the bar parlour, and sat down on the lounge next to Claude Gore-Pearce.

"Quite a pleasure to see you young gents here," he remarked conversationally. "Don't often get off, do you?"

"We haven't got off now, if it comes to that," replied Gore-Pearce. "The rules are dotty at St. Frank's. We're all supposed to be in bed by about half-past nine."

"What a life!" commented Mr. Newton.

"Now and again we break bounds and have a bit of a spree," said Gore-Pearce. "On the strict q.t., of course. This would mean the sack for us if we were found out."

"I hear you've got a young wonder at your school," said Newton. "A fellow named Waldron, or Walton——"

"You mean Waldo," said Gulliver.

"That's the chap," nodded Newton. "Waldo. Of course! Son of that man who calls himself a peril expert, isn't he?"

"Peril expert be hanged!" said Gore-Pearce. "Waldo's pater was a crook at one time. Called himself the Wonder Man."

"Bunkum!" said Mr. Newton, with a laugh. "You can't fool me with that stuff, kid! Why, I've heard that this boy—Waldo's son—can do all sorts of marvellous things."

"So he can!" said Bell, with a grunt. "He can climb walls like a giddy fly—and lift motor-cars, and goodness only knows what else! He's uncanny! Went to the River House a few days ago and spoofed Brewster and all that lot. A new kid, mind you!"

"Confounded sauce, if you ask me," commented Gore-Pearce, with a sniff. "New kids ought to be kept in their place."

Mr. Newton was not interested in this aspect of the conversation.

"You don't really believe that he can do all these wonderful things, do you?" he asked sceptically.

"Seeing is believing," said Gore-Pearce.

"Have you ever seen him climb up the face of a building—like a fly?"

"Yes."

"That's a good one!" chuckled Mr. Newton. "When do you think I was born—yesterday?"

"I tell you we've seen him," said Gore-Pearce, rather irritated by the man's scoffing tone. "I don't like Waldo—in fact, I hate the chap—but there's no getting away from it that he's a marvel. He climbed the face of one of our school buildings like a monkey. Never saw anything like it!"

"Any active schoolboy can climb an ivy-covered wall——"

"Ivy-covered be hanged!" interrupted Gore-Pearce. "There was no ivy on this wall."

"It's no good, young man—you can't fool me like that," said Mr. Newton, shaking his head and smiling with aggravating scepticism. "Oh, no! I'm ready to believe that this kid is a bit of an acrobat, but I'll never believe that he's a magician. Ordinary human beings can't climb bare walls."

"Are you calling me a liar?" demanded Gore-Pearce, with some show of heat. "I tell you I saw this fellow climbing the wall. It's not a bare wall, either."

"I knew there was a catch in it," said Newton, with another of those chuckles.

"There are niches and crevices, of course," said Gore-Pearce. "But you or I couldn't climb it—or any other fellow in the school."

Mr. Newton looked thoughtful.

"There's a queer old building along the lane which leads to Edgemore," he said, leaning back and closing his eyes. "I've seen it often. A sort of ruin, just back from the road. There's a high tower——"

"That's Edgemore Priory," said Bell.

"Is it?" asked Mr. Newton. "Well, anyway, that tower is fairly high—higher than most buildings. And there's no ivy on it. Nothing but bare walls. I'd like to see your wonder schoolboy climbing that tower."

"He could climb it all right," said Gore-Pearce promptly. "I've seen the tower lots of times. Plenty of nooks and crannies all up the face of it. What do you say, you chaps?"

"Rather!" said Gulliver. "After the way Waldo climbed one of our buildings, he could easily manage that."

"He could do it on his head," said Bell. Mr. Newton laughed more boisterously than ever.

"I'm not one of these country yokels, you know," he said amusedly. "Not me! And if you tell me that this Waldo fellow could climb that tower—why, I just won't believe it."

Claude Gore-Pearce swallowed the bait whole.

"Are you ready to bet on it?" he asked, with a sudden eager light in his eyes.

"Bet?" repeated Mr. Newton. "Why, yes, of course."

"How much?"

"Anything you like, kid!" the man said contemptuously. "I have seen that tower, and I know thundering well that there's no human being alive who can climb the face of it—without ropes."

"I'll bet you five quid that Waldo can climb it with his bare hands—and with only a pair of rubber-soled shoes on his feet," said Gore-Pearce.

Mr. Newton chuckled.

"Don't you believe it," he said indifferently.

"I tell you I'll bet a fiver—"

"Do you mean it?" interrupted the man, as though with sudden interest. "Is this on the level?"

"Of course it is."

"Where's your money?" asked Newton cautiously.

Gore-Pearce produced five pounds in Treasury notes, and Mr. Newton's eyes sparkled.

"Well, that's fine!" he said. "I always like a sportsman! I didn't think you were serious, young 'un. I'll cover that five quid."

He produced five pounds of his own, and beckoned over Mr. Porlock.

"Just a little bet we're having," he explained with a grin. "We want you to be the stakeholder, gov'nor."

"What's the bet?" asked the landlord, as he pocketed the money.

"Never mind what the bet is," said Mr. Newton. "We'll say nothing about it until one of us has won the money."

The landlord went back to the bar, and Mr. Newton rubbed his hands together.

"I can do with that extra fiver," he remarked genially.

"You'll never get it," grinned Gore-Pearce. "I've bet on a cert.—but I warned you, so I shan't jib at taking your money."

"No?" grinned Mr. Newton. "All I hope is that the kid doesn't break his neck in trying to climb that old tower. By the way, how are you going to get him to do it?" he added casually.

Gore-Pearce frowned.

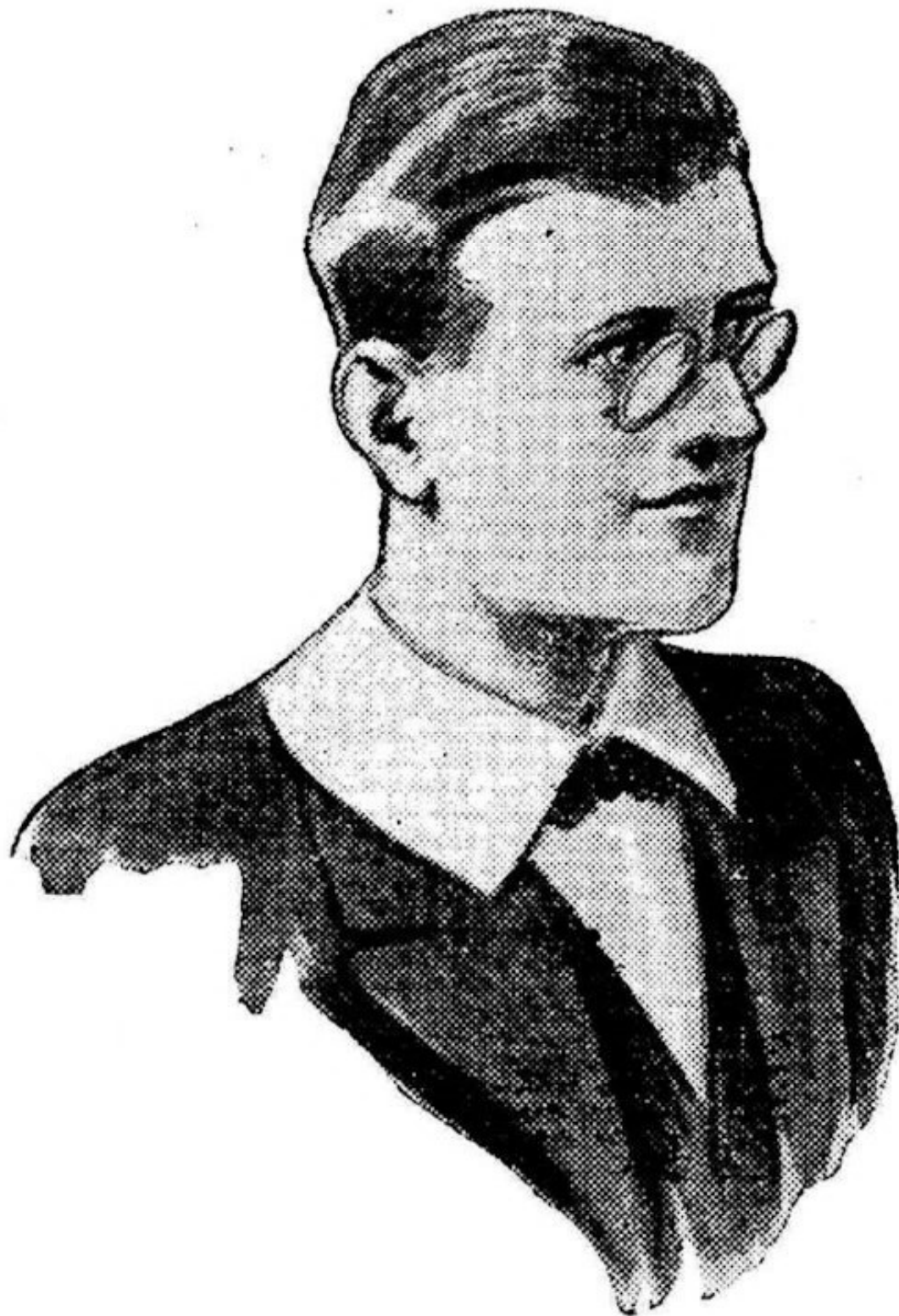
"H'm! I might have a bit of trouble over that," he admitted. "I'm not on particularly friendly

terms with Waldo. Still, I dare say I can manage it. The thing'll have to be done cautiously. Leave it to me."

"I shall want to be there when the youngster tries to climb the tower," said Mr. Newton. "None of your tricks, mind!"

"Oh, you can be there," said Gore-Pearce.

WHO'S WHO AT ST. FRANK'S.



**SIR LANCELOT MONTGOMERY
TREGELLIS-WEST.**

Shares Study C in the Ancient House with Nipper and Tommy Watson. One of the wealthy fellows in the Remove. Always cheerful; always scrupulously attired. An excellent all-round sportsman.

"There'd be nothing in the bet unless you saw the thing done with your own eyes."

"When will you fix it—to-morrow?"

"Better say Friday," replied Gore-Pearce. "That's the day after to-morrow, isn't it?"

"I believe so, seeing that it's Wednesday evening," smiled Mr. Newton.

"All right, then—Friday," said Gore-Pearce. "Some time during the afternoon—"

"Can't manage it!" interrupted Mr. Newton. "I shall be away on business during the afternoon. About seven o'clock in the evening will suit me better."

"That'll do all right, then," said Gore-Pearce. "It'll still be daylight, and perhaps seven o'clock will be better, anyhow. We'll fix it for seven o'clock, Friday evening, then. Will you be there?"

"I'll be there," promised Mr. Newton, with a chuckle.

He maintained his attitude of scepticism, and Gore-Pearce & Co. were rather irritated.

"It's a cert., you chaps," said Claude, after Mr. Newton had wandered away. "Those five quids are mine already."

"Are they?" asked Bell. "How are you going to get Waldo to do the thing? He's not one of our pals, you know—and he won't do any favours for us."

"That's what I was thinking," said Gulliver.

Gore-Pearce lit a cigarette, and was silent for a spell.

"I shall have to do it by degrees," he said at length. "No good asking the chap to oblige me by giving an exhibition. He just wouldn't do it. It's no good telling him that I've got a bet on, either. I shall have to wangle it somehow. But there's five quid at the end of it, and it's worth a bit of trouble."

"I don't think you'll be able to work it," said Gulliver.

"Won't I?" retorted Gore-Pearce. "Wait and see! Quite apart from the money, I want to make this man sing small. He practically called me a liar—and I'm going to make him apologise."

And Gore-Pearce's cunning mind got to work on planning out the details.

CHAPTER 2.

The Cunning of Claude!

CLAUDE GORE-PEARCE was a snob, and he was a bit of a rascal, but with all his noisy talk he was not particularly clever. Never for a moment did he suspect that there might be something behind this apparently innocent wager. It did not occur to him that the whole thing might be a means to an end.

The next morning he had decided on his course of action. He was up early, in spite of the fact that he had been very late in getting to bed. He and his chums had had no difficulty in slipping

back into the Ancient House, after they had returned from the White Harp.

Gore-Pearce knew well enough that Stanley Waldo, of the Remove, would never agree to climb the Priory wall as a favour. Indeed, he would probably suspect a bet as soon as Gore-Pearce mooted the subject; and then, of course, he would have nothing to do with it.

The first thing to do, and the most important, was to gain Waldo's confidence. It was rather unfortunate that Gore-Pearce should have openly displayed his antagonism towards the new boy. However, this was a matter which could be overcome.

"Well, what's the programme?" asked Gulliver, as the leader of Study A strolled out into the Triangle. "How are you going to start the thing? Why not go up to Waldo and challenge him—"

"Idiot!" interrupted Gore-Pearce. "That would be worse than useless. Look here, you fellows—you leave this thing to me. Whatever I do, you back me up, understand? We've got until to-morrow evening, and so we can take things easily."

"Oh, all right—go ahead," said Gulliver.

"We're off to the playing fields now," said Gore-Pearce.

"The playing fields?"

"Little Side."

"What on earth for?"

"Waldo is there, I understand," said Gore-Pearce coolly.

They strolled along to the inner end of the Triangle, and then continued along the secluded space between the wing of the Ancient House and the Junior wing of the School House. They arrived at the gate in the wall, crossed over the little private road, and Little Side was in front of them.

There was plenty of activity on the Junior ground. Nipper and Handforth and Travers and a number of other Removites were in football kit, and they were putting in some practice. Handforth, in goal, was stopping first-time shots with all his customary fire and energy.

"Come on!" he was bellowing. "What's the matter with you chaps? Put some zip into it! I came here for practice! Send in some really hot pile-drivers!"

"Anything to oblige," said Nipper.

He ran forward with the leather at his feet, and just as he crossed the penalty-line he let fly with his right foot—a low, deadly drive. Handforth hurled himself sideways, met the ball with his clenched fists, and sent it rebounding into play again.

"Oh, well saved!"

"Good man, Handy!"

"That was a beauty!"

Handforth grinned.

"I'm feeling in form this morning," he said genially. "There's no game like football—Hallo! What the— What the dickens are those rotters doing on the field?"

He was staring at Gore-Pearce & Co., who were standing just on the edge of the touch-

line, near by, watching with apparent interest.

"Leave 'em alone, Handy," said Church. "It isn't often they come to Little Side to watch the practice. In fact, I've never seen 'em here before."

"There's something funny about it," said Handforth, frowning. "Those cads don't care twopence about football. What are they doing here? I'll bet they're up to mischief!"

Gore-Pearce, who heard the words—for Handforth made no attempt to lower his voice—felt slightly perturbed. Handforth had hit a bull's-eye!

"Let's get on!" said Nipper briskly. "How about you, Waldo? Take a shot, and see if you can beat Handy."

Handforth forgot all about Gore-Pearce & Co.

"That new kid?" he said scornfully. "Come on! Try it!"

Stanley Waldo chuckled. There was nothing in his appearance to suggest that he was something of a phenomenon. His shoulders were broad—but no broader than Nipper's—and he was altogether a well-set-up junior. His face was frank and pleasant, and his grin was particularly attractive.

"I'm afraid I shan't be much good at football," he remarked. "Not in the field, anyhow. I might be all right in goal——"

"Oh, might you?" interrupted Handforth. "Well, my son, I'm goalie, and you needn't think you're going to play in this position!"

"Keep your hair on!" said Waldo. "I know I'm only a new kid, and I don't expect to get into the team this term—or next term, either."

"You'll never get into the team—as goalie—while I'm here!" declared Handforth firmly.

Waldo took a short run at the ball, and when he kicked, it seemed that there was no power in his effort. Yet the leather not only eluded Handforth's fingers, but it shot into the mouth of the goal like a cannon-ball. What was more, it continued straight through the net, smashing the meshes as though they had been made of cotton!

"Well, I'm jiggered!" ejaculated Handforth, spinning round.

"You never even saw it, Handy," said Church. "My hat, what a kick!"

"Bravo, Waldo!"

"A dashed fine shot!" said Gore-Pearce approvingly. "Well done, Waldo! By gad, that was fine!"

"Oh, was it?" roared Handforth. "You're only praising Waldo so that you can get in a jab at me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing of the sort, Handy," said Gore-Pearce, in a surprisingly good-natured voice. "I'm beginning to find that football is an

interesting game—and this term I mean to follow it pretty closely."

"So that you can make bets on the matches?" asked Handforth tartly.

"There's no need to be unpleasant about it," said Gore-Pearce. "I think that this new chap, Waldo, is a marvel. That shot of his was a beauty."

"It was rather too much of a beauty," chuckled Nipper as he ran up to Waldo. "You'll have to go easy, old man—or we shan't have any nets left."

"We need some new nets, anyhow," said Reggie Pitt, of the West House. "We shall have to make a whip round for some more footer funds."

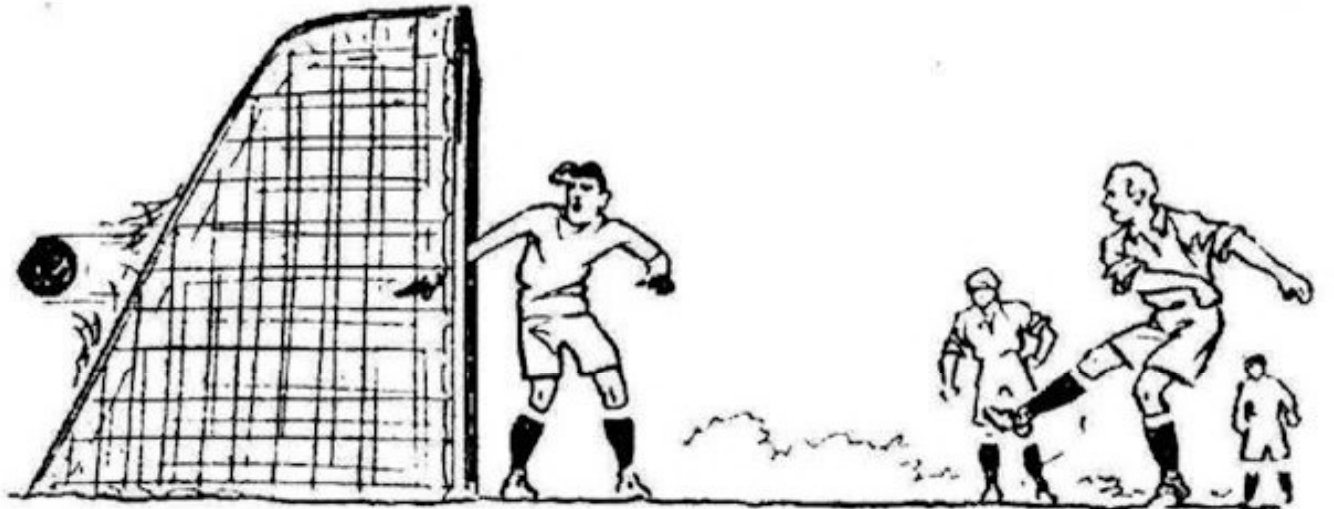
"That's a good wheeze," murmured Gore-Pearce, as though to himself. "Footer funds! I shall have to remember that!"

Waldo certainly revealed great promise on the football field. If anything, he was too energetic. His uncanny strength was disconcerting. It rather spoilt his game, for when he intended a comparatively light kick he really gave a forcible one. As a result, many of his passes went well past their objective.

"But you'll be a first-class man soon," said Nipper with satisfaction. "You're doing fine, Waldo!"

"Thanks!" said the new boy, flushing with pleasure.

"One of the best players on the field," declared Gore-Pearce, who was standing by.



"In my opinion, Nipper, you ought to give Waldo a place straight away."

