

THE ST. FRANK'S WEEKLY.

The Nelson Lee Library

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SAVED
from the
SEA

or
Heroes of the Lighthouse

A THRILLING LONG
STORY OF THE
SCOUTS OF ST.
FRANK'S.



The thin line was carried out far into the night ; but a groan went up when it was seen that the gale carried it fully ten yards beyond the wreck and far out of reach.



or,
**HEROES OF
THE
LIGHTHOUSE!**

A Rousing Story of the Scouts of St. Frank's, and of the gallant rescue in the teeth of a raging gale of a party of Scouts from the Shingle Head Lighthouse.

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

CHAPTER I.

IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM.

THE storm was coming on in deadly earnest.

At frequent intervals the black, massed clouds were split asunder by the most vivid forked lightning, and the thunder boomed and crashed and rolled. At the same time, a hurricane gale was swooping inland across the downs from the English Channel.

Shingle Camp, the headquarters of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd St. Frank's Boy Scout Troops, was being buffeted about severely. The smaller tents were withstanding the gale manfully, but the marquees were booming and billowing ominously, in spite of the extra stay-ropes.

It was late in the evening, and under ordinary circumstances the Scouts would have been in bed, and all lights out. But the gathering storm had changed everything. For an hour the various Patrols had been busily attending to their tents, and making the camp snug and secure.

Pitchy darkness had settled down prematurely. At this hour there should have been the glow of sunset in the sky, and a dim twilight, relieved by the cheerful glow of the camp fires.

But the storm, almost tropical in its violence, had brought darkness—complete and utter. And every camp fire had been stamped out long since. With such a wind, there was a grave danger of fire. There had been no rain for many days, and the grass was as dry as tinder, and canvas is not famed for its non-inflammable qualities.

Even now, when the storm seemed to be at its height, no rain had fallen. Some of the Scouts declared that they had felt a huge drop or two, but these amounted to nothing.

Cecil de Valérie, the Leader of the Eagle Patrol, straightened his back and rubbed his aching hands. He was perspiring freely, for the July evening was close and sultry—even the wind being hot.

"Phew! That was warm work!" he exclaimed breathlessly. "Still, I think we've got her all snug now. What about that stay-rope you were tightening, Hubbard? Did you manage it?"

"Yes, it's as tight as a drum," replied Hubbard.

The Eagles had just finished the task of making their tent secure, and the other Patrols throughout the camp had been similarly engaged. One or two tents, however, were sagging about rather perilously

in the wind. They could be seen in the almost continuous lightning flashes.

"Can't make it out!" said Somerton, staring across the camp. "I haven't seen anything of the Hawks or the Lions——"

"Or the Tigers, either," put in De Valerie. "What on earth can they be doing? They ought to have been back here long ago—particularly as this storm was coming on."

"Somebody said that Nipper and Handforth and all the other Lions and Tigers went out in a boat," said Teddy Long. "It's my belief they've got swept out to sea. I expect they're all drowned by this time."

"You know everything, don't you?" snapped De Valerie.

"Oh, really, De Valerie——" began Teddy.

"Never mind—we'll let it drop," growled De Valerie. "But I don't believe anything you hear, Long. Nipper and Handforth wouldn't be mad enough to go out in a boat in this weather. What about Reggie Pitt and his Hawks? I suppose they went for a swim?" he added sarcastically.

"I believe Long's right," declared Hubbard. "Boots told me that he saw some of our chaps out in an old yacht—but that was hours ago. I expect they went back into Calstowe, and have gone to the pictures, or something like that."

Nelson Lee appeared at this moment, and the Scoutmaster-detective was looking rather worried. He was making a round of the camp, seeing that everything was in order. Mr. Stokes and Mr. Clifford—the respective Scoutmasters of the 2nd and 3rd Troops—were similarly engaged in their own sections of the camp.

"Everything's all right, sir," said De Valerie, as Nelson Lee came up and paused. "I expect we shall get the rain soon. By Jove! That was a terrific flash——"

The rest of his sentence was drowned by the shattering peal of thunder which crashed out, and which seemed to shake the very ground itself.

"I won't tell you to get to bed, boys," said Nelson Lee, when the rolling echo had died away. "But if it comes on to rain, you'd better get inside the tents, and stay there. You haven't seen anything of the Hawks and the Tigers and the Lions?"

"No, sir."

"Extraordinary!" muttered Lee, frowning. "What in the world can be keeping the boys away? At a time like this, too! I could understand two or three absentees—but eighteen!"

"It's jolly rummy, sir," said Somerton. "And it isn't like Nipper or Pitt, either. I could understand Handforth——"

"Yes," interrupted Lee absently. "Well, boys, don't worry yourselves. They're bound to turn up soon. I have heard

rumours that they were seen out in the bay. Do you know if that is correct?"

"Yes, it is, sir," said Teddy Long promptly. "I heard it hours ago. I'll bet they've all been drowned——"

"Don't be so ridiculous, Long!" interrupted Lee curtly.

He walked off, and the Eagles looked after him as he vanished into the intense gloom.

"He's worried," said De Valerie. "I don't wonder at it, either."

"He snapped me up, anyhow," growled Teddy Long. "And I'll bet I was right, too! Just you wait and see! Nipper and Handforth and all those other chaps have got drowned!"

"Aw, can that stuff!" growled Ulysses Adams. "Gee! You make me tired!"

Nelson Lee ran into Mr. Beverley Stokes and Mr. Clifford at the edge of the camp. The other two Scoutmasters were staring out to sea, across the downs—for the camp was pitched only a few hundred yards from the cliff edge.

"Heard anything of your boys yet, Mr. Lee?" asked Mr. Stokes.

"No, but I am not particularly anxious," replied Nelson Lee. "They are all boys I can trust, and there is evidently some good reason for their prolonged absence."

CHAPTER II.

A NEW EDITION OF WILLY.



MR. STOKES made no comment for a moment. He was staring out across the sea in the direction of Shingle Head—that treacherous spur of rock which had brought disaster to many a gallant ship.

"Yes, of course," he said, at length. "A good reason for their absence, eh? Undoubtedly, Mr. Lee. But it is rather a pity. Except for those three Patrols, the entire camp is complete. All my boys are here—and all Mr. Clifford's, too."

"I hope everything is all right," said Mr. Clifford.

The three men were silent for a few moments. Nelson Lee was far more anxious than he would have the others believe. And they refrained from telling him of their own suspicions.

But they all had the same thought.

It was known for a fact that Nipper and Handforth and the rest of the Lions and Tigers had gone out in an old yacht earlier in the evening—before the storm had shown any sign of gathering.

All the rumours could not be merely a fake. And the continued absence of news concerning the missing Patrols was thoroughly disturbing in view of the

weather conditions. What had happened to Reggie Pitt and the Hawk Patrol remained a complete mystery. And there was another cause for anxiety, too.

"It's almost beyond belief!" declared "Barry" Stokes, as he shaded his face against the strong wind and stared towards the deadly Shingle Rock. "Of course, you've noticed the absence of any light, Mr. Lee? It must be the first time on record that anything so alarming has happened."

Nelson Lee nodded.

"It is disastrous," he agreed. "The absence of the light would be bad enough on any ordinary night, but in this storm, and with the sea rising higher every minute, it may mean the loss of many precious lives. There is quite a lot of shipping off this coast—and I understand that a good many of the Caistowe fishing smacks are out. They'll naturally be fighting their way back into harbour."

"May Heaven help them!" said Mr. Clifford fervently.

"Yes, they'll need Providential guidance in this smother!" said Mr. Stokes, nodding. "Without the Shingle Light they'll be blinded—utterly lost and deprived of all guidance. Can't something be done?"

The three Scoutmasters continued to gaze in the same direction. The cause of their perturbation was obvious. The famous Shingle Rock Lighthouse had failed! For the first time in its history, the familiar beam was invisible. The long and short flashes, so well known to the local fishing boats, and the coasting vessels, no longer sent out their warning signals.

In short, the Shingle Rock Lighthouse had ceased to function.

As Nelson Lee had said, this would have been a serious state of affairs on a calm night. But it was a hundredfold more serious now.

All the Caistowe fishing smacks would be beating back into harbour—and the beams from the lighthouse were their sure guidance. Deprived of this guidance, and fighting against the rising seas, a boat was liable to lose its way, and pile itself upon the treacherous rocks.

Furthermore, big ships were in danger—liners, trading steamers, and so forth. All vessels passing down the Channel, and hugging the coast, would be imperilled by the unexpected failure of the Shingle Rock Light. Such a failure could not have happened at a worse time.

"Apparently something has gone wrong with the mechanism," said Nelson Lee at length. "I have no doubt the two keepers are working feverishly at this very moment, and I expect the light will flash out at any second. Old Daniel Nash is not the kind of man to fail in his duty. His record as a lighthouse keeper is absolutely unblemished, I understand."

"But can't something be done?" repeated Mr. Stokes, frowning.

