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The NELSON LEE

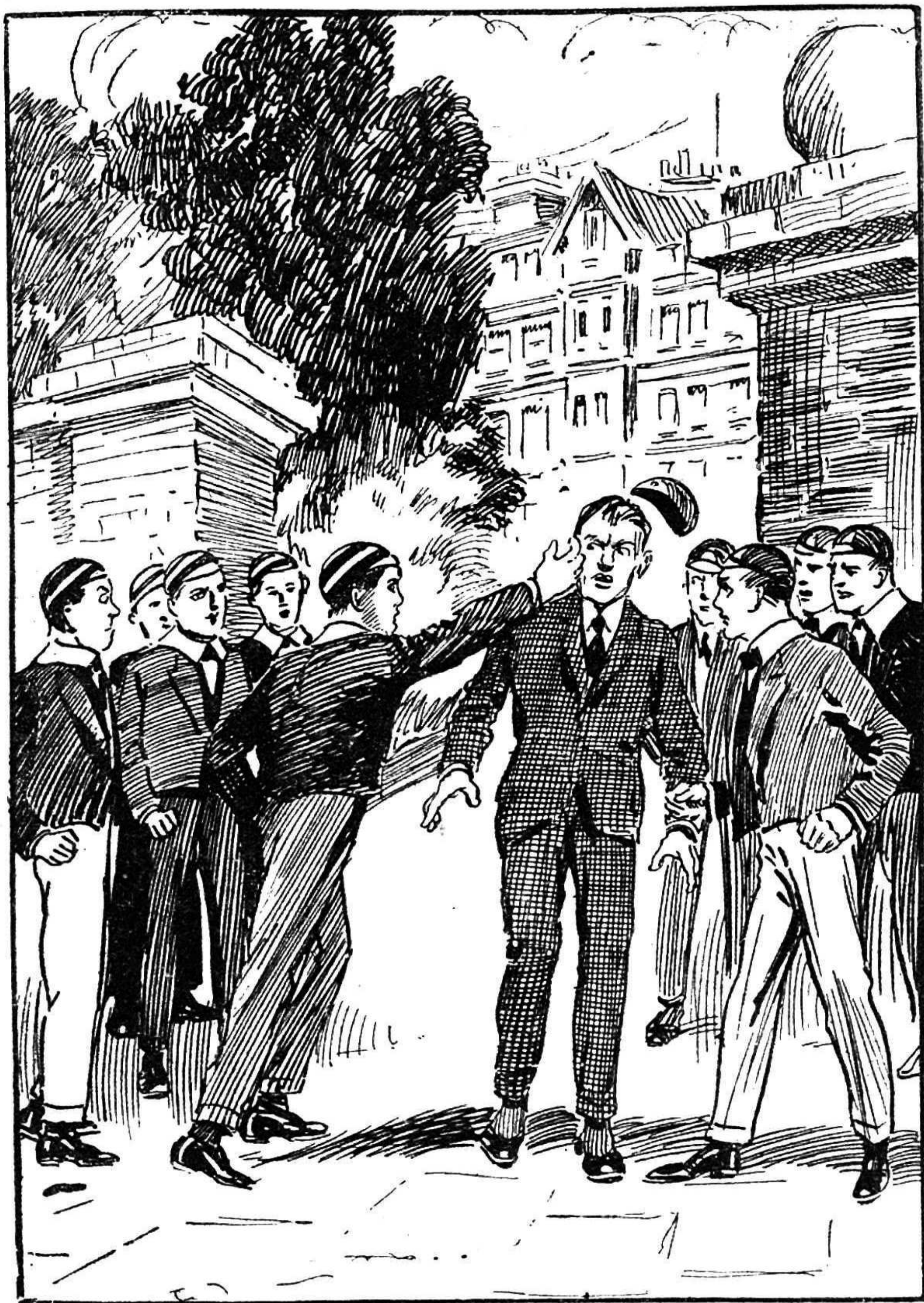
Library, And St. Frank's Magazine



A dramatic moment in the big fight for the honour of St. Frank's, from this week's story :—

TRYING
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THRILLING STORY OF NELSON LEE AND
NIPPER AGAINST PROFESSOR ZIN-
GRAVE AND THE GREEN TRIANGLE IN:
"THE ISLE OF MYSTERY!"



Lawrence lifted his hand and delivered a sharp, resounding slap on Frederick Talbot's face.

"Now will you fight?" asked Ernest Lawrence passionately.



TRYING TIMES FOR ST FRANKS!

*A Rousing School
Story of the Boys
of St. Frank's.*

This is a story of the famous Fourth's desperate fight to regain the honour and respect of St. Frank's, which has suffered cruel degradation from the recent publicity given to a scandal brought about by a few cads at the school. The fire of public indignation has been fanned by unfair reports and mischievous gossip. Boys have left the school wholesale, except in the Fourth Form, where Reggie Pitt, the Captain, has successfully rallied the juniors in an attempt to save the school from complete ruin. Insults are continually heaped upon this indomitable remnant of St. Frank's, and the worst offenders are the boys of the neighbouring Bannington Grammar School. At length, these insults becoming unbearable, and, the Fourth takes action in consequence of which, as you will read in this story, the Grammarians receive a lesson in good manners they will not soon forget.

THE EDITOR.

By E. SEARLES BROOKS

CHAPTER I.

A LETTER FOR ARCHIE.

"THIS," said Archie Glenthorne crossly, "is too dashed bad."

The swell of the Fourth Form at St. Frank's shifted his position slightly on the lounge, and gazed at Phipps with severe disapproval. The valet was quite unperturbed.

"A letter for you, sir," he said evenly.

"What ho! I mean to say, what about it, Phipps?" demanded Archie. "Why should you disturb the young master in the midst of his good old forty winks, for the purpose of bringing a dashed letter?"

"I thought possibly it might be urgent, sir."

"Oh, well, of course, that certainly is a bit of a bright suggestion," admitted Archie.

"I mean to say, letters are important sometimes, what? I must confess, Phipps, that the old scheme didn't hit me. Kindly slice

the missive open, and warble the contents aloud."

Considering that the hour was quite early, Phipps was to be excused. It was, in fact, only just after prayers, and the breakfast-bell was not due to ring for another ten or fifteen minutes. But Archie frequently filled in the time between prayers and breakfast with a little nap.

"The letter, sir, is a local one, and appears to be of a personal nature," said Phipps politely.

"Good gad! Not from a young lady, Phipps?" gasped Archie hastily correcting himself. "Go ahead, Phipps, and proceed with the good old warbling. The young master awaits."

He made himself more comfortable, and Phipps opened the letter, and glanced at it. Even his imperturbability was slightly disturbed. He gave a discreet cough, as a kind of preliminary.

"The letter is addressed from the Bannington Grammar School, sir," he announced.

"And it commences: 'To a Champagne-soaked Tailor's Dummy.' Shall I proceed, sir?"

Archibald Winston Derek Glenthorne sat up stiffly.

"It appears that this letter is a pretty foul sort of composition, Phipps," he remarked. "I mean to say, no gentleman would commence a letter in that way, what? It comes from one of those Bannington Grammar School coves, and, judging by what I have seen of them they strike me as being a decidedly mouldy gathering of cads. But carry on, old fright."

Phipps carried on, and read the whole letter without pause:

"To a Champagne-soaked Tailor's Dummy.

"I thought I'd write to let you know what I think of you. Those rotten cads who helped you in the High Street the other day are the worst hooligans in the district. I mean Handforth and those other chaps.

"As for you it's a pity you were ever allowed to get beyond the crawling stage. You ought to have been smothered when you were an infant. You're a nuisance to your parents, a nuisance to your masters, and you haven't got any more brains than a half-dead snail.

"Those girls who stood up for you are a lot of feather-headed gigglers, and I'm not surprised at them being friends of yours. As you haven't got any brains yourself, you naturally mix with people who are just as scopy. The next time you come near the Grammar School, I shall make a point of blacking both your eyes, and pushing your nose flat into your face.

"So don't forget to look out for squalls, you miserable toad.

"FREDERICK TALBOT

"(The Terror of the Fifth)."

Phipps laid the letter down, and Archie took a deep breath.

"A somewhat poisonous missive, old lad," he remarked. "I mean to say, dashed personal, and all that! That piece about the half-dead snail, what? I mean to say, a chappie can stand some things, but this seems to be perilously near the outer limit!"

"It is certainly an extremely repulsive letter, sir," said Phipps.

"Repulsive?" repeated Archie. "Oddslife! Kindly dash to the bookcase, and examine a few dictionaries, Phipps! I mean, if you can't find a better word than that, my faith in you will absolutely decrease by several hefty jolts. As for this Talbot cove, I absolutely don't know the fellow!"

"He apparently knows you, sir," said Phipps.

"A remark, Phipps, which is capable of being taken in more ways than one," said Archie severely. "However, we will let it pass. You wouldn't insult the young

master, would you? Of course, you know all about the High Street affray, don't you?"

I must confess I am quite ignorant on the subject, sir."

"Oh, come!" protested Archie. "I mean to say, come! Or, dasa it, if you like, go! A crowd of these shop-soiled Grammar School cads pounced on me like anything the other day. They literally turned me inside out, Phipps! Without exaggeration, they turned me inside out! Don't you remember that day I came home like a rag-and-bone collection?"

"Ah, yes—now you remind me, sir, I recall the incident," said Phipps gravely. "A distressing affair, Master Archie. Everybody seems to be cruelly antagonistic towards St. Frank's just now."

"Absolutely! We're all accused of being toppers, and what not!"

"A result of the unfortunate incident on the first night of term, sir," remarked Phipps. "Since that dreadful scene was made public people appear to imagine that we are all painted in the same colour. Even I have been publicly hooted, Master Archie."

"How absolutely jagged!" said Archie, in horror.

"Hooted, sir," repeated Phipps firmly. "I can assure you, the experience was most annoying. And the whole of St. Frank's is condemned because of the foolish action of a mere handful!"

"Horrible, Phipps—absolutely horrible!" murmured Archie. "And what about the vast crowd of chappies who have been whirled away by anxious parents? I mean, St. Frank's is a place of hollow echoes, and great silences, and all that sort of rot! Half-empty Form-rooms—deserted studies—dreary wastes of untenanted passages, and so forth."

Phipps shook his head sadly.

"These are trying times for St. Frank's, sir," he said gravely.

CHAPTER II.

PEACE IN STUDY D.



EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH grunted.

"If there's one thing I hate more than another, it's being helpless like this!" he said fiercely. "Look at me—a

cripple!"

"Ripping!" said Church thoughtlessly.

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, hard luck, old man!" said Church, in great haste. "I didn't quite catch your meaning! That sprained wrist, eh?"

"I can't do a confounded thing!" said Handforth. "I'm helpless! Only ten minutes ago Fullwood sneered in my face—and I couldn't biff him! I tried my left, but the rotter dodged!"

"Yes, it's a bit awkward!" said McClure, nodding. "We've noticed the difference in this study, too."

"The difference?" repeated Handforth.

"Rather!" said McClure. "Church and I have had a glorious time for the last two days. We've been able to live in peace, and — What the dickens are you glaring at me like that for?"

"Wait until I get well!" said Handforth grimly. "I've stored up all sorts of trouble for you chaps! I'll make up for lost time as soon as I can use my fist again!"

Handforth was very grumpy. A couple of days earlier he had been badly bitten over in the goal-mouth during an inter-House match. He had sprained his wrist so badly that his forearm was greatly swollen, and he was obliged to wear a sling.

The pain was considerable, too.

So there had been peace in Study D—an unusual state of affairs. Church and McClure were living in a kind of false paradise. Sooner or later it would end, but they were making the best of a good time while it lasted. As Phipps had remarked, these days were serious ones for the old school. With half the Fifth and Sixth gone, the Senior School seemed empty. Even the Third was somewhat depleted. The two sections of the Fourth remained intact—the only Form to retain its full personnel.

But this was because of Reginald Pitt's fine leadership. He had succeeded in keeping the Fourth together. But this did not alter the fact that the famous old St. Frank's College was on the brink of ruin, and liable to be closed down at the end of this present term.

St. Frank's was a school with a bad name.

The scandal was so acute—following upon the unhappy death of Wallace, of the Fifth—that everybody regarded the St. Frank's fellows as being beyond the pale. They were scorned and sneered at on every hand. Football fixtures had been cancelled, and no other public school would acknowledge them.

For Wallace had died during a disgraceful first-night celebration—when a number of cads had indulged in a champagne party. Many of the culprits had been half-drunk at the time—although Wallace's death had been quite natural.

And St. Frank's was paying for it dearly.

Reggie Pitt had made up his mind to fight against this ill-feeling, and the Fourth was determined to restore the school's good name. The juniors had heard, too, that St. Frank's was getting near to bankruptcy, and all sorts of ideas were on foot to lend financial assistance.

Probably the story of bankruptcy was a rumour—but the fellows took it seriously enough. A minstrel party in Bannington had met with disastrous consequences—involving the schoolboy organisers in loss instead of profit. But they were not discouraged.

"It's bad enough being shunned by everybody, without this confounded wrist!" said Handforth tartly. "I don't believe I'm getting the right treatment. The swelling ought to have gone down this morning!"

"Give it a chance!" said Church. "McClure and I have been hoping that you'd be helpless for a week—"

"Hoping?" roared Handforth.

"Hoping you'd be well, of course!" stammered Church. "I mean, we've been expecting the swelling to take a long time. You can't do better than follow Dr. Brett's advice."

"I'm not sure about that," growled Handforth. "I'm going to have a look in the encyclopædia. I shall probably find a quick cure. These giddy doctors keep you hanging on, just to make the case longer! Everybody's after money nowadays!"

Handforth stalked out of the room, and went straight to Archie's study. He walked in, and made his way across to the bookcase, knocking over a small table on the way, and upsetting a couple of chairs.

"Good gad!" protested Archie. "I don't wish to be impolite, old companion, but is this absolutely necessary?"

"I want to look at your encyclopædia!" explained Handforth.

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "Gaze your fill, laddie! But kindly refrain from wrecking the happy home. And, while you're here, be good enough to cast the optical department over this foul screed!"

Handforth took the Grammarian's letter suspiciously. Then he went red, his eyes blazed, and he finally glared at Archie ferociously.

"He calls me a hooligan!" he shouted.

"My dear laddie, that's nothing!" said Archie. "Read further. He absolutely refers to me as a half-deceased snail, or some such ghastly term. I mean, this Talbot insect is nothing more nor less than a smudge on the fair face of nature."

"What are you going to do about this?" demanded Handforth fiercely.

"I'm dashed," said Archie, "if I know!"

"Then I know," snorted Handforth. "The cad! The worm! The horrible beast! I'm going to smash him up—"

"Hallo! Who's in for a quiet half-hour?" asked Reggie Pitt, appearing in the doorway. "Greetings, fair youths! And what is the indignation meeting about?"

"About this!" said Handforth, thrusting the letter into Pitt's face.

"Thanks—but I don't want to eat it!" said Reggie. "My hat! He doesn't start very politely, anyhow!"

The Fourth-Form skipper read the letter, and grinned.

"This ought to be framed!" he remarked cheerfully.

"Don't you think the chap ought to be slaughtered?" demanded Handforth.

"Why?" asked Pitt. "Why slaughter such an insignificant fool? There's nothing in this letter to hurt Archie. It's only a

spiteful, idiotic tirade. The best thing is to forget all about it. It isn't worth noticing. I wouldn't demean myself by even getting angry!"

Archie Glenthorne breathed a sigh of relief.

"Thanks, dear one, for those sweet words!" he said happily. "Such advice is soothing to the good old eardrums."

CHAPTER III.

GOING TOO FAR.



AT just about the same time Irene Manners tripped into her study in the Moor View School. She had one or two letters to read, and she seated herself in a dainty

chair near the window, and settled herself down.

Irene shared her study with Marjorie Temple and Doris Berkeley. But the other two girls were not present at the moment.

The little room was very feminine—a great contrast to the untidy, rough-and-ready studies of the St. Frank's juniors. Here, in Irene and Co.'s little den, everything was dainty and attractive. Flowers ornamented the mantelpiece, and there were pretty little curtains at the window.

"Hallo, Renie!" said Marjorie, entering the room. "Oh, you mean thing! You've got three letters, and I only had one!"

"Don't bother now—there's a dear!" said Irene. "There's one from mater, and another from the dressmaker's, and another—I don't know who this is from," she added thoughtfully, inspecting the third letter. "It looks like a boy's handwriting."

"Ted Handforth, I'll bet," grinned Marjorie.

"Don't be silly!" said Irene, turning pink. "Just as if Ted would write to me! Besides, it was posted in Bannington."

"I've always understood," said Marjorie, "that it's a usual custom to open letters, instead of turning them over and over in your hands."

Irene laughed, and slit the letter open. She took out a single sheet of exercise-paper, and commenced reading. Then, after a moment, she sprang to her feet, flushing hotly with indignation.

"Oh, Marjorie! Look at this!" she cried. "What in the world is the matter?" asked Marjorie in alarm.

"This letter is terrible—I'm almost afraid to finish it!" panted Irene. "Oh, what a dreadful creature the boy must be! To write such insulting things to a girl!"

Marjorie came round the table, very curious. She looked over her chum's shoulder, and they both read the letter together. And Irene's indignation was very understandable.

"Darling Feather-Brained Fluffy Irene,— How do you like the truth for once? Of all the giggling, simpering little snobs, you're just about the worst specimen I've seen. I suppose you think you're pretty? I wouldn't walk with a girl like you, even if you were the last one on earth."

"I was in the High Street when you made such a little idiot of yourself by standing up for those St. Frank's hooligans. But they're your friends, aren't they? So, of course, you're all in the same class."

"I wonder how many champagne parties you go to with the St. Frank's chaps? You pretend to be such a demure little miss, but you can't fool me. How many different boys do you flirt with every week?"

"I expect that colour of yours costs a lot, especially the red stuff you put on your lips, and the eyebrow black. My word! You've got a nerve to appear publicly, all painted up like a doll! If I was your mother, I'd lock you up for a month and spank you every day. No wonder the St. Frank's chaps are such a set of beastly cads! How could they be anything else with you near them?"

"FROM ONE WHO KNOWS YOU."

The two girls were quite pale by the time they had finished the letter. It was certainly a dreadful missive—insulting from first to last. Indeed, the final insult was the crowning affront.

"What shall I do?" asked Irene breathlessly. "It's terrible, Marjorie! Such lies! What a horrible, detestable cad!"

Marjorie was furious.

"You ought to take this straight to Miss Bond," she said hotly.

"Oh, I couldn't!" protested Irene. "I daren't! And you know what Miss Bond is like. She'd start accusing me of being too familiar with the St. Frank's boys. That's just what she's like."

"Yes, you'd better go careful," agreed Marjorie, trying to calm herself. "This letter is from one of those Grammar School boys, I believe. He practically admits that, doesn't he?"

Irene's blue eyes flashed.

"But the cad is too much of a rotter to sign his own name!" she exclaimed angrily. "Anybody who writes anonymous letters like this ought to be horse-whipped! Oh, I'm terribly upset!"

"I wish we could find out who he is," said Marjorie.

"But we can't—and I suppose I shall have to put up with some more of the same kind!" exclaimed Irene breathlessly. "A cad of this sort is never content with one letter. Oh, I didn't know any boy could be so dreadfully horrid. He accuses me of getting tipsy, Marjorie. And he says I flirt with lots of different boys—"

"What's that?" asked Doris Berkeley,

bustling into the study. "Hallo, who's dead? And when's the funeral?"

