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AND ST. FRANK'S MAGAZINE.

2D

"Help!
Help!" cried
the Fifth Former
frenziedly.
"Wallace is
dead!"

The
SCANDAL
at
ST. FRANK'S

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THE
GREEN TRIANGLES
PRISONER



Here, in this prison, a star was in sight! The darkness was confusing, and the first lucid thought that occurred to Lee was that his eyes had been tricked by the noxious fumes. (See **THE GREEN TRIANGLE'S PRISONER!**)



The autumn term at St. Frank's begins with this story which is the first of a powerful new series introducing many great changes at the Old School. Nelson Lee and Nipper are for the present figuring in some new stories of the Green Triangle, and their adventures will accordingly be described in a separate series of stories. Meanwhile, Reggie Pitt will skipper the Remove and edit the Mag., and Dr. Beverley Stokes will become

Housemaster in place of Nelson Lee. The story you are about to read will put to the test Pitt's powers of leadership, for St. Frank's is disgraced by a most unfortunate incident, and this being made public results in many indignant parents taking their sons away from the school. Matters become so serious that the Head fears he will have to close down St. Frank's. Pitt feels that it is time for him to act and to save the school from complete ruin.

THE EDITOR.

By E. SEARLES BROOKS.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAN IN THE TRAIN.

SORRY!" gasped Handforth breathlessly. He dashed towards the barrier at break-neck speed, leaving a perfectly inoffensive stranger sitting dazedly in the middle of the Victoria Station entrance.

And just as Handforth reached the barrier the gate closed with a clang. He pulled up short, breathing hard. The ticket-collector eyed him with a sort of cold, contemptuous glance.

"Too late!" he said briefly.

"Too late!" howled Handforth. "Open this gate, you fathead! Hi, guard, wait a minute! Don't go without me!"

The guard was in the act of waving his flag, and he didn't even pause. And Church and McClure, gazing out of a compart-

window near the end of the train, looked startled.

"I knew it!" groaned Church. "I told him not to go back for that silly magazine! Now he's lost the train!"

"Serves him right!" said McClure callously. "We shall have a bit of peace on the way down now."

But Edward Oswald Handforth, of the Remove Form at St. Frank's, was not the kind of fellow to be detained by mere gates. And even if he hadn't wanted to catch the train at all, he would have done so, just to throw this superior-looking collector into confusion.

"My hat!" panted Handforth grimly. "I'll show you!"

With one bound he was over the barrier. The ticket-collector lost his complacency, made one grab, and missed. Handforth streaked up the platform like a marathon runner.

"Stop that boy!" roared the collector grimly.

The train was moving, but Handforth was in no mood to hesitate at a trifle like that. Church and McClure had opened the door in readiness, and the next moment their leader came charging in head-first.

"Done it!" panted Handforth.

Crash! Slam!

Handforth went hurtling into the lap of a gentleman who was just in the act of opening a newspaper. At the same second the door slammed to, and a couple of porters outside made several choice remarks of a lurid nature.

Handforth sat up amid the ruins of the newspaper, and he grinned victoriously at his startled chums.

"There you are!" he panted. "They thought they could keep me out, but I beat the lot of 'em!"

He rose slowly to his feet, disentangling a few odds and ends of newspaper from his neck, and tossed them out of the window. He appeared sublimely unconscious of the fact that he was treating another's property with sheer contempt.

"That fathead of a ticket-collector tried to keep me back!" he snorted wrathfully. "But I soon showed him——"

"Boy!" thundered the owner of the newspaper.

"Hallo! Anything wrong?" asked Handforth, turning round. "Oh, sorry! I didn't see you, sir. What do you think of these rotters, trying to make me lose my train?"

The stranger glared.

"I know nothing of your troubles, young man!" he snapped. "Perhaps you realise that you have deliberately torn my newspaper to shreds and thrown it away?"

"Oh, was that your newspaper?" said Handforth. "That's queer! I thought it was Church's. It's all right, sir, you don't need to apologise."

"Apologise!" stormed the other. "Good heavens! Your insolence is absolutely appalling! I shall take very good care to report your conduct in the right quarter!"

Handforth sat down and gazed at the owner of the newspaper with interest. He wasn't very impressed. The gentleman was thin, weedy, sour-faced, and he wore enormously thick spectacles. A little wisp of hair had escaped out of his hat and trailed forlornly over his forehead.

Church and McClure were grinning. Now that Handforth was safely on board the train their worries ceased. It was the first day of the autumn term, and the famous chums of Study D were en route to the old school.

"Report me?" repeated Handforth, after the words had sunk fully in. "Report me? Who to?"

"To your headmaster, you infernal young rascal!" snapped the weedy one.

"Allow me to inform you, boy, that you are an impertinent young puppy! And if you dare to say another word to me I shall——"

"Half a minute, sir," interrupted Handforth grimly. "If I spoilt your old paper, I'm sorry. There's no need for you to get so jolly touchy. And what do you know about my headmaster, anyhow?"

"My name, young man, is Mr. Horace Pycraft," said the stranger coldly.

"My hat! You have my sympathy, sir."

"You will soon learn that this studied insolence will get you into serious trouble," continued Mr. Pycraft. "I have not the slightest doubt that you are all members of the Lower School at St. Frank's College?"

"That's right, sir—we are," said Church.

"Then it may interest you to know that I am on my way to St. Frank's College to take up my appointment as master of the Fourth Form!" exclaimed the weedy stranger, with a certain vicious relish. "Am I correct in assuming that you are Fourth Form boys yourselves?"

"We belong to the Remove, sir," said Church. "There isn't a Fourth Form at St. Frank's. I think you must have made a mistake——"

"Tush!" interrupted Mr. Pycraft excitedly. "Tush, sir! I shall be in complete charge of the Fourth Form in the Modern House——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth & Co. roared at this interesting piece of news.

"Are you daring to laugh at me, young man?" stormed Mr. Pycraft.

"Sorry, sir!" gasped McClure. "You've certainly made a mistake. There's no Fourth Form at St. Frank's, and there's no Modern House, either."

"Bah!" snarled Mr. Pycraft furiously.

The train stopped at Clapham Junction, and Mr. Pycraft made a hasty exit, only too glad to get away from these insolent young jackanapes. And Handforth & Co. enjoyed the joke tremendously.

CHAPTER II.

VERY FUNNY!



"BELLTON at last! thank goodness!" said Church fervently.

He and McClure had spent a stormy hour in the train. To begin with, Handforth had insisted upon reading a magazine which Church badly wanted. In the end the unfortunate periodical was torn in half. And if Church was the poorer by half a magazine, he was the richer by an ominously swelling ear.

McClure had escaped this ordeal, only to land himself in an entirely unnecessary

argument regarding wheat crops. Handforth had unluckily seen a field of wheat in the course of being gathered, and he had made caustic remarks concerning the crop.

No harm would have resulted if McClure had kept silent, but he happened to make an observation that clashed with his leader's view, and after the fight was over McClure felt somewhat exhausted.

"Good old Bellton!" cried Handforth, as he stepped out of the train. "By George! A bit different to the Sahara, my sons! Well I'm jiggered! There's nothing changed!"

"What do you expect, a new town hall, or something?" asked Church sarcastically.

"I expected to see some signs of progress," replied Handforth severely. "These English villages are dead. We go away for three months, and when we come back there isn't a sign of change. Even the porter's the same!" he added, bestowing a cold glance upon old Wiggins, a somewhat ancient relic who had probably been in Bellton ever since railways were thought of.

"Never mind Wiggins, and never mind the lack of progress!" exclaimed McClure. "My hat! It's good to be back! Somehow there's something about Bellton that looks peaceful and serene."

"You'll forget that feeling when we get into Study D," said Church ominously.

They passed out of the station, and Handforth sniffed.

"Not even a taxicab," he said. "The same old hack. It's about time this village woke up!"

Bellton was of the opinion that it had been awakened. Throughout the afternoon crowds of fellows had been arriving by every train, and the echoes of the old village had been thoroughly aroused.

They were further aroused when Handforth & Co. passed through. Edward Oswald could go nowhere without making himself heard. But the trio finally reached St. Frank's in safety, and they turned into the Triangle.

Groups of fellows were standing about, talking. Those who hadn't been away on the holiday tour were eagerly questioning those who had. Reginald Pitt and Jack Grey were talking with John Busterfield Boots.

"Hallo, you chaps!" said Handforth briskly. "Heard the latest, Buster? Pitt's going to be Remove skipper—"

"That's stale!" interrupted Boots.

"Of course, Nipper was mad to suggest such a thing, but it was no good my interfering," said Handforth tartly. "There's only one fellow for the captaincy, and that's me!"

"Poor old Handy!" said Buster. "Same delusions as ever!"

"Delusion!" roared Handforth. "Why, you—you—"

"Talking about delusions, we met a chap in the train who had one," said Church hastily. "We simply yelled, you know. A weedy bounder, with a soft look on his face. Said his name was Pycraft."

"Pycraft!" ejaculated Buster Boots, staring.

"Yes," grinned Handforth. "The dotty chump must have escaped from an asylum. He told us he was going to be master of the Fourth Form at St. Frank's."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Church and McClure.

"Where's the joke?" demanded Buster, staring harder than ever.

"And—and this chap said that he was going to be in the Modern House!" yelled Church. "The Modern House, mark you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth & Co. doubled themselves up, and after their merriment had exhausted itself they were rather surprised to see that the other fellows were taking no part in the enjoyment.

"I think," said Reggie Pitt, "that this matter needs adjusting. Did you, by any chance, cheek this interesting Mr. Pycraft?"

"Cheek him!" grinned Handforth. "I should say I did!"

"Poor chap!" said Boots in a hollow voice.

"I don't like to be the bearer of bad tidings, but Mr. Horace Pycraft is our new Form master," said Buster calmly. "It seems to me, my son, that you're in for a nice little swishing."

Handforth & Co. lost their grins.

"Your—your new Form-master?" stuttered Handforth. "What rot! You're in the Remove, the same as we are, and Mr. Crowell's our Form-master."

The chums of Study D were the centre of many pitying looks.

"My dear, painful fathead," said Reggie Pitt sadly. "You've been terribly misled. You've been laughing at a joke that isn't a joke at all. Mr. Pycraft was only telling you the truth!"

"The truth!" repeated Church. "But he told us that he was going to be master of the Fourth Form! There isn't a Fourth Form!"

"There wasn't, you mean," said Jack Grey.

"Wasn't!"

"In future the Remove is to be known as the Fourth," explained Pitt. "Personally, I rather like it—it sounds better. And there's no longer a College House at St. Frank's."

Handforth stared dazedly across the Triangle, as though he expected to see a blank space instead of the imposing, substantial College House. He always took things literally.

"You dotty ass!" he snorted. "It's still there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The building is still there, but it's now called the Modern House," explained Pitt cheerfully. "You see, we progress with the times. The Head has taken compassion on Mr. Crowell, and has carved up the Remove into two sections—to be henceforth known as the Ancient Fourth and the Modern Fourth."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth blankly.

CHAPTER III.

KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES.



THE news struck Handforth and Co. all of a heap.

"Then—then Mr. Pycraft is really coming to St. Frank's as a master!" gasped Church. "Oh, my goodness! We've put our foot in it properly! I suppose he's going to take charge of the Modern Fourth?"

"Your brain power, said Reggie, "is stupendous."

"What absolute rot!" snorted Handforth. "The Modern House! Whoever heard of such piffle! That old barn is the College House—and always will be! It's like the Head's nerve to change——"

"As a matter of fact, I expect the School Governors are responsible—so don't blame Dr. Stafford," interrupted Pitt. "And what about your desire to make progress? Here we are, moving with the times, and you're as Conservative as—as the average village shopkeeper."

"Good!" said Buster Boots heartily. "That's the stuff, Pitt! Why should we stand still? In these days we want to go right ahead! There's nothing like pep and ginger! Pushfulness—that's the order of the day——"

"I think Handy favours pushfulness," grinned Pitt, with a glance at Church's ear. "Oh, by the way, you chaps, ten Ancient House fellows have been shifted over into the College— Sorry! Over into the Modern House. In future, they'll be Modern Fourth-Formers."

Handforth looked utterly disgusted.

"Anything else?" he asked bitterly. "Have they messed about with the School in any other way? They'll be shifting the playing-fields next!"

Cecil De Valerle chuckled.

"Yes, there's something else," he grinned. "The Ancient House junior studies are still lettered, as usual, but in the Modern House, they've got numbers, instead."

"Horrible!" said Handforth sourly.

"My address, in future, is Study 6," said John Busterfield Boots briskly. "You can keep your silly old letters! Study 6 is a

lot better than Study V. Sounds more imposing!"

"It sounds rotten!" retorted Handforth. "As a matter of fact, I shan't stand it! I'm going straight to the Head——"

"I shouldn't be a bit surprised!" interrupted Church hastily. "Old Pycraft's just blown in, and he's already spotted us! I think we'd better gracefully fade away!"

And Handforth and Co. beat a hasty retreat. And Mr. Horace Pycraft swept across the Triangle, and made a bee-line for the Head's House. Judging by the glance he bestowed upon all and sundry, the new master had made up his mind to declare war from the very commencement.

"Help!" said Buster Boots. "Have we got to adopt that?"

"We thought old Crowell was a bit of a beast, and we've been congratulating ourselves on the change," said Bob Christine. "But this freak looks a regular corker!"

"You can't always judge by looks," said Reggie Pitt. "He'll probably turn out to be a decent old bird. And you mustn't judge by what happened to Handforth and Co. Handy would make an angel wild."

"Well, let's get indoors," said Jack Grey. "It'll be tea-time soon, and we've got to put our books straight, and all that."

They nodded to the Modern House fellows, and strolled into the Ancient House. During the summer holidays there had been a great many alterations and improvements, and the juniors had plenty to talk about.

Redecorations and repainting had been in progress—in spite of the fact that a good deal of this sort of work had been done only a few months earlier. St. Frank's, to tell the truth, was prospering, and the governing board was a go-ahead, enterprising body.

An excellent class-room had been provided in the Modern House—a big lecture-room which had fallen into disuse. It was now splendidly equipped, and would be presided over by Mr. Pycraft.

The new order of things met with popular approval. The College House boys themselves much preferred their House to be known as the Modern House. Not only did the name sound better, but it was in nice contrast to the Ancient House.

Furthermore, there was something attractive in the division of the Remove into the Ancient Fourth and the Modern Fourth. The Form had grown so large that Mr. Crowell was quite incapable of taking the whole class. Although divided, it would still be one.

In the Fourth-Form passage, in the Ancient House, Reggie Pitt and Jack Grey ran against two juniors who were hanging about the doorway of Study C. Sir Montie Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson were not looking exactly happy.

"Down in the dumps?" asked Pitt sympathetically.

"Oh, it's rotten!" growled Watson. "Montie and I will be like lost sheep without old Nipper. It's a beastly shame, his staying away this term—and perhaps for good!"

"It's a bit rough, I know, but what else could the poor chap do?" asked Reggie. "Mr. Nelson Lee's still missing, and that rotten Green Triangle gang is getting up to mischief. Nipper couldn't come back here if he tried! He's in London—working might and main to find his guv'nor."

"Fathead! Hasn't Nipper left?" asked Edward Oswald. "And wasn't he skipper? And isn't the Remove without a captain?"

"Another delusion!" said Pitt sadly. "The Remove isn't skipperless, because I happen to be the captain of the Lower School. And you know it as well, you boulder—because you were present when Nipper asked me to take on the job!"

"That's nothing!" said Handforth loftily. "You can't fool me like that! I've finally made up my mind to become captain!"

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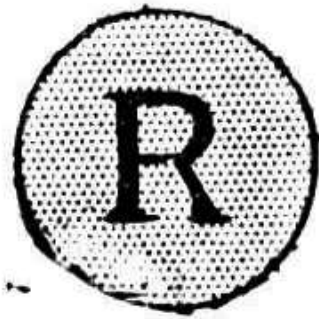
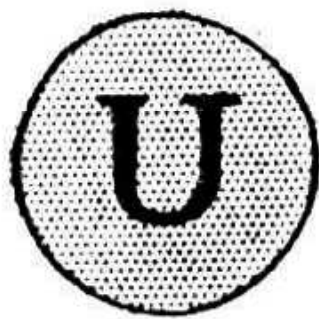
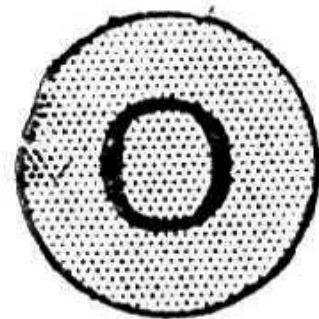
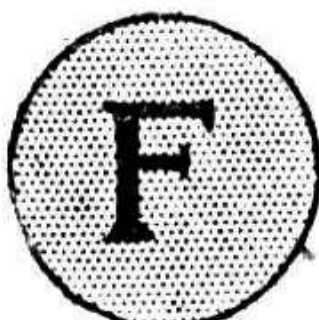
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The two forlorn juniors nodded.

"Dear old boy, you're right—you are, really!" remarked Sir Montie. "But at the same time, it's shockin'ly frightful. Of course, we shall get over it in time, but it's hard to begin with. I dare say there are worse troubles at sea, begad!"

"Just a minute—I want a word with you!" said Handforth, charging out of Study D, next door.

"What about this election for the captaincy? Church and McClure are going to nominate me as a candidate—"

"Which election?" asked Pitt innocently.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE STRICT Q.T.



REGINALD PITT patted Handforth softly on the back.

"You can't help it, old son—and I feel deeply for you!" he said, in a sorrowing voice. "But why do you get these visions? You'll be saying that you want to edit the Mag. next!"

"Idiot! I'm the Editor already!" snapped Handforth. "I appointed myself Editor yesterday—before we even left home!"

Pitt shook his head, and walked on. And Handforth was allowed to indulge himself in his little fancies. He was a good sort—one of the best—but he always suffered from a strange and weird hallucination that he was fitted for the post of junior captain. But as nobody else thought so, and as Handy was never taken seriously, it didn't matter much.

"Hallo! Still the same old firebrand?" asked somebody.

Handforth turned round, and found himself staring at Fullwood and Co., of Study A. The nuts of the Ancient House were dressed even more dandified than ever, and they were all in good humour.

"Hallo, Fullwood!" growled Handforth. "Haven't seen you for months! And you other chaps, either," he added, nodding to Gulliver and Bell. "I'll bet you've been up to some nice tricks during the holidays."

Ralph Leslie Fullwood nodded.

"You bet we have," he agreed calmly. "What's the good of holidays if a fellow can't have a good old roaring time? Things'll be as tame as milk at St. Frank's here by comparison. But there's one improvement this term."

"What's that?" asked Church.

"That blessed prig of a Nipper ain't here," replied Fullwood unpleasantly. "Thank goodness, he's gone back to his confounded gutter business—Hi! What the——"

"I'm going to punch your head, you insulting rotter!" roared Handforth, clenching his fists. "Nipper's one of the best! Every decent chap is sorry that he's left! And if you say a word against him again, I'll smash you!"

"Hear, hear!" said Dr. Beverley Stokes, turning the passage corner. "I agree with the sentiment, but I greatly deplore the show of violence," went on Dr. Stokes genially. "Fullwood, if you say such things about Nipper in my hearing again, I shall be compelled to swish you somewhat heftily. You young snob! It's a pity you don't take Nipper as a pattern! One of the best and truest boys we ever had in this school."

"Hear, hear, sir!" agreed Church. "And the best junior skipper!"

"Yes—but give your friend Reggie a chance," smiled Dr. Stokes. "Between you and me, old chap, I've got an idea that Reggie will surprise the natives. In other words, if he doesn't prove to be a better captain than Nipper I'll cheerfully boil my best Sunday hat, and make my dinner of it!"