"I'm afraid not," replied Lee. "The Rock is a particularly exposed crag, and only in the calmest weather can a boat approach. Of course, in this month, and throughout the summer, the lighthouse is generally approachable at almost any condition of the tide. But in such a storm as this no boat could live near the Rock."

"In mid-winter the lighthouse keepers have been cut off for weeks on end," remarked Mr. Clifford. "I think Mr. Lee's right, Barry. Nothing can be done in this weather—"

He broke off as a flash of lightning revealed a small figure near by. The small figure was staring out in the same direction as the three Scoutmasters.

"Who is that?" called out Mr. Clifford.

"It's all right, sir—only me," replied a familiar voice. "I say, what's the matter with the Light? Somebody's turned the tap off!"

Willy Handforth, recognising his Scoutmaster's voice, approached. Another flash of lightning revealed the fact that his face was rather pale, and he was not his usual self. But he strove to make his tone careless.

"Seen anything of my major, sir?" he asked, turning to Nelson Lee. "He hasn't turned up, I suppose?"

"I'm afraid not, Willy," replied Nelson Lee. "None of the Tigers have been seen since tea-time, in fact. The Lions are also—"

"Yes, I know, sir," interrupted Willy. "I'll bet my major is the cause of it. He got himself into a scrape of some kind, and the others are lugging him out of it. I've heard that they hired an old yacht, and they'll have some excitement if they're out in this storm."

"Impossible!" said Mr. Stokes, frowning. "They wouldn't be mad enough to keep at sea in this weather— By the way, wouldn't it be a good policy to make inquiries in Caistowe?"

"I have already done so," said Nelson Lee quietly. "The yacht went out late this afternoon, and had not returned an hour ago, when the storm was on the point of breaking."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Mr. Stokes. "You didn't tell us this before!"

"I didn't wish to cause any undue alarm," said Lee. "And there is no reason for jumping to conclusions now. In all probability the yacht has taken shelter in one of the numerous coves down the coast. That is the logical assumption."

"Rather, sir!" agreed Willy. "Nipper was on board, and he wouldn't let the chaps do anything rash, I know. I'll bet they've gone ashore in some isolated bay. They're bound to turn up before long."

Willy turned away and looked out towards

Shingle Head again. He was a different Willy now. All his usual confidence and cheek had gone. He was subdued. And this proved, more than anything else, how great his anxiety was.

The darkness had shut in deeper than ever, the thunder boomed, and the wind howled. Small wonder that the whole camp was anxious!

CHAPTER III.

WHAT IRENE & CO. SAW.



"GORGEOUS!" exclaimed Doris Berkeley breathlessly.

"You won't say that in a minute, when the rain swishes down," said Irene Manners. "It's bound to start soon. We'd better get back to camp while we're still dry."

There were six Moor View schoolgirls on the cliff path, full in the teeth of the summer gale. And Doris, at least, was revelling in the fight against the elements. They stood there, staring out into the darkness, holding their wide-brimmed hats against the wind.

All were in the uniform of Girl Guides, and their shoulder-knots of brown-and-red told the initiated that they formed the Robin Patrol. And the two white stripes on Irene's left pocket, and the badge in her hat, formed clear evidence that she was the Patrol Leader.

It was quite late; but owing to the fierce storm the camp had not settled down for the night. The Moor View girls were camping much farther along the cliffs—two or three miles from the St. Frank's Scouts.

Irene & Co. had come along the cliff path for a walk, Miss Bond, their captain, having allowed them to go, on Irene's assurance that she would look after her Patrol with care. There was also an understanding that they would be back within half an hour.

"I simply love a storm like this!" declared Winnie Pitt enthusiastically. "It makes you feel so jolly small, you know. I'll bet the sea's fearfully rough, down there on the beach."

"I say, let's go down!" suggested Doris. "There's a path just along the cliffs here—"

"No!" interrupted Irene firmly. "We've got to get back to camp."

The others accepted her word without question, although they were not exactly on duty now. Irene's Patrol consisted of Doris Berkeley, Marjorie Temple, Winnie Pitt, Ena Handforth, and Violet Watson. They were, in fact, the star Patrol of the Moor View company.

"Hallo, I felt a big spot of rain just then!" said Ena, shouting, against the wind. "My hat, it'll probably come down in sheets in two or three minutes, and we shall get soaked! Miss Bond will have a fit!"

"It won't do her any harm!" said Doris complacently. "She's been a bit peevish to-

day— Why, what the dickens—I say, you girls, haven't you noticed something?"

"It's too dark to notice anything," said Marjorie.

"That's just it!" went on Doris excitedly. "Why is it so dark? What about the Shingle Rock Light? It ought to be out there—almost dead ahead of us! Yet the headland is as black as ink!"

The girls were rather startled at Doris' discovery.

"The lighthouse isn't working!" said Irene, with a catch in her voice. "Something's happened! It's frightful, you know—especially on a night like this! There may be a lot of wrecks—"

She broke off with a gasp, for at that second a particularly brilliant display of lightning flickered and blazed in the sky. For a second, the network design of electric flame patterned the sky. And the beach below, the angry surf, and the cruel crags of Shingle Head were clearly revealed to the watching girls.

And Doris uttered a shout of alarm and horror.

"Look!" she exclaimed, pointing. "Don't you see? Out there—"

The darkness shut down, and the thunder boomed and rolled.

"What is it?" asked Irene sharply.

"There was a boat down there—being driven straight on to the rocks!" panted Doris in alarm. "I saw it clearly—and I'm sure it was out of control! Oh, somebody is in dreadful danger!"

"I saw it, too!" said Ena quietly.

Violet Watson wasn't quite sure, but she rather fancied she had caught sight of something. The others were clearly sceptical.

"It must have been your imagination," said Winnie, shaking her head. "No boat could live in this sea—"

Another flash came—even longer than the first—and it made the entire scene as brilliant as in full day. But the sea and the rocks had a curious look. The effect was like that obtained when a flashlight photograph is taken. But the picture was impressed vividly upon the girls' minds.

Far out, on one of the half-submerged rocks at the outer edge of the bay, a boat was caught in the crags. The girls even saw it lifted high and smashed down. They saw struggling figures, too.

"They're Boy Scouts!" screamed Marjorie, terrified.

"Oh, and they're clinging to those rocks!" panted Irene. "Perhaps they're being smashed to atoms while we're talking!"

"Perhaps Ted's there!" said Ena, with a kind of dull agony.

Further conversation was impossible at the moment. The shock of the thing had hit the girls like something solid. The lightning had permitted them to see what was evidently a tragedy—there, below in the bay, a boat had been smashed on the rocks, and its occupants thrown to the mercy of the angry sea.

Irene & Co. waited, tense and frightened. They waited for the next flash of lightning to gleam out. It seemed an endless vigil. In reality the lightning came within twenty seconds.

And, staring, the girls saw the figures of several Boy Scouts climbing high on the rocks—out of reach of the smother and foam.

CHAPTER IV.

GIRL GUIDES TO THE RESCUE!



“THEY’RE safe!” breathed Doris, her dark eyes gleaming with hope and thankfulness. “Did you see? They’ve got on to the rocks—”

“Yes; but the tide’s coming in all the time!” interrupted Ena, in her quiet but determined way. “That rock will be under water within half an hour. And then they’ll be swept off to certain death. What can we do?”

“Let’s rush to the coastguards,” suggested Marjorie breathlessly.

“But that would take too long!” protested Irene. “There’s a lifeboat-house in the gap, only a few hundred yards away, and it would take them a long time to get here.”

“Oh, why aren’t they on the watch?” asked Violet angrily. “They ought to be here all the time, in a storm like this—particularly as the lighthouse isn’t working! It’s a shame!”

“Oh, but, Violet dear, I suppose they are on the watch,” said Irene. “I expect they’re all along the cliffs, looking for distress signals. Naturally, they couldn’t see this, because it’s only a small boat, and wouldn’t be able to give any signals. We only saw it by chance.”

“I say, let’s take the boat out ourselves!” exclaimed Doris briskly.

“Oh, Doris! Don’t be silly—”

“We’re Girl Guides, aren’t we?” demanded Doris, her tone becoming obstinate. “Aren’t we supposed to do all sorts of big things? Guides aren’t merely to look at! It’s their duty to be ready in an emergency!”

“But not to take a lifeboat out!” objected Irene. “We’re all good at rowing, I know, but Miss Bond would be terribly angry—indeed, she’d be frightened out of her life—”

“She won’t know anything about it!” interrupted Ena. “I agree with Doris—we ought to go! By the time we get to the coastguards the tide will be up, and it’ll be too late. We’ve either got to make the attempt, or abandon those poor chaps to certain death.”

It was a terrible position for the Robin Patrol. They were all plucky girls, but the prospect of braving the sea in this storm rather appalled them—whilst fascinating them at the same time. And they would have

to make a decision, one way or the other, at once.