"Thanks for the advice—but I think I know what I'm doing," said Nipper smilingly.

"Well, you've got a good man there—best man I've seen for terms," said Gore-Pearce, as he turned away. "If you don't play him pretty soon you'll be sorry."

"WELL, that'll do for a beginning," said Gore-Pearce complacently, as he and his chums strolled across the Triangle.

"I'm hanged if I can see what you're playing at!" protested Gulliver.

"You'll see before long," promised Gore-Pearce.

During the "break" in the morning lessons, Gore-Pearce provided the Remove with another surprise. A good many fellows were in the School Shop, indulging in a bun or a doughnut. The leader of Study A came

in with his two chums, and he lounged elegantly against the counter.

"Ginger-beers, Mrs. Hake," he said pleasantly. "We'll have some of those special beef-pies of yours, too?"

He looked round the crowded shop.

"Anybody else care for a ginger-beer?" he asked.

Reggie Pitt nearly choked as he took a bite out of a doughnut.

"Am I dreaming?" he gurgled. "Did Gore-Pearce ask us to have a drink with him?"

"I'm not sure," said Castleton, making a pretence of cleaning his car.

"Don't rot, you fellows," said Gore-Pearce. "Come on! Ginger-beers all round, if you like. It's a thirsty morning for this time of the year. Go ahead, Mrs. Hake—serve them! The drinks are on me."

"Very well, Master Gore-Pearce," said Mrs. Hake, beaming.

But even she was astonished. Not once since his arrival at St. Frank's had Gore-Pearce stood treat to the crowd. There was no doubt about it now, however. His money was good, and there was a rush for ginger-beers. The juniors began to feel that Claude Gore-Pearce was quite a decent sort of fellow, after all.

"You ought to keep up your football, Waldo," said Gore-Pearce, as he strolled over to a table where Stanley Waldo was sitting with Fullwood and Russell, his study-mates. "You were marvellous this morning."

"Cheese it," said Waldo. "What's the idea, Gore-Pearce? Do you want to borrow something?"

"Can't I be pleasant without you making sarcastic remarks?" said Gore-Pearce, rather testily.

"It's so unusual, you know," murmured Fullwood.

"I think the Remove ought to be pleased to have this new chap," continued Gore-Pearce, nodding towards Waldo. "Look at the way he spoofed the River House chaps the other day. Best jape we've had for terms."

"That's true," admitted Russell. "Hal Brewster and his chums were spoofed to the eyes."

"Bell's ringing," said Nipper, looking in at the doorway.

"Oh, just a minute!" said Gore-Pearce. "I want you, Nipper, old man."

Nipper came in.

"I'd like you to take this, if you don't mind," continued Gore-Pearce, handing Nipper a ten-shilling note.

"What for?" asked the Junior skipper, in surprise. "You don't owe me any money, Gore-Pearce."

"No; but I understand that the footer funds are rather low," said Gore-Pearce, to everybody's amazement. "I thought I'd like to make a little sub."

"Great Scott!"

"What's come over him?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Do you mean this, Gore-Pearce?" asked Nipper, hesitating.

"Of course I mean it."

"You really want me to accept this ten bob as a sub to the footer funds?"

"Why make such a fuss about it?" asked Gore-Pearce, with a laugh. "Come along—let's get into the class-room. Old Crowell will be tearing his hair."

NIPPER was looking thoughtful as he strolled back to the School House with Handforth and Waldo and a few others.

"What's his game, I wonder?" asked Nipper slowly.

"Something crooked, I'll bet!" declared Handforth with a snort. "Subscribing to the footer fund, eh? Standing ginger-beer all round! Praising Waldo's football! There's something fishy about all this!"

"Well, it certainly seems a bit queer," said Stanley Waldo. "Of course, I don't know Gore-Pearce as well as you fellows—but I had gained the impression that he is very much of a rotter."

"A good impression, too," said Handforth. "He is a rotter. He can't kid me! Leopards can't change their spots! And Gore-Pearce is as spotted as a plum-duff!"

"Then he can't be very spotted—if you take our plum-duffs as an example!" said Nipper, with a chuckle. "The ones they serve in the Ancient House are more duff than plum!"

"Don't quibble!" said Handforth severely. "I think we ought to grab Gore-Pearce and ask him what his game is."

"No, we can't do that," said Nipper. "After all, the fellow may be a bit different this term. Give him a chance."

"Do you think he's different?" demanded Edward Oswald.

"Well, no. I think he's up to something."

"So do I," said Handforth. "We'd better be on the look-out, you chaps! When Gore-Pearce makes himself pleasant, there's something squiffy in the wind. He'll need watching."

However, Gore-Pearce continued to remain amiable throughout the day. The difference in him was not greatly marked—but it was a difference, nevertheless. His snobbishness was toned down; he was pleasant to everybody; and he was particularly pleasant to Stanley Waldo.

"You're taking your time over this business, aren't you?" asked Gulliver, during tea in Study A.

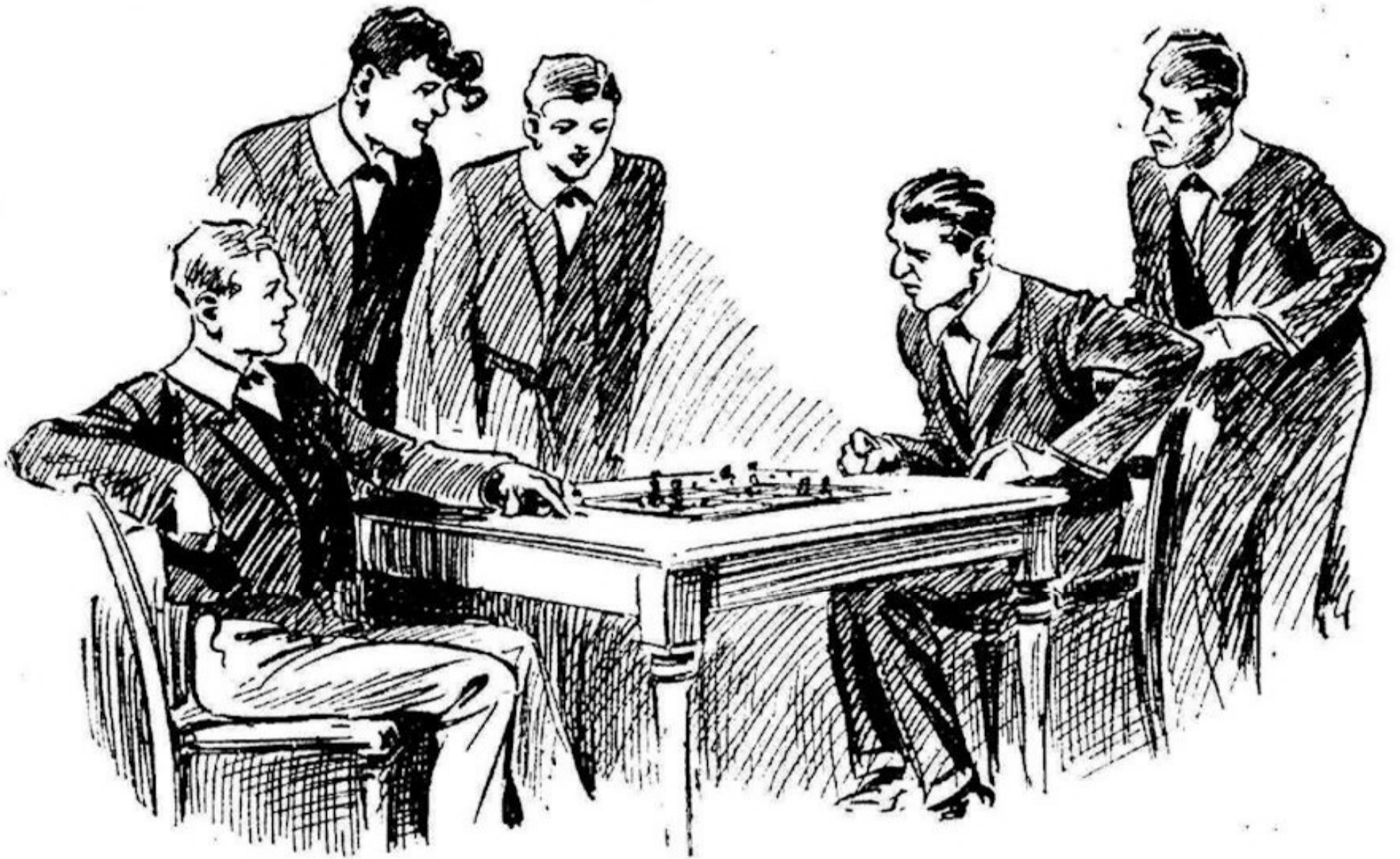
"It's a wonder you didn't ask Waldo to have tea with us," put in Bell.

"I did—but he had already fixed up with those silly fools in Study D," replied Gore-Pearce with a frown. "By gad, I shall be glad when this affair is over!"

"Bit of an effort to keep up this pleasantness, eh?" grinned Bell.

"Oh, shut up!"

"And it's costing you some money, too,"



The sight of Claude Gore-Pearce playing a game of chess with Stanley Waldo caused much comment in the Common-room. And, extraordinarily enough, Claude was obviously enjoying himself. Handforth came over and looked at the Study A leader keenly. Had Gore-Pearce really reformed—or was he playing some deep game of his own?

said Gulliver. "Ten bob to the footer fund, and ginger-beers all round—"

"I haven't spent a quid yet," interrupted Gore-Pearce. "If I win that bet—and I shall win it—I'll be a clear four quid in pocket. It's worth spending the money."

"A sprat to catch a mackerel," nodded Gulliver.

"Exactly," said Gore-Pearce, as he helped himself to the meat paste.

CHAPTER 3.

Success!

"CHESS?" said Waldo. "I'm afraid I'm not much good at the game."

"Well, never mind—let's have a bit of sport," said Gore-Pearce genially. "As a matter of fact, I haven't played chess for terms. I expect you'll beat me."

They were in the junior Common-room, in the Ancient House; and a number of other fellows were looking on in astonishment. Here was Claude Gore-Pearce suggesting a game of chess with somebody! Hitherto, he had always turned up his nose at that fascinating game.

"Beats me hollow!" said Handforth flatly.

Within five minutes Gore-Pearce and Waldo were sitting on opposite sides of one of the little tables, and a chess-board was spread in front of them. Gore-Pearce certainly did it very well. He did not care two straws about chess—although, fortunately, he knew the moves of the game. He was bored

stiff, but he acted his part so well that he looked really interested. Waldo, on the other hand, was quite keen on chess, and he was soon absorbed.

"Well, well!" said Vivian Travers, as he strolled across to the table. "What have we here? Congrats, Gore-Pearce, dear old fellow."

"What for?" demanded Gore-Pearce, looking up.

"For inducing Waldo into the game," said Travers. "How much is the side bet?"

"Don't be a fool!" snapped Gore-Pearce, with something of his old manner. "There's no bet on this game."

"Not a penny," said Waldo, smiling.

"Not with you, of course," agreed Travers. "But if Gore-Pearce hasn't got a bet on with one of his pals, I shall be surprised."

"Can't you leave us alone?" asked Claude testily.

"Talking about bets, how about a little flutter with me?" asked Travers, glancing round. "Who'll take it on? A level ten bob that Waldo wins? Don't all shout at once."

"We'll biff you out of this Common-room if you start betting here, you rotter!" said Handforth indignantly.

"Cheese it, Handy—he's only kidding!" grinned Church. "Don't you know Travers by this time?"

"He's only kidding because we all refuse," retorted Handforth. "If one of us

pulled out ten bob and laid it on the table, Travers would cover it in no time."

"You never know," said Travers. "Try it and see."

Nobody tried it. And during the next hour there were all sorts of visitors to the table where Gore-Pearce and Waldo were playing their game. Nipper came across and looked on for a while—and he was impressed by the fact that Gore-Pearce was really playing with concentrated attention. Perhaps there was something in this, after all. Perhaps Claude was reforming slightly—very slightly. At any rate, Nipper hoped so.

STRANGELY enough, Gore-Pearce found himself engrossed in that game. He had started it languidly enough, his only object being to ingratiate himself more soundly with Waldo, so that his task on the morrow would be all the easier.

But now that he was right in the middle of the game, he was discovering that chess was extraordinarily fascinating. It was ridiculous, of course—and he told himself, time after time, that he was a fool to take enjoyment in this rot. Yet, in spite of this, he exerted his wits to the utmost in order to beat his opponent.

But after a further half hour Waldo sat back in his chair, smiling.

"I'm afraid that's checkmate," he said gently.

"Rot!" said Gore-Pearce, gazing intently at the board. "Checkmate be hanged! There's a move I can make with my Queen's bishop—"

"I took your queen's bishop five minutes ago," murmured Waldo.

"By gad! So you did," said Gore-Pearce. "Well, if I move this rook—no, that wouldn't do, because I should still be in check. Why, confound it, I believe you've got me."

Handforth came over, and took a look.

"Of course he hasn't got you," he said promptly. "Why can't you move your giddy king to the next square, straight along? His queen can't have you in check then."

"But his insignificant little pawn can," said Nipper.

"By George! I didn't spot the pawn!" said Handforth. "Yes, it's checkmate right enough. Good for you, Waldo! I knew you'd whack him."

Claude Gore-Pearce pushed back his chair.

"Well, thanks for the game, old man," he said, smiling genially at Waldo. "We shall have to have another some time. A thundering good game—and you beat me handsomely."

It had been surprising enough for Gore-Pearce to be playing a game of chess; it was doubly surprising for him to take his defeat in a sporting spirit. He strolled across to the fireplace, produced a packet of chocolate from his pocket, and passed it round amongst those immediately near him.

"This is too good to be true," murmured Nipper, as he watched.

"Are you giving this chocolate away, Gore-Pearce?" asked Jimmy Potts, as he was offered a chunk.

"Of course."

"What's the matter with it?" asked Jimmy, staring at it.

Claude grinned.

"Nothing," he replied good humouredly. "It's some of Mrs. Hake's best."

And later on, when the Remove went to bed, somebody casually dropped a banana skin in front of Claude and he went flying along the upper corridor, to strike the floor with a tremendous bump.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Somebody threw that banana skin down on purpose!" roared Gore-Pearce, glaring round.

"Of course," said Travers. "You surely didn't think that it was knocked on the floor by accident, did you?"

Gore-Pearce pulled himself together with an effort, and rose to his feet.

"I shall be sore for a week," he said, trying to grin pleasantly. "Who's the chap who dropped that banana skin so that I should fall on it?"

"Guilty, my lord," said Harry Gresham, of Study J.

"All right, you bounder, wait until to-morrow!" chuckled Gore-Pearce. "I'll have my own back for that!"

He was still laughing heartily when he went into his own dormitory, and everybody was struck by his good temper. They might not have been so struck if they had seen him when he had closed the dormitory door. Gulliver and Bell were the only fellows with him now.

"The fools!" he snarled, rubbing himself. "They think they're clever, don't they? Thank goodness this rot won't last much longer!"

"It's an awful effort to keep good tempered, isn't it?" asked Bell sympathetically.

"Any wise cracks from you, and I'll smash you!" snapped Claude.

"Wise cracks?" said Bell, staring.

"That's the worst of going to these talkies," grinned Gulliver. "They're full of slang."

"By gad! I felt like smashing Gresham just now!" growled Claude. "I suppose no thought it was funny to make me sit on that banana skin! Wait until to-morrow evening—until after I've won my bet with that fellow, Newton! I'll get my own back on Gresham!" he added viciously.

"You sound more like yourself now," said Culliver.

"I don't want any rot from you chaps!" shouted Gore-Pearce, glaring at them. "I've stood enough from the others!"

"Better go easy, they'll hear you," said Bell. "Not that Gully and I care, of course. But the others are suspicious, anyhow."

Gore-Pearce breathed hard.

"Yes; perhaps you're right," he muttered. "I'm fed to the teeth with this silly affair, and I wish I hadn't started it; but I've got to go through with it now or I shall lose my five quid."

He undressed sullenly. He was uneasy when he thought of the morrow. Another day of pretence, such as this one, was not pleasant to contemplate.

HOWEVER, Gore-Pearce got through it all right. He found that things were much easier. A few of the juniors believed that he had taken a turn for the better. The rest didn't seem to care much one way or the other. There were more important things to think about than Claude Gore-Pearce.

Immediately after tea, the cads of Study A shadowed Waldo closely. They did not want him to get out of their sight. He spent an hour on Little Side, and he revealed great promise as a footballer.

Gore-Pearce was beginning to fear Waldo would remain on the playing fields until after seven o'clock, and that wouldn't do at all. The appointment was for seven, and Gore-Pearce was determined that Waldo should be at Edgemore Priory at the fixed time.

Just before half-past-six, Waldo went indoors with a number of other fellows and changed. When he came down he found Gore-Pearce & Co. in the lobby, which, as it happened, they had to themselves.

"Well, I've changed my opinion about the man," Gore-Pearce was saying, as though he did not know that Waldo was coming down the stairs. "And I'll guarantee that he could do that climb with ease."

"Rubbish!" said Gulliver. "Climb the Edgemore Priory tower? Don't be an ass!"

"Yes, draw it mild, Gore-Pearce!" said Bell.

"If it wasn't troubling the fellow, I'd ask him to go along to the Priory with us—Oh, hallo!" said Gore-Pearce, glancing up. "Funny thing, Waldo—we were just talking about you."

"I hope you were saying something complimentary," smiled Stanley Waldo.

Being a comparatively new fellow, he did not know a great deal about Claude Gore-Pearce's character. He had certainly gained

the impression that Gore-Pearce was a rotter; but perhaps that first impression had been wrong.

At all events, Waldo was now feeling on much more friendly terms with the cad of Study A. He was inclined to think that the rest of the juniors were prejudiced. As far as he could see, Claude was quite all right. It was true that he—Waldo—had thrown Gore-Pearce into the fountain pool on his first day at St. Frank's, but Gore-Pearce had apparently forgotten that little incident, and he was bearing no animosity.

"We were talking about your climbing abilities," explained Gore-Pearce, linking his arm into Waldo's, and edging him towards the door. "I don't know if you have ever been to Edgemore Priory?"

"Never seen the place."

"Well, it's a sort of ruin—mainly a tower—about a mile away," explained Gore-Pearce. "I was telling these chaps that you could climb the wall of that tower as easily as you climbed to the top of the Modern House the other day."

"It all depends upon the wall," said Waldo, with a smile. "I'm not a fly, you know, and if there aren't any crevices or cracks I can't climb it. I've got to hang on somewhere."

"Of course he has!" said Gulliver. "And I know jolly well that he couldn't climb that tower!"

"I say he could!" insisted Gore-Pearce.

"Well, I agree with Gulliver," put in Bell.

"The thing is absolutely impossible. And

if Waldo even attempted it, he would be dotty! Why, if he slipped, he would half-kill himself!"

"Any other chap might—but not Waldo," said Claude, shaking his head. "He's too sure of himself. Waldo takes after his father—he hasn't any nerves, and he's as cool as ice. I'd bank on him for a climb like that."

Gulliver sniffed.

"Well, I don't want to offend the chap, but I know thundering well that he couldn't do it," he declared. "It's idiotic. There isn't a human being who could do it."

"Waldo could do it, I tell you!" shouted Gore-Pearce, becoming angry. "You're a pair of obstinate idiots—"

"Here, steady on," grinned Waldo. "Why all this argument? I've got nothing to do for half an hour, so why shouldn't we go



IN THE GRIP OF THE LAW!

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along to this tower and have a look at it?"