She looked at the solemn faces of her chums curiously.

"Doris, just read this!" said Irene quietly.

Doris read it. She had been bright and gay upon entering—just her own cheerful self. But by the time she had finished the letter she was another person. Her eyes were glittering dangerously.

"The boy who wrote this deserves to go to prison!" she said fiercely. "You've got to find out who he is, Irene. You must!"

CHAPTER IV.

TRACED!



DORIS looked at her chum sharply. "Why not?" she asked.

"Because—oh, because I couldn't!" replied Irene. "Such terrible insults! I couldn't let them see—"

"Rubbish!" interrupted Doris firmly. "They're all lies—there's not a single word of truth in the whole letter. What does it matter about the boys seeing it?"

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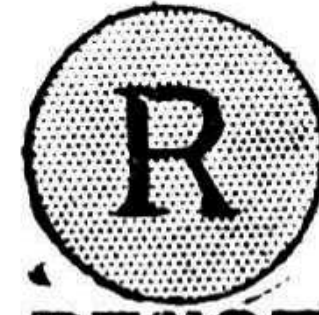
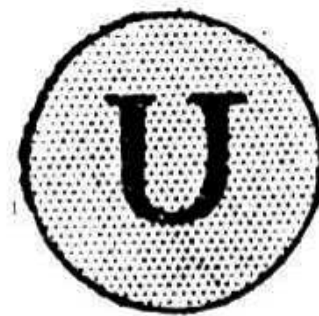
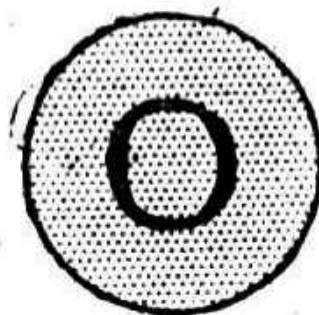
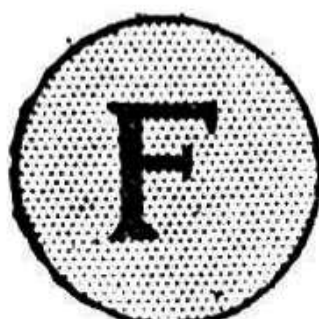
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If you don't, he'll write again, and the next letter might be too dreadful to read."

"But what can I do?" asked Irene helplessly. "It's anonymous."

"Anonymous or not, it won't require much of a detective to find out who the boy is," insisted Doris grimly. "Of course, he's one of those Grammar School beasts! Oh, what an absolute cur!" Her eyes suddenly sparkled. "I'll tell you what—let's show it to Ted Handforth or Reggie Pitt."

But Irene shook her bobbed hair vigorously.

"Never!" she said fiercely. "Oh, never!"

shouldn't be surprised if they can name the cad. They might know his handwriting."

"That's true!" said Marjorie, nodding.

"I can't help it—I won't agree!" replied Irene. "Oh, just think of that letter being talked about all over St. Frank's! I shall tear it up—"

"You won't!" interrupted Doris, seizing the letter.

"I'm going straight to St. Frank's, and I shall show this letter to Reggie Pitt!" said Doris grimly. "He's the captain of the Fourth, and he's jolly sensible. Reggie's always level-headed—"

"But I won't let you take that letter—"

"Rats! I'm taking it!" interrupted Doris briskly.

She darted out of the room, ignoring Irene's sharp cry of alarm and annoyance. The girl was almost crimson with shame and humiliation. The thought of the St. Frank's fellows reading it horrified her. It was only natural, perhaps, but, at the same time, Doris was undoubtedly right.

The letter contained nothing but lies, and Reggie Pitt and Handforth would know this immediately. And if there was any possibility of the culprit being named, it was worth the trouble of going.

Irene sank into a chair, with tears in her eyes.

"I shall never be able to face those boys again!" she sobbed. "Oh, the shame of it! Writing me a letter like that! I'm not such a girl as he says, am I, Marjorie?"

"Don't be silly!" said Marjorie soothingly. "The boy who wrote that letter is an absolute hound! And if we find who he is, I'd like to see him whipped until he howls for mercy!"

In the meantime, Doris was speeding to St. Frank's. Her bicycle had been handy, and she took advantage of it. She was only a few minutes in covering the distance, and when she arrived in the Triangle, she was overjoyed to see Handforth and Pitt and one or two others strolling near the fountain.

The girl leapt off her machine, looking very pretty in her flustered indignation. She had come hatless, and this alone was unusual. Her curls were all disordered, and she ran up to the juniors without taking any notice of their greetings.

"Please read this letter," she said breathlessly. "Irene got it this morning, and it's too awful for words! She didn't want me to bring it, but I insisted!"

"A letter, Miss Doris!" said Pitt keenly. "By jingo! I wonder——"

"You wonder what?" asked Doris.

"Well, Archie got a rotten letter this morning," said Pitt. "But let's have a look at this one before I say anything further."

He took it and glanced through the atrocious paragraphs. And his face became grim and set as he read to the bottom.

"The chap who wrote this isn't fit to live!" he said fiercely.

"What is it?" asked Handforth. "May we see, Miss Doris?"

"Yes, of course—read it!" said the girl.

The other juniors were Jack Grey and Handforth and Archie Glenthorne. They read the letter together—Handforth holding it and the others craning over his shoulders.

"By George!" roared Handforth. "I've never read such an insulting lot of rot in my life! This ought to be sent to the police! The beast could be locked up for sending this through the post."

"No, he couldn't!" said Pitt. "It was sealed up. It's anonymous, too."

"What do you mean—anonymous?" demanded Handforth.

"Why, the cad hasn't put his own signature—he was afraid to," replied Reggie. "Of course, we're going to take action over this. We can't allow such an insult to go unpunished."

"Good!" said Doris heartily. "I knew I could trust you chaps!"

"But how can we do anything when we don't know who it's from?" asked Grey.

"The thing is absolutely frightful beyond description!" said Archie Glenthorne in horror. "I mean, that letter that I got was dashed near the edge, but this thing is positively repulsive! The reptile who wrote it can't be a human being at all! Miss Irene, don't you know! A priceless girl of the most ripping kind, what?"

At this moment Irene herself arrived, with Marjorie. The latter had insisted upon her coming. But Irene was still reluctant, and she joined the group with downcast eyes and burning cheeks. All the juniors were embarrassed. They could easily understand her feelings.

"Don't worry, Miss Irene!" said Pitt cheerfully. "This is a rotten insult, and we'll avenge it for you. And for ourselves, too, because it's just as insulting to us."

"But why should anybody write in that way?" asked Irene huskily.

"Why?" repeated Pitt. "Because there are some people on this earth who haven't got the instincts of a toad. This fellow, Talbot, is evidently one of them."

"Talbot!" shouted Handforth, with a start.

"You—you know who wrote it?" asked Irene, with a little gasp.

"Archie got a letter from him this morning in very much the same strain," replied Reggie quietly. "He was idiot enough to sign that one, which proves that he hasn't got the brains of a worm. It's the same paper, the same ink, the same handwriting, and it came by the same post. We don't want any better evidence than that, do we?"

Archie's letter was produced—he had it on him. And one comparison was sufficient. Without the slightest doubt the letter to Irene was the work of Frederick Talbot, of the Bannington Grammar School.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHOSEN AVENGER.



HANDFORTH gave a roar of triumph.

"Yes, he's the rotter who did it!"

he exclaimed, his voice fairly quivering with eagerness.

"Look here, I'm going straight over to the Bannington Grammar

School, and I'm going to smash Talbot to smithereens!"

"With a sprained wrist like yours?" asked Jack Grey.

"Oh, my goodness!" said Handforth blankly. "I'd forgotten that!"

He gazed at his bandaged wrist with an expression of absolute dismay. In fact, the colour fled from his cheeks, and he looked at Irene and Co. with pained consternation.

"I say, what shall I do?" he asked huskily. "Just when I need my fist more than ever before, I'm crocked! Of all the horrible, rotten luck!"

"Never mind, Handy — leave this matter to us," said Pitt quietly. "Hallo, breakfast-time!"

"Yes, we shall have to be going, too," said Irene. "I'm awfully sorry to have caused you any worry——"

"We're tremendously glad you came—and very much obliged to Miss Doris for bringing that letter!" interrupted Pitt. "Archie was going to ignore that silly letter to him, but this one's different. It can't be ignored. It cries aloud to be punished!"

"Rather!" agreed Doris, nodding. "If I was that boy, Talbot, I'd hide myself for a month! We can trust you fellows to punish him properly, can't we?"

"You can!" said Pitt promptly.

"Absolutely!" added Archie. "Leave it to us, fair ladies, and Talbot shall be positively annihilated! I mean to say, a boulder of that sort simply doesn't deserve to remain on the good old globe!"

Irene and Co. went off, still agitated and pale. Even now, Irene was doubtful of the wisdom of having shown that letter to the St. Frank's boys. But Doris pointed out that the result had clearly justified the action. For they had discovered the contemptible letter-writer, and they could be quite certain that Pitt and Co. would avenge the insult.

So Irene freely forgave Doris for having snatched the letter so abruptly, and the whole matter was now in the hands of the Fourth. It wouldn't be allowed to rest.

It was a half-holiday, and Pitt instantly decided that the afternoon should be entirely given over to the performance of



Pitt took the letter and glanced through the atrocious paragraphs. And his face became grim and set as he read to the bottom.

this duty. But the captain of the Fourth was rather thoughtful.

Breakfast over, a kind of committee-meeting was held.

The fellows gathered together in Study E, and the party consisted of Handforth and Co., Pitt, Grey, Tommy Watson, Glen-thorne, Buster Boots, Christine, Lawrence, and two or three other Modern Fourth juniors.

In fact, the committee was a representative one. They were all allowed to see the letter—but only on condition that they didn't divulge the contents to anyone else. And these juniors were reliable. Once having given their word, they wouldn't break it.

The whole Junior School knew that there was something in the wind, of course, but it was generally assumed that the excitement was being caused by the letter to Archie. In any case, there was no necessity to maintain secrecy. The whole school could know of the affair—so long as the contents of the letter to Irene were not broadcast.

"Now we've got to decide on this matter," said Pitt grimly.

"There's only one thing to do!" declared John Busterfield Boots, his face red with angry indignation. "Ragging is too good for this cad! He ought to be tortured at the stake!"

"It's no good talking like that," said Pitt, who always remained level-headed. "We're not in Ancient Rome! This fellow

Talbot has insulted Miss Irene, and he has insulted St. Frank's. He must be made to pay. But there's only one method."

"What's that?" demanded Handforth grimly.

"A representative of St. Frank's must fight him!" replied Pitt.

"I'll do it!" said Handforth promptly.

"My dear chap, you can't, with your wrist—"

"I can lick him with one hand!" roared Handforth aggressively.

"You can't do anything of the sort," said Reggie, with much patience. "I'd take the job on happily, but I'm dubious. I don't think I could lick him. And, to be whacked by that Grammarian would only make the matter ten times worse. Those cads would crow madly."

The committee regarded their captain in surprise.

"You admit you can't lick a Grammarian?" asked Handforth, pained.

"I admit it!" replied Pitt quietly. "Is there anything weak in that? What on earth's the good of me challenging this hulking cad to a fight, and losing? The fellow who fights Talbot must be capable of delivering a complete and convincing defeat."

"I'll do the job!" said Boots promptly.

"Thanks awfully. I'm glad to see so many fellows willing enough to risk punishment," said Pitt. "But, in my opinion, there's only one chap in the Lower School who's fit to take the job on. I'm talking about you, Lawrence," added Reggie, looking at the Modern House junior.

"I'm game!" said Ernest Lawrence gladly. "There's nothing I'd love better! Anything to avenge Miss Irene and the old school!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" snorted Handforth. "Are we going to let one of these silly Moderns do the job?"

"Thanks!" said Lawrence, smiling.

"Oh, I don't mean to be personal—" began Handforth.

"Lawrence is the man for the job, and we all know it!" interrupted Pitt. "This chap Talbot is in the Fifth. He's a hulking bully, and all the other Grammarians go in fear of him. You know him?—that clumsy, towheaded cad! He'll take some whacking, Lawrence. But you've been a professional boxer, and I've got faith in you."

"Thanks," said Lawrence quietly. "I won't fail."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHALLENGE.



ERNEST LAWRENCE was unusually animated during morning lessons.

His record was an astonishing one, when it came to boxing. As everybody knew he was something of a miracle with

his fists. Soon after coming to St. Frank's he had engaged in a number of professional matches, and had been hailed everywhere as a boxing discovery.

So he was clearly fitted for this present task.

But it would be no light one. Frederick Talbot, of the Bannington Grammar School, was a famous firebrand. He could box well, and he had the advantage of great weight. He was a cad and a bully, and he had always done very much as he chose among his own schoolfellows.

This immunity from punishment had probably led him to insult Irene and St. Frank's so atrociously. He had never even considered the possibility of punishment. But punishment was coming—as surely as the sun was shining!

For that letter to Irene was not merely ail it appeared to be on the surface. In addition to being a deadly, unwarrantable affront to the girl herself, it was a vile insult to St. Frank's.

For the old school had a bad name at present, and Talbot's letter was really directed against St. Frank's. It was quite fitting, therefore, that a representative fighter of the Fourth should seek satisfaction.

Both Mr. Crowell, in the Ancient House, and Mr. Pycraft, in the Modern House, noticed a certain restlessness in the two sections of the Fourth during lessons. The news had leaked out that Lawrence was to visit the Grammar School that afternoon for the purpose of fighting Talbot. And the whole Fourth Form was agog with tense excitement.

Mr. Crowell, although a stern Form-master, had a wonderfully human understanding of his boys. He asked no questions—he affected to notice nothing. But Mr. Pycraft, on the other hand, made a score of cunning inquiries during the morning. Obtaining no satisfaction, he resorted to ill-natured insinuations—and even threatened to detain the whole Form.

Mr. Pycraft was cordially hated, and there was little surprise in this.

Since he had taken command of the Modern Fourth he had proved himself to be a busybody and sour-tempered inquisitor, and, generally, a most detestable character. But there was no question about his qualifications as a master. He was a brilliant scholar.

Everybody was thankful when the time came for dismissal. And then there was a wait until dinner arrived. Lawrence filled in the time by visiting the gymnasium, and putting in a strenuous half-hour of exercise.

He made a point of always keeping himself in fine condition, and this final training made him as fit as a fiddle. He was eagerly looking forward to the afternoon's entertainment.

As soon as dinner was over, the avenging party set off on bicycles.

Altogether there were sixteen juniors—Lawrence himself, and an escort of fifteen. Nobody was particularly surprised when Irene and Co. appeared in the lane.

"Please don't do this!" exclaimed Irene, running up and stopping the cyclists. "I'm afraid!"

"Don't you worry, Miss Irene—Lawrence isn't!" said Handforth.

"I'm not afraid in that way; but you'll only get yourselves into more trouble!" said Irene concernedly. "People are saying such horrid things about St. Frank's, that if this fight gets talked of, some dreadful punishment might fall upon all of you."

"We've got broad shoulders, Miss Irene—we can stand it," said Pitt, smiling. "Besides, any punishment that we endure over this affair won't be a punishment at all. It'll be a sheer pleasure."

The eyes of the three girls sparkled.

"It's nice of you to put it like that, Reggie," said Irene softly.

"You leave it to the boys, old girl!" said Doris. "Do you think we could stop them now? My hat! We might as well try to stop a volcano! Let 'em go—let 'em smash that cad to pulp!"

"Oh, Doris!" protested Irene.

"It's all right—nothing like being blunt!" said Doris calmly.

The juniors admired Doris for her frankness, and heartily approved her sentiments. And they were about to remount their cycles when another girlish figure appeared. She proved to be Ena Handforth, and she took in the whole situation at a glance. Edward Oswald's sister was a very self-possessed little mortal.

"Just like you, Ted!" she said coldly. "Just when there's a fight to be undertaken, you go and sprain your wrist! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

Handforth gulped.

"I couldn't help it!" he retorted. "I was playing football——"

"It's all right, sis—don't worry!" put in Willy. "Lawrence is going to do the trick. As a matter of fact, it's rather a good thing that Ted is crooked. He'd only have made a mess of the fight!"

"What?" roared Handforth.

"Oh, it's no good, old man—you're a good scrapper, but you've got your limitations," said Willy calmly. "I've seen Talbot—and I know what he's like! Even Lawrence will have his hands pretty full—and Lawrence could lick you with his eyes shut!"

Handforth tried to speak, but words failed to come.

"Oh, well, it's no good talking now," said Ena. "But look here—don't let Irene put a spoke in this business! She's been blubbing all the morning——"

"Oh, Ena!" protested Irene indignantly.

"So you have!" said Ena firmly. "And I don't blame you! Even I'd blub if I'd got a letter like that! But it's no good being soft—that reptile ought to be punished. So

you chaps go ahead, and good luck to you!"

With such advice the juniors remounted their machines, and sped to Bannington. They took no notice of sundry jeers and hoots that came from urchins on the way. Of late they had grown accustomed to these petty annoyances and insults. St. Frank's was scorned by all and sundry.

Arriving at the Grammar School, the party was lucky enough to run straight into Frederick Talbot in the very gateway. He had a number of his cronies round him, and they all regarded the St. Frank's fellows with contempt.

"What are these worms doing out of their holes?" asked Talbot sourly.

"I've come here to fight you!" replied Lawrence. "You can make your choice—gloves or bare fists. Personally, I prefer the latter. I can punish you more!"

Talbot roared with laughter.

"Go away!" he said jeeringly. "I don't fight with gutter brats!"

Slap!

Lawrence lifted his hand, and delivered a sharp, resounding slap on Frederick Talbot's face. The Grammarian staggered back, breathing hard.

"Now will you fight?" asked Ernest Lawrence passionately.

CHAPTER VII.

FOR THE HONOUR OF ST. FRANK'S.



FREDERICK TALBOT gave a kind of gulp. "You—you— Yes, I'll fight you!" he snarled thickly. "I'll smash you to jelly! You filthy rotter! I'll jolly well——"

"Steady!" panted two or three other Grammarians. "Can't scrap here, you ass! We're in full view!"

Talbot restrained himself with an effort. The situation was tense. But the fight was a certainty now. And the St. Frank's crowd had become very calm and grim. They didn't care where the battle took place, so long as it was commenced quickly.

Talbot himself had calmed down slightly, and he glared at Lawrence and the others with fierce hatred. He was a powerful fellow—bigger than Lawrence altogether. Being a hopeless dunce, he was still in a form lower than his age indicated. He should have been in the Sixth terms ago.

He was a clumsy, hulking bully of a fellow, almost a head taller than his pals. His very size inspired fear, and nobody in the Grammar School had ever been known to stand up to him for more than one round.

Even Handforth, famous fighter though he was, looked a bit startled when he saw Talbot's size. But Lawrence was calm. Lawrence had perfect faith in his own ability. He had tackled more difficult pro-

positions than this. But he didn't fool himself. The fight wasn't going to be easy.

"I suppose you've had the nerve to come here because of that letter I wrote?" sneered Talbot. "Why doesn't Glenthorne fight me? I wrote the letter to him—not to these——"

"Your beastly letter, you frightful cad, has nothing to do with the matter!" interrupted Archie coldly. "But the poisonous missive you sent to Miss Irene Manners has!"