"Better, sir?" asked Handforth, staring.

"Better!" repeated Dr. Stokes firmly. "And I'll tell you why. Pitt combines Nipper's fine leading qualities with a really human sense of humour. And that'll help him enormously. For example, Reggie will grin with real appreciation when you suggest becoming captain in his place."

"Yes, sir!" said Handforth feebly.

"However, time will show," said the Housemaster of the Ancient House. "I'm here instead of Mr. Nelson Lee, and I hope you fellows will pull together, and give me a good trial. There's no reason why we shouldn't work together nicely, and make things run on oiled wheels."

"Rather, sir!" said the juniors heartily.

"Oh, and there's just another point I want to mention," added the Housemaster. "Last term I was temporary Head. But Dr. Stafford is back now, and you'll do me a favour by calling me 'Mister.' I don't like to make a song of my degree now. Rather embarrassing for the Head—understand? You don't mind, old sons, do you?"

"Of course not—er—Mr. Stokes," said Church.

"Good lad! Go up one!" grinned Barry Stokes. "That's the stuff to give them!"

"How's Mrs. Stokes, sir?" asked Handforth politely.

"Topping!" replied Mr. Stokes. "Absolutely topping! She's completely recovered from her illness during the summer, and—Well, you can see her for yourselves if you care to drop in to tea. As many as you like—everybody's welcome!"

"Thanks awfully, sir—but—but—the first day, you know——"

"Quite right, Handy—I forgot!" said the Housemaster cheerfully. "You like to have a bit of a spree on the first day, don't you. All right—to-morrow! See you later."

And Mr. Stokes strolled off with a genial nod.

"My hat! He's a good sort!" said Handforth enthusiastically. "Come to think of it, I believe we shall be better off with old Stokes here, instead of Mr. Lee. Mr. Lee was a fine sort, but Stokes is an absolute ripper! He's just like one of ourselves!"

"Yes—until he catches a chap on the hop!" sneered Fullwood. "And then he's as harsh as any other beast of a master."

Handforth nodded.

"You ought to know!" he said tartly.

Fullwood turned on his heel, and walked out, Gulliver and Bell accompanying him. And just beyond the steps of the Ancient House they encountered Grayson, of the Modern House.

"Just the fellows I was looking for," said the Fifth-Former. "How much money have you got?"

"What's that to do with you?" asked Fullwood unpleasantly.

"Oh, well, if you're going to be bad-tempered, you can jolly well go and eat coke!" said Grayson. "As a matter of fact, I was going to invite you chaps to a very special spree to-night."

"A spree?" repeated Fullwood, with sudden interest.

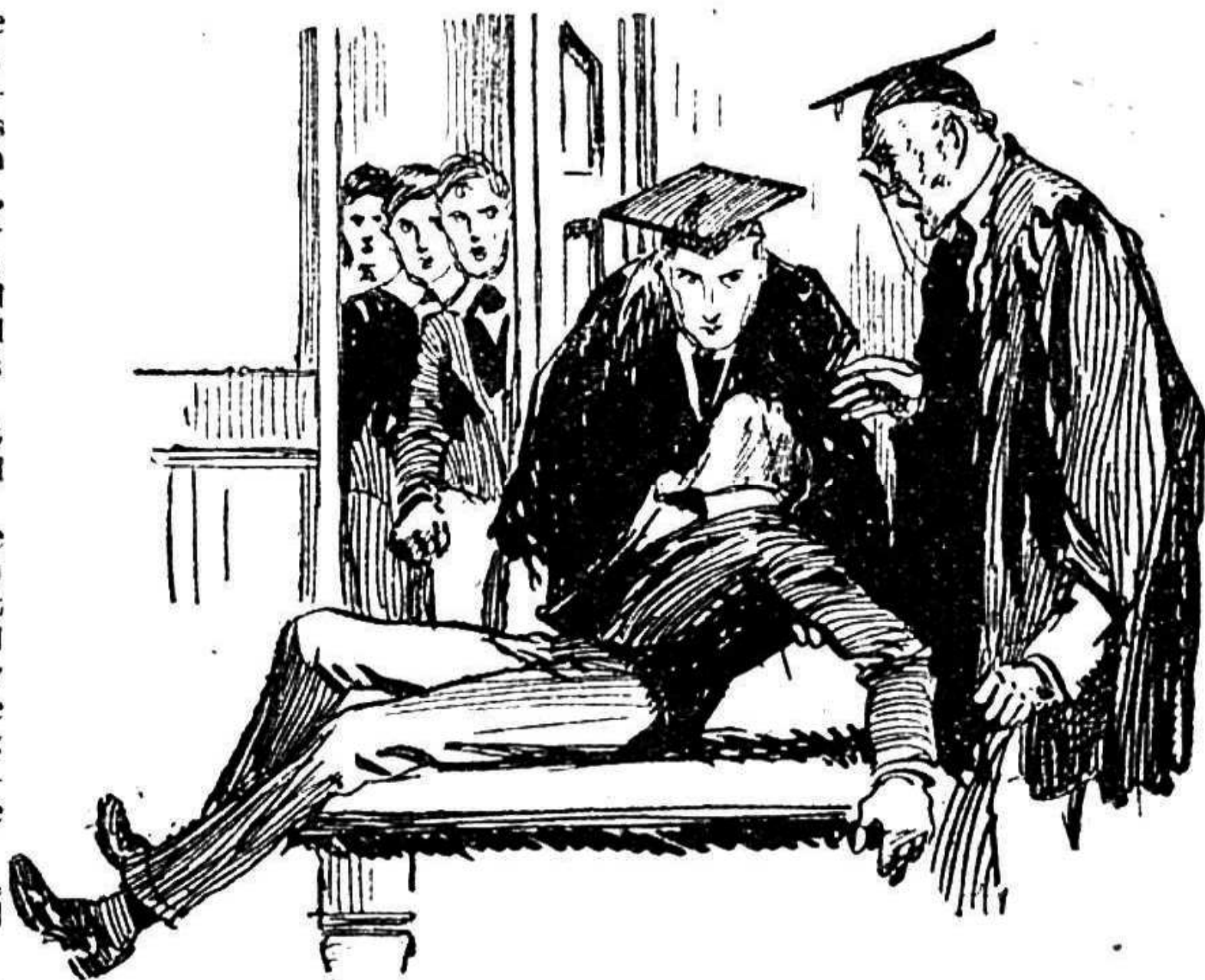
"Not so loud! We don't want everybody to hear," muttered Grayson. "It's Kenmore's idea—a celebration party, after lights-out, to wind up the holidays. Only a select crowd, you know, and each chap is expected to contribute towards the exes."

"Oh, well, I don't mind," said Fullwood obligingly.

"Mind!" snorted the Fifth-Former. "You young rotter, you ought to be jolly well honoured! It was my idea to invite you three—and I had to talk Kenny over. Champagne, you know!" he added, in a whisper "Champagne, smoking, card-playing, and all the rest!"

Fullwood and Co. became very eager.

"Good!" said Ralph Leslie enthusiastically. "You can count us in!"



"I think the boy's dead, sir," said the Housemaster quietly.

CHAPTER V.

THE CELEBRATION PARTY.



ST. FRANK'S was hardly a haven of peace and quietness.

It was bed-time in the Junior School, and the dormitories were fairly throbbing with noise; and even the

Fifth-Formers were devoid of their customary reserve and dignity.

For it was the first night of term, and in both Houses at St. Frank's the fellows were allowed free rein. All sorts of extraordinary noises could go on on this particular night, and nobody in authority would take any notice.

Masters and prefects became discreetly deaf, and long after lights-out the sounds could continue without any fear of interruption. Even so, it was necessary to keep within the limit.

On the following night, of course, everything would be strict and formal. So the fellows generally let themselves go, only too pleased to take advantage of the unwonted laxity.

And it was this very laxity, in fact, which had prompted Simon Kenmore, of the Sixth, to moot the idea of a celebration party. As he pointed out to his special cronies, they could make as much noise as they liked, and smoke and drink to their hearts' content, and nobody would dream of interfering.

Fullwood and Co. learnt that the party was to be held in a big room on the top floor, where there were no sleeping quarters of any kind. Thus, the party would have the whole landing to itself, and it wouldn't even be necessary to set a watch.

The time fixed for the commencement was ten-thirty, and the young "sportsmen" of the Fourth were rather annoyed to find that half the Form was still awake at this hour.

But even the most talkative fellows were beginning to yawn. And Handforth himself had nearly exhausted his famous vocabulary. It had been a strenuous, tiring day, and the influence of bed made itself felt.

One by one, the juniors dropped off to sleep. But it wasn't until eleven o'clock that the last one yawned and settled himself under the bedclothes. And five minutes later the dormitory slept.

That is, with the exception of Fullwood and Gulliver and Bell. These three juniors were very wideawake indeed, and they were intensely impatient to join the big party—which had now been going on for over half an hour.

The nuts of Study A had contributed three pounds between them towards the expenses of the champagne party, and they were fully determined to have their money's worth.

"Thank goodness!" breathed Fullwood, as he slipped out of bed. "Never knew such a crowd of talkative rotters! You chaps ready?"

"Give us a chance!" protested Bell. "I haven't got one sock on yet!"

But in less than five minutes the trio were prepared—not fully dressed, but quite sufficient for the occasion. There would be no formalities at a party such as they were attending.

They noiselessly left the dormitory and tiptoed their way along the corridor, past the Fifth-Form dormitory. Voices and laughter from within informed them that the Fifth was still wakeful.

But they met with no misadventure, and finally arrived on the upper landing. A chink of warm, welcome light from beneath a closed door cheered them up. And they could hear subdued voices, the chink of glasses, and even the rattle of money.

"Sounds good, doesn't it?" whispered Gulliver eagerly.

The chums of Study A had not improved, apparently, during the holidays. On the very first night of term they were only too ready to plunge full tilt into their old games.

They tapped on the door, and it was opened after a short delay by Grayson of the Fifth. Grayson was looking very flushed.

"Oh, so you've come!" he said, with a kind of leer. "Young asses! I thought you'd forgotten us!"

"Those fools in our dormitory wouldn't go to sleep!" said Fullwood.

"All right—come in!"

Grayson held the door open, and Fullwood and Co. entered. The room was close and stuffy, and reeking with cigarette smoke. There were some temporary tables, and these were set out with a bewildering assortment of cold foods, and an imposing array of champagne and spirit bottles. Several of the seniors were already playing cards.

"By gad!" said Fullwood, staring. "This is what I call a party!"

Kenmore, of the Sixth, looked round.

"You kids had better go easy on the champagne!" he said curtly. "And don't touch the whisky at all—"

"Rats!" interrupted Fullwood. "We've paid our whack, and we're going to have our share! We ain't juniors and seniors now, Kenmore. This is a spree, and we're all equals!"

"Cheeky young cub!" said Kenmore wrathfully.

But the rest of the party grinned, and accepted Fullwood and Co. without question. The usual crowd was there—Grayson, Shaw, Parkin, Wallace, and a few other seniors. These fellows represented the "fast set" of St. Frank's, and they were, of course, an extreme minority.

But to look at this scene one might imagine that the famous public school was a very hotbed of iniquity. And even for the fast set itself, this orgy was far and away more wild than any other.

By the time Fullwood and Co. arrived, the majority of the roysterers had been imbibing freely, and now they were excited, noisy, and

highly flushed. Fullwood and his chums lost no time in sampling the drinks.

And the effect of the champagne was soon obvious. Unaccustomed to such heady beverage, the juniors soon became animated. They demanded to be admitted into one of the games.

"Clear off, you bally juniors!" said Wallace thickly. "If you come interfering here, I'll chuck one of these bottles at you!"

"Steady, old man!" said Shaw nervously.

Wallace was a weedy, pale-faced Fifth-Former, and at present he was looking far from his usual self. The wine had gone badly to his head, it seemed, for his face was flushed to an alarming extent.

"Don't interfere with me!" he shouted. "I know what I'm doing—I'm not drunk! And I won't have these infernal kids—Leave that money alone, Grayson, you thief!"

Grayson, leaning over the table to pick up one of his own notes, turned a furious face towards the senior.

"It's my own money, you confounded fool!" he shouted.

"It isn't—you're a thief!" raved Wallace wildly.

CHAPTER VI.

TRAGEDY!



SIMON KENMORE grasped Wallace by the shoulder and swung him round.

"Listen to me, you drunken idiot!" he hissed. "If you can't keep your voice quiet, you'll get pitched out!"

Understand? Pitched out! Can't you stop this insane babbling, you fool?"

Wallace waved his hands wildly.

"Grayson's stolen my money!" he screamed. "I won't stand it, I tell you! I won't stand it! I'm not going to be robbed—"

"Hold him!" gasped Kenmore breathlessly.

The madly excited Fifth-Former had gone into a kind of frenzy. His face went nearly purple, and it took four seniors to hold him down. Left alone, he would have aroused the whole Ancient House.

"By gad! He's gone off his head, or something!" panted Grayson.

"No, he hasn't; he's had too much champagne!" snarled Kenmore. "And a few more of you will be like this if you don't ease up! It's a pity you haven't got more sense."

"Hallo! He's gone limp!" said Shaw suddenly.

"About time, too!"

Kenmore glared down at the Fifth-Former. Wallace had relaxed, and he was flopping back in his chair in a loose, unnatural attitude. The other revellers stood staring at him rather blankly.

Wallace fell half out his chair to the floor.

"He's fainted!" muttered Parkin shakily. "I say, this is a bit rotten! The confounded fool has swooned! What the deuce are we to do?"

"Bring him round, of course!" snapped Kenmore, who was about the only fellow who kept his head. "I've never seen such a crowd of frightened babies in all my life! There's nothing to be afraid of—he's only fainted. I don't wonder at it, either, after that frenzy!"

"I say, it was awful!" muttered Gulliver. "Did you see his face? It went nearly black! And his eyes——"

"Shut up, confound you!" snarled Fullwood.

He didn't like to be reminded of that vision. Wallace's face had, indeed, been awful a moment prior to his collapse. And now there was something rather terrifying in his utter limpness.

"Come on—don't stand looking on!" said Kenmore sharply. "Lend a hand, here! We'll lift him up and revive him. Get some water, somebody!"

"We haven't got any water!" bleated Bell.

"There's a tap, isn't there?" snarled Kenmore.

Bell hurried out in a shaky condition, but he was in hardly a worse condition than the others, for they were all alarmed. Even Kenmore, the coolest of the lot, only kept himself sober with an effort.

"We'll pull him up in the chair—that's the way!" he exclaimed. "Gently, now! Yes, he's gone right off—as clean as a whistle! Why doesn't that young idiot hurry up with the water?"

"Couldn't we try some whisky?" ventured Parkin.

"The fool's had too much already!" replied Kenmore curtly. "It's water he wants—and plenty of air. This room's like a curing factory! You can't see a yard for fumes!"

But nobody opened the window—all were too anxious. The party was forgotten, the card-table was deserted. The sudden collapse of Wallace had brought the boisterous celebration to an end. And even those fellows who were badly under the influence of drink became sober.

"I say, look at his face!" muttered Shaw. "It's white now—horribly white! I—I believe—— And look at his eyes too——"

"Can't you keep quiet?" panted Kenmore.

"They're glassy!" said Shaw with a shudder. "And his face has gone as white as wax! He hasn't fainted at all—he's dead!"

Crash!

"Take that, you mad blockhead!" hissed Kenmore, catching Shaw a vicious blow across the cheek. "Haven't you got more sense than to say fool things like that? The chap's only fainted——"

"Here's the water!" put in Fullwood quickly.

"And time, too! Bring it here—hurry up!" ordered Kenmore, his voice shaking and trembling with anxiety. "Splash some over his face—no, you dolt! Not like that! Half a pint of it!"

Bell was so nervous that he nearly spilt all the water on the floor. But a good deal of it went on Wallace's face. The unfortunate junior was pulled up, but his head lolled over to one side in a horrifying manner.

"I tell you he's dead!" screamed Shaw wildly.

And this time Kenmore took no notice. Instead, he seized Wallace in his arms and laid him full length on the table, sending glasses and money and crockery sweeping to the floor. Kenmore's face had gone as pale as chalk, and he was shaking from head to foot.

"Now then—some of that water!" he muttered. "We'll pour some down his throat. And some of you others rub his wrists. Go on—don't be scared! He'll soon come round!"

Grayson took hold of one of Wallace's wrists, and then let it go abruptly.

"He's dead! I can feel it!" he shrieked. "Oh, this is awful! Fetch the doctor, somebody——"

"Hold on!" gasped Fullwood. "Don't go out, yelling like that—you'll rouse the house! And that'll mean the sack for the lot of us!"

"Good heavens!" muttered Simon Kenmore faintly.

His hand was over Wallace's heart, and there was not the faintest sign of a beat. And small wonder. For, in all truth, the unfortunate Fifth-Former was actually a corpse!

CHAPTER VII.

THE ALARM IN THE NIGHT.



"WHAT—what's the matter?" asked Parkin with a gulp.

"He's dead—no question of it!" breathed Kenmore.

"Look at his eyes! They're all glassy and staring——"

"Didn't I tell you so?" shouted Shaw, his voice rising shrilly. "I knew it five minutes ago! Help! Help!"

He ran madly to the door and wrenched it open.

"Stop that lunatic, some of you!" yelled Kenmore.

But Shaw was already flying across the landing, and Grayson was close at his heels. Gulliver and Bell fled, too—every bit as panic-stricken as the two Fifth-Formers.

Shaw, in advance, literally fell down the

stairs from top to bottom. He picked himself up, bruised and battered, but even more terrified than before.

"Help!" he screamed. "Help! Help!"

His voice rang through the Ancient House in the most alarming way, and the panic-stricken shouts of Gulliver and Bell only added to the effect. Shaw staggered along the corridor, and ran into the arms of Mr. Stokes.

"What on earth——" began the Housemaster.

"Quick, sir!" sobbed Shaw. "Wallace is dead!"

"What's that?" exclaimed Mr. Stokes sharply, grasping the boy by the shoulders and shaking him. "Good heavens! Pull yourself together, Shaw! And what are you doing in this House, anyhow? You don't belong here——"

"Wallace is dead, sir!" hissed Shaw feebly. "He's up there, in the attic, as white as a waxwork, with staring eyes—all glassy and——"

"Stop!" commanded Mr. Stokes sternly. "If you go on like that, young man, you'll frighten yourself——"

"What is this commotion?" demanded Dr. Stafford, hurrying upon the scene in his dressing-gown. "What is the matter here, Mr. Stokes? And these boys——"

"There's a chap upstairs, sir—dead!" shouted Gulliver. "He had a fit, or something, and suddenly collapsed. Quick—fetch the doctor!"

Complete confusion reigned for a few moments. And Dr. Stafford and Mr. Stokes were not the only newcomers on the scene. A number of Fourth-Formers had crowded out of their dormitory, and were huddled up in the passage, looking on with staring eyes. Reginald Pitt came pushing through.

"Anything we can do, sir?" he asked briskly.

But nobody took any notice of him. Indeed, his question wasn't even heard. Dr. Stafford and Mr. Stokes and the others were hurrying up to the next floor, and they were all so startled that nobody thought of forbidding the crowd to follow. Even two or three members of the domestic staff had appeared, and were looking on, nervous and frightened.

Dr. Stafford strode into the room of death with a firm stride. But he checked suddenly, an exclamation on his lips. And just behind him was Mr. Beverley Stokes, as grim as the Head himself.

"Upon my soul!" muttered Dr. Stafford faintly.

He was utterly taken aback. Never before had he seen such a spectacle of unlicensed revelling in his school. The hot, fume-filled atmosphere, the champagne bottles, the glasses, the cards and the piles of money, the dishevelled, wild appearance of the roysterers themselves, all these

things impressed themselves on Dr. Stafford's mind with stunning force.