"Gad! That's not a bad idea!" said Gore-Pearce, as though surprised. "But I wouldn't let you do it, Waldo!" he added quickly. "Hang it, this is only a little argument, and there's no need—"

"I'll have a look at this tower and see if I can climb it—and then we'll settle the argument one way or the other," said Waldo good-naturedly.

"Well, if you really think—"

"Come on," said the new fellow.

CLAUDE GORE-PEARCE gloated inwardly.

He had gained his object—and Stanley Waldo was not even remotely suspicious of the real truth. The new boy believed that he had come upon the Study A trio quite by chance. And when he had actually offered to attempt the climb, Gore-Pearce could have yelled with triumph. Claude had intended to put the thing to Waldo as tactfully as possible, but now there was no need. Waldo had fallen into the trap so neatly that everything was all right. Truth to tell, Waldo was only too keen on attempting something difficult. A climb of this sort—one that Gulliver and Bell declared to be impossible—promised to be interesting. And it would be rather good to show them that they were wrong. Waldo felt, subconsciously, that he had been challenged.

"Well, I must say this is jolly decent of you, Waldo," said Gore-Pearce pleasantly, as they walked along the lane. "I shan't let you make the climb unless you decide that it's quite safe, you know."

"Let's wait until we get there," said Waldo.

Gore-Pearce was glad enough that he and his companions had been able to get away from St. Frank's without any of the other fellows spotting them. By great good fortune, the Triangle had been almost deserted when they passed out through the open gateway.

"There's the tower!" said Gore-Pearce, after a while.

They had passed the Moor View School, and were now in a very quiet part of the lane. Edgemore Castle lay to the right, across a wide stretch of parkland. A little way farther on a stone tower jutted out above the tops of the trees, and Waldo inspected it with interest.

"Looks fairly promising," he remarked.

"Wait until you see it," said Gulliver.

"You'll be an idiot if you try to climb it."

"Oh, will he?" said Gore-Pearce, who did not want Gulliver to overdo the thing. "I say he can climb it—and easily, too."

"Well, don't get excited," grinned Waldo. "We'll soon see."

"These chaps make me tired," growled Gore-Pearce. "I've got plenty of faith in you, even if they haven't."

When they turned a bend in the lane, they saw a small two-seater car drawn up on to

the grass border. A man was bending over the engine, the bonnet flap being up.

Mr. Newton was waiting, and, while waiting, he thought he would investigate a little scraping noise that had been coming from the engine. Gore-Pearce was glad to see the man in this attitude; for it looked as though he had stopped there because of some mechanical trouble. Gore-Pearce did not want Waldo to suspect that Mr. Newton was in any way concerned in the climb.

The man glanced round as the schoolboys came up, and did not fail to notice the violent wink which Claude gave him. Waldo saw nothing of it because Gulliver was in between.

"Why, hallo, Mr. Newton!" said Gore-Pearce in a tone of surprise. "What's wrong? Trouble?"

"Just a little," said Newton cautiously, remembering that wink.

"Anything we can do?" asked Waldo.

"No, I don't think so," said the man.

"It's nothing much—nothing to stop me, anyhow."

"How would you like to see this friend of ours climb the old Priory tower?" asked Gore-Pearce. "He's a bit of a marvel, and I believe that he can do the climb fairly easily. These other two chaps say that it's impossible."

"Well, I should say the same," said Mr. Newton, glancing at the tower.

"Supposing you come along with us, and watch it?" asked Claude.

Mr. Newton could see that Gore-Pearce did not want Waldo to know that there had been any bet—or that he, Newton, was here by appointment. He was quite satisfied. This way would do just as well as the other.

"Go ahead," he said with a smile. "If there's a free show on, I'll take one of the front seats."

CHAPTER 4.

The Climb!

MR. NEWTON shook his head dubiously as they stood on a rising piece of ground, overlooking the ruined priory.

"I think your friends are right, young man," he said, looking at Gore-Pearce. "Nobody can climb the face of that tower."

"Waldo can!" retorted Gore-Pearce, thinking of those two fivers in Mr. Porlock's keeping.

"Waldo?" said Mr. Newton. "Is that this young fellow's name?"

"Yes."

"I seem to have heard it before, somewhere."

"I expect you're thinking of Waldo's pater," said Gore-Pearce. "He's the Peril Expert, you know."

"Why, yes, of course," said Mr. Newton, nodding. "That's it! By thunder! Is this youngster anything like his father? If so,

(Continued on page 14.)

“WOT I SEZ IS —”



WOT I sez is this 'ere: Being page-boy at a big school like St. Frank's ain't all jam and honey, as the saying goes. Work, and plenty of it, is my lot in this 'ard world. Still, I'm one of those philosopher blokes. I suppose I'm lucky to 'ave a job at all in these 'ard days, I says to meself.

It's not the actual work so much that gets up my nose. Admitted I'm not allowed to have a mike as often as I'd like to, for that there Mrs. Poulter, the Ancient House matron, is a real terror. If she does cop you—my word, you ought to see the length of her giddy tongue! No, what I objects to is having fellows like Master Gore-Pearce and others coming to me and fair worrying me with things that don't come under my ju-ju—what's the giddy word?—jurisdiction. Yes, I think that's the right word.

Why, only yesterday that there Gore-Pearce wanted me to run down to the White Harp, in Bellton, to take a blinking betting slip or something for him.

Nothing doing, I says to him. If I'm nabbed it means the sack, and as I don't want the sack just yet awhile I'm not being nabbed, thank you! Whereat Claude, or whatever his perishing name is, went off into a rare temper. Fair raved and stormed and stamped about the place. But I stuck to my guns. Nothing doing, I'd said, and I meant nothing doing. I didn't think Gore-Pearce could get any madder, but he did then. He said he'd report me. I said "Fiddlesticks, Master Gore-Pearce!" and then he tried to strike me, he did, and if I hadn't slithered out of the way as quick as a jelly slithers down your throat, then I should 'ave 'ad a lovely cabbage ear—that's the right 'ow-d'ye-do, ain't it?

Yus! Master Gore-Pearce is one o' my pet avisions, or whatever you calls the blessed things.

Then, would you believe it? After I'd got

TUBBS, the Ancient House page-boy, is not mentioned very often in the St. Frank's stories. Yet he is very much alive and kicking—and he has his woes like the rest of us!

rid of 'im, who should come along but that there thing called Master Long. Wanted to borrow half-a-crown, if you please! Couldn't get it out of his own Form-mates, I suppose—they know 'im better than to do that—and so he'd

come scrounging to me.

"Go and eat coke!" I tells him firmly, and walks away on me dignity as well as me feet.

What aggrenoyes me more than anythink p'raps, is to have blokes what don't belong to the Ancient House asking me to run their blinking errands. Some of the seniors like Sinclair and Grayson are always doing this. If I refuse—as I 'ave a right to do—they just get nasty and clip me a oner over the face. And what's the good of complaining? The perishers would only deny the whole blessed business, and who's going to believe the page-boy in front of seniors? Nobody!

One of my ambitions in life is to catch these blokes bending, and then kick 'em—kick 'em 'ard on that part of their anatomies which was made to be kicked.

And now I'll change the record.

THE happiest days at St. Frank's for me are "breaking up" days. They're also my busiest days, come to that, but I don't mind. It's all for the good o' the cause, I says to myself.

All day long I seems to do nothing but hump about trunks and cases and bags. The boys themselves are extra ex-ex-exuberious and think nothing of giving me a hearty wallop on the back. They don't seem to realise that I'm balancing about fifty trunks on me head, and another fifty in me arms—don't realise it until said things drop on their pet corns or squash in their toppers!

Still, I collects a nice little packet in tips, and, being a business man, that's all I'm concerned about.

WALDO'S FOE!

(Continued from page 12.)

he might be able to make an attempt at this tower."

"He'll not only attempt it—he'll do it."

"He'd better not try," said Newton decidedly. "Why, it would be sheer madness! I won't have anything to do with the affair, anyhow."

"It's all right, sir—don't worry," said Waldo with a chuckle. "We had decided to go ahead with the climb long before we met you. I think I can manage it all right. Anyhow, I'll have a shot."

He had inspected the tower with greater interest than ever, and he knew that he would be able to climb it with supreme ease. It was true there was no ivy, and the wall itself was sheer. But there were plenty of crevices between the old stones—plenty of cracks and fissures.

Even Gore-Pearce had a few qualms as he looked at that wall. He had made his bet, knowing that Waldo could do wonderful things; but this wall seemed to be very much of a facer.

"What's the old mansion over there?" asked Mr. Newton, pointing across the park-land beyond to Edgemore Castle.

"That place?" said Gore-Pearce. "That's Edgemore Castle. The old Earl of Edgemore lives there."

"Really?" asked Mr. Newton, as though surprised and interested. "A fine old building! And I'll warrant it contains some treasures, too."

"Old Lord Edgemore was practically broke at one time," said Gulliver. "Gore-Pearce's people were going to buy the castle, but—"

"Don't talk about that!" growled Gore-Pearce, with a frown. "The whole thing fell through, and the earl recovered a lot of money. I don't know all the details. What does it matter, anyhow?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter!" said Mr. Newton. "Isn't there a famous Edgemore necklace? A kind of heirloom?"

"I've never heard of it," said Gore-Pearce, with a touch of impatience.

"This would have made a good location for your father, young man," said Mr. Newton, turning to Waldo. "Plenty of stuff to lift in that old house, I'll warrant! But your father has changed, hasn't he?"

Waldo looked him straight in the eye.

"Is it necessary to rake up the past?" he asked.

"Sorry—didn't mean to touch you on the raw, young 'un!" apologised Mr. Newton. "Well, what about this climb? Are you going to try it?"

"Yes," said Waldo.

He had taken a great dislike to this stranger. He almost wished he had not come. But it was hardly fair to blame Gore-Pearce & Co. for Mr. Newton's shortcomings. He was evidently only a casual acquaintance of theirs.

They moved nearer to the tower, and the closer they got the more formidable the tower looked. This ruin was a very old one, and for many years it had been allowed to decay. The Priory itself was in utter ruins, and the old walls were, for the most part, covered with ivy and other creepers. The autumn tints were looking extremely beautiful in the evening light, and the whole place presented a charming picture.

"He oughtn't to do it!" muttered Gulliver nervously. "What's going to happen if he falls when he's half-way up?"

"He'll come down with a nasty bump," said Bell.

"He'll kill himself!"

They were both quite nervous, and Gore-Pearce gave them a sharp look. He didn't want the climb to be called off now—just when there was a chance of him winning the money.

"Can't you fellows dry up?" he asked in a low voice.

"Well, it's rotten!" said Gulliver excitedly. "If Waldo falls and kills himself—or even if he only injures himself—we shall be in an awful hole. The Head will want to know all about it, and we shall have to say that we persuaded Waldo to—"

"Who persuaded him?" demanded Gore-Pearce. "It was his own idea!"

"Of course it was," put in Waldo. "Don't make such a fuss, you fellows. I shan't be in any danger. Don't worry. If I find the climb is impossible, I'll come down. I give you my word that I won't take any unnecessary risks."

In order to stop any further argument he ran forward, stood at the bottom of the tower for a moment, then clutched at the stonework with his nimble fingers.

"Now, watch!" said Gore-Pearce, with a triumphant glance at Mr. Newton.

"I'm watching," said Mr. Newton.

There was something positively uncanny about the way in which Waldo went about that climb. The whole thing seemed impossible. Even Mr. Newton, when he looked at that wall, had his doubts. He was anxious and worried as Waldo progressed. And it need hardly be said that his worry was not occasioned by any thought for Waldo's safety. There was something else behind this!

"By gad!" said Gore-Pearce in a whisper.

There was something rather frightening about this feat of Waldo's. He seemed to be clinging to the face of the tower by some sort of magnetism—as though his fingers were coated with a kind of strong adhesive so that he stuck there.

If any of the St. Frank's masters had come along at that moment they would have felt positively faint. This schoolboy was taking a dreadful risk. One slip, and he would go hurtling down on to the hard stones below!

Waldo himself was quite enjoying the affair. As he had seen upon his first inspection, the old stones were much worn by the

weather. He had no difficulty in finding handhold and foothold as he worked his way upwards.

There wasn't another fellow in the whole of St. Frank's who could have climbed more than ten or fifteen feet. But Waldo continued upwards serenely. The fact that there was now an abyss beneath him did not affect his nerves in the least. He was a real chip of the old block. The more peril there was, the better he liked it.

Half-way up, and still he was going strong, edging towards the summit, flat against the wall of the tower. Those watching below were fascinated—fearful. Mr. Newton himself was trembling.

"It's awful!" muttered Gulliver. "He'll never do it! He'll never get to the top!"

"If he falls from that height he'll break his neck!" said Bell hoarsely.

"Can't you fools keep quiet?" snarled Gore-Pearce, turning on them.

And up there, on the face of the tower, Waldo heard every word. His hearing was as acute as his eyesight. In nearly all respects he was abnormal. He smiled. He could well understand that those three Removites were feeling the tension.

"It's all right, you fellows," he sang out. "I'm quite enjoying this. I'll soon be at the top now."

"Well, I'm hanged!" said Newton, with a little gulp.

He was already beginning to curse Sam Wilkes for having forced him to engineer this business. But it seemed that Sam Wilkes had known what he was doing.

"I can't look at him!" whispered Gulliver.

The last few feet were the worst of all. At least, they were to the watchers. To Waldo they were the easiest. For there, at the top of the tower, the stonework was even more cracked and uneven than it was lower down. With supreme ease he pulled his way up, and he heard a united gasp of relief from the watchers as he clutched at the top of the parapet.

"He's done it!" said Gore-Pearce exultantly.

"I believe he has!" admitted Mr. Newton, with a grimace.

Yet there was a light in his eyes which denied the tone of his voice. His voice indicated that he was chagrined—but his eyes told that he was pleased.

"I knew it!" said Claude, his face hot and flushed. "What did I tell you? Didn't I say that Waldo could climb this tower? This is going to cost you a fiver, Mr. Newton!"

"I've already kissed it good-bye," said the man with pretended sorrow.

Never for a moment did he take his gaze from the top of the tower. He saw Waldo pull himself up and sit for a moment on the parapet. The extraordinary schoolboy glanced down, smiling.

"How's that?" he asked genially.

"Bravo!" shouted Gulliver. "Oh, well done, Waldo!"

"Rather!" chuckled Bell. "You boulder! You nearly gave me heart failure!"

Waldo chuckled, and dropped lightly down on to the stonework beyond the barrier—on to the roof of the tower. It was flat and wide and perfectly safe. He leaned over again; and then, for some reason, he quickly drew himself away and vanished from sight.

"Well, that's that!" said Mr. Newton, speaking rapidly. "You've won, Gore-Pearce, and you'd better come along and collect your money."

"Where did he vanish to just now?" asked Gore-Pearce, staring upwards.

"I suppose he's coming down—there's a staircase inside, isn't there?" asked Mr. Newton in a casual voice. "Are we going to wait for him?"

"Well, it's hardly playing the game to bring him here and then leave him."

"Oh, let's come," said Newton. "Let him walk back on his own."

Gore-Pearce grinned.

"By gad, that's rather good!" he chuckled. "Hang the fellow! I've won my bet, and now I can treat him as he deserves to be treated. Yes, we'll let him walk home!"

And they went to Mr. Newton's car, fondly believing that Stanley Waldo was on his way down the tower.

Even now, Gore-Pearce & Co. had not the slightest inkling that they had led Waldo into a sinister trap!

CHAPTER 5.

The Vanished Schoolboy!

SOMETHING had happened to Stanley Waldo.

Something very drastic, in fact.

When he reached the top of the tower he experienced a glow of satisfaction at having completed the climb so easily. It



rather amused him to surprise people so much with his peculiar abilities.

That there could be any real danger lurking at the top of the tower never entered his head. Yet, when he turned and leaned over the parapet, after dropping down on to the flat stone roof, he became aware of a slight sound on the other side of the tower.

He half turned, and at the same instant a heavy stone came hissing across, to strike him on the left shin.

He felt no actual pain, for, like his celebrated father, he did not know what pain was. But that sudden blow caused him to half stumble, and then a figure came sweeping out from beyond a jutting mass of

masonry. Waldo caught one glimpse of it.

"Wilkes!" he ejaculated.

Crash!

Almost in the same instant, a heavy wooden club descended on his head, and he collapsed into a limp heap. Waldo was a phenomenal sort of youngster, but, after all, he was human. And that blow on the head was sufficient to stun him temporarily.

"Only just did it!" muttered Sam Wilkes hoarsely.

He looked down at his victim, and he knew that the youngster would be quiet for a spell. He crept over to the further parapet, and peeped between two of the piles of masonry. He saw Jim Newton and the three schoolboys going along towards the waiting car.

"Good for you, Jim," muttered Wilkes. "Those kids don't know a thing."

In the sense that Wilkes meant it, this was perfectly true. Gore-Pearce and Gulliver and Bell had got Stanley Waldo to this tower without any suspicion of the real object. To them the affair was merely a bet.

But Jim Newton had hoped, from the first, that he would lose. For the whole object of the thing was to get Waldo to make that climb—so that he would walk into the trap that had been so carefully prepared for him. And so cleverly had this trap been set that not even the cads of Study A knew of its existence.

Wilkes heard the car start, and he listened while the sounds of it grew more and more distant. Then he turned, and there was a gloating expression in his eyes as he surveyed the still figure of the fallen boy.

"Hope I didn't overdo it," he said with a sudden start.

He went on his knees, and a moment later he was satisfied. Waldo's heart was beating steadily and his respiration was regular. He was only stunned. Before long he would come to his senses.

And now Sam Wilkes lost no time in making his next move. He proceeded to drag Waldo down the worn, crumbling, circular stairs of the tower.

It was a long drag to the bottom, but Wilkes was wiry, and the task was not so very hard. For the schoolboy only needed to be pulled by his shoulders, and he half tumbled down those old stairs.

When the bottom was reached, Wilkes only paused for a moment or two. Then he plunged down into a black cavity in the old stone floor. There were more stairs here, narrower, and in a worse state of preservation.

There were only one or two candles burning, and presently a low, narrow passage was reached. It was damp and cold, and there was a peculiar earthy smell in the air. Only for a few feet did Wilkes drag his victim along this passage.

Then he turned into a doorway, so narrow that he could hardly squeeze through. He

had some difficulty in dragging his burden after him. It was the doorway of a dungeon—no more than one foot across, and only about four feet high.

The door gave access to a small chamber with a low stone roof. The walls were of stone, too, immensely thick and very aged.

"There!" panted Wilkes as he propped the schoolboy against the wall. "You'll be safe there for a few hours, boy! There'll be no escape for you—strong as you are! And here you'll stay until I come to let you out—which won't be until one o'clock in the morning."

He squeezed his way through the narrow doorway, and when he was in the passage he drew the door closed. It was a solid stone affair, and there were three enormous iron bolts fixed to it. With a creaking and rattling, they shot into their sockets. The only ventilation for the dungeon was a tiny slit at the top of the door.

"When you come out of here, kid, you'll be in the biggest mess of your life!" chuckled Wilkes. "Nobody will believe your yarn—nobody will believe that you spent hours in this old dungeon. There won't be a soul to support the story."

He chuckled again, went up into the daylight, made sure that he was not being observed, and then stole away.

"SEEN anything of Waldo?" asked Nipper, coming into the Common-room.

"No," said Handforth. "He must have gone off somewhere after footer practice. I haven't seen him since we came indoors to change."

Gore-Pearce, who was lounging near the fireplace with Gulliver and Bell, said nothing. He himself was surprised that Waldo had not turned up. He was rather anxious for the new boy to return—so that he could reveal himself again in his true colours. It was well past calling-over now, and Stanley Waldo was missing.

"Can't understand it," said Nipper. "Why should he be late? He hadn't a permit, and he's not the kind of fellow to flout the school rules."

