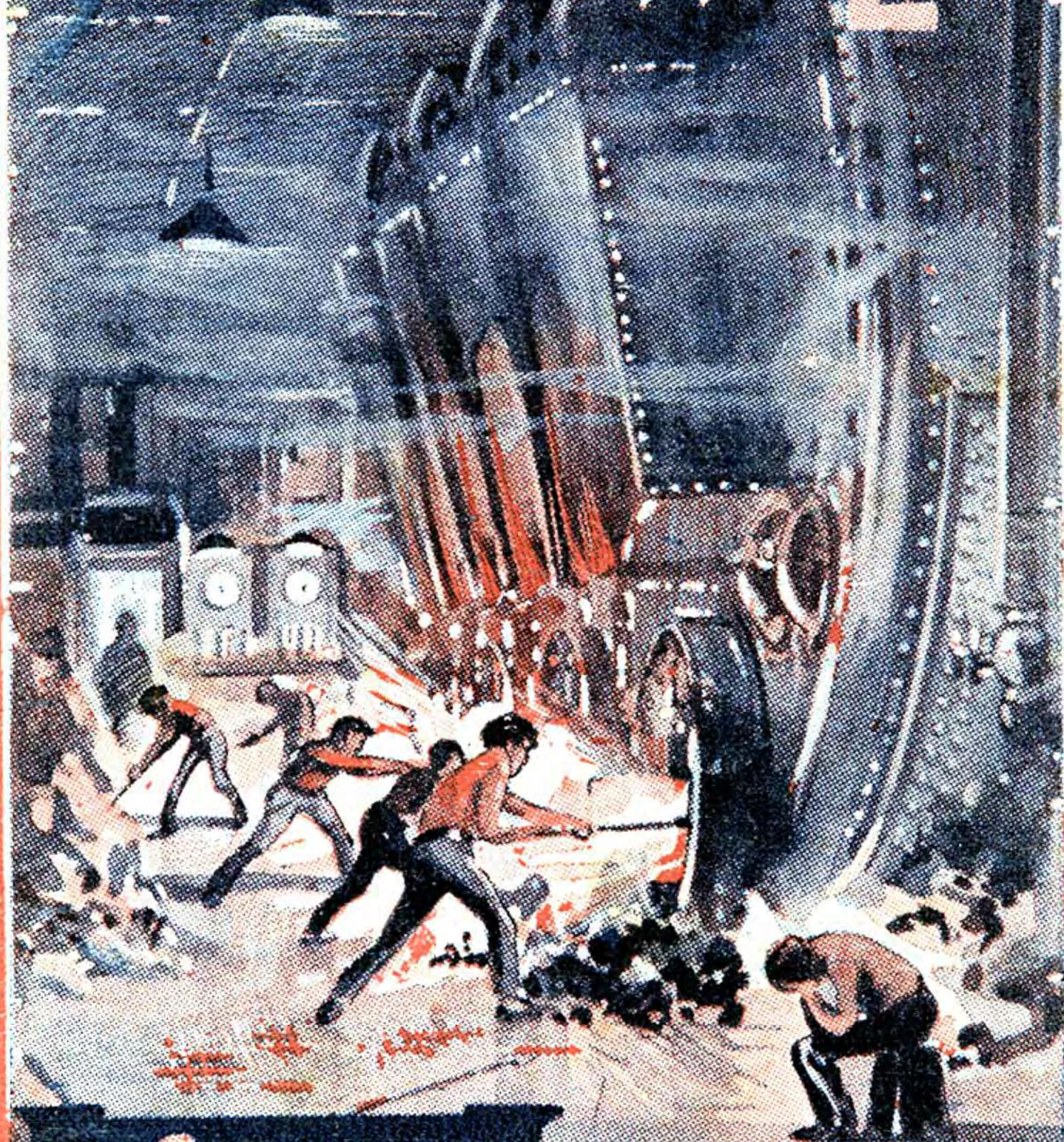


TWO GRAND LONG STORIES AND THE MAG. !

The Nelson Lee

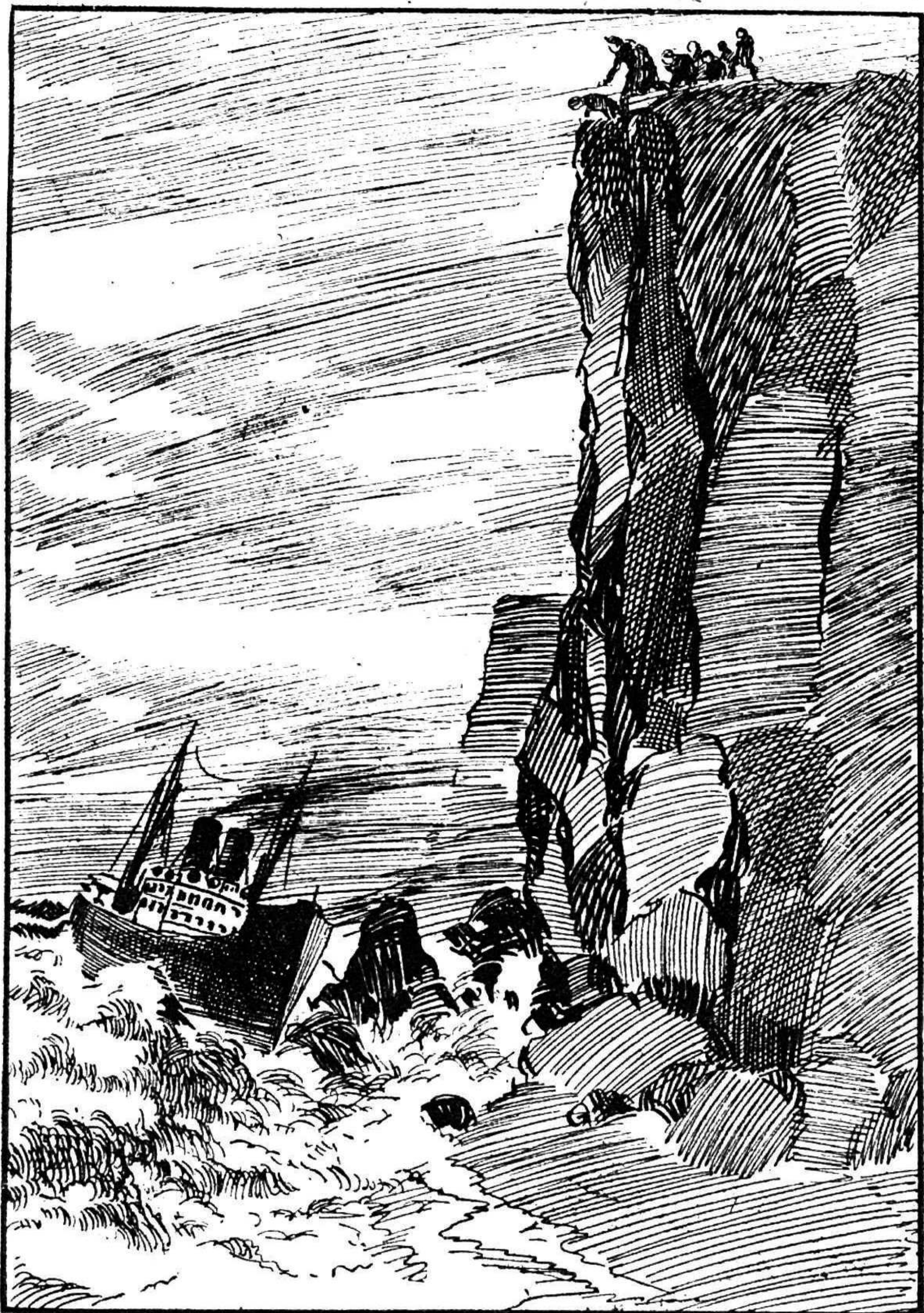
LIBRARY
And St. Frank's Magazine **2d**



**The SCHOOLBOY
STOKERS;**
*or, Saved from
the Sea.*

The half-naked juniors were doing marvels in the terrific heat of the stokehold. (From This Week's Rousing Story of St. Frank's.)

Thrilling Story of NELSON LEE in :—
**PROFESSOR ZINGRAVE'S
LAST CARD !**



A fairly big steamer, in apparently fine condition, was wedged cruelly on the rocks at the outer edge of the bay.

THE SCHOOLBOY STOKERS!



A FINE LONG STORY OF SCHOOL LIFE, INTRODUCING THE FAMOUS BOYS OF ST. FRANK'S.

Under the leadership of Reginald Pitt, the Fourth Form of St. Frank's is fighting hard to regain the lost fortunes and good name of the school. The grave scandal that marked the beginning of term has dragged St. Frank's into public disfavour, with the result that large numbers of boys have left, and the school is faced with the possibility of closing down through lack of funds to carry on. Last week Ernest Lawrence, the brilliant young boxer of the Fourth, contributed a useful sum of money to the Head as the proceeds of his great victory in the ring against Battling Dawson, the famous professional. But the Fourth are anxious to do their share in raising funds for the old school, and so take full advantage of an opportunity which comes their way, as described in this week's splendid story.

THE EDITOR.

By E. SEARLES BROOKS

CHAPTER I.

SOMETHING LIKE A CHEQUE!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH stared.

"Five thousand quid!" he ejaculated, in a kind of awed voice. "My only hat! Let's have a look at it!"

He took the slip of paper from Ernest Lawrence, and gazed at it fascinatedly.

It was quite a small cheque—insignificant, even—and it hardly seemed worth a penny.

"Five thousand quid!" said Bob Christine.

"Seems like a dream!" put in Buster Boots. "And it all belongs to Lawrence—he won the whole giddy lot!"

Lawrence, of the Modern Fourth, laughed.

"That's just where you're wrong—I didn't win it at all!" he replied. "I can't look upon this money as mine! It's mad! Just because I knocked that chap out—"

"My dear fellow, it's no good being so modest," interrupted Boots. "You offered to fight Battling Dawson to get Mr. Gordon out of a hole. You fought the chap, and

delivered the knock-out. Therefore you won. And that money's yours."

"Hear, hear!"

The group of juniors were gathered in the lobby of the Ancient House at St. Frank's. It was Saturday morning, and Lawrence's great fight had taken place just a week earlier. And this morning the cheque had arrived. Lawrence could hardly be blamed for bringing it proudly across from the Modern House to show Pitt & Co.

Reggie Pitt himself was enthusiastic.

"You've got to stick to this," he declared. "If any boxer ever won a purse, you did! Why, it was one of the most magnificent efforts that ever happened! You entered the ring expecting to be whacked in the first round, and you actually smashed Battling Dawson into a cocked hat!"

"Good old Lawrence!"

The juniors had been saying that all the week. It was only just recently that they had ceased to wonder. During the earlier part of the week no other subject was discussed in the whole of St. Frank's. And now it was all revived again, by the arrival of the cheque.

Without doubt, Lawrence had put up a wonderful performance. He had accepted "Smiling Bill" Gordon's offer to fight in the Southampton Stadium, but he had only boxed for a purse of £50. And then, owing to an accident to the celebrated Gunner Moole, Lawrence had taken the latter's place.

And he had staggered everybody by winning.

It had been a championship match, with a £5,000 purse. Lawrence, of course, was ineligible for the championship itself, but Mr. Gordon had been so overjoyed that he had insisted upon paying over the whole purse-money, with an additional £1,000—for the winner's share was £4,000.

To say that Lawrence was overjoyed would be setting it down very inadequately. He had wanted that mere fifty to help the old school during these dark days. But if he could have helped with fifty, what could he now do with the enormous sum of five thousand?

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

The stigma was not quite so acute as it had been, for time had dulled the edge. The fellows were beginning to move about in Bellton and Bannington without being openly jeered at. And one or two other schools had made tentative suggestions regarding the renewal of football matches.

But it was all half-hearted—everybody seemed to be doing St. Frank's a favour. There was something condescending in this spirit, which galled the St. Frank's boys more than anything else would have done. And they were intensely eager to prove to

the whole world that St. Frank's was clean to the core, and always had been.

It was some weeks now since the scandal had started—brought about by the appalling publicity connected with the death of a Fifth-Former. It had occurred during a disgraceful drinking and smoking bout on the first night of term.

And the papers had seized the story avidly, and given it enormous prominence for several days. And thus St. Frank's had fallen into disrepute, and half the seniors were absent—having been removed by their parents.

Unless a revulsion of feeling took place soon, scores of other fellows would be taken from St. Frank's at the end of the present term; and then there would be nothing but ruin and bankruptcy for the famous old college. Indeed, bankruptcy was already looming.

And here was a chance to help!

And Lawrence lost no time in carrying his cheque to the Headmaster's study. He had been longing for this moment all the week. Dr. Malcolm Stafford greeted the junior with a smile.

"Good-morning, Lawrence!" he said, trying to be cheerful. "I hope you haven't come to me to engage in another boxing match? I overlooked the technical offence in the first instance, but I am afraid——"

"No, sir, it's not that at all," interrupted Lawrence. "And I didn't bring further disgrace upon the school, did I, sir?"

"Good gracious, no!" said the Head. "Quite the contrary. Surprisingly enough, the affair produced quite a favourable effect. But we can't allow it to go on, Lawrence——"

"I don't want it to, sir—I've just brought you this," said the junior.

He placed the cheque on the desk in front of Dr. Stafford, and the latter adjusted his glasses, and inspected it.

"Splendid, my boy!" he commended. "Of course, I knew you were receiving this. So it has arrived, eh? I trust you are thinking of making some good investment——"

"It's not mine at all, sir—I want to give it to the school," interrupted Lawrence uncomfortably. "That's all I entered the fight for, sir—so that I could help St. Frank's a bit."

The Head's glasses nearly dropped from his nose.

"But, good gracious!" he ejaculated. "This is impossible, Lawrence! The school cannot accept such a loan——"

"It's not a loan, sir," interrupted Lawrence. "It's just a gift. I can't feel that it's mine, and so I'm giving it to the school, to make up a bit for the bad times we're passing through. Please take it, sir—I'll be awfully proud if you do."

CHAPTER II.

NOT PLAYING THE GAME.



DR. STAFFORD'S eyes softened.

"And I am proud of you, Lawrence," he said quietly. "Proud that one of my boys should express such loyalty and devotion to the old school. Indeed, I cannot find words to tell you of my admiration."

"Oh, it's nothing, sir," muttered Lawrence awkwardly.

"It is something very big indeed," corrected the Head. "But, of course, it cannot be. The school governors would never accept such a gift from a junior scholar. I'm afraid the matter is delicate, and it would distress me if it caused you the slightest offence—"

"But won't you take it, sir?" asked Lawrence anxiously.

"I'll take it; but only on one condition," replied Dr. Stafford. "I will send it to our chairman, and state your wishes. I have no doubt that Sir John will communicate with your father, and if Mr. Lawrence is agreeable, the sum may possibly be accepted as an investment. But quite in a business way, Lawrence."

"I didn't mean it like that, sir," said the junior, with regret. "I wanted it to be just a gift."

"And I admire you for it, Lawrence—I thank you, too," said Dr. Stafford. "And if I condemned you for your breach of discipline after this, I should indeed be harsh. Thank you, my boy; I only hope your fellow-scholars are every bit as loyal."

"They are, sir—in the Fourth, anyhow," said Lawrence eagerly.

He took his departure, feeling rather disappointed. He couldn't feel that the money was his—he had never felt it from the first. But, it seemed, he couldn't disown it, even if he wanted to! But it was good to learn that the school would accept it—if not as a gift, as a loan.

Outside, in the Triangle, Lawrence ran into Teddy Long. The sneak of the Fourth was looking very eager and excited; and he displayed an affectionate friendliness, which was most unusual, Lawrence being no friend of his at all.

"A bit windy this morning, isn't it?" asked Long genially.

"Yes, looks like a gale springing up," replied the Modern House junior. "In fact, it's a gale already," he added, as a sudden whirlwind came whistling across the Triangle. "My hat, that was a gust, if you like! Sky looks a bit threatening, too!"

"Blow the sky!" said Long. "I mean, rather! I say, Lawrence, I suppose you couldn't lend me a fiver, could you?" he added, in a careless, casual kind of way.

"You suppose right," said Lawrence. "I couldn't."

"I don't want it all now, of course—a couple of quid will do at the moment," said Long eagerly. "You can hand over the other three after you've got your cheque cashed. Come on; be a sport!"

Lawrence looked grim.

"I possess exactly fifteen shillings and fourpence," he exclaimed. "So I can't lend you a fiver, I can't lend you a quid, and I'm jolly certain I'm not going to lend you a bob! So clear off, and try your sponging stunts on somebody else!"

Teddy didn't quite like being told the blunt truth.

"But you'd never miss a fiver!" he shouted. "You've got five thousand quid—"

"I've got nothing; that five thousand is locked up, and can't be touched," interrupted Lawrence. "So you can go and eat coke!"

He walked on, and Teddy Long scowled.

"Yah, mean beast!" he yelled disdainfully.

Then he bunked—as fast as his legs could carry him. Ernest Lawrence wasn't the kind of fellow to insult! One blow of his right could send a fellow to sleep for hours!

Lawrence went in, thoughtful. He recalled something which had slipped his memory until now. He had won £50 on that first minor fight, and £15 on a test bout a week earlier. And this sum was due to him. Perhaps Mr. Gordon had overlooked it in view of the larger sum. Or perhaps it would come along in a day or two. Lawrence didn't bother—he knew very well that he could trust Smiling Bill.

And he felt satisfied that the matter was settled. Some of the juniors thought he was mad for giving the entire sum to the school; but the majority were intensely proud of him—and jealous, too. They all wanted to do big things, and it seemed unfair that Lawrence should have the privilege.

The same spirit of loyalty was very much in evidence all through the Fourth. Reginald Pitt and his chums, Handforth & Co., Archie Glenthorne, most of the fellows, in fact, were striving to think of some scheme whereby they could get big money together—to help St. Frank's over the stile.

But what could the Fourth do?

"It's all very well for Lawrence—he's a boxer, and can get money for nothing!" growled Handforth. "But what about us? We can hope to do something, but that's about all."

"What about your big book?" asked De Valerie.

Morning lessons were over, and the juniors were chatting in the common-room. Handforth glared at De Valerie wrathfully.

"You leave my book alone!" he said. "I haven't started it yet; but when I do I shall give you a surprise! It's going to be—"

the best seller of the year! And a best seller makes thousands and thousands!"

"Good old optimist!" grinned Pitt.

"Thousands and thousands!" repeated Handforth firmly. "Don't I know? What about that marvellous book called 'If Summer Goes Away' or something like that. The author made a fortune—forty or fifty thousand quid!"

"Of course, that's a mere trifle to what you'll get for Trackett Grim," said Jack Grey. "So, on the whole, there's no need to worry. You'll get a hundred thousand for your story, so St. Frank's can still carry on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But how's it going to carry on until the hundred thousand arrives?" asked Pitt. "You know, it might be a couple of weeks before Handforth gets the whole lot!"

"Couple of weeks!" howled Handforth. "I haven't written the story yet!"

Reggie looked surprised.

"I thought you were going to write it between supper and bedtime to-night!" he said innocently. "It doesn't take long to knock off these best-sellers, does it?"

Handforth turned away in disgust—having no words to reply. And the other juniors discussed the unfair attitude of the newspapers. In their opinion, the papers were decidedly not playing the game.

They had given big reports when the scandal occurred—but Ernest Lawrence's great fight had scarcely been reported at all. And the Fourth, at least, felt that something would have to be done about it.

CHAPTER III.

WINDY



"**P**HEW! What a gale!" exclaimed Church, with a whistle.

The wind was, indeed, booming round the old school in a thunderous manner.

Great driving gusts were sweeping down from the moors, carrying sheets of driving rain with them.

Outside, the Triangle was a drenched mass, and the trees were whipping about in the wind like things in agony. The gale was furious. It had grown stronger and stronger since the morning—and had now become a regular October snorter.

Handforth and Co. were in their study in the Ancient House. Tea was just over, and the three juniors were thinking about strolling along to the common-room for an hour—to take a spell of easy enjoyment. It seemed very cosy and warm in the well lighted school, compared to the bleak, windiness of the dark evening outside.

"Gale?" repeated Handforth, who was sitting at the table, chewing a pencil. "Oh,

you mean the wind? Yes, it's a bit stiff—but it's not half so bad as the gale I've got in this story of mine!"

"What's that—the best seller?" grinned McClure.

"No, it isn't!" roared Handforth. "This is a new Trackett Grim adventure for the Mag. Pitt says he wants it, so I've got to swot away here all the evening for nothing!"