Talbot started, and went pale.

"I never wrote to Miss Manners!" he blustered.

"Lying won't make the position any better," said Pitt grimly. "We've heard about that letter of yours, and we've come here to avenge it. You unutterable cad! It's a wonder you can breathe! A beast of your sort ought to choke!"

Talbot nearly did choke.

"Do you think I care?" he shouted thickly. "What if I did write the letter? That girl's a rotten little snob—and she's no more good than you chaps are!"

"Stop!" interrupted Pitt harshly. "If you don't, we'll forget about the fight and treat you in a more fitting way!"

The St. Frank's juniors were so aggressive that Talbot pulled himself up.

"We'll go to the meadow, along the road!" he snapped. "One of you chaps go indoors and get some gloves—two pairs. It won't take me five minutes to smash this fool!"

A move was made along the lane—before any of the prefects or masters got wind of what was happening. Pitt and Co. saw none of the really decent Grammarians. There were quite a number of juniors in the school who were well liked at St. Frank's. But of late they had kept to the background. They didn't want to be openly antagonistic, and yet, at the same time, they feared to show any friendliness.

Some distance up the road the crowd turned into a meadow. It was a quiet spot, with no houses overlooking the ground, and situated at the edge of a deserted by-lane. The meadow formed a kind of hollow, almost surrounded by trees at the bottom. It was really an ideal arena for a fight.

On the opposite side the ground sloped up again, with the main London Road at the top, running along a slight ridge. But there was not much chance of onlookers from this direction, for there were trees all the way along.

"Now then—we'll start this affair at once," said Talbot aggressively. "No need for rounds or timekeepers. I shall knock this beast out within ten seconds!"

Pitt shook his head.

"We'll do the thing properly," he said. "We'll have rounds, and we'll have two timekeepers—one of your chaps, and one of ours. They'll stand side by side, with

watches showing, so there can't be any misunderstandings."

"Oh, all right—but it's unnecessary!" said Talbot.

Lawrence was quietly stripping. He divested himself of his jacket and waistcoat, removed his collar and tie, and his shirt followed. He stood there in rubber-soled shoes, trousers with belt, and vest. His bare arms looked exceedingly businesslike.

Frederick Talbot laughed contemptuously.

"I'm not going to strip—not worth the trouble!" he sneered. "I shall only have to get dressed again in two minutes."

"It's two minutes now!" said Handforth. "A little while ago you said you'd do it in ten seconds!"

Talbot scowled, and allowed his seconds to fix on his gloves—which had just been brought by one of the others. Pitt carefully examined the gloves that Lawrence was to wear—for he frankly suspected treachery of some kind. He also examined Talbot's gloves with even greater attention.

Everything was in order, and the two fighters faced one another. There was no beating about the bush—no delay. The onlookers formed a complete circle round the imaginary ring.

"Time!" rapped out the timekeepers, in one voice.

And the battle commenced.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN IN THE LIMOUSINE.



TALBOT rushed in like a whirlwind. He evidently intended finishing the fight in the first ten seconds, as he had intimated.

"Now, you beast!" he snarled thickly.

The expression on his face was fierce and boded evil for Lawrence. Talbot was in an ugly temper. If his opponent received any of the powerful blows that he aimed, it would go hard with him.

Swish!

Talbot lashed out with enormous force. His fist shot through the air, and for a second it seemed that the glove would land on Lawrence's jaw. But, curiously enough, the Modern House junior's face was no longer there. It seemed to vanish—with a quick, easy movement. And something shot up out of nowhere, and struck Talbot on the side of the face.

It didn't seem hard, but it jarred the Grammarian through and through.

"Go it!" roared Handforth excitedly.

Talbot was mad with rage. He fairly let himself go, and lashed out right and left. He put every atom of his strength and skill into these blows. And if one of them had

struck fairly and squarely, Lawrence would have received the knockout.

But not a single one of those wild lunges found its mark.

Lawrence's footwork was extraordinarily clever, and the St. Frank's crowd looked on with shining eyes and bated breath. They had expected fine things from Lawrence, and he was not disappointing them.

And while Talbot lashed at the empty air, Lawrence was getting in thrust after thrust—a jab on the chin, a direct punch on the nose, and a regular cannonade of blows on the ribs. Lawrence's arms worked so quickly that only a trained eye could follow the exquisite timing of his thrusts. His judgment was supreme.

And while this opening round went on, something happened which the juniors knew nothing of. Along the main road, at the top of the hollow, a limousine came gliding smoothly onwards.

In the back a man was sitting in solitary state. A big cigar was in his mouth, and he was idly admiring the beauties of the countryside. At least he appeared to be doing so. As a matter of fact, he was really calculating exactly how much money he would receive from the sale of eight hundred and twenty seats at 5s. 9d. each. The matter of the entertainment tax was confusing, and the gentleman seemed worried.

Gazing at the scenery as he passed, he was suddenly rather surprised to have a totally unexpected vision placed before his gaze. The limousine passed a slight clearing in the trees.

And during that moment the gentleman in the rear caught sight of a temporary ring. Two figures were within it—boxing energetically. And one of them was performing some of the prettiest footwork that anybody could wish to see.

The vision vanished, for trees intervened.

"Hold on, Johnson!" shouted the man in the back of the car. "Just pull up! Back the old bus to that clearing. Did you notice the scrap going on down in the hollow?"

The driver pulled the car to a standstill.

"The scrap, Mr. Gordon?" he repeated. "I saw nothing."

"Oh, well, I don't suppose I can expect anything else," said Mr. William Gordon. "Your job is to keep your eye on the road, isn't it? It's only a schoolboy fight, but I'd like to look at it for a minute. We're in no hurry."

The driver chuckled, and backed the car as directed.

He was accustomed to the quaint little ways of Mr. William Gordon—known throughout two continents as Smiling Bill Gordon. He was, in fact, no less a person than the celebrated boxing promoter—the man who had organised more "big fights" than any other man living.

Smiling Bill was a biggish man with an aggressive cast of countenance. But this fact was completely nullified by the per-

manent smile which radiated Mr. Gordon's face. And there was a twinkle in his eyes which could not be ignored. There was something very captivating about the gentleman's manner.

He pulled a pair of binoculars out of their case, as the car came to a halt at the spot where the fight could be seen between the trees. Mr. Gordon levelled the glasses, and focused them.

"By Peter!" he muttered. "One of those youngsters is a smart young feller! Just look at him, Johnson! Just watch—that was a beauty! And see his footwork! Pretty—pretty! Now then—careful! Fine! The Gunner himself couldn't have done it better!"

Mr. Gordon rose to his feet in his excitement and leaned out of the window, with the glasses still levelled. The binoculars brought the fight close up, and he was able to watch every fine point of the contest.

And he kept up a continuous fire of comment—disparaging here, and praising there. And all his disparagement was for Talbot—and all his praise for Lawrence.

To an untrained eye, the odds seemed all in favour of the Grammarian bully. It seemed that Lawrence had no chance whatever. But what Smiling Bill Gordon didn't know about boxing wasn't worth learning. And he instantly saw that Lawrence was an absolute genius with the gloves.

"This boy's a miracle!" he panted enthusiastically. "Good glory! Look at that! Did you ever see such a lovely jab? There! And that hook— Oh, first class—first class!"

The fight was getting grim, and Mr. Gordon followed every movement of it. He watched every fine phase with the eye of an expert. And Johnson, the driver, wondered. It wasn't like his celebrated master to take an interest in a mere schoolboy scrap.

But that's just where Johnson was mistaken—this wasn't a mere scrap.

It was an exhibition of sheer science on Lawrence's part—a display of boxing skill that was a revelation to the eye. And Frederick Talbot himself was beginning to realise that he had more than met his match.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KNOCK-OUT!



IT was the fourth round, and Talbot had not been successful in even marking his opponent.

On the other hand, Lawrence had dealt some powerful, punishing blows. Talbot's left eye was closing, his nose was bleeding, and his lower lip was puffy. And he swayed unsteadily on his feet.

His clumsy thrusts were nowhere, and then Lawrence's left came up from an unexpected quarter. Crash! The blow found its home on Talbot's chin, and every tooth in the bully's jaw was shaken.

He staggered back, fell over, and lay prone on the grass—dazed. A perfect yell went up from the Saints.

"Oh, well hit, Lawrence!"

"Good man!"

"Time!" said the timekeepers together.

It was a lucky escape for Talbot, for he was being counted out. There were two referees in this remarkable fight, for neither side would trust the other. Talbot staggered to his companions drunkenly, and he was breathing hard and laboriously.

"The beast!" he muttered. "Oh, the beast!"

"You're not licking him, old man!" whispered one of his cronies.

"Shut up, hang you!" snarled Talbot.

He was savage with disappointment and rage. He knew very well that he wasn't licking the St. Frank's junior. He also knew that the St. Frank's junior was licking him. And he suddenly struggled to his feet.

"Look here!" he shouted hoarsely. "I give you best!"

"Yah! Funk!" roared the Saints.

"It's no good—I'll fight you to the finish!" retorted Lawrence curtly.

"You're not going to slip out of it like that!" said Pitt. "This fight goes on until one of you is knocked out."

"Hear, hear!"

"Time!"

Lawrence commenced the fifth round as fresh as paint. He was smiling now, for he knew that the battle was entirely in his own hands. And he was rather disgusted with the Grammarian's cowardice. He decided to put an end to this farce.

Lawrence's science was astonishing, and his confidence and composure were things to watch with sheer delight. He fought with a supreme ease, and inspired confidence by his very manner.

Talbot was nearly worn out, and during the fifth round he received blow after blow with clockwork regularity. And he could give nothing in exchange. It was the best round of the fight, from the point of view of the St. Frank's fellows. But the Grammarians looked on glumly and hopelessly.

Through his binoculars, Smiling Bill Gordon watched with keen delight. He danced about so much that he could hardly hold the glasses. Smiling Bill had a volcanic personality, and he was rather excitable. There was nothing of the burly, bullying boxing promoter about him.

By some clever footwork, Lawrence reached the position he had been waiting for. He finished the fight in whirlwind fashion. Talbot was driven round the ring like a hunted animal. Blows showered upon him, and he was confused and bewildered.

Crash! Biff! Crash!

Blows struck Talbot everywhere, and the final one was the most exquisite uppercut the juniors had ever seen. It caught the bully fairly and squarely, and he went down like a log, and lay still.

"—Seven—eight—nine—out!" counted the St. Frank's referee.

"He's not out!" roared the Grammarian. "It's only—"

"What does it matter?" interrupted Pitt. "Talbot won't rise, if you go on counting to a hundred! He's out!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Lawrence!"

"Well done, old man!"

Ernest Lawrence looked at the Grammarians calmly.

"You'd better take him away and wash him!" he said. "He's not hurt much—just a few bruises. But I think the honour of St. Frank's is avenged! Who's got my clothes?"

Lawrence was hardly touched. Just a slight bruise on his left cheek was the only mark noticeable. He donned his clothing without further comment, and the entire St. Frank's party moved off.

They were feeling satisfied and happy. Frederick Talbot had received the worst licking of his life, and it was likely to be many a long day before he indulged in further ruffianly abuse through the post.

The St. Frank's fellows reached the lane, and at once mounted their bicycles. The Grammarians were left behind—so sick and disappointed that they couldn't even raise a jeer or a hoot.

"Better go straight back, eh?" suggested Boots.

"Yes. The other fellows will be anxious to know the result," replied Pitt.

They rode along the little lane, and joined the main road two or three hundred yards further on. Rather to their surprise, a big, imposing-looking limousine was waiting at the corner. And a smiling gentleman was standing near the footboard, with a large cigar in his face.

"Just a minute, youngsters!" he said cheerily. "I'd like to meet the lad who gave such a wonderful display down in the hollow. Good glory! You're hardly marked, boy!" he added, as he picked out Lawrence. "Come here—quick! Come here, confound you! Give me your fist!"

He grabbed Lawrence's fist, and shook it like a pump-handle.

"One of the finest performances I've ever seen!" he said enthusiastically. "Congratulations, boy! What's your name? Which school do you belong to?"

"I'm Lawrence, sir—Ernest Lawrence, of St. Frank's," smiled the junior.

Mr. Gordon beamed.

"Well, look here, Ernest Lawrence, of St. Frank's, step into this car and have a chat with me," he invited breezily. "I want to talk to you badly. Your friends won't mind, will they?"

Lawrence hardly knew what to say. The offer was an extraordinary one. The man was a perfect stranger to him, and although he seemed so genial and friendly, there was no telling.

"It's all right, sir," said Pitt, coming to the rescue. "I think you're Mr. Gordon, aren't you?"

"Good glory! Am I so famous?" asked Smiling Bill.

"I've seen your photograph in the papers, sir," grinned Pitt. "Just at present you're doing big things in Southampton, aren't you? There was quite a lot about it in the 'Bannington Gazette' last Saturday."

"Right every time," said Mr. Gordon. "Well, I'll tell you what—I shall be stopping at the Grapes, so we'll meet there, eh?"

This plan was settled upon, and Lawrence entered the car. He would have his chat with Mr. Gordon, and meet the others at the Grapes Hotel. And Lawrence wondered what was in the wind.

CHAPTER X.

AN UNEXPECTED OFFER.



SMILING BILL GORDON settled himself back comfortably in his seat, and looked at the Fourth Former with interest. He examined him, indeed, in very much the same way as a butcher looks at a prize ox.

"Wonderful!" said Mr. Gordon.

"Yes, sir!" smiled Lawrence. "It's a funny thing I didn't recognise you at first. I saw your photograph, too, but you can never judge much by those newspaper reproductions. Pitt's as keen as mustard, though."

"Yes, yes—quite so," said Mr. Gordon slowly.

He was evidently thinking. The limousine was crawling along. Indeed, the cyclists had gone on ahead. Mr. Gordon had instructed his driver to take the short journey into Bannington very easily.

"I was watching your little fight, boy," said Smiling Bill suddenly. "I examined every move through these binoculars. Some of the prettiest work I've ever seen, in or out of the ring. You're no mere amateur at the game."

"No, sir," smiled Lawrence.

"Ever fought in a proper professional boxing ring?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have, by Peter! H'm! I'm not surprised," ejaculated Smiling Bill. "Who trained you?"

"My father," said the junior quietly.

"Your father! Why, good glory!" gasped Mr. Gordon. "Not—not— Then you're the son of the famous Lawrence! Huh! What a fool I was not to guess that

before! He told me you were at a public school!"

"Do you know my father, sir?"

"Well, I don't exactly know him, but I've met him once or twice—especially in the old days," replied Smiling Bill. "A wonderful amateur, boy! One of the cleverest boxers this country ever knew! And so you're his son? Well, well! I'm proud to know you, young man!"

"Thank you, sir. I'm proud to know you, too!"

Lawrence said this in earnest. For Smiling Bill Gordon was a man of unimpeachable character. He was known throughout Europe and America as an absolutely honest promoter—something of a rarity, according to many cynics. Mr. Gordon always gave a square deal. He had never broken faith with the public, and had never promoted anything but a genuine fight.

Consequently, his enterprises always met with success. The public trusted him, and boxers trusted him. He was as honest as any man can be, and his wonderful personality made him the most popular figure in all boxing circles.

"That work of yours was superb," went on Smiling Bill. "I've seen a few youngsters in my time. A few? Thousands! And I don't think I've ever seen one I admire more than you, boy. I suppose you keep in training all the time, eh?"

"More or less, sir."

"Good—can't do better!" said Smiling Bill. "Now, that fight? Just a schoolboy quarrel, I suppose?"

"A matter of honour, sir," smiled Lawrence.

"Fine!" grinned Mr. Gordon. "The other fellow was rather battered in the finish, wasn't he? But I won't ask questions—it's not my business! Besides, there isn't time. What I want to know is this—what do you say to a nice little fight at my stadium in Southampton?"

Lawrence started.

"You're joking, sir!" he said breathlessly.

"I joke sometimes, I'll admit; but not when I'm making anybody an offer," replied Mr. Gordon. "Take your time, boy. Don't be flustered. The offer isn't much—a small match, with a twenty-pound purse."

"Twenty pounds, sir?" asked Lawrence eagerly.

"Fifteen win—five lose!" said Smiling Bill briefly.

Lawrence thought rapidly. This sudden offer took him all of a heap. The money, of course, was trivial. But to Lawrence it seemed a big amount at the moment. He remembered the financial condition of St. Frank's—and the pledge of the Fourth to do everything in their power to help the old school.

And here was a chance to win fifteen pounds in one lump! As an individual effort it was a chance—and, if he won, a noteworthy achievement. Why, if every

junior in the Fourth earned fifteen pounds, the lump sum would be quite considerable.

So, looking at it in that way, the prize was worth going for.

"I don't know, sir," said Lawrence cautiously. "Of course, I'd like to do it, but it's against the rules."

"Sometimes people wink at rules," smiled Mr. Gordon. "I'm not the kind of man to involve a young boy in trouble—but this is a trifle. Rules of that kind are only made to be broken. And isn't boxing the finest sport in the world? Is there anything more manly or great than the art of self-defence?"

"No, sir!" replied Lawrence breathlessly.

"Then what's the quibble for?" grinned Bill. "Come along!—he who hesitates is lost! This match is only a small affair—a preliminary to a bigger bout. You'll meet a youngster named Tommy Douglas—a local boy. And I think you'll beat him, if you reveal the same form as you've shown me to-day. What about it?"

"When is it to be, sir?"

"On Saturday afternoon."

"That's half-holiday!" said Lawrence eagerly. "It only takes three-quarters of an hour to get from Bellton to Southampton—even less on a good train. I could do it, and nobody would be the wiser."

"Absolutely!" said Smiling Bill, nodding.

"All right, sir—it's a go!" said the schoolboy boxer.

CHAPTER XI.

A CHANCE TO MAKE BIG MONEY.



SMILING BILL GORDON seized Lawrence's fist.

"Good boy!" he said heartily. "That's the stuff I like! And, remember—I'll see you square. If there's any trouble over this,

I'll come along to your Headmaster, and put it right. But you needn't worry. My stadium isn't a common booth. It's a clean, healthy centre of sport. I'm out to make this game honest and healthy."

Lawrence knew it—and he knew, also, that he was safe.

For many months he had admired the great Smiling Bill—the man who had done more for the great sport of boxing than any other man in history. For it was Mr. Gordon's principle to use clean methods, and honest means. Under his banner boxing had become a changed sport. Every fight organised by Mr. Gordon was a real honest contest—fit for the highest in the land to see.

Smiling Bill had lifted the banner of boxing to a higher plane. And many people who had previously expressed disgust at the game now regularly visited Mr. Gordon's stadium. Indeed, it was a frequent occurrence for young University undergraduates to appear in Mr. Gordon's ring.

"Now we've got that settled, there's something else I want to tell you," said Smiling Bill. "I didn't want to open my mouth too wide at first, but now that we've fixed up this match with Tommy Douglas, we can go ahead to something else."

"Something else, sir?"

"You bet your life!" said Mr. Gordon, nodding. "If you win this match against Tommy, there'll be another job for you. To put it briefly, I'll match you against Buddy Sloane, of Portsmouth."

"But he's a well-known boxer, isn't he?" gasped Lawrence.

"He is—just about your weight, too," said the other. "The winner of Saturday's fight has the chance of fighting Sloane. So, if you turn out as I expect, you'll be in for something good."