"Must have been delayed somewhere," suggested Gresham.

"That's what it looks like," agreed Nipper. "But I'm afraid he'll be in for trouble—unless he's got a good excuse. Crowell's on his track already."

"What do you make of it?" whispered Gulliver, bending nearer to Gore-Pearce.

"Why ask me?"

"Well, we know what happened to him," said Gulliver. "I mean, he climbed the tower and we didn't wait for him to come down. Supposing he fell?"

"But he wouldn't climb down, you ass!"

"He might have fallen inside the tower," said Gulliver. "Supposing some of the stairs gave way? Supposing he's lying there now, hurt?"

"Supposing you talk sense?" snapped Gore-Pearce. "He'll turn up soon."

Just then the door opened. Buster Boots, of the Fourth, came in with Lionel Corcoran and Bob Christino and one or two others.

"Pax!" said Boots briskly. "No larks, you chaps! We're here to talk about football."

"A perfectly peaceful mission," said Corcoran, nodding.

"You're welcome, then," said Nipper. "But first of all, have you seen anything of Waldo this evening?"

"What's the matter? Have you mislaid him?" asked Boots.

"Well, he missed calling-over—and that's unusual for him," said Nipper. "Nobody seems to have seen him since he came indoors to change after footer practice."

"What about Gore-Pearce?" asked Corcoran.

"Eh?" ejaculated Claude, starting round.

"Can't Gore-Pearce tell you anything about him?" went on Corcoran. "I saw Waldo walking up the lane, near the Moor View School, with Gore-Pearce and Gulliver and Bell. That was just before seven, quite a while after we came in from footer practice."

There was an immediate buzz.

"What about it, Gore-Pearce?" asked Nipper. "Where did Waldo go with you?"

"Oh, up the road," replied Gore-Pearce indifferently.

"By George!" roared Handforth. "Do you mean to say you've been listening to us all this time and you haven't spoken? You heard us asking about Waldo—"

"I'm not interested in your troubles," said Gore-Pearce sourly.

"I knew the leopard couldn't change his spots!" snorted Handforth. "He's just the same as ever, you chaps! Where did you go with Waldo, Gore-Pearce?"

"If you must know, we went to the Priory ruins."

"What for?" demanded Nipper.

"Oh, nothing much—only to settle a little argument," replied Claude. "Gulliver and Bell said that Waldo couldn't climb the wall of the tower—and I said he could."

"You don't mean to say Waldo attempted the thing?" asked Nipper, aghast.

"He not only attempted it—but he did it," said Gore-Pearce coolly. "And I won five quid—I mean—"

"Oh!" said Nipper. "You won five quid?"

"Let it drop!" said Gore-Pearce, turning aside.

"We'll let you drop in a minute—with a bump!" roared Handforth. "By George,



Slowly but surely Waldo climbed up the wall of the Priory Tower. He had no difficulty in finding foothold or handhold; and he was supremely indifferent of the fact that one slip would send him hurtling to his death.

so that's why you've been so mealy-mouthed to-day and yesterday? You were simply spoofing Waldo? Getting into his confidence? Wangling it so that you could win your rotten five quid! And you didn't mind him risking his life by climbing that tower as long as you could get—"

"Don't be an idiot!" broke in Claude. "Waldo needn't have climbed the tower unless he had liked. We couldn't force him."

He was pressed for details, and he refused to give them. But Gulliver and Bell, when they were seized, were willing enough to talk. They saw no reason why they should not. After all, the affair had been innocent enough—or so they thought—for they had had no knowledge of the real motive behind that climb.

"You say that Waldo got to the top

successfully?" asked Nipper. "And after that you don't know what happened to him?"

"How should we know?" said Gulliver. "We were going to wait, but Newton wanted us to hurry off—"

"Newton?"

"He's—he's a chap we know," said Gulliver uneasily.

"A bookie, I suppose?" asked Handforth.

"No, he isn't, he's quite a decent chap," denied Gulliver. "It was he who made the five quid bet with Gore-Pearce."

"I don't see why you should cross-examine us like this," put in Gore-Pearce truculently.

"I don't have to ask your permission if I want to make a bet. This man laughed in my face when I told him that Waldo could do wonderful things. He was so confoundedly sceptical that I decided to test him. I wagered him five quid that Waldo could climb that tower, and he took it on."

"Thinking that he would win the bet?"

"Of course," said Gore-Pearce. "He thought I was off my rocker; but he didn't know Waldo as we know him. Consequently,



he was a bit done when Waldo simply walked up that wall like a giddy fly!"

"Well, that's all right," said Nipper. "If you like to make these bets, Gore-Pearce, that's your concern. But we want to know why Waldo hasn't turned up."

"How should I know?" said Claude. "I'm not his keeper! As soon as the bet was settled, we went away."

"Leaving Waldo—whom you had tricked—to get down from that tower as best he could?"

"Oh, don't be silly!" snapped Gore-Pearce. "You've been up that tower, and so have I. There are proper stairs inside, aren't there?"

"Well, yes."

"Then what's the idea of making all this fuss?" said Gore-Pearce. "He must have come down two or three minutes after we had left. I suppose he's gone off somewhere on his own."

"I'd tell you what!" said Handforth suddenly. "Let's go along to the tower and make a search. I'll bet Waldo slipped, or

something, and got wedged, or something. Perhaps he met some tramps, or something—"

"There's a lot of 'or something' about that, Handy," grinned Nipper. "Now that we know where Waldo was seen last, I don't think we need worry. He got to the top of the tower all right, and it's a cert that he reached the ground in safety. He'll turn up before supper."

"They generally do," nodded Travers. "Calling-over can be missed without a qualm—but not supper."

HOWEVER, when supper-time arrived there was no Stanley Waldo.

When the meal was over, the juniors were rather anxious. Not all of them, of course. The rank and file were not particularly interested in Waldo and if he chose to stay out like this, it was his own funeral. But Nipper and Handforth and Travers and a few others were feeling concerned.

"I tell you we ought to do something!" Handforth was insisting. "I'll bet he met with an accident at that old Priory. Why can't we sneak out and search for him?"

"I'm beginning to think that it might be advisable," said Nipper.

"Beginning to think!" snorted Handforth. "I thought it an hour ago! Come on! We've got to find Waldo. We'll slip our overcoats on, and dodge out—"

"Indeed!" said a sharp, acid voice.

Handforth jumped, and found Mr. Crowell looking on. The Remove master had come up unexpectedly.

"Indeed, Handforth!" he said coldly. "So you are thinking about breaking bounds in order to search for Waldo?"

"He hasn't come back, sir—"

"I am well aware of that," said Mr. Crowell. "And when he does come back he will have a very unpleasant interview with me. I absolutely forbid any of you boys to leave these premises."

"But, sir—"

"If you disregard this warning, Handforth, and break bounds in spite of what I have said, I shall recommend you to the headmaster for a flogging," said Mr. Crowell curtly. "Now! Let there be no more of this nonsense!"

He went on his way, and Nipper sighed.

"That's done it!" he said. "Just as well, perhaps. I can't really think that anything bad has happened to Waldo. He's a queer sort of chap, and he doesn't mind a swishing in the least. Can't feel it, anyhow. So why should he worry?"

All the same, Nipper felt rather uneasy. And when bedtime arrived and there was still no sign of Waldo, the Remove skipper was deeply concerned.

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CHAPTER 6.

The Prisoner in The Dungeon!

"WHAT do you make of it?" said Gulliver.

He and Gore-Pearce and Bell were in their little dormitory, and they were undressing.

"About Waldo, do you mean?" asked Gore-Pearce.

"Yes."

"Why look at me like that?" said Claude aggressively. "It's nothing to do with me, is it?"

"I didn't say it was," replied Gulliver. "But, all the same, I can't help feeling that something might have happened to the chap at that Priory tower. We didn't see him come down, you know, and I am wondering if he met with an accident."

Gore-Pearce sat down on the edge of the bed.

"I'm wondering something else," he said

thoughtfully. "Didn't you notice something queer about that chap Newton, while we were driving back from the tower?"

"Something queer?" asked Bell.

"He seemed excited, in a subdued sort of way," replied Gore-Pearce. "And, now I come to think of it, it was a bit queer of him to rush us off like that before Waldo could get down."

"What are you getting at?" asked Gulliver, staring.

"I don't know," confessed Gore-Pearce. "But it seems to me that Newton acted strangely for a man who had just lost five quid on a bet. Anybody might have thought that he was pleased. I'm beginning to think that there was more in that business than met the eye."

"You'd better go and ask him about it," said Bell sarcastically.

"That's what I'm going to do," replied Claude. "Besides, I want to collect my winning money—and my own money, too."

Porlock is still holding the stakes, and I shan't be satisfied until they are in my pocket."

The cads of Study A had not thought it worth the risk to enter the White Harp in full daylight during the early part of the evening. A master or prefect might have spotted them. Far better to leave it until full darkness came.

"You don't think they're going to dish you over that ten quid, do you?" asked Gulliver, with a whistle. "Hang it, half the money's out of your own pocket."

"I don't trust Porlock, never did," said Gore-Pearce. "He's a tricky, shifty sort of rotter. We'll have a little nap now, and it about half past eleven we'll get dressed and pop down to the White Harp."

IN the meantime, the prisoner of the Priory dungeon was not taking things as tamely as Sam Wilkes had imagined.

Nearly an hour had elapsed before he had recovered from the effects of that brutal blow. He had come to his senses gradually, and for quite fifteen minutes Stanley Waldo had sprawled on that hard ground, with his back against the wall, under the impression that he was napping in the armchair in Study I.

Then, gradually, as his full wits returned, he realised that something was wrong. He felt no actual pain—only a dull kind of thick-ness in his head. There was something in his make-up—something that had puzzled hosts of specialists—which made him immune from pain. He had inherited this peculiarity from his father.

"I've had a crack on the head," said Waldo decidedly. "That's what's the matter with me. I've had a crack on the head—and a heavy one, too."

He felt his head, and he was rather startled at the size of the bump which seemed to stick up through the hair.

"Wilkes did it," he told himself. "I seem to remember spotting Wilkes just for a second before he got in that blow."

He was puzzled by the odour of dankness in the atmosphere. He was chilled to the marrow, too, and when he tried to move he felt that he was lying on some rough, damp stones.

"Something funny about this," he said, feeling for his matches.

As it happened, he had a full box. He soon struck one, and held it aloft.

"O-oh! So this is the wheeze, is it?" he murmured, with perfect composure. "Down in the castle dungeon! A nice, pleasant-looking little place! Well, we do see life!"

He struck another match, and rose to his feet. It only took him a few seconds to discover that the door was bolted on the outside—and heavily bolted.

There was no other means of exit. On all sides there were the solid stone walls. The place was almost like a vault.

"Yes, it's a dungeon—and I'll bet it's

underneath that Priory tower," Waldo told himself. "Ye gods and little fishes! I walked right into the trap—and didn't know it!"

His expression became rather grim as he thought of the part that Gore-Pearce had played in that little drama. It was Gore-Pearce who had taken him to the Priory tower—Gore-Pearce who had mooted the idea in the first place. Therefore it seemed morally certain that Gore-Pearce was somehow mixed up with Sam Wilkes. And that other man—that Newton fellow—was undoubtedly an accomplice too.

"A whole bunch of 'em," decided Waldo. "They got me to climb that tower, knowing that Wilkes was at the top, waiting to knock me out. And I was idiot enough to think that Gore-Pearce was trying to be decent!"

He bitterly regretted trusting the cad of Study A. All along Gore-Pearce had "played up to him." It was as obvious as daylight now.

"But I'm dashed if I can understand why Wilkes has pushed me into this dungeon and locked me in," muttered Waldo, as he struck another match. "What's the good of leaving me here?"

A thought struck him—an ugly thought. Was it possible that Wilkes had decided to leave him in this dungeon to die of starvation and thirst?

He remembered his first encounter with Wilkes. He had captured the man then and handed him over to the police, since Wilkes was an escaped convict. Unfortunately, the man had again escaped.

He was a low-class criminal of a vindictive, revengeful nature. Waldo's father—the famous Peril Expert—had engineered his arrest and conviction, and Wilkes had sworn to be revenged upon Waldo senior. There was something almost fanatical in his mad desire to "get even." It seemed that he was trying to exact his revenge by attacking the son. It was so much safer than attacking the father! And the result would be very much the same: for if anything happened to Stanley, the blow would be a tragic one for Rupert Waldo.

"Oh, well, if that brute has left me here to die I've just got to show him that there's nothing doing in that line," said Waldo coolly. "Perhaps he thought that this dungeon could hold me. Funny how people make such mistakes!"

He located the door, went over to it, and felt carefully round the heavy, rough stonework. It was not long before he pursed his lips and shook his head.

"I may be a Little Boy Wonder, but there are some jobs which are even beyond my powers," he muttered. "Stanley, old man, this looks like being your Waterloo."

The door certainly was impregnable. Waldo stood back and then heaved himself at that great mass of solid stone, but it did not even quiver. Strong as he was, he could make no impression upon it.

He struck some more matches and care-

THE ST. FRANK'S QUESTIONNAIRE!

Here are twelve testers for you, chums—questions which refer to St. Frank's and its members. Give them the "once-over," jot down the answers to those which you know, and then compare them with the correct list which will be given, together with another set of questions, next week.

1. Who is the master of the Sixth Form?
2. What are Tregellis-West's full Christian names?
3. Who is the captain of the Bellton Boys' Eleven?
4. Who is the captain of Bellton Rovers—in the District League?
5. Who is the landlord of the George Tavern in Bellton?
6. Who are the occupants of Study F in the Ancient House?
7. What is the Modern House Junior Common-room telephone number?
8. Who is the Housemaster of the West House?
9. Which Moor View School girl is Handforth's particular chum?
10. Who is the village policeman?
11. Who is the matron of the Modern House?
12. What is the name of the Canadian boy in the Remove.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUESTIONS.

1. Archibald Winston Derek. 2. Herbert Vandyke. 3. Willard's Island has a quaint old castle-like ruin on it, known as Willard's Folly. 4. Archibald Winston Derek Glen-thorne and Alfred Brent. 5. Bannington 76. 6. The Japanese Café. 7. In Bannington—The Stronghold. 8. Mr. Arthur Stockdale. 9. Mary Summers. 10. Lawyer—now a High Court Judge. 11. Helmford. 12. Captain Joshua Pepper.

fully went round the stone walls. At first he thought that he was not going to meet with any success. After four matches had been expended, he was kneeling beside the wall opposite the door. He imagined that this was one of the outer walls. On the other side might be solid earth, or there might be freedom.

He was kneeling here because he had detected that one of the enormous stones of which the wall was built was slightly loose.

The match went out, and Waldo systematically started to work with his pocket-knife, clearing the space round the edges of the stone as much as possible. And when he gripped these edges with his uncannily-strong fingers he could feel a slight movement.

He judged that the stone was an enormously heavy one, going back for a foot or so into the wall. Probably it weighed a couple of hundredweight. Any ordinary boy, feeling that stone, would have left it alone. For even if he could have loosened it more he could not possibly have pulled it out.

But Stanley Waldo knew his powers—he knew his strength. And in this loose stone he saw hope. His patience was remarkable, for at the end of half an hour he still crouched there, working steadily. He had not taken a moment's rest, and he was feeling no fatigue.

He struck a match now and had a look at his handiwork.

"Room enough to get my fingers in now," he told himself. "Well, here goes! Other people get out of dungeons by burrowing through the walls, so why shouldn't I?"

He got a firm grip on the stone, and com-

menced to joggle it gently and continuously. There was scarcely any movement at first, but after ten minutes or so there was a slight difference. The movement was greater. The stone was gradually but surely coming free.

And once having got a start, Waldo's task became easier. With every fresh succession of tugs and shaking movements, the stone loosened itself more and more.

At the end of half an hour it was projecting an inch or two out of the face of the wall. And now Waldo could get a better grip.

He exerted his amazing strength. . . .

"WELL, that's that?" said the prisoner contentedly.

Another half an hour had gone by—a period of ceaseless, intensive labour. Any other youngster would have been nearly exhausted. But Stanley Waldo was showing no signs of distress. His powers of endurance were remarkable. And there, on the floor of the dungeon, was a great square of ancient stone, nearly two feet thick by a foot deep. It was enormously heavy—well over a hundredweight—and in the wall there was a corresponding cavity.

"Now to see if we've been wasting our valuable time," murmured Waldo.

He struck another of his precious matches—they were getting low now—and he did not feel very pleased when he saw that there were further great stones at the back of the deep cavity. However, when he felt them he was gratified to discover that they were comparatively loose. They came away in his grip as he tugged at them. They were smaller stones, and once he had cleared two



Waldo went down on his knees and gently examined the girl's ankle. It was already considerably swollen, and he saw her wince as he touched her. The sprain was obviously severe. Betty Barlowe would never be able to walk back to the Moor View School!

or three of them the rest almost fell out of the wall. And beyond there was—darkness.

"Looks promising," he told himself.

At all events, there was a cavity of some kind on the other side of this wall. It was rather disappointing to find that the hole did not lead into the open air, however. There was no refreshing draught coming through—nothing but the same stagnant, earthy-smelling air.

At last the smaller stones were removed, and Waldo squeezed his way through cautiously. There was solid stone work beneath his feet when he stood up. The silence was impressive. He struck another match, and a rueful smile spread over his face.

"Well, that's that!" he said disgustedly.

He was in another dungeon—almost identical with the one he had left! And the solid stone door was closed— But was it? Was it completely closed?

He strode over towards it, and a sigh of relief escaped him when he found that the door was not quite shut—and certainly not bolted. He pushed it open, and found himself in a stone passage where the roof was arched.

This passage led into another one—larger, wider. There was evidently a similar passage leading to the other dungeon. They were back to back.

Not that this mattered. Waldo's one concern now was to get out. He had seen by his watch that the hour was ten-thirty.

The junior school would be in bed by now. No doubt the fellows were wondering what had happened to him.

Two or three of his last few matches went, and he came to the foot of some circular stairs. He mounted them, and a chuckle escaped him when he suddenly found himself being fanned by the night wind. He could hear the rustling of branches. A moment later he burst out from the Priory ruins, the gloom of the night seeming almost bright after the pitchy blackness of that dungeon.

"So much for Mr. Wilkes!" said Waldo complacently.

He did not trouble to make any investigation of the ruins. He was quite sure that Wilkes was not here now. His chief thought was to get back to St. Frank's and to report himself. He rather wondered what explanation he would give. He did not want to sneak against Gore-Pearce & Co. Perhaps it would be as well to say nothing and to take his punishment in silence.

But Stanley Waldo was not destined to return to St. Frank's just yet. The adventures of this remarkable evening were not yet over.

He had proceeded half-way down a steep, narrow hill in the lane. It was only a short

distance from the Priory ruins, and he remembered it well. There was a right-angle turn at the bottom—a very acute turn—with a rustic fence providing the only barrier between the road and a sheer drop into a kind of gully beyond.

Abruptly Waldo came to a halt.

He turned and stared up the hill. He



Waldo went down on his knees and gently examined the girl's ankle. It was already considerably swollen, and he saw her wince as he touched her. The sprain was obviously severe. Betty Barlowe would never be able to walk back to the Moor View School!

could have sworn that he had heard a sharp kind of cry—a human cry—above the blustering of the wind in the trees which bordered the roadside.

And now he heard something metallic—rather like the mudguard of a bicycle, loose in one of its stays.

"Oh! Oh!" came the voice again—and now much nearer.

It was the voice of a girl, and in the dim, vague light Waldo saw the girl hurtling down the hill towards him. She was on a bicycle, and it was quite evident that the machine was out of control!

CHAPTER 7.