A little distance away there was a gap in the cliffs, sloping steeply down to the beach. And in this gap stood a small, weather-beaten shed. A lifeboat was housed here—not one of the big, official kind, but a comparatively small lifeboat which was maintained by local subscriptions. It had been occasionally used in big storms to rescue the survivors from wrecks on the sheltered side of Shingle Head.

It was more or less of an emergency lifeboat, and not designed for long-distance work. The Caistowe lifeboat was the recognised craft for this particular district; but this could not be used now, for the crew—even if on the alert—could know nothing of the disaster.

While the girls were still trying to make up their minds, a figure loomed up along the cliff path—and, indeed, almost bumped into them. A blaze of lightning revealed their forms, and the newcomer halted.

“Hallo!” he ejaculated. “What the dickens are you girls doing out here in this weather? At this hour, too! You ought to be all tucked away in your little cots!”

“Why, is that you, Willy?” asked Irene, staring into the gloom.

“Of course it’s me!” replied Willy Handforth. “I’m jolly worried about Ted. I couldn’t stick in camp, so I came for a walk— Oh, hallo, Ena! I thought you’d be knocking about somewhere.”

His sister grabbed hold of his arm.

“Why are you worried about Ted?” she asked fiercely.

“No need to bite me!” said Willy. “I say, you’ve got some muscles, you know—”

“Quick! Where’s Ted?” demanded Ena, shaking him.

“I don’t know,” said her young brother. “He went out with his Patrol, and with the Lions, quite early in the evening, and they haven’t been seen since. They hired a yacht, and I believe it’s been blown in one of these coves—”

“Then—then my brother is among those boys on that rock!” shouted Ena huskily. “Quick, girls! We’ve got to get that lifeboat—”

“Rock?” echoed Willy. “What do you mean?”

“We saw a small boat driven on to the rocks, and the occupants were just able to scramble into safety,” said Irene quickly. “But they can’t last long, because the tide’s coming up!”

“Great Scott!” said Willy, taking a deep breath.

“But it couldn’t have been the Lions and Tigers,” put in Doris. “It was a small boat we saw—not a yacht. Besides, there were only a few fellows, as far as I could see—certainly not a dozen.”

Willy gave a jump.

“The Hawks!” he shouted. “Reggie Pitt and his lot! I expect they took a small

boat out and got caught in the storm. But how do you know this? It's as black as pitch——"

The girls quickly explained what they had seen, and they even pointed out the rock where the boat had crashed. The lightning was so vivid and continuous that Willy soon picked it out. And he could distinguish one or two clinging figures, half-smothered by the spray.

"My only hat!" he ejaculated in alarm. "We musn't stand here like this! We've got to do something. Those chaps can't last long——"

"We thought about breaking into the shed in the gap, and getting out the lifeboat!" interrupted Doris. "It's only a small one, and we've never done anything like this before, but we can have a shot at it."

Willy looked at the girls with gleaming eyes.

"By jingo! Who was it that said girls haven't got any spirit?" he exclaimed breathlessly. "I say, you're made of the right stuff! Good egg! We'll rush down to that shed, and rush the lifeboat out in two shakes! Come on! Girl Guides to the rescue—with a Boy Scout thrown in as a makeweight!"

And, without any further argument or indecision, they hurried along the cliff path towards the nearby gap.

CHAPTER V.

THE CASTAWAYS OF SHINGLE ROCK.



WHILE the whole coast was animated with anxiety and conjecture concerning the failure of the Shingle Rock Lighthouse, the actual truth was very different from the general supposition.

In Caistowe, and in all the fishing villages along the coast the failure of the light was set down to some mechanical defect in the apparatus. People believed that old Dan—the lighthouse keeper—was feverishly working with his mate to restore the light.

Up and down the coast for miles the excitement and alarm grew. And at sea, where many fishing smacks were fighting against the storm, and where coasting steamers were steadily plugging on their course, the consternation was even greater. For every vessel was gravely endangered. Without the famous Shingle Light to guide them, they were like blind men near the edge of a precipice. And the storm increased their peril a hundredfold.

The truth about the Shingle Rock was astounding.

It was in the sole care of twelve Boy Scouts—the Lion Patrol and the Tiger Patrol

of the 1st St. Frank's Troop! Daniel Nash was a prisoner in one of his own store-rooms, and his mate was dead. That, in a nutshell, was the exact position.

And how had this extraordinary state of affairs come about?

The St. Frank's Scouts were not on the lighthouse by choice—they were marooned, cut off from the land, and prisoners on the rock. And the cause of their predicament was the unexpected madness of Daniel Nash.

The hardy old lighthouse-keeper had recently had the misfortune to lose every penny of his savings through injudicious investment. And his loss, combined with the solitude of his life, had suddenly deprived him of his reason.

The St. Frank's fellows had been involved by pure chance.

They had hired the old yacht in the early evening, as Nelson Lee had ascertained, but they had taken no rash chances. At that hour the sea had been glassily calm, and Nipper had read the warning signs. So he had decided to just sail round the lighthouse and then make for the safety of Caistowe Harbour.

But old Nash had appeared at the door of the lighthouse while the yacht was close by, and had invited the Boy Scouts to inspect his lonely home. It was hardly surprising that they had eagerly accepted the invitation.

For they would be off in half an hour, and there had been no prospect of the storm breaking before nightfall. They had had hours to spare.

Then had come the shock.

For old Dan, having seen the boys enter the lighthouse, had stove in the yacht's side with a sledge-hammer, and had set her adrift.

It was not until then—when it was too late—that the Scouts had realised their position. The lighthouse-keeper had cunningly concealed his madness from them until he had deprived them of all means of escape. And then he had come out in his true colours—and had, indeed, attempted to choke the life out of Handforth.

For hours the startled juniors had remained on the lighthouse balcony, hoping to attract attention. But luck had been against them. In the meantime, old Nash had wrecked the delicate lighting apparatus and rendered it useless.

But he had been conquered at last, and was now safely under lock and key, unable to do any further mischief. The gathering storm had only added to the consternation of the Scouts.

Nipper had succeeded in signalling to the Hawk Patrol late in the evening, and the Hawks, without waiting to give any general alarm, had taken out a boat with the intention of rowing to the lighthouse. But the storm had swooped down with startling,

unexpected suddenness. And they had found the current too strong for them.

Fight as they would, they had been unable to get back to the shore. The darkness had swallowed them up, and Reggie Pitt and his gallant Patrol had been cast on one of the exposed rocks, their boat smashed beneath them—as Irene & Co. had dramatically witnessed.

The Hawks were mercifully saved, and at first they had believed themselves to be secure—thinking that the rising tide would not affect them. But the direction of the wind—a sheer gale—was having a big

cause of humanity. Fate had placed them in this position—they were the temporary keepers of the Shingle Rock Lighthouse.

And while the entire population along the coast wondered, the marooned Scouts were working at the highest possible pressure. Even while the storm was raging, Nipper and three helpers were doing their utmost to repair the damaged apparatus and get it into working order.

The others were manufacturing flares, and the first of these was about to be lit. By hook or by crook the schoolboy lighthouse-keepers were determined to carry on!



"Then we'll come!" interrupted Irene promptly. "There are six of us here——"

"Seven!" corrected Willy briskly.

effect upon the water, and was causing the tide to rise with extraordinary speed, and to a much higher point than usual.

Thus their perch was not the safe one they had thought, and they were in peril of being swept off and battered to death on the cruel rocks. Their fate, indeed, hung in the balance.

Nipper and Handforth and the other Scouts on the lighthouse knew nothing of this little drama, although they suspected that the Hawks were in some kind of danger. They had their own troubles to think about—and their duty, too.

They were Scouts, and as such it was up to them to render unselfish service in the

CHAPTER VI.

THE MODERN GRACE DARLINGS.



IRENE & CO. and Willy received a surprise when they hurried down the gap and came within sight of the small lifeboat-shed. Rain was pouring down now—sheets of driving, hissing rain.

The girls were already wet through, but they scarcely noticed their discomfort. The midsummer storm was raging in all its fury, and the sea, if anything, was getting angrier. The lightning was so continuous that the electrical display seemed to be

never ending. And the thunder crashed and rolled with confusing intensity.

The girls were surprised to see a lantern gleaming near the lifeboat-shed. And as they approached they found that the doors were opened, and several burly men were engaged in hauling the lifeboat down the shingle. There were two or three storm-lanterns standing about.

At first the girls thought that the lifeboat crew had witnessed the accident, and were about to go to the rescue. But they soon changed their view. The men were performing their work so leisurely and with such calmness that they had obviously received no alarm.

They paused as the Girl Guides approached and peered at them dubiously. Willy had taken in the situation at a glance. He recognised the men as local fishermen, and easily guessed that they had come along to the lifeboat as a mere precaution—in case there was a sudden call. The fishermen went up a good deal in Willy's estimation. They weren't so slow, after all.

"Better get back to your camp, young ladies!" said one of the men, as he came forward. "This ain't no place for the likes o' you. What wi' this 'ere rain an' the storm—"

"Bother the storm!" interrupted Irene. "We came here to get the lifeboat out."