"Oh!" said Lawrence, taking a deep breath.

He sat there, thinking. Big possibilities had suddenly opened out before him, and he could hardly realise them all at once. But he knew that a tussle with Buddy Sloane would mean a bigger sum than fifteen pounds.

Mr. Gordon supplied the information at once.

"It's up to you to beat Tommy," he said. "If you do, there's a purse of seventy-five pounds attached to the Sloane fight."

"Seventy-five, sir!" breathed Lawrence.

"Fifty for the winner—twenty-five for the loser."

So Lawrence stood to win a clear sixty-five pounds—if he was successful in both matches! It was a stupendous thought. That he alone could present the school with such a sum! It was worth going all out for—worth it for the sport alone.

The money had no attractions for Lawrence. But for the school's need he wouldn't have considered it. His father had plenty, and Lawrence was never wanting for cash. But this affair was different. How great it would be to earn sixty-five pounds by his own prowess for the sake of the school!

"That's—that's fine, sir!" said the junior. "Of course, I'll go all out—I'll try as hard as I can to win."

"That's the spirit—can't do more than that!" said Smiling Bill. "And don't forget that you'll be boxing before one of the most distinguished audiences in England—if you qualify to fight Sloane."

"When—when does it take place, sir?"

"The Saturday after next."

"That gives me a clear week after the Tommy Douglas contest."

ANSWERS
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"Yes—not much; but these matches are only minor affairs, after all, although big from your point of view," said Mr. Gordon. "You see, boy, I'm always after the best talent I can get, and that glimpse of your form has convinced me that I've got hold of a winner."

"Thank you, sir," said the junior. "But what did you mean about a distinguished audience?"

Smiling Bill grinned.

"You don't seem to realise, young man, that the occasion will be a rather wonderful one," he replied. "Don't you read the boxing news? What takes place at the end of next week?"

Ernest Lawrence started, his eyes gleaming.

"You—you mean the great International fight?"

"Sure thing!"

"Between Battling Dawson, of Chicago, and Gunner Moole, of London, for the light-weight championship of the world?" gasped Lawrence.

"Exactly!" said Smiling Bill Gordon. "Now do you understand? If you beat Tommy, you'll appear in the ring against Buddy Sloane. That fight will be a preliminary to the International contest. And, naturally, the stadium will be simply packed with distinguished people. I might even whisper that there'll be Royalty present."

"Oh!" breathed the junior.

Of course, he had read about the big fight. There was only one. It was a match that only took place once in a few years—a great International contest of world-wide interest. And it was being held at Southampton because Mr. Gordon's stadium was undoubtedly the finest spot.

So Lawrence hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels.

He only had to beat Tommy Douglas and he would qualify for the great event. He would appear in the same ring as Battling Dawson and Gunner Moole—and before the same audience.

Of course, the fight would only be a small affair, compared to the main event, but there was something thrilling in the thought of opening the evening's entertainment. It was a chance that seldom came to any boxer of Lawrence's youth and inexperience.

For, after all, he was not a professional. And he strongly suspected that Mr. Gordon was making the path very easy for him. This was one of Smiling Bill's habits. He never acted according to tradition. He had his own methods, and cared nothing for precedent.

"Get into training at once, and make yourself as fit as possible," he heard Mr. Gordon saying. "You needn't come over to Southampton until Saturday. The match is in the afternoon, so you'll be able to do



Bill Gordon grabbed Lawrence's fist and shook it like a pump handle.

it nicely. Turn up at my training quarters not later than ten-thirty."

"Yes, sir," said Lawrence, in a kind of trance.

CHAPTER XII.

IN TRAINING.



THE Grapes Hotel was reached a few minutes later.

And Reggie Pitt and the other juniors were waiting there—rather curious to know what had been happening. They only had a few words with Mr. Gordon. He and Lawrence emerged from the car, and they shook hands.

Then Smiling Bill waved cheerfully to the other fellows, and entered the hotel.

"Here's your bike," said Pitt, wheeling Lawrence's machine up. "Are we going now?"

"Yes, I suppose so," said the Modern House junior.

They mounted and rode away. But very little was said until the town was left behind. For there were all sorts of unpleasant interruptions—urchins hurling insults—and sometimes hurling something more solid. But as soon as the country road was reached, Lawrence called a halt.

"I can't talk riding," he said. "Look here, you chaps, I want to tell you all

about it. But don't breath a word, whatever you do, or there might be trouble."

"What the dickens are you talking about?" growled Handforth. "What's all this mystery?"

"You ought to bring Trackett Grim on the scene," suggested Church.

"Look here, Walter Church——"

"For goodness sake don't start arguing now!" groaned Pitt. "We're all waiting to hear what Lawrence's got to say. He looks a bit dazed, so I suppose the news must be important."

Lawrence laughed.

"Perhaps it won't seem much to you—perhaps I'm excited over nothing," he said. "But Mr. Gordon wants me to go over to Southampton on Saturday afternoon and fight in his stadium. It's a small match against a fellow named Tommy Douglas."

"And have you promised to go?" asked Buster Boots quickly.

"Yes!"

"Good man!"

"But what about the Head?" asked Christine quickly. "He'll put a stop to this if he gets to know."

"Why should he?" asked Pitt. "Mr. Gordon isn't like an ordinary promoter. He's in a class by himself. Only last week two Oxford undergrads were fighting in his stadium. And, if it comes to that, a gipsy appeared on the same occasion! Mr. Gordon doesn't care who his boxers are as long as they are clean and straightforward. And if the Head took exception to such a contest, he'd be condemned by everybody."

"Perhaps so, but it's against the school rules," said Christine.

"Oh, well, there's no need to worry—nobody is likely to know," said Lawrence. "In any case, Mr. Gordon's promised me that he'll put things right if I get into trouble. But here's the point. If I win this match I shall receive fifteen pounds of the purse."

"Fifteen?" snorted Handforth. "That's not much!"

"No, but I shall also qualify for a bigger match," said Lawrence enthusiastically. "And that'll mean a prize of fifty pounds."

"Phew!"

"You'll be able to buy a motor-bike," said Boots enviously.

Ernest Lawrence shook his head.

"I don't want money for myself," he replied. "I wouldn't fight for money—my dad's told me not to. But don't you understand? If I win this cash, I can send it straight to the school, as my share of the Fourth's big effort to raise money."

"All of it?" asked Bob Christine incredulously.

"Every penny!"

The juniors looked at Lawrence in wonder. There was no question of the Fourth-

Former's stirring loyalty. For the sake of the old school he was prepared to enter the ring and gain nothing for himself.

"That's what I call fine!" said Reggie Pitt quietly. "Lawrence, old man, you've got the spirit we all love——"

"Oh, dry up!" growled Lawrence uncomfortably.

"I mean it—and we're jolly proud of you!" said Reggie.

"Rather!" said Boots. "Modern House for ever!"

"You wait!" snorted Handforth.

"What's sixty-five quid? Huh! If I can't earn more than that I'll kick myself! I'm going to write a special novel, and sell it for five hundred pounds!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass!" said Pitt witheringly. "You don't want to give it away like that! You mustn't ask anything less than a thousand! And what's it going to be—a long Trackett Grim story?"

Handforth looked grim.

"I'm not going to tell you!" he replied darkly. "I've got it all planned out, and when you see the way Trackett Grim finds the jewels you'll simply gasp with wonder."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll either gasp in wonder, or else we'll expire with mirth—one or the other!" said Reggie, nodding. "It'll be just as well to leave the last three parts of the book blank, because nobody will ever get as far as that. They'll perish of split sides during the first ten pages!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth raved in vain. It was his one grievance that nobody would ever take his literary efforts seriously. He wrote them in all solemnity, and really believed that they were grave and earnest. He never appreciated the humour of his extraordinary writing.

St. Frank's was reached with the juniors all animated. And the news that Frederick Talbot had been hopelessly smashed was received with great acclamation on every side.

Irene and Co. heard the news with quiet satisfaction. They didn't gloat over the cad's defeat, but they felt that he had got his deserts. And they were grateful, indeed, to Lawrence, for fighting their battle. But Lawrence didn't look at it in this way. He considered that the battle had been for the honour of St. Frank's.

And, apart from all this, it had led to something altogether wonderful. And the schoolboy boxer was determined to seize his chance with both hands. From that minute he went into strict training.

He rose at six next morning, and was out and about. He haunted the gymnasium, and the gloves were on his hands for hours every day. He meant to be fit for Saturday.

CHAPTER XIII.

SMILING BILL'S STADIUM.



RALPH LESLIE FULLWOOD looked thoughtful.

"There's somethin' on!" he exclaimed. "I don't know what it is, but there's somethin' on!"

"Let it be on!" growled Claude Carter. "We've had quite enough of putting our spoke in. Don't forget what happened at the town hall the other day! Blow these chaps! I don't care what their game is!"

Claude Carter was a new boy, and, being several kinds of a rotter, he had naturally chummed up with Fullwood and Co. He had excellent reason to remember the last occasion they had interfered.

Certainly they had succeeded in ruining Pitt and Co.'s carefully laid plans. But retribution of a drastic nature had fallen upon their own heads. Since then they had been very cautious, and had given the other members of the Fourth a wide berth.

At the present moment the cads of Study A were standing at the window. It was Saturday morning, and outside in the Triangle groups of juniors were standing about, talking with apparent carelessness. But they couldn't disguise the fact that they were all very excited.

"Another stunt to raise money, I expect," sneered Carter. "Don't bother about them—they're silly fools! I suggest we go to the races this afternoon."

"It's a pity you can't suggest somethin' sensible!" snapped Gulliver. "I'm broke! I'll go, if you'll lend me a quid or two."

"You've got as much hope of getting a quid or two from me as an icicle has in a furnace!" said Claude Carter calmly. "But I'm a generous chap. I'll lend you a couple of bob with pleasure."

"You can boil yourself!" snapped Gulliver.

Carter grinned, and turned to the window again.

"We'll keep our eyes open, of course," he suggested. "I'd like to know what these mugs are up to—just so that we can spoil it. The next time we'll be more cautious, though."

Morning lessons were rather irksome to the Fourth. As a matter of fact, they always were on Saturday morning. It seemed quite ridiculous to the juniors that Saturday should be spoilt by lessons at all. And to-day things were particularly interesting, because a number of juniors were off on a picnic.

At least, that's what everybody understood.

The same sixteen fellows who had gone to Bannington on the occasion of the fight with Frederick Talbot, had planned to go off by the two o'clock train from Bellton. Everybody thought they were just going to Caistowe. But the real truth was different.

They were off for Southampton.

The journey could be undertaken with ease, for there was no football fixture to interfere with the plan. With St. Frank's in such bad odour, practically all fixtures had been cancelled. It was only possible to indulge in House matches. And there had been so many of these recently that Saturday afternoon could easily be spared.

The train was caught without trouble—although it had necessitated a quick rush to the station immediately following dinner. Lawrence had eaten sparingly. For just at present he was on a diet, and was very particular about his food.

"Well, we're off!" said Handforth, as the train started. "But we shall be a bit late, shan't we?"

"No—this is a quick train," replied Lawrence. "Besides, Mr. Gordon wrote to me, and said that if I arrive by three, it'll be all serene. It's not an important bout, of course, and it doesn't come on till late in the afternoon."

Southampton was reached quickly, for the journey was comparatively short, after all. And as the Stadium was situated fairly close by, in a busy part of the town, the juniors soon reached it.

The place was a fine structure.

Mr. Gordon had put it up at his own expense, and had proved that he was a good prophet. For the Stadium had done well since its opening. It was an enormous place, capable of seating ten thousand.

Lawrence took leave of his companions outside. They paid for their admission and passed into the auditorium. But Lawrence went to the rear, and made his way to the training quarters.

He found himself in a small lobby. Men with a pugilistic look were much in evidence, and there was an air of bustle that couldn't be mistaken. The doorkeeper looked at Lawrence rather doubtfully.

"Come to the wrong entrance, haven't you, young man?" he asked.

"I don't think so—I want to see Mr. Gordon," said the junior.

"Oh! Mr. Gordon!" grinned the doorkeeper. "You don't want much, do you? Look here, my lad— Oh!" he added abruptly. "Are you the youngster that Mr. Gordon's expecting, name of Lawrence?"

"Yes."

"That's different," said the doorkeeper briskly. "Sorry, Master Lawrence—I forgot you for the moment. Hi, Joe! Take the young gent along to the gym., will you? The boss wants him at once."

Joe proved to be a burly individual in a sweater, and he escorted Lawrence down various passages, and finally admitted him into a beautifully fitted gymnasium. Smiling Bill Gordon was there, talking with a fair-haired young fellow who was dressed ready for the ring.

"Ah, here he is!" said Mr. Gordon briskly.

"Come along, Lawrence—this is Tommy Douglas, your opponent."

"Pleased to meet you," said Lawrence heartily.

"Same here," replied Douglas. "Let's hope we have a good match."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIGHT!



LAURENCE looked very different once he had stripped and dressed himself for the ring.

And, without further ado he was given into the hands of two or three gentlemen in white sweaters. Two of these cheery individuals were Lawrence's seconds, and the junior lost no time in showing what he could do.

He was, in short, put through his paces by a particularly ugly looking gentleman named Jim Whitby—who proved to be a very important person. In fact, he was Gunner Moole's trainer. And Mr. Whitby was delighted with the way Lawrence shaped.

Gunner Moole himself came in and watched for a few minutes, while Lawrence was sparring with one or two partners.

"That kid's got the real stuff in him!" exclaimed the famous lightweight, with conviction. "He's a wonder!"

"The best youngster of his age I've ever come across," declared Mr. Whitby. "He'll eat Tommy Douglas up in one gulp! My word! The boss is a marvel for picking 'em out!"

Smiling Bill was quite overjoyed, and he was convinced that he had discovered a real "find" in Lawrence. But he said little. It wasn't Mr. Gordon's way to talk.

Lawrence only just had enough time to go through the preliminary formalities before it was time for him to enter the ring. The contest was a ten-round affair, and, barring a knock-out, the decision would be given on points.

The Stadium was only a quarter full—but even this meant an audience of well over two thousand. The afternoon's events were small fry, in the general opinion of the boxing fraternity.

Pitt and Co., and the other St. Frank's fellows, had obtained good seats for a mere trifle, and were highly satisfied. They were very anxious to see their champion leave the ring the winner.

The first to enter was Tommy Douglas. He struck Pitt as being a rather aggressive young man. Douglas was decent enough, no doubt, but at the moment he was suffering from an unfortunate over-confidence. He knew that he was matched against a schoolboy, and he felt that he was in for a dead certain win.

He had seen Lawrence in the gynasium, certainly; but this made no difference to his confidence. He was a promising young boxer, and had already announced openly that he was booked for the fight against Buddy Sloane.

Lawrence entered the ring with his head buzzing somewhat. He had been given so much advice by well meaning friends that his mind was in a whirl. But he calmed down as soon as he set foot in the ring.

His policy at first would be caution.

And then, as soon as he found exactly what he was up against, he would fight accordingly. Lawrence got a rousing cheer from the St. Frank's crowd as soon as he entered—but nobody else took any notice of him.

On the other hand, Tommy Douglas had been clapped and cheered to the echo, proving that he had a whole host of friends present. This enthusiasm tended to make him easier than ever.

Tommy had sized up Lawrence as a useful sort of amateur, but a mere mouthful for him. He would just play about for a round or two, in order to give the crowd a show, and would then settle him with a clean knock-out. This was Mr. Douglas' little programme.

How could a mere schoolboy be any good against a first-class boxer? Tommy considered himself to be rather better than first-class, and this was his big opportunity to show the world what he could do.

He lounged into his corner rather languidly, chatting with his seconds in a careless sort of way. It must be confessed, in fact, that Tommy Douglas even went to the point of swanking.

The gong sounded, and the first round commenced.

The two boxers left their corners. Overhead were the great glaring electric lights, and the atmosphere was rather hazy with tobacco smoke. Lawrence seemed bewildered. He had been in a professional ring on many occasions, but it all seemed new to him again.

His apparent unfamiliarity with his surroundings caused a laugh in the audience, and people were already beginning to say that he wouldn't last the first round.

"Seconds out!"

The audience became quiet. A silence fell, and everybody sat still, with that tense expectancy that generally marks the opening of a fight. All eyes were centred upon the ring. The two agile figures stood out in clear relief under the brilliancy of the electrics.

"Time!"

Tommy Douglas leapt into the battle casually. It was clear to all that his confidence was supreme. Even Lawrence could see this, and the schoolboy was grim and firm. Under no circumstances would he go blindly into the battle, and make a hopeless mess of it.

They both looked sturdy, muscular figures. They were practically stripped, merely attired in loose, short knickers, and vests. There was quite a contrast between the pair.

Both were about the same height, but Lawrence seemed cleaner limbed, and not quite so heavy. Tommy, although well-built, adopted a crouch which completely marred his figure.

They circled round the ring for a few moments, sparring for an opening. Lawrence was very careful. He waited for Douglas to make the first move. And this only added to the conviction that he was highly nervous and anticipating quick defeat.

Nothing was further from the truth.

For Lawrence was perfectly calm. His heart was beating evenly, and his coolness was intense. But his appearance was liable to give the onlookers a false impression.

Tommy Douglas suddenly leapt in close and delivered a quick, sharp punch on Lawrence's chest. He got the blow in with apparent ease, but immediately danced out to distance, satisfied.

He smiled to himself as he drove in again. His confidence was unabated, and he was beginning to have a certain amount of contempt for this paltry schoolboy. Again he landed a punch, and it seemed that Lawrence's defence was nowhere.

Mr. Gordon, looking on, lost his smile. He frowned slightly. Ernest Lawrence wasn't coming up to expectations. But the St. Frank's junior hadn't really started yet.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WINNER.

"SECONDS out!"

The second round was about to begin. The first round had been a dull affair, with Lawrence completely in the background. Precious little had been done, but even this went to the credit of Tommy Douglas.

"Why doesn't the fathead show us his real form?" growled Handforth.

"Give him time!" said Boots uncomfortably. "I can't understand it! He seems to be dazed, or something. He's not himself at all! Let's hope this round's better!"

"It's a pity you Modern House chaps don't show a bit more sense!" exclaimed Reggie Pitt. "You know Lawrence better than I do—you're always in contact with him. But I'm not mystified a bit. He strikes me as being a certain winner!"

"A winner?" repeated Christine, staring.

"Exactly," replied Reggie. "If you'd only read the signs properly, you wouldn't be so blind. Lawrence isn't nervous. He's just been taking in the measure of his opponent.

And in this round he'll sail in properly, unless I'm mistaken."

How true Pitt's prophecy was became evident a moment later. For with this round the fight became far more interesting. Instead of being purely on the defensive, Lawrence instantly attacked. He not only took the audience by surprise, but Tommy Douglas as well.

Crash!

Quick as lightning the schoolboy boxer's right shot home—a beautiful cut which seemed to come from nowhere. Tommy was not prepared for it, and the blow woke him up with a jar. And before he could even commence to recover, a left swing caught him a terrific thud on the chest. He staggered back, hurt.

"So that's the game, is it?" he muttered savagely.

He proved to be one of those boxers who quickly lose their temper unless everything is going right. With a scowl of anger, he leapt in to the attack, and there was a swift exchange of blows. At least, this is what it appeared to be. But Lawrence was hardly touched.