But hardly had he grasped the picture when he caught sight of Wallace on the table, in an attitude that was grimly suggestive of death.

"Good heavens!" muttered Dr. Stafford.

He crossed to the side of the body and bent down. Mr. Stokes had accompanied him, and together they examined Wallace. And when they looked up they were both pale and shaken.

"I think the boy's dead, sir," said the Housemaster quietly.

"This is appalling," exclaimed Dr. Stafford, controlling his voice with difficulty. "Will you go downstairs, Mr. Stokes, and ring up the doctor? His number is Bannington 63. Urge him to get here at the earliest possible moment."

Mr. Stokes hurried off.

Everybody else in the room remained still—completely sober now. Even Grayson and Shaw had come back, feeling more confident in the Head's presence. Somehow, they completely failed to realise the gravity of their own position. Their only thoughts were connected with Wallace.

"Every boy here will go to his room at once!" said Dr. Stafford harshly. "No, Kenmore, I shall hear nothing now. I have seen quite enough to convince me that this boy's tragic condition is not wholly accidental."

"But—but we want to know if he'll live, sir," panted Kenmore.

"You will know to-morrow," replied the Head coldly. "I need hardly tell you that a most rigid inquiry will be made into this appalling orgy. Go!"

The late revellers were only too glad to get out of that room, and they descended the stairs, to be pressed for information by the crowds who hung about in the lower corridor.

Mr. Stokes returned with the information that Dr. Brent was hurrying to the school in his car, and would arrive within ten minutes. And the local practitioner was as good as his word.

He was admitted by Mr. Crowell, for practically everybody in the Ancient House was now wide awake, and the story had flown round like lightning. Even the College House—or, rather, the Modern House—was beginning to seethe. For somebody had carried the news over the Triangle.

Dr. Brett's examination was quite brief.

He looked up from the body of Wallace with a grave expression.

"I am sorry, Dr. Stafford, but I can do nothing for this lad," he said quietly.

"He is dead?" asked the Head, with compressed lips.

"Quite dead!" said the medical man.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MORNING AFTER.



SLEEP was hardly thought of for the rest of that night. Even during the small hours crowds of fellows sat in the various dormitories discussing the horrible affair with bated breath.

In the Fourth Form dormitory, Fullwood and Co. were questioned until they were sullen with impatience. And their tempers were in no way improved when the Fourth passed a vote of censure on their behaviour and threatened to send them to Coventry.

"You were willin' enough to question us, but now that we've told you everythin' you turn on us like this!" snapped Fullwood angrily.

"Don't you deserve to be turned on?" demanded Armstrong. "You cad! You and your rotten pals are responsible for Wallace's death—"

"It's no good going on like that, Armstrong," interrupted Pitt. "We don't know how Wallace died, and it isn't fair to blame Fullwood and Co. until all the facts are available."

But Fullwood and Co. were blamed, nevertheless.

It was very much the same in the Fifth Form dormitory. Grayson and Shaw were pestered with inquiries. Wallace had gained a fame after death that he had never approached while living.

He had been an insignificant sort of fellow—a kind of permanent invalid, more or less, with always something the matter with him. During the winter terms, he had frequently spent weeks on end in the sanatorium.

And he had been inclined to associate with the worst section in the school, being, in fact, a mean, contemptible rotter himself. Wallace had always gained nothing but contempt for himself by reason of his petty spite, his unutterable meanness, and his habit of sneaking. Among all the decent fellows he had had not a single friend.

But now that he was dead, there were no harsh things said about him. His dramatic decease certainly caused no pain to anybody. There were no chums who sorrowed for him. His exit from all earthly things was simply regarded as a sensational piece of excitement.

And the next morning, when everybody came downstairs at the usual hour, most faces were showing signs of a sleepless night. And, needless to say, there was only one topic of conversation from the tiniest fag to the most lordly Sixth-Former.

And everybody was in a state of uncertainty.

"The question is, what killed him?"

asked Jack Grey. "He couldn't possibly have died through drinking champagne or whisky."

"Of course not," said Pitt. "But I have no doubt that the drink helped to a certain extent. Still, all that will be thrashed out at the inquest."

"Inquest!" exclaimed De Valerie, with a start.

"Of course—there's bound to be an inquest," replied Reggie. "When somebody dies suddenly, or accidentally, an inquiry has got to be held. That's the law. And everything is made public, too."

"Phew!" whistled Somerton. "That's a bit steep! I thought we'd be able to keep this affair hushed up. Just think of the harm it'll do to the good name of St. Frank's."

"I know that—but it can't be helped," said Pitt.

"How absolutely, frightfully shocking!" observed Archie Glenthorne. "What I mean is, how dashed near the edge. This story, whizzed back and forth from mouth to mouth, and all that sort of thing, will absolutely go broadcast through the land! I'm afraid the good old populace will obtain a somewhat hectic view of St. Frank's, what?"

Reginald Pitt scratched his head.

"We can't do anything, of course," he declared. "If we attempt to hush things up, people will only look at us with suspicion. When it comes to an affair like this, the only thing is to tell the plain, bold truth. And we're not to blame, are we?"

"Yes, but the chaps who are ought to be sacked!" said Handforth indignantly. "The rotters! The miserable cads! Getting up this beastly drinking orgy, and causing Wallace's death! Every one of 'em ought to be cleared out."

"Hear, hear!"

"Including Fullwood and Co.!" roared Handforth.

"We couldn't help it, could we?" snapped Fullwood.

"I don't say you could, but if that rotten party hadn't been held, Wallace might have been alive to-day."

"So he might."

"These cads ought to be sacked!"

"Why not duck 'em in the fountain trough?" suggested somebody.

"Now then—none o' that!" said Pitt sharply. "Haven't you idiots got any sense of decency? You can't go ramping about the place with death in the house."

The juniors were somewhat subdued.

"All the same, they ought to be sacked!" argued Handforth. "Just because a set of these boozing rotters hold a party, the whole of St. Frank's will get it in the neck! If the Head sacks them all it might do something to save the school's good name!"

"Hear, hear!"

Fullwood and Co. were in very bad odour in the Fourth. And they took care to remain aloof. They were anxious, too—nervous, jumpy, and worried. They fully expected to be expelled.

After breakfast a preliminary inquiry was held by Dr. Stafford. There was a sort of court, with Dr. Stafford, Mr. Stokes, and Mr. Stockdale on the bench. And everybody who had taken part in the celebration orgy was closely and rigorously questioned.

But the only fact that could be elicited was that Wallace had suddenly gone into a frenzy, and had then died without a word. And all the culprits were intensely relieved by the Head's announcement that punishment would be held over until after the inquest. And this, after all, was the only fair decision.

But all the participants in the party were held at a distance by the rest of the school. For the time being they were barred.

Morning lessons were held as usual, but work was a mere farce.

Even under ordinary circumstances, work on the second day of term was practically unheard of. The day was chiefly spent in getting into ship-shape again and settling down. But on this particular day there was not even a trace of settling down.

And even the masters were only too pleased to release their Forms at the end of the morning. The boys went out into the open—glad to be under the clear sky after being confined indoors.

And they found not one reporter, but no less than six.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE PAPERS.



REGINALD PITT found himself surrounded by two or three business-like young men, who seemed very anxious to be friendly.

"Now, young 'un, perhaps you can tell us a few details about this little mystery that happened last night?" asked one of the reporters cheerfully. "Just give me the facts——"

"Nothing doing!" interrupted Reggie.

"What do you mean—nothing doing?" demanded the reporter. "I represent the 'London Evening——'"

"Sorry, but I can't help that!" interrupted Pitt. "That affair last night was purely connected with the school, and you won't get any information out of me. And I hope you won't be successful with anybody else."

"Afraid of the truth coming out?" asked the reporter, with a slight sneer.

"I'm not afraid of the truth—but I'm afraid of the sensation that you fellows will make of the truth," replied Pitt. "But I

don't suppose it'll make much difference—you'll get the information somewhere."

"You bet we shall!" agreed the reporter promptly.

Another brisk gentleman was having a go at Handforth.

"You want to hear all about the murder?" asked Handy. "All right; I'll give you the facts——"

"Murder?" repeated the reporter. "I thought——"

"Oh, well, it wasn't exactly a murder—but that's only a detail," said Handforth. "This chap Wallace was——"

"Steady, old man," whispered Church. "We don't want all this scandal in the papers, do we?"

"Rather not!" replied Handforth indignantly.

"Then what's the idea of jawing to these reporters?"

"By George! I suppose I'd better not do it!" said Handforth, with a start. "Clear off, you rotters! Unless you get outside pretty quick, we'll make you run the gauntlet! Like your nerve to come here at all!"

It was quite characteristic of Handforth to change his tone without a moment's warning. At first he had thought merely of making himself somewhat important. But Church had brought him up with a jar. And now he was determined to keep his mouth tightly closed.

And practically everybody else in the Fourth was the same. Even Fullwood and Co. were as mum as oysters. They certainly had no wish to give themselves away.

But the reporters gained a lot of information from Teddy Long before that young rascal could be dragged away. He not only gave the newspaper men a full account of the orgy scene, but he added countless details, which only had their existence in his own mind.

He was hauled away at last, but by this time the mischief was done. And the reporters gained quite a number of facts from some of the servants, too. At all events, the affair seemed to be gaining publicity by leaps and bounds. The surrounding country was already talking of nothing else—but the tale was getting further afield.

In the evening, for example, De Valerie went rushing into the Ancient House, waving a newspaper—a copy of a London evening paper. De Valerie had just come from Bannington, and had got the paper straight from the station.

"I say, you chaps, have you seen this?" he asked breathlessly.

"Seen what?"

"One of the London papers!"

"My hat! Let's have a look!"

"Show us, Val!"

De Valerie was surrounded by an eager crowd, and there were many startled exclamations when the paper was thrown open. The tragedy at St. Frank's had been given more prominence than any other item of news.

Right across the front page ran this legend:

"APPALLING ORGY AT FAMOUS PUBLIC SCHOOL.

"Boy Dies During Brawl at St. Frank's College."

There were many shouts as the terrible words were read.

"Oh, my goodness!"

"What a rotten shame to set it out in big type like that!"

"Think of the bad name we shall get!"

"Wait a minute—let's read the report underneath!" exclaimed Pitt. "This is more serious than you chaps think."

In order to save time, Reggie read the report aloud, and the crowd listened with hushed breath. And well they might. For the reports had made the very most of the affair.

The tragedy itself had been sordid, but there had certainly been nothing mysterious or sinister about it. Yet the newspaper insinuated that St. Frank's was a veritable hotbed of vice and iniquity. The disgraceful party which had led up to the death of Wallace was indicated as quite a common occurrence—instead of being, as it actually was, an almost unheard-of orgy.

"The rotters!" shouted Handforth indignantly. "Anybody who reads this will think we're all tarred with the same brush! They'll think that this sort of thing has been going on for years, and has only come out now because of Wallace's death!"

"Yes, that's what it looks like!"

"But it isn't true!" roared Handforth.

"Yes, we know that——"

"It's a libel!" yelled Armstrong. "Why should the public be made to believe that we're all drunkards and rotters? Something ought to be done about this! It isn't fair!"

"Steady on—steady on!" said Pitt sharply. "It won't do any good to get excited. Peace, my children! Keep your hair tightly on, and allow your Uncle Reggie to hold forth!"

"Go it, Pitt!"

"Tell us what we've got to do!"

"That's easy—you've got to keep cool!" replied Reggie. "I expected these reports—and there'll be plenty more like 'em! And they'll all have the same flavour—so it's no good thinking anything else. These newspapers will make the whole country believe that St. Frank's is a regular sink of crime and hidden vice!"

"But can't we prove it's all a lie?" snorted Handforth.

"I hope so—but that's about all I can say," replied Pitt. "When this sort of thing gets round——"

"Hallo! Here's the telegraph boy!" interrupted somebody excitedly.

CHAPTER X.

THE INQUEST.



THE telegraph boy produced not merely one wire, but no less than four. And it turned out that he had at least a dozen others for fellows in the Modern House or in the

Upper School generally.

But the four were addressed to Doyle, Griffiths, Church and De Valerie. Doyle opened his feverishly, and read the message in a kind of daze.

"I've got to go home!" he gasped.

"What the dickens for!" demanded Handforth.

"Goodness knows!" said Doyle excitedly. "It's from the pater—he tells me to leave St. Frank's by the first train, and to wire him the time of it so that he can meet me at Victoria."

"Well, I'm blessed!"

"Here! Mine's the same!" shouted De Valerie.

"Mine, too!" yelled Griffiths. "Mine's from the mater, and she tells me to leave this 'dreadful place' instantly."

"There you are—everybody's getting the wind up already!" said Handforth bitterly. "And I'll bet most of those other telegrams are the same sort. At this rate there won't be any chaps left!"

"I—I'd better go and see the Head, I suppose," said Doyle anxiously.

"Yes, and I'll go with you," said Church. "My telegram is nearly the same—I've got to go home to-morrow!"

Handforth's jaw dropped.

"You've got to go home?" he repeated. "For good?"

"I expect so."

"What about McClure and me?" roared Handforth fiercely.

"I—I don't know!" said Church miserably. "I say, this is too utterly rotten for words! I don't want to be sent to another school! There isn't one as good as St. Frank's."

"Good man!" said Pitt heartily. "That's the spirit! In spite of all this scandal, St. Frank's is the best place at any time! Don't you go, Church! Stick to the colours!"

"But—but I shall have to go——" began Church.

"Oh, will you?" said Handforth grimly. "Look here, my lad, if you go away from St. Frank's, and leave McClure and I in the lurch, I'll kick you out of Study D for the rest of the term!"

"But I shall be out, if I'm away!" said Church dully.

"By George! So you will!" said Handforth. "Well, I'll jolly well lock you up in Study D, and keep you there until you take root to the floor! Huh! It's likely we're going to let all the best chaps clear off!"

Church was rather flattered to hear himself referred to as one of the best chaps. According to the way Handforth spoke sometimes, he had been led to believe that he was a kind of human worm. But it was only in moments of serious stress that Handforth revealed his true feelings.

The rest of that evening was like a nightmare.

Telegrams poured in so rapidly that special messengers had to be sent from Eannington—the tiny Bellton post-office couldn't cope with the rush.

Without exaggerating, a full third of the Fourth was ordered to return home at once. And it was almost as bad in the Fifth.

The Third, too, was affected—although not to such an extent.

But, although it was such a staggerer for the school, it could easily be understood. Reading such reports in the papers, parents had taken alarm by the dozen. And, fearful lest their sons should be influenced by these terrible drinking parties, the boys were ordered home. Fond parents were in a bit of a panic.

The Third was not so much affected because mere fags were obviously free from that kind of taint. And the Sixth escaped because these seniors were old enough to look after themselves.

It was the Middle School that felt the blow so severely.

But Dr. Stafford himself took the matter in hand firmly. He addressed the whole school in Big Hall, and said that no boy would be allowed to leave until the morrow, at the earliest. As everybody knew, the Head was waiting for the result of the inquest.

He was hoping, in fact, that most of the parents would retract overnight, and countermand these panic orders in the morning. Dr. Stafford was looking pale and ill with the sudden, unexpected anxiety.

And the next day, with St. Frank's still boiling and bubbling like some great cauldron, the inquest on the ill-fated Fifth-Former was held. The coroner's court was packed.

The proceedings were comparatively brief.

Evidence was called which completely laid bare the nature of the celebration party. Most of the participants went into the witness-box, and described the events which had led up to the tragedy. And during the course of this searching inquiry, not a single fact was left hidden. The orgy, in all its naked horror, was laid bare for the whole world to know. And the reporters could be fully trusted to publish the tiniest detail.

But Dr. Brett's evidence was the most significant.

He had made a post-mortem examination, and was able to prove conclusively that Wallace's death was entirely due to a weak heart. The champagne he had drunk had merely excited him.

"But did not this dreadful drinking bout lead to his death?" asked the coroner.

"No," replied Dr. Brett. "The condition of the boy's heart was such that he might have dropped dead at any moment. A sudden shock of any kind would have been sufficient to bring about fatal results."

The medical witness went into details, and convinced the jury that the death had been perfectly accidental and from natural causes. And this verdict was arrived at with scarcely a minute's delay.

But the mischief was done—the scandal had been spread broadcast!

CHAPTER XI.

THE VOICE OF SCANDAL.



A LARGE number of fellows believed that Dr. Brett's evidence would put a new complexion on the whole affair. Since Wallace had died of purely natural causes, there was obviously no case against the celebration party.

But nothing could get over the hard facts.

The party had been a disgraceful affair, and the truth was laid bare for all to know. The great reading public thought little or nothing of Dr. Brett's evidence. The unfortunate senior had died during the spree, and thus it was directly responsible.

And if one party of that kind could be held, why not scores? St. Frank's was spoken of with shocked awe. In less than twenty-four hours the famous public school was looked upon as a plague spot.

With scores of boys ordered to leave for home Dr. Stafford was in a terrible dilemma. With regard to the culprits, he took into consideration the verdict of the coroner's jury. And none of the revellers were expelled. The Head held the view that they had been punished severely as it was.

But all were flogged—and other punishments were imposed as well. Dr. Stafford remembered that this had been a first-night celebration and that they had been carried away by their exuberance.

The school, as a whole, condemned the Head's leniency. But Dr. Stafford probably felt that with so many boys being taken away it would be necessary for him to retain every one possible.

BUY THE

MERRY MAG. 7d

That afternoon there were more wires. Fully half the Fifth was ordered home and over half the Fourth. The situation was acute.

But still the Head forbade anybody to leave.

By teatime some early editions of the evening newspapers arrived.

They were full of dreadful publicity. The inquest was reported in full, and the whole story of the party, in the words of the boys, was reported. It was a terrible blow at the prestige of St. Frank's, and was undoubtedly destined to have a devastating effect.

St. Frank's—one of the famous English public schools that had always borne an irreproachable character! And here it was, being held up as a kind of plague spot. Was it any wonder that parents in every part of the kingdom ordered their children to return home?

"It seems to me that this is about the end of the old school," said Reggie Pitt grimly. "The place'll never last, after this; it can't. With over half the chaps gone, we shall go bankrupt!"

"Looks like it," said Jack Grey solemnly.

"We're not going to stand by and see that happen, I suppose?" demanded Armstrong. "There must be some solution——"

"There is one, but I doubt if the fellows have enough courage to adopt it," interrupted Pitt. "The only way is for the school to stick together, to ignore these summonses home, and to stick here, on the spot."

"That's impossible!" growled Church. "If I don't go home, my pater will come down here and fetch me!"

"Let him come; I'll deal with him!" said Handforth fiercely. "Understand, my lad, you're not going home—— Eh? What's that?"

"Telegram for you, Master Handforth," said Tubbs, the pageboy, pushing his way through the crowd.

Handforth took it, and his jaw dropped.

"I knew it was coming," said Church miserably. "Oh, we shall all clear out to-night! They might as well shut the school at once!"

Handforth gave a snort of disgust as he read his telegram. It was quite brief but to the point:

"Cannot allow you to remain at St.



"Now, young 'un, perhaps you can tell us a few details about this little mystery that happened last night?" asked one of the reporters cheerfully.

Frank's. Have arranged for you to join Redcliffe College. Travel there by first train. All details fixed.—FATHER."

"Well, have you got to go home?" asked Pitt.

"Home!" snorted Handforth. "No. My pater tells me to go to Redcliffe. He's made every arrangement!"

"Just like Sir Edward," said Reggie with a faint smile.

"Do you think I'm going, you duffer?" snapped Handforth. "Blow Redcliffe! And blow my pater! I'm not leaving St. Frank's, just because a few miserable rotters have a champagne fight!"