"Oh, ye did?" said the man with a grim smile. "I admire your pluck, young lady, but it's work for men. An' mebbe there'll be a call before long—what wi' the light bein' out an' the sea fair swarmin' with smacks. Not as long as I've lived have I seen that light fail, an' if there ain't a wreck it'll be a mercy!"

"But there is—there is!" said Irene quickly. "A small boat was driven on the rocks only a quarter of an hour ago, and the occupants are all clinging to the rock, and in danger of being swept off!"

"So buck up and get the lifeboat launched!" put in Willy briskly. "I'll come along with you and lend a hand. But the main thing is speed—we can't stand here jawing."

The other fishermen had joined the group now. There were four of them altogether, and they heard this fresh piece of news with an exchange of startled glances. Willy's calm offer to lend a hand with the lifeboat made little or no impression.

"A boat was driven on the rocks?" repeated one of the men. "You're dreaming, missy! There's been no boat out in this sea—"

"But we saw it!" shouted Doris. "We saw it distinctly in the lightning. And there were five or six boys in it. They're clinging to the rocks now, and they might be swept off at any moment. The tide's rising all the time."

It only took Irene & Co. a few moments to convince the four burly fishermen. And

then the latter were not only startled, but thoroughly alarmed. This was an unexpected call.

"The others won't be along for half an hour, Jim!" said the eldest of the group. "You'd best rush along and hasten 'em up. If them boys are to be got off, there's no time to lose!"

"We'll never do it, Ben!" said the other. "It'll be more than half an hour before I can get back—I can't go round by the beach, because the tide's cut off the headland by this time. I shall have to go up the cliff and round—"

"And those boys will die!" interrupted Irene.

"It's no good, missy—four of us ain't no good in the lifeboat!" said Ben firmly. "We'd go in a minute, if we could, but we shouldn't stand a chance—"

"Then we'll come!" interrupted Irene promptly. "There are six of us here—"

"Seven!" corrected Willy briskly.

"Well, seven of us!" went on Irene. "We can all row—we've had plenty of practice, and with you men to control the boat we can do it! It's either that or leaving those boys to their fate!"

"And there's not a second to lose," added Willy urgently.

"Bless your hearts, young ladies, it can't be done!" ejaculated the old fisherman. "I daresent take ye out—much as I admire your grit! We might never get back—"

"Well, that'll be better than standing here idle!" said Doris fiercely. "We've got to go—we've got to! We can't let those boys drown without making any attempt to save them. And if you send for the other men it'll be too late!"

"Gosh!" shouted one of the others. "The gal's right, Ben! An' we can do it, too. What's more, it ain't for us to pick an' choose. There's lives to be saved, an' it's up to us to save 'em!"

"Ay!" assented the others.

And in another minute the decision was made, and the lifeboat was being dragged down the beach. It was unprecedented for mere schoolgirls to venture out in a lifeboat, but the circumstances were so exceptional that the extraordinary nature of the exploit was almost overlooked.

And the girls were so businesslike in their uniforms that the fishermen did not hesitate. The Robins were certainly proving that they were Girl Guides in earnest.

CHAPTER VII.

ALARMING NEWS.

IN the meantime, Nelson Lee was not feeling any happier.



No news of the missing Scouts had come in. Inquiries had been made everywhere, but nothing definite could be ascertained. It

was only known that the sailing yacht had set out early in the evening, before the storm was heralded, and since then it had completely vanished.

Nelson Lee had paid another visit to Caistowe, and his anxiety was increasing by leaps and bounds. He met Mr. Stokes on the cliff path, and briefly explained the futile nature of his visit.

"It's extraordinary, Mr. Stokes—and I don't mind admitting I'm intensely worried," he said. "The boys would surely have communicated something by this time if they had run into a sheltered cove. I am beginning to fear they were swept out into the Channel by the storm."

"It will be all right if they keep clear of the coast——"

"It won't, Mr. Stokes—it won't!" interrupted Lee. "That old yacht was safe enough in fair weather, but I have definitely heard that she would never be able to withstand a rough sea. Her owner assured me that she couldn't live for half an hour in this storm."

Mr. Stokes was deeply concerned.

"This is bad news with a vengeance!" he exclaimed. "And we can do nothing. But I can't believe that Nipper would be so rash; it's not like him at all."

"I know it isn't," agreed Lee. "That's what puzzles me so much. But even the most careful of us are liable to slip at times, and the calmness of the evening may have deceived him—— Hallo! What's that out there? Upon my word, Mr. Stokes, it's on the lighthouse!"

He pointed through the driving rain. Flickering uncertainly in the murk was a faint, ruddy glow. It rose and fell uncertainly. But from its very height and direction Nelson Lee knew that the glow was proceeding from the summit of the lighthouse.

The effect was somewhat weird. The storm was raging fiercely, with wind and rain beating in from the Channel. The thunder was still rolling and booming as incessantly as ever, and the sky was inky black, indicating that the great electrical disturbance was by no means at its zenith.

"Yes, that glow is on the lighthouse, without question," agreed Mr. Stokes. "But what can it be?"

"A flare, by the look of it," replied Lee keenly. "An improvised torch, I should say. At close quarters it is probably a lurid glare, but the driving rain has the effect of reducing the light to a minimum."

"But it's no use as a substitute for the great lamp," said Mr. Stokes. "They might as well use a couple of candles."

"They are evidently in extremities," said Lee. "And any kind of warning light is better than nothing. Even that improvised torch may be the means of saving a ship from running on the rocks. And at least

we know for a certainty that the lighthouse-keepers are doing their best. I pray to Heaven they are successful."

His tone was so significant that Mr. Stokes looked at him sharply.

"Have you any special reason for saying that, Mr. Lee?" he asked.

"Well, yes," admitted Nelson Lee. "While I was in Caistowe I collected a telegram, and I learned that Lord Dorri-more is coming up the Channel this evening in his private yacht, the Wanderer. They are making for Caistowe harbour, and should be due by this time."

"By jingo!" said Mr. Stokes. "I hope they steer clear of Shingle Head! They'll come pretty close if they're making for Caistowe harbour——"

"That is the reason for my anxiety," interrupted Lee. "Captain Burton is in command, and although he is a splendid skipper, this part of the coast is none too familiar to him. He will naturally be relying upon the guidance of the Shingle Rock Lighthouse. And without it, in such a storm as this——"

Lee broke off, and looked towards the camp. Lights were glowing in many of the tents, for none of the Scouts had even thought of settling down for the night. But Lee had been attracted by the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps.

"Is that you, sir?" gasped a youthful voice.

"What do you want, Heath?" asked Lee sharply.

Chubby Heath, of the Third, came up in a fever of excitement.

"Please, sir, I've just heard something!" he ejaculated. "One of the boys from the farm just told us that six of those Moor View girls are down at the gap getting out the lifeboat. Willy's there, too, and I believe they're all going out to rescue some chaps who've been shipwrecked!"

This was something tangible at last.

Not that Nelson Lee was overjoyed by the news. He was startled to hear that Irene & Co. were preparing to go out in the lifeboat, and that Willy Handforth was also involved in the adventure. Lee, indeed, was inclined to discredit the story. But he couldn't ignore it.

"I'll go at once!" he said crisply. "Are you coming, Mr. Stokes?"

"Yes, rather!" declared Barry Stokes. "I say, this is beginning to get exciting, you know. A shipwreck, eh? It seems that that yacht has gone ashore nearer than we expected——"

"We can know nothing until we get there," interrupted Lee, as they fairly ran along the path.

And even when they did get there, they were still in the dark. For the beach was deserted, and no living soul was in sight.

But the emptiness of the lifeboat-shed told its own story.

"Look!" said Mr. Stokes huskily.

He pointed out across the tossing waters of the bay. In the lightning flashes the two men caught sight of a small lifeboat. It was struggling manfully against the strong sea, pulling out farther and farther into the smother.

And just then Nelson Lee kicked against something in the sand. He picked it up. It was a Girl Guide's hat.

"Then it's true!" said Nelson Lee quietly. "Good heavens, Mr. Stokes, it seems that nothing is impossible to-night!"

CHAPTER VIII.

SAVED FROM THE SEA.



REGGIE PITT clung desperately as his feet were swept from under him by the fierce wash of the receding wave. It was only by grim tenacity that he kept his hold.

"You chaps all right?" he panted.

"Yes; but it was a near shave!" came Jack Grey's voice.

"I say, this is getting too thick for words!" gasped Augustus Hart. "Another wave like that and we shall all be washed off. This rock isn't so safe as we thought it was. There'll be no walking ashore when the tide goes down!"

"You said it!" came the voice of Ulysses Spencer Adams. "Say, where's the wise guy who told us there was nothing to worry about? Oh, boy! This is some picnic, I'll tell the world!"

Considering everything, the Hawks were keeping up their spirits with amazing fortitude. They had been clinging to their precarious perch for half an hour, and matters were becoming desperate in the extreme.