"Then why do it?" asked McClure.

"Because that fathead of a Pitt is going to shove some rot of my minor's in unless I get this story done!" growled Handforth. "I've got the interest of the Mag. at heart, and I don't want to see it ruined by piffle!"

Church and McClure thought they had better not continue the argument. It could easily develop into something more drastic. In the meantime, the gale was roaring and crashing outside with ever increasing violence.

"I'll bet it's rough along the coast," said Church, changing the subject. "The sea must be rising in mountains!"

"How can the sea rise in mountains?" asked Handforth sarcastically. "Mountains aren't made of water! That's one thing I always avoid in my stories—I always put things literally!"

"Of course you do, old man," agreed Church. "Blow this weather! I was going to pop to the village to-night to get a paper. No other chance until Monday. I wanted to see if there's anything about Lawrence."

"Well, can't you go?" demanded Handforth.

"In this wind and rain?"

"Of course!"

"Thanks all the same, but I'd rather be excused," said Church firmly. "You can go if you like—but you wouldn't! When it comes to the point, you generally change your opinion!"

"Who me?" demanded Handforth aggressively.

"Yes! You wouldn't go to the village in all this rain, I'll bet!"

"All right—I'll show you!" said Handforth, jumping to his feet, and reaching the door. "I'm going to the village to get that paper! It's likely I'm going to be spoken to like this!"

Handforth hustled out, and Church and McClure grinned. Their leader, in his impulsiveness, frequently let himself in for tasks which he would never have performed in saner moments.

Handforth emerged from the cloakroom, wrapped up in an enormous mackintosh. A sou'-wester was on his head, and he wore enormous top boots. He appeared to think that the lane was flooded. And in order to make quite certain, he carried an umbrella.

"Going out?" asked Tommy Watson, meeting Handforth in the lobby.

"Do you think I've got dressed like this to have a nap?" demanded Handforth sar-

castically. "Of all the potty questions! Of course I'm going out!"

"An appointment with Miss Irene?" asked Reggie Pitt.

"No!" roared Handforth. "I'm going to buy a paper!"

"You're going to the village in this smother just to buy a paper?" repeated Reggie. "My hat! I didn't think you had such interest in the giddy newspapers! But you can't go out like that!"

"Like what?"

"You'll get soaked to the skin!" said Pitt. "Why not borrow a few more mackintoshes, and a tarpaulin, or something?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Handy!" grinned Church. "Another gamp gone!"

"Do you think I care?" snapped Handforth. "It's yours!"

"Mine!" howled Church wildly.

"Oh, don't worry! It can easily be repaired!" said Handforth, throwing the wreckage into the lobby. "It only needs a new cover, and some new ribs. The stick's still all right!"

Church picked it up in horror, and wasn't at all pleased when the other juniors did nothing else but roar. Handforth plunged across the Triangle boldly. An extra fierce

Best Boys' Books

THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY

No. 733. THE THREE RIDERS.

An Exciting Yarn of Cowboy Life in Texas, introducing Young Sheriff Fist-Fight. By RICHARD RANDOLPH.

No. 734. SMASHING THROUGH.

A Grand Sporting Story of Flying, Racing and International Intrigue. By JOHN HUNTER.

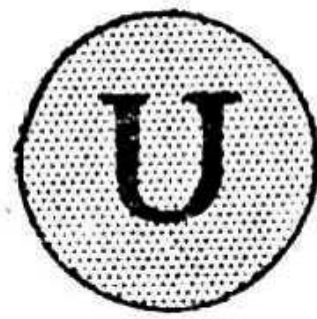
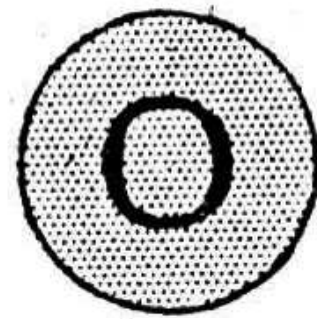
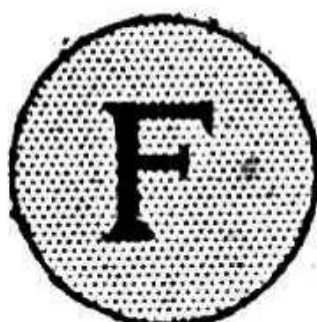
No. 735. FED UP WITH FOOTBALL.

A New and Original Tale of League Football. By JOHN W. WHEWAY.

No. 736. LORIMER'S LEGACY.

An Exciting Detective Story of Baffling Mystery and Adventure. By MAXWELL SCOTT.

Now on Sale.



PENCE

Per Volume.

On The Market.

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY

No. 351. THE AFFAIR OF THE COUNTRY CLUB.

An Original and Dramatic Detective Story. By the Author of "The King's Secret," etc.

No. 352. THE FOREST OF FORTUNE.

A Most Absorbing Story of Detective Work, featuring Sexton Blake, Tinker, Granite Grant and Mademoiselle Julie.

No. 353. THE PRISONER OF ELLIS ISLAND.

An Amazing Tale of London and New York. By the Author of "The Case of the Two Guardians," etc.

No. 354. THE OLD TOLLGATE TRAGEDY.

A Fascinating Tale of Baffling Mystery and Wonderful Deduction, introducing Sexton Blake and Tinker.

Get Your Copy To-day.

And it wouldn't be a bad idea to take a boat, while you're at it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth snorted, and flung the door open. A terrific gust of wind came surging in, and nearly lifted him off his feet. But he set his teeth, opened the umbrella, and plunged out.

Rrrrip!

"Great pip!" gasped Handforth frantically.

The umbrella had turned inside out with one triumphant swoop, and the cover had completely gone, floating over the Triangle into the dim distance. And nothing remained but a few tangled ribs.

gust came, lifted his mackintosh up with a fearful swish, and half smothered him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FOURTH'S P.S.A.



HANDFORTH struggled on valiantly.

Any less determined fellow would have given up the fight, and have returned to the warmth within. But Edward Oswald wasn't to be beaten. He nearly fell into

the fountain pool before recovering his bearings, and then tripped over a tree branch.

But, finally, he managed to get out into the lane. His journey to the village was nothing more nor less than a fight. The wind came shooting down the lane like something solid—for it was a genuine, snorting hurricane.

But Handforth got his paper.

He tucked it carefully away, and commenced the return journey—pondering over the remarks he had overheard in the little post office. The sea was terribly rough, and two or three fishing smacks had foundered in Caistowe Bay. And, what was more serious, the Caistowe lifeboat had been driven on the rocks while attempting a rescue, and was now a wreck.

Indeed, it seemed to be the wildest night of the year.

Rain was descending in sheets, and Handforth was more than pleased when he reached the Triangle. He dashed in and met a small form bunking between the gymnasium and the Ancient House. The form was enveloped in a thick overcoat, and the pair nearly collided.

"Hallo, is that you, Ted?" gasped Willy, as he pulled up. "Got that paper of yours?"

"Yes, I have," said Handforth breathlessly. "You didn't think I was going to be done, did you?"

"You're spoofing me!" said Willy, as they struggled up the steps.

"Am I?" roared Handforth. "What about this?"

He dived into an inner pocket, and produced the paper. It gave one triumphant clap as the folds caught the wind. And the newspaper, opening out like a balloon, simply tore itself out of Handforth's grip, and vanished into the blackness.

Handforth stared after it dazedly.

"I don't want to be critical, but of all the mad things to do!" said Willy tartly. "Fancy taking the trouble to go to the village on a night like this, and then letting the giddy paper escape!"

"It was your fault!" yelled Handforth indignantly.

"My fault?" gasped his minor.

"Yes! You wanted to see it, and now it's gone!" snapped the leader of Study D. "Look here, my son, you've got to go to the village again, and get another!"

"Poor old Ted!" said Willy sadly. "I wonder why you get these delusions?"

He opened the big Ancient House door and nipped in. But he didn't wait to continue the argument. And Handforth was chipped unmercifully by the others. He hadn't even the satisfaction of producing any proof.

Lots of juniors believed he had never been to the village at all.

However Handy forgot all about it by the following morning. And Sunday proved to be an uninteresting day to begin with. The gale had died down much to the disappointment of the Fourth. Somehow it was rather exciting to hear the wind booming round the old buildings.

The sky was grey, and the whole countryside had a ragged, untidy look about it. And a thick, unpleasant mist was sweeping up from the sea—almost amounting to a fog.

The morning passed without event, and the juniors hoped against hope that there would be no walk in the afternoon. They always looked forward with apprehension to these Pleasant Sunday Afternoons.

For the walk was a compulsory one—the entire Fourth sallying out in charge of a master. It was always a kind of procession, and, being Sunday, the juniors were compelled to behave themselves with due sedateness. And it was a considerable strain.

They didn't escape.

Directly after dinner, Mr. Crowell announced that he was taking the Form, and all the boys were to be ready by two-thirty. The Modern House section of the Fourth was also included in the walk—Mr. Crowell being in sole charge.

The procession started out dismally.

There was no rain, the roads were muddy, the air was damp and bleak, and the fellows were all in a state of irritable gloom. This was mainly because they were forced to go. And it is one of the traits of human nature to jib against anything compulsory. Left alone, many of the fellows would have deliberately chosen to go for a walk—but that would have been different.

Mr. Crowell took his long procession past the Moor View School, then on to Bannington Moor, and round by the Downs to the coast. His idea was to take a look at the sea towards Shingle Head, and then branch inland again, reaching Bellton by a by-lane, and then home.

This programme was kept to until the cliffs were reached. The first sight of the sea was rather unsatisfactory. The mist was lying in patches, and only an occasional glimpse of the angry water could be seen.

The juniors were looking down into a small bay near Shingle Head—the spot being quite isolated and uninhabited. The coast was very wild about here, with any amount of treacherous rocks—the worst of all being those which jutted out like fangs beyond the headland.

"Nothing to see here!" grunted Handforth. "Even the sea is a swindle! It isn't even rough!"

"I expect you'd find it rough if you were in a small boat," said Church. "It's very deceptive from up here. The wind's gone down, and the sea isn't choppy—but just look at those terrific rollers! Look at the way they're breaking on the shore!"

"There's enormous strength in those waves," added McClure. "I pity any helpless ship that got driven— Why, what's that thing— Look! Great Scott! Can't you see—"

McClure broke off excitedly, and pointed.

"What's the idea?" asked Handforth.

"There's a big ship there—right on the rocks!" gasped McClure. "Didn't you see it? She's jammed on those fangs at the edge of the bay! I saw her distinctly as the mist shifted."

"Rot!" said Handforth, peering forward intently. "There's nothing there! Just one of your visions, my lad! If there was a wreck, we should have heard signals for help—"

He broke off as abruptly as McClure had done. For at this moment the sea mist lifted again, and revealed a fairly big steamer, in apparently fine condition, wedged cruelly on the rocks at the outer edge of the bay!

CHAPTER V.

THE FOURTH TO THE RESCUE.

"A WRECK!"

"Oh, my goodness!"

"Look! She's listing over to port!"

"But there's still smoke coming out of her funnel—she

couldn't have struck more than a few minutes ago!"

"Look! There are some boats putting off!"

The Fourth was very excited—with good



The umbrella had turned inside out with one triumphant swoop, and the cover had completely gone, floating over the Triangle into the dim distance.

reason. The mist had now cleared completely off the sea in that direction, rolling away like a blanket, and revealing the proud ship lying there, her bows jammed upon the rocks. The stern rose and fell to the great rollers—but the bows never lifted. The ship was fixed in the cruel rocks.

"But why haven't they signalled for help?" asked Grey quickly.

"Goodness knows!" said Pitt. "Not much good here, anyway—there's no lifeboat along this coast nearer than Caistowe. Besides, in this mist they'd never be able to locate the wreck."

Pitt was probably right. The officers and crew of the ill-fated steamer were in no



particular danger. The sea was not wild, although sufficiently rough to cause anxiety. Those deep rollers were bad. But the bay was near at hand, and the ship's crew evidently believed that a safe landing could be made. This was obvious, for the two big boats were putting straight into the bay, one just behind the other. The ship was being abandoned to her fate. Apparently, she had gone on to the rocks during the afternoon—out of her bearings on account of the thick mist, the treacherous currents, and the heavy swell.

"It seems a shame!" exclaimed Watson. "Leaving that fine ship to smash to pieces like that! But I suppose they've got to think of their lives first—and it's too late now, anyhow."

"Too late to save the steamer, if that's what you mean," agreed De Valerie. "She's fairly on the rocks, and these rollers will soon pound her to fragments. Don't you remember that tug that went aground last winter? Within five hours she was scrap-iron and matchwood."

"But this ship's ten times as big as a tug," said Watson.

"All the more reason she'll smash up quickly," said Boots.

The crowd watched the progress of the two big lifeboats. They were being badly handled, by the look of things, and made little progress. But the sea itself sent them into the bay, and now they were closer together.

"They'll collide unless they're careful!" remarked Pitt. "Of all the rotten seamen! I don't think much of that crew, anyhow!"

"Souise my scuppers, they're a lot of landlubbers!" roared Tom Burton. "In another minute they'll find themselves in trouble. Let's get down in the bay, and help the boats ashore. They'll never do it otherwise."

"Good idea!"

"Rather!"

The suggestion was eagerly taken up. Mr. Crowell made no attempt to stop the juniors. One glance had told him that they were very excited, and if he gave any orders, he would be ignored. And Mr. Crowell was a tactful man. He thought the circumstances warranted a little freedom. Besides, if these juniors could give much-needed assistance, all the better.

Burton was probably the most eager of all. For his early boyhood had been practically spent on the sea, and a scene of this kind always appealed to him strongly.

It was a considerable distance down to the bay—for a roundabout route had to be taken. The entire Fourth finally ran down the gully, and emerged into the bay on the level of the beach.

They could still see the steamer—but she looked larger now, and her perilous position was even more obvious. Without question, she was doomed. Dramatically, unexpectedly, the Fourth had come upon a tragedy of the sea. This fine ship, steam-

ing so proudly on her course an hour or so ago, was now at the mercy of these cruel rocks and a pounding sea.

And the lifeboats, much nearer the shore, were having a bad time of it in the big rollers. There were a large number of men on board, and they were floundering clumsily at the oars.

"There they go!" roared Handforth. "I knew it!"

An extra big wave had come sweeping along into the bay, and one boat was swung round, and sent crashing broadside into the other. And before any control could be regained, both boats capsized.

"My only hat!"

"They've all gone under!"

The two boats had emptied their human contents into the sea, and the men were now struggling madly in the big waves. The juniors rushed down to the water's edge. And the crashing of the surf was thunderous. At close quarters the sea looked very rough, indeed.

"Look here—we've got to do something!" shouted Pitt. "These fellows are in danger of drowning! Come along! Rescue, the Fourth! All the best swimmers forward!"

"Count on me!" bellowed Handforth, ripping off his overcoat.

"Bust my tops!" roared the Bo'sun. "Come on, shipmates!"

A dozen juniors literally hurled themselves into the sea, intent upon rendering assistance. They gave no thought to their own danger. Human lives in peril, and they were on the spot to render aid. Nothing else mattered.

It was a valiant effort.

The best swimmers naturally formed the party—for the others hung back, rather fearful of the thundering waves. But to those fellows who could swim with skill and confidence the prospect was not alarming.

All the same, the task was a dangerous one.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS.



MR. CROWELL was horrified.

Running down the gully into the bay, breathless and spent, he stumbled over the sands towards the sea. And he was staggered to find half the Fourth in the water—some distance from the shore, battling grimly with the waves.

Others were wading out as far as they dared, and the remainder—the weaklings—capered about on the sands in a condition of wild excitement. It was a scene to make any Form-master stare.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Mr. Crowell. "They'll all be drowned!"

But he was wrong.

Those juniors who were doing the real rescue work—Reggie Pitt, Tom Burton,

Watson, Boots, Handforth, etc.—were strong, powerful swimmers, and were in little danger of disaster. And the tide was sweeping in, with the current on the safe side.

The difficulty would have been to swim out—it was, indeed, all the juniors could do to fight the current in their efforts to reach the struggling sailors. The return journey was easy—for they were practically hurled ashore.

So, Mr. Crowell's fears were groundless, although he was to be excused for jumping to such conclusions. He ran down to the water's edge fairly panting with anxiety.

The sea itself was icily cold, it seemed—but after a very brief immersion the juniors discovered that it was not numbing. In dead winter such a swim would have had serious effects. But the warmth of the summer sea had not yet departed from the ocean.

In any case, they were too excited and busy to worry about such trifles.

Everybody worked at top speed. As the sailors came ashore they were helped up the beach by those juniors who were wading in. The Fourth, in fact, acted as a whole—everybody doing his bit.

Even Fullwood and Co. forgot their usual cynicism, and laboured with a will. And Teddy Long was well to the fore when it came to helping on the high and dry beach.

Most of the sailors were rather spent when they arrived. But everybody was got ashore in safety. And the overturned boats themselves, only just visible in the crashing waves, were being driven on to the shingle.

The ship's crew proved to be a miserable-looking lot.

Scarcely any of them were English, although the vessel herself was British built and British owned. The captain was among the survivors, as also were several other officers.

"The best thing you can do is to keep on the go!" panted Pitt, as he helped the last man ashore. "Some of the chaps will help you to the village, and you'll be able to get food and—"

"I don't need no advice from you, young shaver!" growled one of the drenched men. "You've done well—you and your mates—and we ain't ungrateful. But now we're ashore, we know where we are. That blamed fool in the second boat was the cause of the capsizing."

"Are you the skipper?" asked Pitt quickly.

"I am—Captain Anderson," retorted the other. "This cursed fog has piled my ship on the rocks. Means the loss of my ticket, as sure as blazes! Where's that infernal Hoskins? He was in charge at the time—the blamed fool!"

"It's no good talking now—" began Pitt.

"Ain't it?" ejaculated Captain Anderson fiercely. "That fool piles up my ship, and

I've got to take the blame! And me below at the time—asleep! Curse them all for a crowd of blundering swabs!"

The captain added a perfect string of foul blasphemy, and the juniors were rather startled. They weren't surprised to hear bad language from a seafaring man, but Captain Anderson's efforts were appalling.

Pitt sized him up in a very few minutes. The captain was a very stout, bloated individual, with a face so coarse that he was utterly repulsive. The great bags under his eyes were significant enough. And his very breath was disgusting. He was soaked in alcohol.

Those juniors who were near by easily understood that the steamer had been practically abandoned on the rocks because of the captain's helpless incapacity. Even the drenching of the sea had scarcely sobered him. When leaving his ship he must have been three-parts drunk.

And so the Fourth felt rather swindled. They had helped to save these men—and the men proved to be hardly worth saving! They were about as poor a crowd of humanity as one could encounter in a day's march. And the skipper was the biggest blackguard of the lot.

"We'd all bin drowned if you 'adn't saved us, mate!" said one of the survivors huskily, as Handforth helped him to don somebody's dry overcoat. "Thanks! You're a good 'un! Real sports you are!"

"Rot!" said Handforth. "We had to do something."

The survivor in the overcoat was a thin, weedy-looking boy, on the point of exhaustion. He was, in fact, one of the ship's pantry boys, and but for Handforth he would probably have drowned.

"When did you strike the rocks?" asked Church.

"Not more than an hour ago," muttered the boy, with chattering teeth. "I don't believe as 'ow the ship was lost! But the skipper was blind drunk, an' ordered everybody into the boats, an' off we come! Not much chance of saving the old tub now! She'll soon be broke up."

"Old tub?" repeated Handforth. "She looks new."

"She is new," said the shiverin' pantry-boy. "An' old Mac was wilder than I ever saw a man afore! Fair raved, 'e did. Still on board, too! Poor bloke! We won't see Mac no more!"

"You've left somebody on board!" repeated Handforth blankly.

"Yus! Old MacGregor, the Chief."

"But he'll drown—he'll be killed when the ship smashes up!" gasped Church. "Why didn't he come off with all the rest of you?"

"The old Chief wouldn't come; he raved at the skipper like he was mad!" muttered the boy. "Called him all the names under the sun, an' swore 'e wouldn't come off the ship."

Handforth rushed away, went through the shivering crowds of rescued men and their rescuers, and singled out Reggie Pitt and Captain Anderson.

"Is it true that the chief engineer is still on board?" gasped Handforth.

The skipper scowled, and swore violently.

"True?" he snarled. "Of course it's true! The darned old fool wouldn't shift—and he can drown in the old tub for all I care! I offered him a place in my boat, and he wouldn't take it."