The argument could not continue, for the great bell in the tower commenced clanging. It was a signal for the school to collect in Big Hall. And when everybody was present Dr. Stafford appeared on the platform.

There was a tense hush, for everybody realised that the situation was acute, and the tension almost at breaking point.

"I have very little to say, my dear boys," said the Head quietly. "You all know the facts, and you all know how grossly unfair to our famous old school the majority of the reports have been——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old St. Frank's!"

"Bravo, sir!"

"Thank you, boys; but I fear that your loyalty will have but little effect," continued Dr. Stafford. "The tragedy of Wallace's death is an absolute disaster for the school, and the effect is more devastat-

ing than I can describe. All those boys who have been ordered home by their parents will make full preparations for departure at once.

"Oh!"

"Every facility will be afforded them for taking the evening train from Bellton," went on the Head. "I take this opportunity to bid these boys good-bye, and wish them every success in their new schools."

"We don't want to go, sir!" shouted somebody.

"Rather not!"

"We'd prefer to be at St. Frank's sir!"

The Head smiled rather wearily.

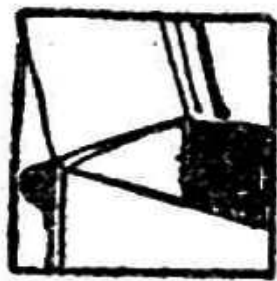
"Perhaps so, boys, but your own parents are the final judges," he reminded them. "Nothing can alter the fact that an appalling, disgraceful scene took place in this school, and, as headmaster, I am responsible. I can only trust that St. Frank's will outlive the terrible scandal, and in time lift itself again to the very front rank of England's public schools. In the meantime, I fear that we shall pass through a critical period of stress, which may indeed end in complete disaster."

Dr. Stafford's speech was received with silence no 7. For if the Head was pessimistic, then the situation was indeed grave.

He did not say so in so many words, but it was clear to everybody that St. Frank's College was in danger of being absolutely blotted out.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CRISIS.



PACKING was the order of the hour.

Everybody seemed to be doing it. In Fifth and Fourth the dormitories were in a perfect fever of bustle. A startling proportion of the fellows had received orders to depart for home.

And parents were even more imperious than schoolmasters. They had to be obeyed. And some of the juniors, no doubt, felt a sneaking joy over the disaster which had overtaken St. Frank's.

For it meant a period of home again—a kind of continuation of the holidays. But the fellows who thought in this way were only the short-sighted ones. The more thoughtful boys were upset and worried.

For this upheaval would mean a new school, and all the trials and troubles of getting settled down in strange surroundings. There was a large amount of love for St. Frank's ingrained in most of the boys, more particularly in the seniors.

For these had spent several years at St. Frank's, and it was a big wrench to leave in this fashion. Some were striving

for scholarships and similar honours. And to be dumped down in a new school would mean an end probably to all their ambitions.

But parents had to be obeyed.

So packing was going on with feverish haste. It was no good staying at St. Frank's now. And the bad odour in which the school now wallowed was distasteful, too. The snobbish fellows were only too glad to leave.

"It's all very well for the Head to talk, but I'm not going!" declared Handforth grimly. "As for my pater, he can go and eat coke! It's likely I'm going to a rotten school like Redcliffe!"

"But what else can you do?" asked Church. "I shall ask my pater to send me to Redcliffe, too. But McClure hasn't been told to leave yet, so he'll stay here!"

"Rotten!" said McClure miserably.

Handforth glared.

"If you think you're going to stay here, my lad, you've made a mistake!" he snorted. "You're coming with Church and I to Redcliffe. Understand?"

"But you just said you wouldn't go to Redcliffe!" protested McClure.

"And I won't!" roared Handforth.

The fact was, he didn't quite know what to think or what to say. The great leader of Study D was intensely worried. Right at the very beginning of the term everything was upset.

He wasn't greatly overjoyed when his minor came along. And for once Willy was looking as serious as an owl. His habitual sunny expression, his sparkling eye, his ready tongue—all were subdued.

"Finished your packing?" he asked gloomily.

"I haven't done any packing!" retorted Edward Oswald.

"Just like you, Ted. Always leave everything till the last minute—"

"You young rotter!" said his major. "Where's your loyalty? Where's your patriotism towards St. Frank's? I'm not going. And I'm ashamed of you for getting packed up so meekly."

"Who's packed up?" demanded Willy, with some heat. "You chump! I was only finding out what you were doing! I haven't packed up myself, and won't! I mean to stick here until the pater comes down and yanks me off by the ear! And even then I'll kick like the dickens!"

Handforth's eyes glowed.

"Good man!" he said heartily. "By George! I didn't think you had it in you, my lad. You've got more pluck than I imagined. Put it there!"

He seized Willy's hand, and Willy howled.

"Go easy!" he roared. "No need to crack my knuckles!"

"Why, I hardly touched you, you blessed young coward!"

"How would you like your hand squeezed in a vice, just after you'd received six swishers from old Suncliffe?" demanded Willy, examining his hand with tender care. "He's a beast. He lays it on with horrible force!"

"Good luck to him!" said Handforth. "I'll bet you deserved a dozen!"

Reginald Pitt came out in the lobby a moment later, and he was just in time to meet Tubbs. And the pageboy, with a long face, handed Reggie a telegram.

"Just come, Master Pitt," said Tubbs sorrowfully. "I 'ate to think of you goin' away, young gent. There's some as won't be missed, but you're one o' the real good sports, you are!"

"Thanks, fair youth, for such bounteous words," said Reggie, bowing gracefully. "Praise from you is praise indeed. But if the powers that be decide upon my abrupt removal—Hullo, what have we here?"

"A telegram, by the look of it," said Handforth brilliantly.

"Cease thy prattling, O youth of foolish tongue!" said Pitt, gazing at the telegraph form with eager eyes. "Great tidings! This wire isn't from my pater at all."

"Who's it from—your mater?" asked Church dully.

"No—from Nipper!"

"Nipper!" echoed Handforth and Co. in one voice.

"Yes—listen to this!" said Reggie eagerly. "Great news! Nelson Lee safe—nearly mad with relief. The guv'nor and I will carry on against Triangle. Don't know if we can return St. Frank's. Good luck to everybody. Concerned about scandal. Hope you'll live it out all right.—Nipper." What do you think of that?"

"Ripping!" said Handforth eagerly. "So Mr. Lee's found? Didn't I tell you all along that he wasn't dead? Didn't I say he'd beat those Green Triangle rotters?"

"I don't remember it, but we'll pass it," said Pitt. "You see, Nipper isn't coming back—neither is Mr. Lee. It's just as well. They're safely out of this miserable business!"

He walked away very thoughtful and serious. That telegram from Nipper had raised certain questions in his mind.

"What would Nipper have done in a case like this?" muttered Reggie. "Would he have given in? Would he have allowed the whole Form to clear out and desert the school?"

Pitt's eyes gleamed with sudden resolve.

"No, he wouldn't!" he decided. "I can just imagine the fire and zest with which he would have grabbed this situation in both hands and dealt with it! By Jove! I'm going to fight!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EXODUS.



REGGIE PITT'S resolve stirred him deeply.

He was captain of the Junior School—the one fellow that the Form looked to for advice and help. And here he was, doing nothing, while the fellows were packing by the score! He had taken no action whatever to prove his strength as a skipper.

And would Nipper have acted in the same way?

Pitt was convinced that Nipper, with all his vitality and energy, would have made things hum. And Nipper had particularly entrusted the captaincy to Reggie Pitt—and Reggie wasn't going to fail!

Out in the Triangle, he paced up and down for a time, thinking feverishly—planning ways and means. First and foremost, there was one thing to be done. The entire Fourth must remain intact—both Ancient and Modern sections. Orders or no orders, they must stick to the school!

But how could this be accomplished?

Already large numbers of Fifth-Formers were leaving both Houses on their way to the station. Fags were in evidence, too—for a certain number of the Third had their marching orders.

"By jingo! I've got to look alive, or it'll be too late!" exclaimed Pitt crisply. "What's the time? Ten-to-six! And the train leaves at six-forty! Less than an hour!"

There was certainly every need to hustle!

Pitt rushed indoors, and charged into Handforth and Co., who were still in the lobby.

"Do you fellows want to help?" he asked sharply.

"Help in what?"

"I want to call a Form meeting—full force!" retorted Pitt. "Everybody's got to attend—Ancient and Modern alike!"

"Moderns?" repeated Handforth. "Oh, you mean the Monks? The College House chaps? I don't recognise these fatheaded new names—"

"Call 'em what you like—but get a move on!" interrupted Pitt briskly. "I've got an idea—I mean to save the Fourth, if it can be done!"

"You—you mean—prevent the chaps leaving?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"Exactly!"

Edward Oswald was alert on the instant. Fairly hopeless as a leader, he was, nevertheless, of extraordinary value when it came to a task which called for hustle, speed, and force. And this was just the kind of job he revelled in.

The leader of Study D turned himself into a whirlwind. He rushed from the Ancient House to the Modern House like a tornado, yelling to all the juniors that a Form meeting was to be held on the instant

—in the gymnasium. Church and McClure were engaged in similar work. And quite a number of other Fourth-Formers caught on to the scheme.

"Form meeting?" said Armstrong, staring. "What are you talking about? I'm just off to the station——"

"Can't help that—you've got to be there!" interrupted Handforth curtly. "Plenty of time—train doesn't go for half an hour yet. And Pitt only wants to say a few words!"

"Oh, all right," said Armstrong. "But I can't stay long."

And most of the other juniors treated the summons in the same way. Although half of them were booked to leave, and were really not St. Frank's juniors any longer, they answered the call.

For a Form meeting was always an important affair. One was never called unless the situation was serious. And it was an unwritten law in the Junior School that no such summons was to be ignored unless the circumstances were exceptional.

Those fellows who were destined to remain at the school were only too willing to attend the meeting. Fullwood and Co., for example, were among the first in the gymnasium.

The cads of Study A were curious to see what all the excitement was about. During the last day or two they had been sent to Coventry by most of the other fellows—although this punishment was now dying out. After all, the fellows realised that Fullwood and Co. had been mere pawns in the tragic affair which had resulted in Wallace's death.

"Everybody on hand yet?" panted Pitt.

He hurried up, red and breathless, and streaming with perspiration. He had been on the go for ten minutes, without a single rest, and he was filled with high hopes. The juniors were rallying round in a manner that he had hardly dared to expect.

"Yes, most of 'em here," said Tommy Watson. "But the meeting is bound to be short by two——"

"Why?" snapped Reggie.

"Turner and Page, of the Modern House have already gone to the station," said Watson. "They went some time ago——"

"Then fetch 'em back!" interrupted Pitt.

"Fetch 'em back?"

"Yes—we can't have the Form short by two!" rapped out the captain. "Here, Handforth! Do you mind rushing down to the village and yanking Turner and Page back? The idiots have eluded us!"

"Oh, have they?" roared Handforth. "Well, they won't elude me! Hi, Church! Hi, Clurey! Come on! We'll make those two fatheads smart like the dickens for sneaking away like this!"

Handforth and Co. were off like the wind, and Pitt's eyes gleamed as he watched them go. Then he turned and looked at the seething gymnasium.

"Well, they're going to lose their train—the whole crowd of them," he murmured quietly. "This is where I get busy!"

CHAPTER XIV.

LESS THAN THE DUST.



HANDFORTH ran hard, and the short distance to the village was soon covered.

Church and McClure were just as excited as their leader, for it seemed to them that something would come of this situation.

"Come on—don't lag behind!" panted Handforth gruffly.

"Who's lagging?" snorted Church.

There was no question that Handforth himself was the laggard. For Church and McClure forged ahead, and Edward Oswald had to fairly fight in order to keep up the pace.

"No need to rush like this!" he gasped. "Plenty of time!"

"I thought you told us not to waste it?" asked Church, with a certain satisfaction. "And don't accuse us of lagging — Oh! What the——"

Church broke off, and clapped a hand to the side of his head. And when he took it away there was a smear of blood on his fingers. Handforth and McClure paused, breathing hard.

"What's up, you ass?" demanded Handforth.

"I don't know—something hit me!" said Church dazedly. "It must have been a stone—my head's singing like the dickens! And I've got a cut, too—not much, but it wasn't far from my eye!"

Handforth glared round.

"Who's throwing stones?" he bellowed.

"Yah! Drunkards!" came a yell of derisive voices.

From behind the hedge two or three heads arose—the most prominent one belonging to Lumpy Bill, the blacksmith's son. Lumpy was a well-known character in the village—a hulking, good-for-nothing lout, who caused his father no end of trouble. And he was always at enmity with the St. Frank's boys.

"You dangerous rotter!" shouted Church angrily. "You might have blinded me!"

Lumpy Bill roared.

"You're always blind, ain't you?" he jeered. "What about them drinks you 'ave up at the school? Whisky an' champagne, and all the rest! You ain't 'arf a crowd o' bloomin' swells—I don't think!"

Whizz! Whizz!

Another shower of stones came hurtling across the hedge. Handforth and Co. ducked, and managed to escape the fusillade. This sort of thing was nothing new. But Lumpy Bill and his young hooligans were certainly more daring on this occasion than ever before.

"By George!" thundered Handforth. "I'll show you!"

He rushed to the attack.

"Wait a minute, Handy!" gasped Church. "What about Page and Turner? Unless we hurry, the train'll come in—"

Handforth took no notice, but rushed on. His one thought at the moment was to punish Lumpy Bill for this display of frightfulness. And Lumpy Bill, being an arrant coward, promptly took to his heels.

He fled across the bridge and into the village high street. The other louts had scattered across the meadow, and were not heeded. It was Lumpy Bill himself who needed attention.

And Handforth and Co. caught him in less than two hundred yards. For the hulking young ruffian was certainly no athlete. It was characteristic of him to commence bawling for help as soon as he was grabbed.

"You won't get any help this time!" snapped Handforth. "Your precious pals have deserted you! Now then—where's the pond? We'll soon give you a ducking, you rotter!"

"Lemme alone!" hooted Lumpy wildly.

Handforth and Co. took no notice of his howls, and dragged him towards the village pond. But when they arrived there Edward Oswald gave a snort of disgust. There was no pond left. After a long spell of dry weather the pool had dried up, and there was scarcely any mud, even.

"It doesn't matter—we'll stick him in head first!" said Handforth grimly. "There's quite enough mud to half-choke him! Come on—over with the rotter!"

Between the three of them they managed to turn Lumpy Bill upside down—taking no notice of his roars and no notice of the villagers who came hurrying up to see what all the noise was about.

The villagers generally took great delight in seeing Lumpy Bill punished by the schoolboys. His character was notorious, and every time he was given a lesson the villagers approved.

"Ere, you young rascals—leave that boy alone!" shouted a burly labourer, pushing his way forward.

"That's right, Jim—make 'em set the lad down!" shouted another.

"The young puppies ain't no better'n ruffians theirselves!"

"That they ain't!"

Handforth and Co. paused in their operations, and stared.

"What's the matter?" demanded Handforth. "This brute—"

"Mebbe he is a brute, but he ain't a young scoundrel like you an' your fine school-mates are!" exclaimed the labourer fiercely. "Always pretending to be so fine an' gentlemanly—an' yet you ain't no better'n a gang of drunken cardsharps!"

"What!" gasped Handforth and Co.

"Oh, you can play the innercent all right, I dessay!" went on the man. "I

suppose you gits used to it up at the school. We've heard about your goings on, you young varmint. You ain't fit to mix with decent folk!"

Handforth and Co. were utterly staggered.

All these villagers were glaring fiercely, and it was obvious that they heartily approved the attitude of the spokesman. And yet these same men, a few days earlier, had been the first to address the boys with respect and deference.

The change was startling. The whole village, of course, had been bubbling with the news from St. Frank's ever since the disaster had happened. And it seemed that the school was condemned wholesale. These juniors, hitherto honoured and respected, were now less than the dust!

CHAPTER XV.

THE MEETING OF THE FOURTH.



"YOU'RE mad!" shouted Handforth angrily. "What do you mean—we're not fit to mix with decent folk?"

"You knows what I mean, you young cub!" replied the labourer. "You an' your pals up there, in the big school—drinkin', gamblin'—an' causin' the death o' that there 'armless young gent—"

"He was one of the worst of the lot!" shouted McClure.

"Talkin' agin the dead now!" exclaimed one of the other villagers. "You leave young Bill alone! Leave him be! We've generally been agin him, but 'e's a sight better than you so-called gents, anyway!"

Handforth and Co. could hardly believe their ears. And they were freshly startled a minute or two later, when the crowd pushed forward, and forcibly rescued the village lout. It was only by pure chance that Handforth and Co. themselves were not roughly molested.

The village constable happened to stroll into view, and the crowd dispersed, growling.

"My only hat!" said Handforth blankly. "What do you think of that? Treating us as if we were dogs!"

"It's awful!" said Church. "Bob Christine said that he was jeered at this morning, but I never realised— Great Scott! There's the train!"

A warning whistle had sounded clearly through the air, and the juniors knew the meaning of it. The train was just steaming into the station, and if Page and Turner were to be kept back, some swift hustling would have to be done.

"Come on—we'll just do it!" panted Handforth.

They raced through the other part of the High Street, and tore into the station while the train was still waiting against the platform. Charging through the little booking office, they arrived on the platform.

"There they are!" gasped Church breathlessly.

Page and Turner were just getting into a compartment, and up and down the train the carriages were filling with other seniors and juniors. But Turner and Page were the only Fourth-Formers.

"Hi!" roared Handforth.

He and his chums raced up, and grabbed the two Modern House juniors by sheer force and hauled them out of the train.

"You—you idiots!" panted Page. "We'll miss the train——"

"You will—that's why we've dragged you out!" said McClure grimly.

"But—but——"

The unfortunate pair were not allowed to speak. They were held down, and had the mortification of seeing the train steam out of the station without them. Fortunately, their baggage was still on the platform.

"Now you can get up!" said Handforth, as he arose from his seat on Turner's chest. "And you're coming straight back to St. Frank's with us."

"You, dotty lunatics!" snorted Page. "There's no other train until eight o'clock—and that'll land us in London horribly late——"

"You're not going to London at all," broke in Church. "At least, you're not if Pitt has his way! Come on! There's a Form meeting called, and we've all got to attend. We shall be late as it is!"

In the meantime, the meeting in the gym. was becoming animated.

Reggie Pitt had thought at first to keep everybody waiting until the five missing fellows had turned up. But everybody was so impatient that it became necessary to get a move on.

The gymnasium was packed. The fellows knew that they had missed the six-forty train, and many of them were highly incensed. But it was too late to grumble now. And there was something about Reggie Pitt's attitude that interested all and sundry.

The entire Fourth was present—both the Ancient House section and the Modern House section.

"We can't stop here!" shouted somebody. "And what's the good of a Form meeting, anyhow? We don't belong to the Fourth now!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The whole thing's mad!"

The grumblers were becoming excited, and Reggie Pitt saw that he would have to make his speech at once. Roughly, half the Form was under orders to leave, and the other half was in a state of doubt. And those who were going, considered the meeting to be a sheer piece of folly.

"Fellows of the Fourth!" shouted Pitt, suddenly springing upon a raised ledge, and looking at the crowd. "I shan't keep you long—but what I have to say is of the utmost importance."

"Go ahead!"

"Make it short, old man!"

"I've called the whole Form together, but I am mainly speaking to you chaps who are on the point of leaving the school," went on Pitt, nervous and hoarse with excitement. "And I don't want you to think I'm wasting your time, or acting the fool—because this speech of mine is the first real effort I've made as captain of the Fourth!"

"All right—get it over!"