His own thrusts found a mark nearly every time, and his footwork was perfect to behold. Smiling Bill watched with gathering confidence, and he commenced smoking furiously—a sure sign that he was pleased.

On the other hand, Tommy Douglas was far from satisfying the promoter. He had become reckless and foolhardy. And his attack had lost its skill, and was descending the level of a savage brawl.

But this kind of thing didn't pay!

For, whilst Lawrence was hardly touched, he got in blow after blow, and every one enraged Tommy the more. They circled round the ring, with Lawrence the clear master of the situation.

"Go it, Tommy—wake up!"

"Don't let the kid beat you!"

All sorts of shouts came from the crowd—the first indication that Douglas had had that his troubles were obvious to the onlookers. He clinched, and the referee was obliged to caution him for holding.

The boxers broke away, and Tommy set his teeth, and barged in blindly. On a sudden impulse, he decided to go all out for a knock-out.

His chief asset was a deadly left hook, and it had saved him on many an occasion. He attempted to get this home now—but wasn't successful. Indeed, he found it almost impossible to fight down the schoolboy's guard.

The referee, in dodging round, slipped for a moment, and appeared to be in danger of falling. For the merest flash Lawrence glanced at him. And in that second his guard was gone.

Crash!

Tommy landed a deadly blow on the point of the jaw, and Lawrence staggered back

to the ropes, and nearly fell through. He swayed giddily, dazed and bewildered.

"Time!"

"My hat!" breathed Bob Christine shakily. "That's lucky!"

"Yes—I thought he was going to be whacked!" said Boots.

Lawrence got back to his corner, and rapidly recovered under the ministrations of his seconds. They solemnly warned him against the dangers of taking his eye off his opponent. But they needn't have worried. Lawrence himself was fully aware of it, and he was angry with himself for having made such a blunder.

The next round was watched with interest.

Most of the audience believed that Lawrence would be beaten now. But the experienced ones who were looking on were not quite so sure. If no knock-out was delivered by Tommy Douglas, the winner would certainly be the schoolboy. For on points Lawrence was leading well.

His boxing was much more finished—his style polished to a degree. Douglas, on the other hand, was more of a rough-and-ready type, eager to beat his opponent by sheer brute force.

So far the St. Frank's junior was unmarked. He had not escaped punishment, but there was nothing to show. And when this new round commenced he entered into the battle with his muscles throbbing, and his pulse beating high. He was just beginning to enjoy himself.

Almost before Douglas knew what had hit him his guard was swept aside and beaten. He received a punch on the ribs which made him grunt. He backed away a pace or two, but did not escape. Quick as a flash, Lawrence was after him, and landed two tremendous punches which drove the other to the ropes.

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, old man!"

"You've got him now!"

The St. Frank's juniors were on their feet, excited and eager.

Lawrence was like a tiger—a complete transformation. He waded into the unfortunate Tommy, and executed tremendous damage. A swift hook to the jaw, a crashing blow on the ribs, followed at once by a short punch on the side of the head.

Douglas fell back, bewildered.

And then, while Lawrence had the advantage, he seized it. Up came his right, and it found the point of Tommy's chin. The boxer's guard was swept completely away, and failed to exist.

Crash!

All the force of the schoolboy's muscular frame was behind the blow. The thud of it was heard all over the stadium, and Tommy

Douglas was lifted clean off his feet, to crash over full length. Lawrence stood over him, waiting.

But Tommy didn't move, except turn over and blink dazedly. He made not the slightest attempt to rise.

"Out!" said the referee briskly. "Lawrence wins!"

CHAPTER XVI.

BOOKED FOR THE BIG FIGHT.

SMILING BILL GORDON clapped Lawrence on the back delightedly.

"Splendid, young man!" he exclaimed. "When you first started, I thought you were going to be infernally nervous, and throw the fight away. You sly young beggar! You fooled me! And I'm an old hand, too!"

Lawrence smiled.

"Sorry, sir!" he said. "I didn't mean to deceive——"

"Good glory! Don't be sorry for it!" interrupted Smiling Bill. "It was splendid—it was worth quids! Which reminds me, boy. I've got to pay over your share of the purse—and here it is!"

They were in one of the dressing-rooms, and Ernest Lawrence was scarcely an atom the worse for wear. His jaw felt a trifle stiff, and he had a bruise on his chest. But otherwise he was unharmed.

He took the fifteen pounds with a feeling of pride. He had won it fairly; but he decided that he wouldn't touch it until after the next Saturday. He would leave it intact.

And he had qualified for the big fight!

"Next Saturday, my lad, you'll appear on the great night!" said Mr. Gordon briskly. "You are booked to meet Buddy Sloane, and I can tell you at once that the contest won't be anything like this one. Frankly, I expect you'll lose; but nothing's certain."

"I'll do my best, sir," said Lawrence grimly.

"Not a doubt of that," said Smiling Bill. "I'm going to bill you as Tiger Larry—it sounds good, and it won't give any clue. And don't forget to put in every minute of training you can."

"I'll do it, sir," replied Lawrence happily.

The fact that he had qualified so successfully filled him with joy. For in any case he was now a certain winner of forty pounds. For he would get twenty-five pounds for the Sloane fight, even if he lost.

But by winning his total would be sixty-five—a considerable sum, and well worth fighting for. As an individual effort for the school, it would undoubtedly rank as one of the best.

It wasn't long before Lawrence took his

departure from Mr. Gordon, and he emerged into the open. He found his chums waiting for him with open arms. In fact, they were almost on the point of carrying him shoulder high down the street.

"Fine!" said Buster Boots enthusiastically. "That last whack of yours was worth travelling a hundred miles to see! What about the next fight? All fixed up?"

"Yes, for next Saturday."

"Good man!" said Pitt heartily.

"It's for the sake of the school," said Lawrence, without any tone of bragging in his voice. "I'm only too glad to do it—

novel? If you're going to write that, you won't have any time for training!"

Handforth couldn't answer this poser, so he relapsed into silence.

"Of course, this affair has only been a kind of preliminary," said Lawrence. "The real fight will take place next week, and I mean to go all out. It's a big chance, and I mustn't waste it. I expect to lose, but I want to put up a good show before I go under."

"Rats!" said Pitt. "You mustn't expect to lose! You've got to expect to win—and keep on expecting all the week! Don't forget that the will to win is half the battle,



Lawrence staggered to the ropes, and nearly fell through.

and I don't want to claim credit for something I don't deserve. I'd go into this fight even if there was no purse at all! So, you see, it's a selfish motive in the end."

"Rot!" said Handforth. "You can't spoof us like that. I'll tell you what—if you get crocked or anything this week, I'll appear as a substitute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling fatheads!" roared Handforth. "My wrist's nearly well now! By next Saturday I shall be absolutely fit!"

"But not fit enough to fight Buddy Sloane, my lad!" grinned Reggie Pitt. "I admire your pluck, but I don't think much of your judgment. And what about your great

my son. So make up your mind on that, and stick to it."

Ernest Lawrence looked at Reggie with shining eyes.

"Thanks, old man," he said quietly. "You always come in at the right moment with the right advice. Yes, I'll win! I'll make up my mind to win! And there's just a chance—"

"There's more than a chance," said Pitt. "In my opinion, it's a certainty!"

And the St. Frank's juniors wended their way back to the old school, happy and content—and looking forward with keen eagerness to the forthcoming week.

THE END.

By Your Editor:



My Dear Readers,

Mr. Brooks tells me that he is looking forward to a record mail in response to his invitation to you all to write to him. The "Replies in Brief" have proved exceedingly popular, and I have little doubt that the author will find it equally hard to do justice to his correspondents in the limited space at his disposal as in the Uncle Edward feature. But the Author's Page differs considerably from the "Replies in Brief." It is not an "Answers to Correspondents" in the sense that every letter will be answered individually in the NELSON LEE LIBRARY. I can, however, assure my readers that all letters will be read carefully by the Author, and those which are of special interest will be dealt with on the Author's Page.

WHAT THE AUTHOR WANTS TO KNOW.

First and foremost, Mr. Brooks wants to know what you think of the stories now appearing in the paper, whether you like the St. Frank's stories as much as those about the Green Triangle, and what features you like best or dislike most in the Mag. Any suggestions regarding improvements in the NELSON LEE LIBRARY or the Mag. will, of course, receive special attention. Readers, I hope, will take advantage of this opportunity to get in closer touch with the

man whose stories have become a part of their lives, lived in the realm of imagination it is true, yet bearing with it memories which linger on like memories of our own experiences. I have noticed that readers in their letters love to recount the incidents and stories of the past, as though they were talking over old times with a friend. This they can now do with the unique advantage of knowing that they are talking to the friend who actually created those stories.

"THE SCHOOLBOY BOXER'S LUCK!"

The important part played by Ernest Lawrence, the wonder boxer of St. Frank's, in restoring the fallen fortunes and good name of the school will be demonstrated in our next story, "THE SCHOOLBOY BOXER'S LUCK!" To all lovers of boxing (and I do not think there are many British lads who are not) this coming story of Lawrence's fistic encounters in the Ring will prove irresistibly fascinating. Readers have long been clamouring for a real live boxing story, introducing our popular St. Frank's character, and now they will have no reason to complain that their wish has not been gratified.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

Result of Mystery Picture Competition No. 7.

In this competition the First Prize of £1 1s. for the best inscription to the picture has been divided between:—

H. COPELAND, 8, ECCLESTON ROAD, BLACKPOOL, S.S.

CLIFTON EASTWOOD, 14, MYRTLE STREET, TODMORDEN, YORKS.

for the following:—

"Why, yes—figures against the skyline," replied Lee grimly. "They're there, Dorrie!"

The twelve consolation prizes have been awarded to:—

L. Burgess, 22, Belle Field Road, Titchfield, Hants.

J. Clissold, Church House, East Challow, Wantage, Berks.

A. Dew, 55, South Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham.

D. G. Dore, 129, Pyle Street, Newport, Isle of Wight.

C. H. Feam, 78, Cambridge Street, Fenton, Staffs.

A. Gasson, 34, Queen's Park Road, Brighton. S. Homans, North Crawley, Newport Pagnell, Bucks.

G. Houghton, 3, Aldred's Yard, Wellgate, Rotherham.

J. Millington, Trent Villas, Alcewas, Nr. Burton-on-Trent.

G. Stubbley, 12, West Park Terrace, Healey, Batley, Yorks.

M. Todd, 30, Glenfarne Street, Belfast.

Thomas James Whatcott, 209, Alcester Street, Birmingham.

THE ISLE OF MYSTERY!



A Thrilling Story of Detective Adventure, introducing NELSON LEE and NIPPER and the LEAGUE OF THE GREEN TRIANGLE.

This is the Fourth Episode of the Green Triangle series. Nelson Lee has discovered the whereabouts of the new secret headquarters of the League, and this week's story relates how the famous detective lays a trap for Professor Zingrave, the evil genius who manipulates the various sinister activities of the League's mysterious organisation.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE NIGHT.

THE motor-boat glided along almost noiselessly.

The low-lying coast of Essex lay on the left, some little distance away over the calm, gloomy sea. It was night, and the sky was overcast with heavy, dense clouds.

The motor-boat was proceeding at a mere crawl, compared to the speed she could attain with open throttle. She was piloted by a man named Ridgwell, her owner. And there were four other passengers.

These four consisted of Nelson Lee and Nipper, the famous pair of Gray's Inn Road, Chief Detective-Inspector Lennard, of Scotland Yard, and a man named Woodhouse.

The latter was by far the most disconsolate of the entire party. He had reason to be, for he was a prisoner in the tiny cabin—handcuffed and helpless. He was, in fact, one of the leading members of the League of the Green Triangle. But there was every likelihood that he would soon be one of the leading members of a convict gang.

Nelson Lee was determined to press an advantage which had just come into his hands. Somewhere in the gloom ahead lay Turtle Island—a small, insignificant islet, which was at present used by the Green Triangle as a secret retreat.

It was distinguishable from the other Essex islands by a high, rocky prominence in the centre. Most of the islands round this deserted coast were flat and marshy. But Turtle Island was distinctive.

There had recently been a chase—for Woodhouse had been attempting to reach

the island with some stolen jewels of enormous value. But the man had failed. Both the jewels and Woodhouse were now in the chief inspector's charge.

Nelson Lee had briefly explained the situation to Mr. Ridgwell, the owner of the motor-boat, and this gentleman was eager enough to continue the adventure.

"I know Turtle Island well," he declared. "When you gentlemen hired my boat, I hadn't the faintest idea that we were out after the Green Triangle. I'll do anything I can to help."

"Can you tell us anything about this island?" asked the chief inspector.

"Very little, I'm afraid," replied Ridgwell. "So far as I know, it's only a barren rock. Nothing lives on it except a few birds. At least, I've never known anything human to stay there for long. You see, it's just a bare piece of rock, without even a bush, or a patch of grass. No good for any purpose whatever."

"H'm! That's not very promising, at all events," remarked Nelson Lee. "But we cannot do better than go ahead and explore this island, and satisfy our curiosity."

"But isn't Zingrave on the island, sir?" asked Nipper.

"Well, judging by the facts in our possession, the chances are that he is," replied Lee. "For that reason, we must be very cautious. I believe the professor is there, waiting to receive the parcel of jewels from Woodhouse. And it is quite possible that he will have some men with him, as a kind of bodyguard."

Ridgwell pointed into the murk ahead.

"That's the spot," he said briefly.

Looming out of the dim distance rose a little rocky prominence—a kind of projection

from the sea. The motor-boat was approaching noiselessly. And after a short time the prominence revealed itself as an absurdly small island, separated from the mainland by a fairly wide channel.

"Not much to look at," remarked Lennard.

"You can't always judge by appearances, old man," said Nelson Lee. "And although this isle looks so deserted, it may be fairly alive with enemies. When we go ashore, we must be very much on the alert."

"It won't take us long to explore that pimple, anyhow," said the inspector.

Approaching very closely, the motor-boat nosed its way into a tiny inlet. The tide appeared to be high, but this little inlet was protected by the channel, the sea being very calm.

"You can all go ashore, if you like," said Ridgwell. "I'll keep the boat here, and I'll keep my eye on that fellow in the cabin. Not that he's likely to give much trouble."

The inspector laughed.

"You're right there," he agreed. "The man's wearing nothing except two pair of bracelets—one on his wrists and another on his ankles—and if he gets up from those rugs he'll be pretty cold. I took no chances with the fellow. These Green Triangle men stick at nothing."

The chief inspector went ashore with Nelson Lee and Nipper. Both the latter were holding their revolvers ready, for they had no desire to be taken unawares. It would not have surprised Lee if a number of dim forms had detached themselves from the rocks and attacked them.

But nothing of this sort happened.

In fact, to be brief, the search was quite barren. Moving very cautiously at first, the explorers gained boldness. And by the time they had covered half the little island they had dropped all pretence of secrecy.

And the rest of the search was conducted in an open manner.

They went from end to end of the rock, and explored practically every inch of it. But the only sign of life was when a number of sea birds rose with raucous, indignant cries.

The chief inspector was thoroughly disgusted.

"That information must have been false!" he growled. "This is no Green Triangle retreat! There's not a living thing here. The island's as bare as the top of an egg. I'm afraid your little programme is a bit spoilt, Lee."

"Yes, so it appears," replied Nelson Lee. "But we mustn't be disappointed, Lennard—we've got one prisoner, and the Heathbrook jewels are in our possession. We shall have to get Zingrave another time."

"Well, we certainly shan't get him this time," said Lennard.

Nipper was keenly disappointed, too. He had been expecting some excitement, and had been rather looking forward to it. This tame finish to their adventure was a decided set-back.

But, if they had only known it, Turtle Island was not quite so empty and deserted as it appeared to be on the surface!

CHAPTER II.

PROFESSOR ZINGRAVE'S SUSPENSE.



PROFESSOR CYRUS ZINGRAVE, the chief of the League of the Green Triangle, glanced impatiently at his watch.

"Extraordinary!" he muttered. "The Eagle should have been here hours ago. Something has happened—some disaster. Why hasn't Woodhouse communicated in some way?"

The professor was seated in a comfortable chair, but he was certainly not at his ease. He crouched there like some spider in its web. The very surroundings were bizarre.

This was no ordinary room, but a rocky cavern, with a low, uneven roof. A single electric light hung near the rock wall, and the shadows in all the corners were black and mysterious. There was something grim and sinister about the whole place.

Repeatedly, Zingrave consulted his watch.

He was waiting—waiting for the arrival of the Crimson Eagle with Woodhouse and the Heathbrook jewels. They were long overdue, and the professor's wait was doomed to complete disappointment.

For the Green Triangle's aircraft was a wreck, Woodhouse a prisoner, and the jewels in the hands of Scotland Yard. Zingrave knew nothing of these disasters.

The Crimson Eagle had been the league's most valuable asset. For she had been a wonder aircraft—the most extraordinary machine in the world. But at the very moment of success, the catastrophe had occurred. And, owing to that, Nelson Lee was near by—very much on the alert.

It was not often that Zingrave expressed emotion. As a rule, he was cool and calm, and his voice retained that silky softness which was one of the master-criminal's characteristics.

But to-night Zingrave was not himself.

The hours of suspense had changed him. This coup had been the most important on the Green Triangle's programme. With those diamonds in his possession, Zingrave would soon have commanded a fortune. But they were out of his reach, and he was beginning to suspect this fact.

"What can have happened?" he murmured feverishly. "If Woodhouse has failed me, I will make him pay dearly—"

Well—well? What is it? What do you want?"

The professor turned and glared balefully at a man who had just appeared out of the shadows. The fellow was Robson, one of the Green Triangle's members. He regarded his chief with caution, for he knew what Zingrave could be like in such a mood as this.

"I have come with a report, sir—" began Robson.

"A report?" interrupted Zingrave. "The Eagle is in sight? Speak up, man! Don't stand there like a fool! What is it?"

Robson backed away slightly. He didn't like Zingrave's look. The professor, usually so distinguished in appearance, was now transformed. He looked like some demon.

"It's not the Eagle, sir," said Robson huskily. "But there's a motor-boat coming near the island—looking for a landing-place, I think."

"A motor-boat?" demanded Zingrave. "Who's in it?"

"Don't know, sir."

"Bah! What do you know?" snarled the professor, his nerves completely on edge. "Out of the way, you rat!"

He pushed past the man, and went to the end of the cavern. Here he found himself in a wide, natural fissure, which was more or less of a tunnel. But one side of it was sloping upwards, and the top was lost in the deep shadows.

But Zingrave apparently knew his way, for he mounted upwards over the rocks, using a kind of natural stairway. He went up and up, until, at length, he was a considerable distance above the level of the low-roofed cavern. Here there was a kind of wide ledge, and a cool air was blowing down in a distinct draught. Another man was at this spot. He turned as Zingrave approached.

"I'm glad you've come, chief," he said. "This looks fishy to me."

"I didn't ask your opinion, Hamilton—you can keep it to yourself!" retorted Zingrave sourly. "Let me come in that place."

There was a kind of seat, and immediately in front of it a crude-looking wooden structure. Zingrave sat down, and applied his eyes to an opening in the contrivance.

The result was surprising.

Zingrave could see out over the bare, barren surface of the island. For this thing was a cunningly contrived periscope. The island, far from being deserted, was hollow. There were all sorts of unsuspected caverns beneath the rocks.

It was no new haunt of the Green Triangle.