Making Himself Useful

IT was time for instant action.

The girl, whoever she was, was evidently in acute danger. The lamp of her bicycle was out, the brakes were out of commission, and she was being carried down this steep hill at a tremendous speed.

At any second she might crash over, injuring herself gravely. And if she did not crash over, she would unquestionably go hurtling through that rustic fence at the bottom of the hill into the deep gully beyond—perhaps to her death.

There was no time for thinking what to do. Unless something was done within the space of five seconds, it would be too late. Here again, Waldo revealed that remarkable



presence of mind which was so characteristic of his father. He knew he was standing immediately beneath an overhanging tree branch. Out of the corner of his eye he could see the limb stretching right across the narrow lane.

And instead of rushing forward, vainly hoping that he might be able to stop the runaway bicycle, he leapt straight upwards, caught the limb overhead, and swung himself completely round.

In a flash his legs were hooked over the

branch, and he hung head downwards. At exactly the same moment the girl came shooting underneath him. The whole thing was performed like a piece of clock-work.

Waldo, upside down, hooked his arms under those of the girl as she swept beneath him. He tightened his grip, he clutched hard, and held fast. There came a terrific wrench, and only by exerting his full strength did he keep his position on the tree branch.

There was the sound of a splintering crash from the bottom of the hill and then—silence.

"It's all right," said Waldo smoothly. "Safe now."

Perhaps the girl was too terrified to make any coherent reply. At all events, she only panted heavily, and her distress was great.

"Look out!" said Waldo gently. "I've got to drop you, miss. It's the only way. You won't have to fall more than two or three feet. Ready?"

"Yes," came a faint whisper.

Waldo dropped her; she touched the ground, staggered, and a little gasping cry escaped her lips. In the meantime, Waldo had unhooked himself from the branch of the tree, and had dropped to the roadway with the lightness of a panther. He was just in time to catch the girl as she swayed over, limp and inert.

"Oh, my only hat!" muttered Waldo. "That's done it! She's fainted!"

He felt scared. He had not the faintest notion what to do now. It had been easy enough for him to save the girl from a serious accident, but when it came to reviving her from this faint, he was in a rare stew.

It seemed to him that water was necessary. So, carrying the girl with scarcely any effort, he walked down the hill, knowing that there was a little stream farther along. He noticed that the rustic fence was smashed. The bicycle, running on, had gone clean through it.

Waldo glanced down at the face of his unconscious companion, and although the night was gloomy, he could see that she had wavy

chestnut hair, neatly shingled. Her face was pretty, and her age was not more than fifteen.

"Thought so," murmured Waldo. "She's that new girl at the Moor View School."

He had recognised her as Betty Barlowe, and somehow he felt pleased that she was this girl, and not any other. He had only met her once before, and he had been rather attracted by her. Of course, he had seen her two or three times since, had raised his cap to her, and she had smiled back at him.

Now that he had been able to perform a service for her, he was inwardly pleased.

Just off the lane he saw a haystack in a meadow. He pushed through a gap in the hedge and gently laid the girl down with her back to the haystack, where there was good shelter from the keen, cold wind. A little stream ran close by. It did not take Waldo long to soak his handkerchief and return to the girl.

He sprinkled a little moisture into her face and dabbed her forehead, having a vague idea that this would be the right thing to do. It evidently was, for after a minute or so she stirred, groaned a little, and tried to open her eyes.

"Take it easy, Miss Betty," said Waldo gently. "There's no hurry."

He had completely forgotten his original intention now. He gave no thought to St. Frank's. He might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, anyhow; half an hour made practically no difference. It was his duty to look after this damsel in distress, and to see her safely on her way. He thought about leaving her there for a few minutes while he recovered the bicycle. But it was almost certain that the machine would be badly damaged; and if she recovered while he was away, she might be a bit scared.

He was rather disappointed because she had fainted. After all, she wasn't hurt. She must have fainted from the sheer shock of the affair. And Waldo had regarded her as a girl of stronger spirit. However, there was never any telling with girls.

"How's that?" asked the schoolboy, as he continued to dab her forehead. "Feel better now, eh?"

This time she opened her eyes wide. She gazed about her rather wildly, then suddenly it seemed she remembered. She looked straight at her companion, and the scared look died away out of her blue eyes.

"Oh! I didn't quite realise— Thank you ever so much for saving me— Oh, oh!"

In attempting to move she must have caused herself some pain, for she fairly gasped and her pretty face became drawn with agony.

"Nothing to be scared about," said the schoolboy. "I'm Waldo, of St. Frank's. I think we've met before, Miss Betty—"

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted the girl. "I knew who you were at once. Did—did I faint? How silly of me! It—it must have been the pain—"

"I didn't know you were hurt," said Waldo.

"It's my ankle, I think—my left ankle," she breathed. "When you dropped me to the ground I was all right, but my foot caught in a rut, and my ankle twisted right under. The agony was so dreadful that—that—"

"You fainted," said Waldo. "Oh, now I understand. I'm really awfully sorry; it was beastly careless of me."

"But it wasn't your fault!"

"I ought to have taken more care," said Waldo. "We'll have a look at that ankle in a minute. Don't worry about it for the time being; just sit there and get better."

He was sorry to hear about the sprained ankle; yet, at the same time, he was glad that his first impression about the girl was not wrong. She wasn't the type to faint from fright. She had certainly been upset by the narrowness of her escape, and that twisted ankle, coming on top of it, provided the finishing touch.

Waldo was tremendously curious to know the facts. Why was this Moor View School girl out riding at between ten-thirty and eleven on a machine which carried no lights and had inefficient brakes? If she had been coming from the other direction, he might have imagined that she was going on an urgent errand. But she had been coming from Edgemore, and had obviously been on her way to the school.

"How—how did you do it?" came a soft whisper—in a voice full of wonder and admiration.

"Eh?" said Waldo, with a start.

"I just caught a glimpse of you for a second, and I saw you leap upwards," murmured the girl, looking at him gratefully. "And then I felt you lift me clean off my machine. It was so quick that I couldn't believe it. I thought that I was going to crash right through that fence at the bottom of the hill, and I knew there was a big drop on the other side. Yet I couldn't swerve or fall off, or—or anything. It was awful! I know I should have gone over that little cliff!"

"Well, you didn't go over," said Waldo smoothly. "As for the rest, I spotted you coming down the hill, and I guessed that your brakes had gone wrong. So I hopped up into that tree, and caught you as you came under. It wasn't anything, Miss Betty."

"I think it was—wonderful!"

"I made a mess of it," growled Waldo. "Fancy dropping you like that and twisting your ankle! I want to have a look at that in a minute, if you don't mind."

"I think it will be all right soon," said the girl quickly. "Just a minute or two's rest, and I shall be able to walk. I say, how lucky it was for me that you were on this road!"

"If anybody's lucky, it's me," said Stanley firmly.

"It was all my own fault," continued

The POPULAR
Every Tuesday 2d



Edward Oswald Handforth undertakes to answer, in his own unique fashion, any question "N.L." readers care to submit to him. But, although of a certainty the results will be amusing and entertaining, the Editor takes no responsibility for their veracity. Write to Handforth, c/o the NELSON LEE LIBRARY, to-day.

"BURGLAR BILL" (Bolton) informs me that he's going to burgle Study D at St. Frank's, and he bets I don't capture him. What a hope—I mean, what a hope you've got of escaping! I shall be waiting for you with my rusty revolver and my peashooter. And I've got a copy of your fingerprints, too. I shouldn't advise you to write letters when you've got greasy paws next time. No, my lad. Keep away from St. Frank's if you want to retain your freedom.

"ELSIE" (Torquay) asks for a few particulars about myself. As my inquirer is a girl, I'll forsake my natural modesty and give her a few details. I'm as strong as a bull; I can run like a horse and swim like a fish. I've got eyes like a hawk, and ears like a dog. (By Jove! Do you call yourself a human being, Handy?—ED.)

"U. M. AIKMELE AFFE" (Carlisle).—What's the idea of giving yourself a name like that, you chump? You make *me* laugh. If you think that Gore-Pearce has got manly features—well, all I can say is that you'd better buy yourself another pair of eyes. Yes, Irene is a charming girl, isn't she? Don't you think we're well-matched?

E. E. W. (Battersea).—It's lucky for you that you didn't put your full name and address in your letter. If you had—well, Battersea Hospital would have had an extra patient by now.

JACK MUSGRAVE (Upper Norwood).—"How many miles an hour does the world go round, and how many eggs does an ant lay in an hour?" Sorry, but I'm not quite sure of the answers to those two posers. Regarding the first, I suggest—quite free—that you go up in an aeroplane and take with you a stop-watch. In reply to the second question, I think you'd better 'phone up Mrs. Ant and ask to be put through to "inquiries."

"LION" (London).—I thought your suggestion that I should write up my experiences in Arizona and have them published in the Old Paper an excellent one. Unfortunately, the Editor thought otherwise—of course, he would, the mouldy fathead! I fear you get sarcastic in your letter. I do not appreciate sarcasm. Your last question is dotty. How many beans make five? One less than six, of course! You can't catch me napping, you know!

EDWARD OSWALD.

Betty. "I'm afraid I'm awfully careless about my bike. I knew there was something wrong with the brake, but as it kept pulling up all right I didn't bother to adjust it. I thought it would be all right until tomorrow."

"When did the brake first start going wrong?"

"Well, it didn't go wrong at all—until I was nearly here," replied the girl. "I was in a terrible hurry to get home from Bannington, and as I came down one or two of the hills I heard a kind of clicking when I put on the brake. But it acted quite well, and I didn't want to stop on the dark road."

"What about the other brake?"

"I'm afraid the front brake has been pretty well useless for some weeks," confessed Betty. "I hardly ever used it."

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Waldo, looking at her rather wrathfully. "If that's not like a girl. You let the front brake go wonky, and when the back brake starts on the same game, you trust to luck—hoping that it will last out!"

"I'm awfully sorry!" said Betty contritely. "I ought to have seen to it—and in future I shan't be so careless. Everything went all right until I started coming down this hill. I knew it was a steep one, but as I was in a hurry, I pedalled rather too hard,

and then, when I put my brake on, something happened."

"It went bust?"

"I don't think it would have done, only I happened to hit a big rut at the same time," explained Betty. "My lamp was jerked out; there was an awful clatter from the back, and when I grabbed the brake-lever, nothing happened. I couldn't stop at all—and I went faster and faster and faster!"

"You would!" nodded the schoolboy.

"At first I thought of steering into the hedge, and then I remembered that the hedge was smothered with brambles," continued Betty. "Some of us had been black-berrying along this lane—and I knew how thorny these hedges were. But before I could make up my mind to do anything else I saw you, and—and— Well, you saved me!"

"Only to drop you so carelessly that you ricked your ankle!" said Waldo, in a self-accusing voice. "I hope you'll forgive me, Miss Betty."

"Don't be so silly," she replied, smiling. "How could you help it? You had to drop me—you couldn't hold me in the air like that indefinitely, could you? It was my silly fault for not being ready. If you don't mind, I think I'll be getting along now."

"I'll lend you a hand," said Waldo.

"No, really, it doesn't matter," she said, attempting to rise. "I think I shall be—"

O-o-oh! Crumbs! I—I can't use that ankle at all! Oh my hat, I believe I'm crooked!"

She fell back with a little gasp, and it was quite evident that she would do no walking that night!

CHAPTER 8.

The Knight-Errant!

WALDO felt quite annoyed.

"Don't you be so jolly independent, Miss Betty!" he said sternly. "You've hurt your ankle, and you've got to let me bandage it, or something. Now then—let's have a look!"

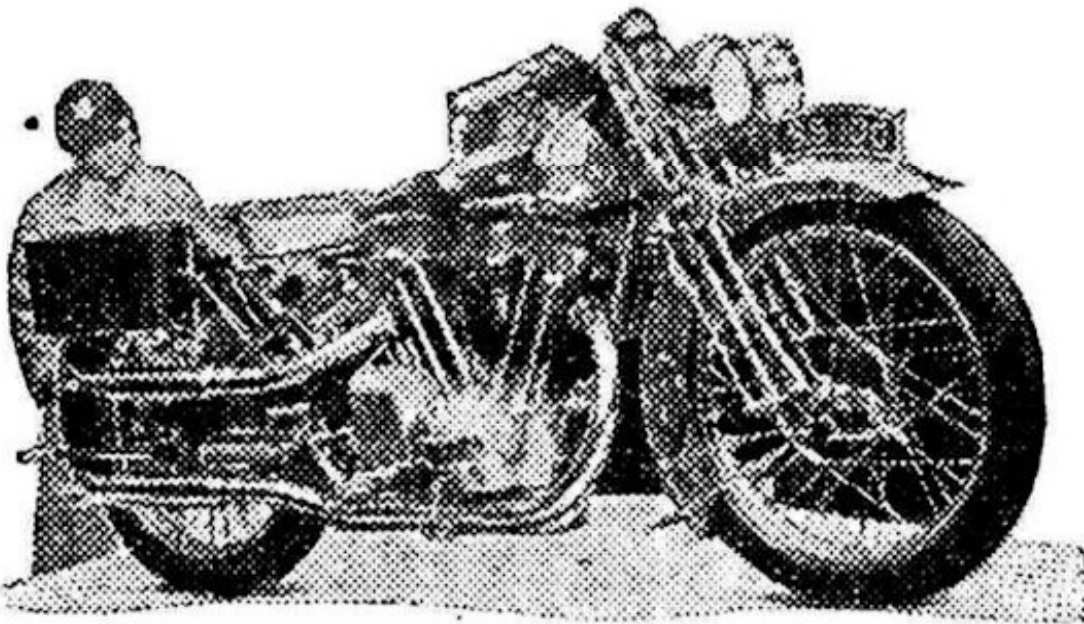
"I—I didn't quite realise it was so bad," she murmured, her face pale with agony.

He went down on his knees, and gently felt the ankle. It was already considerably swollen, and he saw the girl wince as he touched her. He was satisfied that no bone was broken. But, undoubtedly, the sprain was severe.

"Do you think you can take your stocking off?" he asked suddenly.

"Really, it's not necessary—"

"Off with it!" said Waldo gruffly. "I'm going to put a cold water bandage round that ankle. It's the only thing I can do in the cirs, but it's better than nothing. It'll help to reduce the inflammation."



SOME BIKE!

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He took his handkerchief and ran to the little stream. He soaked the handkerchief thoroughly, after folding it into a rough bandage. And when he got back he found that Betty had pulled her stocking well down—as he had anticipated.

"That's good!" he said briskly. "Now, hold still! It'll hurt a bit as I draw it tight but it'll soon be over."

She said nothing, but he noticed that she clenched her fists and set her teeth. He gently lifted her leg, applied the bandage, and pulled the stocking closely over it.

"That'll hold it in position, I think," he remarked. "You mustn't move for a bit, either."

"I—I don't know how I'm going to get home," she said in a worried voice.

"Don't bother about that now—you'll get home all right," Waldo replied.

She secured her stocking and then looked at him gratefully. She had taken rather a fancy to Stanley Waldo at their first meeting, and now she was quite sure that he was the nicest fellow in the whole of St. Frank's.

"I wonder how I can get back?" she whispered. "I'm dreadfully late already, and the other girls will be scared about me."

"Bother the other girls!" said Waldo. "And don't worry about getting along just yet. You must rest for a bit. If it doesn't sound too inquisitive, may I ask why you were flying along this lane, on a wonky bike, at this late hour of the evening?"

"I'm afraid I was breaking bounds," confessed the girl.

"Phew! Is it a habit of yours to break bounds like this?"

"No, of course not!" she said rather indignantly. "And if it comes to that, what were *you* doing here? You're supposed to be in bed by this time, aren't you?"

"Well, it wasn't exactly my own fault," said Waldo. "Some rotter bottled me up in one of the dungeons under the Priory ruins. It took me two or three hours to get out."

"Oh, what a beastly trick!" said Betty. "Do you mean that some of the boys put you there?"

"Not the boys," said Waldo. "A man—that fellow who escaped from the convict prison some little time ago. A rotter named Wilkes."

"I remember," said Betty. "There was quite a scare at the time. Everybody thought that he had escaped from the district."

"Well, he seems to be here still," said the junior. "I rather think he's got his knife into me, too. You see, it was my father who secured his conviction, and he has sworn to be revenged—or something dotty like that."

"How dreadful!" said Betty, looking at him with deep concern. "You might be in danger."

He laughed.

"Never mind me," he said easily. "I'm not scared of the brute. I got out of that dungeon, anyhow—and I'm glad, now, that he put me there."

"You're glad?"

"I'm glad because I was able to be in this lane at the right moment," explained Waldo.

"Oh, I see!" she said. "I don't know what I should have done if you hadn't been here. I think I should have hurt myself pretty badly. I know I was going clear over that cliff."

"We won't talk about it," said Waldo. "I want to know what you were doing, breaking bounds. Some of the Remove chaps have told me that you Moor View girls are



regular sports and that you get up to all the tricks. But I didn't think you were quite so reckless."

"We're not, as a rule," said the girl. "I was terribly silly to go to Bannington like that. The fact is, I went to the Palladium."

"The picture theatre?"

"Yes. And now I'm sorry I went," said Betty, the worried frown returning to her face. "Even if I do manage to get back to the school I might be spotted by Miss Bond or somebody. And it'll mean the sack, I'm afraid. It's a dreadfully serious thing!"

"There's no reason why Miss Bond should know anything about it," said Waldo calmly. "I'm going to see you home, Betty—and I don't think there'll be much difficulty."

"But I can't walk," she said, looking down at her ankle, "and it's about a mile to the school."

"I'm going to carry you," said the junior.

"Carry me?"

"Of course!"

"All the way?"

"All the way," smiled Waldo.

"I won't let you do it!" she said firmly.

"It—it wouldn't be fair! Besides, you couldn't do it. You couldn't carry me a mile like that!"

"Nothing easier!" said Stanley Waldo, with a chuckle. "I dare say you've heard that I'm a rummy sort of fellow. It's nothing for me to carry a light-weight like you. It'll be a pleasure, I can assure you!"

"It's—it's awfully decent of you, Waldo," said the girl softly. "I'm afraid I shall have to take advantage of your kindness. I'm sure I can't walk, and even if my bike was sound I couldn't ride it."

"Therefore, you're going to let me carry you," said Waldo crisply. "And the sooner

we start, the better. You've had quite a little rest, and so have I. Are you ready?"

"Yes, I think so," she said. "But it really is too bad——"

Now then—hold tight!" said Waldo. "I dare say it'll give you a twinge at first, but you'll soon get used to it."

He bent down, helped her to half-rise, and then he took her easily and lightly in his arms. She was only a slim girl, and her weight was practically nothing for him. Besides, he was so strong—phenomenally strong—that he carried her as though she were a mere child.

"Comfy?" he asked, when he reached the road.

"I think it's awfully good of you——"

"Ankle hurt much?"

"It aches a bit," said Betty. "You'll have to stop and rest every now and again. I can't quite understand it; you seem to be carrying me so easily."

He laughed, and strode on with just his ordinary step.

"What are you going to do about the ankle?" he asked. "I mean, how can you explain it to your Form-mistress—or Miss Bond?"

"I don't quite know," replied Betty. "I can't tell any fibs about it, of course. But there's really no reason why I should explain all the facts, is there? I could just say I sprained my ankle, and I don't suppose they'll press me to explain where and how."

"Of course not," said Waldo. "You might have done it on the stairs, or in falling over, or something like that. The main thing is for you to get indoors without being nabbed."

"Hadn't you better take a rest now?" asked the girl.

"I don't need a rest yet," replied Stanley Waldo. "Look here, Miss Betty, I want you to give me your word of honour that you won't say anything about this affair."