"You look upon it as a nuisance, don't you?" said Pitt. "You just want to hear me, and clear out. But by the time I've done, I hope to see you all standing by me—and not clearing out at all. That's the very reason I'm up here, making this speech."

Pitt had begun very indifferently. He was not his usual self. His nervousness was so acute that his voice faltered now and again. But this tension was only caused by the acute nature of the situation.

"You're mad!" shouted somebody. "We've got to clear out! We've been ordered home by our people——"

"That's just it!" interrupted Pitt. "You want to stay here, and you're going against your will! You're leaving St. Frank's because your parents have formed hasty, inaccurate conclusions by reading the newspaper reports. They're taking you away from the school because they think it's a hotbed of vice!"

"That's true enough!" growled Christine. "Goodness knows we don't want to go!"

"Hear, hear! St. Frank's is just as good as ever it was, too!"

"Rather!"

Reggie Pitt thumped one fist into his palm.

"That's just my point!" he shouted. "Here, at St. Frank's, we know the actual truth. We know that this rotten scandal was caused by a few miserable cads who count for nothing. Who are they, anyhow? Kenmore — Parkin — Grayson — Fullwood! They're the handful of bounders who have brought the name of St. Frank's into disrepute!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And just because of that, all your people at home condemn St. Frank's as a centre of drunkenness and dangerous orgies!" shouted Pitt, gaining confidence with every word he uttered. "I'm talking to you now, because I'm going to put the facts to you straight from the shoulder!"

CHAPTER XVI.

STANDING BY THE OLD SCHOOL.



EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH gave a snort of satisfaction. "Here we are!" he said breathlessly. "In with 'em!"

Turner and Page were pushed into the crowded gymnasium, with Handforth and Church and McClure follow-

ing. They had intended having a word with Reggie Pitt, but this was impossible. For Reggie was talking grimly and powerfully—his full confidence restored.

He had got the ear of his audience, and he seized his chance.

"I want you fellows to ask yourselves one thing!" he exclaimed tensely. "Do you consider yourselves to blame for the scandal that is now being talked about all over the country? Do you feel that you've contributed towards this horrible smudge on the school's character?"

Frank's is a sort of plague spot! But is it fair to insult the famous old school like that?"

"Of course it isn't!"

"You agree with me, and yet you are perfectly willing to desert the school with your tails between your legs" roared Pitt indignantly. "Don't you realise that we are needed now more than ever before? Half the Fifth has gone, and a good many Third-Formers and Sixth-Formers! That's bad enough, to start with;



Between the three of them they managed to turn Lumpy Bill upside down, taking no notice of his roars and no notice of the villagers who came hurrying up to see what all the noise was about.

"No, we don't!" yelled the Fourth.

"Then what's the idea of leaving St. Frank's in the lurch?" demanded Pitt fiercely. "What do you mean by deserting the school just when it needs you more than ever it did before? Where's your loyalty?"

"We've been ordered home by our parents!" shouted Armstrong.

"Does that matter?" retorted Pitt sharply. "Our parents don't understand the position—they don't realise that that disgraceful scene was a mere isolated occasion. Everybody has jumped to the conclusion that St.

but what's to become of St. Frank's if the Fourth deserts her, too?"

"She'll go bust!" roared Handforth.

"That's right—she'll be bankrupt within a month!" declared Pitt grimly. "And why? Just because these cads have given the school a bad name! If you all go home, you'll be tarred with the same brush! When you go to your next school you'll be cut dead by practically everybody! They'll take it for granted that you are just as bad as the culprits themselves!"

"By Jove, he's right!" shouted Armstrong.

"Right!" thundered Pitt. "Haven't you got sense enough to see it for yourselves? I tell you, solemnly, that if you desert the school now you'll always have a black mark against your names! And St. Frank's will never recover from this blow!"

"What else can we do?" demanded Christine.

"We can stick to the colours!" replied Pitt, his voice ringing loudly. "We can stand by St. Frank's, and prove to the whole country that she's worth standing by! As for our parents, we can ignore their orders, and wait for something to happen! Here's a chance for the Fourth to come out strong—to stick to the old place when the old place needs us!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Reggie!"

"Three cheers for St. Frank's!"

Pitt had worked up the meeting to a pitch of intense enthusiasm.

"And remember," he concluded, "your only chance of clearing your names is to remain with us. You are all innocent, you took no part in this disgraceful scandal. But who'll believe you if you go? Nobody! Yet, if you remain, and stand by the flag, there's more than a chance that St. Frank's may be saved!"

Reggie Pitt's triumph was complete.

There wasn't a single fellow who disagreed with him. And a few of the nervous ones who felt like leaving, in spite of their convictions, were quickly made to realise that they wouldn't be allowed to leave the school premises.

Without a doubt, Reginald Pitt had proved himself to be a sound, level-headed skipper. His chance had come sooner than anybody had expected—and the juniors backed him up to a man.

The whole Fourth would remain behind—in spite of orders! They would stick to St. Frank's, fight against this canker of gossip and scandal, and kill it!

And when Dr. Stafford heard the news, he was not only impressed, but rather overcome. He took no action, for he realised that the boys were determined. And their expression of loyalty to the school touched him deeply.

And so the day ended, amid general excitement.

The Fourth stayed on—one intact body. The Fifth was depleted by half its number, and a quarter of the Sixth had gone. Even the Third was seriously affected.

But the Fourth Form had made up its mind to fight to the finish. And there was not a shadow of doubt that some very acute trouble was brewing!

THE END.

By Your Editor

My dear Readers,

For most of us the holiday season is over, the evenings are drawing in, and we look around the bookstalls for a likely friend with whom we can spend a cheery evening or two at home. In this little paper you will find a delightful companion every week. You know this, of course, but there may be some of your pals who would like to make the acquaintance of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY.

TWO NEW SERIES.

Now is the time to introduce your chums to the paper, for we begin this week our autumn programme, containing two new series of splendid stories, a magazine supplement, a portrait of our popular author and a special interview with him, a complete list of the famous characters of the Remove, now known as the Fourth at St. Frank's, and much else besides that makes it as bright and compact a little paper as you will find anywhere.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR NEXT WEEK.

Next week there will be another fine long story of St. Frank's, entitled, "THE SCHOOL WITH A BAD NAME!" In this rousing yarn the new skipper of the Fourth will be called upon to lead his Form in their fight against the disastrous effects produced by the recent scandal at the school. There will also appear a thrilling account of Nelson Lee and Nipper's adventures with the League of the Green Triangle in "THE EAGLE'S PREY!" And in the Mag. will be published the first series of portraits of four well-known juniors with short descriptive notes about each. This new Portrait Gallery and Who's Who will feature all the juniors of the Fourth as contained in this week's list. Every reader should make sure of getting the whole series for reference in future stories, as it will be a long time before we republish these interesting facts.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

THE GREEN TRIANGLE'S PRISONER!



At the request of many old readers, I am beginning to-day a new series of stories dealing with Nelson Lee and Nipper's adventures with the Green Triangle, a criminal organisation of which the notorious and infamous Professor Zingrave is the head. Nelson Lee is a prisoner in the

hands of his old enemy, and Nipper has left St. Frank's to rescue his master.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

THE EAGLE'S PREY.

CLANG!

Nelson Lee glanced up from his easy chair and directed his attention through the glittering steel grille. Robson had just appeared, carrying a bundle of newspapers and magazines.

"Ah, Robson, punctual as usual!" said Nelson Lee pleasantly. "Any special news to-day? Any startling crime that Scotland Yard fails to elucidate? I confess I am on tenterhooks."

Robson grinned behind the grille.

"Always cheerful, Mr. Lee, ain't you?" he remarked. "No, there's no special news—not yet, leastways."

"Ah, then our friend, the professor, has not yet commenced his promised activities," said Nelson Lee. "Thanks. Oh, you might just mention that these cigarettes are running rather low."

"I will, sir," replied Robson. "Maybe you'd like some cigars?"

"Maybe I should," agreed Lee drily. "In fact, I can safely assure you, Robson, that a box of cigars would be most acceptable. But please be quite certain that they are of at least a fair quality."

Robson grinned and vanished through the great strong-room door. It closed with a dull metallic clang, and was followed by the sound of the numerous steel bolts dropping neatly into their sockets.

Nelson Lee stretched himself, rose from his chair, and took the bundle of papers from a small ledge on the other side of the grille. Then he gave a short laugh.

"How long?" he murmured. "Months—possibly years! It seems an age since I entered into the occupation of these desir-

able premises. And it will probably be an epoch before I leave them!"

For Nelson Lee, the celebrated criminologist, was a prisoner in the hands of the League of the Green Triangle. Since that day he had been carried off by the Crimson Eagle—the League's wonder aircraft—he had vanished completely and utterly from the face of the earth, without leaving a trace.

And surely no prisoner ever lived in such a prison!

Glancing round, Nelson Lee's gaze rested upon the quiet, tastefully furnished living-room. A soft carpet on the floor, easy chairs, a comfortable lounge, book-cases, softly shaded electric lamps—everything, in fact, that one would associate with a modern home of luxury.

But there was no window in this very commonplace apartment—only a single doorway on one side, and a steel grille on the other. This steel grille looked out upon a small, bare lobby—with the great strong-room door beyond. Nelson Lee never came into close contact with his captors. There was always the steel grille separating them.

The doorway on the other side led into a most delightful bed-room, with a bath-room adjoining. In fact, the suite was very similar to one that may be obtained in almost any first-class hotel. But there were no windows of any kind—only tiny, concealed ventilation grids at various points near the ceiling.

And the whole "flat" was constantly lit by electricity. And here Nelson had remained week in and week out ever since he had disappeared from human ken. The only exercise he obtained was when he paced his apartments from end to end—and he indulged in this walk every morning and evening.

And the famous detective was surprisingly fit.

He fed well, he had every comfort, and he was looked after in an almost fastidious fashion. But when it came to escaping—there was not the slightest possibility of such an event.

Nelson Lee knew it.

He was a man who never gave in—a man who fought when the odds seemed absolutely overwhelmingly against him. But this time he resigned himself. He knew that he was caught like a rat in a trap. He had sense enough to realise that his position was utter hopeless.

Professor Cyrus Zingrave had made no mistake!

At other times, in the past days, the Green Triangle had trapped Nelson Lee into its clutches. He had escaped. But on this occasion the Green Triangle had taken such means that their prisoner was as dead to the world as though he were buried in a tomb.

And this, indeed, was what Nelson Lee's prison was like.

A tomb! An underground dungeon which resembled a modern flat, but which was a dungeon, nevertheless. It was one of Zingrave's fads—this freak prison.

The professor could have killed Lee, and thus been rid of him for ever. But Zingrave had not taken this drastic step. He preferred to indulge his fancy in this quaint way. For he wanted Nelson Lee to live—to read, week after week, of the daringly successful exploits of the Green Triangle.

In the past, Lee had been the one thorn in Zingrave's side. And now the thorn was removed. Zingrave and his associates felt themselves free to operate as their fancy dictated—and Nelson Lee was here, in this prison, a harmless spectator.

At first the great detective had chafed at his imprisonment. He had grown pale and haggard during the first week or two of his grim confinement. But now he was resigned. And he did not fool himself. Unless a miracle happened, he would be kept a prisoner for years—possibly until he died.

The world was no longer a possibility for him.

He had left it behind, and in future his own world would consist of this luxurious little suite of rooms. It was an appalling prospect, and a man of lesser character would have withered under the strain.

But Lee's will was like iron. He grimly made up his mind that he would remain cheerful and healthy. He would show these captors of his that he was not a craven. Never once would he allow them to laugh and gloat over his misfortune.

And there was always hope—somewhere in the back of his mind there lingered a hope. It was so faint as to be almost non-existent. With his own hands he could do nothing. For a man, no matter how ingenious, cannot conquer the impossible.

So far as mechanism went, Nelson Lee had no more chance of escaping than a fly has of disentangling itself from the meshes of a spider's web. But there was always the human element—and that was the base of Nelson Lee's hope.

Sooner or later, no matter how perfect the mechanical devices, the human element would make a slip. And then would come Nelson Lee's chance. But how long?

CHAPTER II.

DAYS OF SUSPENSE.



CHIEF DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR LENNARD, of Scotland Yard, walked briskly

up the stairs to Nelson Lee's chambers in Gray's Inn Road. He entered the consulting-room with the familiarity of old friendship.

Lennard removed his bowler, puffed, and looked round. The room was empty, and wore a deserted, untidy aspect.

"Anybody at home?" he sang out cheerily.

The door of the laboratory opened, and Nipper appeared. He hurried forward, a look of eagerness in his eyes.

"Any news, inspector?" he inquired, his voice tense.

The C.I.D. man's face lost its smile.

"Afraid not, young 'un," he replied gloomily. "You never stop hoping do you? But it's no good, Nipper—I've given him up. Somehow, I don't think we shall ever see him again—"

"We shall!" shouted Nipper fiercely. "I think it's rotten of you to say that, Mr. Lennard! Haven't you got more faith in the guv'nor? He'll turn up one day—I know it! I can feel it in my bones!"

"All right, lad—all right!" grunted Lennard. "No need to get excited about it. I just looked in to pass the time of the day, and all you can do is to jump down my throat. But never mind—you're having a pretty beastly sort of time, aren't you?"

Nipper didn't reply. He stood there, all the animation having left his face. There was an enormous difference in Nipper. His former chums of St. Frank's College would have been startled if they could have seen him.

Nipper was haggard and drawn. He had aged amazingly. Attired in a quiet lounge suit, instead of the familiar Etons, he looked many years older than he actually was. There were deep hollows beneath his eyes, telling of sleepless nights. And his shoulders drooped.

For he had been passing through days of agonising suspense.

Over a fortnight had elapsed since he and the St. Frank's party had arrived back in England, after the summer holiday trip. At

first, Nipper had been fired with a wild enthusiasm to search for his beloved master.

But this enthusiasm had soon died down—had soon become dead. For there was no starting point—no possible line of inquiry that could be followed. The task of looking for Nelson Lee was insuperable.

"Isn't there any hope at all?" asked Nipper, looking at Lennard suddenly. "Haven't you struck anything, inspector?"

"We've struck nothing, because there's nothing to strike," replied the man from Scotland Yard. "Do you really believe in this Green Triangle stuff, Nipper?"

"Yes, I do."

"H'm! You shouldn't!" grunted Lennard. "It's all bluff, my lad. There's no Green Triangle at all—there's no crime campaign, or anything. And, what's more, we're convinced at the Yard that Professor Zingrave is dead!"

Nipper looked openly scornful.

"What about that aeroplane?" he demanded. "What about that Green Triangle in smoke? You and I saw it two weeks ago—"

"Yes, we saw it, but it proves nothing," interrupted the inspector. "Anybody could do sky-writing in green smoke—and a triangle is about the most simple of all formations. I tell you, it's a hoax—there's somebody else on this job, doing it for fun."

"I suppose the gov'nor was kidnapped for fun?" asked Nipper bitterly.

"Heaven knows why your gov'nor was kidnapped—but we all believe that he's been taken out of the country," replied Lennard. "The police have never rested since the news came of Nelson Lee's capture. And during the whole time there hasn't been the slightest trace of a clue. We're not duffers at the Yard, Nipper—give us credit for some brains—and remember, the Yard's organisation is the most wonderful police system in the world!"

Nipper nodded.

"I know that, inspector," he agreed slowly. "But I also know that Professor Zingrave is the most diabolically cunning crook that ever breathed. He's just waiting his opportunity—and before long he'll strike. And if he's killed the gov'nor—"

Nipper broke off, his voice failing.

"That's all right, young 'un," said the inspector uncomfortably. "I was hoping you'd be a bit more resigned. In fact, I almost expected to find you away. Not going back to St. Frank's, eh?"

"St. Frank's?" echoed Nipper harshly. "You're mad, Mr. Lennard! Do you think I could live in school while the gov'nor remains missing? We've got to find him! We must! Do you hear? We must! And I think the Yard's a wash-out—a dismal, horrible failure!"

Nipper's voice became fierce, and the inspector smiled patiently.

"You don't mean it, Nipper—but I'll for-

give you anything just now. Well, if there's any news at all, I'll 'phone through at once. But don't count on anything."

Lennard went—only too glad to get away. Usually, he and Nipper chaffed one another endlessly. But in the present circumstances there was no fun or laughter in Nipper's life.

Soon after the Yard man had gone, another visitor arrived—this time Lord Dorrimore. The sporting peer was full of grave concern, but he managed to cheer Nipper up to a certain extent. There was something very lovable about Dorrie.

"I've really come to entice you away from this place, Nipper," he explained. "You're goin' to a shadow. It's these surroundin's—these old associations. It won't do any good to stop here an' mope."

"You don't expect me to go off on some jungle trip, I suppose?" asked Nipper, his very tone betraying his surprise. "I couldn't do it, Dorrie—it's impossible."

"If you'd be a bit patient, instead of jumpin' to conclusions, everythin' would be easier," said his lordship. "No, young 'un, I just want you to come down to my country place in Berkshire. It isn't winter yet, an' there's still plenty of enjoyment in the country. It'll take your mind off this business an' give you a change—"

"It's jolly nice of you, Dorrie, but I can't go."

"Rubbish! I'm off this afternoon—"

"Then you'll go alone!" interrupted Nipper. "I must stay here; I must be ready to act without an instant's delay if Scotland Yard ever gets on the track."

Lord Dorrimore gave it up, for there was a tone of absolute finality in Nipper's voice. He meant to remain. And Dorrie felt strangely sad. What was there to hope for?

CHAPTER III.

THE ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION.



PROFESSOR ZINGRAVE adjusted his glasses.

"And this little object will do all you say?" he asked, bending over the table and examining the gleaming metal device.

"I am hopeful, Hammerton, but the proof will be in the final test."

The other man looked excited.

"But I tell you this mechanism is absolutely infallible," he exclaimed. "The explosive force is so directed that the entire charge can be concentrated on one small object. It is the most revolutionary invention of its kind that has ever been produced."

The criminal scientist looked up and nodded.

"I know it, Hammerton, because I invented it," he replied coolly. "But that

is one of the reasons why I am doubtful. It is never wise to take anything for granted. You have constructed this engine of destruction from my specifications, and, in theory, it cannot fail. But theory and practice are two different things."

"Generally speaking, yes," agreed Hammerton. "But in this case we can know with absolute certainty that the device will succeed. I've taken the liberty to make one or two minor alterations in the interior design—"

"You infernal fool!" snarled Zingrave, his silky voice becoming suddenly harsh. "Who told you to do that?"

The other recoiled.

"I was compelled to, chief, with the materials available I found it impossible to stick to the absolute specification. But I have improved this bomb. And I can safely guarantee that it will destroy any strong-room under the face of the sun. The most impregnable bank vault will be opened by just one of these contrivances."

"We must prove this; we must put it to the test," said Professor Zingrave softly. "Plans are maturing for such a coup. If you have been successful, Hammerton, the explosion from this bomb will be confined to one tiny area, so that the full force will be shattering in its effects. Well, you had better leave it with me, and you will learn of its success or failure later."

The two men were standing in a small room where only one shaded light relieved the shadow. The window was completely hidden by curtains, and nobody would have imagined that outside lay dense tracts of thick forest on every side.

For the Green Triangle headquarters was situated in the heart of Hampshire, and this secret retreat was so well concealed that none had the faintest suspicion of its presence.

The Green Triangle chief and his agents always came and went in the Crimson Eagle, the wonderful hovering aircraft which had succeeded in carrying Nelson Lee into captivity.

Hammerton did not seem to like leaving the mechanical device in the chief's hands. He hesitated and looked at Zingrave half-suspiciously. Hammerton was a pale-faced man, thin, and thin-blooded.

"You promised me payment—" he began.