It was Pitt himself who had expressed the view that everything would be all right. And he had done so in good faith. From his own observations he had noticed that this particular rock was never submerged at high tide. But Reggie had not allowed for the strength of the wind.

This was causing the sea to surge in with amazing force, and the tide was rising higher than any of the usual spring tides. The rock, which rose to a kind of pinnacle, would not be entirely submerged, even as it was, but human life would soon be impossible upon it.

For the waves were breaking over the rock with ever-increasing violence. So far, the six Scouts had managed to retain their grip. But sooner or later an extra big wave was inevitable, for the tide was still

rising. And then the Hawks would be swept away ruthlessly. Death would be swift, for nothing could save them from being flung with appalling violence against the cruel fangs of rock.

But in spite of their sheer desperation, the six St. Frank's juniors kept up their spirits. They felt that rescue was impossible. Battered by the spray, soaked by the driving rain, and blinded by the spume they were about as helpless as any human beings could be. And they all realised that it was now only a matter of minutes before the end came.

And they had come out for the express purpose of rescuing their companions on the lighthouse. This was indeed a terrible end to their praiseworthy effort.

"We shan't have long to wait now, you fellows!" said Jack Grey. "The next big wave will do it. I'm nearly finished already——"

"Keep your pecker up, old man," interrupted Pitt. "While there's life there's hope, you know. It's my fault that we're all in this mess—I brought you out here——"

"Rats! It's nobody's fault!" said Jack. "Look out! There's another wave coming——" He broke off, and uttered a high-pitched shout of wild excitement.

"There's a boat!" he panted shrilly. "Look! There's a boat! Hi! Help, help!"

"Don't old man!" said Pitt desperately.

He believed that his chum had fallen a prey to his own imagination. For it was incredible that a lifeboat could be out here, in this sea, particularly as the boys had seen no sign of lights from the shore. This was easily explained, for a spur of rock shut off the lifeboat-shed from their vision.

"I tell you there is!" shouted Jack Grey. "There's a boat coming—I saw it in that flash of lightning! Hi! This way! Help!"

"Hang on there!" came a faint, mysterious voice above the hiss and roar of the surf. "Look out for the line!"

Reggie Pitt nearly lost his hold.

"Great Scott!" he breathed. "Jack's right!"

"Hurrah!"

In spite of their exhausted condition, the Hawks managed to raise a cheer. Rescue had come when it seemed no rescue was possible. And now, peering through the gloom, they could even distinguish the dim, ghostly shape of the lifeboat as it rose and fell amid the tempestuous seas.

By hugging the leeward side of the rocks, the boat was afforded some measure of protection. And the four fishermen were able to keep her safely away from the immediate danger zone.

Irene & Co. had done wonders.

Although inexperienced in rowing in such a sea, they had put their backs into the task with all the energy they knew of.

The old salts were startled and delighted at the display of the Girl Guides. And Willy Handforth was no less a marvel, for he handled his own oar with fine skill and judgment.

Indeed, these youthful volunteers had made the rescue a possibility. Without them the lifeboat could never have gone out. And one look at the foam-swept rock told the rescuers clearly enough that not one second was to be lost.

If the castaways were to be saved, they would owe their lives to the efforts of these "mere" girls!

CHAPTER IX.

VICTIMS OF THE STORM.



"JUMP!" shouted Pitt urgently. "Now then all together!"

An unexpected opportunity had arisen. The lifeboat, skilfully handled, had, nevertheless, drifted much nearer to the rocks than her crew had intended. In a way, it was lucky, although perilous in the extreme.

For the Hawks, seeing the boat so close, seized their chance.

They leapt—desperately and recklessly. And before the boat was swept away by the succeeding wave they were aboard—bruised and grazed, but safe.

"Good egg!" shouted Willy. "Jolly fine! I thought you were going to miss us, Clarence! It's a good job you've got long legs!"

Even now the danger was acute. The Scouts had been saved, but the lifeboat was in momentary peril of crashing against the rocks. Old Ben was shouting out his instructions at the top of his voice.

"Back water—all of ye!" he roared. "All together! Now then, steady! Steady! That's the style!"

The girls put their strength into the oars as well as the men, and one effort, fierce while it lasted, made them win clear. The boat was tossed about giddily, and the spray came inboard in foaming masses—but those deadly rocks were no longer in close proximity.

"Easy now—easy!" shouted Ben. "Swing her round a bit—that's the style! By gosh, if you ain't a set of living marvels, young ladies! All together now—pull!"

"Pull for the shore, sailor!" roared Willy, as he strove with his oar.

Pitt and the others were sorting themselves out now, and their relief was so great that they hardly realised that they were now comparatively safe. And they were fairly staggered, too, to see Irene & Co. in the lifeboat. It was an amazing surprise.

"Here, let me take your oar, Doris!" urged Pitt. "Fancy you girls having the pluck to come out—"

"Dry up!" commanded Doris. "You're one of the rescued! Just you keep still until we get ashore. Besides, we can't change places in a sea like this."

"Winnie; too!" went on Pitt, as he looked around, still half dazed. "Great Scott, Win, you might have come out to your death—"

"We had to come, Reg.," said his sister, as she wielded her oar. "But I wasn't sure you were one of the castaways! Thank goodness, I was able to help! I wouldn't have missed this for worlds!"

The lifeboat was now well away from the rocks, and tossing about in the open water, where the full force of the great waves lifted her high one moment, and sent her slithering into the trough the next. Conversation of any kind became difficult, and even impossible.

And the Hawks, much as they longed to relieve the girls, realised that any changing of places would be fraught with real danger. It was far better for them to keep as they were.

It was so dark that the occupants of the boat could hardly see one another—except when the lightning flickered and flashed overhead. But these glimpses were too momentary to be effective.

Irene uttered a sharp, low cry, as she pulled her oar back, but the only one to hear her was Willy, for he was sitting next to her in the bows, wielding the opposite oar. Practically all the rest had their backs to the pair.

"Anything wrong, Irene?" shouted Willy. "I thought I heard—"

His words choked on his lips. For he witnessed something which made his heart leap into his mouth. As a matter of fact, Irene's blade had fouled a piece of floating wreckage—a heavy wooden pile which had been drifting, probably, for months.

But the shock, of it had momentarily numbed the girl's arms, and her oar had slipped from her grasp. She saw it going, and made a grab, for the tossing of the boat had freed it from the rowlock.

And at that very moment a wave came up, and hit the lifeboat broadside, heeling her over giddily. In front of Willy's very eyes Irene toppled overboard without a sound, and plunged into the boiling sea. It was rather uncanny, for the girl had made no outcry—there had been no time, the whole incident having occurred in a few seconds.

As for Willy Handforth, he didn't think at all.

He acted instinctively, on the spur of the moment. As Irene disappeared, so he leapt overboard. The two actions were almost simultaneous. Willy had seen the girl go, and he followed as a matter of course, before his brain could direct his movements. If he had any thought at all, it was a simple one. Somebody had been swept overboard, and he had to go.

to the rescue. Willy would have acted just the same if anybody else had been the victim. The thought of any danger to himself did not cross his mind.

Both he and Irene vanished into the storm-tossed sea. For a moment there was a glimpse of Irene's face in one of the lightning flashes—there was a brief vision of Willy Handforth striking towards her. Then they were both blotted out in the spray and smother.

And the lifeboat went on, her occupants totally unconscious of the missing two! It was a situation that nobody could have foreseen, and every stroke of the oars made the rescue of the pair more and more remote.

CHAPTER X.

A TRAGIC RETURN!



"STOP—stop!"

It was a scream from Doris—a scream which startled everybody in the lifeboat, so fraught was it with horror and alarm.

"Steady, missy—steady!" said Ben, the old fisherman. "I was afraid this would be too much for ye—"

"Where's Irene?" cried Doris wildly. "Oh, stop! Irene's gone! She's not in the boat! Oh, and Willy—Willy's gone, too! They've been swept overboard!"

Her words came like a thunderbolt to the other occupants of the lifeboat. For the shore was practically in sight—the beat of the surf on the shingle could be heard like a continuous roll of thunder. And everybody had been thankfully telling themselves that all danger was over.

But within a second confusion reigned.

"Good heavens!" shouted Pitt, as he peered through the gloom. "Willy's gone! And Irene—" He raised his voice.

"Irene!" he shouted. "Willy! Come on—all of you! We'll shout, and then listen!"

They did so, but no reply came except the hissing rain, and the swirl and swish of the waves as they swept round the rocking craft.

"May Heaven help 'em!" said Ben huskily. "They must 'ave been swept overboard when that wave struck us broad-side—"

"But that was five minutes ago!" cried Doris. "Oh, we must go back! Turn the boat round! Irene!"

She and the other girls called out despairingly—for the sudden discovery that their leader was lost filled them with horror and fear. Until a moment ago they had revelled in the adventure. They were exhausted, and their fair hands were torn and blistered. But they cared nothing for such trifles. They had done it as a matter of duty. For the Guide Spirit had taken hold of them.

