

THE ST. FRANK'S WEEKLY!

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*The
Lighthouse
Scouts*

JOIN THE
ST. FRANK'S
LEAGUE!

Being the thrilling experiences of
a party of St. Frank's Scouts
marooned on a lighthouse with
a madman.

No. 527

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

July 11, 1925.



He forced Handforth back against the rail, and the unfortunate junior's face was already becoming discoloured. He was forced back until he was nearly off his balance.



The camping experiences of the Scouts of St. Frank's will be long remembered for the series of surprising adventures that come their way. This week, for instance, the Lions and the Tigers find themselves

marooned on Shingle Head Lighthouse in the company of a madman.

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

CHAPTER I.

FORTY OF THE BEST.

"HALLO! We turn off to the right, by the look of it."

Nipper stared at the ground, giving particular attention to a tuft of long grass. The top was tied into a knot, and pointed away at right-angles. It was an unmistakable Scout sign. "Yes, they must have gone towards the river," agreed the Hon. Douglas Singleton. "The bounders! They're leading us a fine dance this afternoon! In all this giddy heat, too!"

The Lion Patrol of the 1st St. Frank's Boy Scout Troop perspired freely. All six juniors were hot and flushed, but as enthusiastic for the chase as ever—at least, all save one. Archie Glenthorne was coming to the conclusion that scouting was rather too strenuous.

"I mean to say, what about it?" he asked, mopping his brow. "Isn't it about time we had a rest, laddies? The good old river, tons of shade, and all that sort of thing. Forty of the best and brightest—"

"There's no time for sleeping now, old man," interrupted Nipper. "The Hawks have still got a good start, and we want to overtake the bounders before they reach

camp. What about the honour of the Lions?"

"Oh, rather!" said Archie feebly. "Honour, what? Well, old dandelion, between you and me and the buttercups, it seems a rather priceless waste of time. I mean to say, even if we do overtake the bally Hawks, there's nothing in it."

"Slacker!" said Tommy Watson tartly. "It's only a kind of game, but the more practice we can get, the better."

The six Scouts had halted near the shady banks of the River Stowe. It was a quiet spot, and the sun was blazing down with all the intensity of a hot July afternoon. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and the meadows fairly shimmered with the heat haze.

The banks of the river, at such an hour, seemed wonderfully enticing. Archie gazed at a particularly shady spot with longing eyes. It seemed to be calling to him, and beckoning.

Nipper and his Patrol were tracking the Hawks. Earlier in the afternoon, Reggie Pitt and his Scouts had gone off on a cross-country route, and they were leaving signs all along. It was up to the Lions to read these signs correctly, and overtake the Hawk Patrol before it reached camp.

So far the Lions had been fairly successful. In one or two places they had lost sight of the trail, but had always picked it up again. And now they were keener than ever, because they knew they were losing time.

"Yes, this is the way, dear old boys," said Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "Look at that bush just over there. It's bent over, and points away towards that spinny."

"Good!" said Nipper. "Carry on, my sons!"

The Scouts hurried off on the new trail, eager for the hunt. But Archie, who was No. 5 of the Patrol, and therefore the rear Scout of the formation, paused irresolutely when he got to that shady spot. The way led right past it, and somehow his footsteps flagged.

"I mean to say, why not?" he murmured softly.

Indecision wracked him. On the one hand duty called him—stern, hot, sweltering duty. But, on the other hand, that deliciously shady spot lured him with soft whisperings of rustling leaves. It was cool and delightful, with the river flowing invitingly past.

And Archibald Winston Derek Glenthorne was unequal to the strain.

He gave one look at his departing comrades. They were trailing away round the spinney, and the last figure vanished amid the shade. His companions were unaware that he had flagged behind.

"Oh, well, there you are!" murmured Archie resignedly. "I mean, dash it, the chappies have absolutely dashed off and left me behind! Left me in the lurch, as it were! Under the good old cires, why not?"

When it came to a matter of sleep, Archie was exceedingly weak. He gave one more glance at the shady spot, and succumbed. The grass was long and luxurious. He stretched himself in the midst of it, cushioned his head upon his Scout's hat, and closed his eyes with supreme contentment.

"Oddslife and gadzooks!" he breathed. "What-ho! This, I mean, is absolutely the stuff the doctor ordered! Forty of the brightest and best, and Archie will once more be his robust self. The tissues are positively wilting, and sleep is absolutely the order of the hour."

He never realised that rest could be so welcome.

He sprawled there, enjoying himself to the brim. And, indeed, the situation was pleasant enough. A blazing hot afternoon, the shade of the trees, the quiet ripple of the flowing river, and the soft rustling of the breeze. Added to this came the subdued, droning hum of many insects. Everything combined dreamily, and Archie was lulled into a gentle and soothing slumber.

All thoughts of duty were now abandoned. Peace—perfect peace—descended upon Archie Glenthorne, and it was a matter

of sheer indifference to him whether the Lions tracked the Hawks or not. As a Scout, it must be confessed he was sadly lacking in determination. In the midst of an afternoon's patrol he had deliberately dropped behind and given himself over to sleep! It was little short of treachery—it came precious near to being a capital offence.

But did Archie worry? Judging by the expression of supreme happiness upon his aristocratic features, he did not!

CHAPTER II.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT.



F AIRY voices came to Archie in his sleep. He was dreaming of lovely maidens, and their tones were bell-like in their purity and sweetness. He could see them, all shimmering in gossamer clothing, and one bore a striking likeness to Marjorie Temple, of the Moor View School.

The others seemed rather familiar, too. Yes, without doubt, the other two fairies were Irene Manners and Doris Berkeley. They were floating about in the air, and Archie was vainly attempting to shake hands with them. But every time he tried his hand went clean through. And all the while they were chattering gaily, and laughing in silvery voices.

"Doesn't he look divine, lying there?" asked one of the fairies.

"You bet!" said another. "Particularly with that fly on his nose! I shouldn't be surprised if that wasp starts on him soon!"

Again the fairies laughed, and Archie Glenthorne gave a start in his sleep. It seemed to him that these voices weren't so dream-like, after all. They now had a curious note of reality about them.

He forced himself into wakefulness, and brushed something off his nose. Then, sitting up, he lazily opened his eyes and looked round.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated blankly.

The fairies were very solid, indeed. In short, Irene & Co., in the flesh, were standing quite close to him, and regarding his movements with amusement. But as he gazed at them, they became quite stern.

"Oh, I—I say!" gasped Archie. "I mean what-ho! Greetings, dear old darlings—That is—"

He broke off, confused, and the Moor View girls remained stern.

They were not so fairy-like now. In fact, there was an air of business about them. For Irene & Co. were not attired in fluffy, summery garb, but in the neat, trim uniform of Girl Guides. Furthermore, they looked extremely well in these uniforms.

"Archie!" said Irene grimly. "What does this mean?"

"Eh? What? Oh, rather!" said Archie feebly.

He struggled to his feet, still a trifle dazed. He didn't know how many minutes had elapsed—but it seemed to him that he must have been asleep for hours. The sun was still high, and the heat was still blazing. As a matter of fact, he had scarcely had his prescribed forty. A bare fifteen minutes had elapsed since the other Lions had gone off without him.

"What were you doing, asleep, while the other members of your Patrol are left to struggle on without you?" demanded Marjorie. "Oh, Archie! How could you? I'm surprised!"

Such tones from Marjorie made Archie positively wilt.

"I say, you know!" he babbled. "You see, the fact is we—we— The fact is, I— You see, we were doing a little scouting!" he went on, lucidity returning. "Absolutely! Scouting, don't you know! Patrolling, and all that sort of rot!"

"Is this what you call patrolling—lying on your back in a shady place, and snoring?" asked Doris severely.

"Good gad!" gasped Archie. "Was I snoring?"

"My hat!" said Doris. "Was he snoring? Archie, old son, I'm afraid you've ruined all your chances of promotion. It's perfectly disgraceful! Falling asleep in the middle of Patrol work!"

"Oh, but really——"

"Perhaps you've got a good excuse?" asked Marjorie. "If so, you'd better let us hear it. We're in very much the same position as you are now. We're Girl Guides, and——"

"Oh, rather!" agreed Archie, regarding the girls with approval. "What-ho! Three little maids in blue, what? Absolutely! I must observe that you all look positively stunning. Girl Guides, and all that sort of stuff. So you're dashing about and guiding people, what?"

"We're doing about as much guiding as you're doing scouting!" replied Irene, with a laugh. "It's wonderful fun, Archie. We're in camp, you know, a mile or two away, on the cliffs. But you haven't explained why you were sound asleep."

A spasm of pain crossed Archie's face.

"No!" he replied. "As a matter of fact, not at all. Asleep, what? Well, you see, this patrolling stuff is so dashed strenuous that the good old tissues rebelled. I mean to say, they refused to do any further functioning, and a short spell of rest was indicated."

The three girls dropped their mock severity, and laughed.

"All right, Archie, we forgive you!" smiled Marjorie. "All the same, it's a terrible state of affairs, and I'm not sure that we oughtn't to report you to your Scoutmaster."

Archie grinned gratefully.

"As a matter of fact, I'm dashed glad I lingered in the good old undergrowth," he observed. "I mean to say, I shouldn't have met you otherwise, what?"

"Oh, yes you would," replied Irene. "We saw the Lions over by the wood, and they told us that you were somewhere behind. In fact, Dick hinted that we should find you fast asleep somewhere."

"Oddslife!" breathed Archie. "Dick?"

"Well, Nipper," said Irene. "So we came along, and did some scouting on our own. It didn't take us long to find you. As it's so hot this afternoon, we won't say any more about it. You're exonerated."

"Thanks frightfully!" said Archie, beaming. "I mean to say, the murky aspect has vanished from the atmosphere, and everything is all serene. What-ho! The river looks somewhat priceless, don't you know. The boathouse isn't far off——"

"Thanks all the same, Archie, but it can't be done," interrupted Marjorie.

"No?"

"No!" said the girls.

"Oh, well, if you say so——"

"You've got to get on with your scouting," declared Irene. "Even as it is, you'll be awfully late. And we're out on a kind of patrol, too. We haven't got time for idling on the river."

Archie sighed.

"Then it seems we've got to shake the old flipper, and depart on our various ways," he suggested. "How bally awful! But still, duty calls, and all that sort of thing. Absolutely!"

Inwardly, Archie Glenthorne was slightly relieved. He had suggested a row on the river out of mere politeness—and had realised, after the words had passed his lips, that such a project would entail some strenuous exercise on his part. On the whole, he was glad that the girls had turned the idea down.

CHAPTER III.

THE TIGERS AT WORK.



ST. FRANK'S was unusually quiet.

For one thing, it was a Saturday afternoon, and most of the fellows were taking advantage of the fine weather to be out in the open.

For another thing, there were now no juniors at the school—and this made an enormous difference, when it came to a matter of noise.

In addition to all this, the workmen had knocked off for the week-end. Great building activities were in progress at the old school, and from morning till night, on any ordinary day, the air was filled with the sound of steam cranes, mortar-mixing

machines, and all the thousand-and-one noises connected with building.

Where the Modern House had once stood there now reared a mass of scaffolding. There appeared to be two buildings in the course of erection. They were of grey stone, and were being constructed in the old-fashioned style. Thus, when the new operations were completed, there would be no aspect of raw freshness about St. Frank's. The buildings were being cunningly camouflaged even as they were in the course of reconstruction.

Further operations were now beginning on the other side of the Triangle, and the Ancient House itself was being hidden by scaffold-poles. It would soon be the end of term, when the seniors would leave for the long summer vacation. Then the builders would have the school entirely in their own hands, and the real work would begin. So far, the contractors had only made preliminary moves. During the vacation a vast army of workmen would appear, and some real high-pressure operations would take place—so that the old school would be completely ready for occupation at the beginning of the new term. The builders were under contract to have the job finished by then.

The Junior Forms, unable to find accommodation at St. Frank's, were under canvas near Shingle Bay. They were all Boy Scouts—three Troops of them, including Willy Handforth & Co., of the Third. The Scouts had been having some high old times.

Not only had they met with some adventures with smugglers, but during the past fortnight there had been stirring times on Surf Island, when a number of the Scouts had elected to play the part of Crusoes on a desert island. And those two weeks had been packed to the brim with excitement and fun and adventure.*

Things were rather quiet again now—owing, perhaps, to the fact that Going-Away Day was drawing near, and the

Scouts were thinking more of their coming holidays than the camp.

Six figures appeared in the gateway of St. Frank's. They were Scouts, and they had a business-like air. Their violet shoulder-knots proclaimed them to be the Tiger Patrol.

"Not a soul about," exclaimed the leader briskly. "Good! Just what I wanted! We can do practically as we like."

"But look here, Handy," said Church. "We can't waste too much time, you know. It'll soon be tea-time—"

"If you'd think more of your duty, and less of your tummy, you'd be a better Scout," said Edward Oswald Handforth grimly. "Food's of no importance—and these photographs are! We may not get another day as clear as this."

"But what's the idea of photographing the place at all?" inquired McClure. "A lot of scaffold-poles, and heaps of sand, and piles of bricks—"

"Fathead!" interrupted Handforth. "In years to come, these photographs will be worth quids! Everybody will be tremendously interested to have a look at St. Frank's in the course of construction. Besides, I'm going to send some of the prints to a weekly paper, and get big money for 'em!"

"By gum! There's something in that!" admitted Dick Goodwin. "But they'll have to be good photographs, Handy, or they won't—"

"Good photographs?" repeated

Handforth, staring. "Do you think I take any photographs that aren't good? My dear ass, when I take snapshots, they're snapshots—not horrible blurs!"

Church turned rather red. A few days previously he had borrowed Handforth's camera, and had forgotten to adjust the focus—with disastrous results. And Edward Oswald was never tired of reminding him of the fact.

* These adventures are told in full in the series of St. Frank's stories now appearing in the "Boys' Realm."—AUTHOR.

PORTRAIT GALLERY AND WHO'S WHO.

Fifth Series—Masters.



No. 9.—Mr. Robert Langton.

The Master of the Sixth Form. A very precise gentleman, with an immaculate appearance and with somewhat lordly manners. He is quite popular in the Senior School.

Handforth produced his camera and opened up the front. It was a folding Kodak—one of the most expensive models, and a perfect camera. It had been presented to him by his pater in one of the latter's kindly moments.

"First of all, we'll take a snap of the whole Triangle," said Handforth. "You fellows keep out of it—I don't want the photograph's spoilt. Now, lemme see. This is a long-distance photo, so I shall have to set the focus accordingly."

"Have you got the film in?" asked Owen major.

"Idiot!" snorted Handforth. "You might as well ask if I've got any brains in my head!"

He went on with his adjustments, unable to account for the chuckle which rippled through his Patrol. But he was too busy to bother. And just as he was getting ready to press the bulb an elegant figure strolled up, and passed right into the line of vision.

"Hi! Out of it!" snorted Handforth. "What's the idea?"

William Napoleon Browne, of the Fifth, resplendent in white flannels and blazer, paused and watched the proceedings with interest.

"Forgive me if I am in error, but do I not detect a slight trace of irritation in your tone, Brother Handforth?" he asked kindly. "Why this thusness? Surely my appearance should be the signal for an outburst of cheering?"

CHAPTER IV.

PHOTOGRAPHING SOME PRETTY SCENERY.



HANDFORTH glared. "Can't you see I'm taking some photographs?" he demanded tartly. "What's the idea of pushing in? Another tick, and

I should have opened the shutter—and then my lens would have gone cracked!"

"Alas, that so young a child could have such base thoughts!" said Browne, with a shake of his head. "But let us be friends, Brother Handforth. You have come especially to St. Frank's to take my photograph? Good! It will give me great pleasure to pose—"

"It'll give us great pleasure to chuck you into the fountain in a minute!" interrupted Handforth. "I'm going to take some snaps of that scaffolding, if you want to know."

Browne eyed the scaffolding with interest. "A somewhat blistered project, but we will say no more," he observed. "It is not for me to pass any criticisms. But of all the scaly schemes this is surely the scaliest. I offer myself as a subject for photographic art, and you turn me down in favour of a

heap of scaffolding! Alas and alack! That human nature could be so twisted!"

Browne retired behind the camera, and stood looking on with interest. And Handforth took snap after snap, until he had used the entire roll of film. He was particularly careful to re-wind it, take it out of the camera, and stow it away in his haversack.

"That's one, anyhow," he commented, in a satisfied voice. "Two snaps of the scaffolding, one of the Ancient House, one of the Triangle—"

"But not a single one of myself," interrupted Browne sorrowfully. "You do not seem to realise the opportunity you are missing. You do not appreciate the fact that the 'Daily Snapshot' would pay a fabulous price for just one glimpse of the famous Browne physiognomy. One photograph of myself on the front page would assuredly increase the circulation to millions!"

"More likely to kill the paper altogether," said Handforth briefly.

"There is an old and moth-eaten saying to the effect that absence makes the heart grow fonder—but it is merely a trap for the unwary!" sighed Browne. "We have seen little of one another, Brother Handforth, for many weeks. And yet that great love and affection—which I hoped would spring up between us—shows little sign of fruition."

"Oh, you're dotty," said Handforth. "Clear off, Browne, for goodness' sake! Can't you see you're not wanted? You're interrupting Scouts in the execution of their duty. Buzz off!"

Browne shook his head.

"Without wishing to be critical, may I point out that if there is any buzzing to be done, you should surely be the buzzer?" he asked. "I am here, standing on my native heath, whilst you are but an intruder. Is it meet that I should be brutally told to depart?"

"It's all right, Browne—don't take any notice of Handy," grinned Church. "He's mad on snapshots this afternoon, and can't think of anything else. The only thing is to humour him."

"Ah, to be sure!" said the captain of the Fifth. "A bright idea, Brother Church. But surely Brother Handforth could select prettier scenery for the object of his attention? Only five minutes ago, as I wandered gracefully through the piles of bricks and stacks of mortar bags, I espied the prettiest scenery of all. To wit, three charming young ladies, attired in the neat and natty garb of Girl Guides."

"Eh?" said Handforth, with a jump.

"Ah, you observe that Brother Handforth starts like a frightened mustang," said Browne benevolently. "Is it possible that my words have had a special significance? I fear that Brother Handforth is somewhat chutneyfied when it comes to a question of

young ladies. He is hot stuff with the girls!"

"You silly fathead!" howled Handforth. "I—I only thought— Who were they, anyhow? Not that I care!" he added indifferently. "In fact, I don't believe you saw any Girl Guides at all!"

"Not content with insulting me, Brother Handforth, you must needs pass aspersions upon my veracity," said Browne sorrowfully. "This is indeed one of my luckless afternoons. Without wishing to make a definite statement, I rather fancy the young ladies were none other than our cheery trio from the Moor View School."

"Irene & Co.!" said Handforth quickly. "By George! We haven't seen 'em for weeks! Come on—I'll take their giddy photographs!"

"Look here, Handy——" began Owen major.

"Obey orders!" roared Handforth. "Am I leader of this patrol or not?"

The Tigers hurried off without any further argument, and William Napoleon Browne reflected upon the injustice of life as he strolled into the Ancient House. Handforth would use his films for scaffolding and girls—but not an inch of it would he set aside for William Napoleon Browne! It was a sad thought, and Browne, to judge by the grave expression on his face, was deeply troubled. But it wasn't always wise to judge by the expression on Browne's face.

The Tigers had little difficulty in locating the Moor View girls. After reaching the end of the playing-fields, now littered and filled with building materials, Irene & Co. were sighted in the distance. They were taking a rest in the shade of one of the willow-trees.

"Hallo, you girls!" said Handforth, as he hurried up. "Haven't seen you for ages! I'm going to take your photographs!"

"That'll be wonderful!" smiled Irene. "But I'm not altogether sure that we're ready. We've been out all the afternoon, and we're untidy and dusty——"

"Rats!" said Handforth promptly. "You look lovely! I—I mean— Anyhow, you look jolly nice!" he said firmly. "I'm going to take six photographs—a whole giddy film!"

"Don't you be so rash!" said Doris. "Three will be quite enough, or even two. You don't want Irene in more than two poses, do you?"

The Scouts grinned, and Handforth turned red.

"I'm going to take all of you—not only Irene!" he growled.

"Oh, sorry!" chuckled Doris. "Well, that's all the better. My hair's all anyhow, my nose is shiny, and I've got a smudge on my chin, but why worry over trifles!"

CHAPTER V.

HANDY KNOWS BEST.



CLICK!

The first snapshot was a group, and three standing side by side. The fact that the sun was in their eyes, and they were obliged to screw their faces up, did not worry Handforth in the least. But the girls weren't quite so sure.

"I don't think it'll be much good, Ted," said Irene, shaking her head. "I believe I blinked just as you opened the shutter. Wouldn't it be awful if I came out with my eyes closed?"