"You shall have it!" interrupted Zingrave. "After the test."

"But I have spent much money on experimenting and perfecting—"

"Can you not trust me?" snapped the professor. "Wait, Hammerton, wait! Everything will come in good time. With-

in a few days the Green Triangle will achieve its first triumph. And this little engine of destruction shall assist us in the enterprise."

He picked up the curious bomb, and his fingers touched several of the projecting knobs and adjusting devices. Something clicked. A faint whirr came from within the contrivance.

"What is that?" demanded Zingrave sharply.

Hammerton made no reply. He was standing there, his eyes bulging, his face as pale as chalk. Professor Zingrave caught his breath in, and when he spoke again it was a shout.

"Fool!" he snarled. "What have you done—"

Hammerton tried to speak, and a gurgling cry came from him. Then he dramatically collapsed in a heap, the tension being so great that he had swooned. And the contrivance continued to purr.

Zingrave acted on the instant. That sound from within the bomb was ominous, unnerving. He expected to be blown to a thousand fragments any second. With two agile strides he reached the curtains and flung them aside.

Crash!

The bomb flew from Zingrave's hand, shattered the window, and went flying out down the grassy slope beyond the old ruins. And the professor started back, breathing heavily.

"That fool shall pay for this!" he panted. "Some blunder—"

A devastating explosion interrupted him. It was sharp, short and appalling. It was unlike any other explosion imaginable. All its force seemed to be concentrated into one infinitesimal second.

Through the window Zingrave caught a glimpse of blue flame, so vivid that he was momentarily blinded. And the dreadful clap rendered him utterly deaf. And then, at the same second, he was sent hurtling over backwards.

The window shattered into a thousand fragments and Zingrave was flung to the other side of the room like a ninepin. The furniture seemed to be alive, and from outside came the echo and re-echo of falling stonework.

Zingrave had declared that his bomb would explode with shattering effect, but even he had never believed that proof of it would come so swiftly and so dramatically.

The unexpected had happened, and it is the unexpected which takes people off their guard, and which destroys at a blow every carefully laid plan that human ingenuity can devise.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WAY TO LIBERTY.



THE walls absolutely rocked. Nelson Lee was startled. A minute before he had been preparing himself for bed, and was leisurely removing his collar, for even in captivity Lee took a pride in dressing well.

And then, without the slightest warning, a dull, penetrating boom had sounded. It seemed to come from somewhere beyond the prison walls, high up near the ceiling. Lee paused in the act of his task, and at the same instant the electric light went out.

"What's in the wind now?" murmured the detective curiously.

It all happened swiftly, within the space of a few seconds. In utter darkness, Nelson Lee found himself flung to the floor. Objects hit him. He was bruised and dazed.

It seemed to him that the walls had collapsed. And at first he could do nothing but fight for his life. He picked himself up unsteadily, gashed, bruised, and nearly choked and blinded by thick dust. And then he was set coughing by fearsome chemical fumes.

His eyes watered intensely, and he believed that his last minute had arrived. The thing had come so suddenly, so appallingly instantaneous. He swayed over to the other side of the pitch-black room.

And then with a start he stood rigid.

Whether his eyes deceived him, whether he was insane, he didn't know. But right in the distance he could see something twinkling. He could have sworn it was a star! And a cold draught blew upon his face.

But it wasn't possible!

Here, in this prison, a star was in sight. The darkness was confusing, and the first lucid thought that occurred to Lee was that his eyes had been tricked by the noxious fumes.

And then in a flash he gained the true perspective.

He was looking through a jagged hole near the ceiling. The explosion had obviously spent its full force on the exterior of his prison, the ground being at about the same level as the ceiling of this dungeon bed-room.

And a great hope leapt into Lee's heart. Escape!

The hole was small, but perhaps the masonry was loose. And unless he acted now, on the instant, it would be too late. Some accident had happened; without question there had been a disaster of some kind.

And almost the first thing his captors would do would be to look for him. There



Nipper rushed up to Nelson Lee and seized him. It was a feverish grip. And there was no question that Lee was solid—a living person of flesh and blood.

was not a fraction of a minute to be lost. With one movement, Lee pushed the bed to the wall, blindly and feverishly. But he retained his coolness.

All his nerves were on the stretch, and his heart throbbed rapidly. Could it be that his chance had come now, so much sooner than he had ever dared to hope for?

It was a wild thought, and Lee battled it down. But to stand idle and consider the position would have been fatal—indeed, madness itself. The only thing was to act

while the opportunity was within his grasp. For once this chance sped by, there would certainly be no other.

Fate had played into his hands!

On the bed, he could just reach the jagged opening in the wall. With all his strength he heaved at the stonework. A great portion of the heavy masonry fell, nearly smothering Nelson Lee as it did so. It was only by leaping aside that he saved himself from destruction.

The bed was shattered beneath him, and the mass of debris fell. He had not bargained for such success as this! From somewhere behind he heard the clang of the great metal door—a shout.

But in one movement Lee leapt upwards, and wormed his way through the jagged opening. The cold air of night beat upon him, and the blessed stars were high above. He could see the tree-tops waving in the chill October wind. He was out in the open air—under the sky!

And Nelson Lee bolted like a rabbit. A fierce, grim determination came over him to fight. If it came to recapture, he would fight as he had never battled before! And it would be a fight to the death! Never would he allow himself to be thrust back into that prison of luxury which was really a living death.

But he reached the trees without a human soul accosting him. Scarcely a full minute had elapsed since the explosion, and everything was still confused and disordered. Clouds of dust arose from the wrecked part of the ruins, and the air was still heavy with fumes.

With never a pause, Lee plunged through the undergrowth.

Scratched, bleeding, but with a song of victory in his heart he forged onwards. No woodsman was more cunning than he in the difficult art of woodcraft. He forced his way through the tangled undergrowth with an uncanny sense of direction.

And each step he took carried him further and further away from that prison. He did not go round in a circle, as a novice might have done. Pursuit was possible—indeed a certainty.

But Lee felt that all was now well. In the open he was more than a match for his enemies. He had been captured by a trick, and since that moment he had never been allowed the chance to make a fight.

And while he sped further and further away, Professor Cyrus Zingrove picked himself up in the half-wrecked room. Hammerton was already recovering, and he was finally restored to his wits by a fierce shake from his companion.

"Fool!" snarled Zingrave. "What of my instructions? That bomb would have been safe if you had manufactured it according to my specifications! And now the report will have been heard for miles——"

"It was safe!" gasped Hammerton.

"Are you mad? I hurled it away——"

"And so caused the explosion!" interrupted Hammerton bitterly. "The whirring

from within the bomb was nothing—it could have been stopped by a mere pressure of another button. But my heart is weak, and I swooned before I could warn you——"

"Lies—lies!" broke in Zingrave tensely. "For this, Hammerton, you shall be penalised to the utmost limit!"

"But it isn't fair—it isn't——"

Hammerton's outburst was interrupted by the arrival of a third man. He plunged into the room and halted, nonplussed by the darkness. For there were no lights here, either.

"Chief!" he gasped frantically.

"What is it, Robson?" demanded Zingrave.

"Lee!" shouted Robson. "The explosion shattered the prison——"

"And what of Nelson Lee?" demanded Zingrave, his voice acute.

"Nelson Lee has vanished!" shouted Robson. "I entered as quickly as possible, but he had gone!"

The Chief of the Green Triangle stood stock still, staring. There was something awful in his dead silence. Gone! Nelson Lee had escaped! The one man whom he feared more than any other!

It was small wonder that he stood there, speechless.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMPACT.



NIPPER looked at Lord Dorrimore impatiently.

"Oh, Dorrie, why don't you give it up?" he asked. "It's no good—I won't leave these rooms! I told you yesterday that it's no good."

Lord Dorrimore shrugged his shoulders.

"But, my dear kid, I'm trying to buck you up!" he replied softly. "What on earth's the good of stickin' here, doin' nothin'? You'll simply mope—that's what you'll do. You'll wear away to a shadow."

"Do I care?" asked Nipper gruffly.

"No, by gad, I don't believe you do!" replied his lordship. "I didn't think you had such an infernally strong will, young man! Take my advice, and stop this worryin'."

Dorrie crossed the consulting-room, and entered the laboratory, humming a tune from one of the latest musical comedies. The sound irritated Nipper beyond endurance. But he felt that he was boorish, and he bit his lips, and stared dully out of the window.

The traffic was passing up and down Grey's Inn Road with its usual hustle. Dorrie hummed away in the laboratory in a most exasperating way. And Nipper wondered. His own anguish was everlasting—nothing could alter the fact that Nelson Lee had vanished, and would probably never return again.

And yet Lord Dorrimore remained ever cheerful.

The consulting-room door opened, and Nipper's heart leapt. But it was only Mrs. Jones, the housekeeper, with a couple of letters—which Nipper didn't even glance at. He guessed—correctly—that they were from St. Frank's.

"I can't stand it!" he muttered fiercely.

Dorrimore's gay humming nearly drove him mad. He strode into the laboratory, and came to an abrupt halt, his eyes almost staring from his head. Nelson Lee was calmly brushing his hair in front of the mirror.

"Hallo, Nipper!" he said cheerily. "Had lunch yet?"

"Guv'nor!" choked Nipper dazedly. "But—but—"

He couldn't say another word. He rushed up to Nelson Lee, and seized him. It was a feverish grip. And there was no question that Lee was solid—a living person of flesh and blood.

A soft light came into the great detective's eyes as he watched the boy's emotion. Nipper's eyes, indeed, were wet, and after the first pallor of his cheeks, a flush had crept into them.

"Oh, guv'nor!" he muttered brokenly.

"Steady, young 'un—steady!" said Nelson Lee, rather startled. "I didn't mean to give you such a shock as this. Indeed, I thought you would see through my little impersonation at once—"

"I can't believe it, sir!" whispered Nipper huskily. "Dorrie came in here—and I was furious because he hummed a tune—"

"Just a little trick of mine to keep you fooled whilst I removed the make-up," smiled Nelson Lee. "By James, Nipper, it's good to see you again! Had a bad time of it, eh?"

"I—I can't tell you, guv'nor," said Nipper.

"Well, so have I—an infernally bad time," replied Lee quietly. But that's all over now, Nipper—I'll give you the details after we've had something to eat."

"But how did you come here as Dorrie?" demanded Nipper breathlessly.

The haggard look had entirely vanished from his face—he was transformed. The change, indeed, was startling. It was all Nipper could do to prevent himself from dancing madly with sheer joy.

"I escaped—in Hampshire—and managed to get to Dorrie's country place," replied Nelson Lee quietly. "I came up to Town in his car this morning—thought it better to impersonate him, to be on the safe side. And Dorrie's easy enough to mimic—I knew every trick of his voice and intonation. So it wasn't such a wonderful performance, Nipper."

"And now, guv'nor?" breathed Nipper. "What now?"

"I have decided to drop all deception," replied Nelson Lee grimly. "I can take care of myself, and in future I shall be on my guard. And from this minute I shall fight against Zingrave and the Green Triangle with every ounce of my strength and ability."

Nipper took a deep breath.

"Oh, guv'nor, it's ripping to hear you speaking like that—to see you again, safe and sound!" he exclaimed, with shining eyes.

"And what about St. Frank's, sir?"

"St. Frank's must get along without me," replied Lee, with a smile. "I have more important work to do—but you can return if you wish—"

"Never!" vowed Nipper. "I'll stick with you, sir! And we'll enter this fight together, and smash the Green Triangle to dust!"

Nelson Lee gripped his young assistant by the hand.

"I knew I could rely on you, young 'un," he said quietly. "That's a compact!"

And so the famous pair of Gray's Inn Road started the old life again—forgetting St. Frank's and everything else in the one fixed determination to fight ruthlessly against the League of the Green Triangle.

THE END.

The Further Adventures of NELSON LEE and NIPPER Against the LEAGUE of the GREEN TRIANGLE Will Appear Next Week in Another Thrilling Story:—

"THE EAGLE'S PREY!"

FIVE MINUTES WITH OUR AUTHOR

(Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks)

Interviewed By Our
Special Representative

A CCEPTING the commission to venture forth and interview Mr. Brooks, I must admit I was somewhat curious. As it happened, I had never previously met the author of our St. Frank's stories, although I had often pictured him in my mind as a long-haired, elderly gentleman.

Imagine my surprise, therefore, when I was ushered into Mr. Brooks' presence to find that he is neither long-haired nor elderly, but a tall, youngish man, with fair hair, clean-shaven chin, and a fresh complexion. I am afraid I stared rather hard, for Mr. Brooks grinned as we shook hands.

"Very disappointed?" he asked cheerfully.

"No—not at all!" I replied, with haste. "In fact, I am quite pleasantly surprised. If you will forgive me for being so frank, I had imagined you to be far less prepossessing."

"Forgive you?" he chuckled. "You've relieved me enormously. I hear that the Editor intends to publish a portrait of me at the same time as this interview, and I had been wondering by how many thousand copies the circulation would drop as a result! You have given me fresh heart! I breathe again!"

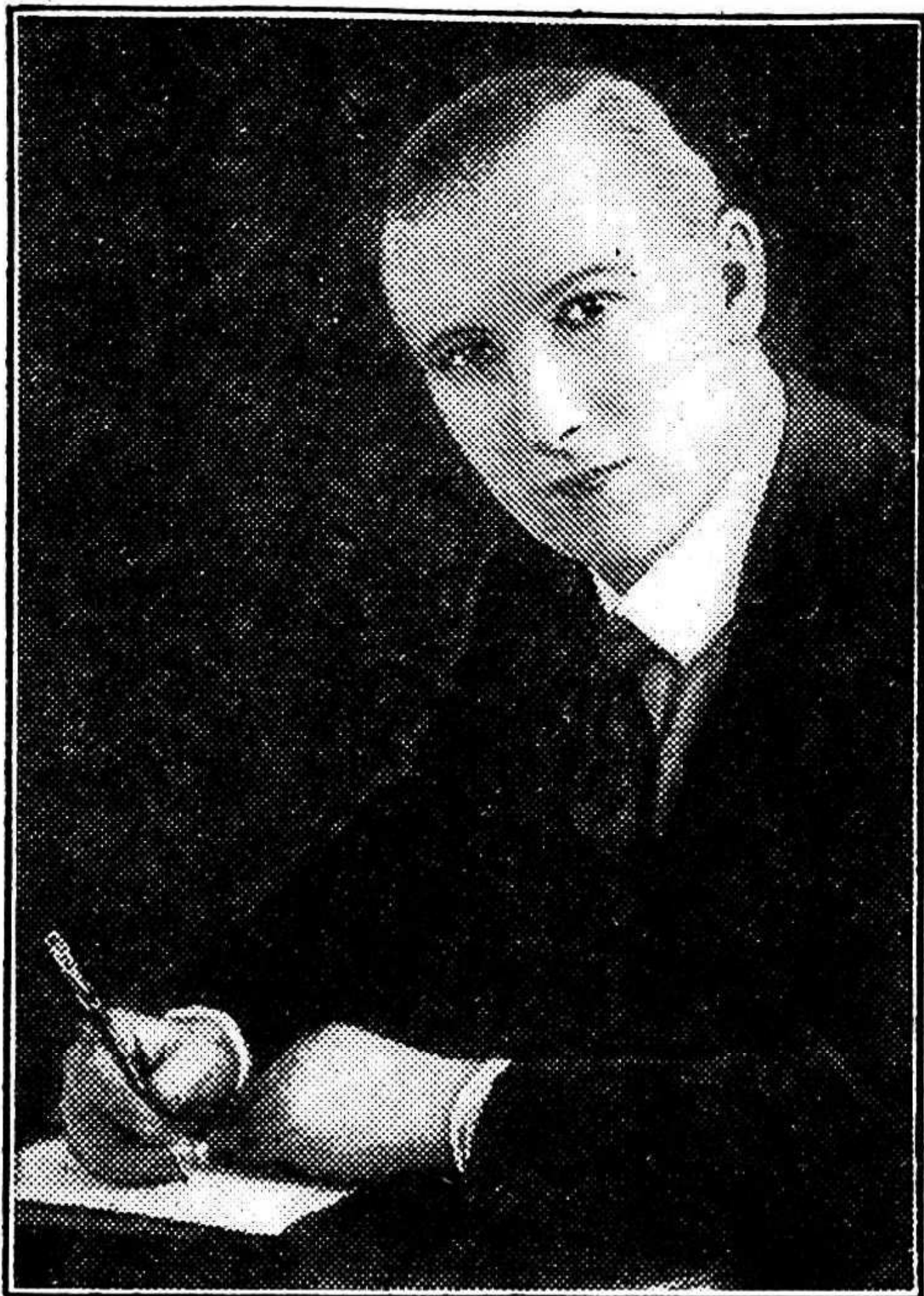
Mr. Brooks made me comfortable at once, and we were soon chatting amiably and contentedly. My first inquiry was a pointed one. I wanted to know how Mr. Brooks obtained all his plots and ideas.

"Well, now you've given me a poser," he replied, smiling. "Honestly, I cannot tell you. I only know that the majority of my ideas simply develop."

"From what?" I asked.

"Oh, anything," he answered. "Some incident I may have chanced to see in the streets—an item in the newspaper—anything, in fact, connected with human nature or adventure or sport. Once I have a peg to hang my story on, the construction is more or less a matter of acute concentration, deep thought—and hard work."

"Then writing school stories isn't easy?" I ventured.



"Try it and see!" chuckled Mr. Brooks. "Mind you, I love all my characters, and regard them as my companions—as living persons. Without my St. Frank's boys I should be desolate."

"And your recreations, Mr. Brooks?" I asked, with interest.

"Well, they are rather numerous," he smiled. "I take a keen interest in football, cricket, motoring, the theatre, cinemas, and reading. I do quite a lot of reading, by the way, for there is no better food for the brain."

We continued our chat, and there is much more that I would like to set down, but I am afraid the space at my disposal is limited. But if any readers are sufficiently interested to express a desire for more, I have no doubt the Editor will satisfy them.