"You rotter!" roared Handforth. "Hi, you fellows! All hands on deck! We've got to get on board that ship and rescue the last survivor! Come on—volunteers wanted!"

"Good man!" said Pitt heartily.

CHAPTER VII.

FIGHTING THE WAVES.



THE Fourth had taken on a startling proposition.

But Pitt, Handforth, and the other stalwarts thought only of one thing—a life had to be saved! And unless the Fourth hurried up and did the saving, it would be too late. For there was nobody else to go out to the wreck on this perilous mission.

Tom Burton naturally took charge—and Pitt was only too willing to leave the leadership in his hands. Both the overturned boats had been cast ashore on the shingle. Oars were lying about in confusion on the sands—for the incoming tide threw every floating object up.

One of the big boats was righted in no time under Burton's skilful instruction. And it was soon filled with juniors—all eager to go out on this life-saving enterprise.

But only the strongest and the ablest were taken.

Once away, the boat pulled out strongly, battling against the heavy waves and the powerful current. Burton was probably the only junior who realised the difficulties to come.

The spirit of this whole task was glorious to realise. Mere junior schoolboys—most of them inexperienced on the sea—risking their lives unquestioningly for the sake of one other. There was something fine and wonderful in the whole adventure.

If anything could have revealed the true grit of the Fourth, this afternoon's exploit did. For never had the Fourth displayed its pluck and resourcefulness to better advantage.

It was all the more praiseworthy because the affair had taken the juniors by surprise. And they were acting as they did from sheer motives of humanity, and not because there was the slightest prospect of cheap advertisement. There were no spec-

ulators to see—and the idea of later publicity never occurred to them. It was just an example of impulsive courage—of British pluck.

Anything in the nature of thrilling adventure appeals to boys—and this dash to sea to save a life appealed to the Fourth fascinatingly. Those juniors who were in the big boat plied the oars with a will, putting their backs into the work strenuously.

It was Burton who gave the directions and kept control. His knowledge of the sea was almost uncanny, and more than once he saved the clumsy craft from destruction.

The fellows worked all the more because they were drenched—and the exercise warmed them up and restored their flagging circulations. One of the hardest workers in the boat, surprisingly enough, was Archie Glenthorne.

The swell of the Ancient House generally came out strong when a feat of endurance was required. Always protesting his tiredness, always affecting to be languid and sleepy, he was actually one of the strongest and most energetic fellows in the whole Form. And once on the go, he took a pride in exerting every ounce of "the good old tissues."

Handforth was in his element, too. Reckless, always ready for a wild adventure, he absolutely revelled in this danger. And he put the strength of two into his rowing.

And the waves were fought, and conquered.

The boat drew nearer and nearer to the disabled steamer. She was in just the same position—her bows wedged in the rocks, and her stern rising and falling to the lift of the seas. And at every move the torn and battered plates shrieked and groaned against the rocks.

At close quarters, the juniors could see that the ship was a fairly big cargo boat, practically new, smart in appearance, and unharmed, save for the shattered bows. It seemed a dreadful shame that she should be allowed to batter herself to pieces on the rocks.

But the sea is proverbially cruel, and once a vessel is at the mercy of a rock-bound coast, there is little hope for her, no matter how proud she may be, no matter how superb her lines.

The real difficulties now began.

The rollers were surging fiercely round the steamer, making any close approach a difficult and dangerous task. At least, so it seemed at first. But on the protected side of the vessel the sea was much calmer than Burton had dared to hope for.

And the gangway was down, making things much easier.

"Easy now, messmates—easy!" shouted Burton tensely. "Shiver my mainmast! If we take it quietly, we can make fast! Then we'll get on board and force the engineer to come ashore. That's right—not quite so hard up there! Easier—easier!"

Under the bo'sun's guidance, the boat

was edged nearer and nearer, the juniors displaying surprising skill. But with such a commander, the thing was made not only possible, but fairly simple.

And at last the boat grated against the lower part of the ladder. It was quickly made fast, and Pitt and Handforth and several others leapt out of the boat. After that it was plain sailing.

Most of the fellows ran up the ladder and found themselves on deck. The ship had a deserted, forlorn appearance. But the juniors were startled by her obvious solidity. It seemed incredible that she could be in any possible danger. They were amazed that the captain and crew had deserted her in such a panic-stricken manner.

"Why, she's as sound as a bell!" shouted Handforth. "There's no danger here! That rotten captain ought to be boiled!"

"Ay, ay, shipmate, you're right!" said Burton angrily. "If my dad saw this he'd go raving—"

"Hallo! Who's this?" demanded Handforth abruptly.

The question was entirely unnecessary, for there was only one man on board—and he had now appeared. He was a short, stumpy individual, attired in blue overalls, with a reefer coat, and a peaked cap set rakishly on the side of his head.

His face was red and ruddy, with iron-grey whiskers. He glared at the juniors from beneath scowling brows, and he came striding up the deck with a quick, nervous step.

"What are ye doing on this ship?" he demanded harshly. "Off with ye! I'll have none of your tricks! This ship's mine—every spar of her!"

He glared at the juniors so ferociously that they half backed away. And they all came to the same conclusion. MacGregor, the engineer, had gone mad!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIE-HARD.



MACGREGOR stood there, still glaring.

"We came to take you off!" said Pitt.

"Then ye can get back from where ye came!" rapped out the chief engineer

harshly. "I'm no leaving this ship—not while there's a breath of life in my body! As for Captain Anderson, the dirty, drunken, besotted hound of a seagoing land lubber—"

MacGregor nearly choked as he strung off a perfectly remarkable series of uncomplimentary epithets. And the juniors, gathering in a semi-circle, made a discovery.

MacGregor wasn't mad—but consumed with terrible rage.

"Souise me! I agree with what you say, Chief!" exclaimed Burton, catching some of the other's rage. "It's a shame to abandon this ship! She may not be sound, but she could have got off these rocks if the skipper had an ounce of seamanship in him!"

"Boy, you've said the truth!" exclaimed MacGregor fiercely. "A new ship, mark ye! Her second voyage—and filled to the hatches with the finest cargo of Oriental treasures that ever graced a ship! She's worth hundreds of thousands—and here she lies, battering herself to shreds! Twelve hours she'll last—no more!"

"Less than that if the wind gets up again," said Burton quickly.

"Straight from India and the Straits Settlements without a blow!" snapped MacGregor. "The best voyage I can remember—and then this tragedy to happen in the Channel! Due in to-night, we were—and the whole ship lies piling herself up when she don't need to be!"

"But there's no chance of salving her, is there?" asked Pitt.

"Chance!" roared MacGregor. "If that cur of a skipper had had an ounce of seamanship in his infernal carcass he'd have had her off the rocks in the first five minutes, and by this time we should be limping into port! But Anderson's a drunken dog! Hasn't been sober for an hour during the last six days! As for the other officers and the crew—they're all the same filthy crowd! I never sailed the sea with such an accursed set of blackguards and ruffians!"

There was every reason for the Scotsman's fury. He exaggerated, no doubt. It was the captain who was the real culprit. The others, after all, had merely obeyed orders. MacGregor's condemnation of the skipper was undoubtedly deserved.

For the juniors themselves could understand that this affair was a crying shame—a crime against the ship's owners and the underwriters.

She was disabled, yes—but a wreck, no. Before many hours had passed she would become a total loss. But at present the ship was still in fine condition, notwithstanding her torn and shattered bows.

The chief engineer was a seaman to his finger-tips. He wouldn't have minded if Captain Anderson had made an effort. But the skipper, in a drunken frenzy, had ordered everybody into the boats, and the fine ship was now abandoned on the rocks.

"How much salvage would you get, Mr. MacGregor, if you were able to save her?" asked Reggie Pitt, his eyes gleaming in a curious manner.

The Scotsman swore.

"Salvage?" he repeated grimly. "I canna say exactly, but it would mean a fortune, laddie. Twenty thousand—fifty thousand—maybe double. But hoots! What's the good? I'm helpless! I'll just wait here until the ship breaks up beneath me! And that cur is on the shore, a deserter—a

drunken criminal who never ought to have been given his ticket——"

"Look here!" shouted Pitt huskily. "What about if we help?"

MacGregor stared.

"You?" he repeated. "Boy, ye're daft!"

"I mean, should we share in the salvage money?"

"Whoever helped to save this ship would have equal shares in any salvage money!" replied MacGregor grimly. "But ye canna do it! I need men. I need stokers—engineers——"

Handforth gave a yell.

"Salvage!" he shouted. "You—you mean for St. Frank's?"

"I mean that I'm ready to seize any chance that offers!" replied Pitt tensely. "Think of it! A fortune in salvage—and the ship's breaking to pieces every minute! With such a rich cargo on board, the salvage money will be enormous! And we'll have equal shares if we can save the ship!"

"You mean we can give it to St. Frank's?" asked Buster breathlessly.

"Yes—for the old school!" replied Pitt, with shining eyes. "Anything to save St. Frank's from bankruptcy! Lawrence has done his share, why shouldn't we do ours?"

"Great Scott!" said Bob Christine excitedly.

"We can try, anyhow," went on Pitt. "And this is a job that everybody can help in! The whole Fourth can do its share! Why not? It's a chance, you chaps—it's the finest chance we shall ever have! Are you game to work as you've never worked in all your lives before?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Absolutely!"

"We'll do it—we'll work like demons!" yelled Handforth.

"Hurrah!"

"Up, the Fourth!"

"St. Frank's for ever!"

The juniors were wild with excitement, for the prospect had fired their imaginations. The very solidity of the ship gave them a sense of safety. Salvage! A fortune to divide! And St. Frank's could be saved by the Fourth! It was a thrilling, fascinating thought.

CHAPTER IX.

BULLDOG GRIT.



REGINALD PITT clutched at MacGregor's arm.

"We'll help!" he exclaimed. "We can do it, Mr. MacGregor! There's a whole crowd of fellows on

shore—they'll come out and do their share! If you say there's a chance to save the ship, we can help you!"

"But, laddie—laddie!" gasped the chief

engineer. "Ye dinna realise what the job is! Ye're no fitted to work in the stokehold——"

"I know that—but we can do it!" shouted Handforth.

"Rather!"

"We're all game, sir!"

MacGregor suddenly jerked off his cap and flung it on the deck.

"Holy Mackinaw! Ye're a set of wonderful lads!" he shouted enthusiastically. "We'll try it! It's the only way—and maybe we'll win! But I warn ye—it's going to be the hardest fight ye ever had!"

"We know it, and we're ready for it!" retorted Pitt.

"Then below with ye—to the furnaces!" roared MacGregor. "Steam I want! Steam, ye understand?"

"All right; we'll shoot down," replied Pitt. "One thing's certain—we can't hope to shift off these rocks until steam's up. How long will it take, Mr. MacGregor?"

"It depends upon the way ye stoke," retorted the engineer, his face aglow with sudden hope and excitement. "Boy—boy! I admire ye're spirit! It'll take half an hour, maybe more——"

"Time for the other chaps to get out here!" rapped out Pitt. "Look here, Boots, you're a cadet. Can you do semaphore signalling?"

"Yes," replied Boots tensely.

"Then stay up here—attract the attention of all the other chaps on the shore," exclaimed Reggie. "Signal to them to come out—every one. They've got boats there—two or three fishing boats, in addition to that overturned lifeboat. Tell them all to come!"

"Right!" replied Boots excitedly.

And from that minute the excitement began.

MacGregor hadn't been able to believe it at first. He had looked upon it as an insane proposition, a wild schoolboy suggestion. But the juniors were inspired by such enthusiasm that it transferred itself to the chief engineer. And even he began to believe that the apparently impossible could become an accomplished fact.

The ship, abandoned on the rocks, and doomed to destruction, now had a faint chance of being salvaged. And if this miracle was accomplished it would be due to the efforts of the Fourth Form at St. Frank's. For MacGregor alone was as helpless as a child in arms.

There was risk—grave risk.

The juniors didn't realise it, perhaps. The decks were so firm and secure that the prospect of foundering appeared remote. But MacGregor knew, and it was this knowledge that had caused him to hesitate. To get all these boys aboard and to send them to their deaths would be a tragedy worse than the loss of a hundred ships.

But the chief engineer was thinking of that salvage, too; he was human, after all.

But more than anything else, his love for his great engines was uppermost. The thought of his vast steel children being shattered to fragments on the rocks appalled him. So he agreed; he consented to this wild, forlorn hope.

And the die was cast.

And then there followed a foretaste of what was to come later. All the fellows except Buster Boots followed the chief engineer into a hatchway. They clattered down iron ladders, through other hatchways, and went down—always down.

And now, for the first time, some felt a twinge of apprehension.

For below, far into the bowels of the vessel, the motion could be felt—the deadly, sickening jars as the shattered bows ground into the cruel rocks. And the shrieking grind echoed and re-echoed along the plates like a million demons in dire agony.

"I say, she's going!" muttered Church.

MacGregor caught the words, and turned.

"She's no worse than she was, lad," he said quickly. "It sounds more down here; but dinna be scared. The for'rard bulk-heads are still sound, and the ship's no taking water abaft the for'rard hold."

It was reassuring, but the sound was nevertheless hard to listen to. And the heat down here, in the great stokehold, was tremendous, even now, after the fires had been allowed to die down.

MacGregor wasted no time.

He set the example himself, after giving brief instructions to the boys. They stripped to the waist. And then, shovels in hand, they worked. The furnaces were piled up, and every effort was made to gather steam in the shortest possible space of time.

And while this was going on, Boots had signalled according to Pitt's directions. And the other fellows on the shore read that signal and obeyed. For the Modern House junior left them in no doubt as to the urgency of the matter.

Within fifteen minutes every other member of the Fourth was coming out—an easier task for them than it had been for the pioneers of the rescue. For the tide was on the turn, and the ebb was of great assistance.

But a full half-hour had elapsed before the boats drew alongside. Burton was there, waiting. The boats came up, and all the juniors were taken on board in safety—an achievement in itself. There were one or two narrow escapes, but good fortune was on the side of the Fourth.

And the thing was accomplished; the entire Form was on board the derelict! Mr. Crowell had been ignored. It is sad, but true. The Form-master had urgently ordered the boys to remain on shore, and not to take any notice of those insane semaphore signals from the wreck.

But the excitement in the Fourth was so intense that Mr. Crowell's voice had been like a whisper in the wilderness. For once the juniors paid no more attention to him than if he had been a first-term fag.

And the steamer Trident, crippled and deserted by her captain and crew, lay jammed upon the cruel rocks off Shingle Head, with an emergency crew of St. Frank's fellows on board. And all were fired with the intense desire to save this apparently doomed ship.

Would this exhibition of grit be all for nothing?

CHAPTER X.

ALL HANDS TO THE PUMPS.



ANGUS MacGREGOR looked at his helpers with gleaming eyes.

"Lads, I'm tellin' ye, there's work ahead!" he said grimly. "Ye've come aboard this craft, an' ye might as well know at once that if we're goin' to do any salvin', it won't be easy. It'll be done by sweat, lads—understand? I'm a blunt man, an' I'll have ye know that work's got to be the order o' the day—work as ye've never known before."

"All right; we're ready!"

"Anything you like, Mac!"

"Absolutely!"

"You give orders, and we'll obey!"

MacGregor looked at the eager crowd with approval.

"Ye've got the right spirit," he declared. "Now then, twelve of ye will go below and help in the stokehold—the twelve strongest. For I'm tellin' ye it's gruelling work. The rest will get along an' man the pumps. She's takin' water, but there's no danger yet."

The junior looked upon MacGregor as the captain, the supreme chief in this enterprise. Of course, word had gone round among everybody that if the ship was saved it would mean a small fortune to the Fourth.

Some of the fellows, needless to say, thought of themselves—Fullwood and Co. were eager enough to work, but their share of the salvage money, if any was won, would be required for their own uses. Their loyalty to the old school did not blind them to the fact that here was a chance to get hold of endless pocket-money.

The majority thought only of St. Frank's. Ernest Lawrence had done his share—the rest of the Fourth could now do theirs. That was the general spirit. Most of the fellows had been jealous of Lawrence, envious because he could get big money and they couldn't. But if this thing came off they would all be heroes.

If the juniors didn't quite realise the perils, MacGregor did.

So far, the Trident was safe. She was taking water, but very slowly, and only her forward compartments were affected. The major portions of her cargo was undamaged, and there was no danger of the stokeholds becoming flooded. If there had been, MacGregor would never have consented to these boys penetrating to the furthestmost depths of the ship.

The Trident had been abandoned disgracefully—unwarrantably. No responsible captain would have committed such an outrage against the fine traditions of the sea.

For the steamer was capable of being backed off the rocks, capable of being taken safely into port. MacGregor knew it, and his whole nature cried aloud in protest against this wicked destruction of valuable property.

Captain Anderson had fallen into a panic when the ship struck; he had ordered the boats away while he was still in the throes of a drunken frenzy, and but for MacGregor's obstinacy the vessel would undoubtedly have battered herself to fragments on those cruel rocks.

And speed was the essence of the situation.

Speed! Delay would mean disaster. Another hour of this grinding and churning and the plates would be so badly ripped and torn that no power on earth would keep the sea from reaching the ship's vitals.

But if she could be released, if she could be freed from the grip of the rocks at once, there was a sporting chance of getting her safely into harbour. Or, at least, she might be beached in a sheltered bay.

So MacGregor was sane enough; he was working to one end. And there were still plenty of lifeboats on board to be used in emergency. If the situation became deadly serious through some unexpected development, MacGregor knew he could get his youthful helpers safely away.

And the Fourth worked—worked as it had never worked before.

At the pumps the fellows toiled away with feverish enthusiasm and energy. A fine spirit of adventure had gripped them. They were capable of doing better things than they had ever done before. And work which would have been sheer torture under normal conditions became endurable.

And the party at the pumps had their work cut out.

MacGregor was here, there, and everywhere. He performed the work of a dozen men. He was constantly in the engine-room, anxiously scanning the gauges and

steam-pressure dials. He dodged into the stokehold at times, urging and encouraging the perspiring boys.

Then he would appear at the pumps and be away again. If the juniors worked, MacGregor set them the finest example that any man could. He was a perfect cyclone of electric energy.

And he was excited—inwardly.

For the gauges informed him that the steam was rising, steadily, relentlessly. And the boys at the pumps were beating the sea. The level of the water in the flooded compartments was getting lower, the sea was being pumped out quicker than it was pouring in. Everything was going with wonderful smoothness.

The forlorn hope was becoming a possible chance.

And on the shore Mr. Crowell was aghast. To his intense relief, he learned that all the boys had safely got on board. One of the ship's officers had binoculars, and through these he had watched the arrival of the boatloads of juniors.

So Mr. Crowell was relieved to a certain degree, although he was aghast at the danger the boys had deliberately run into. They were on a vessel that was pounding herself to scrap iron on the rocks. Poor Mr. Crowell was in the depths of despair.

Captain Anderson, on the other hand, cursed madly.

He knew what was happening; he could understand. The shock had sobered him, and the blackguardly skipper was appalled. It came to him now, with a dreadful shock, that he had practically thrown his ship away.

And these boys—mere junior schoolboys—were working against time to save the vessel before it was too late. And MacGregor was the cause—MacGregor, the man who had refused to desert his post!

Captain Anderson's state of mind was in no way improved when he saw the volumes of smoke pouring from the great funnel—proving beyond all question that an effort was being made to raise steam.

And then, soon afterwards, the steam itself! Hissing volumes of it from the side of the funnel! The drink-sodden skipper went through agony at that sight, for a dreadful presentiment assailed him that the ship would be saved—and he would get his deserts!

CHAPTER XI.

THE SCHOOLBOY STOKERS.



H ANDFORTH reeled back, gasping.

"This heat!" he panted. "My only hat! She'll burst soon—we're making the fires too big!"

"Rats!" said Pitt. "This is nothing! The more heat we can get,

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2^d

the better; it's steam Mac wants—and more and more of it! The fiercer the furnace is, the greater the pressure of steam!"

The stokehold was like a corner of the Pit itself.

The great lurid furnaces, the stacks of coal, the begrimed, half-naked juniors—and that dreadful shriek and groan of the plates as they continued to smash into the rocks.

The fellows were doing marvels.

Absolutely unaccustomed to this kind of work, they were naturally slow. It required three or four boys to do the work of one man. But they were getting over this difficulty by working in spells.

as the rest. No junior liked to admit himself weaker than his companions.

It was a magnificent test of endurance.

And the spirit of do-or-die was uppermost. If ever the Fourth had proved its grit to the full, it was proving it now. When it came to an emergency, these sturdy boys were true blue to the backbone.