"Irene's disappearance, however, put a different complexion on the whole affair.

The girls were nearly hysterical with excitement and dreadful alarm. And the Hawks were similarly affected—not only on Irene's account, but on Willy's, too.

Ena Handforth was nearly distracted. It was her brother who had gone overboard—and Ena, usually so calm and self-possessed, had to be forcibly quietened by her companions.

The affair seemed positively uncanny. Nobody had seen Irene and Willy go, and nobody knew exactly when they had been swept overboard. Consequently, it was impossible to form any judgment as to their position now. During the first few moments everybody thought of effecting a rescue. And the sea echoed with shouts.

But gradually, after the boat had been turned about, the realisation of helplessness dawned upon them. How was it possible for those two poor victims to live in this fierce sea? The current, alone, was enough to drag them down and bring swift death. And the force of the waves was also enough. The two combined made certain.

Perhaps Willy and Irene had shouted—had tried to attract the attention of the disappearing lifeboat. It was a tragic thought. And the lifeboat, with its occupants all unconscious of the disaster, had kept to its course! The thing was appalling in its stark horror.

And now?

What was the good of searching now? Within five minutes the Scouts and the Guides were convinced that their efforts were futile. They were only endangering their own lives by remaining on the water. In such darkness as this, and in such a heavy sea, any kind of rescue was out of the question. Irene and Willy had gone—had been swept away to certain death!

But it seemed incredibly cruel and callous to row ashore while there still remained the faintest shadow of hope. And so, again and again, the lifeboat circled round—until the girls were exhausted, and until the fishermen themselves were feeling the same.

And then, at last, with blank despair in their hearts, they made for the beach. Luck was with them, and a huge wave carried the lifeboat high up the shingle, where she grounded with a jarring crash.

Ready hands seized her, and held her tight—for by this time a considerable crowd had gathered on the foreshore. Nelson Lee and Mr. Stokes were among the spectators—and for some little time they had been puzzled and worried over the erratic movements of the lifeboat.

But they soon knew the dreadful truth.

Now that the danger was over, the school-girls were exhausted. The reaction came, and they had to be lifted out of the boat and carried ashore. They had covered themselves with glory, and their exploit was destined to ring throughout the entire country.

But they cared nothing for that now. They were hysterical and tearful. All

sobbed with despair, and Nelson Lee was soon in possession of the facts. He was overjoyed to see the Hawks come ashore unharmed—wet, bedraggled, and exhausted, but otherwise safe. But when he discovered that Willy and Irene were missing, Lee was horrified beyond measure.

Willing volunteers practically carried the girls to their camp. And Lee watched them go with a feeling of pride. But it was tempered by the despair that gripped his heart.

"It's a mystery, sir—a terrible mystery!" exclaimed Pitt dully. "We didn't know they were gone until it was too late. They must have been swept overboard without a sound—it's too awful."

"We must be thankful that so many of you are saved," said Nelson Lee quietly. "We are still uncertain about Nipper and Handforth and the others. Possibly they have been wrecked—"

"They're on the lighthouse, sir," interrupted Pitt. "Didn't you know?"

Nelson Lee started.

"On the lighthouse?" he repeated sharply. "The Lions and the Tigers?"

"Yes, sir."

"All of them?"

"As far as I know," replied Reggie. "Why, that's why we went out in the boat—to take them off! They signalled to us—used a looking-glass, or something, in the sunlight—Morse code, you know. Old Dan, the lighthouse keeper, went mad, and our chaps are marooned on the Rock."

"Now I am beginning to understand," said Nelson Lee slowly. "So they are all on the lighthouse! In one way, the news is gratifying, for the boys are in no danger from the sea. But with a madman—"

"I think they've dealt with him, sir," interrupted Pitt. "At any rate, their message said nothing about anybody being hurt. They're just shut off on the lighthouse, and all we can do is to wait until the sea gets calmer."

Nelson Lee could now picture the entire sequence of circumstances—the visit of the two Patrols to the lighthouse, their being trapped by Old Dan, and the rescue effort of the Hawks.

It seemed that everything was likely to come out right, after all. Only the dreadful tragedy to Irene Manners and Willy Handforth marred the stirring excitement of the night's adventure.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE NICK OF TIME.



"BY George! That's the style!" said Handforth enthusiastically, holding a big flare high above his head in the raging wind.

"Rather!" agreed Church.

They stood back, shielding their faces against the smother of smoke and sparks. Rain was pouring down in torrents, the thunder boomed, and from far below came the roar and surge of the surf as it swept round the Rock.

For the celebrated chums of Study D were over one hundred and fifty feet above the sea level—standing, in fact, on the observation balcony which surrounded the lantern-room of the great lighthouse.

The storm was at its height, and the Tigers were tattered, dishevelled, and grimy. They had been working like mad—and now, at last, they were reaping some reward for their valiant efforts.

The huge flare was then fixed up. It was thrust far out beyond the balcony, and held secure, being fixed on a long pole. The wind carried the smoke and sparks away into the night, except for an occasional flurry which blew back.

It had been no easy task, getting that flare into position. In the first place, a huge torch had been manufactured—wood, old clothes, oilskins, and other materials being employed. The whole had been soaked with thick oil, and then set alight.

No less than three attempts had been made to bring the flare out into the storm, and on each occasion it had been extinguished. But at last it was well alight, the wind now causing the flames to roar with tremendous fury.

"We've got something going, anyhow," said Handforth breathlessly. "Where's Brent? Where's Burton? What about that other torch? This flare won't last more than five minutes, and—"

"Here they are!" interrupted McClure.

Two or three other Scouts came out on to the balcony. They were carrying a second oil-soaked torch. Nipper's idea was to keep up a continuous succession of these flares—lighting one from the other before it expired. In this way a warning light would be provided. Not that it would provide any serviceable substitute for the real lantern.

Only at close quarters could this flare be seen. On a clear night the torches might have served—but in the midst of this storm it was a question whether the Scouts' efforts would be of any use.

But they were certainly doing their best.

All twelve juniors were working their hardest. While nine of them concentrated their efforts on the torches, Nipper and Watson and Goodwin were struggling with the lantern—smashed and disabled by Old Dan Nash.

Nipper was hoping to get the lamp going, so that the great light would be flashed out into the darkness of the storm, giving its warning to all and sundry. The flares were a mere temporary substitute.

"Just in time!" shouted Handforth, as Brent and Burton and two or three others

came out with the new torch. "You'd better hold it in the flames, and light it—"

"That's what we going to do," interrupted Alf Brent. "Now then, Archie—hold tight!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie Glenthorne.

The elegant swell of the Fourth was working as hard and strenuously as any of the others. He was proving that his usual laziness was a mere pose. For when it came to the point he was just as active and energetic as any of the others. In an emergency, Archie Glenthorne was a fellow to be relied upon.

The second torch was held against the first one, which was now beginning to die down. The oil soon caught fire, and within a few moments the new flare was burning fiercely and successfully.

"It's a good idea to start with, but we can't keep it up," said Brent, shaking his head. "We shall soon exhaust the supplies—"

"Look out, there!" shouted Handforth suddenly.

Gripping the rail, he stared downwards—where all was black and thick. They could hear the crashing of the waves against the crags. But nothing could be seen. For the night was as black as ink. Occasionally, for a brief instant the creamy foam could be seen in a lightning flash, but then the darkness would shut down, murkier than ever.

"What are you shouting about?" asked Church. "There's nothing to see—"

"Yes, there is!" yelled Handforth. "There was a light there—about a hundred yards out, on that rock—"

"Impossible!" shouted Brent. "Nobody could be on that rock—it's submerged nearly all the time. The waves keep breaking over it—Great Scott! I—I thought I saw—"

Alf broke off and gripped the rail fiercely. It seemed to him that a dim kind of light was visible—a sort of yellowish glow, appearing and disappearing like some will-o'-the-wisp. And it was certainly located on that stretch of half-submerged rock.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie. "I mean to say, dashed queer, what? We're all mistaken, of course. A good old trick of fancy, or something of that sort or order. I mean, out here, in this—"

"There it is again!" roared Handforth. "Look!"

They all stared tensely, forgetting the

flares, and their work. But the lightning was less frequent now, and the darkness was like something solid—But then, with an unexpected suddenness which caused the juniors to gasp, a line of fire seemed to rise from the very sea itself—a long thin streak, which curved over, and then broke into a display of vivid sparks.

"Great pip!" gasped Handforth. "It's a rocket!"

The others said nothing—they were too startled. For, without any question, the thing they had seen had been a signal of distress.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SIGNAL OF DISTRESS.



WHAT-HO!" said Archie Glenthorne, at length.

He had been the first to break the tense silence. All the Scouts on the balcony were staring down at that spot—where the rocket had come from, and where they had glimpsed that uncertain, mysterious glow.