Zingrave had known of it for years—had used it, indeed, when the league had flourished earlier. The truth concerning the island had never been revealed, and the professor now found it very useful. It was a retreat of the most perfect description,

particularly with the Crimson Eagle as a means of reaching the mainland.

This perch that Zingrave now occupied was the top-most peak of the cavern, and quite close to the outer air. The periscope was quite invisible from above. Even in the day-time it could not be detected. For the top of the instrument was camouflaged cunningly into the semblance of a rock.

After Zingrave's eyes had grown accustomed to the gloom, he could distinctly see the shores of the island. He could even distinguish the waves breaking on the rocks. And he saw figures, too—figures stepping ashore from a motor-boat.

They came nearer, and although the gloom was so intense that actual recognition was impossible, the professor formed a shrewd guess.

There were two big figures, and a smaller one.

"Lee, Nipper, and that infernal Scotland Yard man, Lennard," muttered the professor. "I'll wager I am right! This is bad—very bad indeed!"

For the presence of such a trio told him much.

Somehow or other, the Crimson Eagle had fallen into the hands of the police, and Nelson Lee had got to know of the retreat on Turtle Island. Zingrave was inwardly furious, but he had at least one cause for satisfaction.

Even though Lee knew of the island he obviously remained in ignorance of its secret. For, after a complete examination of the rocks, the three explorers took to the motor-boat again, and left.

Zingrave was relieved, but his suspense in another direction was even more acute. What had happened to Woodhouse? What was the actual extent of this disaster?

CHAPTER III.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS.



SHOEBURYNESSE showed a few twinkling lights as the motor-boat approached.

"Even if I can't get a train to London, I shall probably be able to hire a car,"

said Chief-inspector Lennard. "What will you do, Lee? Come with me? There's nothing to be gained by hanging about this dismal spot any longer."

"Well, I think I'll remain, if it's all the same to you, Lennard," replied Nelson Lee. "You've got your prisoner, and you're welcome to him. Nipper and I will probably accompany Mr. Ridgwell back to Sheerness, and return to London that way."

"Just as you like," said the inspector.

He was safely put ashore, and Woodhouse went with him—sullen, morose, and thoroughly crestfallen. Woodhouse had

been a very polished gentleman while at liberty, but now that his career was ended for a time he revealed his true characteristics.

"I'm glad you're coming back with me, Mr. Lee," said Ridgwell, as the motor-boat was putting out to sea again. "We ought to be in Sheerness in just over an hour—"

"I'm afraid I rather deceived Mr. Lennard on that point," interrupted Lee. "I have no intention of returning just yet, Mr. Ridgwell. In fact, I'm going to ask you to do me a great favour."

"Anything within my power, Mr. Lee—with pleasure."

"Well, it is certainly in your power," replied Lee. "I want you to set Nipper and I on Turtle Island, and then return here, to Shoeburyness, until the small hours of the morning. You can then pick us up just before dawn."

Ridgwell stared.

"You want to go back to the island?" he asked.

"Yes."

"But what on earth for, Mr. Lee?"

"Well, I have my reasons," replied Lee evenly. "For one thing, I am not fully satisfied that the place is as barren as we at first thought. I want to make a closer investigation."

"But wouldn't it be better if I remained quite near by?" asked the motor-boat owner. "It seems such a pointless thing for me to return to Shoeburyness. I don't mind waiting, Mr. Lee—don't consider me in the least."

Nelson Lee shook his head.

"My reason for desiring your absence is a good one," he said. "I believe there are watchers, and if the boat is seen hovering about, it may spoil everything. I want you to land Nipper and me at a point I shall choose—a kind of blind spot, which will enable us to get on the island without any fear of being observed."

"In that case, couldn't I hover near the island at that point?"

"Well, perhaps you could," said Lee thoughtfully. "Very well, Mr. Ridgwell, if you are agreeable. But I really didn't want to place you to such an inconvenience."

"Nonsense, sir!" said Ridgwell. "I'm only too pleased."

And so it was arranged. This time the motor-boat approached Turtle Island from the inner channel. With scarcely a sound, the little craft nosed her way along, and at a certain spot Lee gave the word. He and Nipper stepped silently ashore like two shadows in the gloom.

The tide was now much lower, and was ebbing rapidly. Indeed, it had been on the turn at the time of the former visit. As Lee and Nipper cautiously progressed over the rocks, Nipper could contain his curiosity no longer.

"What's the idea, guv'nor?" he whispered. "Why have we come back?"

"To make a second examination."

"Yes, I know that—you told Mr. Ridgwell," said Nipper. "But why? This place is as bare as the Sahara! Didn't we go over it from end to end?"

"Precisely. That is why I have come back."

"I don't follow, sir."

"Look here, Nipper. I am by no means satisfied that this island is devoid of human life," said Nelson Lee softly. "At all events, I should very much like to find out the meaning of the tobacco smoke."

"The which, sir?" asked Nipper, staring.

"You heard what I said."

"Yes, but—"

"When we were on this island before, neither Lennard nor I were smoking," interrupted Lee. "Yet, at one particular spot among the rocks, I detected a clear and unmistakable odour of fresh tobacco smoke. I said nothing at the moment, and Lennard failed to notice the fragrance. I will admit it was very faint and unobtrusive. But Lennard should have used his nostrils to better advantage."

"What about mine, sir?" asked Nipper. "I didn't sniff any smoke."

"Which only proves that both you and Lennard were wool-gathering," replied Nelson Lee calmly. "Now, tobacco smoke cannot be present unless somebody is indulging in the weed. And I propose to make another search. I rather fancy we shall meet with better success this time."

"You seem pretty optimistic, sir."

"Yes—it is nearly low tide," replied Lee calmly.

"Low tide?" repeated Nipper. "I don't see the connection, sir. What's the condition of the tide got to do with your optimism?"

"I am afraid you are somewhat obtuse, young 'un," said Lee severely. "Since we failed to find any suspicious circumstance at high tide, it follows that we shall probably meet with greater success at low tide."

"But what the—"

"For example—caves," said Nelson Lee softly. "See, Nipper! Unless I'm mistaken, a cave mouth is revealed already," he added, pointing. "It is uncovered by the dropping tide. And you must bear in mind that this island is cone-shaped, rising sharply in the centre."

Nipper caught his breath in and stared.

"You—you mean it might be hollow?" he gasped.

"Exactly!" said Nelson Lee grimly.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAN IN THE CAVE.



NIPPER took another deep breath.

"My hat! I hadn't thought of that!" he murmured. "You mean, there must be caverns and things under here?"

"Not necessarily; but the possibility is

not unfeasible," replied Nelson Lee. "Remember that tobacco smoke, Nipper. It was coming from a narrow cleft in the rocks towards the centre of the island. A kind of ventilation shaft, no doubt. I cannot help suspecting that this place is an old haunt of the Green Triangle."

"You think they used it when the League was flourishing before, sir?"

"That is my opinion; for it could scarcely have been prepared at such short notice as this," replied Lee. "However, our investigations may make one or two of these points clear. I had no desire to take Ridgwell into our confidence, and that is why I urged him to return to Shoeburyness. But I fancy he will be just as safe where he is."

was running out rapidly, but the rocks now left exposed were slimy and treacherous.

If Nelson Lee's surmise was correct, the situation was a novel one. Lee believed that the centre of the island was a cavern—and he was perfectly correct in this assumption. But as there was no possible entrance or exit at high water, it stood to reason that such entrances or exits must be available only when the tide was out.

In other words, if anybody entered the cavern at low water, escape was impossible until the tide went out again. During high tide, anybody within the cavern was a prisoner—for it would be foolhardy in the extreme to risk an under-water swim, for



A second figure appeared. It was that of Professor Zingrave himself. The chief was well wrapped up in a thick overcoat and muffler. A tweed cap was pulled over his smooth black locks.

"He's a brick, sir," said Nipper. "Even if we're absent for three or four hours, he'll still be waiting. And it's rather comforting to know that he's there, so that we can escape, if necessary."

"There is that aspect of the matter, of course," said the detective. "But keep your voice down, Nipper—don't speak above a whisper. And, whatever you do, keep below the sky-line. There may be eyes watching, and I don't want to give the enemy the slightest hint of our presence."

They moved with great care, and the work before them was by no means easy. In fact, it was difficult in the extreme. The tide

there were deadly perils in the shape of rocks, and treacherous currents.

The cave which Lee had pointed out proved to be a false one. Closer examination showed that it was no cave at all, but just a shallow depression among the rocks.

And the business of exploring the other parts of the coast proved a tedious, arduous one. Lee and Nipper were compelled to step from rock to rock, each choked with slimy seaweed, and affording no stable foothold.

But, at last, after much perseverance, a cave was reached which looked distinctly promising. For this one was deep, and penetrated far into the rocks,

The floor was sodden with masses of seaweed, and Lee and Nipper only progressed by slow degrees—both of them well soaked above their knees. Now and again, indeed, they sank almost to their thighs in the spongy weed.

Water was trickling continuously, and the adventure was taking on an eerie aspect. It seemed impossible that there could be any cavern here. And the quest appeared even more hopeless when the end of the cave was reached. Nelson Lee had produced a torch, and the light from this lit up the interior of the cave weirdly.

The rocks on all sides were wet and glistening, and underfoot there was a short stretch of sloping sand—with a dense mass of flung seaweed near by.

But the rocks themselves were solid and immovable. And although the cave narrowed down to a kind of tunnel at this extreme end, it penetrated no further.

"Better try again, sir, I suppose," said Nipper.

"Yes, it's the only thing for us to do," agreed Nelson Lee. "This cave doesn't look very promising, I must confess. But it proves one thing, at least."

"And what's that, sir?"

"It proves that these rocks are hollow," replied Lee. "Other caves may quite reasonably penetrate into the very heart of the island—"

Lee broke off abruptly, and flashed out the torch.

"What's wrong, sir?" whispered Nipper.

"Hush! I thought I heard—"

Again Nelson Lee broke off. And this time Nipper heard something, too. At the narrow extremity of the cave a queer thud had sounded—as though something was banging on the rock wall. But it had a hollow, unreal sound about it.

And then, suddenly, as Lee and Nipper stood alert, a crack of light appeared. They stared at it in astonishment. Lee was the first to realise the truth.

The rocks, although appearing so solid, were not so. There was a door here—a cunningly contrived rock door! And it was in the act of being opened. Somebody was emerging—and this somebody carried a lantern.

Discovery seemed the only outcome now.

For there was no time to escape down the cave. A few feet away, the seaweed lay in choking masses, and speed was out of the question. Yet, if discovery was to be averted, Lee and Nipper would have to be concealed within a few brief seconds.

The seaweed!

Lee clutched at Nipper's arm, and pulled him backwards.

"Quick—underneath!" he breathed tensely. "And lie still, young 'un—this is the greatest chance we've had!"

Nipper realised the idea in a flash. And, simultaneously, they heaved at the tangled

seaweed, and buried themselves in its midst. The seaweed closed down, and not the faintest sign remained to show that these two intruders were so near by.

CHAPTER V.

NELSON LEE'S RESOLVE.



THE ruse was an astute one.

Robson, emerging from the secret doorway a moment later, had not the faintest suspicion that two human beings were practically within an arm's length of him.

There was nothing unusual in the aspect of the cave.

The same stretch of dripping sand, the same masses of seaweed, the same slimy, dripping walls. The door was cunningly contrived. It was of rock itself, but when closed, it hermetically sealed the end of the cave.

The force of the sea at this point, even at high tide, was comparatively small, and the rock door was constructed to withstand the strain. And even if it had given way, no great harm would have been done, for the sea would only have surged in to a certain distance.

The man emerged, carrying an electric lantern.

"It's all right, sir—tide's quite out," said Robson, turning back into the doorway.

A second figure appeared. It was that of Professor Zingrave himself. The chief was well wrapped up in a thick overcoat and muffler. A tweed cap was pulled over his smooth black locks.

"Very good, Robson—go in advance with the light," said the professor. "I shall not be gone for more than a couple of hours—possibly less. In any case, I shall return before the tide can cover this doorway."

"Very good, sir," said Robson.

They proceeded down the cave, and Nelson Lee felt a slight pang of disappointment. He had been hoping that he would overhear something rather more valuable. At the same time, he was inwardly gleeful. For he knew now, for a certainty, that his suspicions regarding the island were well founded.

Here was Zingrave in person—the Green Triangle's leader! And he would be back again within a couple of hours!

This was no time to effect a capture—even if such a thing could have been done. Far better to leave it until Zingrave returned. During the interval, Lee would be able to make more elaborate preparations.

"You were right, sir!" came a whispered voice through the seaweed. "Old Cyrus himself! By Jingo! We're hot on the trail now!"

"Yes, if we capture Zingrave we shall have dealt a death blow at the league,"

replied Lee. "But we mustn't be too optimistic, young 'un. Remain where you are—take no notice of what I am doing."

Lee thrust the clinging seaweed aside, and gradually emerged. Down the cave he could see a glimmer of light. He silently went towards the exit. For he was curious to know how Zingrave was proposing to leave the island.

Lee was not left long in doubt.

Reaching the opening of the cave, he perceived the two men standing on a rocky ledge. Their figures were clearly outlined against the sky. At their feet lay the sea—calm, and apparently deep at this point. The cave entrance was so protected by the channel that even on a rough day, the sea was comparatively smooth here. At present, there was scarcely a ripple.

Lee continued to watch, wondering.

The minutes passed, and Zingrave and his subordinate still stood there. They were waiting for something. And presently a curious swirling appeared in the water near by. It was impossible to see much in the gloom. But Lee suddenly drew his breath in sharply.

Robson had flashed the light of his lantern on the water. A small steel conning tower was revealed, and it was slowly rising out of the water. A tiny deck followed, and Lee knew the truth.

"A submarine!" he muttered wonderingly.

He was filled with astonishment at the completeness of Zingrave's preparations. Not only had he provided himself with a wonderful aircraft, but he also had a submarine at his disposal!

The League of the Green Triangle was not such a small organisation, apparently, as Lee had been willing to believe. Zingrave was evidently going ashore to the mainland.

Nelson Lee did not wait.

As silently as a ghost he returned up the cave, until he came to the spot where the unfortunate Nipper was still crouching in concealment beneath the seaweed. The rock door of the mysterious cavern was still open.

"Nipper!" breathed Lee.

"Thank goodness you've come, sir!" murmured Nipper. "I'm nearly choked in this rotten stuff! It whiffs horrible, and I'm half drowned!"

Nipper emerged, shivering.

"Pull yourself together, my lad—we're going into this cavern!" said Lee grimly. "Chance has played into our hands, and although we shall be taking a big risk, the game is worth it."

Nipper looked at his master eagerly.

"I'm ready for anything, sir," he said promptly.

And the pair vanished through the doorway into the mysterious depths beyond. At last they had tracked Professor Zingrave to his lair. And Nelson Lee was becoming convinced that the end of his campaign was in sight.

This move of his was a bold one, and in many respects, a rash one. But the opportunity of capturing the master criminal had come, and Lee could not neglect it.

Zingrave was not here at the moment—but he would return. And he would find a trap laid ready for him! The one question that remained was—would the professor fall into it?

**WILL PROFESSOR ZINGRAVE FALL INTO
THE TRAP NELSON LEE HAS PREPARED
FOR HIM?**

**THIS QUESTION WILL BE ANSWERED IN
THE GREEN FLASH!**

**NEXT WEEK'S ENTHRALLING STORY
AND FIFTH EPISODE OF THE LEAGUE OF
THE GREEN TRIANGLE SERIES**

OUR AUTHOR'S PAGE

Mr. EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

Chats With His Readers and Comments on Their Letters.

(NOTE.—If any readers care to write to me, I shall be pleased to comment upon any remarks that are likely to interest the majority. If you have any grumbles—make them to me! If you have any suggestions—send them along! Remember, my aim is to please as many of you as I possibly can. All letters should be addressed to me personally, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.—E.S.B.)

As this is only my third chat, I am writing it before the first one has appeared in print. So I haven't had any letters from any of you. And the question arises—what shall I chat about?

I know.

The only solution to the problem is to turn to some of the letters that have been addressed to "Edward Oswald Handforth." A few of you fellows have been saying that the introduction of Irene and Co. into my stories has changed the policy of the Old Paper—that it used to be a boys' publication, and that it is now a "silly girls' rag." On the other hand, the great majority of letters heartily approve of Irene and Co., and one young gentleman, writing from Dublin and signing himself "An Irish Friend," declares that the introduction of the girls has filled a long-felt want.

What I'd like to know is this: Were those letters written to "Handy" in a ragging spirit, or were they serious? All you chaps who disapprove of the girls, please write and state your reasons. I don't admit that my stories are written only for boys. I like girls to read them—yes, and mothers and fathers, and grandmothers and grandfathers. I'll agree that the St. Frank's yarns appeal to boys more than to anybody else, but if girls and grown-ups read them too—well, I'm naturally pleased.

When I first brought the Moor View School into my stories I did so because I thought you boys would like to get ac-

quainted with a few girl characters. And it seems that heaps of girls have started reading the Old Paper in consequence! I don't think Irene and Co. spoil the schoolboy atmosphere, do they? After all, there are plenty of girls about, and plenty of girls' schools, too. So why not a girls' school near St. Frank's?

In case you don't know, these dots every now and again are just to fill up a few lines. I want to spare you as much as I can. So let's have some more.