"You'll be all right!" said Handforth. "Now I'll take you singly——"

"Wait a minute!" interrupted Tom Burton. "Hold hard, messmate! By what I can see, you haven't——"

"Don't interrupt!" said Handforth severely. "There are some clouds coming up, and I want to take these snaps while the sun's shining. You next, Irene. Come on, squat down on that mound. You'll look fine!"

"But the Bo'sun's right," interrupted Church. "Don't be such an ass, Handy! You haven't put——"

"Do you think I want lessons in photography from you?" asked Handforth tartly.

"You leave this to me, old son. Dry up!"

"Oh, all right!" said Church coldly. "If you won't listen, you won't! Don't say another word to him, Bo'sun!"

"Souise me! I won't!" grinned Tom Burton.

Handforth, as usual, was in a tearing hurry. He gave all his attention to posing the girls. His camera was of secondary importance. He even forgot to alter the focus, and his Patrol looked on with great interest. Somehow, they had an idea that these snaps wouldn't be a great success. But as Handy refused to listen, they took no further trouble.

"Fine!" said Handforth, at last. "I'll develop this film as soon as I get back, and I'll let you have some prints on Monday."

"Thanks awfully!" said Irene. "This makes two lots of photographs to-day. We ought to feel highly honoured."

"Two lots!" ejaculated Handforth, with a pang of jealousy. "Who else has been taking you?"

"Your young brother."

"My minor!" roared Handforth. "Do you mean to say he's had the nerve to take your photographs?"

"Don't be silly, Ted, there was nothing nerry about it," said Doris. "He happened to meet us on the downs, and he had his camera with him. He wasn't more than two minutes snapping all of us."

"Oh, they'll be no good!" said Handforth promptly. "He's only got a cheap camera—I believe he made half of it himself. And if he only took two minutes over the job, he can't expect much success. When I take photographs, I'm careful; I spend a lot of time over 'em."

Irene & Co. took their departure a few minutes later. They had to get back to camp for tea, and as their route lay in a different direction to the Tigers, it was just as well to part here.

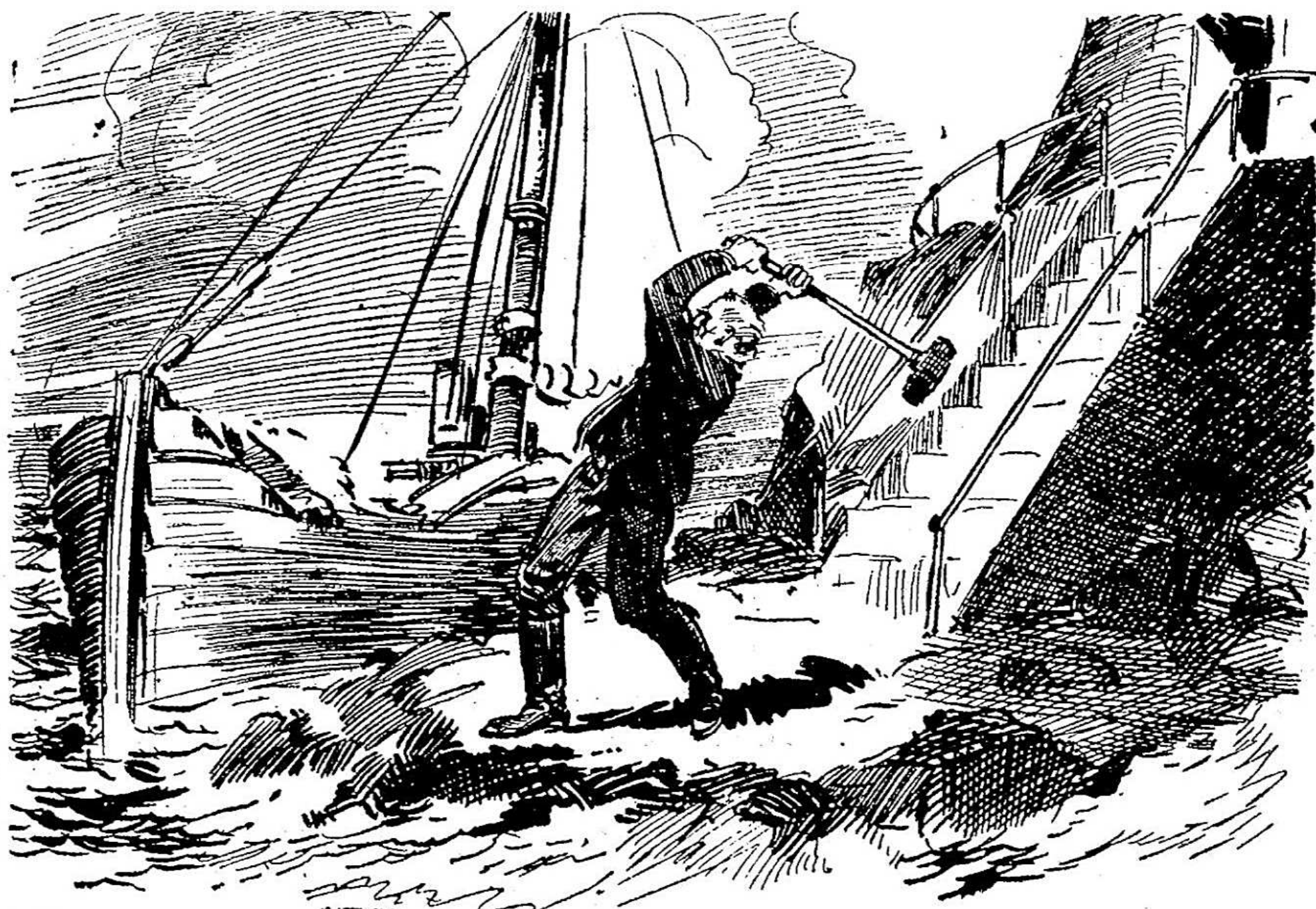
"Talking about tea reminds me," said Handforth, as he watched the girls tripping away. "I say, don't they look fine in

He marched off in a huff, and Handforth felt slightly uncomfortable. He was always goading his chums until they rebelled. And then he was sorry. But he said nothing until they had reached the Caistowe road.

"No need to be bad-tempered, Church, old man," he said gruffly. "Sorry I was snappy just now. What's that you were going to say about my camera?"

Church thawed immediately.

"Oh, nothing much!" he replied. "Any of the other fellows could have told you the same, but you wouldn't listen. You were so jolly busy posing the girls, and operating the shutter, that you forgot to



With each succeeding blow, Nash seemed to become more and more frenzied in his energy.

those uniforms? I never thought they'd make such ripping Girl Guides—"

"I thought you were talking about tea?" asked Church politely.

"Oh, yes!" said Handforth. "That's right. We'd better get back to our own camp as quickly as we can. You know what greedy bounders the other fellows are. There won't be anything left for us unless we hurry."

"About that camera of yours!" began Church. "You forgot—"

"Are you going to teach me my business?" roared Handforth.

"No!" snorted Church. "Go and eat coke!"

alter the focus. For portraits, you know, you need it a bit different—"

"Great corks!" gasped Handforth. "You—you mean—"

"But it doesn't matter a bit," went on Church calmly. "As far as I know, you haven't got any film in the camera."

"No film!" howled Handforth.

"Well, I didn't see you put any in," grinned McClure. "We all tried to let you know, but you wouldn't listen. Why, you didn't even try to turn the knobs, or you would have found out for yourself. You were so jolly excited that you forgot all about everything except the shutter—"

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Handforth, as he examined the camera. "You're right! I took all those photographs, and the giddy camera's empty!"

CHAPTER VI.

DANIEL NASH, THE LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPER.



"**P**ERHAPS you'll listen to us next time," said Owen major coolly. "Church tried to tell you while the girls were still in sight, but you only insulted him. Now it's too late!"

Handforth looked round wildly.

"Too late!" he gasped. "But—but it isn't! I've got to take those photographs—I must! My minor's taken some, and he'll crow over me like the dickens! Come on! We'll rush off, and overtake Irene & Co. before they get to their camp. I've simply got to have those snapshots!"

"No need for all of us to go!"

"Yes there is!" snapped Handforth. "My orders!"

He rushed off down the road, and the other Scouts followed in a half-hearted way. They were getting rather fed-up with this Patrol in the glaring afternoon sun. Perhaps Handforth would dash on and leave the others behind. Then they would be able to dodge back and give him the slip.

They were just passing a curious little house known in the neighbourhood as the Cabin. It had once been occupied by a retired mariner, and the sitting-room was an exact replica of a ship's cabin. At present the quaint little place was occupied by Daniel Nash, the lighthouse-keeper.

In fact, Nash himself was in the little front garden, pottering about among his flowers. Although spending most of his time on the lighthouse, he had regular shore leave, and when in occupation of the Cabin he loved to spend his time in the garden.

"Good-afternoon, Dan!" called out Church, as they paused near the gate.

Old Dan, as he was known in the village, looked up and smiled. But it was rather a forced smile, and as he approached the gate the juniors could see that old Dan was not himself.

He was a weather-beaten old chap, strong, wiry, and with years of seafaring life behind him. As a rule, he was genial and full of bluff jokes. But this afternoon he was looking worn and haggard, and there was even a wild kind of light in his eyes.

"How d'ye do, young gents?" he said listlessly. "Rare warm this afternoon. Scouting eh? That's the style! I hear as there's big alterations going on up at the school?"

"Yes; and we shan't be back there until the autumn," said Church. "Of course, the summer holidays will be starting soon, so it doesn't much matter. Anything wrong, Dan?" he added curiously. "You're not looking quite yourself to-day."

The lighthouse-keeper shot a quick look at the boys, and then shook his head in a weary kind of way.

"Ay, there's plenty wrong!" he said slowly. "Not as you young gents need worry your heads about me. It's all right, young sir. Just you go on with your scouting, and take no notice."

"But we'd like to know what the trouble is, if you don't think we're too inquisitive," put in Dick Goodwin. "By gum! You haven't been dismissed from the lighthouse?"

"No, I'm going back on duty on Monday," said Daniel Nash. "Like enough you won't see me in this little cottage agin. The next time I come ashore I'll be in lodgings."

The juniors were more interested than ever. They didn't want to pry, but Old Dan's agony of mind was obvious. The lighthouse-keeper was usually so jovial that his present despondency struck the juniors all the more forcibly.

By this time Handforth had vanished, and his Patrol gave up all idea of following. They would return to camp at once, and so arrive in time for tea. Handy could look after himself.

"Lodgings, Dan?" said Tom Burton. "Swab my decks! But I thought you liked this little house? What's the idea of taking up your anchor and drifting into another port?"

"It ain't what I likes, or what I don't like, it's a case of necessity," said Old Dan, shaking his head. "The fact is, young gents, I'm broke—lost every penny I had. Most o' the folks in the village know about it, so I ain't tellin' no secret."

"Broke!" echoed Church. "I say, that's rotten!"

"Ay, the savings of a lifetime!" said the old fellow gloomily. "Twenty years it took me to put that money by—twenty years of hard saving. At the end of this year I was figgering on retiring, and settling down here in my old age. But that's all past now; I shall have to work as long as I'm able!"

"We're frightfully sorry!" said McClure, rather awkwardly. "Haven't you been to the police, or—?"

"The police?" echoed Old Dan bitterly. "Nay, young gent, that wouldn't be any good! I put my money into a shipping company. Every penny of it—the last farthing I owned. And they've gone bust—clean broke! I do hear as the shareholders won't get a cent. It's hard for an old man like me; there's no chance of earning a second lot!"

He spoke in a husky, almost toneless voice. The poor old chap's spirit was nearly broken, and the Scouts could easily understand it. All his life Old Dan had saved his money. He was a sober, careful man, and for over fifteen years he had been in charge of the Shingle Headlight. Not once during his long years of duty had he failed to perform his work with precision and care.

And now, just as he was thinking of retiring on his savings, this blow had come upon him. The shipping company had failed, and all his money was lost. To such a man it was a staggering, crushing blow. For it meant the end of all his dreams of peace and rest. Retirement was now impossible. At least, he would not have the comparative luxury he had aimed at. Possibly he would get a pension, but the loss of his life savings had practically bowled him over.

The juniors were only too glad to bid the old fellow good-afternoon, and go on their way. They were intensely sorry for him, but they knew they could do nothing.

It was just one of life's minor tragedies. Little did the Tigers realise how dramatically it was to affect them in the near future!

CHAPTER VII.

POOR OLD HANDY!



"WELL, I declare!"

Irene Manners came to a halt, and looked back.

The three Moor View Girl Guides were on the downs, not very far from their camp. And just in their rear, Handforth was hurrying up, red, flustered, and hot. And this time he was quite alone.

"Thank goodness I've found you!" he said breathlessly, as he came up. "I say, I want to take your photographs——"

"But you've taken them once!" said Irene.

"I expect we smashed the camera," put in Doris. "So he's brought another one——"

"Nothing of the sort," interrupted Handforth. "The camera's all right—one of the best! But that fathead, Church, didn't give me a new roll of films, and I took your photographs with an empty camera!"

The girls laughed uproariously.

"Well, that's the latest!" chuckled Doris, at length. "So we did all that posing for nothing? Oh, Ted! Aren't you the giddy limit? It's a wonder you've got the nerve to ask us to pose again! I suppose you've got a film in the camera now?"

"Yes, rather!" replied Handforth. "I put it in as I came along. No blunders this time! I'm going to remember the focus, too. Those other chaps worried me,

you know—they put me all off. I'm jolly glad they didn't come back with me. When I'm left alone I can always do things properly."

The girls good-naturedly consented to a further "sitting." And Handforth took his six photographs with extra care. And this time he made no mistake about the correct focus. And he made sure that each section of the film was rolled up after each exposure.

"Thanks awfully!" he said, with real gratitude. "I'll develop these as soon as I get back to camp, and I'll let you have some prints on Monday."

He went off happy and triumphant. As he walked home he examined his camera with care, and convinced himself that he had made no blunder. The light had been good, and there was no reason why the photograph shouldn't turn out completely successful. He had a daylight developing outfit in camp, and he resolved to lose no time.

In fact, he was so interested in amateur photography that he forgot to scold his chums when he found them finishing tea. The whole camp was astir with life and activity.

It was a big camp—in three sections. For the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd St. Frank's Troops were all on the same ground—with the downs on every side except one. Shingle Bay lay just below, with the calm waters of the English Channel lapping the shore.

Quite a number of fellows were preparing for an evening bathe. But Church and McClure were denied this pleasure. Handforth caught hold of them, and commandeered their services.

"I took six ripping photographs of the girls, and we're going to develop 'em now," he declared. "These things deteriorate unless they're attended to at once. It's all right, Church—I excused you to Irene & Co."

"You excused me?" repeated Church, staring.

"Yes—I explained that you forgot to give me a spool of film, and told the girls that you were a fathead," said Handforth. "You ought to have heard the way they laughed. Still, they've forgiven you."

Church nearly burst a blood-vessel.

"Forgiven me!" he spluttered. "Why, you—you hopeless jackass!"

"What!"

"You babbling lunatic!" howled Church. "What was the idea of blaming me? They were your films, and it was your camera, and you wouldn't listen to me when I tried to tell you——"

"Are you trying to start a row, Walter Church?" roared Handforth.

"No, I'm not—I've started it already!" bellowed Church. "Of all the nerve! Asking the girls to excuse me—ME! And it was your fatheaded fault all the time. I've never heard——"

He broke off, words absolutely failing him.

"Don't get excited!" grinned McClure. "Hasn't Handy told you that the girls laughed? They weren't laughing at you, my son—they were laughing at him! They knew all the time that he was only trying to shove the blame on you!"

"What's that, Arnold McClure?" demanded Handforth wrathfully.

"Don't start on me!" chuckled McClure. "Let's forget all about it—and develop this film. You took it all on your own, eh? It ought to be topping. I hope you've got Irene's head in!"

"Fathead!" said Handforth tartly.

With the help of his chums, he proceeded to develop the film. Their help consisted of standing by, and looking on. Edward Oswald always hated doing things alone—he always liked an audience.

"What's become of that other film?" asked Church, after a while.

"Other film?"

"Those snapshots you took of the school."

"Oh, those?" said Handforth absently. "I put them in my haversack. Fish out the spool, Mac. We might as well cook that lot as soon as we've done these."

Handforth's haversack was just inside the tent, and McClure searched it. He soon produced the spool—but it was wrapped in silver paper.

"It's a new one," said McClure curiously.

"A new one?" repeated Handforth.

"Rot! I only took two spools out with me, and I used them both—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Church suddenly. "You hopeless ass! You've used the same one twice! Now blame us for it!"

Handforth gave such a start that he nearly leapt into the air. He practically dragged the film out of the patent developing machine. Fortunately, it was fixed and ready, and he held the dripping strip of film up to the evening sky.

"There you are!" yelled Church triumphantly. "What did I tell you? Look! Oh, Mac! Look and die! He's got the girls super-imposed on the school! They WILL be pleased!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A MATTER OF BUSINESS.



EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH felt limp, and the film shook and shivered like a jelly in his grasp.

"Something's gone wrong!" he panted. "And I thought that was a good camera. They must have spoofed my pater—"

"Don't be an ass!" grinned McClure. "It's a Kodak, and one of the best. You can't expect a camera to take proper photographs

if you use the same film two or three times!"

"But—but I can't understand it!" breathed Handforth. "I put that film in as I was walking along—after you rotters had deserted me—"

"That accounts for it," said Church. "You were in such a hurry to overtake the girls that you put the film in the camera without thinking. I say, I don't think you'd be much good as a professional photographer, Handy."

"Look here, if you're going to sneer—"

"Who's sneering?" asked Church. "But when a chap takes six photographs without any film, and then takes six more with a film that he's already used—well, it's about time he took up marbles!"

Handforth was too weak to retaliate. He was shocked. After all his trouble, he hadn't photographed the girls at all! For it would be a mere waste of good material to take prints from these negatives. Not only had he failed to snap the girls, but he had utterly ruined his school photographs! It was a double tragedy.

And then Willy strolled into the scene.

"Hallo, Ted!" he said cheerfully. "What's all the trouble about? I heard you chaps yelling from the other side of the camp. I can't see any signs of strife," he added, regarding Church and McClure closely.

"Clear off!" said Handforth thickly. "Whenever something goes wrong, you always come butting in! If you don't clear off, I'll—"

"Something's gone wrong, eh?" repeated Handforth minor. "There's nothing particularly startling in that. If you had told me that something was going right I might have fainted from shock."

"You cheeky young sweep!" howled Handforth. "You needn't stand here! I'm not going to tell you a word! I'm not going to explain to you that all my photographs have gone wrong—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No need to explain, old son," chuckled Willy. "I'm not quite blind, you know. And when I see you standing there like one of Chivers' jellies, with a yard of ruined film in your hand, I don't need to be a master at guesswork. What's happened? Used the same spool twice?"

"How do you know?" demanded Handforth furiously.

"Oh, you can't keep things like that from me!" said Willy, with a careless air. "Poor old Ted! Irene, too?" he added, as he glanced more closely at the negative. "You can't print those!"

"I'm not going to!" bellowed Handforth.

"I should think not," said Willy. "It's all very well to wear a sweet girl next to your heart, but when it comes to a lot of scaffolding—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By George! I'll—I'll—"

"Just a minute, Ted," interrupted Willy calmly. "What do you think of this?"

With a curious sleight-of-hand movement, he produced a photograph apparently from nowhere. And as he held it about five inches from Handforth's nose, his major couldn't help seeing it: His fury died away like the passing of a summer thunderstorm.

"My only hat!" he ejaculated. "That's topping!"

It was a photograph of Irene—and a good one at that. She was leaning against a picturesque gate, a cheerful smile on her lips. And every detail of the photograph was perfect. It was, indeed, a super-snap-shot.

"Not bad, eh?" asked Willy coolly. "And how about these?"

He turned his hand again, and more photographs appeared. Willy had an uncanny knack of producing articles in much the same way as a magician takes rabbits out of a hat. And his major found himself examining six highly successful photographs of Irene & Co. They were all excellent.

"Where did you get these?" asked Handforth suspiciously. "You can't spoof me, my lad! You had these taken by a professional! That rotten old cardboard box of yours never took these snaps!"

"That rotten old cardboard box of mine may be home-made, but it takes good photos!" said Willy. "And so would your Kodak, if you only used it properly; it would take 'em even better than this. What offers for Irene?"

"Eh?"

"I've got two negatives of her alone, and two in the group," went on Willy crisply. "I don't suppose you'll be interested in the groups, but you can have the other two negatives for ten bob each."

"Ten bob each!" gasped Handforth. "Why, you—you young swindler! I wouldn't give you tuppence for them! They're good snaps, but— Oh, well, you can have five bob for the two negatives!"