Five minutes of shovelling was generally enough to send the fellows back, choking, gasping, and reeling with utter exhaustion. And even the rest did little to bring relief.

For the stokehold was like a furnace itself—the temperature being utterly appalling. If the juniors had been asked whether they could live in such heat, they would have ridiculed the idea. And here they were, not



Mr. Crowell was staggered to find half the Fourth in the water battling grimly with the waves.

There were fully thirty juniors in the stokehold.

They worked in five-minute shifts—ten shovelling away with all their strength and power, and the others resting. Then ten more, and so on in rotation. It was Reggie Pitt's idea to arrange things in this way, for he had quickly realised that no other system would work.

And Pitt was right. These intervals of rest enabled the juniors to carry on—and to keep carrying on. But for the spells, many would have collapsed or swooned within the first twenty minutes.

Even as it was, many of the fellows only kept going by sheer strength of will—by the determination to prove themselves as strong

only living in it, but working—toiling with might and main.

And in the engine-room MacGregor was watching his gauges like a man possessed. The pressure was creeping up—always up! And there came a time when a fine head of steam was raised.

MacGregor decided on the first trial.

On deck, a few juniors were resting—those who had become utterly overcome. The open air revived them as nothing else would have done, and they would soon be ready for another round of grinding work.

"Look!" said Skelton hoarsely, in sudden surprise.

He pointed over towards the stern, and

one or two of the other juniors stared, their pulses quickening.

"She's moving!" shouted Owen major excitedly.

"She's not—it's only an illusion!" muttered another. "Mac's got the propeller's going, but that's all."

He was right. The ship's screws were churning the water madly, revolving at the full power of her engines. The pull was tremendous, but insufficient. The Trident remained a fixture.

The churning sea was like creamy foam all round the ship, and the vessel was throbbing and vibrating through every plate. She was striving—striving with might and main to free herself from the fangs of death.

And MacGregor groaned aloud when he found that the effort was futile.

There was only one solution—still more steam! And if that failed, then, indeed, this magnificent effort would have been in vain. Even in that tragic event, it would not have been useless, for it would have proved the pluck of the boys of the Fourth to the hilt.

"Boys, ye've got to work harder!" yelled MacGregor, appearing in the stokehold, and gazing down upon the wild scene.

"We can't!" shouted Armstrong. "We're nearly done!"

"We shall have to give it up!"

"Yes, it's no good!"

"We won't give it up!" roared Handforth. "More steam, Mac? We'll let you have it! Now, then, you rotters—get at it! And work for your lives!"

"Good man!" shouted Pitt. "Handy's right, you chaps—we've got it in us! Let's make one supreme effort for the next ten minutes! Come on, everybody—up, the Fourth!"

"Hurrah!"

And the juniors, fired with further enthusiasm in spite of their exhaustion, worked like demons. They made an extraordinary picture, in that terrible stokehold—stripped, begrimed, perspiring until they glistened.

MacGregor watched with a kind of lump in his throat.

"Holy Mackinaw!" he muttered. "These boys have got the right stuff in 'em!"

He dashed back to his beloved engine-room; from there he raced aloft, to look after the fellows at the pumps. And he knew, better than anybody else, that this supreme effort was the final test. Failure now would mean the end to all hopes and wonderful aspirations.

Back in the engine-room, MacGregor gloated over the instruments. Steam was rising—more than it had risen before! The pressure was becoming enormous.

He hurried into the stokehold, seized one of the shovels, and took his own spell. A madman at work could not have been more violent in his stupendous exertions. And MacGregor's example fired the juniors to

even greater efforts than their strength allowed of.

At last the engineer flung his shovel down, staggered up into the engine-room, and uttered a shout of triumph. Never, in the whole course of the voyage from the East, had such a head of steam been raised.

And once again the ship laboured agonisingly.

Straining in every bolt and joint, shivering from stem to stern, the Trident struggled to free herself from the rocks. The propellers churned with a deafening roar that threatened to snap the shafts.

And then, with a sudden sickly lurch, the bows of the ship rolled over to port. She plunged, staggered, and wallowed away from the rocky clutch. She was free!

CHAPTER XII.

THE ORDEAL OF THE FOURTH.



"SHE'S off—she's off!"

A member of the ship's crew, on the shore, gave this shout. He and many others were watching with feverish interest. They had seen what was in the wind—they had watched the desperate efforts.

Captain Anderson had laughed harshly and contemptuously—striving to hide his own confusion. He had sworn, with much foul language, that no power on earth could ever shift the Trident from the rocks.

And now the vessel was free!

"Look! She's backing out into the bay!" yelled one of the other men. "Good old Mac! He's done it! The old tub'll be saved, after all!"

"Thanks to them boys, just as much as Mac!" growled another man.

"You're right, mate."

Captain Anderson was deathly pale. He stared as though his eyes were witnessing some vision. But there, clear enough, the Trident was backing slowly and deliberately away from the danger zone.

The sea was churned into snowy-white foam over a large area, and the vessel's movement was obvious. She was getting further and further away from the rocks with every revolution of the screws.

On board, the juniors were nearly mad with joy.

"Keep it up, you chaps!" shouted Boots, hustling down into the stokehold. "She's off—and Mac's going to try and get her round the coast and into Caistowe Harbour!"

"Hurrah!"

"If he can do that, she'll be saved—and everything will be O.K.!" exclaimed Buster. "I'll take a shift now—let's have your shovel, Archie. You look a bit spent."

Archie Glenthorne reeled back.

"Absolutely!" he gasped. "As a matter

of fact, I'm not only spent, old sea-dog, but positively wobbly at the knees! I mean to say, it's dashed frightful when a chappie goes all of a doo-dah!"

Archie was a sight.

He couldn't have been recognised from a nigger urchin. Begrimed with coal-dust, wearing nothing but a pair of trousers, his hair tousled, he looked no more like the immaculate swell of the Fourth than a wild Hottentot would have done.

His hands were blistered and raw. But he didn't care. In a way, he was enjoying himself. Archie hated getting himself dirty; but when necessity demanded, he would wallow in grime quite cheerfully, and positively revel in the experience.

And he was certainly giving the lie to his frequent protestations that the "old tissues" were delicate and weakly. Archie had worked as hard as any of the fellows—and a great deal harder than many. And he was still capable of further efforts.

Handforth & Co. were sticking it well, too.

There was a kind of rivalry between the three. Church and McClure wanted to give in more than once, but Handforth spurred them on with all his usual aggressiveness and arrogance.

Then it came to his own turn to feel faint and weak and exhausted. But Church and McClure were working, and for Handy to succumb while his chums were still fit was absolutely unthinkable. In this way, the schoolboy stokers kept themselves up to the work. They didn't quite realise that all this would mean a severe reaction later.

Mac, in the engine-room, was shouting at the top of his voice. There was nobody with him—he formed the entire engine-room staff. But he shouted because he couldn't help it.

His greatest anxiety had been relieved. The vessel was off the rocks—churning back sluggishly into the centre of the bay. And another point that had also worried the engineer was settled.

This was the question of a pilot.

Mac was the only man on board, and, although he would have loved to do so, he couldn't possibly divide himself into two. And now that the ship was moving, he was imprisoned in the engine-room. He daren't leave his clanging, clattering children.

And who was to pilot the ship? How could any schoolboy be expected to know the mysteries of a compass, the tricks of steam steering, and a hundred and one other technical details inseparable from the bridge of a modern ocean-going steamer!

Mac himself knew nothing; he was as ignorant as a baby when it came to taking the wheel. He knew his engines sideways, endways, upside down, and through and through. He could tell by the sound of a piston whether it was running smoothly, or whether there was a fault. But he was a perfect ignoramus on every other matter.

And his great difficulty had been solved by Tom Burton.

Mac had been amazed, incredulous, at first. But one glance at Burton at the wheel convinced him. The junior was master of himself—and master of the ship!

He had been born on his father's own craft—he had learned the mysteries of the compass before he was eight years of age. He had taken his turn at the wheel before he had reached twelve, and all the great intricacies of navigation were an open book to him. The Bo'sun was a true son of his father, and this opportunity to prove his prowess was a joy to him.

The proof he gave was convincing.

The Trident, limping like a cripple, reached the mouth of the bay. At intervals the engine-room telegraph would clang—in just the same way as it always had clanged. But for the absence of his subordinates, Mac might have believed that everything on board was normal.

Slow—easy—reverse—the orders came down briskly.

And from the shore, crowds of onlookers watched and marvelled.

The big ship, with a heavy list, slowly and laboriously turned, and finally set off into the open sea, proudly and under complete control. Her funnel was belching forth clouds of smoke. Her propellers were converting the sea into frothy cream.

And the race for port had begun!

CHAPTER XIII.

HEROES ALL.



ALF BRENT released his grip, and sank into a huddled heap.

"There goes another!" snapped Johnny Onions. "Quick, you chaps—carry him away. And bring somebody else—we can't lose a man!"

At the pumps, the fellows were working desperately.

And Brent was not the first one to collapse. Several others had found the work too hard for their strength. And as these valiant triers had been carried away, others were set to work.

And even these others were nearly spent. For the whole Fourth was practically on its last legs. Aching muscles, choking lungs, splitting heads—these were all signs of the terrible stress.

The Trident was staggering along steadily.

Already Shingle Head was far behind, and but for the murk over the sea, Caistowe Harbour would already have loomed into sight. But it was just ahead. Another half-hour—and then rest!

Only half an-hour!

It seemed an insignificant space of time. But to these exhausted juniors it was like an age. The prospect appalled them. And yet, they had to keep on. To relax their efforts now would be fatal.

For the Trident was leaking badly.

Her plates had sprung more, and the water was creeping in steadily—beating the efforts of the pump workers. There was a grim, ominous list of the bows. And now and again, when the ship was struck by an extra heavy roller, it almost seemed as though she would dive nose foremost, and never recover from the shock.

The schoolboy labour was reorganised.

Half the amateur stokers were removed, and set to work at the pumps. As long as a fair head of steam was kept up now, it would suffice. There was no necessity for that extra pressure.

All hands were needed at the pumps.

And it was a fight against time. The sea was pouring in through the gaping wounds. But the extra help on the pumps made an immediate difference. The danger was made less acute. The sea failed to make the same steady inflow. The level of the water in the flooded compartments remained the same.

And then came an extra effort—a valiant attempt.

And the pumps won. Once again, the water was being pumped out faster than it entered. And if only this could be kept up, all might yet be well. And Caistowe was only just ahead!

"Stick it, you chaps!" gasped Handforth. "It's the last lap—don't chuck it up now!"

He urged on his men grimly. Reggie Pitt had purposely sent him up to take command of the pumps—for Reggie, being a wise skipper, knew the value of Handforth's own leadership. In anything delicate or in any enterprise requiring tact, Handforth was hopeless—although he didn't know this.

But in an adventure that required bulldog effort and grim tenacity he was absolutely without a peer. And his efforts at the pumps were sufficient proof of this.

His own superb example forced the others to work harder, although they hardly realised it. There was something magnetic and compelling in Handforth's cheerful disposition during this crisis.

And yet Edward Oswald was nearly a wreck. Only he knew the agonising strain of his muscles. His face was pale through the grime, his eyes were bloodshot, and his mouth was drawn down into an unnatural straight line. And he kept going. His example kept the others going.

It was very much the same down in the stokehold.

Reggie Pitt was at the last gasp, but he never admitted defeat. For him to show a moment's weakness would be fatal. If he threw his shovel down, and collapsed, the other schoolboy stokers would all give up the ghost within a couple of minutes. But while Reggie laboured, the others did the same. It was only the weaklings who dropped out.

But even these had done wonders. Even fellows like Gulliver and Bell and Teddy Long—sheer outsiders, as a rule—had caught

the spirit of grim tenacity and proved themselves to be capable of better things.

MacGregor was tense, drawn, and wild-eyed.

The ship was going—keeping up the fight—and getting ever nearer to harbour. The impossible had become possible—the possible was become a probable. And as the prospect of victory grew more certain, Mac was nearly mad with enthusiasm and joy.

He felt that he was a brute.

Down there, in the engine-room, his labour was light, he told himself. He felt that he was doing less than his share. He failed to realise that without him the boys could have done nothing at all.

And his task wasn't so simple, either.

In full charge of the engine-room, without a single assistant, he had a hundred and one things to attend to. Not for one second could he rest, or stand still. He was at it every second—and every fraction of a second.

Tom Burton, on the bridge, felt his heart give a great throb of excitement as a familiar object loomed up through the murk. The little tower at the end of the Caistowe mole!

The port was in sight—and the fight was nearly over.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUCCESS!



"HURRAH!"
"Caistowe!"
"Look! We're nearly at the harbour!"
"Good gad! So we are, laddies!"

In their excitement, the juniors partially recovered their strength. Some who had been utterly spent a moment before found enough strength to run to the rail, and gaze into the misty distance. The sea was quieter here—for the Harbour was already being entered.

The worst, in fact, was over.

The Trident was still limping, but she was a proud ship as she swung round past the mole, and made direct for the docks. The juniors were inclined to think that it was no longer necessary for them to labour.

But Reggie Pitt and Handforth, in command of their respective jobs, soon made the fellows sing a different tune.

"You fatheads!" roared Handforth huskily. "We mustn't ease up now! What's the good of letting the ship sink in the middle of the harbour? All our work for nothing! Stick to it, you beggars!"

"We're done!" moaned Church.

"We're all done, if it comes to that," retorted Handforth. "But it's better to be done than undone! So find some strength somewhere, and use it! Look at me!"

He worked away like a nigger, and the rest obeyed.

Pitt had the same task in the stokehold. And the flagging juniors were kept on while the Trident slid cunningly up the harbour under the hand of Tom Burton.

Motor boats were circling the Trident now, and a couple of tugs had appeared. The sight of these latter was cheering to the Fourth.

And then the ordeal was ended.

For men came on board—the tugs having brought out crowds of willing helpers. While the Trident was still in motion the smaller vessels made fast, and the men scrambled on board.

The juniors were relieved at last—the pumps were taken over by brawny, muscular longshoremen, and any other kind of labour that was available. The juniors emerged from the stokehold—many of them being carried.

In fact, the reaction was rather dreadful.

Some of the juniors had collapsed so badly that they were quite unconscious. And many others were weak and pale—alarming to look at.

The ship was quite near the mole as she edged nearer and nearer—so that she could be run safely aground in the soft mud. For she was salved now—and her repair bill would be comparatively light.

The mole was crowded with excited people.

Men, women and children had caught the fever, and were running up. Long before the Trident loomed out of the murk the people of Caistowe knew that she was attempting to make the harbour.

Word of this had come from the original crew, and it had reached Caistowe in a hundred different ways. Consequently, when the Trident loomed into sight hundreds of eyes were already on the look-out.

And a perfect storm of cheering and shouting arose now.

The onlookers were not all Caistowe people. Dr. Malcolm Stafford himself was there—to say nothing of Mr. Crowell and Mr. Beverley Stokes. Fifth-Formers and Sixth-Formers were in abundance.

“Hurrah!”

“Well done, the Fourth!” yelled Chambers, of the Fifth.

“Hurrah!”

The cheering rose to a mighty roar, and not one junior on board failed to hear it—except those who were unconscious, or sleeping the sleep of utter exhaustion. For some had dropped as they stood—dead beat to the world.

Never before had the Fourth been so spent.

They had shot their bolt—but to what an end!

Men shouted from the Trident's deck

for doctors—for stretchers—for beds to be prepared. And the very instant the vessel touched the quay-side she was made fast—her keel already grounding in the mud. But she was safe here.

Gangways were run out, and then came the triumph of the Fourth.

One by one, the juniors were assisted down. Handforth, Boots, Pitt and a good few others, walked it. But many were carried or assisted. And they came in for a tremendous reception.

Dr. Stafford himself was relieved beyond words—and his keen anxiety was now changed to pride. It made him glow with joy to know that these boys were scholars of St. Frank's. And he flushed as he heard them being cheered to the echo—cheered with wild enthusiasm by rich and poor alike.

It was a revulsion of feeling, indeed!

A week or so earlier these same juniors had been sneered at—hooted—jeered—in Bannington and Caistowe. But the Caistowe people were making amends for their unjust scorn. They gave the Fourth such a reception that many of the juniors even managed to buck up a bit.

If anything was calculated to inspire these seaport folk with enthusiasm, an exploit of this nature was. They knew the sea—they were aware of its dangers—and the loss of a ship meant a great deal more to them than it meant to the average people of an inland town. And so, to find out that these schoolboys had saved a fine ship from the sea's cruel clutches was a recommendation second to none.

St. Frank's could do no wrong after this! With the people of Caistowe St. Frank's became the one school in the whole kingdom whose name should be honoured and respected. The changed attitude, indeed, was startling.

But this sort of thing is only natural. When a revulsion of feeling comes, it is generally complete and overwhelming. Most people are apt to go from one extreme to another, and the Caistowe folks were no exception to the rule.

They gave the Fourth a wonderful time—and the cheering, and the shouts of unstinted praise, were like music to the ears of the tired and weary boys.

How sick they had become of the gibes and sneers! How tired they were of being condemned undeservedly and unjustly! And how glorious it was to hear these cheers of approval and praise!

The fellows forgot the Trident—they forgot the possibility of obtaining salvage money. As they were helped or carried ashore they were aware of one emotion only. They had worked hard—they had done the utmost that was in them—and they were rewarded by success.

CHAPTER XV.

ALL FOR THE OLD SCHOOL.



DR. STAFFORD shook his head. "I am appalled, Stokes—quite appalled!" he exclaimed concernedly. "The boys are in a dreadful state! I cannot help feeling that many will suffer terribly for this foolhardy act."

"Foolhardy, sir?" repeated Mr. Stokes.

"Forgive me—the expression was undeserved," replied the Head. "It was not foolhardy—it was magnificent! Reckless, if you like—but the spirit that made such an adventure possible is the same spirit that has made our nation famous. I am proud that these boys are my scholars."

"By Jove, sir, they're worth their weight in gold!" said Mr. Stokes enthusiastically. "But why are you worried?"

"The poor lads are positively ill."

"What's that—what's that?" exclaimed an elderly gentleman, hurrying up briskly. "Nonsense, sir! The boys are tired out—exhausted. That's all—nothing else!"

The newcomer was a prominent Caistowe doctor. And the scene was the lobby of the biggest hotel on the promenade. All the juniors had been accommodated here—and were now in bed. They had bathed, had partaken of hot broth and other sustaining nourishment, and were now sleeping.

"You really think the lads will be unharmed?" asked the Head.

"It did them good!" declared the medical man. "There's nothing like exercise—nothing like work! Sleeping the round of the clock will set them on their feet, and they'll never know they suffered, except for a few aches and pains, and a strained tendon or muscle here and there. I give the very worst case a week—and not an hour longer!"

The doctor's news was cheering. And the Head was overjoyed. It was good to learn that the fellows would suffer no permanent harm from their daring exploit.

And while Dr. Stafford and Mr. Stokes were talking, a roughly-dressed, grinning individual appeared—Angus MacGregor, the chief engineer of the Trident. He was worn out, but joyous. He had remained on board until he had handed the ship officially over into the hands of the underwriters' representatives—for the astute Scotsman took no chances.

"I'll have ye know, gentlemen, that those boys are the most wonderful youngsters I ever set eyes on!" he declared, with husky enthusiasm. "I'm tellin' ye, they're a braw set of laddies!"

"We know it, Mr. MacGregor," said the Head.

"Ay, but ye don't know what they went

through!" replied the engineer grimly. "Man, ye'll never credit it! Those boys did things that I never believed could be done by boys! And it proved that it's the spirit that does the trick. I'd like to know how many of those youngsters are Scotch!"

Mr. Stokes chuckled.

"Whether Scotch, English, Irish or Welsh—they've all earned the same praise," he replied. "Frankly, I can't quite believe it, even now. The whole thing seems incredible. And the ship, Mr. MacGregor? She's quite safe?"

"Ay, the wee ship's all right now," replied Mac. "An' I'm thinkin' there'll be a large amount of siller comin' to yon boys! The salvage money is likely to run into the tens."

"Tens?" repeated the Head.

"Ay, tens of thousands," replied the engineer.

"Good gracious me!" ejaculated Dr. Stafford, startled. "Are you really serious, Mr. MacGregor?"

"Hae ye ever known a Scotsman to joke about money?" growled the engineer. "Man, I'm serious enough!"

"I congratulate you, Mr. MacGregor," said the Head.