"What-ho!" repeated Archie. "I mean, this is where we dash about, and all that sort of thing! A ship in distress, lads! How about a few ropes, life-saving machinery and so forth?"

Archie was quite serious—in fact, he was gripped with excitement, and he cared little for the fact that he was smothered with oil and grime, or that his hands were roughened and blistered.

"There's another one!" yelled Church breathlessly.

He was right. A second rocket came upwards—and so near was the disabled vessel that the rocket came over on its arc, and only missed falling on the lighthouse balcony by a yard or two. The juniors were rather startled.

"Why, she's only just down there, on those rocks!" panted McClure. "She's not more than forty or fifty yards away! A fat lot of good our flares are, if a ship can't see them at that distance!"

Another vivid flash of lightning flickered overhead, and the lighthouse Scouts were enabled to see with startling distinctness for the space of two or three seconds. They were all staring down in the direction of that rock, and so their gaze was already fixed.

They saw a smallish sailing vessel—her masts shattered, and her rigging entangled. She was labouring helplessly on the rocks, listing over perilously, and the following seas were crashing over her stern, and sending the spray upwards in vast cascades.

Then the darkness blotted out the fleeting vision.

"She's one of the Caistowe fishing

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smacks!" panted Handforth. "What the dickens can we do? There are probably three or four men on board——"

"They'll have seen those rockets from the lifeboat station," put in Church. "So they'll be out before long——"

"That's no good!" interrupted Edward Oswald. "No lifeboat could approach these rocks, and you know it! That smack is jammed on the crags—and she's breaking to pieces with every wave that comes up!"

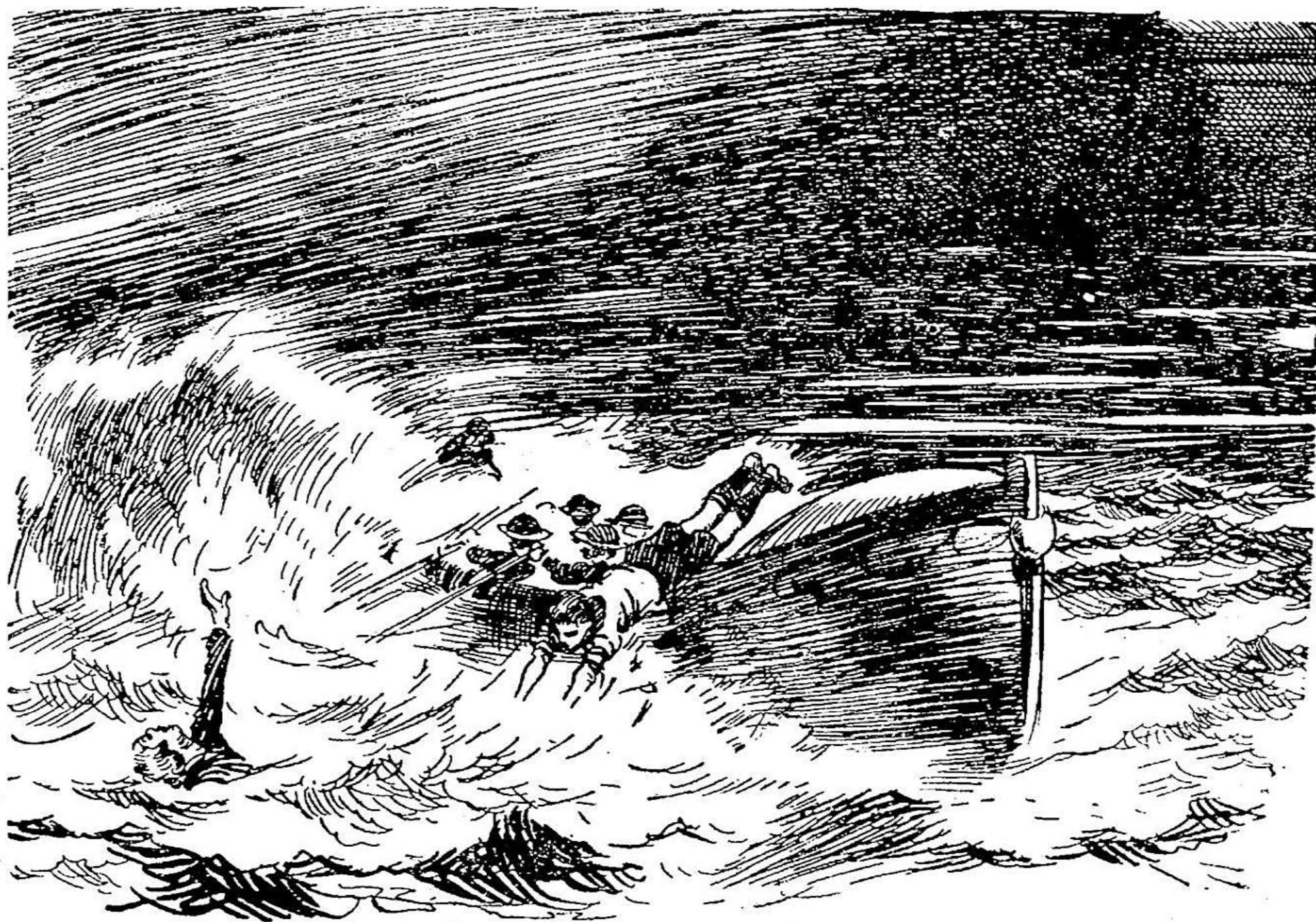
The Scouts felt their hearts beating furiously. The knowledge that human lives were in danger—that almost certain death awaited the unfortunate fishermen—stirred

straight on to these rocks! The torches—the torches——"

He broke off with a gulp, for a glance round had shown him that the second flare was burning out. And the third one was not ready! Within a minute the feeble danger signal would be extinguished—and there was nothing to take its place!

And that big ship, all unaware of her danger, was ploughing steadily on—fighting the fury of the storm—and heading straight for the death-dealing rocks of Shingle Head!

The juniors were startled enough in all conscience. What would have been their



As for Willy Handforth, he didn't think at all. He acted instinctively, on the spur of the moment. As Irene disappeared, so he leapt overboard.

them strangely. They knew the reason for that mysterious glow now. The light was probably in the smack's cabin, and they had just caught a glimpse now and again between the masses of spume and smother.

"Look!" gasped Church abruptly. "What's that out there?"

His voice had risen to a kind of scream, and he pointed directly out into the storm. Other lights were to be seen—a double row of them. They gleamed and winked mysteriously in the night.

"It's a ship!" roared Brent. "A big one, too! Good heavens! She's driving

consternation if they had known that those lights belonged to the steam yacht, Wanderer? How would they have taken the news that Lord Dorrimore himself was on the bridge, side by side with Captain Burton?

Yet it was the truth.

The Wanderer was bound for Caistowe Harbour, and her skipper was determined to take her in. The absence of the Shingle Light had upset all his calculations, and this, with the added confusion of the storm, was causing Captain Burton a good deal of anxiety.

"She's getting nearer!" panted Handforth. "Can't we do something?"

In the face of this new peril, they realised their terrible helplessness. As yet, the yacht was a good distance out, but she was heading for the rocks in an unmistakable way.

The juniors completely forgot the unfortunate fishing-smack in their new excitement. After all, what was a mere cockleshell of a fishing craft compared to this ocean liner? For the Scouts were convinced that those twinkling lights belonged to a great passenger ship, containing hundreds of souls.

And then, at that providential moment, something else happened.

Handforth was about to dash round the balcony, when he came to a dead halt. A blinding, dazzling beam had shot out, illuminating the sea, the rocks, and making the balcony as light as day. Handforth gave one gulp, and stared up.

It seemed incredible—impossible!

But it was a fact. The great lantern of the Shingle Rock Lighthouse was again sending out its enormous beam—the shutter was working, and the familiar short and long flashes were warning shipping that this was a spot to be avoided.

"The light!" yelled Church madly. "Hurrah!"

"Nipper's done it!" roared Handforth. "He's got the light going! Hurrah! He's in time—they'll be able to get that ship out of danger!"

CHAPTER XIII.

NEARING A CLIMAX.



NIPPER himself came running out a moment later. Behind him were Tommy Watson and Dick Goodwin. All three were so grimy that they were almost unrecognisable. And they were nearly ready to drop with exhaustion, for they had been working without cessation for two solid hours at high pressure.

"Is she all right?" shouted Nipper, above the gale.

"By gum, she's working champion!" said Goodwin, gazing upwards. "Ay, lad, but you're a real marvel! I thought we'd never do it—"

"Look out there!" shouted Handforth, clutching Nipper by the arm, and pointing. "Watch! There! Can't you see?"

One of the long flashes came, and the beam many thousands of candle-power in intensity illuminated the sea out ahead. And in that beam was the dark hull and the white superstructure of a big steam-yacht. In the first glance, Nipper recognised her familiar lines.

"Good heavens!" he shouted. "The Wanderer!"

"What!"

"She's the Wanderer!"