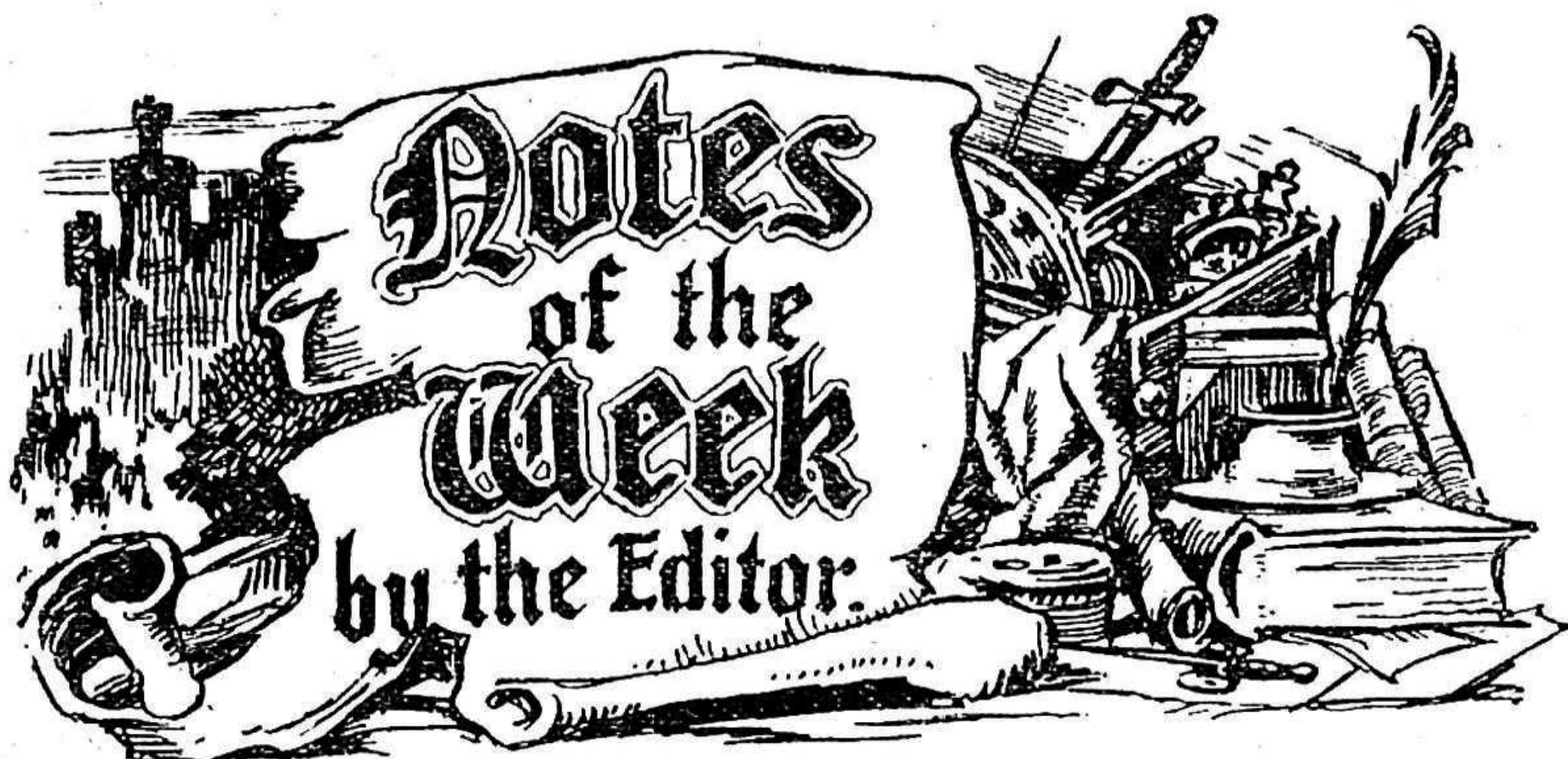
Oh, while I think of it. Quite a few of you have sent your photographs to "Uncle Edward," and you mustn't think that these are destroyed, or pushed away in a musty pigeon-hole, or anything like that. No. As a matter of fact, I'VE got those photographs; and what's more, I've bought a special album, and the portraits are duly preserved. So, in case any of you others send your photos, you'll know what fate they have in store. This isn't an invitation to send me your likenesses (although I shall take it as a compliment if you do), but just a word to show that the photographs already received have been treated humanely.

You won't forget what I asked you last week, will you? Any of you who can't read the Old Paper openly because your parents or guardians object to it, please show them that special paragraph, and then let me know the result. I'm anxious, remember. I hate to think that a few isolated parents have a prejudice against my work. These good people have only got to read a few of my stories, and they'll soon find out that they contain nothing objectionable whatever. I'm not bragging—I'm just stating a plain fact, as most of you know.

Well, I'm getting to the end of the page, I think. (I can just hear you sighing "thank goodness!") Let's hear from you if you have any grumbles or suggestions. And the more the merrier. I hope the grumbles won't make up a very formidable budget! If they do—well, I've asked for trouble, haven't I? And Trouble is the chap we salute, and who makes us buck up and do the best we can!

ADVENTURES OF THE HANDFORTH BROTHERS
:: SKATING ::
A Story Without Words





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

My dear Chums,

The Grammar School cads showed up rather badly over the affair outside the Japanese Café. They thought they could rag Archie with impunity. It was a cowardly and unprovoked attack on one of the most inoffensive of fellows. Had they elected to rag Fullwood or any of his set, they might have had ample justification, and little would have been said. It was fortunate that Handy and a few others turned up at the right moment. The way they mopped up the Grammarians is something to be proud about, and I warmly congratulate the leader of Study D and his chums. The sequel might have been expected. Unable to take their punishment gamely, the Grammarians must complain to their Housemaster that they had been set upon by the hooligans of St. Frank's. Happily, Fenton witnessed the whole affair, and the avengers were honourably acquitted and applauded for their action.

THE JAPANESE CAFE.

This well-known Bannington tea-shop, in publicly banning admittance to the boys of St. Frank's, has given way to pressure made by other of its customers, who have otherwise threatened to boycott the establishment. The management have really no grounds for complaint against the behaviour of our fellows at the café, and they stand to lose a substantial slice of business in turning us away. The loss of Fatty Little alone will be severely felt. The manager had to choose between two evils. But, all the same, I think he might have spared our feelings, and omitted that notice in the shop window. A letter sent to the Head would have sufficed.

WILLY'S DISQUIETING NEWS.

What Willy unwillingly overheard between Dr. Stafford and Mr. Stokes regarding the

serious financial position of the school, as a result of the loss of so many boys, brings us face to face with another side to this wretched business. Sticking together and defending our honour may stave off immediate collapse, but the Fourth is only a minority, and, unless the deficiency in school funds be made good, all our efforts to save St. Frank's will be in vain. Various schemes have been suggested, the concert party we organised last week being one of them. Unluckily, our efforts as entertainers were spoiled by the intervention of Mr. Pycraft. Although we had disguised ourselves as coloured minstrels, our identity was discovered, and we had to beat a hasty retreat to save our skins.

A CHANCE FOR LAWRENCE.

The anonymous letter-writer who sends insulting missives to his victims through the post, hiding his identity under a nom-de-plume, is a particularly specious kind of cad. Such is Talbot, the bully of Bannington Grammar School. His defeat in a bout with Lawrence will be remembered by all who witnessed it as a remarkable exhibition of boxing. Mr. William Gordon, the famous boxing promoter, who chanced to see the contest, has now made a handsome offer to our brilliant exponent of the noble art, and he is shortly to appear in the ring against some of the leading professionals. Every penny Lawrence makes he has generously offered to the school. I hope every one will appreciate this fact, and will not forget to pay tribute to the boy who may be destined to save the school in her darkest hour of need. Naturally, we shall follow with the keenest enthusiasm Lawrence's forthcoming battles in the ring, for upon his success depends the fortunes of the school. But we must not leave it all to Lawrence. We each have our bit to do in order to win back the grand old name of St. Frank's.

Your old chum,
REGGIE PITT.



THE SIGN OF THE SCARLET SHADOW!

*A breathlessly exciting
New Serial of the
marvellous adventures
of Trackett Grim and his
amazing assistant, Splinter.*
By **EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH**

CHAPTER I.

THE CURSE OF THE QUIVERS.

Z URRRRH!

The snow was pouring down in torrents, and tons of it lay drifting about all over the bleak countryside. And sticking out of the snowswept landscape, like a beacon of fire in that dismal waste, stood the impenetrable black mass of Quiver Castle.

The celebrated old ancestral home of the Quivers was a ghostly, spectral place—with towers and turrets jutting up in dozens. In fact, Quiver Castle was the most famous ancestral home in the world.

And the country all round, as far as the eye could see, belonged to the lord and master of this glorious domain. And Quiver Castle stood there, in the middle of it all, like a sentinel watching over its young.

Lights blazed from the great mullioned windows, and the old gables were thick with snow. And in the great hall of the castle Sir Makeham Quiver strode up and down the marble paved floor.

The baronet was taking his evening walk. He was in a rotten rage, because he always liked to go out upon his estate. But the snow was so jolly thick that he couldn't manage it this evening.

So he was taking his constitutional in the hall. Sir Makeham Quiver was a harsh old man with long whiskers and a short temper. The servants hated him. Every word he uttered was a law, and anybody who disobeyed him was instantly chucked out of the castle on his neck.

Suddenly, without the slightest warning, Sir Makeham Quiver came to a dead halt. His eyes bulged out of his head, and swept across the floor. They settled themselves upon his shadow. And he was so startled

that he uttered a low moan of horrified amazement.

"Great pip!" he breathed. "The curse of the Quivers!"

Small wonder that Sir Makeham turned pale! Small wonder that he stood there, rooted to the spot, and glued to the ground! Small wonder that he felt his heart completely stop beating for about two minutes!

For his shadow, instead of being black, had turned scarlet!

There, on the floor, his shadow was as red as cherry cider. It was a most staggering thing, and Sir Makeham gasped for breath. He only started his heart beating again by giving a leap into the air. The jerk was so great that his heart started off, misfired once or twice, and then settled down into a steady purr. It ticked over feebly.

And why was Sir Makeham so horribly agitated?

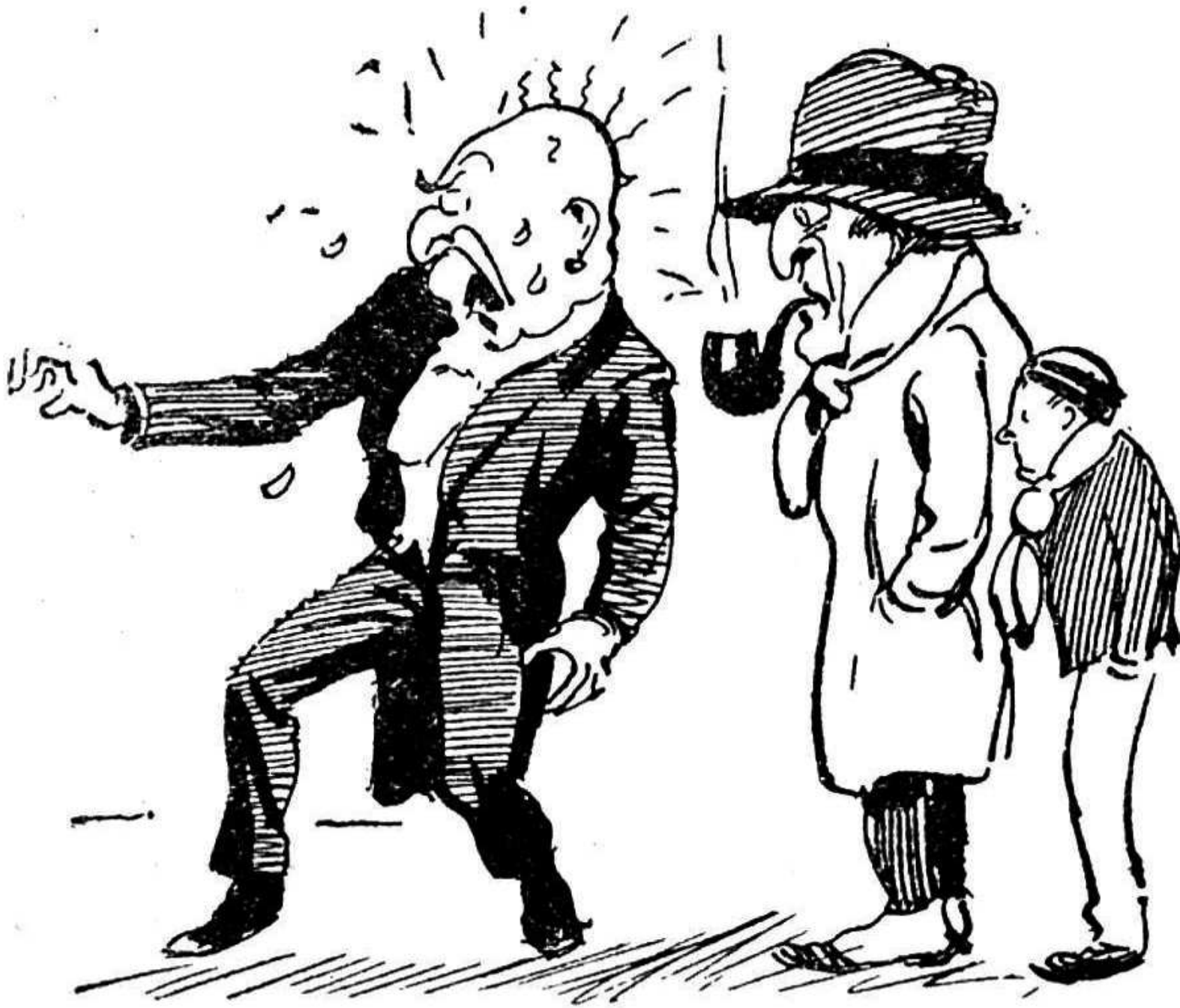
"Why? Ah! That scarlet shadow was the Curse of the Quivers! For thousands of years it had been in the family—haunting Quiver after Quiver until Sir Makeham was the only Quiver left. And he was quivering!

For the scarlet shadow was the unmistakable sign that a death was to occur in the family! According to the old family legend, the oldest surviving Quiver would die within seven days.

There was only one possibility of remaining alive, and that was to guard himself day and night for seven days against the Curse. If once he got through the week, Sir Makeham would be safe—and exempt for all time.

But who could protect him? Staggering into his library, Sir Makeham gazed feverishly at his desk. He picked up a circular that had come by that morning's post, and he uttered a whoop of relief and joy.

And then he grabbed the telephone with both hands at once.



And, creeping up, its arms and feelers writhing horribly was—what?

CHAPTER II.

TRACKETT GRIM'S GREATEST CASE.

TRACKETT GRIM, the most celebrated incriminating criminologist in the world, looked up from his work with a frown. He was in his laboratory at Baker's Inn Road, and he was in the middle of making a new kind of poison gas, with which he could destroy all his enemies.

"Answer the telephone, Splinter!" rapped out Grim.

Splinter, who was already wearing a gas mask as a safeguard, whipped off his head gear, and sprang into the consulting-room. He grabbed the telephone eagerly, for his celebrated master hadn't had a client for weeks, and funds were getting very low.

"Quick, sir!" shouted Splinter, after he had listened for a couple of seconds. "It's Sir Makeham Quiver, of Quiver Castle, Devonshire. He's just seen the Scarlet Shadow, and he expects to die within seven days! He wants us to buzz down, and protect him."

Trackett Grim took the telephone and listened grimly. For a moment he thought of refusing. For if he failed his client would die, and then he wouldn't be able to collect any fee. But then Trackett Grim stifled these greedy thoughts, and promised to

start off within five minutes.

And so, two hours later, the famous pair hurried away in their racing car. They reached Devonshire just before midnight, and even as the clock was striking twelve they arrived outside the walls of Quiver Castle.

The great moat was looking sinister in the moonlight. But the drawbridge was down, and Trackett Grim drove on to it. The next moment a startling thing happened. Without a doubt, some dirty dogs were at work. Even at this early stage Trackett Grim's enemies got busy.

For the drawbridge shot up with such terrific force that Trackett Grim's motor-car was sent hurtling through the air like a pea from a shooter. It crashed

through the great fanlight over the hall door, landed on all four wheels, spun down a couple of passages, and burst into the library.

Trackett Grim and Splinter got out, and Grim bowed.

"We are at your service, Sir Makeham Quiver," he said tensely.

And then his eyes became fixed and staring.

For the baronet was crouching back against the wall. And creeping up to him, its arms and feelers writhing horribly, was—what?

LOOK OUT for next week's electrifying instalment of this astounding serial.

What was it that menaced Sir Makeham Quiver? What awful monster did Trackett Grim and Splinter See?

Read next week's instalment and find out!

FACTS LET LOOSE

∴ Our Allsorts Page ∴

By **EUGENE ELLMORE**

AN ELECTRIC EEL.

A fish which can give an electric shock equal to five hundred volts, enough to temporarily disable a man, is something of a terror. Such a fish inhabits the River Amazon, and travellers—especially Humboldt—have had much to say about it. A specimen has just been acquired by the Zoo, and it may be seen in a large tank in the Aquarium. Naturally, it has the tank all to itself. It is about five feet long, of a dirty grey colour, splashed with salmon pink under the chin and on the chest. It has scarcely any fins to speak of, though the ventral (or abdominal) fin is remarkable, for it extends along the whole length of the body underneath and waves about like a frill. Its electric "batteries" are on each side of the tail, and when they are in action even to touch the edge of the tank will give one "pins and needles." This electric power is both its weapon of defence and its means of livelihood, for it disables and captures its prey by this means. Usually it keeps in hand a reserve force, but sometimes it exhausts its supply, and then it can be easily and harmlessly captured. But its battery is soon re-charged at full strength.

BILLINGSGATE MARKET.

Up to 1850, Billingsgate was an open market, held in sheds beside the old Billingsgate Creek. The City Corporation then built the present market, which was enlarged, the new buildings being opened by Sir Andrew Lusk, Lord Mayor, in 1874. The Jubilee is shortly to be held. Billingsgate Market was in existence in 979 A.D., when King Ethelred made a law granting exemption to men of Rouen who brought wine and large fish to "Bilynggesgate." In the reign of Edward I. the table of prices stated that oysters were twopence a gallon, soles twelve for threepence, and salmon four for five shillings. In 1669 an Act was passed making Billingsgate "a free and open market" for the sale of fish on six days. Mackerel, which will not keep, was permitted to be sold on Sundays, except during the hours of worship. In the reign of George II. it was enacted that every skipper must state on arrival what quantity of fish he had aboard. If he destroyed any

fish, he was liable to a month's imprisonment. And any person who kept fish in "store baskets," and so withheld it from the consumer, was subjected to a heavy penalty. Last year, 182,000 tons of fish were dealt with in Billingsgate Market.

ST. HELENA.

This island, situated in the South Atlantic, from the blue waters of which it rears a snow-covered crown, is a very lonely spot, 1,700 miles from Capetown. Of course, this is why it was chosen as Napoleon's place of exile. His tomb, enclosed by iron railings, is covered with a white slab, but bears no inscription. The emperor's body, however, was taken to France. The tomb on the island is carefully planted round with geraniums. Longwood, the house in which Napoleon lived, is quite a modest place, and contains but few relics of him. Jacob's Ladder, a wonderful series of steps, totalling 699, leads up to the fort and barracks, where, however, there is no longer a garrison. The island is now in a state of decay, and the inhabitants are very poor. No quieter or healthier spot could be found for a real holiday change. In the slave days, St. Helena was the headquarters of British ships engaged in suppressing the traffic. It was discovered in 1502, and as the day of its discovery was the birthday of Helena, Constantine the Great's mother, it was named after her. The Portuguese left it in 1695, and the Dutch settled on it. Then our East India Company got it. There is a Bishop of St. Helena, and his diocese consists of St. Helena, Tristan Da Cunha, and Ascension, islands which are separated from each other by hundreds of miles of ocean.

THE FOOD PROBLEM ON THE ARCTIC ICE.

Stefansson, the Arctic explorer, like all his predecessors in that bleak region, was much baffled by the problem of storing a food supply. He solved it by taking no food at all, as his experience had taught him—or, at any rate, he believed it had—that even in that desert of ice travellers could pick up all the food and fuel they needed. He backed his opinion by risking his life, for he set out to cross the Beaufort

(Continued on page 9)

OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY. And WHO'S WHO.



23

No. 9.—SIR LANCELOT MONTGOMERY TREGELLIS-WEST.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Slim, graceful figure, but nevertheless well set-up and sturdy. Always scrupulously attired. Finely moulded, aristocratic features. Straight nose, sensitive mouth, and rather lean cheeks. Eyes, soft brown. Hair, dark. Height, 5 ft. 1½ ins. Weight, 9 st. 3 lb. Birthday, March 17th.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

A serene, nonchalant nature. Always smiling and urbane. Nothing can disturb his equanimity. Possesses a strict code of honour, and is as true as steel. Wears pince-nez constantly.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

An exceptionally capable footballer and cricketer. A good runner and excellent swimmer. Hobbies: Reading, painting in water colours, and collecting rare coins.