"I'm thinkin' ye'd be better employed in congratulatin' your own boys," replied the chief. "It's they who'll get the bulk of this money—ay, an' they deserve it. It's theirs, I'm tellin' ye."

"But it was your idea to save the ship—"

"I hope I'm an honest man," said MacGregor. "It wasna my idea at all! The boys thought of it themselves, an' it was I who said they were daft. Whatever money we get is shared—equally. I'll take my share, and think myself lucky. Hoots! I'm a Scotsman, an' I'm rare fond of siller—but it wouldn't hurt me if I didn't get a penny! The ship's saved, an' it's nearly all that matters. For if there's one thing more pitiful than another in this world, it's the sight of a brave ship breaking to pieces on the rocks!"

MacGregor was prevailed upon to rest. And after he had gone, Dr. Stafford looked at Mr. Stokes and Mr. Crowell rather strangely.

"Remarkable!" he exclaimed. "Salvage! I must confess I had not looked at that aspect of the matter before. But can it be possible that the sum will be as large as MacGregor indicates?"

"Possibly larger, sir," said Mr. Stokes. "The Trident, I understand, is carrying an exceptionally valuable cargo—she is a rich prize. Abandoned by her captain to destruction, those who saved her are naturally lawfully entitled to the full salvage."

Dr. Stafford was thoughtful. He remem-

bered a few words that Reggie Pitt had spoken to him as the captain of the Fourth came ashore. At the time, the words had had no meaning for the Head.

"St. Frank's is all right now, sir!" Reggie had exclaimed. "We've restored her name, and all the money is for the old school. It's the Fourth's present to St. Frank's!"

And Dr. Stafford started now that the full significance of the words came to him.

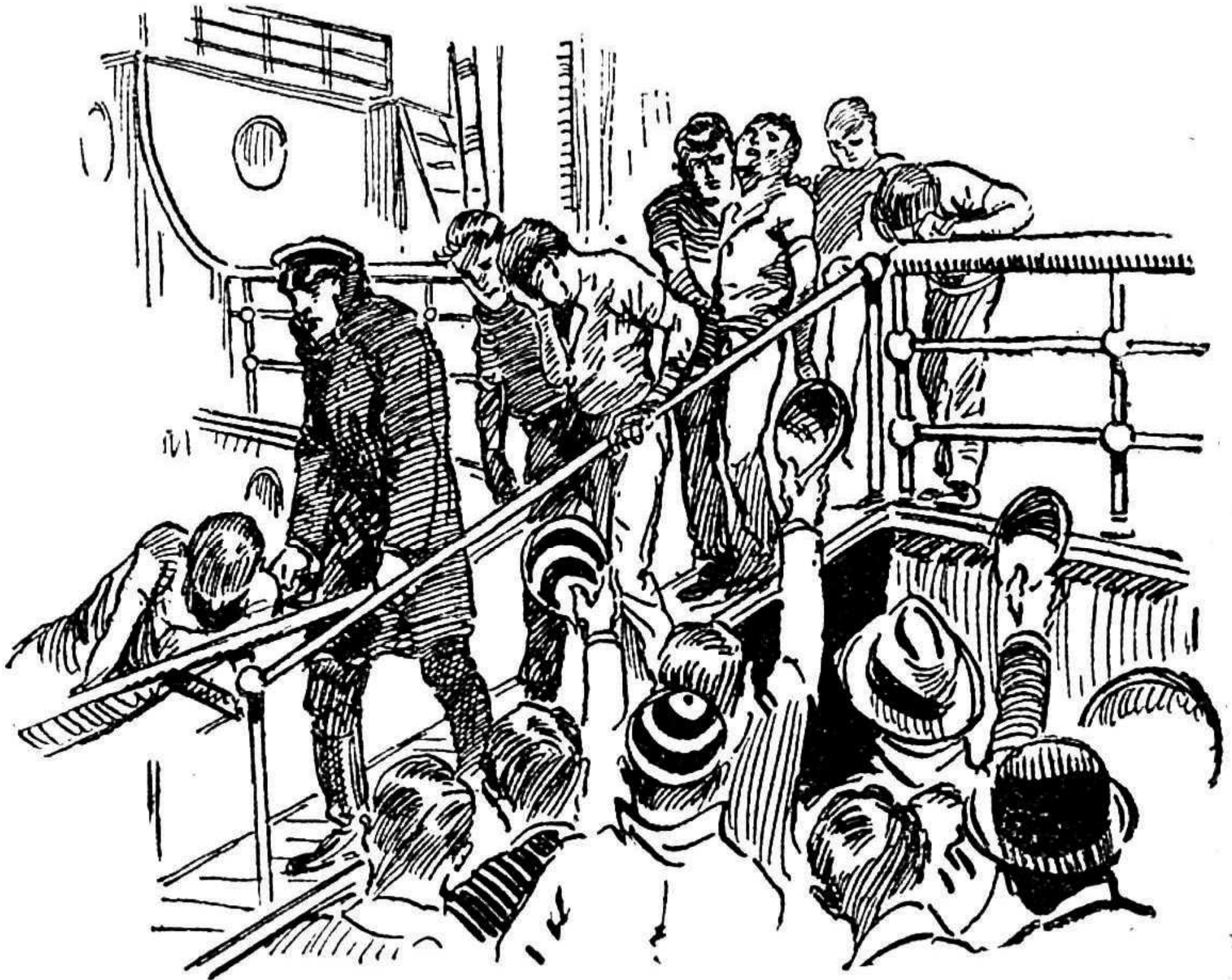
The Fourth had made this epic effort for the sake of the school!

they felt like lead. And then, as a neatly attired nurse came towards his bed, a flood of remembrance arrived.

"Oh! That giddy ship!" he ejaculated. "I say! I'm not in hospital, am I?"

"Hospital?" repeated a junior in the next bed. "Not likely! This is an hotel—and we can order any giddy thing we please! Better hurry up before the other chaps collar everything!"

Handforth started. The next junior was Fatty Little, and he had a tray in front of



One by one the juniors were assisted down. Handforth, Boots, Pitt and a good few others walked it. But many were carried or assisted. And they came in for a tremendous reception.

CHAPTER XVI.

REGGIE PITT'S VOW.



EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH sat up in bed, and blinked.

"Hallo!" he mumbled. "What the dickens—" He broke off and looked round him in bewilder-

ment. "What's happened to the dormitory?" he asked blankly. "Yow! I'm as stiff as a poker!"

He fell back, gasping, as he felt a crick in his neck, and when he moved his arms

him that positively groaned under an extraordinary assortment of eatables. Fatty had lost quite a lot of weight in consequence of his exertions—but he was apparently determined to make up for lost time.

"An hotel, eh?" repeated Handforth. "What rot! We ought to be back at St. Frank's by now. It's night-time, too! Oh, well, we shall be all right for Monday's work—"

"It's Monday evening already!" smiled the nurse, coming up.

"Monday evening!" yelled Handforth.

"You've slept for just about twenty-

eight hours," said the nurse. "And quite a number of your friends are sleeping still. But I'm glad to say they're all normal, and practically recovered."

An hour later, indeed, the Fourth was dressed, and ready to invade the lower regions of the hotel. They had heard that crowds of Caistowe and Bannington people were waiting to give them all a magnificent reception when they showed themselves.

And one glance out of the window was convincing.

The road was packed with crowds—crowds that had waited for hours. For the exploit of the Fourth had been the sole topic of conversation throughout the district since the previous evening.

Reginald Pitt's eyes were gleaming with quiet joy.

"This means the end of all the trouble!" he said gladly. "St. Frank's will be respected again now—and all that rotten scandal will be allowed to die a natural death. Thank goodness for that!"

"Rather!" agreed Tommy Watson. "And there's the salvage money, too—that'll help the old school."

"At the moment I'm thinking more about St. Frank's good name," replied Pitt. "This adventure will be given tremendous prominence in the newspapers. In fact, we're now the talk of the whole country."

"The whole world, you mean," said Handforth.

"The whole world!" agreed Reggie. "The London papers gave St. Frank's plenty of prominence over that scandal—but I'll bet they've beaten their own record with this affair. We'll see columns and columns of praise! Headlines right across the pages!"

"By gad, that'll be somewhat priceless," said Archie Glenthorne.

Buster Boots came charging in like a bull. His face was red, his eyes were gleaming, and none of the other fellows had ever seen him looking so uncontrollably furious.

"The rotters!" he shouted. "The miserable rotters!"

"What's the matter?" asked Pitt.

"Look at these!" roared Buster.

He thrust out a sheaf of newspapers—the London morning dailies and two or three of the London evening journals. The juniors seized them greedily—but with some apprehension.

Pages were scanned in vain—till, at last, Reggie Pitt cleared his throat, and called for silence.

"Here we are," he said with ominous quietness. "Listen to this: 'The large cargo steamer, Trident, went aground, on the Sussex coast, yesterday afternoon, but was successfully refloated, after being abandoned by her captain. A number of boys ably assisted in the salvage work.' That's the report—what do you think of it?"

"It's got just the same in here!" gasped Handforth, with another paper.

There was a terrific hubbub.

"Not a word about St. Frank's—not even a headline!"

"It's shameful!"

"It's not only shameful, but grossly unfair!" exclaimed Reggie Pitt passionately. "These newspapers haven't received the full story—that's the truth of it. They soon report a scandal, and make fine copy out of it! But when it comes to clearing St. Frank's good name—they fail!"

"Are we going to stand it?" hooted Handforth.

"Never!"

The Fourth was indignant and enraged. And with good cause. They had acquitted themselves magnificently—and although the local district realised their merit to the full, the vast proportion of the country was allowed to remain in ignorance.

It was a terrible blow for the juniors.

"Leave this matter to me!" said Reggie Pitt grimly. "I give you my word that I'll make these newspapers do us justice—I'll make them undo their former injury, and prove to the world that St. Frank's is as clean and wholesome as any other school in the kingdom!"

And there was something in Reggie Pitt's tone which meant business!

THE END.

Read of the adventures of the boys of St. Frank's in Fleet Street, which will be described in next week's story:—

THE SCHOOLBOY REPORTERS;
or, **THE HAUNTED EDITOR.**



PROFESSOR ZINGRAVE'S LAST CARD!

*A Clever Detective Story of
Nelson Lee and Nipper against
The Green Triangle.*

For weeks Nelson Lee has been lying in wait for his great triumph over the elusive head of the League of the Green Triangle. One by one the great detective has lopped off the tentacles of this octopus of crime, and the moment has come when Professor Zingrave himself will be brought face to face with the one man he has had most reason to fear. It is the final and most thrilling episode of this magnificent series of the Green Triangle. **THE EDITOR.**

CHAPTER I.

JACK ON THE JOB.

LIEUTENANT REDCLIFFE, R.N., in command of his Majesty's torpedo boat destroyer *Challenger*, peered into the murky darkness with anxious eyes.

He was standing on the tiny bridge of the vessel in company with several civilian companions, all of whom seemed to be equally interested and equally expectant.

The *Challenger* was creeping slowly along the Essex coast, and not a single spark of light was visible from one end of the sleek grey craft to the other. Every one of her portholes was screened, and her usual deck-lights and riding-lights were conspicuous by their absence.

The steel deck, just below the bridge, was crowded with eager parties of bluejackets, and these men, too, were all staring into the gloomy night with expressions of keen anticipation on their weather-beaten faces.

Obviously, the destroyer was engaged in some important naval operation, and her crew were armed in readiness for instant action. It seemed incredible that such war-like preparations should be in evidence at such a spot, but the circumstances were extremely exceptional.

Lieutenant Redcliffe turned to his com-

panions and addressed one of them in a low, satisfied tone.

"We're very close to Turtle Island now, Mr. Lee," he said, still keeping his gaze directed into the darkness ahead. "Our approach has been made so stealthily that I don't see how the enemy can have become alarmed."

Nelson Lee nodded approvingly.

"No, Redcliffe, I must congratulate you on your splendidly made arrangements," he said. "We certainly have everything in our favour, and with any luck at all we ought to be able to carry out our coup very successfully."

Chief Detective-inspector Lennard, of Scotland Yard, chuckled in high glee.

"We can't possibly, fail, Lee," he observed. "Zingrave hasn't the least idea that his secret hiding-place is known to us, and he'll be completely off his guard. Gad! What an opportunity! The discoveries which you and Nipper made earlier in the evening have given us the chance of a lifetime, and it'll be our own fault if we don't make the most of them!"

Nipper grinned.

"Well, I reckon we are making the most of them, if you ask me anything!" he exclaimed. "Zingrave and his crowd are booked for the surprise of their lives during the next few minutes, Mr. Lennard! Just

at the moment when they think they're absolutely secure, and are busy with their plans for a terrific scoop, they'll find themselves up against a nice, hefty bunch of determined Jack Tars."

Nipper's words were perfectly true.

Professor Cyrus Zingrave, the notorious Chief of the League of the Green Triangle, was under the impression that his plans were running with perfect smoothness.

Of late he had experienced many setbacks and disappointments, and his organisation—once so powerful and menacing—was practically on its last legs.

Reduced to a mere handful of members, with no Inner Council, and very few intellectual helpers, the professor had endeavoured to again launch his criminal league against society.

By a trick, he had managed to capture the one man in the world whom he feared most—Nelson Lee, and had imprisoned him in a stronghold which was situated in the heart of a Hampshire forest. But owing to a mishap with a high-explosive bomb, the famous detective had been enabled to make his escape, and Zingrave had been forced to seek other quarters.

Before coming to Turtle Island, however, the professor had—by means of his marvellous air craft, the Crimson Eagle—carried out a daring raid on the liner *Melania*, and had succeeded in stealing the Heathbrook jewels.

With these precious gems the Crimson Eagle had set out for Turtle Island, but owing to a dense fog which had descended, the splendid aircraft had met with disaster near Rochester and had crashed to the ground, her two pilots narrowly escaping death.

One of them had been seriously injured, but his companion, Woodhouse, had managed to make his escape with the jewels. But he had been captured and the jewels recovered before he could reach Turtle Island. Nelson Lee and Nipper, together with Chief Detective-inspector Lennard, had been responsible for this disaster to the Green Triangle's plans, and they had thus dealt a stunning blow at Zingrave.

Nelson Lee had become convinced that the professor had taken up his new headquarters upon Turtle Island, and the great detective had verified his suspicions by a personal visit.

Moreover, he had learned that Zingrave intended to effect the escape from Portmoor Prison of no less a person than Douglas James Sutcliffe, the notorious criminal, known as Jim the Penman. Zingrave required Jim's expert services in a gigantic counterfeiting swindle which he had planned, and for which everything was in readiness.

Nelson Lee had allowed the professor to carry out Sutcliffe's escape without a hitch, in order that Zingrave's suspicions should not be in any way aroused. And now Jim

the Penman was at liberty once more, and was at this moment working at his old profession under the direction of Professor Zingrave in the underground workshops upon Turtle Island.

Everything, apparently, was now working without a hitch, and the Chief of the Green Triangle was perfectly satisfied with the turn of events. After the numerous setbacks and disasters, Zingrave was well on the road to achieve colossal success at last.

Possibly he would have been a trifle perturbed if he could have known the exact state of affairs.

For the gallant Challenger was even now dropping anchor off the rocky island, preparatory to carrying out a raid upon the Green Triangle's stronghold. Turtle Island, it had been ascertained was Navy property, and for this reason the torpedo boat destroyer had been placed at the disposal of Nelson Lee and the police. With a naval force such as this at his command, the famous detective would be able to finish his task with very little trouble, and already the end of the Green Triangle seemed to be in sight.

The Challenger dropped her anchor in a thick blanket of mist, and the weather conditions were extremely fortunate. For the foggy atmosphere, in addition to screening the destroyer's movements, also served to deaden the slight sounds which were inevitable.

Lieutenant Redcliffe turned to Nelson Lee.

"You wish to go ashore in advance of the raiding party?" he queried.

The detective nodded.

"Yes," he agreed. "Nipper and I and Mr. Lennard will go, in company with a couple of your officers. That will be the best arrangement, I think. Then I'd like two big parties of your men to follow, Redcliffe. We can't be too careful, and it would be very unwise to land with a big force at the outset."

The lieutenant nodded, and quickly issued a few brisk orders. Within a few moments the ship's dinghy was lowered, and Lee and his four companions were rapidly rowed across towards the rocky shore of the island.

The first stage of the last lap had commenced.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNDERGROUND WORKSHOP!



PROFESSOR CYRUS ZINGRAVE chuckled.

"So you approve of my little scheme, eh, Sutcliffe?" he queried, looking at Jim the Penman keenly, and speaking in his gentle, silky voice. "You prefer to work here in your professional capacity rather

than to continue your labours at Port-moor?"

Jim the Penman nodded, and grinned.

"Considering that I don't happen to be a fool, professor, the answer is obviously 'yes'!" he replied. "Anything on earth is better than the ghastly torture of that prison, and I owe you a debt of gratitude which I shall find it difficult to pay——"

"Nonsense, Sutcliffe—nonsense!" interrupted Zingrave, with a wave of his hand. "I am only too delighted to think that you are so ready to fall in with my plans. We shall be able to work to mutual advantage. With your skill, and my machinery and organisation, there is no goal too difficult for us to reach. We can conquer the world, if necessary. The financial affairs of nations will be under our control!"

Sutcliffe's eyes gleamed.

"You're right, professor!" he exclaimed. "There's absolutely no end to the scope of the counterfeiter, provided that sufficient care is taken in dealing with the forgeries. With

notes and bonds which defy detection, we've got a weapon which is all-powerful——"

"Exactly!" agreed Zingrave. "It is up to you, Sutcliffe, to do your work more accurately than you have ever done before. If the plates are without flaw there is nothing whatever to fear, and we shall make millions in a comparatively few weeks. You needn't worry about your share of the profits. I have arranged for you to receive a clear twenty-five per cent of everything. That, I think, should satisfy you."

Jim the Penman beamed with genuine pleasure.

"Your terms are exceedingly generous, chief," he replied. "To say that I am satisfied is only putting it mildly. You can rest assured that I'll do my work so that the expert of experts will be baffled. You've



The woodwork was soon splintered and torn asunder by the sledge-hammer blows of the bluejackets, and an aperture was exposed to view.

given me the best chance that I've ever had, and I'd be a fool to throw it away!"

The pair were talking in the vast underground workshop beneath Turtle Island—the barren-surfaced, rocky isle which had every outward appearance of being deserted. It was a desolate, uninviting spot, but it formed an ideal retreat for the activities of the members of the Green Triangle.

Zingrave had, at some past period, installed an electric-light plant in the caverns, and the whole of the subterranean domain beneath the island's surface was lit with electricity. Not only that, but electric power was available for the working of the intricate machinery which had been set up for the extensive manufacture of the spurious money.

It was the professor's intention to turn out banknotes, Treasury notes, and even

false coinage, on a scale hitherto undreamed of. He had perfected his plans for putting these into circulation, too, and he had done all this while Jim the Penman was still a convict in Portmoor Prison.

So certain had Zingrave been of his ability to bring about Jim's release at the right moment that he had felt justified in making these preparations. And now his ambitions were well on the way to being realised. For Sutcliffe was here, actually at work on the engraving of the plates!

And the professor in consequence was highly satisfied.

There was now no need to bother about the financial aspect of the League, for it would soon be in a position to command unlimited wealth, as he had said. Jim was right in stating that there was an unlimited field for the operations of the counterfeiter, and Zingrave intended, once he had flooded the British banks with his spurious money, to devote his attention to other countries.

This would be a very simple matter for a man of Zingrave's intellect, and he would find no difficulty in getting his agents to work simultaneously in different parts of the world. With Turtle Island as the centre of operations, the forgeries could be exported abroad as soon as they were manufactured.

The scheme—a daring and ambitious one, indeed—could not have been even considered had it not been for Jim the Penman's amazing cleverness. But with Sutcliffe as an ally, anything was possible. For Jim's prowess with the pen was known the world over, and his abilities as an engraver were equally as great.

He had only been on the island a comparatively few hours but he had already accomplished wonders. During his imprisonment he had taken care to keep himself in practice, and he had kept his fingers as supple as they ever had been.

He pointed to the plate upon which he was working.

"What do you think of it, professor?" he asked, not without a shade of pride in his voice. "I don't think I've ever done anything better, in spite of Portmoor!"

Zingrave bent over the plate and examined it with minute care with the aid of a powerful magnifying-glass. For several minutes he scrutinised the tiny tracings on the metal, and then he turned to Jim with an enthusiastic look in his eyes.