"Half a crown each?" sniffed Willy.

"Not likely! They're ripping photographs! You'll be able to print as many copies as you like, and plaster them all round your tent."

"Five bob—or nothing!" snorted Handforth.

"All right—nothing!" replied Willy. "As a matter of fact, I'm a bit hard up, so I'll waive a point. Ten shillings, and they're yours!"

His major gulped, and dived down into his pocket.

"Oh, all right—take it!" he snorted.

"I'm not going to argue about a miserable five bob!"

Willy took the crisp currency note, and handed over the two negatives of Irene. He went away, highly satisfied, particularly when he remembered that he had borrowed that film from his major's tent earlier in the afternoon, to say nothing of two packets of printing-paper.

CHAPTER IX.

A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE.

"**W**HEW! It's hotter than ever to-day!"

Tommy Watson made this remark as he sat in the stern sheets of the rather old-fashioned sailing yacht which had been hired for the afternoon. The Lions and the Tigers had clubbed together, and were enjoying themselves.

It was Tuesday, and as lessons were over, the two Patrols had gone off for a

sail. The sea was calm, with a rather oily swell, and only a faint breeze came in from the Channel.

It was practically evening, but the sun was still high, and the heat was oppressive. It had been blazingly hot all day, but seemed to be getting hotter and more oppressive. It was a relief to be on the water.

"We're hardly moving!" said Handforth, as he came aft from amidships. "The best thing you can do is to let me control

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that sail, and we shall get some speed on."

"We shall have to be getting back into Caistowe before long," said Nipper grimly. "I don't quite like the look of the sky. There's a thunderstorm about somewhere, and in this kind of weather you're liable to get caught in a squall. We must keep our eyes well open."

"Squall?" repeated Handforth, looking round. "You're dotty! There isn't a cloud in the sky!"

"That doesn't say there won't be some before long," put in Church. "I believe Nipper's right. There's something rummy about the weather to-day. But we're safe enough as long as we don't go too far out."

"Ay, you're right, messmate!" said Tom Burton nodding. "If I know anything about the sea, there's some dirty weather coming. But we're not likely to run into anything for an hour or two."

"We shall be back in Caistowe before then, anyhow," remarked Nipper. "I think we'd better just sail as far as the lighthouse, make a circle round it, and then go home. If there's any sign of a sudden storm we can change our plans."

"Absolutely!" said Archie Glenthorne. "Personally, old lads, this yachting stuff is dashed good, in my opinion."

Archie was sprawling full-length, and enjoying himself immensely. Most of the other juniors were equally happy. There were twelve of them altogether, but there was plenty of room. As far as the rest could see, there was no need for alarm at all. The evening was perfect.

But Tom Burton was continually glancing windward, and he kept one eye on the sky generally. The Bo'sun had been born at sea, and he had spent all his childhood in his father's sailing ship. What he didn't know about sudden squalls was hardly worth learning.

"We're all right for the rest of the evening, in my opinion," he declared. "The weather's going to change, ship-mates, but not just yet. We shall be in dock long before anything exciting comes along."

Handforth snorted.

"Just our luck, of course!" he said disgustedly. "I'd love to be caught in a squall. What's the good of coming out for a sail when the ship only moves at about four miles an hour? This is too jolly tame for me!"

"You needn't worry, there wouldn't be much excitement, anyhow," grinned Nipper. "This is a slow old tub, and it would take a cyclone to bowl her over! Good! The wind's getting a bit stronger. Here we go!"

"Mind she doesn't run away with us!" grinned Alf Brent.

The yacht surged forward as the wind strengthened. In spite of the fact that she was a "slow old tub," there was something very stirring in the way she ploughed through the clear blue water, her sails billowing out, and the bows rising and falling to the swell.

"This is what I call enjoyment," said Tommy Watson, as he leaned overside and watched the foam-flecked sea swishing past. "Better than being on land in this heat. I say, what about a bathe?"

"We've had enough bathing for to-day," dear old boy," said Tregellis-West. "Besides, we're gettin' a speed on now, an' it wouldn't be possible. Begad! The lighthouse is gettin' nearer—it is, really!"

"Marvellous!" said Handforth. "I suppose you mean we're getting nearer to the lighthouse? Who'd think these rocks were dangerous? They look as harmless as anything."

"You wouldn't say that in the middle of a storm," declared Nipper. "This is one of the most dangerous spots on the whole coast. Shingle Head is nothing more nor less than a death-trap to shipping, or would be if the lighthouse wasn't there. Even now ships are wrecked every year in fogs."

"But why the dickens can't the captains keep their vessels clear of the coast?" demanded Handforth.

"Because there's a kind of drift along here," replied Nipper. "In spite of every care, a ship will sometimes find herself in the current, and then on the rocks. And if she happens to be disabled she's as good as doomed—lighthouse or no lighthouse!"

There was certainly nothing very alarming in the aspect of the coast, as seen from the lazily moving yacht. But it was difficult to judge on such a fine evening, with such a smooth sea. Even the notorious Goodwins are harmless enough to look at on a fine day.

As the yacht approached the lighthouse the Scouts observed a figure leaning over the rail of the balcony. It was even possible to see that he was using a telescope. He lowered this after a while, and waved his hand in cheery salutation.

The figure was that of old Daniel Nash.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE SHINGLE ROCK.



"**R**OTTEN news about old Dan, wasn't it?" asked Handforth thoughtfully. "Of course, you chaps know about him losing his money?"

"Yes, everybody was talking about it on Sunday," replied Nipper. "Poor old chap! It must have been a frightful blow. I'll

bet some crook got hold of him and persuaded him to invest his savings in a rocky concern."

"Something like that," nodded one of the others.

They were much nearer the lighthouse now. In fact, Nipper was steering so that the yacht would pass comparatively close. At the present state of the tide, and in such a calm sea, there was no danger in approaching so near to the usually treacherous rock.

The lighthouse was perched on the outermost spur of the Shingle Head crags, and was quite isolated from the land. Well over half a mile separated the lighthouse from the nearest solid shore.

Old Nash had left his post on the balcony, and now there was nobody in sight. There were always two men on the lighthouse, and their's must have been a lonely life. Except during the regular shore-leave intervals, these men lived practically in solitude. It was quite an event for a pleasure-boat to come so near to the outer rock.

Gliding sedately, the yacht slid through the water into the channel between the Shingle Rock and the next nearest crag. Nipper intended making a circuit of the lighthouse, and then he would set his course for home.

They were now so close that every brick and stone of the grey old tower could be picked out distinctly. And as the Scouts watched, they saw the great lower door of the lighthouse open and a figure appear.

"Ahoy there, young gents!" he shouted.

"Hold that sheet!" exclaimed Nipper briskly. "Ahoy, Dan!" he added, raising his voice. "Thought we'd pay you an evening call."

Old Dan had descended the stone steps, and was now standing upon a kind of rock platform. Further steps led downwards right into the sea, and these were covered with slime and seaweed. The restless ocean surged up and down continuously.

"Come along, young gents—draw right in!" shouted the lighthouse-keeper. "Maybe ye'd like to see the lamp, and have a walk round the balcony? You're welcome, I'm sure."

"Good!" shouted Handforth. "Thanks, Dan. Now then, Nipper, swing her round. It'll be a novelty to go over the lighthouse."

All the other Scouts were equally as eager. Old Nash's invitation had come as a bit of a surprise; they had not expected anything of the sort. But Nipper and Tom Burton exchanged rather dubious glances.

"Swab my decks!" said the Bo'sun.

"I'm not so sure, shipmate. It doesn't look any good to me."

"That's what I was thinking," said Nipper. "I'm rather surprised at Old Dan suggesting it—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" protested Tommy Watson. "He wouldn't ask us to come up unless it was safe. We can trust Dan Nash, surely? He's lived on the sea practically all his life."

"Yes, rather!"

"Swing her round, Nipper."

All the Scouts urged Nipper, and in spite of his misgivings, he manœuvred the clumsy yacht skilfully round. Several of the other Scouts handled the sails under Burton's instructions.

And with only a slight bumping against the rocks, the yacht was secured to the slimy steps. Ropes were passed through the great iron rings which were fastened into the rock.

"Glad to welcome ye, young gents," exclaimed old Nash breezily. "Come and look over the lighthouse and enjoy yourselves. Your craft'll be all right there. There's over half an hour before the tide turns."

"It looks a bit like a storm to me—" began Burton.

"Maybe—maybe, but not for three or four hours yet," replied old Dan. "I'll warrant you boys have allus wanted to look over the lighthouse. Come along—all of ye!"

"But hadn't we better leave two or three on board?" asked Nipper in surprise.

"Not a bit of it!" said the lighthouse keeper. "Come ashore, and go up them steps into the tower. I'll make sure the boat's made fast. 'Tisn't often we have visitors on the Shingle Rock."

Most of the juniors were only too delighted to mount the steps, and enter the lighthouse. This was a novel experience—an adventure they hadn't anticipated. Nipper and Tom Burton were about the only fellows who had any misgivings.

But in face of Daniel Nash's assurance, they could hardly feel justified in remaining on board. They went ashore with the rest of the patrols, and were the last pair to land. They stood waiting for the lighthouse keeper on the flat platform of rock.

"Go ye in!" said Nash, waving his hand cheerily. "I'll follow in a minute. I want to make sure that your boat is all right. It wouldn't do for you young gents to be stranded on the Rock, hey?"

He chuckled, and watched closely until the last Scout had vanished through the doorway. And then his expression changed. A cunning, gloating light entered his eyes, and he reached behind some rocks, and produced a sledgehammer.

CHAPTER XI.

OLD DAN'S AMAZING BEHAVIOUR.



NOW we'll see — now we'll see!" muttered Nash, as he cautiously descended the slimy steps. "Pity she ain't a better craft! I'd 'a' liked her to 'a' been a better boat, durn me if I wouldn't!"

The lighthouse-keeper's sentiment's were remarkable, considering the nature of his next operation. Swinging the hammer round with all his force, he stove in the side of the old yacht, close against the water-line.

Again and again he struck, and he was not satisfied until the sea was pouring into the vessel at an alarming rate. He weakened the woodwork so much that the yacht was badly holed. And with each succeeding blow, Nash seemed to become more and more frenzied in his energy.

But at last he desisted. Then, flinging the hammer down, he cast off the ropes, and set the vessel adrift. She glided silently away, a derelict, listing perceptibly to starboard.

In the meantime, the Lions and the Tigers were revelling in their adventure. They mounted the endless stone steps, going up and up, through various store chambers and living-rooms until, at last, they came to the lamp-room itself.

"By George!" panted Handforth. "What a size!"

"Let's go out on the balcony!" suggested Church. "I say, this is ripping!"

They were enthralled by all they saw. The service-room had interested them, but the sight of the great prism lenses was quite fascinating. And the view from the surrounding balcony was a glorious one. Many and many a time the juniors had longed to have an opportunity of visiting the lighthouse. And now that it had come without being expected, it was all the more thrilling.

"I say, you chaps, come out here!" shouted Church from the balcony. "You can see for miles in every direction—Great Scott! Nipper! Handy! The boat's adrift!"

"What?"

"You're spoofing, you ass!"

"I'm not!" yelled Church. "She's loose!"

There was a rush by the other juniors, and they were all out on the balcony in less than a minute. The view from here was indeed grand, but just at the moment the Scouts took no interest in it.

They were staring down—right down past the rock base, to the sea itself. The water looked curiously pond-like from this height.

The sea was so calm that there was no perceptible swell or ripple.

And a few fathoms away from the landing-steps, the yacht was drifting listlessly away. Without question, she had been cast off, and allowed to go.

"Souise my scuppers!" ejaculated Burton. "There's something queer about this, mess-mates! Old Dan must have cast her off! I thought there was something rummy about him!"

"So did I; but I never anticipated this!" said Nipper anxiously. "What on earth can we do? He must be mad to do a thing like this! Do you chaps realise that we're marooned?"

"Marooned!"

"Of course!" said Nipper swiftly. "There's no boat on this rock—we're absolutely isolated from the land—"

"Great pip!" gasped Handforth. "Let's rush down, and get the yacht back—"

"Don't get excited—it's too late for that now," interrupted Nipper. "She's drifting all the time, and— Well, I'm hanged! Can't you see? She's listing over, and her bows are practically under water!"

"My goodness!"

"She's sinking!"

The Scouts looked down at the sight with startled amazement. One or two of them exchanged uneasy glances. There was something sinister about this extraordinary occurrence. The same thought was coming to all the juniors. For some reason, known only to himself, Daniel Nash had smashed in the side of the yacht, and had set her adrift!

"But—but can't we do something?" asked Watson breathlessly.

"Not now—it's too late," replied Nipper. "We can only wait until Nash comes, and ask him what the game is. I shouldn't be surprised if the poor old chap has gone a bit wrong in the head."

"Great Scott!"

"You—you mean he's mad?" asked Church huskily. "Not that he can do us much harm—we're twelve to one. By the way, what about the other keeper? I thought there were always two men on these lighthouses?"

"Yes, where's the other man?"

The Scouts were freshly alarmed, for they had seen no sign of old Dan's mate as they had mounted to the top of the lighthouse. Not that this was particularly sinister. There were plenty of places where the under-keeper could have been.

"We ought to do something!" declared Handforth. "It's no good standing here and jawing! We've got to get that yacht back, and some of us can swim across before she gets too far—"

"Look!"

"What about it now, Handy?"

The juniors stared down at the stricken yacht. For she had just heeled over with a lurching movement. With her bows down, and her stern lifting out of the water she capsized in the calm sea.

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CHAPTER XII.

OLD NASH EXPLAINS.

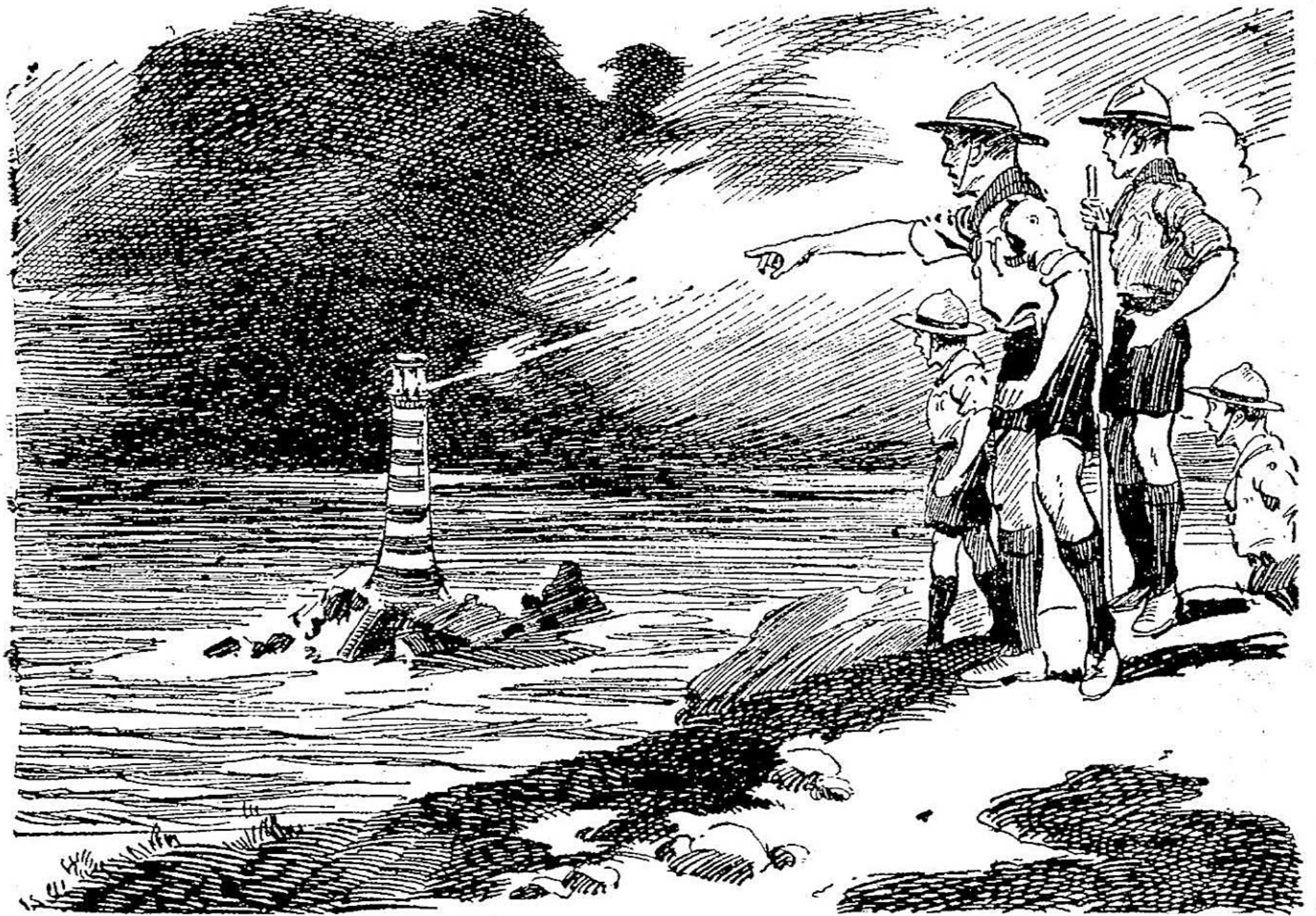


"WELL, that's the end of the old tub," declared Nipper quietly. "And it means that we're perched on this rock until somebody comes along to take us off. There's a storm brewing, and old Nash appears to be off his rocker, so the prospects are pretty lively!"

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie Glenthorne. "It seems to me, old sunlight, that the affair is bally mouldy altogether! I mean to

"A chap can run half a mile in the open, but it takes him a long time to do half a mile in the jungle!" replied Nipper significantly. "It's just about the same here. This water looks smooth enough, but it's one mass of currents and eddies. The strongest professional swimmer would have all his work cut out to get ashore."

The Scouts watched the disappearing yacht with a kind of fascination. They were all on the balcony by now, and there wasn't one fellow who didn't know the exact facts. And the two patrols waited anxiously for old Nash to appear so that he could give an explanation of his extraordinary conduct.



"There it is again!" exclaimed Pitt, frowning. "I say, look! Those flashes are coming steadily now . . . Hold on! I seem to recognise . . . By jingo! It's Morse!"

say, what with being marooned, and all that sort of stuff—"

"Oh, dry up!" growled Handforth. "There's bound to be a telephone here. We've only got to 'phone to the coastguard station, and they'll send a boat out. Not that we shall need help like that. My idea is to get ashore on our own."

"By swimming it?" asked Church sarcastically.

"Yes, if necessary."

"It doesn't look far," said Nipper; "but it's a bigger swim than any of us can manage—"

"It's only about half a mile!"

Nobody was feeling really alarmed. Their hearts were beating faster than usual, and they were thrilled, but danger seemed impossible. After all, there were twelve of them to one—for there was not much chance of the under-keeper following old Dan's lead.

The lighthouse-keeper himself appeared a minute later. He came out of the doorway, and looked at the juniors with his usual benevolent smile. He seemed so genial and breezy that most of the fellows were reassured.

"That's the way, young gents—that's the way!" he said, rubbing his hands together. "Make yourselves at home! I've invited ye

on this rock, and as far as I'm concerned it's yours until ye go off!"

Nipper, who was watching the old fellow closely, was convinced that his first guess was correct. Behind Nash's geniality there was something else. His smile and his breeziness were superficial.

And there was a hard note in his voice—a wild, evil glitter in his eyes. And he looked at the Scouts in a gloating, cunning kind of fashion. Without doubt, the man's mind was unhinged.

But how far? To what extent?

"What was the idea of casting our yacht off, Dan?" asked Nipper quietly. "We wanted to get ashore again, you know. She's sinking now—nearly gone, in fact—"

"Oh, ay!" agreed old Dan. "She's nearly gone. The fact is, young gent, there was just a bit of an accident. I'm real sorry, and I'm afraid you'll have to stay on the lighthouse until I can telephone ashore."

"An accident?" asked Watson.

"A wave come along, an' stove in her side ag'in the rocks!" said the lighthouse-keeper, nodding. "I did the best I could, but she got away. Not that it matters much—as she was a slow old tub, anyway. You young gents had best make yourselves at home, and enjoy yourselves."

Most of the fellows were still further reassured. The affair wasn't so alarming, after all. They believed Nash's explanation. The yacht had got adrift by accident. But Nipper and Singleton and Tom Burton were decidedly unconvinced.

"What about your mate?" asked Handforth. "We haven't seen any sign of him yet—"

"Oh, Jim?" said Dan. "Jim, hey? Poor feller! A accident happened to Jim. That was last night, at about eleven o'clock. The poor young feller fell over this rail, and killed himself."