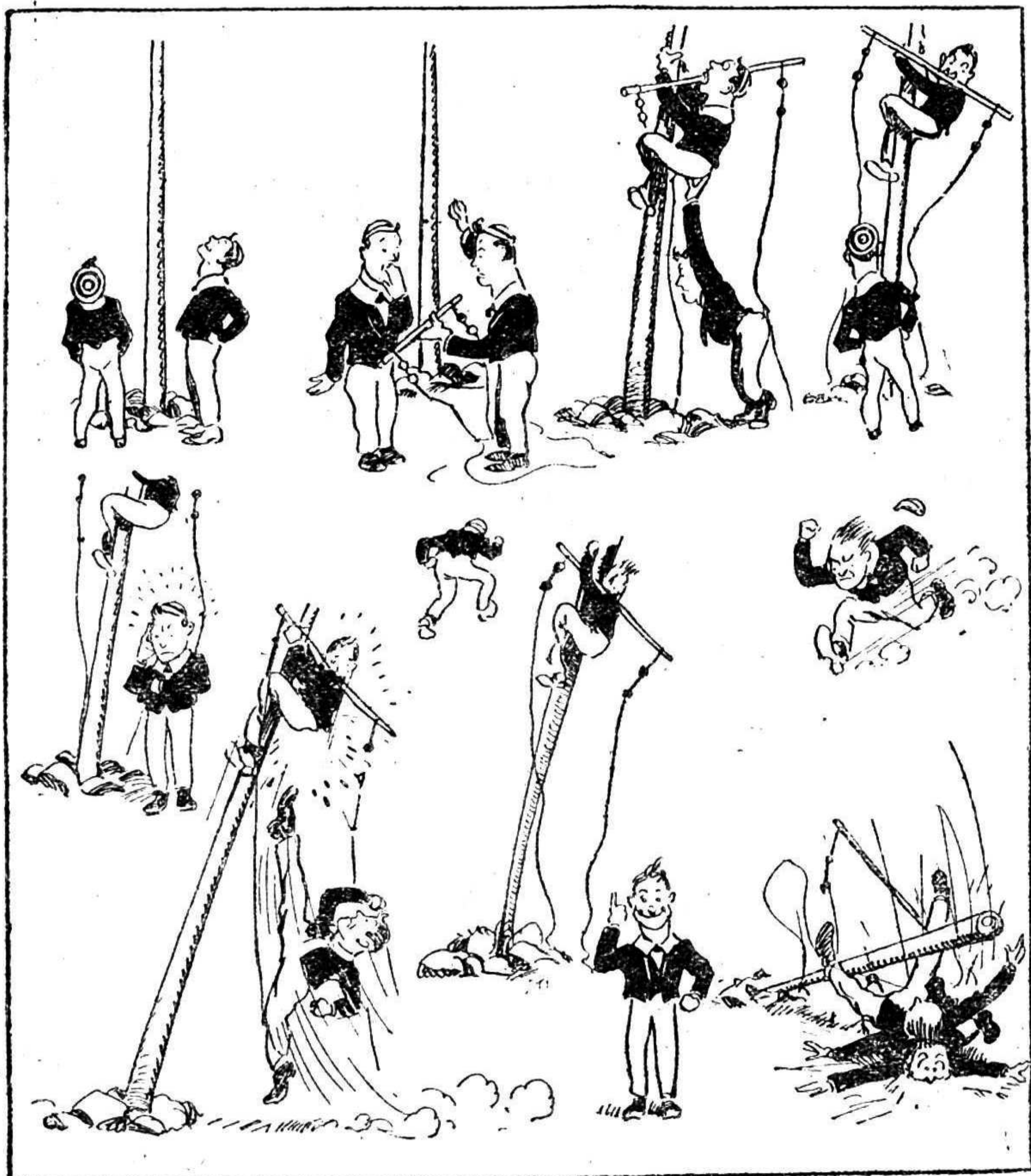
Yours sincerely,
Edwy Searles Brooks

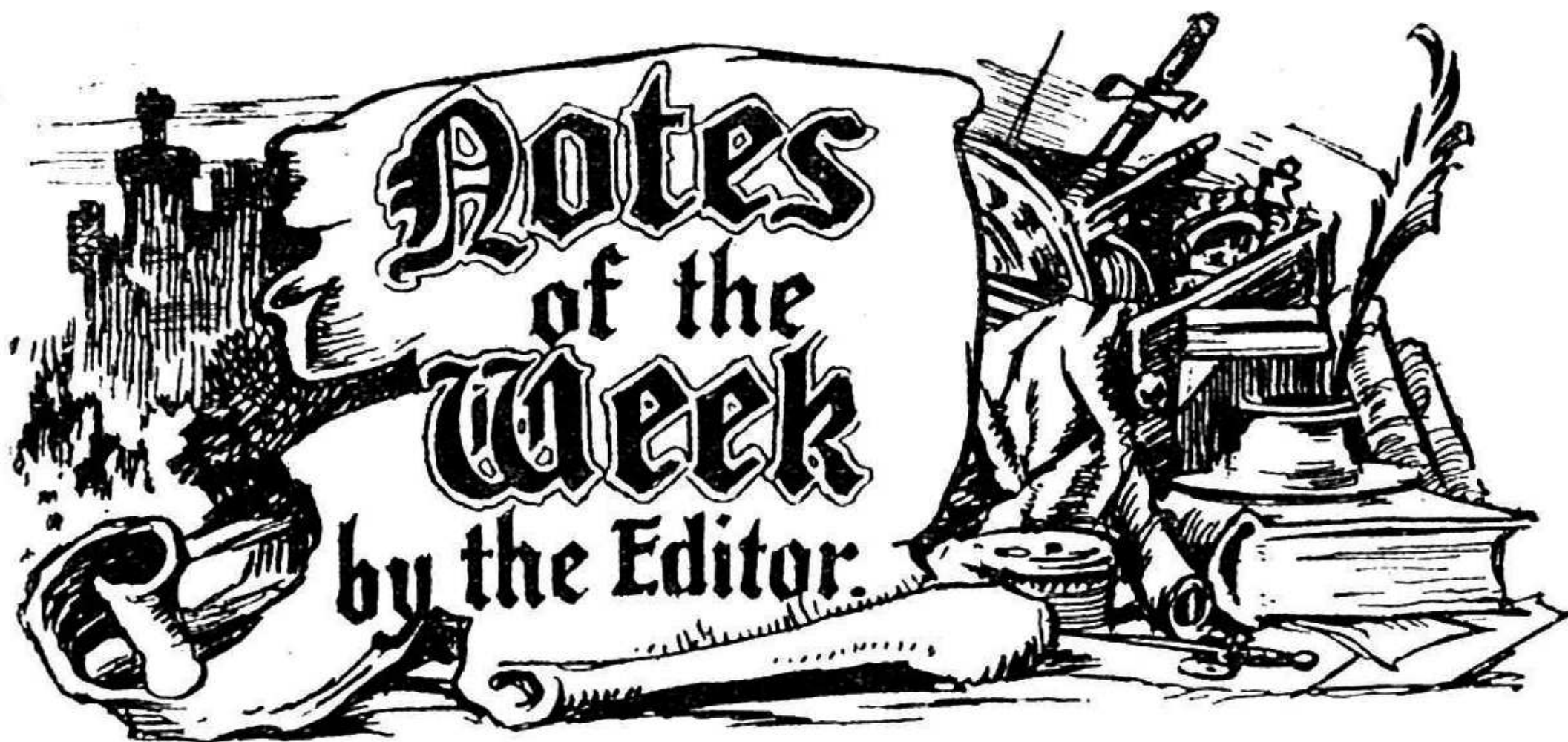


St. Frank's Magazine.

No. 43. Vol. 2. Edited by Pitt. September 20, 1924

ADVENTURES OF E.O. AND WILLY HANDFORTH ERECTING AN AERIAL—No. 2. *A Story Without Words.*





Editorial Office,
Study E,
St. Frank's.

My dear Chums

The new term has begun with many big changes, which, we hope, will be all for the best. It came as a shock when I heard that Nelson Lee and Nipper had deserted St. Frank's. One calamity seems to follow another before you have time to recover from the first. The second calamity is the election of myself to fill the breach made by Nipper as your Skipper and your Editor. I was no more prepared for this than you, and from what I can see of things I could not have taken on this dual office at a more difficult time. Buster Boots, who has been temporarily editing the Mag. during the holidays with great distinction, has gladly relinquished this responsibility, so that he might devote all his energy to the leadership of the coll—I mean, the Modern House. Nevertheless, he will still remain on the staff of the Mag. as our publicity man.

NELSON LEE AND THE GREEN TRIANGLE.

While we are all sorry to lose Nelson Lee and Nipper, we must not forget that they are really doing far greater public service in making full use of their detective powers and experiences in ridding society of such pests as Zingrave and his criminal organisation, the Green Triangle, than in remaining at St. Frank's. Nipper has often told me how both he and the gov'nor chafed under the enforced idleness from the work they loved when there was nothing doing at the school. The best we can wish them, then, is success in their renewed war on the Green Triangle.

THE NEW HOUSEMASTER.

The Ancient House is to be congratulated on its good fortune in having Dr.

Beverley Stokes as the new Housemaster in place of Nelson Lee. Mr. Stokes, as he now wishes to be called, won the hearts of all the boys last term when he acted as headmaster during Dr. Stafford's absence on holiday. Then he showed us that he could be a pal without losing the respect due to him as a master. Out of school he was just like one of the boys. He entered into our games with an enthusiasm that spurred us on to victory. With Mr. Stokes as Housemaster we should do great things in footer this season.

WHY THE REMOVE IS NOW THE FOURTH.

Among the innovations adopted by the Head this term, as suggested by Mr. Stokes, is the new and more dignified name of the Fourth Form for the Remove. The latter title has now been dropped by most public schools, and though it will seem strange to speak of the Remove as the Fourth, we shall soon get used to it.

PERSONNEL AND STUDIES OF THE FOURTH.

To enable Fourth Form boys to know which studies their neighbours occupy under the new arrangement, a complete list of studies and their occupants will be found on another page of this issue. You will notice that the Modera House (formerly the College House) has adopted numbers instead of letters for labelling the studies, whereas the Ancient House still clings to the letter system. In addition to this, you will observe that a few of the boys have been transferred to new studies.

As I am coming to the end of my space, I must now ring off. But don't forget that next week I am starting a Portrait Gallery and a Who's Who.

Your old chum,

REGGIE PITT.

The Adventures of TRACKETT GRIM



THE MURDER IN THE MUDDY MARSH.

Being the Further Amazing Adventures of Trackett Grim and his Clever Assistant, Splinter.

By

E. O. HANDFORTH

SPLINTER gave a sharp cry of surprise, and nearly fell headlong out of the consulting-room window. Baker's Inn Road lay below him, quiet and sedate and peaceful.

The lad's shout was caused by the sight of something which filled him with amazement. A great armoured car was threading its way through the heavy, lumbering traffic. The clatter was terrific, and it even caused the windows to rattle and shake, and the whole house to tremble. Trackett Grim, in the act of shaving before the consulting-room mirror, cut himself rather badly, but took no notice. The great in-criminator cared nothing for injuries. He was so strong and steel-like that even a blow from a bludgeon hardly hurt him.

"Quick, sir!" yelled Splinter. "There's a whacking great armoured car outside! It's stopped opposite our door!"

"Good heavens!" gasped Grim, absently dipping the shaving-brush into the ink-pot. "The Black Hard Gang! For years I have been expecting an attack. They have come at last!"

He dashed to the window, and gazed out. The armoured car, black and sinister-looking, had come to a halt against the pavement. Crowds of people were surging round. Somebody emerged from the dark interior. And Trackett Grim and Splinter stared in stupefied amazement.

For the man who crossed the pavement was wearing a complete suit of armour, and he clattered towards Trackett Grim's door with a swift, hurried step. In a trice he had vanished inside, and in two more trices he was darting upstairs with the speed of an antelope. Trackett Grim and Splinter could hear his slow, laboured steps on the stairs.

"We must flee, sir!" panted Splinter hoarsely. "We must fly!"

"Piffle!" snapped Trackett Grim. "Don't talk to me about fleas and flies at a moment like this! This man is no enemy—

he is a client! My trained mind has already detected that fact."

"Impossible, sir!" breathed Splinter.

"All right, you young ass—just wait and see!" roared Grim.

A moment later the door flew open, and the armoured man from the armoured car entered. His face was completely concealed by the glittering steel helmet. The only indication of the client's appearance was an enormous white moustache which escaped from either side of the helmet.

"Good-morning, colonel!" said Trackett Grim briskly. "Take a seat! What can I do you for? I mean, what can I do for you? Please be careful with the upholstery!"

The visitor sat down with a rattle in one of the arm-chairs and as he removed the helmet he sounded like a human Ford. The helmet came away at last, and Trackett Grim and Splinter found themselves looking at a fiery-red face, which was half-hidden behind the jungle of a huge moustache.

"At last!" ejaculated the visitor. "At last I am face to face with Trackett Grim! I have written you four letters, sir, and you haven't answered one of them! How dare you? And how the thunder did you know that I'm a colonel? By gad, sir, you're a wonder!"

"Elementary, my dear sir!" scoffed Trackett Grim. "A man with a moustache like yours could be nothing else but a colonel. I further deduce that you have spent many years in India!"

"This—this is uncanny!" panted the client.

"A complexion like yours is only secured by long life in India, or by drinking whisky," replied Grim. "And as you didn't ask for a whisky-and-soda as soon as you sat down, I therefore knew that you had lived in India. What is the precise nature of your crime?"

"My crime?" gasped the other. "Oh,

yes, of course! As a matter of fact, there hasn't been a crime—yet. But I am menaced, Mr. Grim! At any moment my life may be taken! I go about in fear and trembling! I am hunted and shadowed! My life hangs on a thread!"

Trackett Grim waved his hand

"Leave yourself in my charge, and you will be safe," he declared, as he deftly lathered his face for the second run over. "The precautions you have already taken are excellent. But let me hear your story."

By this time Trackett Grim was a remarkable sight. The blue-black ink on the shaving-brush had given him a murky appearance. He caught sight of himself in the mirror, but did not even quail. He had such command of himself that he took the blow bravely.

"Just a simple disguise!" he explained promptly. "I find that a shaving-brush is an excellent tool for the purpose."

With one movement, Trackett Grim rubbed his face with a towel, imparting a bluish appearance to his whole visage. Then he sat down, yanked out his notebook, and licked his pencil.

"My name is Colonel Currie Peppercorn," said the client, as he noisily crossed his legs. "Thirty years ago I was a lieutenant up in the Indian hills. I was on leave from the regiment, and had a friend with me. Well, this friend heard about an Indian temple full of diamonds. So we buzzed along to have a look at it."

"Ah!" said Grim. "And your friend was murdered?"

"Not exactly," replied Colonel Peppercorn, shifting his elbow, and tearing a

jagged hole in the arm chair. "You see, we got into the temple, filled our pockets with diamonds, and then scooted. I got away, but Constantine was seized and put to the torture."

"You made no attempt to rescue him?" asked Grim sternly.

"Twenty times I dashed into the fray, and single-handed I slew fifty-five of the Redskins!" replied Colonel Peppercorn. "These Indians are demons, sir! It was only by pure luck that I didn't lose my scalp! There is no worse enemy than a Redskin!"

"I know it!" snapped Grim. "I have fought Redskins in every part of the world! I take it that you came to England to settle down?"

"Exactly!" said the colonel. "For twenty years I lived in peace. Then, one day, I caught sight of Cunning Constantine. And I learned that he had escaped from India, and had gone dotty! He thought I had betrayed him, and he swore to take my life."

"In fact, you were in a pretty nasty mess," said Grim.

"I was in constant danger," said the armoured man. "So I fortified my country house in Essex, dismissed all the servants, and from that day to this I have lived alone—a hermit. Three weeks ago I saw a man lurking round the grounds, and he has lurked ever since. Cunning Constantine is after me! So I have come to you to help me."

"Enough!" cried Grim. "Go back to your home, colonel, and I will come down to-morrow and track this miscreant to earth. I'd come to-day, only I promised to recover the Earl of Bumble's missing masterpieces. I'll soon polish that case off, and then I shall be at your disposal."

Five minutes later Colonel Currie Peppercorn departed. What with his armour, and his armoured car, he was comparatively safe from any chance shots. For Cunning Constantine was quite capable of lurking anywhere.

The following evening Trackett Grim and Splinter arrived at the colonel's country home on the Essex marshes. The place was bleak and barren, with bogs and quagmires lying about.



The only indication of the client's appearance was an enormous white moustache which escaped from either side of the helmet.

all over the place. And in every direction the lovely wooded scenery charmed Trackett Grim and Splinter.

A dreadful shock awaited them.

The front door stood open, and there was no sign of the colonel! But in less than four jiffs Trackett Grim had obtained some clues. The library windows were open, and there were deep footprints leading out on to the marsh. Like a hound on the scent, Trackett Grim followed them.

"Too late!" he cried, in anguish. "The colonel has not only been murdered, but buried! This is terrible, Splinter! And old Bumble only gave us five quid for all yesterday's work! I would that I had come down here yesterday!"

The evidence was conclusive. There, on the marsh, a hole had been recently dug. Trackett Grim and Splinter lost no time in scraping away the mud, and very soon they unearthed the still figure of Colonel Peppercorn—completely clothed in his rusty armour.

"Rats!" growled Trackett Grim. "He's dead! And I was relying on a tenner, at

busily measuring him with a tape measure.

"The murder hasn't happened yet!" whispered Grim. "Cunning Constantine is measuring his victim for the size of the coffin! We are just in time, Splinter! We shall still get our money!"

They burst through the open French windows, and confronted Colonel Peppercorn and his murderer. Both looked startled.

"It's all right, Mr. Grim—you needn't stay," said the colonel lightly. "This man isn't Cunning Constantine at all—he's my tailor!"

"Your tailor!" roared Grim indignantly.

"Yes, sir! I owed him a bill, and forgot all about it—so he lurked about the place for a week or two in the hope of getting hold of me. I was so pleased that I took out that suit of armour, and buried it! And now I'm just being measured for a new suit."

"And what about my marvellous investigations?" demanded Grim angrily.

"Well, as there hasn't been any case, you can't expect to get any fee!" retorted old Peppercorn. "You can jolly well buzz

Very soon they unearthed the still figure of Colonel Peppercorn—completely clothed in his rusty armour.



least. Ah, but what is this, Splinter? What is this? A footprint! The impression of the murderer!"

Splinter was lost in amazement. His master's keen eyes had detected a faint footprint in the mud. It was about two inches deep, and bore the marks of huge brads and half-worn Blakey's.

"At least, we shall get the murderer!" shouted Grim triumphantly. "And perhaps he will have a lot of money on him! Come, Splinter!"

They raced across the marsh, following the trail. But, to their surprise, they found themselves on the other side of the colonel's house. And as they approached one of the windows a shadow fell across the blind. The darkness was so intense that they could see nothing except the lighted window. The thick red blind was drawn, and that shadow stood out in bold relief.

"Cunning Constantine!" breathed Trackett Grim tensely.

He and Splinter stared through the window into the room. And then they started. Colonel Peppercorn himself was standing on the hearthrug, whilst another man was

off, my lad! As it happens, Cunning Constantine pegged out years ago! I got a telegram from India this morning, so now I'm safe!"

Trackett Grim and Splinter returned home, and the famous incriminator sadly opened his case-book and put a black mark in it. Then he and Splinter went round to the fried-fish shop for some supper.

Starting Next Week!

**NEW PORTRAIT
GALLERY AND
WHO'S WHO of
the Fourth at St.
Frank's.**

A Complete and Revised Series.



PEEPS INTO PEPYS DIARY.

By GUY PEPYS of the Remove

MONDAY.—Back at St. Frank's. Yet can I hardly realise this. In truth it doth appear to be a kind of dream. I do ask myself if we are really back from the Sahara, after all those so dangerous adventures, which experiences do also seem to be unreal. But, strolling forth, I do see St. Frank's, standing stern and solid, as if it would say that it does not change, though other things may. And I do see the same fellows, with their familiar faces and characteristic ways.

TUESDAY.—The same, and yet not the same, is the old school, methinks. Without Nipper the place is certainly not the same. And Nipper hath gone—with Nelson Lee! Who would have thought this to be possible? A level-headed fellow was Nipper, cool and clever, and he did never lose himself in emergencies. I do fear me that he will be much missed. It is God's mercy that Handforth was not put in his place. Reggie Pitt, to my thinking, be much the better choice. If we must lose Nipper, no other could so well fill his place.

WEDNESDAY.—Hugely delighted to receive a request from Reggie Pitt, who is now Editor of the Mag, as Nipper's successor, that I would resume my Diary, which was perforce suspended during our African tour. It seemeth that many expressions of commendation have been received respecting the Diary, and many requests that it might be continued. All which pleaseth me mightily, and I do begin to be conscious of that glow which warmeth the heart of the true author. But I do fear me that I shall have to give myself a cold douche to prevent my head from swelling. I do resolve to make the Diary a school classic—a model.

THURSDAY.—Vastly amused to receive from Willy Handforth an invitation-card,

very original both in artistic design and literary style. Weird drawings of animals did adorn (?) the four corners, and the centre was filled in with these words: "1st Great Exhibition of Natural Wonders from the Sahara! Collected by Willy Handforth. You are invited to inspect this Miniature Zoo. No Charge for Admission. Refreshments Free. In Willy's Study." Assembling, we did find that Willy had great store of lizards, beetles, snakes, birds, etc. To but look upon them did give me a creepy-crawly feeling.