"It is wonderful, Sutcliffe!" he exclaimed, with genuine admiration in his voice. "It is amazing—astounding! With plates like these we shall be able to produce notes which will defy detection, no matter what tests are applied. I congratulate you! Well, what is it, Robson?"

Zingrave's enthusiastic remarks were cut short by the sudden appearance of Robson, one of the Green Triangle members. The man was wearing a look of extreme per-

turbation, and it was evident that something was amiss.

"Well, you fool, are you dumb?" rapped out the professor, as Robson hesitated uncertainly. "What are you staring like that for, eh?"

Robson gulped.

"I've—I've just come from the look-out scout, sir," he stammered. "He has reported that a destroyer is lying off the island——"

"A destroyer!" repeated Zingrave. "By Heaven——"

"Two boats, filled with blue-jackets, have already left, sir," went on Robson, with a white face. "They're hurrying towards the island with all possible speed!"

Professor Cyrus Zingrave set his lips tightly.

"A raid!" he muttered. "A Naval raid—brought about by that confounded detective! We must get out of here at once—at once! Robson, go and tell the others!"

The Chief turned and hurried towards the exit as he spoke, and he was closely followed by Jim the Penman. The success which they had hoped for did not seem to be so certain now, and Sutcliffe set his teeth grimly.

Was his new-found liberty to be so short-lived, after all? Was he to be sent back to Portmoor—back to the living death he had escaped from?

CHAPTER III.

TRAPPED!



NELSON LEE peered into the cave-mouth.

"All quiet!" he breathed, to Chief Detective-inspector Lennard and the others who were with him. "The tide is completely

out, and we could not have chosen a better moment for our arrival. At the end of this cavern there is a secret door——"

"By glory, what a place for a gang of crooks!" muttered Lennard in a surprised tone. "It's like a regular underground fortress!"

"Rather!" said Nipper. "The professor knew what he was about when he chose this island for a stronghold. But for the gov'nor's discoveries, the League could have carried on here unsuspected for years! It's absolutely ideal for their purposes."

The little party had halted just inside the cavern, and they were speaking in low tones. The floor was covered in thick, leathery seaweed, and this substance formed a carpet upon which the feet of the intruders made no sound.

They had only landed from the destroyer a few moments before, and they had lost no time in hurrying towards their destination. The detective did not anticipate any difficulty in carrying out his "round-up" of the League members, and he was hoping to

take them by surprise. This advance party was merely intended to discover the lie of the land; the raiders would come along later.

"We'd better get on towards the door—" said Nelson Lee, and then suddenly paused.

He was standing, in company with the others, quite near to the cave entrance, and in full sight of the rocky ledge which overlooked the deep sea pool at the mouth. And even as Lee spoke he heard the sound of swirling, churning waters—precisely as he had heard them on a former occasion.

Instantly the famous detective knew what this portended.

Zingrave's submarine was coming to the surface.

Obviously, this indicated that the professor had become alarmed, and had signalled for the vessel to stand by in readiness for instant departure. The submarine, no doubt, was the only possible means of escape from the island for Zingrave and his men, and its sudden appearance meant that they were even now about to leave.

Nelson Lee hastily motioned his companions to stand back in the shadows near the rocky walls, with a whispered word of explanation. Almost before they had taken up their new positions the detective's suspicions were verified, for the glistening conning-tower of the submarine emerged from the surface of the water, and the man-hole at the top was immediately flung back.

From the aperture a man emerged, and hurriedly stepped ashore, dragging with him a mooring-rope. The watchers expected to see others follow, but none did. Evidently this man was in sole charge of the boat, and had brought it to the surface in readiness for the rest of the League members.

Nelson Lee touched Lennard's arm, and then ran forward silently towards the unsuspecting man, the Chief Inspector by his side. Together they grasped the Triangle man, who twisted round with a startled gasp.

"What's the game— Great Scott!" he gasped, in a crestfallen voice. "You, Lee? And the police! Good heavens! So that's why the Chief signalled for me so frantically, eh?"

"Exactly!" said the detective. "I had hoped that our arrival was unsuspected; but the professor is evidently prepared for emergencies! No doubt a sharp look-out was kept—"

"Well, it can't be helped, Lee," said Lennard. "This chap will be far safer trussed up and gagged, in my opinion! We seem to have arrived just in the nick of time, by all appearances! Another few minutes and we should have found the birds flown!"

Nelson Lee nodded, grimly, and assisted the Chief Inspector to roughly bind and gag the prisoner. This was accomplished in a very few seconds, and the man was

hurriedly carried to a niche in the rocks, and stowed out of sight upon a pile of seaweed.

Scarcely had they finished their task when they received startling verification of Lennard's words.

For, even as they turned to proceed along the cavern, they saw the rock-door at the further end open and a crowd of figures emerge, headed by Professor Cyrus Zingrave himself!

Obviously, they were on their way to the submarine; but they checked abruptly as they beheld the five figures which barred their path. The sight was as surprising as it was disconcerting, and Zingrave drew in his breath with a sharp hiss.

"Nelson Lee!" he grated, in a harsh, hate-charged voice. "By heavens, it is always you who upsets my plans, and baulks my every movement! But you and your friends cannot stop me from leaving the island—"

"Pardon me, professor," interrupted the detective coolly, "but I think you are mistaken! Mr. Lennard and I have you covered at this moment, and at the first sign of treachery we shall not hesitate to fire!"

The Chief Inspector nodded.

"Quite right!" he agreed. "The game is up, Professor Zingrave, and I call upon you and your men to surrender—"

"Surrender! Never!" cut in the Chief, with a steely glint in his eyes. "We will fight you to the last man, Lee, and be hanged to you! My men outnumber you by—"

His words were drowned in a great rush of feet from just outside the cavern, and a second later a large party of bluejackets came pouring into the cave. Zingrave's expression changed as he saw them, but he instantly gave the order to his men to retreat through the rock door.

They did so with alacrity, and the massive door was slammed back into position. This move rendered the Triangle men safe for the moment, but Nelson Lee only smiled.

"The professor has only succeeded in trapping himself and his men within the cavern," he said coolly. "There is no other exit but this one doorway, so the trump card is held by us!"

But the wily Zingrave, even if he had no trumps to play, had at least one master-card, as Nelson Lee was soon to learn!

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT THE GREEN FLASH DID!



NELSON LEE turned to one of the Challenger's officers.

"I think you had better give your men the order to smash the door down," he said. "Several of them have come armed with axes, I see, and

they should be quite sufficient to accomplish the task."

The officer nodded, and gave the necessary orders without hesitation. The willing sailors jumped forward on the instant, and were soon raining hefty blows upon the rock-fronted door with their axes.

Nelson Lee, Nipper, and Lennard watched the operation with interest, and they knew that only a very short time would elapse before they were free to enter the great cavern. The weapons of the sailors soon dislodged the chunks of rock with which the door was faced, and within a very few minutes the oak timbers of the door itself were exposed to view.

The structure was massive and strong, and was supported on one side by three tremendous iron hinges, and secured on the other by a steel lock of enormous strength. Despite these, however, the woodwork was soon splintered and torn asunder by the sledge-hammer blows of the bluejackets, and the aperture was soon exposed to view.

Five minutes after the commencement of the sailors' onslaught, the door was non-existent, and the whole raiding party charged through into the cavern beyond. Nelson Lee, Lennard, Nipper, and the officers led the way, but they were soon outdistanced by the eager bluejackets, who intended to get into the forefront of the battle.

It was at this moment that Zingrave gave the order for his "master-card" to be played—and it took an extremely surprising form.

Nelson Lee observed, as he entered the cavern, that one man—who wore a pair of enormous goggles over his eyes—was standing in the centre of the great underground cave in an attitude of expectancy. Over his shoulder he carried a large, leather-covered case—an object which looked for all the world like a camera.

And as the eager sailors charged into the apartment, Lee heard Zingrave's harsh voice give a sharp order. Instantly the man with the "camera" became active, and commenced manipulating his peculiar apparatus with a coolness which was surprising.

But more surprising still was the effect which was produced upon the oncoming sailors.

Without warning, they commenced to drop to the floor, as if electrocuted by an unseen current—one after the other in a continuous succession! The thing was most dramatic and uncanny, and Nelson Lee set his lips grimly.

His keen gaze had seen that just prior to each man's fall a queerish, green flash had appeared from the box-like case which the League man carried, and he instantly guessed that the phenomenon was caused by some sort of a "death ray" apparatus.

He was right; but he did not know that the green flashes were harmless. They were so powerful that they mowed their victims

down instantly, and rendered them unconscious for approximately an hour, when the effects wore off. Zingrave had invented the contrivance himself, and it had been used with complete success in the escape of Jim the Penman from Portmoor.

Flash! Flash!

Two more of the gallant bluejackets went crashing to the floor, and Lee could see that at this rate they would lose all their men before anything was accomplished.

"Keep back, men!" he shouted warningly. "Spread out fan-wise, and rush that man with the green-ray apparatus!"

The sailors grasped the detective's meaning instantly, and they fell back at once, and commenced spreading out according to directions. Professor Zingrave, from a far corner of the cavern, rubbed his hands with glee as he observed what was taking place, and he shouted a few orders to the green-ray man.

"Mow them down, Robson—mow them down!" he said, in a voice charged with hatred and wrath. "We'll teach Nelson Lee who is master here!"

Robson, the man who was manipulating the paralysing green-flash instrument, nodded in response, and commenced slowly moving the machine round, causing it to send its devastating rays towards its victims in the manner of a machine-gun.

Two or three men dropped writhing to the ground during the first few moments, and the mowing-down movement looked like being uncannily successful. But then Fate took a hand in the game, and completely altered the professor's intentions.

For the green rays, as they darted across the cavern, encountered something more than the undaunted bluejackets—something which caused pandemonium to break loose in that underground stronghold.

Crash!

A blinding flash of light suddenly filled the cavern with brilliance, and it was followed by a tremendous sizzling roar. Then darkness came—pitch-black darkness like the pit itself.

The green flash had caught a portion of the intricate system of electrical wiring which Zingrave had installed, and had caused a short circuit—resulting in the failure of the lighting system, and also in the failure of the deadly green ray!

Instantly confusion broke out in the cavern, and hoarse shouts and lurid curses filled the air. The Green Triangle men were tremendously alarmed at the turn of events, for they had never anticipated anything of this sort. All their hopes had been centred in the green ray, and now that they were deprived of this they could foresee disaster looming ahead of them.

Nelson Lee was the first to act—and he did so almost before the cavern was plunged into blackness. He had noted, with unerring precision, the exact spot where Zingrave was standing, and without a second's

hesitation, he streaked across the cave in the darkness, sure-footed and determined.

The detective knew that nothing barred his path, and he padded along almost in a straight line. And he judged his distance with amazing accuracy.

Almost within a foot he halted in front of the professor, and then, instinctively knowing that Zingrave stood before him, Nelson Lee flung out his arms and gripped the chief in a vice-like clutch.

"Don't attempt to escape, professor, for it will be useless!" said the detective coolly. "You may as well realise, now at once, that the game is up——"

"Lee!" almost shrieked Zingrave, struggling frantically. "By Heaven, I'll show you whether the game is up or not!"

And the professor, despite his age, commenced struggling with the wiry criminologist in a manner which proved that he was determined to fight to the last gasp.

CHAPTER V.

EXIT THE GREEN TRIANGLE!



CHIEF DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR LENNARD muttered under his breath.

"Confound the darkness!" he exclaimed irritably. "Just when—— Ah! Good man, Nipper! That torch of yours will save the situation! Where's Lee?"

"That's what I want to know!" said Nipper, holding his torch and flashing the light about in search of his master. "He rushed away—— By gosh! Look, Mr. Lennard—look! He's over there, scrapping with the professor!"

Both he and the chief inspector dashed off at once, and were soon bending over the writhing forms of Nelson Lee and Zingrave. By this time the detective had almost gained the mastery, for his superior strength and athletic training were bound to triumph over the old criminal.

But Zingrave had put up a magnificent fight, and the detective had had by no means an easy task. The professor had fought like a demon possessed, but Lee had merely acted on the defensive all along. He could have knocked out his opponent early in the encounter, but the detective had been loth to do this on account of Zingrave's age.

Now the chief of the Green Triangle was panting and gasping for breath, and there was very little fight left in him. By the time Lennard and Nipper arrived he was a mere limp, dejected-looking figure, and the chief inspector yanked him to his feet and handcuffed him without the slightest trouble.

"This time, professor, there's no need to request you to surrender," he said quietly, "for I arrest you without giving you the

option! You've had a very considerable innings, all things considered, and you'll have plenty of time to review your mistakes during the next few years! I fancy this means the final exit of the Green Triangle, and I, for one, shan't be sorry!"

The professor glared impotently.

Every member of the league was quickly captured, and his arms bound behind his back. They were a sullen, discomfited collection now, and they caused no trouble whatever.

Nelson Lee and Lennard now commenced a search of the caverns for Jim the Penman—for it was soon observed that he was missing from the Triangle men. This state of affairs seemed to be extraordinary—but an explanation was soon forthcoming.

In a near-by passage they came upon a little heap of garments, beside which writhed one of the unfortunate bluejackets—now clad only in his shirt and underwear! He showed very obvious signs of brutal treatment, and he was bound and gagged, and scarcely conscious.

"By jingo! This is Sutcliffe's doing!" muttered the detective grimly. "He knocked this sailor completely out and took his clothing! Dressed as a sailor himself, Jim the Penman could easily mingle with the rest of the crew, and I shall be surprised if we find him still on the island!"

Nelson Lee's prediction was soon proved to be true, for a thorough search of the barren isle failed to reveal any trace of the astute Jim. By some means he had managed to make good his escape, and the detective was disappointed.

But, upon the whole, Lee had every cause to be satisfied.

His strenuous campaign against the League of the Green Triangle was now definitely ended—and it had ended in complete victory for the famous detective. Zingrave and his men were disbanded for ever.

And Nelson Lee, there and then, resolved that he would leave no stone unturned to effect the speedy capture of Jim the Penman, a criminal who was almost as dangerous as Zingrave himself.

THE END.

Grand New Series starts
next week with:—
**THE RETURN OF
JIM THE PENMAN**
Being the Adventures of
NELSON LEE against the
Prince of Forgers.

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.]

Last week I made a rather mysterious reference to a Big Idea which had occurred to me. I don't know if any of you remember it, but it doesn't matter much, anyhow. I only gave a mere whisper. But this week I intend to raise my voice a trifle.

The scheme first hit me while I was thinking kindly things about all those among you who have been getting new readers for the Old Paper. Readers who go to the trouble of introducing the St. Frank's yarns to their chums or acquaintances are real friends to the Old Paper, and I take this opportunity of expressing my personal thanks. For don't forget that the more readers we have the greater my enthusiasm for wielding my pen.

But we're forgetting about that Big Idea, aren't we?

Now, all you boys and girls (from eight years of age to eighty), why shouldn't we start a club? A club with a world-wide membership, so that I can get into even closer touch with you, you with me, and each with one another? That's the idea in a nutshell. How does it strike you?

We could call it The St. Frank's League, eh? Yes, I think that would be the best possible of all names. The St. Frank's League! Sounds rather good, doesn't it? Each member could have a number, and a certificate of membership. Yes, and a badge, too! So that all members of the league would recognise one another on sight—even if they were strangers. That would

create a kind of good fellowship, wouldn't it? You can be quite sure that I should wear a badge myself, and would never venture out without it.

The badge itself could embody the actual badge of St. Frank's College, with the school's motto underneath, and the words "St. Frank's League" above. How would you like to wear one? And then we could have different kinds of badges for different grades of readers.

For example, to start with you'd just have a Nomination Badge—to show that you had been nominated a member. Then we could have a Bronze Badge for readers of three months' continuous loyalty. How's that? And a Silver Badge for readers of six months' loyalty. And while we're about it, why not an extra special Gold Badge, and an Illuminated Scroll, for all readers who have been true blue for a solid year?

But this is going a bit too fast. The whole scheme is "in the air" at present, and if it ever comes to anything, there's an awful lot of work entailed, in planning all the preliminary details. To begin with, new members would require a Certificate of Membership, with their name and membership number carefully filled in. I shall have to discuss it earnestly with the Editor, and perhaps The St. Frank's League will become a reality.

Of course, we've got the league already—all you thousands of readers are fully-fledged members. But it would be rather nice, wouldn't it, to be officially recognised, and to have a certificate and a badge?

I'm so full of this league scheme, and so busy with the new St. Frank's stories for the New Year, that I haven't had any time to deal with any other matters in this chat. And I am writing this before any of your letters to me have come to hand. I told you we go to press several weeks in advance, didn't I? But next week I hope to have a regular deluge of letters upon me, and you can guess how I shall revel in reading them.



St. Frank's Magazine.

No. 48. Vol. 2.

Edited by Pitt.

October 25, 1924.

ADVENTURES OF E. O. HANDFORTH

:: BOXING ::