"Great Scctt!"

"Killed himself!"

"Oh, my goodness!"

"A sad affair, young gents," declared Nash. "It was like this. Jim was takin' a breath o' fresh air, an' I came out to 'ave a word with him. Well, we got arguing—politics, it was. Jim was allus a masterpiece for talkin' politics. After a bit, I thought 'e was sayin' too much, so I just took 'old of 'im an' kept him quiet—like this!"

Old Dan, smiling breezily, took hold of Handforth to illustrate his meaning. And Edward Oswald got the shock of his life. For he found himself held in a grip of iron. The fingers round his throat felt like the clutch of a vice.

"Here, steady!" he gurgled.

"That's just how poor Jim went on," chuckled the lighthouse keeper, his expression becoming more wild. "But I took no notice—I gripped him like this, an' forced him back, an' back—"

"Help, help!" gasped Handforth. "He's—he's choking me—"

"Ay, just as I choked Jim!" panted Daniel Nash.

He forced Handforth back against the rail, and the unfortunate junior's face was already becoming discoloured. He was forced back until he was nearly off his balance.

In another moment he would go hurtling down to certain death!

CHAPTER XIII.

MAROONED WITH A MADMAN.



NIPPER was galvanised into activity.

At first he had not thought that Handforth was in any danger. But there was now no doubt that the leader of the Tigers was within an inch of death. The situation had become dramatic in a second. And with a madman to deal with, the affair was difficult.

"Quick! Grab him!" shouted Nipper desperately.

As he spoke, he flung himself at the lighthouse keeper, and seized his hands. He was attempting to relax that grip on Handforth's throat. But old Dan's arms were like steel, and Nipper got a shock.

"Come on—quick!" he shouted urgently.

The lighthouse keeper, a fresh frenzy upon him, was intent upon choking the life out of his victim, and hurling him down to the rocks below. Handforth was struggling, but his efforts were feeble against such mad strength.

Church and McClure and several of the others leapt to Nipper's aid, and in a few seconds a wild melee was in progress. The balcony was not very wide, and such quarters were cramped. But the juniors managed to haul the lighthouse keeper backwards by force. Nipper kicked his legs from under him, and they all fell in a heap.

In the confusion, Handforth found himself released, and he staggered off, dazed and bewildered, holding his throat.

Nash was fighting with terrible wildness and strength. Nipper received a crashing blow which nearly knocked him senseless. Tommy Watson and Church each felt that their ribs were crushed in. And Nash tore himself away, and backed into the open doorway.

"Ye'll all go the same way!" he shouted thickly. "Just like Jim! It won't take me long to polish you off, young gents! I've got you here, an' that's all I wanted! It's the likes of you and yours that swindled me out of my savin's! I'll show you that a poor man can't be robbed!"

He disappeared, giving vent to a peal of insane laughter which made the juniors

gaze at one another with growing horror. They heard the man stumbling down the stairs into the depths of the lighthouse.

"Thanks, you chaps!" panted Handforth, as two or three of the fellows seized him. "It's all right—I'm better now. By George! I thought the rotter was going to pitch me over the rail!"

"He tried to murder you!" said Church breathlessly.

"What about your throat?" asked McClure. "I'll bet it's horribly bruised, Handy. It's a wonder he didn't choke you—"

"Dry up about it!" muttered Handforth, fingering his throat tenderly. "Thank goodness you chaps were in time. I say, what the dickens are we going to do? We're marooned on this lighthouse, and old Nash is as mad as a hatter. He's dangerous!"

"I expect it was brought on by his loss," said Nipper quietly. "He looks upon us all as enemies. In his mania, he believed that everybody conspired to cheat him out of his savings. It's a pretty pitiful sort of thing, when you come to think of it—but that doesn't alter our position. Poor old Dan! He was such a fine old chap, too!"

"That's what makes it all the harder," growled Tommy Watson. "No wonder he invited us to look over the lighthouse! He only lured us here so that he could trap us!"

"It's awful!"

"He might come out with a gun, and start firing at us!"

"Or he might bring a sledge-hammer!"

"We've got to escape—we've simply got to!"

Many of the Tigers and Lions, thoroughly alarmed by what had happened, clamoured round, all shouting at once. They were beginning to feel the horror of their position. The very air seemed menacing, too. There was a stillness, a threatening, brooding sullenness in the atmosphere which told of coming trouble.

The sea looked dead flat from this height, and out to sea it was almost impossible to distinguish the horizon. The sky, although cloudless, was assuming a dull, dense coppery hue. There was every evidence of a sudden and startling change in the weather conditions. And this alone helped to make the marooned juniors all the more uneasy.

They felt terribly isolated.

The tragedy on the lighthouse appalled them. Old Nash's fellow keeper had been flung over the balcony and killed. And now the Scouts were sharing this isolated rock with a homicidal maniac!

"It's no good getting windy!" growled Handforth. "What we've got to do is to capture the poor chap, make him helpless, and lock him in one of his own store-rooms! We're twelve to one, aren't we?"

"That's the spirit, old man," said Nipper, nodding. "If only we can get old Dan under lock and key we might be able to communicate with the shore. But the first thing is to attend to this madman. Even at this moment he might be concocting some murderous attack."

"Well, there's twelve of us—" began Handforth.

"If there were twenty-four, it wouldn't make much difference," interrupted Nipper grimly. "We can't attempt to capture him openly. My dear chap, we should succeed, but two or three of us might be killed in the process. And it's not worth taking risks of that kind."

"You're right, old man," agreed Singleton. "While Nash is quiet, the best thing we can do is to leave him alone. One madman is as dangerous as a dozen ordinary men. If only we could think of some way of getting ashore!" he added desperately.

But all the others were thinking of the same thing. The position seemed fairly hopeless. Even if somebody appeared on the distant cliffs, it would be impossible to signal any message—for the distance was too great.

And not one of the Scouts felt inclined to enter the lighthouse—they preferred to remain on the balcony, under the open sky. For somewhere within that stone tower lurked the madman, a positive and terrible menace.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BREWING STORM.



"THERE she goes," said Church dully.

He referred to the unfortunate old yacht. By this time she had drifted a considerable distance from the lighthouse, and at last she had given up the struggle. She vanished silently and quietly into the depths—so unobtrusively, in fact, that Church had only noticed it by chance.

Out to sea the haziness had increased, and no boat or sail of any kind could be seen. In the opposite direction, the rocks and cliffs arose grimly. They seemed astonishingly near—particularly the jutting rocks of Shingle Head where they came out in a kind of ragged point. But on this part of the coast there were no houses, and not even a human being could be seen along the cliff path. The whole of nature seemed to be pausing under the spell of the brewing storm.

"There's some thick weather coming, shipmates," said Tom Burton, with another glance at the sky. "It may be an hour or two yet, but, souse me, when it does come we shall know all about it."

"Then it's up to us to do something before it arrives," declared Alf Brent. "We can't stick here, just twiddling our thumbs! The sea's as calm as a mill-pond. Can't somebody swim ashore?"

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

Nipper shook his head.

"I admire your pluck, old man, but it couldn't be done," he said. "Our only course is to stay out here——"

"But look!" interrupted Handforth, pointing down over the rail to the stretch of water between the lighthouse and the nearest spur of rock. "It isn't far—any ass could swim that distance. And the sea's like a pond—there's hardly a ripple on it."

It certainly looked simple enough, but this time Tom Burton intervened.

"You'd better take notice of Nipper, messmate," he said quietly. "I'm a better swimmer than you are—and I wouldn't attempt it. The sea may seem calm, but in that channel there are the most treacherous currents along the whole coast. I should find myself being swept out to sea all the time, instead of getting ashore. Even a boat, with two oarsmen, would have all its work cut out to beat the current."

"Then what are we going to do?" demanded Handforth.

"I don't know," replied Nipper. "The chief thing is to keep our heads, and use our wits. I'm thinking of later on, too. It's evening already, and there's a big storm coming up. Even the most ignorant land-lubber could tell that. Awful things might happen unless we act drastically."

"What do you mean?" asked Tommy Watson.

"Nash is in no condition to operate the light, and it's quite possible that he'll deliberately wreck the apparatus," replied Nipper grimly. "We've got to trap him before he can do anything of that kind—if we can."

"And then work the light ourselves?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"If it's humanly possible, yes," replied Nipper. "Think what it'll mean if we don't! A fearful storm—the night as black as pitch—and this terrible headland deprived of its warning light!"

"Great Scott!"

"I mean to say, how absolutely frightful!" exclaimed Archie Glenthorne. "Nipper, laddie, you've absolutely hit it. We haven't got to think of ourselves—but of the good old mariners on the ocean blue. A question of duty, what?"

Nipper looked rather uncomfortable.

"We don't want to pose as heroes, or anything of that sort," he growled. "At the same time, we're the only people who know of Nash's madness, so it's up to us to keep the light going. It might mean the loss of hundreds of lives if we fail in this

emergency. "Never mind our own predicament—we're quite safe in the lighthouse for days—if only we can get Nash under lock and key. We've got to concentrate on that."

"Hear, hear!" declared Handforth enthusiastically. "And then get the giddy light going, eh? As a matter of fact, I was just going to suggest the same thing! Where's the fathead who was suggesting that we should get ashore? Of all the cowardly ideas——"

"You offered to swim, anyhow!" put in Church.

"Eh?" gasped Handforth. "By George! I—I'd forgotten that! Still, it doesn't matter—I must have been absent-minded! Our duty is to stay here and take charge of the lighthouse. If we can't get the lamp going, we shall have to make a bonfire on this balcony."

"That'll be a fat lot of good in a storm!" said Owen major sarcastically. "Besides, if we made a bonfire on this balcony, we should soon make a bonfire of the whole lighthouse! We should be fuel for it!"

"Or food for the fishes!" said McClure. "We'd better leave everything to Nipper, old man—he always comes out strong in these emergencies."

"And don't I?" demanded Handforth warmly.

"Don't let's argue!" put in Church. "Hallo! I can see some black clouds coming up. It's the first sign of the storm!"

He pointed out across the sea, and the other Scouts followed the direction of his finger. Low down in the sky there was an intensely black line. It was moving so slowly that its advent had scarcely been noticed. But there was something threatening and menacing about that cloudbank.

"The storm's coming up," said Nipper nodding. "It won't arrive just yet, but the sooner we can deal with old Nash the better. You fellows stay here; I'm going inside to do a bit of scouting!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE SUN AND THE MIRROR.



THE others didn't quite like it, but they allowed Nipper to go in without protest. He had taken charge of the situation with all his usual coolness and ability.

"If he doesn't come out within five minutes I'm going in to look for him!" declared Handforth, gazing at the doorway. "The ass oughtn't to have gone in alone!"

"He knows what he's up to, don't you worry," said Tommy Watson. "If a crowd of us went it would be worse, because

old Nash would hear us, and probably make an attack."

"I wonder what the other chaps are doing?" said Owen major musingly, as he looked across at the cliffs. "I say, they'll think we've got drowned, or something, especially if any wreckage drifts ashore. Nobody will dream of looking for us on the lighthouse."

"We might have been spotted as we came on the rock," said Dick Goodwin. "And it'll be queer if somebody didn't see the yacht sinking. At the same time, this coast is pretty lonely, and it's quite on the cards that nobody knows anything about us."

"Shut up!" interrupted Watson anxiously. "Listen!"

They tried to hear any sounds from inside. But all was quiet. Nipper, venturing within, stood for a moment looking at the great mass of glistening apparatus—the lamp, with its reflectors, its levers and gauges. His heart sank a little. How was it possible for him and his fellow-Scouts to operate this intricate piece of mechanism? He already knew that the Shingle Rock Lighthouse used oil. Indeed, when coming up through the various rooms, the Scouts had seen many huge tanks and pipes. The light itself was provided by means of a great high-pressure incandescent mantle, and this light, magnified and reflected thousands of times, was sent out in great flashing beams. A mechanically operated shutter caused the light to be intermittent.

The juniors had often watched that beam from the downs—three short flashes and then one long one. They had often wanted to come on the lighthouse and see how everything worked, but they had never dreamed of paying their visit under such circumstances as these.

Everything being quiet, Nipper ventured down the stairs into the service-room. Here there were further pipes and more apparatus. It was dim and rather gloomy. There was no sign of Daniel Nash.

Nipper remembered that the room beneath was a store-room, then came the living-room, and below that the bed-room, with old-rooms and tank-rooms further down. Very cautiously he crept down, holding himself ready to turn tail and flee at the first sign of danger. For Nipper was not foolish enough to attempt any single-handed encounter with the madman.

Step by step he descended into the living-room. But before he got down he paused. He could see Old Dan now. The lighthouse-keeper was calmly sitting at the table, partaking of biscuits, cheese and pickles.

"Come along, young gent," he invited cheerily. "Come and join me in a bite. Fetch the others down, too—ye're all welcome!"

Nipper started. Nash's hearing must have been uncannily acute, for Nipper was not aware that he had made the slightest sound. He stood on the stairs, and managed to assume a careless air.

"Thanks, Dan," he replied. "I'll go and tell the others."

"That's the style!" nodded Dan. "Make yourselves at home, lads. Pleased to have you here, I'm sure. Just having a bit of supper before getting ready for the night. It'll be time to get the lamp goin' in half an hour, and I'm thinkin' it'll be needed to-night. There's dirty weather, young gent—dirty weather!"

"Yes, there's a storm brewing, I think," said Nipper.

"Ay, one o' the worst!" nodded Old Dan, helping himself to some more pickle. "The glass has dropped a whole piece, an' it's my opinion there'll be a reg'lar hurricane before darkness."

Nipper nodded again, and retired. He hurried up the winding granite stairs, and at last emerged on the balcony. The other Scouts, who had been getting anxious, greeted him with relief.

"My hat! We thought you'd got killed!" exclaimed Watson huskily.

"What's old Nash doing?" asked Church.

"He's down in the living-room, eating cheese and pickles," replied Nipper drily. "Not very alarming, is it? I expected to find him smashing up the happy home, or something. And now's our chance. He only has his violent spells periodically, I expect, and if we can only induce him into one of the store cupboards we might be able to lock him in."

"Good idea!" said Alf Brent.

"What-~~ho~~!" agreed Archie. "Absolutely!"

Nipper screwed his eyes up as he stood there, for the sun was now low on the horizon, and the beams, shining on a dead level, were positively dazzling. There was something unnatural about this late evening sunlight. It was almost orange-coloured, and intense. The sun itself was like a huge copper disc hovering over the land.

"By Jove!" breathed Nipper tensely.

Shading his eyes, he fancied he saw one or two figures on the cliff path. And these, in conjunction with the sun, put an idea into his head. For the moment he forgot about Nash, and his face flushed with subdued excitement.

"What's up?" asked Handforth, looking at him curiously.

"Wait a minute!" replied Nipper.

He hurried inside, and seized a telescope—he had noticed it lying on a ledge earlier. He also took down a small mirror from the wall. Armed with these things, he passed out on to the balcony again.

"Hold this!" he said quickly.

Giving the mirror to Tommy Watson, he

raised the telescope, and quickly focussed it. The figures on the cliff path leapt into prominence. They became so clear and distinct and so near that Nipper felt almost inclined to shout.

"By Jove! The Hawks!" he ejaculated. "Reggie Pitt and his chaps! And the sun's shining in the right direction, too!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Church eagerly.

"Signal to the Hawks!" replied Nipper, lowering his telescope. "They're standing there watching. We can't let this opportunity slip by. If only they catch the flashes and read them, we can warn them of our danger!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SIGNALS FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE.

REGGIE PITT shook his head and pursed his lips.

"Yes, by jingo, there's something pretty big stewing up!" he exclaimed grimly. "Look at that cloudbank over there. And look at the unnatural calm of the sea, and the queer tint of the sunlight. It reminds me of a tropical cyclone!"

"We'd better get back to camp," said Jack Grey uneasily. "There's not much chance of the storm coming down for another hour, but I'm thinking of the tents. They'll all be blown to shreds unless we fix up some extra stay-ropes. Let's be going."

"By jings! You're right, pard!" declared Jerry Dodd. "I don't like the look of this at all. I've seen a few storms in Australia, and they generally start in this way. There'll be pandemonium loose before long."

The Hawks were standing on the cliff path, and the very air about them quivered with sultry heat. There wasn't a breath of wind, and the whole of Nature seemed to be utterly stationary. It was the calm before the storm.

All the evening it had been unnaturally

hot, and anybody could tell that Nature was about to arouse herself for a tremendous onslaught. Further across the downs there were some sheep, and even these creatures were obviously uneasy in their attitude. Instinctively they knew what was coming.

A puff of wind came along from the sea, full into the faces of the Hawk Patrol. It was hot and stifling, and at the same moment the air quivered with a low, indefinite rumble. It was so distant and so intangible that the juniors half thought they had imagined the sound.

"This storm's going to be a regular beauty!" declared Reggie Pitt. "Personally, I rather like a good old thunderstorm—there's something exciting about it. And they clear the air, too!"

"We don't want our camp blown down or washed away," said Jack Grey. "We'd better be getting along. I wonder what's happened to Nipper and Handforth and all those other chaps? They went out in that old yacht, didn't they?"

The other Hawks scanned the sea.

"No sign of them now," said Reggie. "Oh, they'll be in Caistowe by this time. I expect we shall find them in camp; it's getting on towards supper-time, anyhow—Hallo! Did you see that?"

"See what?"

"There seemed to be a flash from the lighthouse."

Clarence Fellowe nodded.

"Why, yes, I saw it clearly!" he remarked.

"A flash of sunlight merely. Or perhaps they're preparing for the night, by fixing up the light."

"Too early for that—the sun isn't down yet," said Grey.

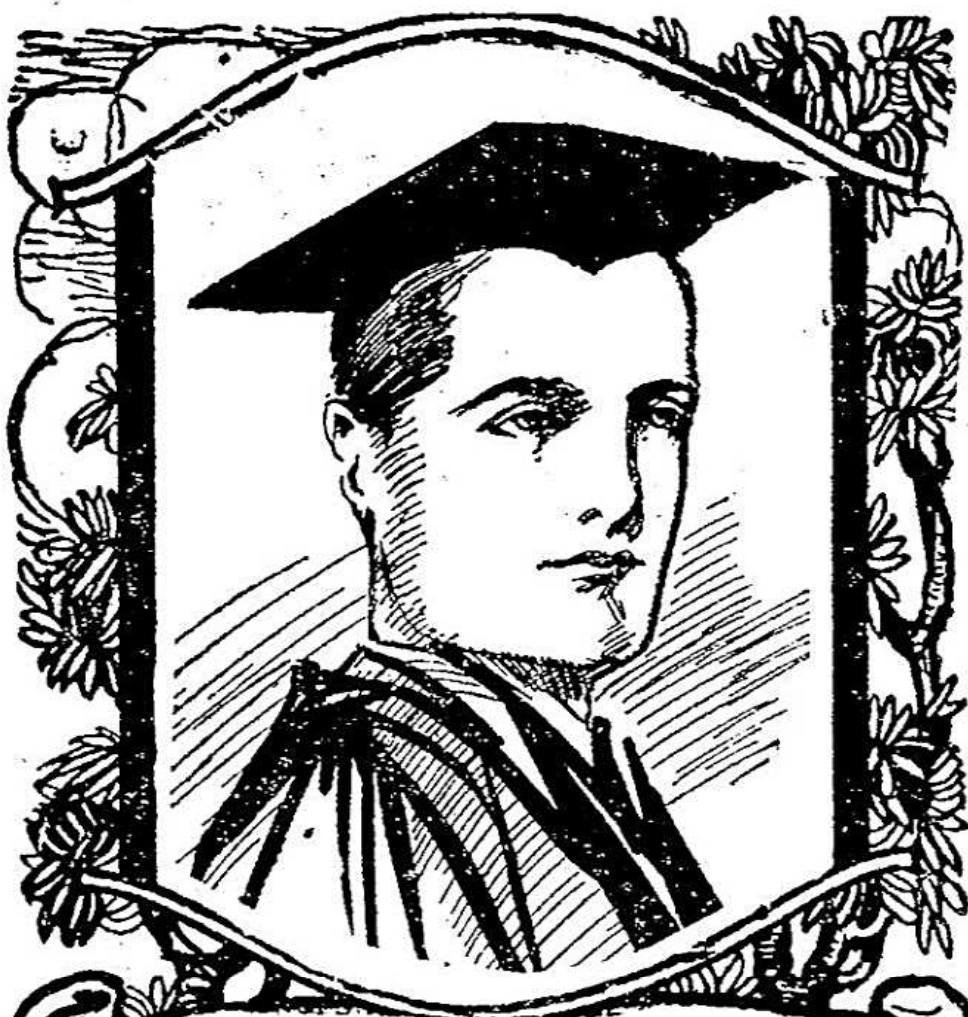
"There it is again!" exclaimed Pitt, frowning. "I say, look! Those flashes are coming steadily now! Hold on! I seem to recognise—By jingo! It's Morse!"