FRIDAY.—Did visit Willy to condole with him. But, to my surprise, he did inform me that his exhibition of yesterday had been a great success, for that he had sold six lizards at half-a-crown each, and three collections of beetles and insects at five shillings each, to fellows who had not been to the Sahara. To my confusion, he did press upon me to buy some of his ghastly wares, and, as I did go to offer him sympathy, 'twas mighty hard to refuse. In the end I did find myself minus five shillings, with two ugly lizards on my hands, the which I did promptly hand over to Hussi Ranjit.

SATURDAY.—A week gone, and precious little work done. Old Crowell very testy, but the boys heeded him not. Verily, methinks a schoolmaster's lot is not a happy one. Nobody sought to borrow money of me to-day; everybody seemeth to be flush; and hence none of the amusing financial transactions which usually characterise Saturday. Naturally we couldn't spend money in the Sahara, and when we did get back safe and sound our people were so overjoyed that they pressed upon us presents, which to our great delight did often take the form of ten-shilling and one-pound notes.

FOURTH FORM STUDIES

ANCIENT HOUSE

STUDY A

Ralph Leslie Fullwood
Albert Gulliver
George Bell

STUDY B

Arthur Hubbard
Teddy Long

STUDY C

Sir Lancelot Montgomery Tregellis-West
Tommy Watson

STUDY D

Edward Oswald Handforth
Walter Church
Arnold McClure

STUDY E

Reginald Pitt (Captain)
Jack Grey

STUDY F

Tom Burton
Jerry Dodd
Augustus Hart

STUDY G

Guy Pepys
Johnny Onions.
Bertie Onions

STUDY H

Justin Bartholomew Farman
Charles Owen (Owen major)

STUDY I

Clarence Fellowe
Timothy Tucker
Enoch Snipe

STUDY J

Timothy Armstrong
Louis Griffith
Claude Carter

STUDY K

Harold Doyle
Yung Ching
Larry Scott

STUDY L

Nicodemus Trotwood } Twins
Cornelius Trotwood }
James (Fatty) Little

STUDY M

Cecil De Valerie
Duke of Somerton
Ulysses Spencer Adams

STUDY N

Hon. Douglas Singleton
Hussi Ranjit Lal Kahn

STUDY O

Solomon Levi
Dick Goodwin

STUDY P

Archibald Winston Derek Glenthorne
Alfred Brent

MODERN HOUSE

STUDY 1

Bob Christine
Roddy Yorke
Charlie Talmadge

STUDY 2

Hubert Churchman
George Holland
Ernest Lawrence

STUDY 3

David Merrell*
Frederick Marriott*
Robert Canham*

STUDY 4

William Freeman
Eric Dallas
Arthur Steele

STUDY 5

Horace Crowe
George Webb
Albert Crooks

STUDY 6

John Busterfield Boots (Captain)
Percy Bray
Walter Denny

STUDY 7

John Holroyd
Edwin Munroe
Peter Cobb

STUDY 8

Clement Turner
Joseph Page
Donald Harron

STUDY 9

Julian Clifton*
Robert Simmens*
Cyril Conroy (Conroy minor)*

STUDY 10

Harry Oldfield
Len Clapson
Billy Nation

STUDY 11

Walter Skelton*
Eugene Ellmore*

STUDY 12

Sessue Yakama*
Hubert Jarrow*

*With the commencement of the Autumn term these ten juniors have been transferred from the Ancient House.

IN REPLY to YOURS

Correspondence Answered
by **UNCLE EDWARD**



(NOTE.—Readers of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY can write to me, and I will reply on this page. But don't expect a reply for four or five weeks. Address your letters or postcards to **UNCLE EDWARD**, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street. London, E.C.4.—**UNCLE EDWARD**.)

SPECIAL NOTICE!

As I told you last week, I am not answering any questions about ages or heights, or colours of eyes, or any of those fatheaded things as you'll get these details in the forthcoming Portrait Gallery and Who's Who? In fact, I'll take it as a favour if you'll refrain from bothering me on such silly subjects. But don't forget I'm always ready to answer questions on any subject under the sun. Instead of looking in your Encyclopædia, just write to me.

UNCLE EDWARD.

1 **W. GINGER** (Manchester): I can see you know how to use a typewriter. That letter of yours was beautifully typed—just as well as I could have done it, if not better. I believe in being frank, and you must be off your rocker to suggest that Church and McClure have always lived in constant peril. Do you think I'm an ogre, or what? I wonder why the dickens all you chaps like Willy? Of course, I'm not jealous, but I'm blessed if I can see anything to like in the little beggar. If you could only see him grubbing about with his rotten beetles and things, you wouldn't touch him with a barge pole. And he's got the cheek of a dozen. I don't know who he takes after. About Frinton. Yes, he's still here, and he's now quite a decent chap. The other fellows you mention are also at St. Frank's. My statement that I have one sister between Willy and me is quite correct. Ena comes between us.

But my elder sister, Edith, is married, and so she doesn't count. She's out of the family, so now you can understand. Don't worry about that Portrait Gallery—it's coming along all right.

AN OLD READER (Kensington, W.14): Thanks for your letter, John B. Of course, I shan't make fun of it. What a dotty idea! Did you run out of paper, or do you usually write the first page on purple, and the last page on white? Why not try three sheets next time, and finish on yellow? You might as well thoroughly enjoy yourself while you're about it. By the way, where did you get your wonderful seal? It looks like a blob of pitch to me.

R. BIGG (Cambridge): I'm surprised at you being so extravagant with your writing-paper. Your letter measures at least four inches by three. You'll go broke if you buy paper at this rate, old son. My Trackett Grim tales are so full of sense that you can't appreciate their value.

INQUISITIVE (Tottenham, N.17): What's all this piffle about my wedding? You're not the first idiot who's written such twaddle to me. How the dickens can I get married when I'm still a junior at school? I think some of you chaps must be off your giddy rockers. If I get any more questions like yours about Irene I'll jolly well chuck them in the fire, and give no answer at all. Still, as the rest of your letter was quite O.K., I'll forgive you.

ERIC (Kilburn, N.W.6): Don't call me "NUNKY." I don't like it, and I won't have it. I shan't answer your letter at all now. The chap who told you I took Irene to the Cinema is an ass. In fact, I don't believe anybody told you. You can't pull my leg like that, you josser.

J. H. S. (Normanby, Yorks): If your ribs are in danger of cracking because of my Trackett Grim tales, you'd better not read any more. Goodness knows, I don't want to send anybody to the hospital. But in my opinion you're up the pole. My ribs never crack when I read dramatic literature.

JIM SMITH (Withernsea, E. Yorks): Cricket's over by now so it's no good me telling you that if I had the chance I could be a better bowler than anybody

else. Yes, my brain is quite different to other people's. I've never seen it, of course, but I judge by results. By the way, are you going into the envelope manufacturing business?

CHARLES REYNOLDS (Neath): I don't mind you calling Church and McClure sprats, but it's like your giddy nerve to say I can exhibit myself in the Wembley Aquarium as a sea-lion. And why should Trackett Grim have a bloodhound? He's so clever that he doesn't need any assistance of that sort.

G. A. POLSON (Piccadilly): You've made a bloomer, old son. If you'll look at Nipper's page of the July 26th issue, you'll find that it was Buster Boots who said that his people were abroad—and not Guy Pepys. I'd love to hear from you again, with all your frank opinions.

T. S. C. D. S. T. (Fulham, S.W.6): It's a good thing you didn't sign your name in full, or there wouldn't have been any room for the letter. I don't agree with you that the portrait of me above is splendid. You must be a rotten judge. Still, as you're such an old reader, I'll forgive you. I'm afraid that scheme of yours isn't possible in the form you suggest.

F. C. M. (Walsall): My hat! I agree with you. It certainly is time you wrote. No, you ass, I don't wear a mask, and it's impossible to judge my looks until you see me face to face. You can't go by any of these rotten pictures of me.

L. F. DREW (York): I'd like to give you a long reply, as you ask, but I've got such a heap of other letters to answer this week that I'm nearly going grey. For a chap of thirteen your handwriting is fine. I'm suspicious.

WILLIAM A. HAMES (Cleethorpes): Got your two letters, Bill. Sorry I've been so long in replying, but McClure used your first letter as a jam-pot cover, and I didn't notice it until tea-time to-day. It's gone on the fire now, because you refer to my Trackett Grim stories as bosh—and it was smothered with jam, anyhow. Your second letter's a lot better, so I'll let you off.

MAVIS (Chapelton, Sheffield): Your letter wasn't dull at all. In fact, I quite enjoyed reading it. But you're wrong about the Trackett Grim stories. I don't edit them—I write them. If I edited them as well they'd be a lot longer, and therefore better. The photograph you ask for will soon appear.

R. ELLIOTT (Berkhamstead): You haven't written much, but you want to know a lot. The last time I hit Willy was when he pinched my Sunday topper to make a pond for his tiddlers. He hasn't got any tiddlers now! The population of St. Frank's will probably be mentioned in some of the future stories.

MUSICO (Holloway): The best cure for corns is to walk out in the rain without

any shoes or stockings for two or three weeks. At the end of this time your feet will be so sore that you won't notice the corns at all. Lipping can be cured by always talking through your nose.

C. D. S. (Risca, Newport, Mon.): I see you didn't Risca-nother letter like your first one. All right, old son, you're forgiven. I regard you as a staunch pal. As for bearing malice, you know me better than that. You're wrong about that companion publication. The Old Paper stands alone.

W. BOWLES (South Norwood, S.E.25): Thanks all the same, but I always get my Trackett Grim titles out of my own head.

F. H. (Darlington): Thanks for your little note. Hope you're out of that nursing home by this time. You're not the only one that likes Willy—blowed if I know why.

A READER (Hampstead, N.W.): All I've got to say to you is—Go and eat coke!

A UNANIMOUS JOURNALISTIC JUVENILE EXPERT (Enfield, Middlesex): I took one look at your two pages of foolscap a week ago, and I've just recovered. It deserves a long reply, so I'll leave it over until I've got more space. Hope you don't mind—it doesn't matter to me if you do, though.

CAPTAIN EBONY (Platt Bridge, Wigan): I think I shall call you the Deadwood Dick Fiend. I've answered you already, weeks ago, so I needn't go over it again. Thanks for all the nice things you say.

"CUG" FIELD (Holloway, N.7): As Nipper is Nelson Lee's assistant, he has all sorts of privileges—the lucky beggar! But I'll bet I could drive a car just as well as he can. No, Splinter isn't Trackett Grim's son.

LESLIE PAWSON (Harrogate): If you think that Willy can write better than I can, I've got nothing but pity for you. Poor chap! You're mad!

FRANK S. R. (Shrewsbury): It's a pity you can't sign your name clearly. I've puzzled for ages, and given it up. So now you've only got an initial instead of a surname. There's nothing else in your letter to reply to.

J. LISTER (Lincoln): Of course the Trackett Grim stories are written by a chap with brains. I know him personally. Hope you've got a better pencil by now.

EDWARD O. H. (Chiswick): Rats! I don't believe you signed yourself properly. I know Handforth personally, and his fist is miles better than yours. Besides, he wouldn't be seen dead with that rotten purple ink of yours.

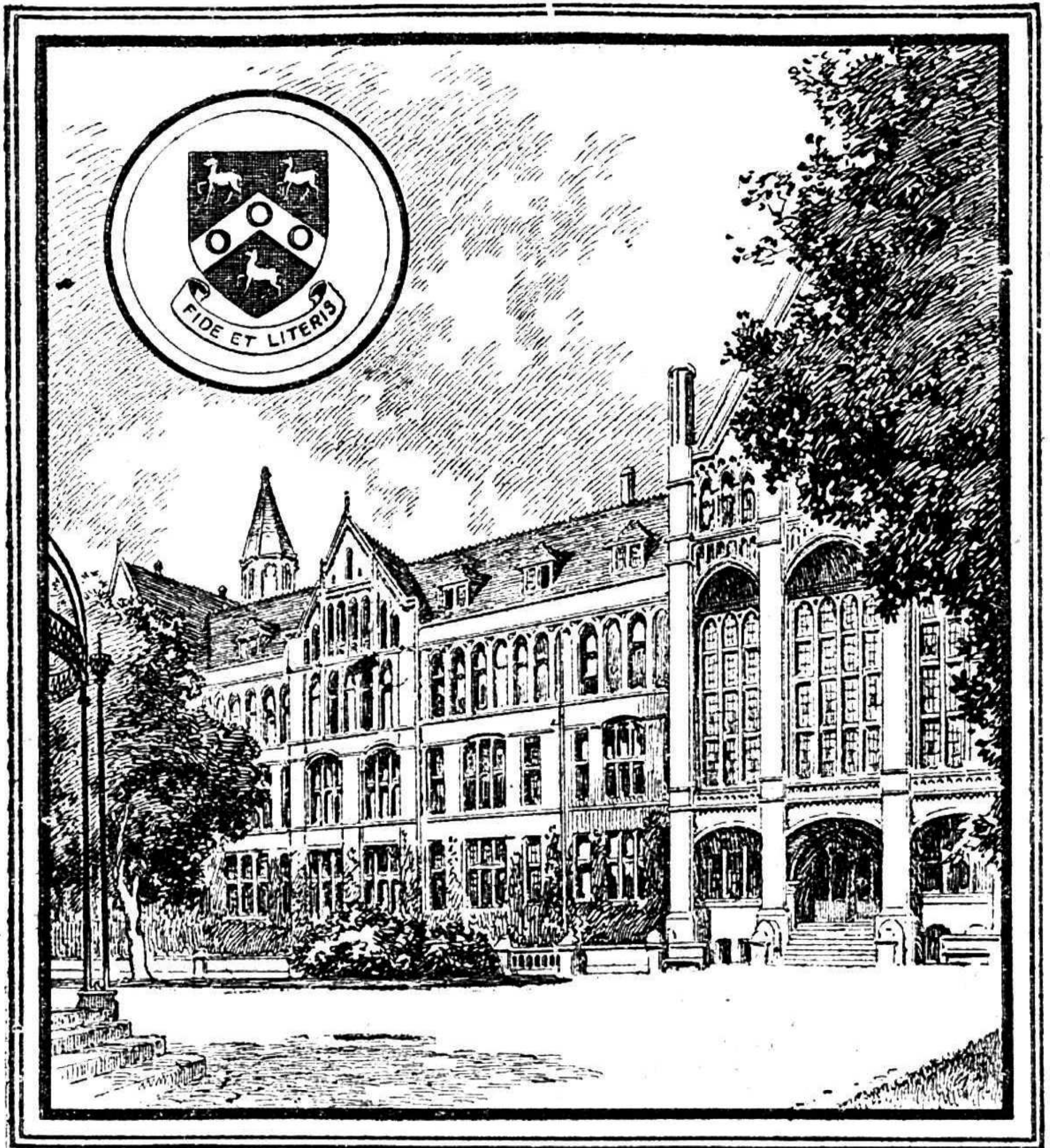
Sorry, no room to answer any more this week. Other letters will be answered as soon as possible.

UNCLE EDWARD.

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SPECIAL SERIES OF ART SKETCHES BY MR. E. E. BRISCOE.

No. 45.—ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL.



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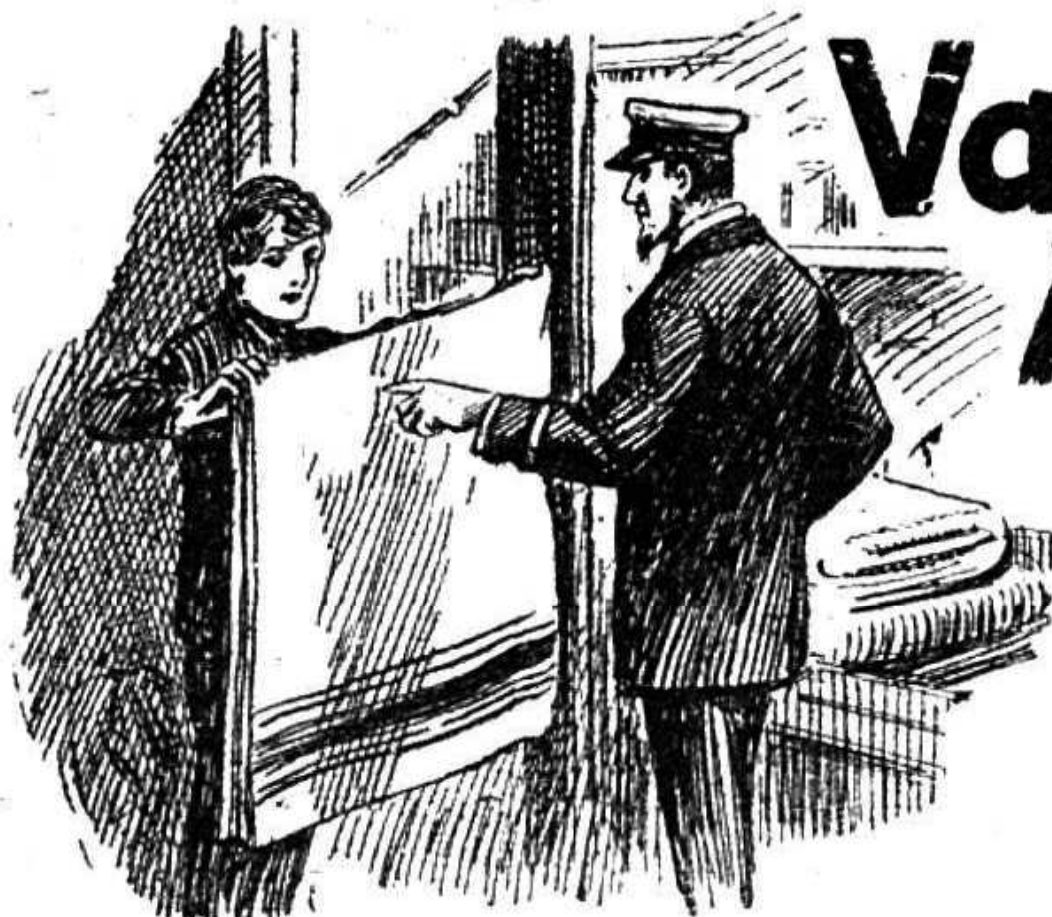
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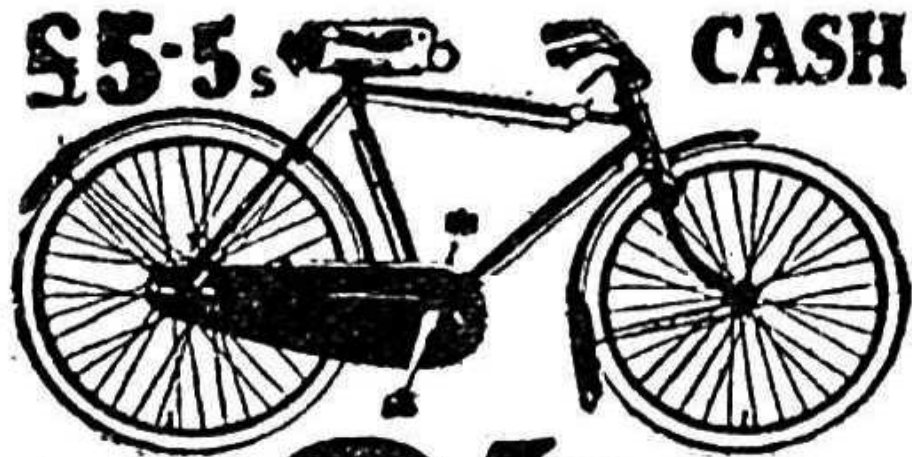
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