"But I must!" insisted Betty. "Irene and Doris and the others will question me, and it'll seem awfully funny if I don't explain——"

"You can tell your friends, if you like, but I mean I don't want you to say anything about me to your Form-mistress," explained Waldo. "There's just a chance that you might be twigged as you go in—accidents will always happen, you know—and I wouldn't like Miss Bond to know that I had helped you like this, and carried you home."

"Yes; she might tell your headmaster, and then you would get into trouble," said Betty.

"I didn't quite mean that."

"Oh, I see!" said the girl. "What you really meant was that it might be unpleasant for me if Miss Bond got to know about this."

"Well, you know what these headmistresses are," said Waldo vaguely. "If you are twigged, it would be better for you to say that your bike went wrong, that you ricked your ankle and that you were late in con-

sequence. That's all perfectly true—and it would be a good excuse. No need to mention me at all."

"Well, if you really think so——"

"I do," interrupted the schoolboy. "Will you promise?"

"Yes."

"Good," said Waldo. "Thanks, Miss Betty. I'll only make you give me that promise just in case. I don't suppose for a moment that anything will go wrong. Naturally, I shan't tell any of the fellows about this—they'd only chip me."

"Yes, I think you're right," said the girl slowly.

She again suggested that he should set her down and take a rest; but he laughed at the suggestion and walked on with as much ease as ever. There was really something wonderful about this junior. He was just like any of the other chaps—and yet, at the same time, he was so different. Even a burly fellow like Handforth could not have carried Betty so easily and effortlessly. He might have refused to take rest, but he would have been labouring under the weight of his burden. But Stanley Waldo clearly suffered absolutely no fatigue. It was not bravado on his part.

And so, at last, the Moor View School hove in sight.

"Now, which is the best way?" asked Waldo softly. "The main gates are closed, I suppose?"

"And locked, too," said Betty. "There's a little wall just on this side, and if you could lower me over it I might be able to hobble to the dormitory window. It's not far, and I expect the girls will be on the look-out for me."

"You're not going to do any hobbling while I'm here," replied Waldo. "I'll get you over the wall—and carry you to the window."

A moment later the low wall was reached. Waldo gently raised her up, and sat her on top of the wall.

"Don't move," he whispered. "Just stay there for a tick."

He vaulted over, reached up, took her in his arms again, and carried her cautiously and stealthily through the grounds towards the big bulk of the school wall, which loomed near.

"Which is the dormitory window?" he breathed.

Betty pointed.

"That's the one—up there," she whispered. "I don't know what I shall do if the other girls aren't awake. I can't climb up, and I daren't call to them."

"Let's hope for the best," murmured Waldo.

They arrived immediately beneath the window of the girls' dormitory; and there, to Waldo's satisfaction, was a strong rope. It was dangling down from that upper window, evidently in readiness.

He gave a gentle tug at the rope and it resisted. He tugged again. Two or three heads appeared over the window-sill above,



Betty grabbed at the dangling rope and, watching, Waldo saw her hoisted slowly up to the dormitory window; saw her dragged in to disappear from view. "Good egg!" he muttered contentedly.

and there were some low, startled ejaculations.

"That you, Betty?" came a soft call.

"Yes!" whispered Betty Barlowe.

"All serene!" came the voice of Irene Manners. "You boulder! We've had the wind up vertical about you! Where have you been all this time? Grab the rope, and we'll haul you up!"

"All right!" breathed Betty, turning to Waldo. "Good-night—and thanks *awfully* for all that you've done!"

"Good-night, Miss Betty—and thank *you* *awfully*," chuckled Waldo. "I'll pop round to-morrow to see how that ankle is. Cheerio!"

He slipped away into the bushes, and so silent were his movements that he was like a shadow. One or two of the girls above thought they saw a dim form moving away, but they certainly heard nothing. And they wondered if their imaginations had played them false.

Watching. Waldo saw the girl hoisted

slowly to the dormitory window; he saw her dragged in, and then the dormitory window was softly closed.

"Good egg!" he murmured contentedly.

CHAPTER 9.

Hard to Believe!

WHEN Waldo got to St. Frank's, the school clock was just chiming the hour of midnight. He grinned cheerfully as he slipped noiselessly into the West Square.

"The witching hour—and all's well!" he murmured. "At least, I hope that all's well. I've been expecting a master or two and a squadron of prefects to be waiting for me. But I expect they got fed up, and have gone to bed."

He knew that there must have been some concern over his absence. He had missed calling-over and supper, and it was certain

that the masters had made inquiries about him. However, it was no good worrying over these possibilities. The main thing was to get indoors, and to get to bed.

After his climb of the Priory tower it was nothing for him to skim up the Ancient House wall. There was ivy here to help, and within a few moments he was sitting on the window-sill of his dormitory. He pushed the window gently open and stepped in.

"Good!" he murmured. "They're asleep!"

He looked at Fullwood and Russell in the gloom, and they did not stir. He looked at his own bed—and started. Somebody was in it!

"Well, here's a nice snag!" he murmured, frowning.

He bent closer, and recognised the sleeping junior as Harry Gresham. Then it occurred to him that he must have made a mistake. These three juniors were Gresham and Duncan and Adams. He had got into the wrong dormitory. All the windows looked alike, and he had counted wrongly.

Well, it didn't matter. He was rather relieved. His own dormitory was next door.

He slipped out quietly, got into the passage, and suddenly came to a halt. Somebody was moving about.

In fact, he almost ran into three dim figures, and they halted and stared at him.

"Who's that?" came a startled whisper.

"Only me," said Waldo coolly. "Gore-Pearce, isn't it?"

Claude Gore-Pearce gave a little sigh of relief.

"You silly idiot!" he muttered. "You gave me a turn! Have you just come in?"

Gulliver and Bell breathed more freely now. They were all fully dressed, and were, in fact, about to steal off—on their nocturnal visit to the White Harp. Gore-Pearce wanted to collect his winning money, and Gulliver and Bell were going with him because there might be a chance of a "bit of sport."

They were relieved to hear Waldo's voice—to know that he had got back safe and sound. All their uneasiness concerning him was at an end.

"I'm not interested in what you fellows are doing out here, or where you are going," said Stanley Waldo, his voice curiously grim; "but before you go off I'd like a few words of explanation from you."

"What do you mean?" asked Gore-Pearce uneasily.

"You know what I mean," said Waldo. "You fooled me nicely, didn't you? Pretended to be so interested in me—wanted to be friends, and all that. And all the time you were only preparing that frame-up."

"Frame-up?" muttered Gore-Pearce. "I don't know what you mean!"

"Do you deny that that man Newton was in with you?"

"Well, I—I—"

"Don't try to invent any lies," said Waldo scornfully. "You tricked me into climbing that tower, knowing that Wilkes was at the top, ready to bludgeon me."

At this, Gore-Pearce & Co. fairly jumped. "Bludgeon you!" gasped Gulliver. "But—but we didn't know—"

"You're mad!" said Gore-Pearce. "We don't know anything about a man named Wilkes. By gad! Was there somebody waiting for you at the top of that tower?"

"There was," said Waldo. "A very pleasant gentleman with a club. He knocked me senseless, dragged me down to the dungeons, and locked me in one of them."

COMING NEXT WEEK!



"My only aunt!" breathed Bell, aghast.

"Are you trying to be funny?" snapped Gore-Pearce. "You can't spoof us with this idiotic yarn—"

"It's true—and you know it's true!" broke in Waldo angrily. "You're a set of confounded rogues to be mixed up in such a rotten business!"

Claude Gore-Pearce was struck by the new boy's tone.

"Look here, Waldo," he said earnestly. "You're all wrong! Hang it, I'll admit that I fooled you and the other chaps, but I didn't know anything about a man being on the top of that tower, ready to attack you!"

"You didn't know?"

"Of course I didn't! I wouldn't be a party to such a crooked dodge!"

"Then, why did you induce me to climb that tower?"

"To win a bet, of course," said Gore-Pearce.

"Oh, a bet!"

"That fellow, Newton, ridiculed the idea that you could climb the tower," said Gore-Pearce. "I bet him five pounds that you could do it—and he accepted. And as I rather wanted that liver I tried to wangle the thing."

"Oh!" said Waldo.

Light came to him in a flood. He was

"THE ARRESTED SCHOOLBOY!"

Thrown into prison!

Such is Stanley Waldo's alarming experience next week.

Of course, it's all Sam Wilkes' doing. The rascally convict has sworn to be revenged against the Remove, and this is his way of getting it—by making Waldo appear a thief!

Yet Wilkes hasn't taken into consideration that Waldo isn't an ordinary boy. Waldo simply escapes from prison—and then the fur begins to fly!

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relieved. Gore-Pearce and his pals were rascally enough, but they were not so crooked as Waldo had feared. They had been only interested in the bet.

But it was clear enough that Newton had engineered the whole thing. He had started the ball rolling with that bet, and the three schoolboys had tumbled headlong into the trap. Without knowing what they were doing, they had induced Waldo to climb that tower. Newton was the only one who had known what the result of that climb would be.

"You believe me, don't you?" asked Gore-Pearce.

"Yes," said Waldo. "Now that you've mentioned the five quid bet, I believe you.

Sorry I thought such rotten things about you, Gore-Pearce. All the same, I've a good mind to give you a thrashing. You're a fraud!"

"Cave!" came a hurried whisper from Gulliver.

A door had opened lower down the corridor, and the cads of Study A fled. They ran pell mell to the end of the corridor, turned the bend, and waited.

"What's all this jabbering out here?" came a well known voice.

"It's only that idiot, Handforth!" muttered Gore-Pearce. "Come on! We'd better get downstairs and slip out. If we don't, Handforth will kick up a dust, and some prefects might come."

"But will it be safe?" asked Gulliver nervously.

"If we don't get out now, we might not get out at all to-night," replied Gore-Pearce. "I mean to collect that money of mine."

WALDO found himself surrounded by Handforth and Church and McClure, and before they could say anything to him, Nipper and Travers and a few others arrived. Everybody had been more or less on the alert, and the voices in the corridor had aroused the juniors.

"So you've come back, have you?" said Handforth sternly.

Waldo was in no way perturbed. He was glad to know that Gore-Pearce & Co. had not actually plotted against him. They had gone now, and he was not interested in them any more.

"I suppose there's been a bit of trouble?" he said coolly. "I was half expecting to find some masters and prefects waiting for me."

"They gave you up," explained Nipper. "Thought you had gone off for the night somewhere, I expect. What's the idea of crawling in like this at midnight?"

"I was detained," said Waldo.

"Where—and how?" demanded Handforth.

"At the Priory ruins, in a dungeon."

"What on earth—"

"Somebody kindly knocked me on the head, made me unconscious for about an hour, and when I woke up I was in one of the Priory dungeons," explained Waldo. "Fortunately, I managed to get out—"

"Wait a minute!" interrupted Nipper. "Are you trying to pull our legs, Waldo?"

"Not at all."

"We know that you were at the Priory ruins, dear old fellow," said Travers. "Gore-Pearce told us all about that. He made a five quid bet with some sportsman that you couldn't climb the Priory tower."

"Well, I climbed it," said Waldo. "And when I got to the top, another sportsman sprang out on me and knocked me silly."

The listening juniors could be forgiven for being sceptical.

"This sounds a bit thick," said Handforth suspiciously. "I believe you're trying to spoof us, you bounder!"

"No, I'm not," said Young Waldo. "It was that brute, Wilkes, I believe—the man who escaped from the convict prison the other day."

"Oh!"

"He was lying in wait for me at the top of that tower," continued Waldo. "As I told you, he knocked me on the head, dragged me down the stairs, and shut me up in one of the old dungeons."

"He must have heard about that bet, and he saw an opportunity of attacking you," said Nipper. "But what was his idea, I wonder?"

"I don't know—unless he meant to leave me in the dungeon to die of starvation and thirst," said Waldo. "And that hardly seems probable."

"How did you get out?"

"I found a loose stone, and worked at it until I got it out," replied the new boy. "It was a long job, and at first I thought that I shouldn't succeed. But perseverance is a great thing."

"A loose stone?" said Nipper thoughtfully. "I explored those Priory dungeons once, and I remember that the walls are made of great slabs of rock."

"Yes, they're fairly big," said Waldo. "The one I got out weighed over a hundred-weight, I should think."

"Great Scott!"

"It was a long job, as I've told you," continued Waldo. "It wasn't until half-past ten that I got out—"

He paused, realising that he had been unwise, perhaps, in mentioning the time.

"Half-past ten?" repeated Nipper. "Did you get out of the dungeon at half-past ten?"

"Yes," replied Waldo.

There was no way of evading that question, and he really saw no reason why he should tell a deliberate lie.

"If you got out of the dungeon at half-past ten, why weren't you here sooner?" asked Nipper, wonderingly. "It's not more than ten minutes' walk to the Priory, and yet it's past midnight now. What the dickens have you been doing for the past hour and a half?"

Waldo thought of Betty Barlowe, and of the promise he had made.

"Oh, I was delayed a bit," he said vaguely. "Nothing much."

"Delayed where—at the Priory?"

"Not exactly."

"What do you mean, then?"

"Is this cross-examination necessary?" asked Waldo mildly.

"Well, you'll be required to give a full explanation to the Housemaster in the morning," said Church. "Mr. Lee was waiting up for you until nearly eleven, I think. If you had come straight home you would have

caught him before he went to bed. Why didn't you come? What kept you all this time?"

"Yes," said Handforth sternly. "Out with it, my son! What have you been doing?"

"I'm sorry, but I'd rather not say," said Waldo, realising that his attitude must seem strange to the others. "Please don't make a mystery out of nothing. There's not much in it, really. I was—well, I was delayed. That's all."

"Were you alone all the time?" demanded Handforth.

"If it's all the same to you, I'd rather not say," replied Waldo steadily.

"That means that you weren't alone," retorted Handforth. "By George! I didn't think that you were a fellow like that, Waldo. I didn't think you were the kind to go out on the razzle after lights-out! As for this yarn about being knocked on the head by somebody and shoved into a dungeon, you don't really expect us to believe that, do you?"

"You needn't believe it unless you like—but it happens to be true."

"I'll have a look at that dungeon to-morrow—to see what kind of a hole you made in the wall," said Handforth coldly.

Neither he nor the others could be blamed for suspecting Stanley Waldo. His refusal to give any account of his movements since half-past ten indicated that his story was faked up. It had seemed thin all along. It was impossible for him to produce anybody who could corroborate that yarn. And it really seemed that he had been doing something which he did not want the others to know about, which surely meant that it was something shady.

"I'm sorry," he said quietly. "I don't want you fellows to think that I've been on the tiles, or anything like that. I don't go in for pub-haunting or gambling."

"Then why don't you tell us what you've been doing since half-past ten—since you got out of that dungeon?" asked Church bluntly.

"If he wants to keep quiet about it, let him keep quiet," growled Handforth. "We don't want to be inquisitive, do we? We don't want to inquire into his beastly affairs! Blow him! Let's get back to bed!"

"Yes, I think we'd better go," said Nipper.

They went, after bidding Stanley Waldo rather a cold good-night. Their manner had become distant. His attitude had rather antagonised them.

So Waldo himself went to bed in an unhappy frame of mind. He had been getting on so well at St. Frank's that he felt that this shadow was the beginning of a trying period.

He dimly suspected that Sam Wilkes was plotting actively against him. That Priory affair had been a mere incident in it. What was the convict's real game?

CHAPTER 10.

A Surprise For Sam Wilkes!

CLAUDE GORE-PEARCE paused half-way down the lane to light a cigarette.

"Safe enough here," he remarked. "There's not a chance in a thousand that we shall meet anybody. What do you make of all that yarn that Waldo told us?" he added abruptly.

"Sounds fishy to me," said Gulliver.

"I believe he was just trying to put the wind up us," said Bell. "What rot! I mean, telling us that somebody coshed him on the head and threw him into one of the dungeons! Who the deuce would do a thing like that?"

They got to the White Harp without meeting anybody, and after they had tapped lightly upon the back door, it was opened for them by Mr. Porlock himself.

"Well, young gents, what's the idea of this?" asked the landlord, not entirely pleased. "There's no special party on to-night, you know. I'm just on the point of going to bed. We're all shut up."

"That's all right," said Gore-Pearce. "As long as we've found you up, Mr. Porlock, that's all that matters. I've come along to collect my winning money—and you hold the stakes."

"Oh, that money!" said Jonas Porlock, nodding. "I'd forgotten. That's right, Master Gore-Pearce. You won that bet, didn't you? Mr. Newton told me about it."

"Is he here?" asked Gore-Pearce.

"Yes—in the bar-parlour. You'd better come along in."

The three schoolboys were admitted, and they found Mr. Newton sitting in the bar-parlour, smoking and reading in front of the fire.

Yet, somehow, he was looking a bit anxious, and he did not seem at all pleased to see the St. Frank's boys.

"You can't stay long, you know," he said gruffly. "I'm just going to bed—and so is Mr. Porlock. It's a pity you didn't wait until to-morrow."

"It's awkward for us to come here ordinarily," explained Gore-Pearce. "You know what our masters are. We get into trouble if we're seen entering this place."

"Anybody might think it was a den of thieves!" said Mr. Porlock, with indignation. "It's a pity these schoolmasters can't be a bit more broadminded. Here's a respectable country inn—"

"Well, don't go off the deep end," interrupted Newton impatiently. "This boy won his bet, Porlock, and you hold the money. You'd better give it to him. When I lose a bet I pay up—and keep smiling."

"You don't seem very happy about it," remarked Gore-Pearce.

Newton only grunted. He was jumpy and nervous. He kept glancing towards the door, or the window, as though he expected something to happen. The coming of these three schoolboys had upset him.

He watched almost nervously as Mr. Porlock slowly produced the notes, and counted them over.

"Hurry up!" said Newton sharply. "Don't take all night, Porlock."

"What's biting you?" asked the landlord, staring.

"Nothing," grunted Newton. "But you told me you were going to bed—"

"So I am," said Porlock. "No need to get excited. Well, here's your money, young gent," he added, handing the ten pounds to Gore-Pearce. "Mr. Newton seems a bit touchy, so if I was you I'd clear off."

Gore-Pearce took the money, and pocketed it.

"Good!" he said with satisfaction. "We won't stay here if we're not wanted."

Newton went to the door with them.

"Everything all right up at St. Frank's?" he asked casually, as they were about to go.

"Yes, as far as I know," said Gore-Pearce.

"Everybody in bed and asleep, I suppose?"

"Yes, of course."

"Oh!" said Mr. Newton.

"That chap Waldo didn't turn up at bedtime," continued Gore-Pearce. "I believe the Housemaster waited up for him for a bit, but he went to bed in the end."

"So that Waldo kid didn't turn up?" asked Mr. Newton casually. "Well, it's none of my business."

But he could not hide the note of satisfaction from his voice. It was evident that his earlier inquiries had been just feelers. Yet he had not liked to mention Waldo's name, in case Gore-Pearce & Co. connected him with Waldo's disappearance.

"The chap didn't turn up until we were coming away," went on Gore-Pearce. "We ran into him in the passage—"

"He's turned up?" ejaculated Newton, utterly startled.

"Yes—just a minute or two after midnight."

"But—but how did he turn up?" demanded Newton sharply.

"He told some silly sort of yarn about the dungeons at the Priory," said Gulliver. "Said he had been imprisoned there by some rotter, after being knocked on the head."

"What nonsense!" said Mr. Newton, with a forced laugh.

"Well, it does seem a bit steep," agreed Gore-Pearce. "He said he had an awful job in escaping from the dungeon—"

"Escaping!" broke in Newton, more startled than ever. "Do you mean to say that he escaped?"

"Why, do you know anything about it?" asked Gore-Pearce, staring.