"Morse!"

"Somebody signalling!"

"But what on earth should they signal

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"or?" asked Dodd. "And how's it being done?"

"A piece of looking-glass, or something bright," replied Pitt. "They're using the sun— Hold on! L-i-o-n-s. Lions, by Jove! That's the best of knowing the Morse Code!"

All the Hawks were familiar with it, and they stood there tense, while they read off the flashes. There could be no further doubt that somebody was deliberately signalling. And it was almost conclusive that it was Pitt & Co. who were being signalled.

"Lions—Tigers—danger!" said Pitt at length. "My only hat! They must have drifted on to that rock, or something, and now they're on the lighthouse! That's why they're signalling to us!"

"But they can't see us at this distance," objected Grey. "At least, we can't see them—"

"I expect they spotted us through a telescope," said Pitt. "Great Scott! I'm a first-class idiot! What's the matter with my binoculars?"

They had been slung across his back, and he had forgotten them until now. Quickly taking them out, he put them to his eyes, and stared at the lighthouse. The balcony came into prominence at once.

"Yes, the balcony's crowded!" he exclaimed tensely. "I can see a lot of Scouts— The Lions and the Tigers—"

"They're signalling again," interrupted Hart.

The Hawks watched keenly. And at last the fresh message was completed—and it was certainly enough to startle anybody.

"Nash mad—boat smashed—come rescue!" repeated Pitt. "My goodness! What do you think of that? Old Dan has gone off his head, and our chaps are alone on the lighthouse with him!"

"Great Scott!"

"What—what can we do!"

Pitt waved his hat vigorously, and the other Hawks followed his example. And Nipper, on the lighthouse balcony, saw those waving hats with perfect clearness. It told him that his Morse signals had been read and understood.

Ashore, Pitt was looking grim and tense.

"What can we do?" he repeated. "Look down there! There's an old boat on the beach! We'll go down to it at once and row straight out! No need to waste time by going to the coastguard station—it's a couple of miles away, and this storm is gathering all the time. Come on!"

And the Hawks, thrilling with their unexpected mission, forgot all else in the excitement of the moment.



"Come on!" panted Nipper huskily.

A turn of the stairs showed him that their suspicions were correct.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARTILLERY OF THE HEAVENS.

NIPPER lowered his telescope, and took a deep breath.

"It's all right—they saw the signals, and they're making a move!" he exclaimed. "The Hawks are doing something! It oughtn't to be long, now, before a boat comes out."

"Thank goodness!" said Church. "The storm's coming up quickly, too. Did you feel that puff of wind a minute ago?"

All the marooned Scouts were inwardly excited. Nipper's expedient, undertaken on the spur of the moment, had met with complete success. The figures on the cliff had seen the signals, and were taking action. It was a tremendous relief to everybody.

In the meantime, nothing had been seen of Daniel Nash.

He had remained within the lighthouse, and the knowledge that he was quiet helped to make the juniors more comfortable. Perhaps he would have no further outbursts of violence.

The storm was now gathering rapidly—as storms will. For hours it had been in the air, and had seemed far distant. But now,

suddenly, it developed with almost tropical rapidity.

There was something grand and awe-inspiring in the whole affair, and nobody needed telling that the threatening storm would be of stupendous power and violence.

That inky cloud bank had risen almost to the zenith, and a premature darkness was speedily gathering. Now and again forked lightning would split the black mass asunder—vivid, lurid network designs of lightning which at times half covered the sky. And the rumbling thunder was now becoming louder and louder. It was crashing out like the united efforts of countless batteries of artillery.

The sea was uneasy, too. The flat calmness had given way to an ominous roll. Sullen waves were beginning to surge against the rocks, far below the lighthouse balcony. The wind was now coming—only in mere puffs, but they were growing more frequent.

"I didn't expect the storm to sweep up as quickly as this," said Nipper anxiously. "I hope Pitt and those other chaps won't do anything rash. It'll be pretty serious if they try to get to the lighthouse in a boat. I'm almost beginning to wish I hadn't signalled."

"Oh, they'll tell the coastguards," said Handforth. "They wouldn't be mad enough to come out on their own——"

"Here, I say—quick!" ejaculated Church, pushing forward. "There's a sound of something smashing inside! I believe Old Dan is in another of his giddy fits!"

Nipper turned away from the balcony rails, and went to the door. He had been scanning the shore, in the hope of seeing the Hawks. But it was getting so dim that the beach was almost invisible.

Passing inside, Nipper paused in the doorway. The other fellows were crowding round, half fearful of going in. An ominous smashing sound came distinctly to their ears, although they could see nothing.

"What is it?" muttered Tommy Watson.

Nipper passed round the great lamp, a fresh anxiety troubling him. Considering the storm and the gathering darkness, it was high time that the lamp should be lit, sending out its warning flashes to shipping. But within the lighthouse everything was gloomy and dim.

Nipper suddenly came to a halt, and caught his breath in. The lamp itself was an enormous thing—a kind of tower, with iron steps leading up to the great reflectors. And the smashing sound was coming from above.

"Good heavens!" muttered Nipper huskily.

Some fragments of glass came shattering down near by. And then, staring up, Nipper saw what was happening. Daniel Nash was perched up amid the mechanism and reflec-

tors. Armed with a great hammer, he was deliberately doing his utmost to ruin the delicate apparatus, and pound it to fragments.

"Dan!" shouted Nipper desperately. "What are you doing?"

A wild peal of laughter came from the madman.

"There'll be no light to-night!" he screamed, in the throes of his frenzy. "There'll be no light to-night! For years Old Dan has kept the light goin', but in this storm there'll be nothin' but darkness! Let the ships be wrecked—let them smash themselves to pulp on the rocks! It's what I want to see! Curse them all! They've ruined me, an' I'll have my revenge!"

Nipper was utterly horrified. On any ordinary night the failure of the Shingle Light would have been serious enough, but with this appalling storm brewing, it would be terrible. Never before had the light been so urgently needed.

"Dan!" shouted Nipper. "Cool yourself, Dan! You've got to get the light going——"

"You young fool!" shrieked the lighthouse keeper. "Get out of here, or I'll learn ye! Get out of here!"

He flung something down, and Nipper only just dodged in time. A rough piece of metal struck the floor, and rebounded. Then, as a heavy peal of thunder crashed out, Nash recommenced his onslaught of destruction.

Nipper reeled out on to the balcony, breathing hard. The full realisation of the horror had come upon him. Not only were they trapped in the lighthouse with a madman, but on this night of all nights—with an unprecedented storm about to break in all its fury—the light would fail!

CHAPTER XVIII.

TO THE RESCUE.



JACK GREY looked up anxiously.

"I say, this storm's coming down pretty quickly," he exclaimed. "I think we'd better chuck it up, Reggie—we might get caught in the middle of it. We'd better go along to the coastguards and tell them——"

"My dear chap, the storm will have broken before then, and it'll be too late altogether," interrupted Pitt. "So far, the sea is calm, and if we put our backs into the rowing we'll be at the lighthouse in ten minutes. If things look too bad when we get there, we can easily row back. It's the only chance of doing anything at once, anyhow."

The Hawks were on the beach, tugging away at the old boat which Reggie Pitt had

pointed out from the cliff top. During the short interval the whole character of the sky had changed. The sun had vanished, darkness was coming on, and the air was throbbing with the first warnings of the great electrical disturbance.

But the sea, although uneasy, was by no means rough. To the juniors, it seemed a comparatively easy task to take the boat out to the lighthouse. They had plenty of pluck, and plenty of daring. And there was no time to bring anybody else into this affair. Either they acted alone, or not at all.

For Reggie Pitt could clearly see that not one second was to be wasted. If they went to the coastguard station, the journey itself would occupy valuable time, and then there would be delays. Before anything definite could be done, the storm would be at its height.

No, this was the only possible way.

And, Pitt argued, plenty of good might come of it, whilst there could be no harm. If they managed to get the Lions and the Tigers off, all well and good. If they found this couldn't be done, they could easily get back to shore, and warn the coastguards then. Once the storm broke, it would be necessary to wait until it had abated—for the Shingle Rock was absolutely unapproachable except in the calmest weather.

It was, indeed, now or not at all.

"Come on—put your backs into it!" panted Reggie. "Seconds mean everything at a time like this. I'm beginning to think we're going on a hopeless quest, but we can try, anyway."

They got the boat into the water, and at last pushed off. Once out beyond the breakers, they found the sea rougher than they had anticipated. It had seemed so calm and oily from a distance. But at close quarters the sullen waves were rising higher with every minute that passed.

And the darkness was gathering at an alarming rate—although, strictly speaking, darkness wasn't due for a full hour yet.

"I think we'd better give it up!" said Hart, as he pulled at his oar. "I'm no funk, but this looks bad to me—"

He was interrupted by a shattering peal of thunder. For a moment the Hawks were dazzled by the lightning. The dense black clouds were now rolling up in massed formation. Even the lighthouse itself was indistinct in the gloom. So far not a drop of rain had fallen.

Reggie Pitt quickly made up his mind.

"Yes, we'll go back!" he said briskly. "This is more than I bargained for. Still, we started on the job, and we did our best. We'll get ashore, and rush to the coast-guard station."

"Good!"

The Hawks were relieved. As soon as they had started out in the boat they had

realised the size of the job they had undertaken. They were all inwardly alarmed. The sea was rising almost like magic. And already the shore had become a dim, indistinct blur.

They had only left it a few moments before, and now they pulled back with desperate strength. But although it had taken them a comparatively short time to get to their present position, all their pulling at the oars seemed to be of no avail. In fact, Pitt, with a feeling of helplessness clutching at his heart, began to realise that they were getting further out!

Some unseen, unsuspected current had caught them, and had them in its grip. No wonder they had made good progress when going outwards! No wonder they failed to make any impression on the return trip!

Fight as they would, they could not beat the current. In spite of all their efforts, they got further and further out. It seemed that some grim shadow of disaster was descending upon them—and preparing to smother them out of existence.

Only a few minutes ago the sea had been calm, the sky had been comparatively light. But now—when it was too late to get back to the beach—the waves were rising with an uncanny, extraordinary strength. The sky had darkened until it had an awe-inspiring, terrorising effect. And the vivid lightning flashes, and the peals of thunder, only added to the Hawks' consternation.

"Fool—idiot!" shouted Pitt fiercely. "It's all my fault, you chaps! I brought you into this—"

"Shut up, Reggie—you didn't know!" interrupted Grey. "We all thought it was the best thing. We've been out in these waters before, and there's never been a current like this. How could we know?"

Pitt looked round desperately.

His eyes tried to pierce the gloom, and he started. Was it imagination, or reality? But it seemed to him that the boat was getting nearer and nearer to the treacherous, death-dealing crags of Shingle Head—although he and his companions were pulling their hardest in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE COMING OF THE STORM.



HANDFORTH was pale and shaken. For once he was genuinely moved.

This was no ordinary adventure, with only themselves to be considered. Hundreds of lives might depend upon the result of this night's work.

The balcony was already dark, and inside Daniel Nash was deliberately wrecking the intricate mechanism in his frenzied madness. And these twelve Boy Scouts were cut off

on the lighthouse—isolated from any kind of help, and left entirely to their own devices.

"We can't let this go on!" shouted Handforth desperately. "Look here, Nipper—we've got to grab Nash and lock him up! It doesn't matter if some of us are hurt—or even killed! If we don't do it, there might be hundreds of lives sacrificed!"

"Swab my decks, he's right!" shouted Burton.

"I'm game!" panted several of the others. Nipper looked at them grimly.

"By Jove, you've got the right spirit, but it's too late, old sons!" he exclaimed, his voice tense and firm. "The apparatus is practically wrecked—and Nash has done his worst! If there had been any chance of our stopping him, I might have agreed, but we needn't risk human life for nothing!"

"What do you mean—nothing?" demanded Handforth.

"I mean that if we captured Nash now we couldn't do anything," replied Nipper. "The mechanism is shattered, and Nash can't do anything worse. He'll calm down now, and we must watch for our opportunity."

Nipper's point of view was the most sensible one. There was utterly no necessity to attack this maniac and go to almost certain death. For, without question, Nash would undoubtedly do his utmost to kill the first junior who came near him. And if the Scouts made a combined assault, several of them were certain to be fatally injured in the melee.

The affair was becoming more and more dramatic.

The elements themselves were combining to add to the horror. Confusion within the lighthouse, and confusion in the heavens! The great masses of black clouds were now rolling up—veritable regiments of the sky. The last glow of daylight had practically vanished.

Such a thunderstorm as this was quite unusual in quiet, peaceful Sussex. But the weather had been hot for days, and all the fury of the gathering storm was concentrating itself for a mighty onslaught.

On the lighthouse balcony, the juniors leaned against the rail, uncertain, nervous, and just a little bit scared. The vivid lightning and the booming thunder added to their confusion.

Fortunately, Nash had not ventured out upon the balcony—he was making no attempt to deliberately attack the juniors. He had trapped them on the lighthouse, and he was apparently satisfied. It was far better for them to leave him alone—only disaster could follow if they provoked him. Their only course was to wait.

"Things look bad just now, but an hour will probably make all the difference," said Nipper tensely. "This storm is so fierce that it probably won't last long. And old Dan's madness may subside with the passing of the storm. I've got an idea that the electricity in the air is affecting him. His mood is responding to the outside influences."

"You mean that when the weather gets calm, he'll get calm?" asked Watson.

"Yes, something like that," replied Nipper. "Thunderstorms affect mad people in that way occasionally, I've heard. And I don't believe Nash is really mad. It's only a kind of temporary insanity. He's capable of any violence just now, but this attack has been brought on by solitude and brooding over his troubles. If only we can subdue him, and get him ashore, a month or two of rest will probably put him in his right senses."

Handforth grunted.

"It's all very well to talk about getting him ashore," he growled. "We can't even get ourselves ashore! And what about those Hawks? They signalled to us——"

"It's no good relying on them now," interrupted Nipper, shaking his head. "They must have abandoned the thing before they started. They wouldn't be mad enough to come out in this smother. The sea's getting higher every minute, and as soon as the wind comes the waves will be terrific."

Ay, you're right, shipmate," nodded Tom Burton seriously. "There's going to be some dirty weather before long. And with the light out of commission, it'll be a bad thing for the coastwise shipping!"

"Everything depends upon us," said Nipper quietly. "There's no possibility of help reaching us before the morning. The coastguards wouldn't be mad enough to approach the Shingle Rock in the darkness. We can take it for granted that we're on this lighthouse for the night."

"With a madman to deal with!" said Tregellis-West. "Begad, it's a frightful position, dear old boys!"

"Yes, with a madman to deal with," repeated Nipper. "He seems to be quiet now, so I'm going to have another shot at him before long. And if there's any chance of locking him up in a store-room, we'll do it."

"Good!" said Handforth briskly. "That's what I like! Action! I'm fed up with this waiting. I'll tell you what—I'll do the scouting this time, and you chaps——"

"Thanks all the same, Handy, but it's my job," interrupted Nipper. "Phew, that was a flash, if you like!"

Boom—boooooom!

The thunder rolled and crashed with terrific intensity, and at the same time the gusts of wind increased. But even now no rain had fallen. The storm was still gathering its forces for the big onslaught.

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT THE LIGHTNING REVEALED.



"STICK it, you chaps—stick it!"

Reggie Pitt shouted the words encouragingly as he put all his strength into the rowing. The Hawks were in desperate plight. There were only four oars

in the boat, so two of the juniors were necessarily idle.

Perhaps this was all to the good, since it allowed a relief now and again. The sea was rising alarmingly, for the wind had come along, adding a new terror to the thunder and lightning.

And the close proximity of the treacherous Shingle Head did not tend to make the Hawks any the more comfortable. They could see nothing in the blackness—except when an extra long lightning flash flooded the sea. And even then they were so dazzled that they could see little. And afterwards the darkness appeared blacker than ever.

from exposure. The air was still hot, and the wind itself was almost stifling. Although they were half-soaked with spray, the seawater was not likely to do them any harm. A midsummer storm of this type is not dangerous in that way.

“The best thing we can do is to get out as far as we can,” shouted Pitt. “Then we might be able to work round the other headland and drift into the comparative calmness of Caistowe Harbour. That’s our best chance.”

“But what if we’re swept out into the Channel?” asked Dodd.

“Then we shall be swept out,” replied Pitt grimly. “We’re doing the best we can,

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The boat was tossing about perilously.

The Hawks seemed to be cut off from every kind of help. The shore had vanished, the headland was out of sight, and the lighthouse showed none of its warning flashes. Jack Grey and one or two of the others believed that they had been swept right out to sea.

But Pitt knew differently.

Now and again he could hear the booming roar of the surf, and knew that the rocks were comparatively close. They were pulling at the oars mechanically, in order to give themselves something to do.

There was no fear of the Scouts suffering

and— Great Scott! What a terrific flash! Look out for the crash!”

The clap of thunder which instantly followed was so devastating that Pitt's eardrums sang with the effect of it. And in the moment of brilliancy he had seen the rocks quite near by.

The same flash had another effect.

It was a long, blinding display of electricity—forked lightning, which spread half across the sky, flickering and shivering.

And on the lighthouse, Nipper was leaning over the rail, staring at the sea, a hundred and fifty feet below. He could tell by the hiss and roar of the surf that the sea was rising alarmingly.

And in that flash he saw the great waves. More than this—he saw what appeared to be a cockleshell, several hundreds of yards away, and perilously close to the jagged rocks. The thing was photographed on Nipper's mind with startling distinctness—he could even see it after the darkness had shut down.

A boat! A boat with six figures in it—six figures in Scout uniform! Nipper knew that he had made no mistake. One glimpse had been enough. The intensity of the lightning had not permitted him to make any mistake.

"Did—did you see?" he muttered, turning to Handforth.

"See what?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Nipper.

"Look here——"

"I say, there's a boat down there!" shouted Church, pushing round the balcony. "I saw it distinctly—a boat with three or four people in it! They're coming to the rescue!"

A wave of excitement passed through the Lions and Tigers.

"Keep calm, you chaps!" warned Nipper. "I saw the boat, too—but you needn't hope for any help. The Hawks are in ten times more danger than we are! They came out in answer to our signal, and the storm hit them. They're drifting—I don't think they can get back."

"My goodness!"

"Can't we help them?"

"We can't do anything!" shouted Nipper grimly. "If they try to get near the lighthouse their boat will be smashed like an egg-shell. Even as it is, they're drifting towards the rocks! I wish to Heaven I'd never signalled to the shore at all! But how were we to know that this would happen?"

"They ought to have gone to the coast-guards!" snorted Handforth. "Fancy coming out in a boat on their own—— By George! I saw it then—right near those rocks!"

Another flash had come, and Handforth pointed. But he was pointing into the darkness, where nothing could be seen. The wind was now roaring in from the Channel, and the storm was settling down to do its worst. Almost continuous lightning and booming thunder. It was indeed an evening of adventure and excitement.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FIRST GLEAM OF HOPE.

 **N**IPPER gave a sudden start. "I'll tell you what!" he exclaimed. "The Hawks don't know their position—they're lost because the lighthouse isn't working! If we could only rig up a kind of flare it might give them a sense of direction——"

"A flare, eh?" interrupted Handforth. "Yes, but how?"

"We'll make a kind of torch," said Nipper quickly. "There's plenty of crude oil below, and if we find some wood and paper and string we can make a huge torch, and set it alight."

"But it'll blow out!" objected Church.

"Not if we light it thoroughly before we bring it into the wind," replied Nipper. "Come on—let's dash in, and see what we can do!"

"But what about Nash——"

"We shall have to chance meeting him," replied Nipper. "Some of our chaps are in terrible danger, and we've got to act."

They entered the great lamp-room. Nipper and Watson and Handforth and Church were the four who ventured in. It was impossible for the whole twelve to go. The others waited outside, anxious and tense.

The four Scouts felt uneasy as they entered the lighthouse. It was all dark—pitchy black. They felt that the madman might be lurking in this gloom, ready to smash them to pulp with his murderous hammer. And indeed this was no imaginary peril. It was real enough.

But the Scouts reached the stairway without encountering any danger. With Nipper leading, they passed cautiously down. The booming of the thunder came to them in a subdued, indistinct way now. And now and again it seemed that the great granite tower positively shook.

Down in the service-room everything was quiet. Nipper ventured to pull his electric-torch out. He was about to switch it on when a sound came from the room below—the living-room.

At the same time there was a glow of light—a flickering, lurid glow.