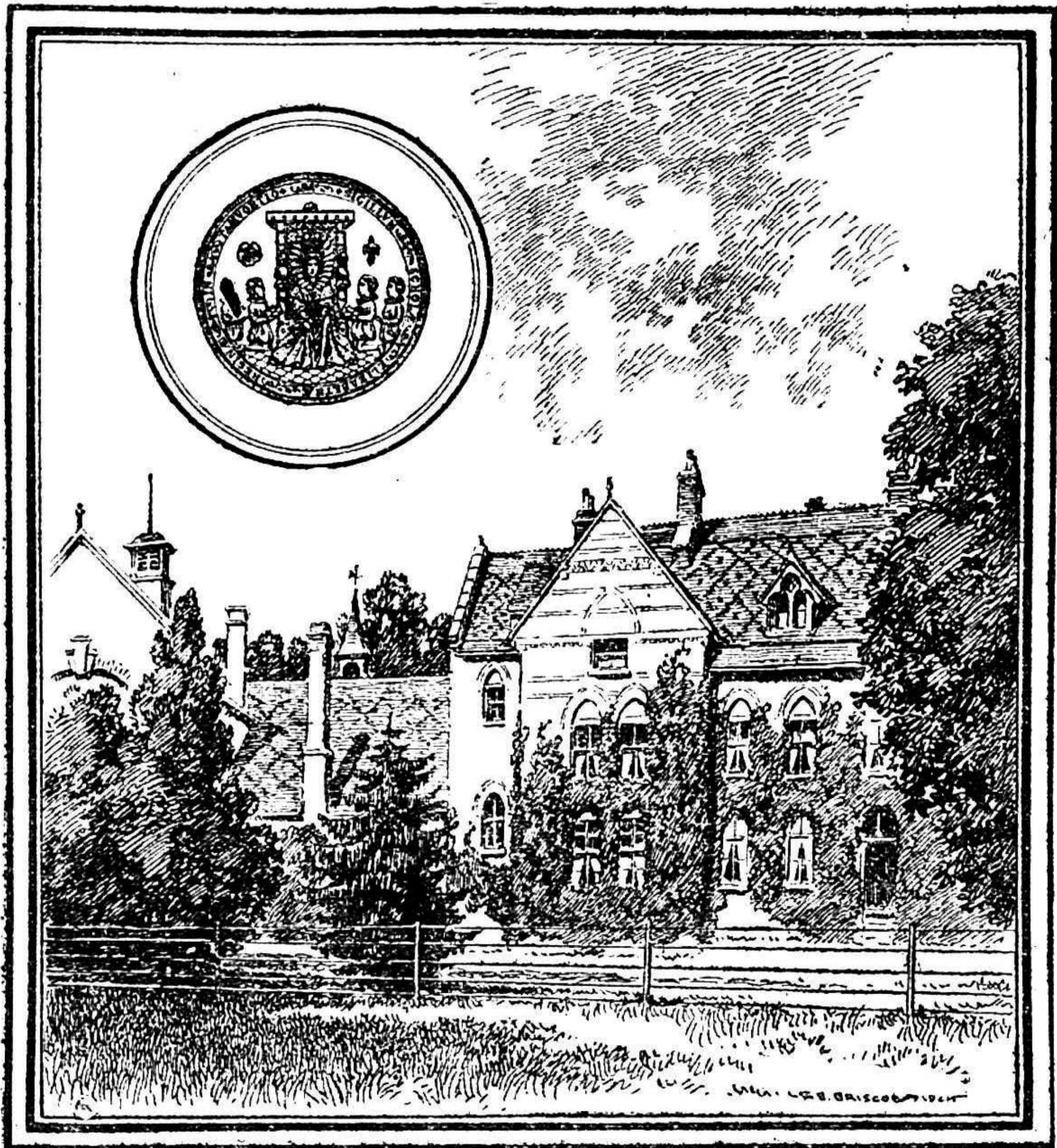
A Story Without Words



OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

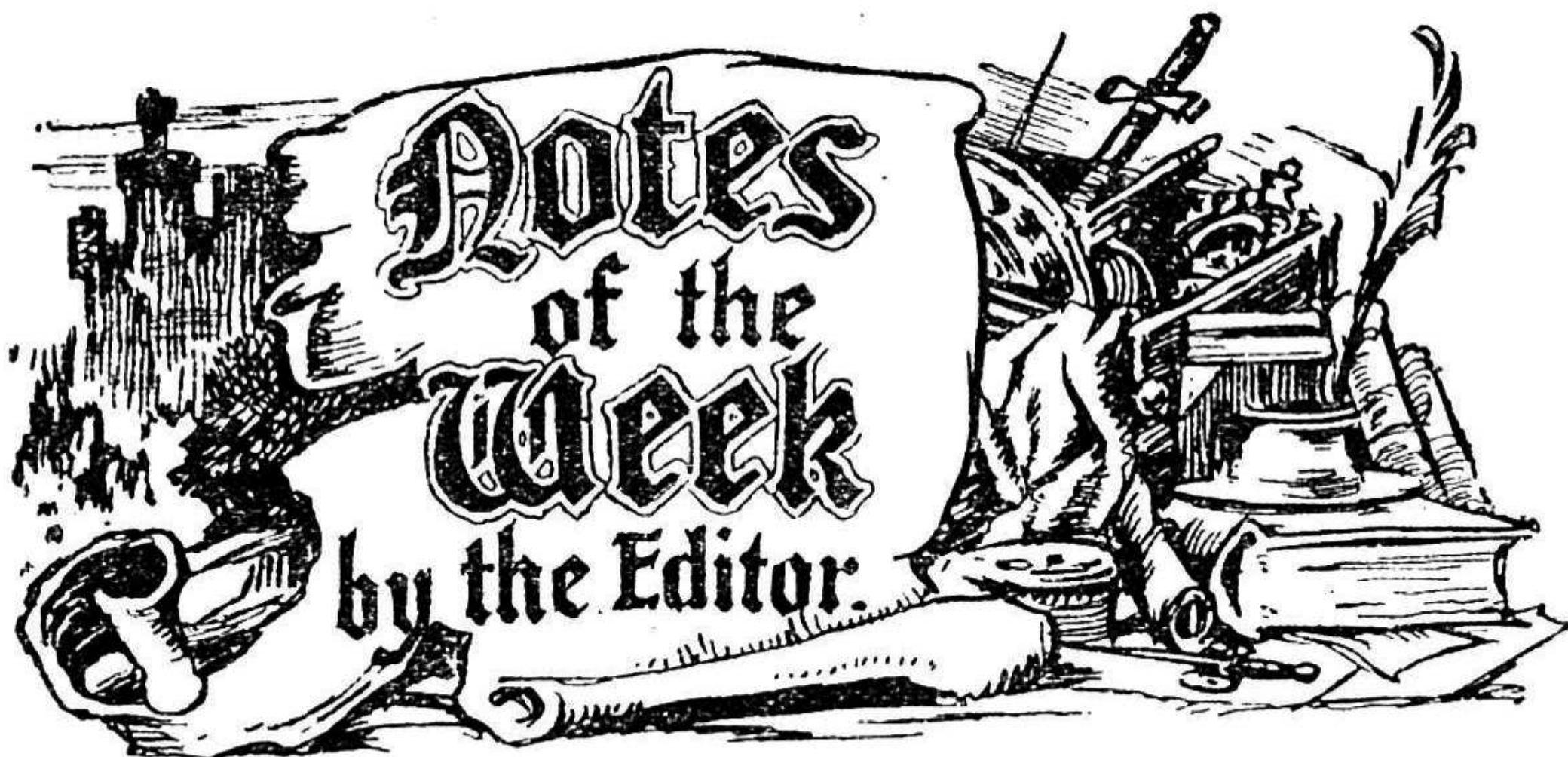
SPECIAL SERIES OF ART SKETCHES BY MR. E. E. BRISCOE.

No. 50.—Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Tamworth.



Better known as "Begg," this ancient Staffordshire school was founded by Queen Elizabeth. The present buildings were erected about 120 years ago. There are about 260 boys at the school, most of whom are day scholars. The school has four houses—Whiston's, Guy's, Rawlet's, and Barford's. Each house has a good footer and cricket team, the latter being one of the best in Staffordshire. Other sports include swimming, boxing, boating, running, and "scratch sixes." The sports-master is a county cricket player. The cadet corps numbers 240 boys. Many old

boys gave up their lives in the Great War, and a tablet has been set up in their memory. A library is attached to each of the houses, and contains over a thousand books in each, some of which are hundreds of years old. The school publishes a magazine, called "The Fleur De Lis," which comes out once or twice a term. The Head's house may be seen on the right of the picture, and part of the science building on the left. The playing-fields are bounded by the fence in the foreground, and are large enough for four matches to be played at once.



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

My dear Chums,

Handy's method of dealing with his accumulation of letters by giving a general answer to several readers at once is only a temporary measure, and when, in a week or two, every letter has been acknowledged, he will try to give replies individually as before.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED IN "WHO'S WHO."

Quite a number of his correspondents ask for details concerning the various boys at the school. Most of these questions are being answered in "Who's Who." Consequently, if there is any reader who wants to know anything about the characteristics of a particular St. Frank's junior, he will find all the information he requires in the feature I am publishing for this purpose.

TO SERIOUS INQUIRERS.

I should also like to remind my chums that Handy's "Replies in Brief" should not be taken too seriously. Handy, of course, means to be serious, but if you really want accurate information don't expect to find it in the "Replies in Brief." On the other hand, if you are humorously inclined, you will get plenty of amusement in writing to Handy and reading his "Replies." The majority of letters to Handy refer to his Trackett Grim stories, his friendship with Irene Manners, or challenges to fight our pugnacious contributor. Any departure from these well-worn topics by correspondents to E.O.H. will be warmly welcomed.

THE GOOD OLD FOURTH!

Have you noticed how quickly scandal travels, how it grows, and becomes distorted as it progresses on its evil journey? You must also have noticed how slowly in

comparison does praise circulate. A case in point is the absence of any reference in the newspaper reports of the part played by the boys of St. Frank's in the salvage of the Trident. This steamer, after being abandoned by her drunken captain and crew, would have been battered to destruction on the rocks but for the timely action of the St. Frank's Fourth Formers. These juniors, at grave risk to their lives, swam out to the helpless steamer, and worked like Trojans; stoked up the furnaces, ultimately freeing the vessel from her perilous position, and bringing her safely into port. When one remembers how the name of St. Frank's was denounced all over the country in connection with the death of Wallace, one wonders at the silence following upon the glorious deed just performed by our fellows. It more than wipes out the blot caused by a few rotters, who were not representatives of the school as a whole, yet no mention is made of it in the papers.

GETTING JUSTICE.

From a financial point of view we have every reason to be satisfied with our recent achievement, for the school has been saved from liquidation by the large sum of money awarded us by the owners of the Trident. That is all to the good; but when the public are kept in ignorance of what we have done we are no nearer winning back our good name than before. Modesty in the ordinary way is an excellent virtue, but it does not carry us very far in our present campaign. It is not enough to do great things and allow them to pass unnoticed at a time when St. Frank's is everywhere regarded with disfavour. It is not of ourselves we must think, but the honour of the school. We cannot rest until justice is done. The public shall know the truth before long or my name is not

REGGIE PITT.



OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY. *And WHO'S WHO.*

23

No. 17.—TOM BURTON.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Big-limbed, with clumsy, lumbering build. Jolly, good-natured face, the very essence of geniality and bluff heartiness. Deeply tanned, sunburnt complexion. Eyes, frank and open and innocent blue. Hair, brown and curly. Height, 5 ft. 2 ins. Weight, 10 st. 2 lb. Birthday, August 18th.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

The soul of natural good-humour. Hearty, blunt and kindly. Excessively clumsy in his actions—except in a boat, where he is in his element. Wears all clothes untidily, and cares nothing about smartness. Sunny-tempered, generous and lovable. One of the best.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

Champion swimmer of the Fourth, and has few equals in sculling. On sea water he is invincible. Fond of the open air, and spends most of his leisure time out of doors. Hobby—building large model yachts and sailing them.

TOM BURTON

No. 18.—ALBERT GULLIVER.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Thin and weedy, with skinny legs and arms, and narrow shoulders. Long, pointed nose, and thin lips—sharp, unpleasant features generally. Large ears, standing out prominently from his head. Pale, pasty complexion. Eyes, flat blue. Hair, dark and greasy. Height, 4 ft. 11 ins. Weight, 7 st. 3 lb. Birthday, April 3rd.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

Mean and spiteful, and an unmitigated rotter generally. An out-and-out snob. No initiative of his own, but always ready to follow a companion in evil courses. Under great stress, is capable of fleeting decency. Dresses smartly, and considers himself to be very much of a Knut. Sulky tempered, but not quarrelsome, as a rule.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

Hates all manly sports, and regards football and cricket with contempt. Pretends to enjoy smoking, reads sporting papers, and is always ready for a gamble.

ALBERT GULLIVER

THE FOURTH At ST. FRANK'S.



No. 19.—SESSUE YAKAMA.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Quite small, and neatly built. Wiry and strong. Distinctly Oriental face, with twinkling eyes. Infectious smile, revealing neat, pearly-white teeth. Eyes, dark. Hair, sleek black. Height, 4 ft. 6 ins. Weight, 6 st. 13 lb. Birthday, March 22nd.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

Immobile and imperturbable, and never gets flurried. Always smiling and intensely calm. Capable of deep, intense fury, but only under extraordinary provocation. Talks excellent English, but in a flowery, amusing manner. Plucky and dogged, with any amount of tenacity.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

A keen lover of Japanese wrestling—ju-jitsu. At this sport is capable of tackling and beating the biggest bully. He is an adept at juggling, and can perform the most surprising feats in this art.



SESSUE YAKAMA

No. 20.—HUBERT JARROW.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Quite an ordinary-looking boy, with nothing distinctive about him whatsoever. Medium size and well-built. Quite attractive features, and really good-looking. Healthy complexion, and usually wears a mild, contented expression. Eyes, brown. Hair, chestnut. Height, 4 ft. 10 ins. Weight, 8 st. 2 lb. Birthday, November 14th.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

A happy, easy-going soul, with a habit of rambling on in his conversation from subject to subject with bewildering rapidity. Once started, he is difficult to stop. Dresses with the usual boyish carelessness, and manages to mislay his cap about four times a day on the average.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

Interested in sports from a spectator's point of view, but not a brilliant sportsman himself. Knows many recitations—some of his own composition—and can deliver them brilliantly at concerts at a moment's notice. Keen on music, and plays piano excellently. A prominent contributor to the "St. Frank's Magazine."



HUBERT JARROW

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.

TRAVEL TALES.

By An Old Boy

(Lord Dorrimore's Weekly Trifle)

No. 19.—AN
INFURIATED BEAR.



TRAVELLING in Peru in my young days I came to the hacienda (or ranch) of an Indian half-breed of a very superior type. In fact, he and his son were two of the finest and bravest fellows I ever met.

That part of Peru, near the Pass of Aricoma, where the mighty Amazon has its source, is the habitat of a very large and powerful species of brown bear, running up to three hundred pounds in weight.

For my especial benefit, the young senor got up a bear hunt.

We set out early one morning, and soon came upon the spoor of a bear. We followed this up the densely wooded mountain side, and found the animal's lair. In it was a cub about a month old. We captured it with some difficulty, and then began to descend the mountain.

Then we found ourselves face to face with the biggest bear I have ever seen—a terrible looking fellow. Evidently he was the father of the cub, and he was in a fearful rage. He came straight for me, as I was holding the cub. My companion seized his rifle, and pointing it straight at the brute's head, he pulled the trigger twice. Both cartridges missed fire. Realising what this meant, he hurled his useless firearm full in the bear's face.

The brute turned on him at once and embraced him. I flung the cub from me and grabbed my rifle. In a flash I placed the muzzle close to the bear's head and fired. He fell dead. Another moment and the brave fellow would have been literally squeezed to death. Even as it was, he had a broken arm, and was severely crushed and bruised. He always claims that I saved his life. But that's rubbish, because he saved mine first.

NOVEMBER NOTES.

These Marvellous Prophecies of Happenings for Next Month have been Specially Prognosticated

By OLD JAW.

OWING to the position of the sun by day and the moon by night it is probable that November will be a month of light and dark. It will be light by day and dark by night.

Winds will be likely to blow hardest when there is a storm, and rain is sure to fall whenever it is wet. Only on the fine days towards the end of the month will the sun be seen. It should then be fine. Great clouds will darken the sky, and fog on the thirtieth will probably be of a yellowish colour. Fog on other days may be of the same shade, unless it should happen to be different.

As to St. Frank's, the portents are very conflicting. Owing to the prominence of Mars, which crosses the meridian twice a day till further notice, there will be warfare.

Study D is likely to be the centre of a scrap on November the First and other days. A big fellow with unruly hair and large fists throws a shadow across the horoscope. Beware!

It seems likely that one at least of the juniors will eat too much food round or about the beginning or middle, or maybe end of the month. It will depend on a remittance from home.

The arc of the circle subtending the zenith shows this junior weighs seventeen stone, and may increase this girth at the dates forecasted.

There will be a rumour of fighting between two brothers. I cannot tell their names, but I know they are related by birth, and share the same name!

On the playing-fields there will be sharp battles in which a large ball will be kicked from end to end of the ground. White posts may be erected, and figures in coloured jerseys will run to and fro.

St. Frank's will play some matches against other schools. They will win all their games—unless they lose. If this should not happen, the games will be draws.

Altogether November promises to be a very stirring month, full of days and nights and half-holidays. Three meals will be taken every day, and masters will appear at ordered times to teach lessons. That is what the stars tell me, and—

(You'll see some more stars when I get hold of you.—Ed.)



THE PREVIOUS HAIR-RAISING INCIDENTS BOILED DOWN.

Trackett Grim and Splinter are investigating a terrible mystery at Quiver Castle. All sorts of rummy things have been happening. Sir Makeham Quiver, Bart., is menaced by sinister enemies. Even his shadow has turned scarlet, and this means that a death in the family is about due. And as Sir Makeham is the only member of the family left, he's in a proper old funk. Unless he dodges the Curse of the Quivers for seven days he'll be slaughtered. Trackett Grim has already discovered tons of clues, and he has gone to bed to sleep on them. In the middle of the night he wakes up to see a beastly-looking hooded figure grabbing hold of Splinter. And before Grim can move an inch, the Hooded Stranger picks Splinter up and chucks him at the famous detective. NOW READ ON, AND STEADY YOUR NERVES. THE LAST INSTALMENT WAS FULL OF AWE, BUT THIS ONE IS MORE AWFUL STILL!

CHAPTER V.

THE HOODED TERROR!

WITH amazing presence of mind, Trackett Grim leapt out of bed, and so left the way clear for Splinter to bounce on the mattress. The brave young lad proved his courage and skill.

For having bounced once, he rebounded, and leapt at the Hooded Figure feet first. He landed right on the rotter's chest, and they crashed over in a heap. Splinter seized the hood and pulled at it.

"Good!" roared Trackett Grim. "We'll soon learn his identity!"

Splinter gave a final tug, and the hood was swept off. But at that very second the moon went in, and the bed-room was flooded with darkness. The miscreant wriggled free, and leapt across the room to one of the far corners.

"After him, sir!" gasped Splinter.

Trackett Grim needed no telling. The moon came out again, and Grim saw a crouching figure looming towards him. The famous detective gave one mighty leap, and grappled with his enemy.

But it was an awful frost, for Trackett Grim had only leapt at his own reflection in the wardrobe mirror. He sat on the floor, dazed. He had given himself an awful kosh, and both his fists were half-skinned.

"Have you got him, sir?" panted Splinter.

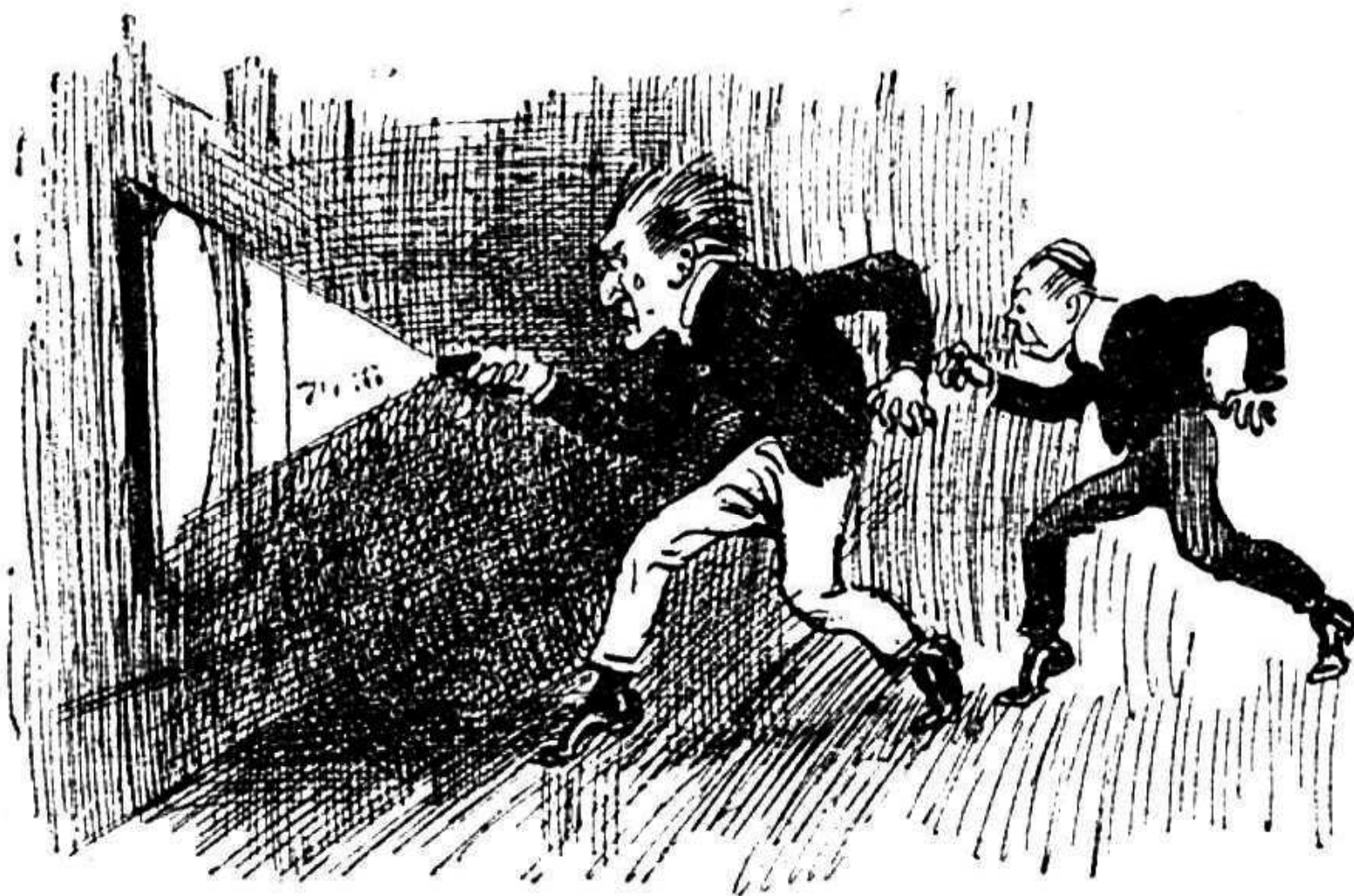
"No; he escaped!" snapped Grim, leaping to his feet and switching on his electric torch. "Ah! As I thought! A secret panel! The cad escaped down a hidden passage!"

Trackett Grim and Splinter had the room to themselves, and as the door was locked, the detective's deduction was marvellous. Without delay, he started looking for the secret panel. And he was so jolly clever that he found it in a couple of ticks.

He had nothing to guide him—no clue, no trace. All the oak panels round the room were exactly the same, without a crack or a crevice. And yet the notorious incriminator picked out the secret panel at the first go.

"Do you see, Splinter?" he asked tensely.

Splinter was too overcome to reply. Trackett Grim's torch was focused upon one particular panel. It wasn't fully closed—there was a space of two inches left open.