No. 10.—TOMMY WATSON.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Broad-shouldered and sturdy, with short, bulldog neck. Frank, sunny face, with plump, rosy cheeks containing two distinctive dimples. Broad, snub nose and short forehead. Eyes, blue. Hair, medium brown, and generally untidy. Height, 4 ft. 11½ ins. Weight, 9 st. 12 lb. Birthday, December 11th.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

Good-tempered and cheerful, but inclined to be stubborn and stolid. Unimaginative, but a faithful pal. No power as a leader. Difficult to ruffle, but sulky after a quarrel. Blunt in speech, and always to the point.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

A capable fellow at most sports, but never manages to shine at any. A trustworthy reserve for the junior eleven, frequently gaining his place through reliability. Interested in cycling, wrestling, and wireless.



TREGELLIS-
WEST



T. WATSON

THE FOURTH At ST. FRANK'S.



No. 11.—RODDY YORKE.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

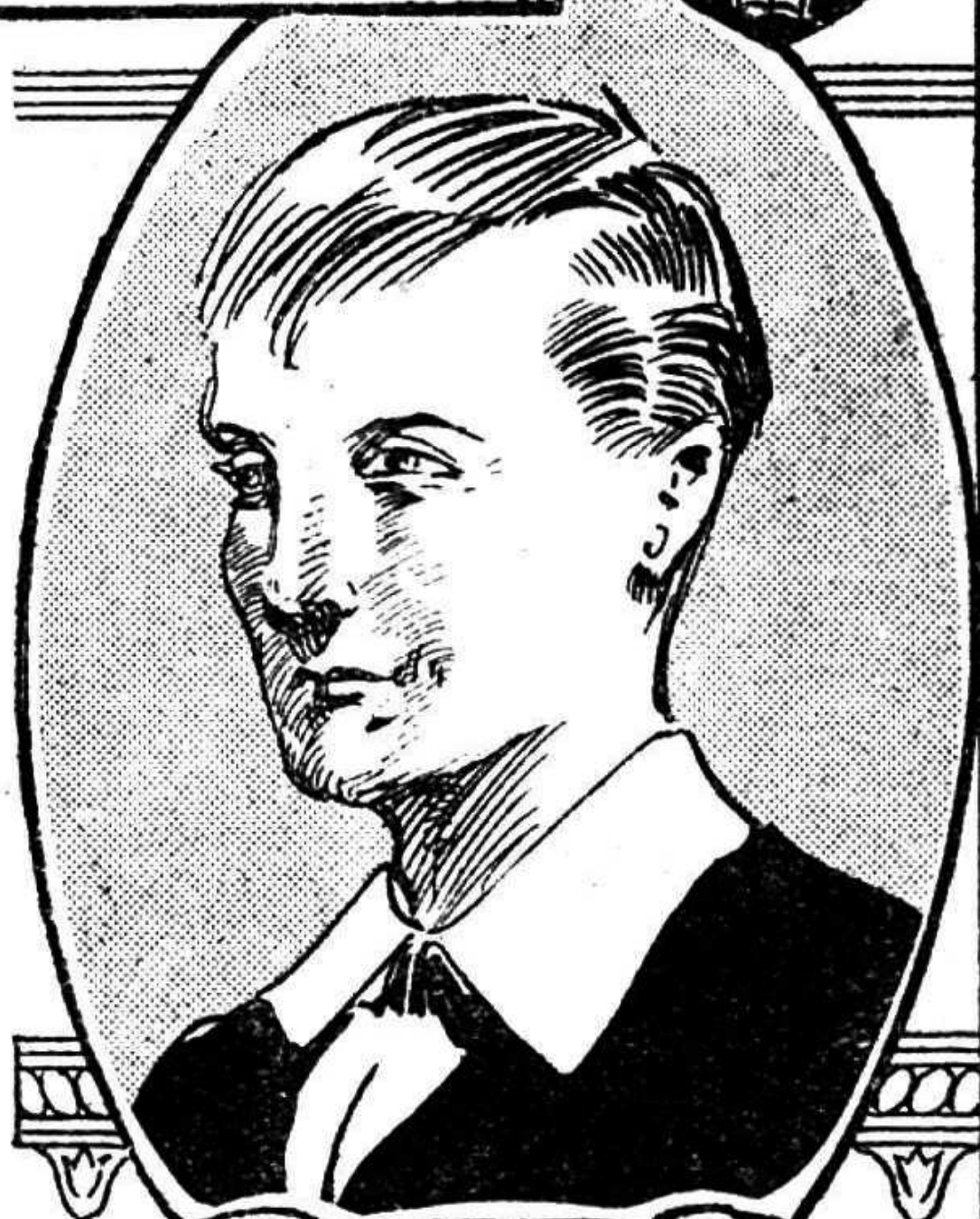
Loose-limbed, awkward figure. Long neck, with distinctive head. High cheekbones and long nose. Large, good-natured mouth, wrinkled at the corners. Rather prominent teeth. Eyes, grey. Hair, dark. Height, 5 ft. 1 in. Weight, 9 st. 11 lb. Birthday, February 4th.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

Reckless and impulsive. Full of high spirits, and generally thoughtless. Goes about carelessly dressed, and never looks exactly smart. A good chap generally, with no particular vices or virtues.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

Fairly good at sports, football being his favourite. Possesses a mania for woodwork, and in spare moments is always busy with fretsaw and chisel.



R. YORKE

No. 12.—CHARLIE TALMADGE.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Average figure, with nothing particularly distinctive. Inclined to be slightly bow-legged, but won't admit it. Cheerful, open face, with medium nose. Always has three characteristic wrinkles in his forehead. Eyes, hazel. Hair, fair. Height, 5 ft. 1 in. Weight, 9 st. 6 lb. Birthday, October 1st.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

Hot-tempered, flaring up at a moment's notice. Cheerful and willing, and always ready to do a good turn. Takes a pride in his appearance. Cheeky and self-confident, and always ready for a jape. High-spirited generally.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

Prominent member of Modern House junior eleven. Good sprinter, but lacks staying power. Has a passion for the cinema. Collects albums full of movie stars, with all their histories. Particularly keen on chemistry.



C. TALMADGE.

NOTE.—The ages of Fourth Form boys vary between 14 and 16, but, for obvious reasons, no more definite information on this point can be given.

NEXT WEEK: Ralph Leslie Fullwood, Dick Goodwin, Len Clapson, Percy Bray.



IN REPLY to YOURS

Correspondence Answered by
Edward Oswald Handforth

(NOTE.—Readers of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY can write to me, and I will reply on this page. But don't expect an answer for several weeks—perhaps five or six. Address your letters, or postcards, to E. O. HANDFORTH, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, LONDON, E.C.4.—E. O. H.)

I SAY! JUST A TICK!

You're all good sports, every one of you, and you've evidently made up your minds to give me a good old twisting. Letters have been pouring in like a flood, and old Mudford, the postman, is talking about going on strike. But not me! I'm not the chap to shout "Help!" until I'm snowed under—and so far I'm only half-buried. But you've got to go easy with me and be satisfied with just a line or two each. You're all such rattling good chaps—boys and girls alike—that it seems a dirty trick to disappoint you. Still, it's really your own fault. A lot of you fatheads have been asking for a longer school story and a smaller "Magazine." So now we've got two pages less than we used to have. If it goes on like this, you won't get any Trackett Grim story at all! It's been cut down to next to nothing for several weeks past. It doesn't give a fellow a chance! But I've got a tremendous surprise up my sleeve, although I shan't breathe a word about it now. The fact is I am just writing the first instalment of a wonderful Trackett Grim serial, to appear this week. So you've got a treat in store! But about these Replies. I'm trying to make them interesting to all readers—those who haven't written as well as those who have—and if some of you get fewer lines than others, don't be wild. Sympathise with me instead, and try to realise that I'm doing my best to please everybody. And that's something

nobody's ever done yet! I know that you boys are sportsmen, and I'm just as sure that you girls are jolly sensible fellows.—
Your Old Pal, TED.

FRANK L. YOUNG (Bridlington): Good old Frank! You've got your wish—smaller "Mag." and two stories every week.

WILLIAM AGATE (Willesden, N.W.10): Are you joking, or is it just nerve? Fancy pushing my stuff out of the "Mag." to make room for Willy's tosh! He can't write for toffee. Besides, he might get a swelled head, although he's my brother.

WILLY I (Finsbury Park, N.4): Another one sticking up for Willy! I'm blessed if I know what you see in the kid. All right—come and fetch him away if you like him so much. But you're in for a warm time if I'm about when you come!

IRENE COLLINS (Hove, Sussex): That's nothing! Of course you're my friend. Look at your lovely letters—and your name! Good idea of yours about the other Irene. I'll get her to write something else for the "Mag." presently. You see if I don't. Yes; I had another sister besides Ena, but she got married. As you call me Edward because it sounds manly, I don't mind at all.

HAROLD RANSOM (Stoodleigh, Devon): Get out! I must have had lots of other letters from Devon before yours. Church and McClure aren't here just now, or I'd ask them. But I know Devonshire can't be as slow as all that. Still, I'm very pleased to get your nice letter, Harold. A reader of the Old Paper for five years, it gets better and better, and you want it twice weekly. Well, I'm blowed! Do you really mean it, or is that just Devonshire cream? Your letter is as rosy as your famous apples. Good old Devonshire!

GEORGE TINDALL (Kensington): Oh, you fibber! I'm jolly sure you didn't wait eight weeks for your last reply. And if you had done, what of it? You've got to

take your turn, old son, with us busy people. That can't be right about other chaps being unfairly answered before you. Our printers aren't such loonies! Thanks for your cheery letter, George. Write again soon.

KEN (Cardiff): It's like your nerve to suggest that Trackett Grim is only clever at finding babies' dummies. He discovers much smaller things than those. Fullwood made his appearance in the first story about St. Frank's—No. 112, July 28th, 1917 issue of the

"Best Book Going," as you kindly call it. Bravo Cardiff!

B. W. MESSEM (Forest Gate, E.7): Yes, Enoch Snipe's still here, the rat! John Martin's away just now. The best boxer in the Fourth is supposed to be Lawrence, but he hasn't met me lately! Don't worry about Fullwood—he gets plenty of hidings from me. Armstrong's all right, but he's a bit weak-willed, and thinks a little too much of himself—just the opposite to me.

TED.



By An Old Boy
(Lord Dorrimore's Weekly Trifle)

No. 17. MY ADVENTURE WITH A BUFFALO.

IT was in India. The Indian buffalo, though a little different from those of North America, is a fierce beast, and as strong as he is fierce. A tiger fights shy of him unless he is very hungry indeed, and if the tiger attacks he will probably get the worst of it. At one time there were regular fights between buffaloes and tigers in India.

One day a servant rushed into my room and said excitedly that a mad buffalo had

got into the next compound, after goring two policemen. I rushed for a coil of rope, and then went out to lasso the buffalo, for I had at one time been rather expert with the lasso, though it was years now since I had practised the art.

A number of persons were assembled, including police and soldiers. But there was danger in shooting the animal, as there were houses all round, and somebody might get killed. I proposed to lasso the beast, and then they could shoot it. They laughed at me. I stalked the buffalo, and got near enough to see that he was blowing red foam from his nostrils, pawing the ground, and showing his temper generally.

As soon as he saw me he came for me. I threw the lasso. But the buffalo dodged, and I missed, the rope just dangling on one horn. Then he came at me again, missed me by a hair, and then turned away. Again I went after him, again threw the lasso, and again failed! Then I resolved to climb a tree near by. I clutched at a large branch, and began to swing myself up. The buffalo made a rush at me, and just grazed me! But I made the rope fast, and soon had a noose over the beast's head. But I was nearly tripped up by the rope as the buffalo galloped round the tree. Then a fellow with a sporting rifle let fly with both triggers at once, and as I was standing only a few feet above the buffalo's head he nearly shot me instead of the animal. And that chap actually got the horns—and fine ones they were—while I got—a paragraph in the newspaper!

FACTS LET LOOSE.

(Continued from page 5)

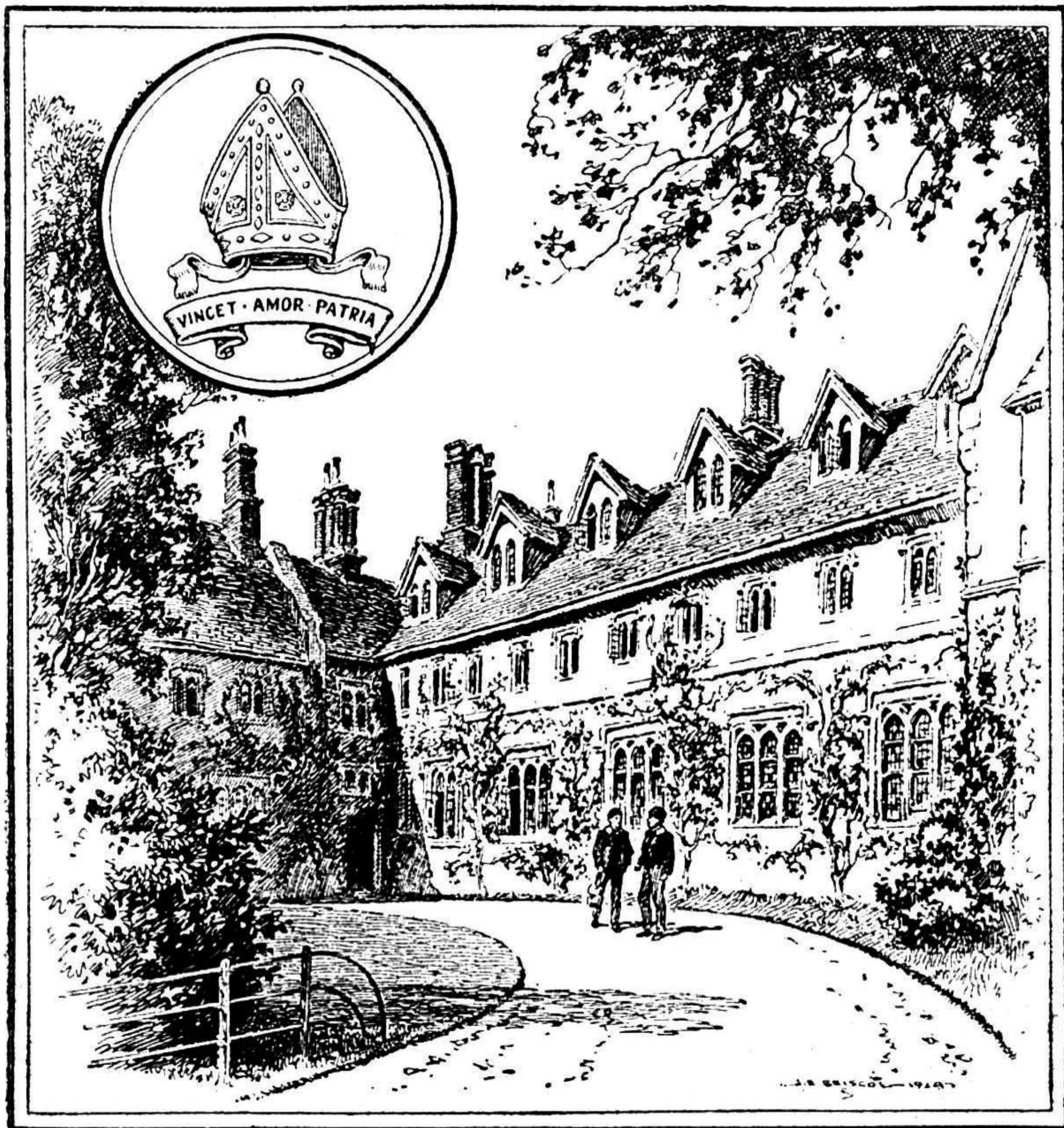
Sea over the ice with only thirty days' supplies on his sledges. Eskimos said he was courting suicide. Old whaling captains on Herschell Island looked upon him as a sentimental imbecile. One of them who had been in the Arctic for a quarter of a century, and thought he knew all about it, sneered contemptuously: "A college professor who carries books in his sledges where a sensible man carries grub! Say, did you ever shake hands with him? He's got a hand soft as a woman's! I don't believe that fellow ever did a real day's work in

his life. As for his being clever, I never could see it. Just having a lot of theories no one else agrees with don't make a man clever, not necessarily. I'll eat my shirt if he ever comes back." But Stefansson came back. He had proved the truth of his theory. For there were always plenty of seals, so that flesh to eat, and fat to give warmth and light, were never lacking. And, incidentally, he also proved that the horrors which certain sensational novelists have conjured up in connection with Arctica do not exist, and that with suitable clothing and a fair share of common sense, travellers can be safe, and even comfortable, in the desolate Arctic regions.

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SPECIAL SERIES OF ART SKETCHES BY MR. E. E. BRISCOE.

No. 48. ARCHBISHOP HOLGATE'S SCHOOL.



This ancient school was founded by Archbishop Holgate, of York, in 1546, for the purpose of teaching French, Latin, and Hebrew. With the advance of the times and the inclusion of many new subjects in the curriculum, Hebrew has now been dropped.

The number of boys in the school is 400, and these are divided into five houses, known as Holgate, Dean, Ebor, Johnson and Boarders. The boarders number about 80, the remainder being day boys.

There were four class-rooms in the old building, with dormitories above. An exten-

sion has been added, giving accommodation for seven class-rooms, three laboratories, and a day-room. But, with the growth of the number of boys, further additions have been made since the war, providing three more class-rooms.

The games played at the school are soccer and cricket. There is a cadet corps attached to the school, composed of about 70 boys.

I am indebted to a reader for the above, and I am accordingly presenting him with the original sketch of his school.

TEN POUNDS

a week for **LIFE!** — or,
£4,000

That is the prize offered in next week's UNION JACK—other prizes, £300 and £200. Remember—
FIRST PRIZE a FORTUNE!
Make sure of getting next Thursday's competition number of the
UNION JACK—2^D.

You are strongly recommended to read—



PIRATES BOLD!

by Sidney Drew

A screamingly funny story appearing in
THE BOYS' FRIEND.

Now On Sale.

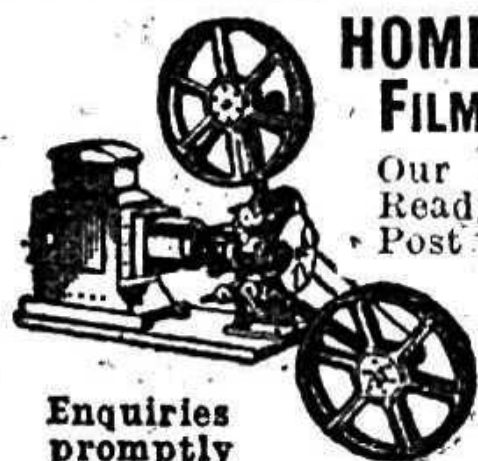
In addition to top notch stories the
"B.F." is offering to its readers a
**FIVE POUND NOTE AND SIX
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Don't miss this great opportunity whatever you do. Ask your newsagent for a
copy of **THE BOYS' FRIEND** right away!

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR!

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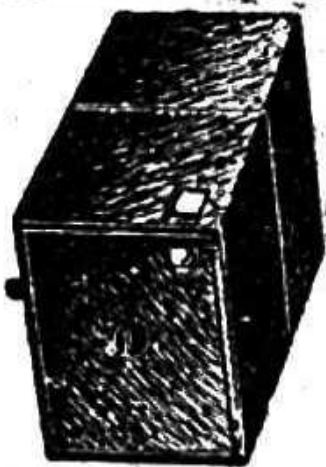
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