"No, of course not, but—but— What should I know?" demanded Newton harshly. "I've lost five quid on the kid already, and I'm sick of him! All right; you'd better be going. Good-night!"

He closed the door before they could make

any reply, and they looked at one another in astonishment as they heard the bolts being shot.

"Something rummy about that!" said Gore-Pearce, as they walked down the back path. "I believe that Waldo was knocked on the head and shoved in a dungeon. And Newton knew all about it, too! That's why he took us off so hurriedly in his car."

"I can't make head or tail of it," said Gulliver.

"If you ask me," said Bell, "there's something rotten about the whole business."

"Well, what does it matter to us?" said Gore-Pearce. "I've won the bet, and Waldo hasn't come to any harm. So why should we worry?"

JIM NEWTON paced up and down the bar-parlour with short, nervous strides.

"So the kid's escaped!" he muttered. "Gosh! He's as big a wonder as his father! Even Sam didn't expect anything like this. The whole game will be ruined!"

Porlock went to bed, and the rest of the household had long since retired. Newton was left alone in the bar-parlour, having promised to put the light out when he was ready. But apparently he wasn't ready just yet—and Mr. Porlock was perfectly willing to let him remain downstairs if he wanted to. He paid well, and so did Mr. Sam Wilkes.

The landlord understood that Mr. Wilkes had paid a flying visit to London, and that he was coming back on a late train—walking from Bannington. Newton had promised to wait up and let him in. Whether Mr. Porlock believed this story of a London trip did not matter. It wasn't his business, anyhow.

A tap sounded on the window of the bar-parlour and Jim Newton started. Then he hurried out of the passage and opened the back door.

"That you, Sam?" he asked hoarsely.

"Who else did you think it was?" retorted Sam Wilkes, as he came in. "Porlock in bed?"

"Yes."

"Best place," said Wilkes. "That fellow knows how to conduct this place, Jim. Isn't too curious?"

"Confound Porlock!" snapped Newton. "How did you get on?"

Sam Wilkes was looking flushed, and there

was an expression of gloating triumph in his eyes.

"First class," he replied. "One of the easiest jobs I've ever pulled off, Jim. I'll just have a drink and a smoke, and then I'll hop off to that old ruin and let that kid out."

"You'll waste your time," said Newton. "He's escaped!"

Wilkes' expression changed; he stared at the other with absolute consternation.

"Escaped!" he ejaculated. "How do you know? You're mad! He couldn't escape from that place! The door is a foot thick."

"I don't care how thick the door is—he escaped!" said Newton. "Those three kids have been down here again. They only left five minutes before you came here. They said that Waldo turned up about midnight."

"But—but it's impossible!" panted Wilkes. "I bolted him in— By thunder! He's as slippery as his father! They were never able to hold Waldo—and it seems that his son is just the same. It's uncanny!"

"Never mind about it being uncanny," said Newton. "How is it going to affect your plan?"

"Just at first I thought it would ruin it," said Wilkes. "But you say that he didn't turn up until midnight?"

"That's what the boys told me."

"Then it won't matter so much," replied the escaped convict, a gleam of cunning coming into his eyes. "If he had escaped earlier it would have made a big alteration. In fact, I couldn't have worked the thing at all—because he would have had an alibi. But as he didn't get back to the school until midnight, everything can go on as I've planned."

"It's a risky game, Sam——"

"Risky nothing!" interrupted Wilkes. "I'm going to have my revenge on that kid's father!" he added, with sudden vehemence. "Understand? I've got it all fixed!"

"Be careful that you ain't too clever, Sam," grunted Mr. Newton. "You might get yourself into a mess."

"There'll be no mess for me—but wait until to-morrow," said Wilkes exultantly. "That kid will find himself in a mess—and a big one, too! And it'll mean disgrace for that father of his! I tell you, Jim, it's an absolute cert! I've got that kid where I want him now!"

THE END.

EXCITING—THRILLING—DRAMATIC!

"The Arrested Schoolboy!"

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!

GOSSIP ABOUT ST. FRANK'S



Things Heard and Seen By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

WHAT about some more photographs? Don't forget that all readers who send me theirs get mine in return. And if those you send me are suitable for production, and are accompanied by your permission to publish them, they may appear in these columns sooner or later. It seems to me that the more photos of myself I send out, the better. At least, I hope the majority of readers don't think the same as Herbert Duffin, of Earlsfield, who wrote to me: "I am very pleased with your photograph. I had imagined that you were an old gentleman with crutches, so to speak." Well, I'm glad to say I haven't got to that stage yet. By the way, always bear in mind that I welcome letters from all our readers.

* * *

READERS who want to write to me, or send me their photographs, should address their letters: Edwy Searles Brooks, Editorial Office, "Nelson Lee Library," Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Don't make the mistake of thinking that this is my office. It's the Editor's. And he, being a kind gentleman, has promised to send all your letters on to me. I'm not there every day like he is. I've added this bit because so many readers *will* keep thinking I'm the Editor. I'm only the author of the St. Frank's stories. Don't blame me for anything else!

* * *

WHO says that a chap is too old to read the Old Paper after he gets to manhood? Our photograph this week is of Mr. Fred Oates, of Devonport, and he tells me that he will be twenty-seven in August. He doesn't intend giving up the St. Frank's yarns, and he is quite pleased to have his "dial" in the Old

Paper. I hope this will comfort some of the readers who kid themselves that it's beneath their dignity to read school stories after they reach the ripe age of seventeen or eighteen. It's not a question of dignity at all. There's no reason why school stories shouldn't be read by people of all ages. These yarns are especially written for boys, and if it comes to that, clockwork trains are especially made for boys. But just as fathers read the Old Paper, so do fathers play with their sons' clockwork trains—and take a gleeful delight in doing it, too. You ought to see me some times!

* * *

OUR READERS' PORTRAIT GALLERY



Fred Oates

ONE day last week I had to destroy a perfectly good plus-four suit. As it happened, I had been round the St. Frank's Golf Links with Mr. Pagett, and when I came back I happened to look into one of the Third Form studies. It wasn't Willy Handforth's, although he was there. Some of those young beggars of fags had manufactured an extraordinarily effective stink bomb. Willy had heard wind of it, and was trying to smother it before it went off. Willy is more in favour of a direct punch than that sort of

thing. Unfortunately the beastly thing let itself loose while I was in the study, and I don't remember much about getting out. But I do know that I was compelled to take an immediate bath and to borrow some clothes from the Head, and have my own togs destroyed. How the dickens these youngsters manufacture these bombs is a mystery to me. Never in my life have I smelt such an appalling odour. And that reminds me that Edward Wood, of Peterborough, has actually asked me how to make stink bombs! Even if I knew I wouldn't tell him. No, sir! In fact, after my experience of last week, I'm convinced that stink bombs should be banned!

BY the way, talking about Willy, I asked him how he managed to get hold of that mango I found him eating some weeks ago. J. Plowman, of Glasgow, tells me that the mango fruit has never been successfully imported to England, the fruit being rotten by the time it arrived. Not being a mango expert, I can't say whether this is accurate or not. All I know is that Willy assures me that he got the fruit from a ship's officer—in Swansea, I think, while the school was on tour. Perhaps this officer had a special way of his own for preserving the fruit, or perhaps he had a kind of forcing-house on board. Anyhow, the fruit was quite all right when I saw it. If that ship's officer really has discovered a method of bringing the mango to England in good shape he ought to make a fortune. But perhaps he couldn't ship them in quantities. The one he gave Willy may have been just an isolated case.

* * *

LESLIE A. THOMPSON, of Enfield, asks me if the fellows have any gymnastics at St. Frank's. Well, what's the gymnasium for? He wants to know who the gym master is. As a matter of fact, this gentleman's name is Mr. Arthur Blake, and he is a gymnast and athlete of remarkable distinction. Now I suppose I shall get heaps of letters asking me why on earth the gym master hasn't been referred to in the stories. In order to forestall such letters, I might as well say at once that nothing of any real interest has happened in the gym—nothing that I thought worth recording. Neither has Mr. Blake appeared in any incident which required me to mention his name. Sooner or later I expect he'll figure in the yarns—but only when necessary. In the old days the gym duties were superintended by Mr. Harold Clifford, the sports master. But Mr. Clifford left St. Frank's a good while ago, and some of the prefects, I think, took it in turns to shoulder his duties until the advent of Mr. Blake. While I'm on this subject I'd better state frankly that there are all sorts of people at St. Frank's—people who have been there for years, including heaps of boys—who have never even been mentioned. For example, there's Mrs. Carr, the matron of the West House, and Rodgers, the West House page-boy, and Mr. Simpson, the chemistry master, and Mr. Grayle, the maths expert. People like these aren't mentioned simply because there's hardly ever an occasion when they are connected with the events which I relate about the boys. There are lots of people at St. Frank's like this.

* * *

NOW I hope I shan't get requests from enthusiasts urging me to tell them the full and complete personnel of the school, including all these masters and prefects, and seniors and juniors, and

domestic servants and grooms, and chauffeurs and gardeners and porters, etc., etc., who live at St. Frank's, and have their daily round the same as everybody else. It would be altogether too much of a task for me to drag such people into the stories merely for the sake of mentioning them. But let me assure you they are there, and that St. Frank's is a really big school. How often have I mentioned Mrs. Hake, in the school shop? Yet on busy days Mrs. Hake has two assistants in her shop, serving as hard as they can go. I haven't mentioned the names of these assistants, because I don't even know them myself, and they certainly don't matter. But if Handforth, say, suddenly fell in love with a new assistant that Mrs. Hake might happen to get, she wouldn't be in the school ten minutes before her name would come out. Perhaps you readers don't know that Josh Cuttle is the *head* porter? He's always been referred to as the *porter*. Actually, he's got three men under him. I could go on like this for a long time, but I think it's time I changed the subject.

* * *

I UNDERSTAND that old Dorrie—in other words, Lord Dorrimore—is showing a big interest in speed cars. It's quite a fever nowadays. Having had a taste of speed in his powerful racing motor-boat, Dorrie now has some idea of going all out to break Major Segrave's Daytona Beach land speed record. This ought to please Thomas F. Rex, of Sydney, who even suggests that Dorrie might figure in a special speed car story. In any case, whether Dorrie goes in for it or not, the race couldn't come off until some time next year. Dorrie was a bit secretive about it when I spoke to him, but I'm pretty certain that he is spending many thousands of pounds on a specially designed car.

* * *

ANOTHER Australian reader, Peter H. Samsom, of Prospect, South Australia, asks me to mention the studies of a whole list of juniors, and he wants the Christian names of another list of juniors, too. He's not the only one, of course, who makes requests of this sort, and if I were to reply in full in these columns, they would be packed with nothing else but lists of names and studies. This is where the Questionnaire comes in. Everybody who wants to know the occupants of studies, and Christian names, and all sorts of general information about St. Frank's, need only study the Questionnaire, and all these details will be supplied. That's what the Questionnaire is for. It may be a few weeks before the certain information that any certain reader requires is given, but I am sure nobody will mind this.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

Here's Another Exciting Instalment of our Grand New Adventure Serial, Chums!

The ISLAND CASTAWAYS!

by ARTHUR S. HARDY



(Introduction on page 38.)

Tom's Dream!

"I EXPECT," said Eva as she looked at the name on the boat, "dad had Captain Stanton lower that boat to pick us up, and she must have drifted away in the fog and the storm."

"I expect that's it," said the boy, with a cheerfulness he did not feel; "and maybe the yacht is very near us now. We'll have to keep a sharper look-out than ever after this."

Inwardly he was alarmed. Ugly thoughts crowded into his mind. Supposing the yacht had been torn from her anchorage and wrecked upon a coral shore? Would not that account for the presence of the staved-in boat? He knew now why the yacht had not come to their rescue.

Something dreadful had happened. But even if the ship had foundered there were plenty of lifeboats besides this one they had found, and most if not all of the passengers and crew must have been saved.

All the same, it looked as if Eva and himself would have to stay upon their island indefinitely.

"Help me turn her over, Dave," said the

boy, and with Sellwood and Eva helping him he managed to right the boat.

She was partly filled with sand, and where she had lain they found a single oar which had been thrown up with her, while to Tom's delight her mast and sail were in her, safely housed.

"I say," he cried excitedly, "it ought not to be difficult to repair that hole; and if we can make the boat seaworthy we need not be tied to this island, Sellwood. We can go

cruising when the weather's favourable, and we need not wait for a steamer or a whaler to pass. We can go and find one."

But Sellwood showed no enthusiasm. Years of loneliness and self-communion had so dulled his

brain that he no longer craved the freedom he must once have longed for.

"We can make the boat good," was all he said.

They hauled it higher up the beach where the sea could never reach it, and, resolving to return to-morrow, made their way back home.

Often during the walk Eva looked at Tom. She knew there was something wrong, but she refused to harbour the disquieting

Happily, Tom Perry and Eva Hanway have settled down on the island upon which they were cast in such dramatic circumstances. And then, one day, a ship appears in sight, a mysterious-looking ship!

thoughts that flashed across her mind. When they were back at the hut she spoke to him.

"Tom, I believe you think the Esmeralda has gone down," she said.

"No," he protested vehemently. "I don't really, but she may have been damaged in that storm."

"The lifeboat could have got adrift without an accident," she said. "Captain Stanton would never be caught napping. I can't think any harm has come to the yacht, Tom. It's odd she has not turned up, but she'll come before long."

"I'm sure she will," said Tom, with a forced laugh. Then he left her and plunged among the trees.

He remembered again, apprehensively, that great burning light they had seen far, far away, which had grown brighter then faded, and which they had believed to be an aurora. That must surely have been the flickering glare from a burning ship. And might not that ship have been the yacht, Esmeralda?

Tom was stunned by the mere thought of such a tragedy. He would not mind staying on the coral island for a month or two, or even longer, for his own part; but there was Eva to think of. It would be no fun for a girl. She was cultured, too, used to every luxury. She had pluck, and might find it amusing while the novelty of their forlorn position lasted, but when that novelty wore off—what then?

Tom was determined that he would make seaworthy that small boat they had found as soon as possible, and when she was ready he would sail in search of aid.

As he wandered on with his head bowed in thought, he came to a rising slope from the top of which he was able to look over the sea, and the magnificence of the scene startled him.

A great bank of cloud of slatey-blue had rolled up from nowhere. And far away, near where the sun pierced through the horizon, the very ocean seemed on fire. The glare even at that great distance was almost blinding.

Tom fancied he could see the white sides of the Esmeralda amid the patch of burning gold, and she was blazing from stem to stern.

So vivid was the image he could see the flames leaping high above her smoke stack, dirtying the burnished copper, licking at the bridge and the look-out cabin. He fancied he could hear the sizzle of the burning enamel.

On the deck he could see Thornton Hanway coolly marshalling the guests and assuring them there was no danger. He could see the disciplined crew swinging out the boats and lowering them away.

Higher and higher roared the flames, sending millions of sparks afloat upon the trailing smoke.

He could see the men bending lustily to their oars as they pulled the boats to a safer distance from the sides of the doomed Esmeralda.

So real was the impression his mind had conjured up, Tom could feel beads of perspiration rolling down his cheeks. And yet he shivered. He closed his eyes and looked again, but still the impression held.

He found himself wondering in a dull kind of way why it was the seamen pulled so desperately, urging the lifeboats farther and farther away from the burning yacht at racing speed.

Then he remembered that the Esmeralda was oil driven, that she had stored in her thousands of gallons of fuel. And the fire was eating its way to the great oil-tanks.

And then—when it reached them—what?

He looked at the golden glory below the great black cloud, and as he looked the very sea and sky seemed to open and let forth one great blinding flash.

The oil tanks had blown up! The Esmeralda was no more.

Tom staggered a pace, went down upon a rock, and, burying his face in his hands, remained there motionless. The thing he had dreamed was not an idle fancy, he knew. He was certain, convinced beyond all doubting, that the yacht was lost!

THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

THORNTON HANWAY, American millionaire and business magnate, is the owner of the yacht *Esmeralda*, which is touring among a number of unknown islands in the Southern Pacific. He is accompanied by

EVA HANWAY, his pretty daughter, and her chum,

TOM PERRY, a plucky, adventure-loving English boy. Tom's father,

GEORGE PERRY, a lifelong friend of Hanway's, is also on board. At the moment there is great anxiety on the yacht owing to the pilot,

DANIEL KEMISH, having developed a sudden illness. In years past Dan and his partner, David Sellwood, had owned a small vessel, which traded in these parts. Dan had been the cause of Sellwood losing his life—or so he thought—and since then the former has never forgiven himself. Sailing these seas once more has brought back old memories, and this fact, combined with the heat, has turned his head. Tom and Eva decide to visit a nearby island, and they set off in a small motor-boat named the *Rosita*. Without warning a sea-fog suddenly descends over the sea, and the boy and girl are unable to find the yacht. Then comes a terrible storm. The motor-boat is swamped; Tom and Eva are plunged into the mountainous seas, and finally are cast upon an unknown island. Later, unknown to the two chums, Hanway's yacht is set on fire by Kemish. Meanwhile, Tom and Eva explore the island and find that it is inhabited by David Sellwood! One day the three castaways see a boat lying on the beach. On it is the name *Esmeralda*!

(Now read on.)

While Tom gazed out to sea, eagerly watching the progress of the approaching ship, David Sellwood set light to the beacon.

but she looked straight at him. "Dad and mother, they may be dead," she murmured brokenly; "but somehow I can't believe that they are."

He caught her hands and held them tightly.

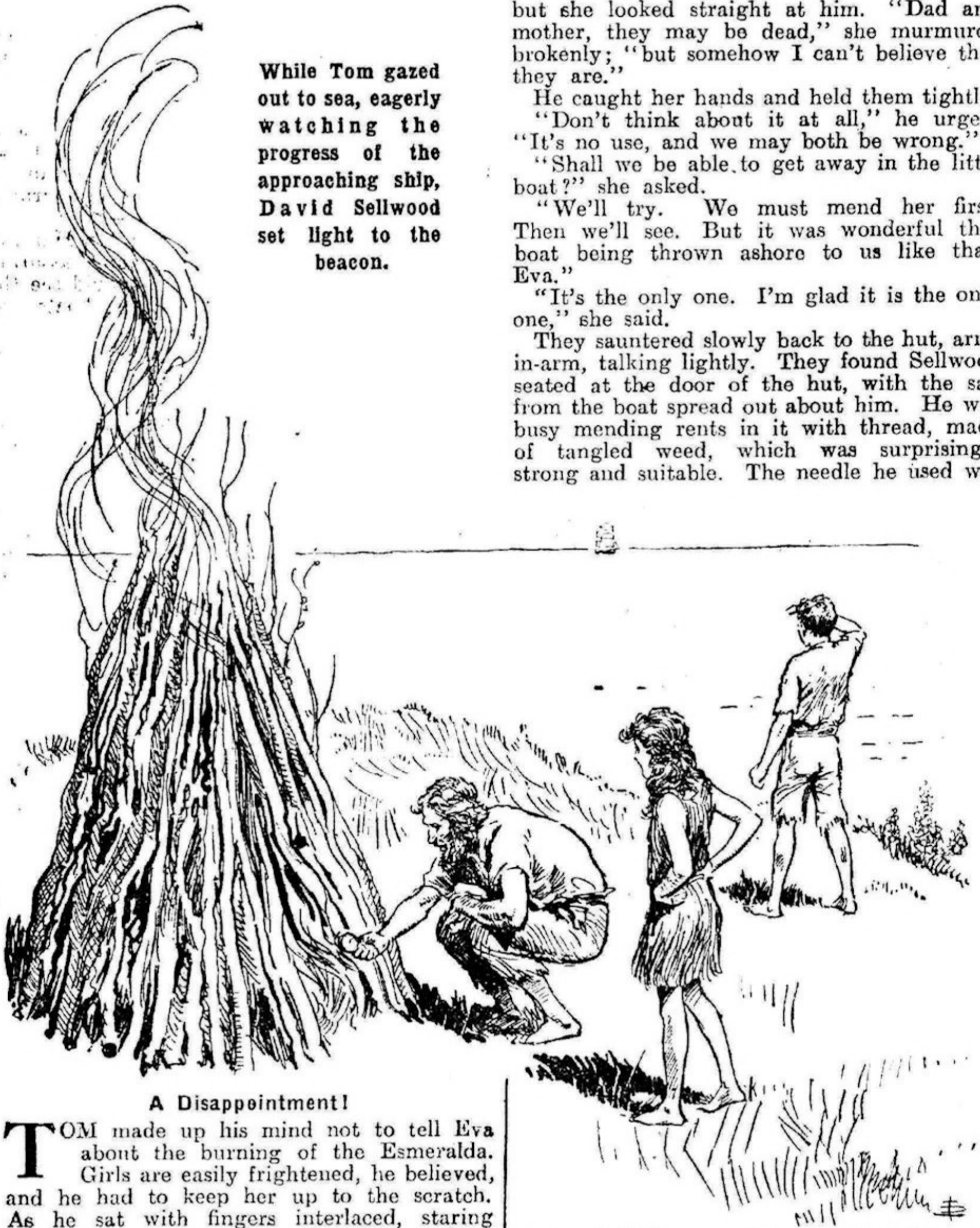
"Don't think about it at all," he urged. "It's no use, and we may both be wrong."