The Hooded Terror had been so keen on bunking that he hadn't stopped to shut the door properly.

The Hooded Terror had been so keen on bunking that he hadn't stopped to shut the door properly!

Trackett Grim grabbed the panel, and slid it noiselessly back. It rolled along its groove with a grim grating sound—and beyond lay the terrible, mysterious secret passage!

CHAPTER VI.

DOWN IN THE OLD DUNGEONS!

SIR MAKEHAM QUIVER sat up in bed with a start.

"My only hat!" he ejaculated blankly.

The moon was pouring into the room, and Sir Makeham's shadow formed a black patch on the other side of the bed. And as he looked at it, the shadow turned as scarlet as a red-ink stain on a blotting-pad. For the second time, Sir Makeham Quiver had received the sign!

With a terrific yell, he hopped out of bed, and whizzed across the room to the door. In two jiffs he was in the bed-room next door. Trackett Grim and Splinter were just disappearing into the secret passage.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Sir Makeham, staring.

"What's the idea of butting in like this?" demanded Grim curtly. "Can't I do my investigations without you messing about? Go back to bed, and don't stand there looking like a giddy scarecrow!"

"But—but my shadow has turned red again!" hooted Sir Makeham.

"I don't care if it's turned green!"

retorted Trackett Grim firmly. "It would be more like you if it did! Go and eat coke!"

Sir Makeham Quiver pulled himself up with dignity.

"Very well, Mr. Grim—I will go!" he replied. "But I thought I would let you know as soon as possible."

He went back to his own bed-room, subdued. For once Sir Makeham Quiver had lost his fire. He had seen Trackett Grim and Splinter, and had failed to make 'em quiver.

"That's the way to do it, sir!" said Splinter, grinning.

"Of course it is!" agreed Grim. "We

can't be humbugged about in the middle of an investigation! Follow me, my lad!"

They penetrated the secret passage. Both were only clad in pyjamas, but they didn't care about a detail like that. The passage was so cold that frost was distinctly visible on the stone flags. Water was dripping through the cracks in the ceiling, and more than once Trackett Grim got a jab from an icicle.

The intrepid pair turned three or four corners, and then came to a flight of stone steps. They went down and down until they were in the dungeons of the castle, far below the ground.

And then, suddenly, the ground opened at Trackett Grim's feet. Both he and Splinter plunged over the edge of the awful chasm and went hurtling downwards into the blackness of the tremendous abyss!

And as they whizzed downwards a cackle of fiendish laughter rang out!

(Don't fail to read next week's scalp-tingling instalment! It will be so full of thrills that the printers will go all white and shaky when they're setting up the type! Read about the Mystic Eye of Awful Dread in our next week's budget of this masterpiece of detective serials!—AUTHOR.)

**NEXT WEEK'S "WHO'S WHO" WILL
FEATURE:**

**SOLOMON LEVI, JACK GREY,
GEORGE BELL, and WALTER
DENNY.**

IN REPLY TO YOURS



(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.)

TEN LONDON READERS.—TED OF AFRICA (Lambeth), AN AMERICAN READER (W.I.), X? (Herne Hill), CISSIE & FANNY (S.E.), AN OLD READER (West Wickham), CHARLES NUGENT (Catford), GRACE WEBBER (Walworth), J. COOMBS (Kennington), MAUDIE & HILDA (Rotherhithe), G. KYNVIN (Streatham, S.W.2): Haven't got so much space this week as last. Got your letters. Thanks! Fine! Can't waste words. Sorry! Hard luck!

TEN LANCASHIRE READERS.—OLD PAL (Southport), BERTTONGE (Bolton), NOSEY PARKER (Castleton), J. HARKER (Bradford), DFHONAHTR, R.S.V.P. (Darwen), U.S.A. (Blackpool), J.O. (Liverpool), BUFFALO BILL (Accrington), JACK (Preston): This week I'm polishing off a whacking great pile of left-overs. No offence! But I've got to do something, blow it! Next week I'll have tons of room.

TEN MORE LONDON READERS.—W. J. HATCHARD (N.18), BROWN HATTER (Carshalton), G.L.A.D. (S. Norwood), SYB & EVE (S.W.18), GERALD (Highbury), AN ADMIRER (E.11), W.G.G. (E.8), F. MINDE (E.8), MAIDMENT (Bermondsey), GEORGE WEBB (Walthamstow): Can't say much. No room. All your letters great. A few insults; but I forgive you. You don't know better. Write again, please!

TEN YORKSHIRE READERS.—ETHEL JOWSEY (Scarboro'), TOM MIX

Correspondence Answered by Edward Oswald Handforth

(Shipley), WINIFRIDE W. (Skipton), CASUAL OBSERVER (Middlesboro'), MARY SENIOR (Huddersfield), SHERLOCK HOLMES (Halifax), RICHARD QUINTON (Huddersfield), JESSE CHARLESWORTH (Huddersfield), ARDENT ADMIRER (L'pool), THE FAMOUS 4 (L'pool): Church has just reminded me that Liverpool is in Lancs. The ass! What do I care?

TEN MORE LONDON READERS.—W. L. STEVENSON (N. 19), EILEEN (Balham), CANDID FRIEND (S.E. 5), NANCY HASLAND A. SHAFE (Edmonton), Wm. F. JOHNSON (E. Dulwich), W. F. MEMETJT (N.22), P. W. BALE (S.E.4), PYJAMES (E.11), R. W. WARD (Hornsey): I'll bet some of you chaps and girls are jolly wild! So would I be! Squashed up like this, and your questions side-tracked! But what can I do?

TEN MIXED READERS.—G. G. (Melton), BETTY H. (Melton), J. ELLIOTT (W. Bridgford), PATSY S. (Swindon), J. COOPER (Gillingham), EDWARD SAUNDERS (Ventnor, I.W.), BILLY BUNTER (Wallingford), R.B.T.G.S.C. (Tideswell), T. FITZGERALD (Bristol), A. LINELL (March): If you'll only write again I'll make amends next time. But I simply must get things straight. It's all Pitt's fault.

TEN MORE LONDON READERS.—TOM HASTINGS (Mitcham), TOMBOY (S.E.14), DONALD & MARGERY CRACKNELL (S.E.4), N.B. (S.E.7), JOHN PRIOR (Maida Vale), DOUGHY & DUG (M'bone), IRENE II (Chiswick), REX INGRAM (Canonbury), J. BLISS (S.E.4), R. A. BALL (S.E.5): This is what comes of messing about with my space! All you readers let in the cart. But I haven't ignored you, have I?

TEN WELL ASSORTED READERS.—B.L.U.F.F. (Bellton), BERNARD MORLEY (Brighton), HARRY (Derby), IRENE II (Hants), ROTTEN WRITER (Worthing), R. C. PRICE (Woking), W.B.E.G. (Peterboro'), E.O.H. II (Stockport), S.J.E.M. (Weymouth), JOHN L. FOOTE (Wallsend-on-Tyne): I'm shoving you all in tens so that you

can find yourselves more easily. If I didn't do this, you'd get fed-up.

TEN MORE LONDON READERS.—TOMBOY LUCY (Hanwell), F. CUGFIELD (N.7), DORIS II (Honor Oak), PAT O'DONOVAN (E.C.), BRUISER (Battersea), A.L.H.K.H.E. (Ilford), DORIS BOWLER (N.W.6), AL. ED. NOTT (E.14), RENE McKETE (Tooting), M.L.: My hat! Another lot of Londoners! Jolly fine readers, all of you. A rotten shame, isn't it? The Editor ought to be slaughtered. What do you say?

TEN WIDELY DISTRIBUTED READERS.—W.S. (Leicester), DORIS & JOYCE MAYES (Leicester), BILLIE (Stoke-on-T.), G.L.M. (Hove), BERTRAM ONSLOW (K'minster), GEORGE (Wallsend), EVELYN DARLING (Nott'm), Wm. C. DAVIES (Shrewsbury), ARABELLA (Walmer), S. PRIOR (Oxford): Now then—sort yourselves out! You can't jolly well expect me to do everything, I suppose? I'm getting thin and weak.

TEN MORE LONDON READERS.—A. LEESON (Fulham), ONE WHO KNOWS (N.W.5), L. C. HOARE (E.15), PETER WADDELL (Balham), 2 IRENES (E.1), KINKO (Hounslow), THOS. S. (Rotherhithe), HORACE S. H. (S.E.6), N. WILLIAMS (Peckham), G. The last of you London fellows! But MITCHELL (Fulham): Thank goodness! don't worry. Give me another letter each, and you'll have long individual replies. Honest!

TEN SOUTH OF ENGLAND READERS.—DISAPPOINTED F. W. (Tunbridge Wells), BLOODTHIRSTY BLUCHER (Bournemouth), S. McEWEN (Jersey), W. CHAMPION (Reading), H. COX (Arundel), CECIL TRILL (Cliff at Hoo), A. CAREY (Bexhill), BONZO (Westcliffe), Fk. Rd. TRENT (Ashford), S.E. (Penzance): If you grumble because you haven't all got long replies, you must be as heartless as flint. Try and picture my anguish!

TEN NORTH OF ENGLAND READERS.—DAVID ADAMS (Longton), AN AMERICAN BOY (Shifnal), ALBERT REED (Gateshead), JOHN B. CROSS (Kirkpatrick), REGGIE (Gateshead), FRANK W. RIMMER (Wallasey), WINNIE (Clitheroe), B.B. (Oldham), B.C. (Birkdale), J. LESLIE DAVIES (Birkenhead): Phew! I'm just beginning to breathe again! You wouldn't believe how long it took Church and McClure to sort out all this week's letters and put them ready for me. I've worked like a slave!

TEN MIDLAND READERS.—INTERESTED (Wisbech), ROBERT GLEED (Old Sodbury), G.N.H. (Leamington Spa), ROBERT PASTILL (Worcester),

AILEEN BARSON (Leicester), BIFF (Leamington), HAROLD WILCOX (Lichfield), GRAIG KENNEDY (Coventry), GREAT SCOTT (Much Wenlock), PEG (Shropshire): Even though I'm not giving you proper replies, I'm putting you all in good order. You ought to find yourselves easily.

TEN EAST ANGLIAN READERS.—ARCHIBALD FITCH (Glemsford), ED. OS. FORTHAND (Norwich), JEAN (Lowestoft), E.W.M. (Essex), TOMBOY (Colchester), WINNIE (Holt), W.J.B. (Loughton) SMUT (Rochford), NIPPER (Coggeshall), A FAITHFUL ADMIRER (Westcliffe): You can't jolly well say I don't know my geography! I'll bet Church hasn't made a single mistake in sorting out this week's letters.

TEN WEST OF ENGLAND READERS.—T. MARTIN (Bristol), JIMMIE (Bristol), C.R.S. (Cornwall), RAYMOND S. HOUSE (Axbridge), E. SEABOURNE (Newport, Mon.), DORIS (Bristol), J.D.C. (Bristol), LEN POPE (Bournemouth), JACK RICKETTS (Hayle), VERONICA & THORA (Plymouth): These ten have worked out so evenly that son-a-chaps might think my replies are just bluff. But they're not. You all know that, don't you?

TEN LEEDS READERS.—S. P. FARNLEY, Miss BUBBLES (Roundhay), F. C., TOMBOY, B. YATES (Birstall), PANSY, R. GLENDINNING, BUBBLES (Morley): There's only eight of you, really, but I thought there were ten. It's your fault for mixing me up. Wait a minute, though. I find that TOMBOY has written two letters, so I wasn't far wrong. If you don't like this idea of replying in companies just write and let me know. Then I'll jolly well tell you off for grumbling. You ought to be jolly pleased to get a reply of any kind—with me absolutely wallowing in all this work. I'm getting fed-up, I can tell you. I haven't written the instalment of my serial for this week yet, and if that's missed out of the Mag we shan't be able to stop the riot.

TEN MANCHESTER READERS.—JACK CAPLAN (Lower Broughton), A.T.G.W. R.J.P.R. HARRIS (Tim-buck-two), FRED CLARKE, The HON. A. HIGGINSON, PATRICIA NORRIS (Stretford): Well, I'm jiggered! Only five of you, after all. I naturally thought there'd be ten letters from Manchester among the pile up the corner, behind the coal-box. You Manchester chaps ought to be boiled! Fancy letting Leeds and Birmingham beat you! As a matter of fact, I thought that chap with eight initials was three or four readers. Like his nerve!

TEN YORKSHIRE READERS.—J. FARRAR (Halifax), ALAN R. MORRISON (Sheffield), JACK LAWSON (Rotherham), WALLY BAND (Rotherham), AN ADMIRER (Bradford), A. LEEMING (Sheffield), JEAN (Scarborough), S. THOMPSON (Bradford), J. BALDWIN (Silsden), NORAH (Nunnington): I'd like to thank you all for the nice things you say about my Trackett Grim stories. I haven't read your letters over again before writing this reply, but as far as I can remember you all like my Trackett Grim stories tremendously. That's only natural, of course. Everybody says the same. In fact, I'm getting so used to it that I haven't got a swelled head a bit. Poor old Teddy Long just looked in, and I gave him a swelled ear, but that's different. Extra thanks to you, S. THOMPSON.

TEN MOPE LONDON READERS.—TILLY BRESTICKER (Clapton, E.5), FRANK L. HERRING (Leytonstone, E.11), F. C. KNOWLES (Camberwell, S.E.5), JOE TAFFY (E.1), R. W. E. (Putney), OLIVE (E.C.), DISGUSTED (West Hampstead), GEORGE (Shepherd's Bush), JULIET (E.C.), JIMMY NELSON (Shepherd's Bush): Here's another batch of you London chaps. Oh, sorry! I believe there's a girl or two among you, but I don't suppose they'll mind being called chaps. Anyhow, ten more polished off is all to the good. And if you're not getting full replies to your letters don't blame me. Just vent your anger against that ass, Pitt. He's the Editor, and he's squashed this feature into two pages, so what the dickens can I do? The type's small enough as it is!

THIRTY-SIX ALL IN A BUNCH FOR THE LAST.—SPLINTER (Rye), T.G. (Worthing), Mrs. M. CHEESE (Gravesend), R. SEWELL (St. Ives), J. MCKENZIE (Glasgow), T. CURTIS (Upper Deal), VOTANOSKI VENIBLOWSKI (Sevenoaks), GEO. BARCLAY (Glasgow), MISTATE FINDER (Lewes), A REGULAR READER (Northampton), JOE MACFARLANE (Glasgow), FRANK H. GOODSON (Tring), FELIX (Ramsgate), BERT BRAILSFORD (Worksworth), CLIECELE (Glaxgate), NORADA (Dundee), F.C.M. (Walsall), NUMBER ONE (Willenhall), WALTER HANCOCK (Soodland), WALTER DEAKIN (Polesworth), A STAUNCH SUPPORTER (Aylesbury), SPRAT (Cambridge), TRUE BLUE (Warwick), ROBERT ALLISON (High Lane), A KEEN OBSERVER (Glasgow), UNE PETITE FILLE (Nottingham), MARGARET (Basingstake), CHARMION (Cranbrook), JUSTIN FITZGERALD (Staplehurst), LOCOMOTIVE (Newark), H.L.G.T. (Southam), S.R.C. (Newport, I.W.), A GIRL READER (Nottingham), IKE

& MC (Ramsgate), ADMIRER (Nottingham), THOMAS L. LAMPON (Watford): After giving everybody else only a few words, I can't possibly allow you any more, or all the other giddy readers would get jealous. I've done my best, and if you don't jolly well like it you can jolly well lump it!

AN APOLOGY.

Now that I've got completely up to date with all my Replies, I want to make a handsome apology on behalf of Reggie Pitt, for the awful mess that he's got my Reply Page into. It was all his fault, because he crowded Portrait Galleries and Who's Who into the Mag. I warned him that scores of you would suffer, but he calmly ignored me. And ever since then I've been wrestling like mad with this problem. So I apologise for him, and I'll jolly well see that he doesn't mess me about again! All readers who feel disappointed please write again. I give my personal promise that I will reply to your future letters singly and at length—even if I have to leave out the Trackett Grim tale. And, blow it all, I can't promise more than that, can I? Some of you asses are never satisfied.

TED.

"SCAPEGRACE SCHOOL!"

That's what they called Mr. Bunny's school—"Scapegrace School." It was not a reformatory, though every fellow there had previously been expelled from another school. What, then, was this extraordinary place?

NORMAN TAYLOR,

the author of so many fine school and sport yarns, has written about "Scapegrace School." You will find the first story of an amazing new series about it in this week's

BOYS' REALM

Now on Sale.

Price 2d. Everywhere.

£10 a week for Life! - or £4,000!

ENTER FOR THIS RECORD PRIZE — *Details in this week's* —

UNION JACK - 2d.



HOME CINEMATOCRAPHS FILMS AND ACCESSORIES.

Our New Illustrated List Now Ready. Send post card for Copy. Post Free. Machines from 7/6. Films from 1/- per 100 feet, Post Free.

FORD'S (Dept. A.P.),
13, Red Lion Square,
London, W.C.1.
Entrance Dane Street.

Enquiries promptly attended to.



Chain FREE

YOURS for 6d. ONLY

This handsome full-sized Gent.'s Lever Watch sent upon receipt of 6d. After approval send 1/- more, the balance is then payable by 6 monthly instalments of 2/- each. Guaranteed 5 years. Chain offered Free with every watch. Wrist Watches, etc., on same terms. Cash returned if dissatisfied. Send 1/- now to **Simpson's, Ltd.**, (Dept. 122), 94, Queen's Road, Brighton, Sussex.

Stop Stammering! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars FREE.—**FRANK B. HUGHES, 7, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.**

MAGIC TRICKS, etc.—Parcels 2/6, 5/-. Sample Trick & Illus. List, 6d. Ventriloquists' Instruments, 6d. each, 4 for 1/- (P.O.'s).—**P. Fearing, Travancore House, Seafeld Rd., Colwyn Bay, N. Wales.**

75 STAMPS 4½d. Caymans, Angola, Grenada, Nigeria, Mozambique, etc. 10 Siam, 6d. **Brooks, 43 Edmund St., Camberwell.**

Height Increased 5/- Complete In 30 Days. Course.

No Appliances. No Drugs. No Dieting. The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS. Send stamp for particulars and testimonials.—**Melvin Strong, Ltd. (Dept. S), 10, Ludgate Hill, London, Eng.**



Be sure and mention "The Nelson Lee Library" when communicating with advertisers.

26 Weekly

buys a No. 300A Mead Gramophone with giant horn, loud sound-box, massive oak case and 40 tunes. Carriage paid. 10 Days' Trial. 300 model 37/6 cash to record buyers. Table Grands and Cabinet models at **WHOLE SALE** Prices. Write for Lists.

Mead Company (Dept. G2), BIRMINGHAM.



HEIGHT COUNTS

in winning success. Let the Girvan System increase your height. Send P.C. for particulars and our £100 guarantee to Enquiry Dept. A.M.P., 17, Stroud Green Rd., London, N.4.

105 DIFF. STAMPS FREE, inc. 1/- So. Africa & other fine Brit. Cols. Ask for Blue Label Appros. No. 3 & send postage.—**B.L. CORYN, 10, Wave Crest, Whitstable, Kent.**

MAKE YOUR PLAY PAY.

Sell Private Xmas Cards in spare time. £10 easily earned. Experience not necessary. Beautiful sample book free. £1,000 in prizes. Write:—**G. DENTON & CO., Dept. A33, Bevington, Works, Accrington.**

HEIGHT INCREASED 3.5 ins., without appliances, drugs or dieting. Complete system, 5/-.—**C. CLIVE, 8, Seafeld Rd., Colwyn Bay. (Parties, testimonials, stamp.)**

OUR "IDEAL" CINEMA, 4/9 (post 6d.) complete with FILMS & SLIDES. Cowboy, Comic and Drama Films, 100 ft., 1/6. Send for Big Bargain Lists.—**A.E. Maxwell, George St., Hastings.**

CUT THIS OUT

Nelson Lee Library PEN COUPON VALUE 2d.

Send 7 of these coupons with only 2/9 direct to the **Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet St., E.C.4.** You will receive by return a splendid British Made 14ct. Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6 (fine, medium, or broad nib). If only 1 coupon is sent the price is 3/9, 2d. being allowed for each extra coupon up to 6. (Pocket Clip, 4d.). Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. **Special New Offer—Your own name in gilt letters on either pen for 1/- extra.** Lever Self-Filling Model with Safety Cap, 2/- extra.