"Great Scott!" breathed Church. "I believe he's setting the place on fire!"

Nipper hastened down the stairs, with a new fear clutching at his heart. This tower was made of granite, with stone floors, but once one of the apartments got alight the stairways would act like flues, and the conflagration would spread from one apartment to the other with appalling rapidity. Better to risk an encounter with the madman than to fight the dread terror of fire.

"Come on!" panted Nipper huskily.

A turn of the stairs showed him that their suspicions were correct.

In the centre of the living-room the table was smashed to fragments and was made into a bonfire. This was now flaring up with a roar, and old Dan Nash was standing well back, throwing articles of clothing upon the fire.

"Come along, young gents—come along!" he shouted boisterously. "We'll soon have the old place flaring up! Ay, there'll be a

light on the Shingle Rock to-night—a light as they've never had afore!"

"Better rush him!" muttered Handforth tensely.

Nipper paused a moment. Just in Nash's rear there was a big cupboard, with the door standing wide open—the mad lighthouse-keeper had evidently just removed the clothing from this place.

"Yes," said Nipper. "We'll rush him! But leave it until the last moment—make him believe we're friendly! See that cupboard? Our move is to push him in, and slam the door."

"My hat! If we only can!" breathed Watson.

They descended the last few stairs, and crossed the floor. For the moment they ignored the fire. The maniac needed all their attention. Old Dan stood there, smiling, but his smile was twisted and his eyes were glittering with a wild, insane light.

"Off with yer clothes!" he roared. "Anything to feed the fire!"

"Now then!" roared Nipper.

With one terrific rush the four Scouts were upon the enemy. He was capable of murdering them all, for his normal strength was greatly increased by his madness. It was only by taking him at a disadvantage that the juniors had any chance.

And the ruse was successful.

Off his balance, Old Dan reeled back, crashed into the cupboard, and fell headlong. He screamed and raved as he fell, but with one movement Nipper seized the door and slammed it shut. The latch clicked, and the madman was a prisoner.

"Shoulders—quick!" yelled Nipper.

They all jammed their shoulders against the door while Nipper shot the bolts. Their relief was stupendous. For the time being, at all events, their terrible enemy was helpless. And there seemed little chance that he would escape from his prison.

"We've got him—we've got him!" roared Handforth triumphantly.

"Yes, but the fire—" began Church.

Nipper was already acting. Hanging to a clip on the wall there was a patent fire-extinguisher. Indeed, there was one in every room of the lighthouse.

"Rush to the other room and get the extinguishers!" panted Nipper. "You'll find 'em hanging on the walls! Quick! Don't lose a second!"

They took no notice of the muffled screams and curses which came from within the cupboard. Dragging down the appliance, Nipper crashed the nozzle to the floor, and a fierce stream instantly resulted. He directed this into the heart of the fire.

The effect was almost instantaneous.

The leaping flames were subdued, and the intensity of the fire was greatly reduced. But it had got a firm hold, and



Hart and Farman were the sick ones; but they managed to scramble up the rocks. Death lurked near, and their sickness was forgotten for the moment.

soon began making headway again. But the arrival of Watson with another extinguisher was fatal to the conflagration. This one did the trick.

Three minutes later the fire was out, and the four juniors staggered up drunkenly to the other room, for they were almost overcome by the smoke, fumes, and heat.

But without any question the situation was improved.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE ROCKS.



BOOM, boom! Crash! The rolling thunder, the shrieking wind, and the rising sea all combined to make this a terrifying, horrible experience for the Hawk Patrol. Pitt and his Scouts were dazed and bewildered by the buffeting they were receiving. They wondered how it was that the boat managed to keep afloat.

Several waves had already come inboard, and the bottom of the little craft was flooded. It couldn't be very long before she

became utterly swamped. And what then? She would sink, and the Hawks would be precipitated into the treacherous sea.

In that case their fate would be sealed.

For if they couldn't row the boat back to shore the chances of swimming to safety were too insignificant to be considered.

Darkness shut them in on all sides. They were deafened and inwardly scared. And one or two of the Hawks were dreadfully ill, too. The violent rocking of the boat had rendered them incapably seasick. They little cared whether they were drowned or not.

"I can't make it out!" said Pitt, more to himself than to the others. "We're near the lighthouse—I saw it in one of the flashes. But she isn't working to-night. The lamp's dead! Heaven only knows what's been happening on the Rock!"

"I expect Nash has murdered everybody!" said Grey hopelessly.

They felt some huge drops of rain, but they couldn't even be sure of this, for the spray was continuous. But there was no doubt about the storm. It had developed to its highest pitch now, and the heavens were crashing out in fearful violence every few seconds.

And with the coming of the wind the waves were rising.

In an amazingly short space of time the sullen rollers were converting themselves into gigantic waves. To these helpless juniors in the boat it seemed that disaster must overtake them at any moment.

Indeed, they were at a loss to understand why the boat was still afloat. Something like a miracle had saved them so far. But this miracle could not continue; it wasn't in the nature of things.

At times the boat would wallow between the great waves. Even in the gloom, the Scouts could see the spray-smothered wave-tops towering over them on either side.

At any moment one of these waves might break and smother them utterly and completely. But somehow the boat always

escaped. She rose dizzily and uncertainly to the crests of the rollers. For a moment she would hover there, and then glide down into the depths again.

"It can't go on—it can't go on!" muttered Grey. "Reggie, old man, we're done! We can never get into the harbour!"

"No, I'm afraid not!" agreed Pitt. "That's the funny part of it. We seem to stick in one place now. We're near the rocks, and yet we don't strike them. Some trick of the current must have pushed us into a kind of dead spot. And we're

just wallowing here. But it can't last much longer."

"Look!" shouted Hart suddenly.

The lightning was flashing, and Hart pointed over the sea. None of the Scouts were now rowing. One oar had been smashed, another lost, and it was a sheer waste of energy to attempt to use the others.

"What did you see?" demanded Pitt.

"Rocks!" panted Hart. "Rocks!"

Pitt stared, and waited for the next lightning flash. It came almost at once, a searing, sizzling flame of blue. It split the heavens in twain, and as the thunder crashed out, Pitt saw the rocks.

"Good heavens!" he muttered.

They were within fifty feet. Round them the surf boiled and foamed. And even in that flash Pitt recognised the rocks. They were a portion of the spur which ran out from Shingle Head. The rocks rose sharply in

the centre, forming a kind of pinnacle, round which the seas hissed and churned.

Pitt remembered exploring these rocks only a week or so ago. He and two or three others had perched themselves in a hollow of that pinnacle, and had found the haven quite snug.

But now the rocks were a place of dread and disaster.

The seas were breaking over them continuously, and all round the force of the waves was so terrific that only death could result if the boat struck. Yet a minute

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The French master. Typically French, and very excitable. Confines his attention mainly to the Senior School, the juniors seldom seeing him, except on examinations.

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later another flash of lightning revealed the fact that the boat was much nearer.

The Hawks could hear the roaring and crashing of the surf. Those who were unaffected by illness told themselves that their last minute had come. All conversation ceased. They waited tensely for the wave which would carry them on those cruel fangs—to mangle and smash them to smithereens.

A wave came—a mighty roller which seemed twice as formidable as any other. It lifted the boat like an eggshell, carried it high, and then swept it forward. The rush was so swift that the scouts had no time to even cry out.

And they were being carried straight on to the rocks!

CHAPTER XXIII.

ALMOST A MIRACLE.



CRASH!

The boat struck the rocks in a peculiar way. Carried forward by that enormous wave, she was literally deposited high on the rocks—not crushed to pulp against them.

The wave tossed her on the rocks, left her there, and the surf receded. The Hawks thought that death had come, but in less than a second they found that they were comparatively safe.

The boat literally fell to pieces about them. And although one or two received minor gashes and bruises, they suffered from nothing worse than shock. They were able to scramble up the rocks.

"Quick!" yelled Pitt. "There's a chance for us!"

"We—we're safe!" panted Grey. "How did it happen? I thought we were going to be crashed to death——"

"Never mind how it happened," interrupted Pitt. "There might be another wave like that one in a minute, and we shall be swept back. We've got to get higher—out of reach!"

Hart and Farman were the sick ones, but they managed to scramble up the rocks. Death lurked near, and their sickness was forgotten for the moment. It was a stiff task, for the rocks were slimy, slippery, and covered with festoons of clinging seaweed. And the darkness did not tend to help them.

"Come along, old man," gasped Pitt. "Up you come!"

He grabbed Farman by the arm, and hauled him up. The American junior was grateful, for he was feeling dreadfully bad.

"Say, I'm sure a dumbell!" he panted. "Gee! I thought we were all gone this trip! I'm usually a good sailor, but——"

"Never mind," interrupted Pitt. "Even

the best sailors go under now and again. Up you come!"

At last the Hawks were high on the rocks—well out of reach of the lashing, infuriated waves. On every side the surf boiled and roared. But the six juniors were comparatively safe.

As Pitt had previously found, there was a kind of natural shelter at the top of the rock pinnacle. And, fortunately, the wind was blowing in the right direction now. In that shelter, the juniors were protected from the full force of it.

"Well, this is a surprise!" said Jack Grey, as he allowed himself to relax. "It's comparatively calm here. I say, I can't make it out! Why on earth weren't we smashed up?"

"That's what I'd like to know," said Jerry Dodd. "By jings! It looked as though we were going to be torn into fragments! And yet we just sat down on the rock with hardly any shock at all!"

"The trick of the sea," said Pitt. "There's never any telling, with the sea, you chaps. It's always been a mystery, and always will be. With one wave the sea can kill a dozen people, and with the next wave it can save a dozen. It's no good trying to reach any explanation. We're safe, and let's be thankful."

"By jings! We are!" said Dodd fervently.

"But for how long?" asked Grey. "As far as I know, the tide's coming up—it isn't ten o'clock yet, and it's high tide at midnight. This rock will probably be completely under water——"

"Rats!" interrupted Pitt. "Even at high tide, this pinnacle is safe. My sons, there's nothing further to worry about, as far as we're concerned. We've just got to wait until the tide goes down, and then we shall be able to scramble to safety by crossing the rocks—they're all exposed at low water. We're safe—except for a possible cold or two. But what about those chaps on the lighthouse? We've got time to think of that now."

The others were rather startled.

"Goodness knows what's happened," said Jack Grey. "We know that Old Nash has gone mad—that message told us as much. And the very fact that there's no light proves that something awful has happened."

"They're all dead, I expect," said Hart miserably.

"Don't you believe it," replied Pitt. "If twelve of our fellows can't deal with one madman, it's a pity! I expect they've had some excitement, but I'm pretty sure that they'll come out on top."

"Sure!" said Farman! "I've got a hunch that way, too."

And the Hawks tried to make themselves comfortable. This was practically impossi-

ble, but they were, at least, safe. The storm was abating, the thunder becoming more distant. Rain was falling steadily, and even the sea appeared to have done its worst.

But, somehow, Reggie Pitt wasn't quite satisfied. He had an idea that the weather was attempting to fool them. Midsummer thunderstorms of the nature of this one are liable to return—and to return with increased violence. There was a feeling in the air which indicated that something of that sort would happen now.

But why should they worry over a mere possibility?

The Hawks were safe, and a dozen thunderstorms couldn't affect them much. They merely had to wait until low tide, and they could then return to camp. So far as they were concerned, the adventure was over.

But what of their companions in the lighthouse?

CHAPTER XXIV.

NIPPER'S DECISION.



"CAPTURED?" shouted Alf Brent joyously. "Old Nash is captured?"

"Locked in a cupboard!" said Handforth.

"Thank goodness!"

"You can trust us to do the right thing!" said Handforth calmly. "It didn't take me long to come to a decision. As soon as I saw Nash in front of that cupboard I knew the best move——"

"You ass, it was Nipper's idea!" said Church.

"Eh? Why, you—you——"

"We won't argue!" interrupted Nipper. "There's no time for arguing. Nash tried to set fire to the place, and we only just extinguished it in time. And now that he's locked up, we can get busy. I want all you fellows to work as you've never worked before!"

The Scouts were on the balcony, and the rain was pelting upon them—not that they cared. The thunder wasn't so loud, and the lightning was less vivid. But the night had set in as black as pitch, and the sea was wild and boisterous.

"What do you want us to do?" asked McClure eagerly.

"Yes, old tulip!" said Archie. "Absolutely!"

"First of all, we're going to explore this lighthouse from top to bottom," replied Nipper grimly. "We're going to light every lamp that we can find, and we're going to make doubly sure of that cupboard door. We're booked here for the night, so we'll make ourselves useful."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Nipper!"

The prospect of activity heartened the Scouts to a surprising degree.

"What's more, we're going to manufacture as many flares as we can," went on Nipper. "They won't be much good, compared to the usual light, but they'll be better than nothing."

"I say, couldn't we get the real lamp going?" asked Church eagerly.

"I don't know—I'm going to examine it while you other fellows are making the flares," replied Nipper, cool and calm. "The storm's getting better, but the sea is terribly rough. At any hour of the night a ship may run on these rocks, and wreck herself. We've got to do all we can."

"Yes, by jingo, you're right there!" exclaimed Brent. "There'll be plenty of ships running for Caistowe Harbour in this storm, and without the Shingle Light they'll be completely out of their bearings. Even a flare would be better than nothing."

The situation had changed with dramatic suddenness.

And the Lions and Tigers, instead of being uneasy and alarmed, were thrilled with hope and eagerness to get to work. The safety of shipping depended upon THEM! They would show everybody that they were good Scouts—ready to serve in the hour of emergency! It was a chance they had never expected to come their way.

Not that they were thinking of any possible glory now. Duty was the only call which appealed to them. The Shingle Light was out! Well, the Shingle Light had to be lit, or a substitute provided. That was the one and only thought which filled their minds.

In the excitement, they even forgot the terrible plight of the Hawks. In any case, they could do nothing—and perhaps, by this time, the boat had managed to get ashore. It would be a mere waste of time to wait on the balcony looking for those other Scouts.

Several of the juniors had electric torches, and they proceeded to distribute themselves up and down the lighthouse. The first thing was to light every available lamp.

And then, when they had some light on the subject, they would be able to give their attention to the real work of the night. They all had a feeling that the drama was by no means over. And in this, they were right! As a matter of fact, the real, tense drama had hardly commenced!

The further Adventures of
**The Scouts of St. Frank's on
 Shingle Head Lighthouse**
 Will be described in next week's Story:—
**SAVED FROM THE SEA;
 Or, Heroes of the Lighthouse!**

THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE

(All communications to the League should be addressed to the Chief Officer, St. Frank's League, c/o THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.)

June 12th, 1925.

My dear League-ites,—

The first League announcement in our June 13th issue has resulted in an immediate response from readers all over the country, many of whom have generously offered their services as Organising Officers. Their names and addresses have been duly recorded, and by the time this appears in print they will have received their Foundation Certificate of Membership and appointment as O.O.s. I anticipate many more volunteers for O.O. before the list closes on June 20th. After that date, those who were desirous of becoming O.O.s will have been able to show their enthusiasm in another way before joining the executive of the League. In other words, they can prove their genuine desire to help the League by distributing Our Paper to six more prospective readers, and so becoming bronze medallists. Then, and only then, will their names be eligible for consideration as O.O.s.

It will be noticed that I have laid particular stress on the need for making Our Paper widely known among your friends who are at present non-readers. That is because existing readers know all about the League, and to increase the membership we must introduce the League to those who, not being readers at present, have not had the opportunity of knowing anything about the League.

I will take the opportunity now of thanking all those readers who have written to me about the League, offering their help and support as Organising Officers. I much regret that owing to the very large amount of correspondence I am unable to answer each letter individually, though, of course, I will do my best to write personally as soon as possible to those who have enclosed stamped addressed envelopes.

Many of these correspondents tell me they have in the past secured several new readers. I would like to present them each with League medals by return of post as a mark of my appreciation for their services towards Our Paper. But that would be a breach of League conditions, and I must be fair to all. Consequently, although I am very grateful to these readers, I am afraid it is impossible to allow the new readers they so generously obtained before the League was formed to count towards getting the League Members' Certificate or other League awards.

While on the subject of awards, I might mention that in addition to the bronze medal, I may be offering a solid silver medal to members who have won their bronze medal, and, later, a solid gold medal to silver medallists. But before I order any silver medals to be struck, I want the League to be, at least, 5,000 members strong, and not less than 10,000 members before any gold medals are struck.

As I trust many of you are already qualifying, or have qualified, for your bronze medals, you would like to know something about the conditions for exchanging them for silver medals, and, later, exchanging the silver for gold medals. Subject, of course, to any amendments that may be deemed necessary, bronze medallists who wish to exchange their bronze medals for silver medals will probably be required to purchase six extra copies of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY and present them to six prospective new readers, sending in their twelve coupons in exactly the same way as when they applied for their bronze medals. As regards qualifying for exchanging silver for gold medals, I have practically decided to offer this award to silver medallists who buy another twelve copies and present them to twelve prospective new readers, sending in their twenty-four coupons as for the other awards. I hope this is perfectly clear. Anyhow, full instructions will be given to bronze medallists on how they can qualify for the next award when they receive their bronze medals.

As a typical example of the spirit and enthusiasm shown by readers for the League, I am taking the liberty of publishing the following letter from Master Alfred E. Fletcher, of 91, Francis Avenue, Southsea, Portsmouth:

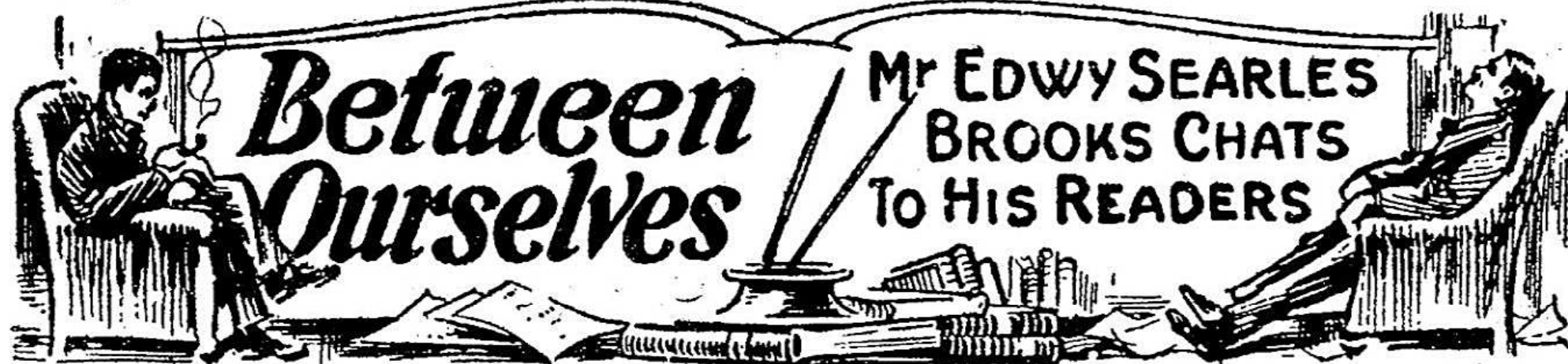
"To The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY,

"Dear Sir,—

"I must congratulate you and Mr. Brooks upon the excellence of the St. Frank's League scheme. What I read in this week's "N.L.L." was a pleasant surprise.

"In my opinion, the St. Frank's League is doing noble and patriotic work for the whole of the British Empire and for the English-speaking countries, too. It will be doing national service in providing clothes for poor people, in providing employment for youths, and giving advice on the choice of careers, thus indirectly governing the future of the Empire in no small fashion, and, lastly, but not leastly, introducing healthy and clean literature, written by a man who has no equal, into the lives of many boys, thus making them aspire to higher ideals. For I readily believe that reading about such splendid, true-blue sporting Britons like Nipper, Reggie Pitt, Handforth, and the rest influences the minds of readers and elevates them a great deal.

(Continued on page 39.)



Mr EDWY SEARLES
BROOKS CHATS
TO HIS READERS

(NOTE.—If any readers write to me, I shall be pleased to comment upon such remarks as are likely to interest the majority. If you have any suggestions, send them along. If you have any grumbles—make them to me. All letters should be addressed to EDWY SEARLES BROOKS, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. All letters acknowledged below have been personally read by me, and I thank their writers most heartily. But, although ALL letters afford me an equal amount of pleasure, I am reluctantly compelled to confine my individual replies to those of general interest.—E. S. B.)