"Shall we be able to get away in the little boat?" she asked.

"We'll try. We must mend her first. Then we'll see. But it was wonderful that boat being thrown ashore to us like that, Eva."

"It's the only one. I'm glad it is the only one," she said.

They sauntered slowly back to the hut, arm-in-arm, talking lightly. They found Sellwood seated at the door of the hut, with the sail from the boat spread out about him. He was busy mending rents in it with thread, made of tangled weed, which was surprisingly strong and suitable. The needle he used was



A Disappointment!

TOM made up his mind not to tell Eva about the burning of the *Esmeralda*. Girls are easily frightened, he believed, and he had to keep her up to the scratch. As he sat with fingers interlaced, staring over the now sombre sea, he did not hear her light step behind him, and it was not until she touched his arm and slid on to the rock by his side that he knew she was there.

Something in his expression must have told the girl that all was not well.

"What is the matter, Tom?" she asked, trembling a little, while he marvelled at her intuition.

"Nothing," he answered, with assumed indifference; but she guessed, and her voice throbbed when she spoke again.

"Tom, the *Esmeralda* has gone down—that's what you think." Tears filled her eyes,

made of fishbone, and he handled this with amazing dexterity.

The mast lay beside him, and this he had trimmed with a sharp knife. David Sellwood, Tom had discovered, was an exceedingly capable man.

Early in the morning they all three went to where the boat was beached, and Sellwood set to work at once to patch it with wood, which he pegged into position.

The next day they launched the boat. The mast was stepped and the sail run up. The blue sea was heaving sluggishly, and there was just sufficient wind to fill the sail.

As they sat side by side, Sellwood took the tiller and steered, managing just as if he had sailed a boat only yesterday. Keeping within a hundred yards or so of the shore, they sailed with the wind behind them, the boat heeling slightly. Water began to seep in at the patch, and presently Tom and Eva were obliged to bail, but it only added to the fun.

The water gained very slowly through the leak, and gurgled up and down as the boat dipped her bows into the slight swell. There was no danger, for the boat could be run ashore at any time.

In between the bailing, Tom watched the gnarled and weatherbeaten face of the old sailor. In Sellwood's eyes a new light shone. The brain, sluggish for so long, was beginning to work actively. The lips, so tight set as a rule amid the ragged bush of hair that the man was forced to grow, curved a smile.

"I have never seen a light crazy boat with the petrol engine such as you talked about, lad," he said to Tom, "but I doubt if it could ever beat a sailing boat like this. She'd ride in any sea, and I'll caulk that leak with clay so's she'll be watertight. Miss, whenever you grow tired of our island, and the weather's favourable, I'll take you to another one. Maybe we could find one better and larger than this."

Eva's face brightened.

"I wish you would," she cried. "I suppose there are many islands near. We could sail from one to another, couldn't we?"

Tom knew that she was thinking about her father and mother, and all aboard the yacht. She was hoping that they might find some of them shipwrecked on one of the neighbouring islands. It was possible, too, providing they had not all perished in the explosion that had destroyed the Esmeralda.

He remembered when he had been on the hill-top with the girl, staring across the sea at that great, flickering glare. He remembered with a quiver of nerves how there had been a sudden flash before the light went out. His vivid dream last night had shown him the awful scene. The Esmeralda had blown up, and unless all aboard had taken to the boats before the oil tanks exploded, there would be no survivors.

He forced a cheery smile when he saw that the girl was looking at him curiously. He started telling Sellwood of the amazing things that were done on the earth, in the water, and in the air by the use of the petrol-driven engine.

They spent the whole of the day in making the circuit of the island, letting down the sail and riding easily on the rocking sea while they ate the bread and fruit they had brought with them, and drank fresh water from their bottles.

Sellwood timed their return so nicely that the starting point came into view perhaps an hour before sundown. They ran the boat in to the beach to see whether any other treasures had been thrown up by the sea, but met with disappointment.

Continuing their voyage with a freshening wind behind them, they ran the boat into the sheltered lagoon and drew her up high on the sand. Shouldering the mast and sail, and striding on with giant steps, Sellwood led the way back to the hut, where the three of them lazily finished the evening's meal just before the sun sank down and night came with a glory of stars and a gentle cooling breeze.

From that day Tom noticed a great change in David Sellwood. The man became communicative, more friendly, more human; he told them tales of his voyages in search of sperm whale which thrilled them. Then he went on to speak of Daniel Kemish, his old partner, and later, pilot aboard Thornton Hanway's ill-fated yacht.

"Dan was as grand a seaman as ever stepped aboard a whaler," he stated, "but that last voyage I took with him he would not leave the drink alone. And he sailed the ship till the end of her time, and steered her safe back into port with a cargo worth a fortune, you say? Well, well, Dan must have pulled himself together somehow."

Sellwood frowned down at the ground.

"And he paid off the crew and sold the ship?" he went on musingly. "I'm not surprised, for Dan was very fond of me." His blue-grey eyes, no longer dulled with illness, sought Tom's. "Dan came out as pilot aboard your yacht, young sir," he said, "to try and find me. I'm sure of it."

The days that followed that first sail in the boat remained wonderfully fine, and the three castaways found life on the island agreeable enough.

The change in Eva was marvellous. She would accompany Tom in their exploration rambles tirelessly. She could run like the wind and was never weary. Her hair grew long till it tumbled about her shoulders, and Tom often teased her about it, contrasting it with the Eton crop she had favoured at home. She did not mind.

Dave Sellwood had fashioned a mirror for her out of the lid of a biscuit-tin he had found on the shore, which he polished until she could see a somewhat distorted reflection in it; and then, of course, there was the lagoon, a natural looking-glass for her to peep into.

Sellwood cut her a comb out of a piece of solid wood with his precious knife, and made another coarser one for his own use. So he kept his hair and beard in order, abandoning his former and primitive method of burning the hair by fire.

And day by day the huge pile of wood that formed the beacon grew taller, broader. It was there for them to light whenever a ship appeared.

There was another change in Sellwood, too; he wanted to get back to civilisation.

The leak in the sailing boat was caulked so that no water filtered in. Then at last came a day with a favourable wind that would not only enable them to make a quick journey to the distant island, but should help

them on their return so that they could be back again by sundown if they so desired it.

At daybreak they carried the food and water they would need down to the lagoon, and pushed the boat into the turquoise waters. While Tom and Eva sat and watched, Sellwood took the oar and deftly worked the boat out to the bar of the coral reef and over it to the open sea.

There the boat caught the wind, and, running up the sail, Tom cleeted it home. Dipping into the swell and spurning foam from her stout nose, the boat sped onward. Magically the shore receded until Tom marvelled to think their island was so small. The coco-nut palms that fringed it were dwarfed to nothingness. Bonfire Hill, as Tom called the place where the huge beacon had been erected, peeped like a tiny cone above the trees, and of their wood pile they could see nothing at all.

All around them stretched the great blue ocean, and the island for which they were heading was hidden from view.

Smaller and smaller still their island grew, and at last they could make out a sweep of low-lying, shadowy grey land far ahead of them.

For an hour or more after they had sighted it, it looked the same. But soon they could make out a few details, and to their disappointment they saw it was a barren land. Not one tree was there. Though the coral mass rose steeply up in places, there was scarcely a sign of vegetation upon it, and the only living things there were the seabirds that fringed the shore in thousands.

It seemed almost a wise thing to turn back, but none of them liked making the long journey for nothing, and so they sailed the boat into a sheltered place and beached her there.

As they advanced birds rose screaming into the air and circled about them. There was sand in plenty upon the beach, and a deposit of earth that lay deep upon the coral base. Some day, Tom supposed, flowers and grass and trees would spring up until at last it would form such another paradise as their own island.

But, it was useless staying there. Their exploration discovered for them nothing worth while. Taking to the boat again, the three adventurers sailed round the shore and then started homeward. On the return journey David Sellwood steered another course. There was plenty of time, and besides, he vowed there would be little difficulty in steering the boat on a true course for home by the help of the moon and the stars.

"If you can see the pole star, boy," said the old sea captain enthusiastically, "you can steer a course anywhere."

All day long they sailed, and during the return journey sighted other islands to starboard. These islands were far away and of considerable size. They rose higher out of the ocean than the barren coral reef just visited by the three castaways, and they were covered with a luxuriant vegetation.

"They're more like what we want," said Sellwood. "We'll get along to them soon and explore. Maybe they'll prove worth a visit."

Before the boat had returned safely to the lagoon night came. Then the wind dropped, there being scarcely breeze enough to fill the sail. The swell died down. Soon they were sailing on an even keel beneath the star-spangled sky. Then the moon rose to flood sea and land with shimmering silver. About the boat flashed streaks of phosphorescence that lent to the scene a wonderful beauty.

The palms showed black against the silver sky, and as Sellwood sent the boat gliding lazily into the lagoon, the water lay around them like a sheet of burnished metal. The entrancing picture made amends for the disappointment of their voyage, and as they trailed their way along the footpath to the hut, their tired eyelids drooped heavily with sleep.

Tom had scarcely stretched his length upon the bed of grass he had made for himself than he was away in the land of forgetfulness.

"Look! There's a Ship!"

FOR days after their visit to the distant island it rained. That glorious tropical night was merely the precursor of a wet period which seemed as if it would never end. Day after day the sheeting rain confined the three castaways to the shelter of the hut, and only now and then did the sun peep out shamefacedly from the flying clouds.

David Sellwood relapsed into one of his moody brooding fits and hung about the hut listlessly.

Sometimes Tom and Eva would go out and face the rain, but they were soon driven to shelter again. Once they went down to the Point to find the breakers tumbling in a roar upon the strand. Debris was heaped up high above the previous water-line, but they did not examine it.

Seaward, the ocean was heaving in a great turmoil. But in the lagoon, when they went to it, the waters were calm. Their boat lay safely on the sand where they had left it, ready for a visit to one of the other islands the moment the storm weather dispersed.

One day, when the rain had abated for a spell, Tom and Eva climbed up to Bonfire Hill. Their wood pile stood just as it had been before the bad weather broke. Thrusting his hand into one of the draught holes they had made, and which was stuffed with shavings and dried grass, Tom found it tinder dry despite the rain. It needed but a touch of flame to set the great signal stack alight.

At last, as suddenly as the bad weather had come, a fine spell succeeded it, and the island took on an even more entrancing beauty.

The day after the rain ceased Tom, Eva, and Sellwood laid their plans. In the morning, should the weather prove fair and the

(Continued on page 44.)

HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM No. 113.

SECTION A	READER'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP. I desire to become enrolled as a Member of THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE, and to qualify for all such benefits and privileges as are offered to Members of the League. I hereby declare that I have introduced "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" and THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE to one new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. Will you, therefore, kindly forward me Certificate of Enrolment with the Membership Number assigned to me, and Membership Badge.
SECTION B	MEMBER'S APPLICATION FOR MEDAL AWARDS. I, Member No..... (give Membership No.), hereby declare that I have introduced one more new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. This makes me (state number of introductions up to date) introductions to my credit.
SECTION C	NEW READER'S DECLARATION. I hereby declare that I have been introduced by (give name of introducer) to this issue of "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY."
(FULL NAME).....	
(ADDRESS).....	
.....	

INSTRUCTIONS.

INSTRUCTIONS.—Reader Applying for Membership. Cut out TWO complete Application Forms from Two copies of this week's issue of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY. On one of the forms leave in Section A, crossing out Sections B and C. Then write clearly your full name and address at bottom of form. The second form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his name and address at bottom of form. Both forms are then pinned together, and sent to the Chief Officer, The St. Frank's League, c/o THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

Member Applying for Bronze Medal: It will be necessary for you to obtain six new readers for this award. For each new reader TWO complete forms, bearing the same number, are needed. On one of the forms fill in Section B, crossing out Sections A and C, and write your name and address at bottom of form. The other form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his

name and address at the bottom of the form. Now pin both forms together and send them to the Chief Officer, as above. One new reader will then be registered against your name, and when six new readers have been registered you will be sent the St. Frank's League bronze medal. There is nothing to prevent you from sending in forms for two or more new readers at once, providing that each pair of forms bears the same date and number.

Bronze medallists wishing to qualify for the silver medals can apply in the same way as for the bronze medal, filling in Section B. Every introduction they make will be credited to them, so that when they have secured the requisite number of readers they can exchange their bronze medal for a silver one.

These Application Forms can be posted for $\frac{1}{2}$ d., providing the envelope is not sealed and no letter is enclosed.

A FEW OF THE ADVANTAGES OF JOINING THE LEAGUE.

You can write to fellow members living at home or in the most distant outposts of the Empire.

You are offered free advice on choosing a trade or calling, and on emigration to the colonies and dependencies.

If you want to form a sports or social club, you can do so amongst local members of the League.

You are offered free hints on holidays, whether walking, hiking, or camping.

You can qualify for the various awards by promoting the growth of the League.

If you want help or information on any subject, you will find the Chief Officer ever ready to assist you.

NOTICE.

The St. Frank's League has now attained such proportions that we are compelled to discontinue the offer of gold medals in connection therewith. The silver and bronze medals will still be available, however, as heretofore, to those who qualify for them in accordance with the rules.

The ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE CORNER!



*The Chief Officer Chats
with his Chums.*

*Here's his address if you want to
write to him: The Chief Officer, The
Nelson Lee Library, Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

How to Keep Fit!

CYRIL UNDERWOOD, of Kettering, asks me for advice on this subject. And as it is likely to interest heaps of other readers, I propose to deal with it briefly in these columns this week.

The essential factor in keeping fit is exercise. But not too much, mind you. Over-exercise is perhaps even more harmful than too little, for it strains the constitution.

Take things gently and easily when you're first starting your course of training, gradually increasing the programme as you become hardened and fitter.

"Early to bed and early to rise." Make that your motto, and when you do rise devote a few minutes to breathing exercises. After this do a bit of bending and stretching, followed by more breathing exercises.

Then go for a brisk walk in the fresh early-morning air. Back to breakfast, feeling as hungry as a hunter, and then off to school or business.

Do this for a little while, and you'll soon be feeling as fit as the proverbial fiddle.

Skiping is an excellent exercise, which I strongly recommend; and how about going for a trot instead of a walk sometimes? Be sure to have a rub down when you return from a run, however. Failure to do this

might result in serious consequences. And don't forget to make a point of doing breathing exercises before and after every morning's training. This will improve the wind enormously.

Have any of you ever tried a fruit breakfast?

It's A1, and will do you a world of good. You don't want to mix the fruit, however; don't start with an apple, following up with an orange and a banana, and finishing with some grapes. Make a meal of one of those fruits only.

Pastries and anything "heavy" in the food line, of course, should be avoided by all would-be fit 'uns.

He Wants to be a Sailor!

THE minimum age for joining the Royal Navy is fifteen. This is in reply to W. E. Hall, of Folkestone. At present my correspondent is working on a farm, but this sort of work does not appeal to him. He wants to

join the Navy.

If my chum wants full particulars on this subject I should advise him to apply for the official handbook, "How to Join the Navy," which can be obtained from any post-office.

THE CHIEF OFFICER.

THIS WEEK'S WINNING LETTER

DEAR CHIEF OFFICER.—*It is indeed a great pleasure to write to you. I have only been a member of the St. Frank's League for about two months, but I think I am as keen a supporter as those who have belonged to it for years.*

In the short time of my membership I have persuaded one of my pals to join, and I'm going to try and get more to do the same; not for the medals awarded particularly, but because I feel it my duty to get them to read the finest book of its kind published, and to bring to their notice the splendid organisation which it runs.

The work which the League does all over the world is a great help to the boys of England, for not only does it enable them to correspond with members of other countries, but it helps them to learn about those countries.

The motto of the League is yet another credit to the paper.

Cheerio and good luck!

(Signed) EDWARD A. BLACKBURN (S.F.L. No. 9648).

(For this interesting letter, Edward A. Blackburn has been awarded a useful pocket wallet.)

All members of the St. Frank's League are invited to send to the Chief Officer letters of interest concerning the League. The most interesting will be published week by week, and the senders will receive pocket wallets or penknives. If you don't belong to the League, join immediately by filling in the form which appears on the opposite page.

"The Island Castaways!"

(Continued from page 41.)

wind be favourable, they would start upon their second voyage of discovery. In any event, they would not delay the adventure longer than was necessary.

Almost as soon as he was awake, and while Sellwood was preparing the breakfast—a task he had shouldered willingly—Tom climbed up to the top of the hill and looked across the ocean. And as Tom's eyes swept the sea, he saw, far away to the south, a sail. Breathlessly he watched it, blinking his eyes to make sure, and when he was satisfied he turned to the girl.

"Eva!" he cried. "Look! Look! There's a ship. I am sure it's a ship!"

She followed his pointing hand. Tom was right.

"It is a ship, and if it is coming this way we can signal to it by lighting the beacon fire!" she cried excitedly. "Tom, it will pick us up. Let us go down and tell Dave!"

They raced down the hill and along the winding footpath till they reached the hut. Dave was enthusiastic.

"Maybe it's all right, and we'll be rescued," he growled. "But there's time enough to think of it. Eat your breakfast. Even if the ship is coming this way, it will

take a long time to reach here on the slack o' wind and against the current. There's no need to worry."

After breakfast, in response to Tom's and Eva's urgings, Sellwood went with them to the hill-top. The sailing ship had come appreciably nearer. They could make out her sails, but she was still far away—and there was something queer in the way she sat deep down in the sea, as if she were laden to above the plimsoll mark.

Sellwood eyed her critically, and shook his head.

"There's something wrong with her," he cried. "Never seen a ship yaw so strangely when there's no need for it. There's something wrong, or else she's being badly handled."

"She's an old windjammer," added Sellwood, "but I don't know what she's doing here."

"Whatever she is," said Tom, "let us light the pile, Dave. She can take us in to the nearest port where there's a wireless station, and we'll soon be home again."

Sellwood pursed his lips, but said nothing. He had brought his burning-glass, as he called it, with him, and holding this so that it focused a spot of fire on the dry tinder, he soon had the flames roaring in the draught hole!

(Will the three castaways be rescued? Don't fail to read next week's thrilling statement of this grand serial, chums!)

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