Twin Tomboys (South Cerney, Glos.), H. Clifford Bate (Colombes, France), J. Bowers (Poplar), Claude Bradshaw (Amphill), N. Augustus Taylor (Nuneaton), C.B.A. Battersea.) I hardly know how to give you the information you require, Twin Tomboys. I'll willingly tell you how to feed a pet rabbit if you like, because this might interest others, too. But your rabbit, you say, has had the run of the house. If you'll give me a few more details about the bunny I'll give my opinion as to what you should do in your special case. And now I'm going to quote a few words from another letter: "I must thank you for putting those little bits in your chat from readers' letters, etc. For my mother always used to call the N.L.L. a penny dreadful, and she told me I oughtn't to 'read such trash.' Well, I showed her a few lines in your page, and she not only lets me take it now, but she hands out twopence." That's what I like to hear. It pleases me to know that these columns of mine are helping to dispel a good many false impressions that exist in some minds concerning Our Paper.

Ernest L. Lovell (Paignton), Interested (Paddington), John Keith (Huntly), Smithy Horatio Theodolphus (Bradford), Sidney Cohen (Leeds), Cecil A. Westrope (Surbiton). Your suggestion with regard to publishing readers' sketches is quite good, Interested. When the St. Frank's League has obtained a good membership, there will probably be a page devoted to this sort of thing in Our Paper. But, of course, the Editor

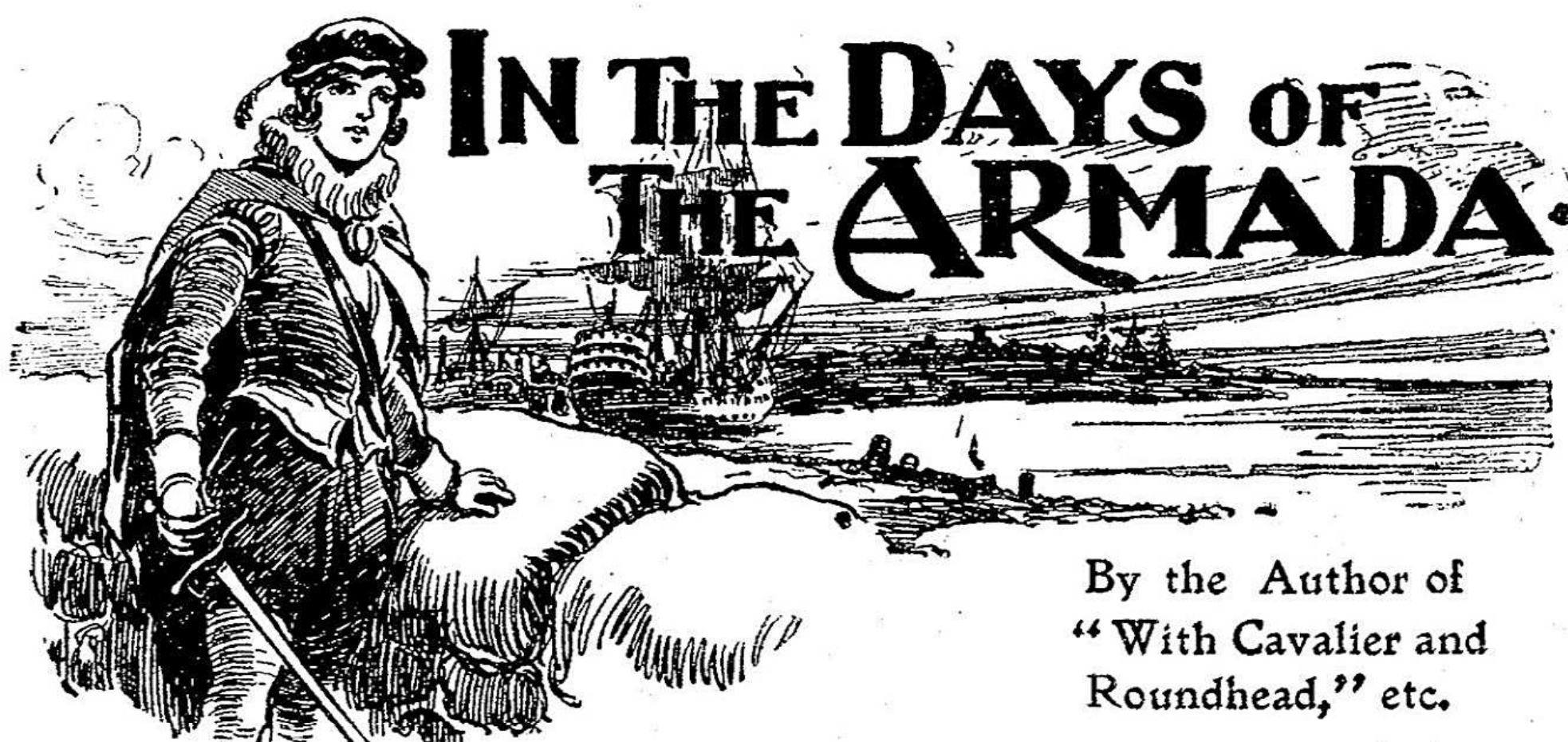
won't do anything of that sort until the growth of the League warrants such a step. As for a competition, Sidney Cohen, the biggest competition in the history of Our Paper is just starting—I mean the St. Frank's League. It offers endless opportunities for all those who are full of enthusiasm, and when the League gets big enough the benefits will be better than any mere prizes.

Videx (Oldham), A. Anderson (Aberdeen), Stanley Sherwin (Liverpool), Edward M. Staines (Lee), Ernie Fletcher (Southsea), H. Longden and E. Tissott (Collie, West Australia). You needn't argue with your chum any more about Cecil De Valerie, Videx. I always pronounce the name as though it were spelt in this way—"de VALery." Some people, I believe, pronounce it "de ValEerie," but I prefer the former for my own character. As for your request for No. 1 of Our Paper, A. Anderson, I'd like to oblige you. But copies of our first issue are very scarce, and I'm afraid it can't be done.

As the Editor, in his capacity as Chief Officer of THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE, has taken so much space to explain the details of this great new movement, I have only room left this week myself to acknowledge a few more letters.

George Glover (Melbourne), Ch. Brener (Riversdale, S. Africa), Sinclair Robert Dobie (Eastbourne), Rex (Ipswich), Lonely Nan (Chichester), George Burgess (Selsey), J. Owen (Smethwick), M. Williams (Baden, Vienna), Victor Dartz (London, W.1), Winnifred W. Smith (Liverpool), Shingled (Cleckheaton), P. Drabble (East Sheen, S.W.14), Gafria (Poplar, E.14), J. Southwell (Hull), H. G. Rogers (Reading), James McAlpine (Greenock), Charles Browne (Edmonton, N.9), Ethel Cummings (Toronto), An Interested Reader (Clapton, E.5), James Bury (Darwen), The Boy Who Works at the International (Chichester), T. Martin (Bristol), Kenneth Horace Barsen (Chalfont St. Peter), F. V. L. Thorpe (Aylesbury), M. D. R. (Stamford Hill, N.16), T. Grim (East Dulwich, S.E.22), J. Leo Prescott (Preston), Harry Glenton (Hull), Albert Radford (Nottingham).

A STIRRING TALE OF A BRITISH BOY'S EXPLOITS WHEN SIR FRANCIS DRAKE
SAILED THE HIGH SEAS.



By the Author of
"With Cavalier and
Roundhead," etc.

FOR NEW READERS.—The story begins in 1587, when Giles Montford, the sixteen-year-old master of Templeton, decides to take up arms under Drake against the Spaniards, in defiance of his uncle, Don Ferdinand Gonzales, who has invited him to go over to Spain. Giles is sent to London on an important mission, and returns with a dispatch from the queen to Admiral Drake. He has barely arrived back at Templeton when the house is rushed by five Spanish soldiers, and Giles is overpowered and carried off to Spain as a prisoner of his uncle, Don Gonzales. He is rescued by Simon Trent, his trusty servitor, and later sees much fighting against the Spanish under Drake before returning to England. Then Giles sets forth on the *Adventurer* to Sluys, in Holland, to relieve the garrison, which is besieged by the Spaniards. They are led into a trap by a spy, and captured. Giles and his friend, Sydney, escape narrowly from being hanged. Afterwards, they are exchanged for two Spanish prisoners in the hands of the English.

(Now read on.)

THE further experiences of our young heroes in the doomed town of Sluys need not be put down at length. The hopeless struggle was protracted for several weeks longer, accompanied by much loss and suffering to the garrison and the townspeople. During this time Trent and the two lads took an active part in the defence, now and then finding a chance to pay the burgomaster a brief visit.

On the 3rd of August the town surrendered in consideration of the magnanimous and

honourable terms offered by the Duke of Parma, which included the freedom of the garrison and immunity to the lives and property of the inhabitants.

On the following day the Spanish army entered Sluys in triumph, and the little garrison marched out. The burgomaster, true to his resolve, accompanied the troops to Flushing, and from there sailed for England with Trent and the two lads. He remained in London, which he considered the best place for his search, and took up his residence at an inn near the Guildhall. He promised to communicate with his friends from time to time, and to let them know if he met with any success.

Giles and Trent were glad to get home, and they received a hearty welcome from Hereward Tomewell. There was no news of particular importance. Sir Richard Edgumbe had just sailed for Holland, and the family had gone to London for a permanent stay. Tidings from Spain said that the Armada was nearly ready, and that the invasion was fixed for September.

Sydney found a sad surprise awaiting him at home, for his father had died suddenly during his absence. It was a bitter blow to the lad, and after his grief was partly spent he was readily induced by Giles to take up his quarters at Templeton.

Meanwhile, Drake had returned with his fleet to England, having done great damage to Spain in the course of a few months. From the mouth of the Tagus—where he waited in vain for Admiral Santa Croce to accept his invitation to come out and fight—he sailed up to Corunna, where

he destroyed the shipping in much the same manner as at Cadiz.

Giles, Sydney, and Trent eagerly reported for duty to their old commander, and though they were not needed at present he promised that they should fight under him at the first opportunity. So they returned to Templeton, where they spent the winter very pleasantly. They made several visits to London, and renewed their acquaintance with Ruys Van Hartsen, the Earl of Essex, and other friends.

The old burgomaster could not be induced to come to Templeton. He was prosecuting his strange search as determinedly as ever, though as yet he had met with no success. He took a great fancy to Giles, and the liking was warmly returned.

One more thing must be mentioned. During the latter part of 1587 and the early months of 1588 Trent kept a close and secret watch upon Edgecumbe Hall, which was now in the entire charge of the steward. But he failed to discover anything amiss, and so he reluctantly veered round to the opinion that his suspicions of Simon Baillie were without foundation.

Meanwhile, though the English Government was strangely idle in the face of the threatened Spanish invasion, and failed to strengthen the utterly insignificant navy, the people themselves were busy with preparations. In most of the counties bodies of men were mustered, officered, and drilled. It was expected that a land army of one hundred thousand would be ready to repel the Spaniards and their allies.

Tidings were constantly arriving concerning the Armada, which was said to be growing to mammoth dimensions. Fortunately for England, however, the sailing of this great fleet was put off until January, and then a longer delay was made necessary by the sudden death of Santa Croce. He was succeeded by the Duke of Medina-Sidonia, who required time to study and understand the plans of his predecessor. So the time slipped round to May of 1588, and at the middle of that month the Armada was still lying in the harbour of Lisbon.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN WHICH THE BURGOMASTER RECEIVES A STRANGE LETTER.

ON the evening of the 25th of May, just as the last rays of the sun were gleaming on the lofty tower of St. Paul's, three horsemen rode over London Bridge from the Southwark side, and made their way rapidly across the busiest quarter of the city.

Two were handsome, richly dressed lads; the third was older, and more plainly

garbed, with the unmistakable carriage of a soldier.

As the reader has probably guessed, the party consisted of Stephen Trent, Giles, and Sydney, and they had come up to London to spend a few days while the opportunity offered; they expected shortly to be summoned back to their posts of duty under Sir Francis Drake.

For the lads to have stopped anywhere but with Ruys Van Hartsen would have been an unpardonable offence, and so they rode straight to the residence of the old burgomaster of Sluys, which was quite a pretentious mansion in Bishopsgate Street. He had bought the house several months before, furnished it in a costly manner, and sent to Holland for a staff of servants.

Hardly had Trent and the lads pulled up their horses by the sidewalk, when their old friend dashed out of the door and gave them an eager greeting. A couple of servants followed at his heels and took charge of the horses. A little later the burgomaster's visitors were seated in a cosy dining-room, and before a table that was laden with all the delicacies London could supply.

"That you should have arrived at this time, my friends, is truly remarkable," said Ruys Van Hartsen. "Since morning I have been longing for you, and now that you are here, you have it in your power to do me a great service."

"And that we shall be only too glad to do," replied Giles. "I can answer for my companions as for myself. But does this service concern your quest? Have you at last found your grandson?"

"I have," declared the burgomaster, "and most strangely. This was slipped under my door this morning, and none saw the messenger who brought it." He drew a letter from his pocket. "Read that, my friends, and judge for yourselves."

Giles took the document first, and after perusing it with great interest, he handed it to Sydney, who, in turn, passed it to Trent. The few lines that it contained were written in a scrawling hand on a small sheet of parchment, and were as follows:

"To the Burgomaster, Ruys Van Hartsen, late of Sluys, in Holland:

"If you would know where to find Cecil Sheriton, come alone this night, at the hour of ten, to the Nag and Pillion Inn. It lies in Duck Lane, off Snore Hill. Inquire for Septimus Tulworthy."

"It is truly a strange missive," said Trent, handing back the letter. "Have you had doings of late with any persons concerning this matter?"

"None whatever," replied the burgomaster. "Until now my researches have been barren. I am constrained to believe that the writer of the letter is Walter Sheriton himself."

"It is likely," said Giles; "and I would

infer that he is in hiding under a false name for some cause, else he would have come to your house."

"But you are to go to this place of assignation alone," added Trent. "In what way can we be of service? Do you wish us to follow at a distance, so that we may be ready to help you at any sign of foul dealing?"

"I have a still better plan," answered the burgomaster; "for I confess that I do not relish the idea of putting myself in the power of a stranger, and in such a squalid locality. I intended taking my servants with me, and had provided suitable disguises. You shall wear them instead, and shall play their parts for which you are far better fitted."

As it was now drawing close to the hour of nine, no further time was wasted. The burgomaster brought the disguises from an inner apartment, and it was seen that he had chosen them with rare skill. In a few minutes his three visitors had exchanged their apparel, and assuredly none of their friends could have recognised them now.

Giles and Sydney were garbed in the rusty, hard-worn clothing of two apprentice boys, with faded hats that slouched down over their eyes. To make the disguise more complete they rubbed lampblack here and there on their faces and hands.

Trent's tall figure was transformed into that of a country yeoman, and he looked the



"I assure you that at least one of your prisoners is wrongfully taken. That gentleman yonder," pointing to the burgomaster—"was decoyed here by letter."

"What instructions had you given them?" asked Sydney.

"They were to have carelessly entered this inn at the hour of nine," replied the burgomaster, "and one at a time. They were to remain there, eating and drinking, until I had come and gone."

"A right clever plan," cried Trent, "and one that we will gladly undertake. What say you, my lads?"

Of course, Giles and Sydney were only too glad to do their old friend a service, and, moreover, they relished the possible chance of adventure that the undertaking seemed to offer,

part to perfection. His face was masked in a false, reddish beard, and he carried a short whip, as though he had but lately driven into the town.

Each concealed a loaded pistol about his person, and then the burgomaster led them out through the rear of the house to a courtyard that opened on a dark alley.

"You are acquainted with the way?" he asked.

"Every foot of it," replied Trent. "I knew Snore Hill and Duck Lane years ago. But I would suggest, Master Van Hartsen, that the lads enter together. That will be more

seemly, and I will follow after a short interval."

"Yes, it is the part of wisdom," assented the burgomaster. "So be it; I leave all to you. At the hour of ten you will see me enter the Nag and Pillion——"

"Which will be a sign to us to look the other way," interrupted Trent.

"Exactly. I have no fear that you will make a mistake. And now be off, for time presses. Good luck to you!"

With this Master Van Hartsen entered the house and closed the door, and a few moments later the three adventurers were past the alley, and out in the adjoining street. The distance was but short, and as they hurried along, Giles and Sydney walked a few paces behind Trent, who led the way with unerring knowledge.

Soon after crossing Holborn they entered a gloomy and squalid part of the city, and when they turned from Snore Hill (white-washed to Snow Hill in later years) into Duck Lane, they found it to be but a narrow and zigzagging alley. The footways were broken and rutted, and pools of water glistened in the road.

They pushed on for several hundred feet, passing groups of intoxicated, evil-looking men and women, who called after them impudently. Then a rickety timber-house, with an overhanging second storey, was seen through the gloom on the right side of the lane. A dull light revealed a horse painted on a sadly-faded signboard.

This was clearly the Nag and Pillion Inn, and though the night was sultry the door and windows were closed. Giles and Sydney had been instructed what to do, and while Trent walked carelessly on they turned aside and entered the inn.

The lads found themselves in a dingy, low-ceilinged room. It contained half a dozen benches with short stools ranged around them, and the floor and walls were filthily dirty. Two frowsy-looking ruffians sat in a far corner with pewter pots before them. Another of like ilk, who was probably the landlord, was stretched on a bench by the fireplace.

The three men roused themselves to stare at the newcomers, and then settled back with contemptuous indifference. Giles and Sydney sat down by one of the benches, and ordered flagons of cider from the slatternly woman who entered from an inner room.

They sipped it slowly, meanwhile talking and laughing in swaggering tones. They were satisfied that the burgomaster's mysterious correspondent was not present. He was likely keeping himself secluded in some remote part of the house.

A few moments later Trent came in, with all the awkwardness and uncertainty of a country bumpkin unused to London ways. He sat down at a distance from the lads, and stretched his long legs under the bench, and called for a tankard.

During the next hour there was little doing, and nothing to see. The lads thought it prudent to call for bread and cheese and more cider. A few burly draymen and porters slouched in and out, and a genuine apprentice lad, who had evidently visited more than one tavern that night, fell asleep on a stool with an untasted flagon beside him.

Finally a distant bell was heard to strike the hour of ten, and but a minute or two later Master Van Hartsen opened the door and strode into the room. He was plainly dressed, and a light cloak concealed the greater part of him.

The landlord rose from his bench and slouched forward with a keen look of interest on his face.

"Welcome, good master," he said. "You will find here plenty to eat and drink."

"I come on a different errand," the burgomaster replied in a low tone. "I would see one named Septimus Tulworthy."

"He is here, my good sir; this way."

The landlord conducted the burgomaster to the adjoining apartment, and the door closed behind them. Their footsteps could be heard receding farther and farther.

Several minutes went by, and the landlord did not return—a fact that led Trent and the lads to suspect that he was very probably Septimus Tulworthy himself.

Then there was a sudden stir of footsteps and voices outside, and the door was thrown open. With scuffling tread and clank of arms, ten pikemen of the Royal Guard, led by a grim-looking officer, marched into the room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN WHICH SEPTIMUS TULWORTHY CAUSES A FECK OF TROUBLE.

THE scene that followed this unexpected intrusion may be better imagined than described. The customers of the inn, Trent, and the lads among the number, sprang to their feet in fear and consternation. The consciousness of guilt drove the colour from more than one face, and it was amusing to see the rogues scramble under the benches in the vain hope of eluding detection.

But the soldiers were evidently after better game. The officer and five of his men dashed through to the inner room, and thence to an apartment still more remote. The others remained behind, posting themselves at both doors.

"Silence, you drunken dogs!" cried one of the soldiers. "Cease your whining, else you may have cause for it. Up with you at once. Let us see what you look like!"

This peremptory command brought four trembling wretches to their feet, and they

huddled together in a far corner of the room, eyeing askance the heavy weapons of the pikemen. Meanwhile, Trent and the lads had quietly taken their seats, and were as cool as they could be under the circumstances. They were alarmed for Master Van Hartsen, for they could not imagine what the raid of the soldiers meant.

Their fear and alarm became well-nigh uncontrollable, when they suddenly heard the clamour of angry voices and sounds of a scuffle in the back part of the house, followed immediately by three or four pistol-shots. The outcry quickly died away, and a moment later the captain and his men came forward into the tap-room, dragging with them three very reluctant and indignant prisoners, whose arms had been bound behind them.

The burgomaster was one, and another was the landlord; a black eye and a bleeding lip showed that he had offered resistance. The third prisoner, who came last between two soldiers, shot a keen glance at Trent and the lads. As they returned it, they were amazed and thunderstruck to recognise Humphrey Jocelyn, the zealous officer of the company of dragoons quartered at Plymouth.

Just then a lieutenant of the Royal Guards burst breathlessly into the inn by the front door.

"Zounds, but this is a tangled hole of a place!" he cried. "How many have you taken? Was anyone shot?"

"No," replied the captain; "but the man we wanted most got away. Did you not capture him? I told you to post your men at the rear of the house."

"And so I did!" declared the lieutenant. "But the knave broke right through us the moment he leaped out of the window. My men are in hot pursuit, but I doubt if they will catch him on so dark a night, and in this crooked locality!"

"Out upon you for a blundering fool!" the captain cried angrily. "I have done my part; it is you who must answer for the escape of this Simon Baillie!"

At this Giles and Sydney gave a start, and Trent came eagerly forward.

"Who did you say, my friend?" he demanded. "Is it the same Simon Baillie who is steward at Mount Edgcombe? If so, I know the knave well. But I assure you that at least one of your prisoners is wrongfully taken. That gentleman yonder," pointing to the burgomaster, "was decoyed here by a letter."

"Sirrah, who are you, sir, that dares to dictate to me?" cried the captain. "Doubtless you are concerned in the plot with the rest. 'Tis an easy matter to see through your disguise."

"Ay, and here are two more!" exclaimed the lieutenant. "I'll warrant they never

served an apprenticeship, in spite of their smut and coarse clothes!"

He indicated Giles and Sydney, who had imprudently seized an opportunity to whisper to the burgomaster.

As the result of these denunciations, Trent and the two lads speedily found themselves in custody, and with fettered arms. Giles and Sydney exchanged uneasy glances; the affair had begun to look serious.

"You are over-zealous, my friend," Trent said to the captain. "You will rue it later. As a soldier in the service of the Queen, I demand to know why I and my companions have been taken into custody. There are plenty at Court who will vouch for our characters."

"You are either innocent or a knavish liar; my man," replied the captain, "and it is not my part to determine which. This affair in which you stand implicated smacks of treason; and some heads are likely to go off. This Simon Baillie is doubtless the same you confess to knowing. He came up to London three days ago, and since that time he is known to have consorted with Spanish spies. The Queen's minister hath word that a conspiracy was to be hatched at this inn to-night."

"I know nothing of that," said Trent; "but I have long suspected the knave of traitorous doings."

"Ho, and you are not the only one!" broke in Humphrey Jocelyn. "I have had an eye on Simon Baillie myself, and when he started from London I gained leave of absence to follow him. I was here on the same errand as yourself, my good captain."

"I can vouch for my old comrade, Stephen Trent, yonder, and for the taller of the two lads," he added. "He is Master Montford of Templeton, in Devonshire, as fine an estate as lies on Dartmoor."

"You will need someone to vouch for yourself, my man," answered the captain, "since I can testify that you were sitting at a table with Simon Baillie when I entered. No more words now from any of you. I have listened longer than is consistent with my sworn duty."

The command was peremptory, and as the captain was evidently not a man to be trifled with, the unfortunate prisoners thought it best to obey.

The remaining occupants of the room were questioned closely by the captain and the lieutenant, and as their wits were plainly befuddled by drink, they were allowed to depart, one by one.

Meanwhile Giles could not resist the temptation to sidle up to Master Van Hartsen at a moment when the guards were looking another way.

"Did you see the man?" he asked in a low tone. "Which of them was it?"

The burgomaster shook his head slightly. "No," he replied in a whisper; "they kept me waiting in an empty room, and before I could get a glimpse of this Septimus Tulworthy I was in the hands of the soldiers. Forgive me for leading you into such a scrape. But say no more, my lad, since this secret converse hath a suspicious look."

Giles prudently turned away, and a moment later the pikemen and their officers marched the prisoners out of the inn and down the crooked lane toward Snore Hill. The party hurried along rapidly, and as the hour was late they attracted little attention. They chose unfrequented streets as much as possible, and they seemed to be heading for the river.

On the way one of the lieutenant's absent party—which numbered five—was encountered accidentally while hastening toward Duck Lane. He reported that his companions were scattered in pursuit of Simon Baillie, but that they had little hope of capturing him.

At this the captain swore ferociously, and then pushed on with his prisoners more rapidly than ever. They slipped across Fleet Street and plunged into a dark and narrow thoroughfare that led in the direction of the river. Here the lieutenant ran on ahead, and quickly disappeared in the gloom.

Of course, there was no chance for the prisoners to converse. They could only guess at their destination. Trent and the two lads were in front, and the other three a few paces to the rear. Humphrey Jocelyn and the burgomaster had not looked each other squarely in the face while they were at the inn, and now they had no chance to do so in the darkness, though they were side by side.

The city clocks were striking the hour of eleven when the dismal little procession reached a flight of landing-stairs a short distance below London Bridge. After waiting here less than five minutes, a covered boat with six oarsmen drifted alongside. The lieutenant was in charge, and as soon as the soldiers and prisoners were aboard he gave the word to start, and the craft went swiftly down the river.

Not until the boat had turned in at the Traitors' Gate and was gliding under the huge iron grating did the luckless captives realise that they were to be immured in that most dreadful and dismal place—the vast Tower of London.

In a moment more they had landed, and were fairly within the massive walls. The Constable of the Tower appeared, accompanied by guards with torches, and formally took charge of the party. He conducted them through St. Thomas' Tower, and thence across the paved avenue toward the opposite tower.

They were about to enter the gloomy archway when Master Van Hartsen caught a glimpse of Humphrey Jocelyn's face, which was exposed to the glare of the torches. The burgomaster uttered a sharp cry, and

stopped as suddenly as though clutched by an invisible hand.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE IN THE TOWER OF LONDON.

"ON with you, man!" cried the captain. "This is no place to loiter. What ails? Hast seen a ghost?" "Ay, I have," replied the burgomaster; "a ghost of the past."

He submitted to be pushed on by the guards, and his face was strongly marked by anger and excitement as he still kept his eyes on his fellow-prisoner.

Finally, when they had come through the Bloody Tower, he could contain himself no longer.

"We have met before, Master Humphrey Jocelyn," he exclaimed, "though it was many years ago; nor might it be fairly called a meeting, since we but passed each other on the sidewalk."

"My mind fails me," replied Jocelyn. "When was this of which you speak?"

"In the town of Sluys, thirteen years ago, and on a summer evening," declared the burgomaster, in a voice that shook with emotion. "You have altered some since then, but I would swear to your face. Just before dark I saw you standing in the shadow of Grey Friars' Church, close to my house. An hour later my grandson was stolen from the very door."

He paused a moment, looking searchingly at Jocelyn, whose face showed but a faint trace of colour beneath the bronzed cheeks. The captain had made signs to his men to let the conversation continue, hoping, doubtless, that some important evidence of guilt might be inadvertently dropped.

"Not until now did I remember the stranger by the church that night," Ruys Van Hartsen resumed; "not until now did I dream of connecting you with the crime. I believe you to be the Septimus Tulworthy who decoyed me to the Nag and Pillion to-night. If you have information about my grandson, I pray that you give it to me, and so relieve a heart that has sorrowed for many years. When we are free you shall have any reward that you choose to ask—provided your information leads me to discover Cecil Sheriton."

Humphrey Jocelyn stared hard at the burgomaster, and then burst into a laugh.

"Why, the man hath gone daft!" he cried. "His words are but riddles, and without sense. What know I of Septimus Tulworthy, or of Cecil Sheriton? As for the Dutch town of Sluys—why, I never put foot within its walls in my life. I never so much as trod the soil of Holland."

"'Tis a lie, you foul-hearted knave!" thundered the burgomaster. "Ay, and well you know it. Think you I can mistake a face like yours? The same scar was over your left

eye when you peered at me from the shadow of Gray Friars."

Humphrey Jocelyn merely shrugged his shoulders and laughed mockingly. Before the burgomaster could burst into another torrent of denunciations the constable himself interfered, and forbade further speech.

By this time the party had passed the garden and mounted the flight of steps that led to a higher part of the inner ward. A moment later they entered the Beauchamp Tower, and here the prisoners were led apart, and hurried away to separate cells.

Giles spent a wretched night, scarcely sleeping at all. He confidently expected to be released in the morning, for he had no doubt that the burgomaster's story would clear himself and his friends of any suspicion of a Spanish plot.

But suppose Master Van Hartsen was not allowed an opportunity to render his explanation? What then would be the result? That such was the case Giles soon had strong reason to believe. One day passed into another, and still he found himself locked in his dreary cell. He began to feel seriously alarmed, for well he knew what dark deeds were customary to the Tower, and what numbers of unhappy prisoners had been forever dead to the outer world once they passed under the shadow of the Traitors' Gate.

The worst of it was that the lad could gain no single word of information concerning his friends or himself. His meals were brought in by a grim and sullen keeper, whom he vainly implored to take a message for him to friends in London or to the constable of the Tower.

It was, no doubt, fear of consequences that kept the man obdurate, for his eyes glittered greedily when Giles offered him money and a valuable ring; but to every appeal his answer was a dogged "No."

So three whole weeks went by, and on the morning of the 17th of June two of the Tower guards came for Giles and led him to the lower floor of the building. In the corridor, where a brief halt was made, he was rejoiced to find Trent, Sydney, and the burgomaster waiting in the custody of soldiers.

"What does this mean?" Giles whispered to Trent. "Are we to have our trial, think you?"

"We are likely summoned for a better purpose," Trent answered, in a low tone; "my keeper proved to be a good fellow at heart, and after long wavering he consented to bear me a message to the Earl of Essex. This was but yesterday morning, and I doubt not steps have already been taken in our behalf. But make no mention of the matter, Master Giles, lest it bring trouble to this trusty fellow—"

At this point one of the guards interrupted the conversation, and moved the two apart. A moment later a door was thrown open at the end of the corridor, and the four prisoners were quickly ushered into a large and gloomy apartment.

Seated behind a long table at the farther

end of the room was Sir Francis Walsingham, his face cold and stern. On his right sat the Earl of Essex, and on the left the constable of the Tower.

(To be continued)

THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE.

(Continued from page 31)

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(Continued on page iii of cover)

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HOW TO MAKE A HAMMOCK CHAIR.

By DICK GOODWIN.

THE hammock or folding chair shown at Fig. 1 is not a difficult job, and, if suitable material is used, it can be made as strong as the best bought chair obtainable. Owing to the strain to which the framework is subjected, especially at the riveted joint, a hard wood of some kind must be used.

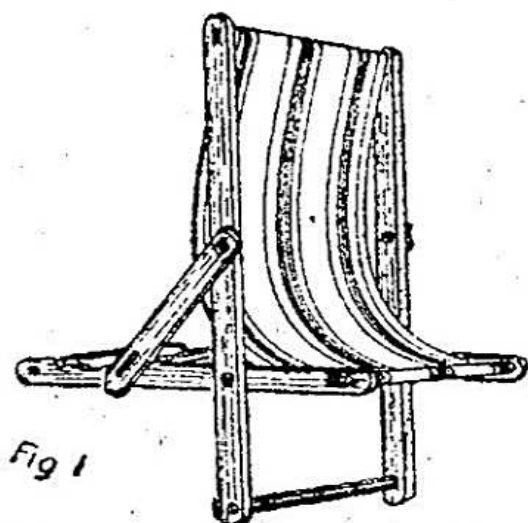


Fig. 1

Birch or beech are the best woods to use, but specially selected oak is suitable. The material is finished to a width of $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. and a thickness of $\frac{7}{8}$ in., as in the section at A, Fig. 2; but the narrow edges are generally slightly rounded off, as at B.

This can be done with an ordinary plane and finished with glass-paper, but a hollow plane will do the work much quicker.

PREPARING THE FRAMES.

There are three frames to make; these are numbered 1, 2, and 3 and shown separately, with sizes, at Fig. 2. Frame No. 1 is composed of two 50-in. lengths, joined at one end with a 21 in. length of 1 in. round wood, as at C, Fig. 3, and at the other end with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{7}{8}$ in. piece as at D, cut to the same length. The method of joining the rails to the side pieces is shown at C and D, Fig. 4, the same lettering being taken to avoid confusion. It will be seen at Fig. 3 that the ends of the rails are provided with tenons, these fitting into suitable mortises in the side pieces, as at Fig. 4.

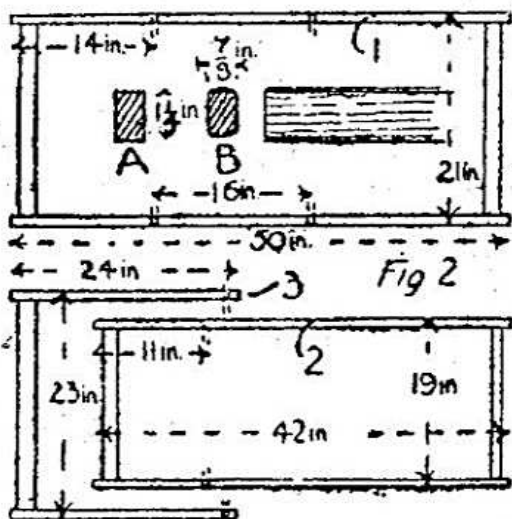


Fig. 2

FITTING THE TENONS.

In order to make the joint thoroughly secure, thin wedges are driven into saw cuts made in the tenons; these are inserted when glueing up the joints, as shown at E.

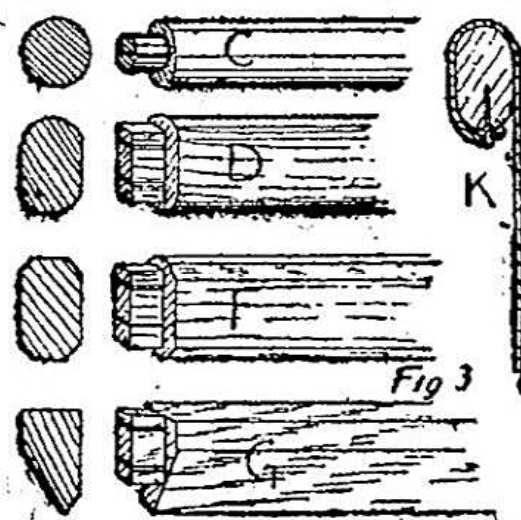


Fig. 3

Frame No. 2 is made with two 42 in. lengths, with one round rail as at C, and one, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{7}{8}$ in., as at F. This rail is tenoned in as the others, and has the four corners taken off with the plane as shown in the section. The two frames should be quite square at the corners, and the inner one just $\frac{1}{4}$ in. narrower than the outer one. The third frame has one rail only, and comprises two 24 in. sides with a 23 in. rail; this is cut to the section shown at G, Fig. 4, the tenons on

the ends being kept as long as possible and neatly wedged when glued up. It is now necessary to bore the holes for the rivets H that are to hinge frames 1 and 2 together, and also 1 and 3.

BORING THE RIVET HOLES.

The position of the rivet holes are shown by dotted lines at Fig. 2, but to make the work quite clear the side view given at Fig. 5 indicates [the position of the parts when together, with the sizes of a canopy framework, if required. The centres of the holes must be measured very accurately, and as well, before the parts are actually fastened together, the notches at the end of frame 2

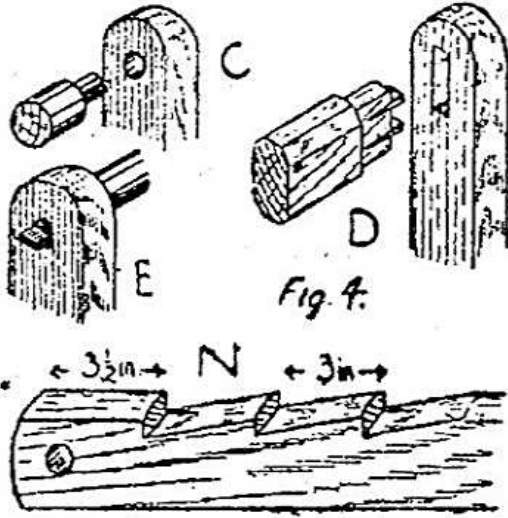


Fig. 4

must be cut. The notches are first sawn 3 in. apart, commencing $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. away from the end, and then cut to the required slope with a sharp chisel as in the enlarged detail at N, Fig. 3. Care must be taken to avoid sawing down more than is actually necessary, the depth being about $\frac{5}{8}$ in. The next stage is to rivet the parts together. A section of the riveted joint is shown at H, Fig. 6, together with a view of one of the rivets. The diameter of the rivet is $\frac{3}{8}$ in., and, in addition to the four rivets, a dozen $\frac{1}{8}$ in. thick washers will be required.

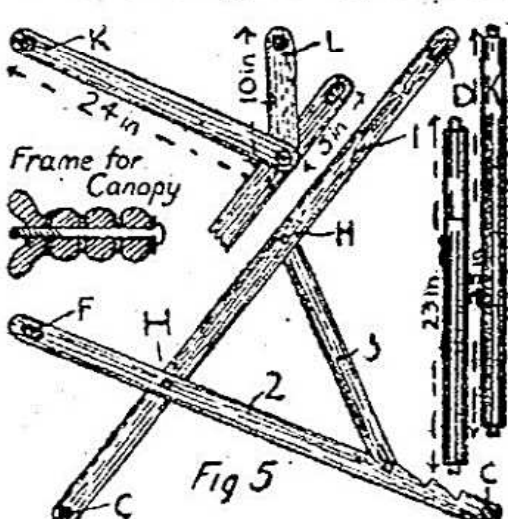


Fig. 5

CLOSING THE RIVETS.

The method of hammering over the straight end of the rivet is shown at Fig. 6, and to provide a solid base for the round head of the rivet it will be necessary to use a block of lead or, at least, a piece of very hard wood, placed end grain uppermost. A hollow should

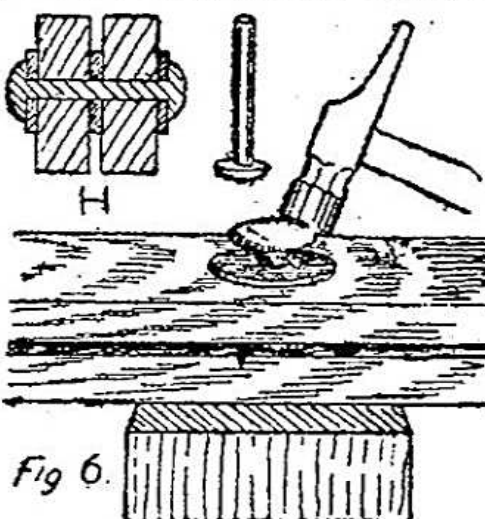


Fig. 6

be made in the block to take the rivet head, so that the washer can lie flat. Hammering is done round the edge, gradually working all round until the top assumes the shape in the diagram. When the top has been sufficiently spread, it will be found an easy matter to work down to the shape of the other end and form a neat finish. A hollow punch can be obtained to give the head a neat finish, but careful hammering will do quite well enough. An alternative to riveting is to use bolts and nuts, but the end of the bolt should be burred over to prevent the nut working loose. The method of nailing on the canvas is shown at K, Fig. 3.

(Continued from page 30)

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I have had a number of inquiries from girl readers asking if they can qualify for membership of the League. Of course they can; and become Organising Officers, too. Next week I shall have something

special to say to my girl readers—a letter all to themselves.

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(The St. Frank's League.)

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ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM No. 3. July 11, 1925.

SECTION

A

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SECTION

B

MEMBER'S APPLICATION FOR BRONZE MEDAL.

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SECTION

C

NEW READER'S DECLARATION.

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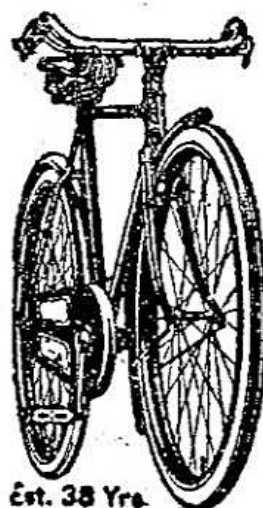
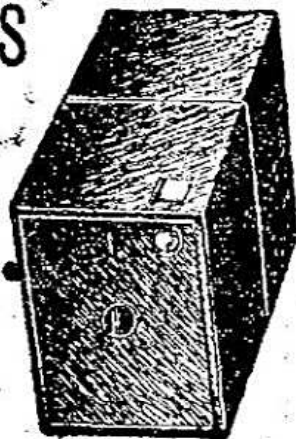
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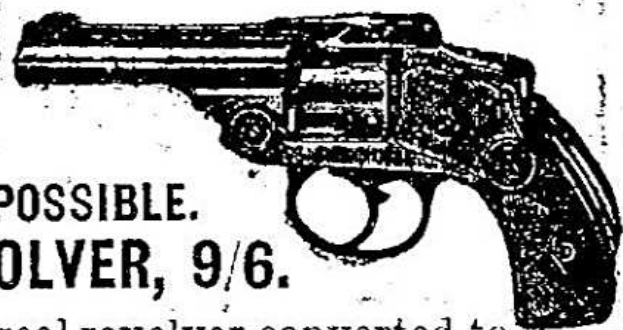
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