The juniors were trebly excited now. And they, too, recognised the vessel's lines. They watched with dreadful anxiety, for even now the danger was still ghastly. It was by no means certain that the yacht would escape disaster. She may have come too far to be able to get back.

But the light was working—and that was the main thing! Nipper and his two helpers had succeeded when any kind of success had seemed impossible. For Old Dan had made such a wreck of the apparatus that at first glance it had appeared that weeks of work would be necessary to repair the damage. Goodwin's mechanical genius was partly responsible for the repair; but Nipper's had been the guiding mind. They had made a botch of it—a repair which could not stand more than a few hours' work—but the light was going! Nothing could alter that fact.

On the Wanderer's bridge Captain Burton was aghast with horror, but by no means panic-stricken. He and Lord Dorrimore had seen the light suddenly flash out with inward consternation. For they had discovered, with an unexpectedness which came as a dire shock, that their vessel was nearly on the rocks.

The skipper jammed over the engine-room telegraph. Full speed astern! The yacht's propellers ploughed and churned. The graceful craft shivered and shook in every plate and in every rivet. She vibrated from stern stem to stern like some stricken creature.

But, gradually and certainly, she fought against the current, and drew slowly back—away from that horrible danger-zone. Indeed, as the look-out man reported later, for a few tense minutes it had been touch and go! The yacht had come within five or ten feet of the outermost crag! She had escaped destruction by a hair's breadth!

But for Nipper's determination to get the light going, the Wanderer would, by this time, have been piling herself up on the rocks, doomed to certain and swift destruction. Once caught in those crags, no ship had ever been known to escape. Big and little, all were doomed.

But the Wanderer, having received the warning in time, was able to get back into safe waters—her position now verified—and with the course to Caistowe Harbour no longer in doubt. She was saved.

And the Scouts on the balcony, watching with tense excitement, were relieved beyond measure when they saw the twinkling lights growing smaller.

"Thank goodness!" breathed Nipper. "She's just managed to pull out in time. By jingo, it's a good thing we got the light going! Those flares would have been no good—"

"There's a fishing-smack down there—pounding herself to bits on the rocks!" interrupted Brent grimly. "We can't do anything, Nipper; but it's horrible! Look—we can see her now! She's lit up in every flash from the lantern! I don't think she can last.

more than twenty minutes at the most! And all we can do is to watch her go to pieces!"

Nipper stared down, his attention attracted towards the stricken smack for the first time. In the intermittent flashes, he could see the little craft. Big seas were breaking over her, but so far she was comparatively whole. She had jammed herself into a wedge of the rocks, and her destruction was not as swift as it would have been otherwise. Sooner or later, however, she must inevitably slide off the reef, and sink like a stone.

The nearness of the Shingle Rock Light, and its welcome beam, had brought momentary hope to the apparently doomed fishermen. But although aid was so near-by, it was nevertheless remote. For no boat in existence could have lived in that sea which boiled between the Shingle Rock and the spur on which the smack was jammed.

Up and down the coast and out in the Channel, the sudden reappearance of the famous light had brought relief and joy. Nobody knew why the light had been out, or how it had been restored. But the familiar flashes acted as a guidance and an aid to every ship in the great waterway.

"I can't stand this!" muttered Handforth. "I'm going inside! I can't stay here and watch that smack go to pieces! Poor chaps! They don't stand an earthly chance——"

"They do!" interrupted Nipper grimly. "If we work hard enough we can save them! We're here against our will, and we're new to all this sort of thing. But we've got to do our duty!"

"But—but I don't understand!" gasped Watson, staring.

"Downstairs, in one of the store-rooms, there's a complete rocket apparatus!" said Nipper tensely. "It's got a range of a hundred yards at least—and that wreck isn't seventy-five yards away!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SCHOOLBOY LIFE-SAVERS.



NIPPER'S statement electrified the others into wild activity.

A moment before they had felt certain that nothing could be done. But with a life-saving rocket apparatus there were immense possibilities. The stricken smack was so close that she seemed to be almost below. There had been no more distress signals, but this did not indicate that her crew had been washed overboard. The supply of distress rockets had been expended, and now nothing further could be done.

The castaways must have known that no lifeboat could reach them. And help from the lighthouse seemed equally remote. But the Scouts, with this new duty suddenly thrust upon them, rose to the occasion.

"Rocket apparatus!" said Handforth breathlessly. "What's the good of that?"

It's no good firing rockets! They've done that already——"

"Fathead!" shouted Church. "This is different!"

"How is it?"

"A rocket apparatus is a special contrivance, Handy," said Nipper quickly. "They've got them all along the coasts—there must be two or three hundred stations, and this is one of them."

"Yes; but how——"

"We've got to fire a rocket, and make it carry a thin line across to the wreck," explained Nipper swiftly. "Once we've made the connection, we can send over a hawser, and then it'll be comparatively easy to fix up the cradle, or breeches buoy. It's the only thing to be done, in fact—and everything depends upon getting the line across."

Now that the decision was made, action was the watchword.

Happily, the juniors were not worried with the great lantern—there was no necessity to waste any further time with the temporary flares. The light was working perfectly, and the great clockwork apparatus was functioning with precision. The fact that it jarred and grated made little difference. It was in working order—even if reluctant and sluggish. Nipper was convinced that it would carry on until dawn came.

For the moment, there was much to be done.

Half a dozen fellows accompanied Nipper down into the interior of the lighthouse. They seized the rocket apparatus and carried it up to the balcony—the tripod, the rockets, the box of thin line, and everything else necessary. Other juniors were set to work on the heavier task of hauling up the hawser, the breeches buoy, and all the other necessary tackle. Tom Burton was placed in charge of this work—and nobody could have done it better, since he was familiar with such things.

The main thing was to get the light rocket apparatus to work—if only they could shoot the line on to the wreck, and get it secured, half the battle would be won. And speed was the most essential feature of all.

Fortunately, all was in readiness for instant use. There was nothing complicated about the mechanism. One look at it was enough for Nipper. He had had some slight experience of these rockets, and the first one was soon released. It went off with a terrific spurt of flame and smoke, and the juniors watched breathlessly.

The thin line was carried out far into the night; but a groan went up when it was seen that the gale carried it fully ten yards beyond the wreck, and far out of reach.

Another rocket was fired, and by this time lights were waving on the smack's listing deck. The fishermen were aware that efforts were being made to save them, and they were using storm lanterns as a means of guidance.

The second rocket was fired amid tense silence.

Over it went, and, as luck would have it, the great lantern was shut off during those momentous seconds. It seemed an age before the beam came out again. And then the juniors were permitted to see something which filled them with joy.

The line had fallen true! Two figures, visible now and again amid the smother, were hauling on it desperately.

"Hurrah!" roared Handforth. "They've got it!"

"Bust my main-deck, so they have!" belowered the Bo'sun. "We'll bend this hawser on now, and give them the signal to haul on it. We'll have the breeches buoy fixed up in no time."

And Tom Burton was right. He himself bent the hawser on to the thin line, and it was soon hauled across the intervening stretch of water; but as the balcony was so far above sea-level, the hawser never once touched the angry waves. Both rescuers and rescued worked with a tremendous will. And it was surprising how soon the thing was rigged up.

"It's going to be a stiff pull, mess-mates!" shouted Burton. "We shall have to haul them right up at a sharp angle, but there's plenty of us here. Better than dragging them through the sea, anyhow!"

The hawsers were now tight, and Nipper and Burton and the others were working hard on the cradle arrangement upon which the fishermen were to be hauled to safety.

The breeches buoy was sent down at last, and all the Scouts knew that every second now counted. The fishing-smack was in a more precarious position than ever, and at any moment she was liable to heel over and carry her victims with her. Speed was more essential than ever.

The weather was improving. The rain had now practically ceased, one or two rifts were appearing in the clouds, and the lightning was elusive and distant. The storm, in fact, having reached its zenith, was now rapidly passing. Even the wind had lessened considerably.

But there were precious lives to be saved, and the temporary guardians of the Shingle Rock Light worked grimly and unselfishly.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SURPRISE OF THEIR LIVES.



"HAUL away!" sang out Nipper briskly.

With his eyes glued to a pair of night-glasses he had been watching the movements on the smack. He had seen the first figure placed into the breeches buoy. An arm had been waved, and the signal was given.

Handforth and Burton and the rest hauled on the line with all their strength. And

the precarious-looking cradle came travelling upwards from the wreck to the lighthouse.

The passenger was brought over the treacherous sea, over the spray-smothered rocks, and upwards to safety. At last the breeches buoy reached the balcony rail, and willing hands were held out to pull the fisherman into safety. Handforth and Church were the nearest.

"Good!" shouted Handforth. "We'll soon have you— Great pip, what the—I—I must be dreaming—"

"It's—it's Irene!" gasped Church blankly.

He stared in absolute amazement. The figure in the breeches buoy was a slight one—attired in rough serge trousers and a blue jersey. The juniors had glimpsed the figure with the thought that it belonged to the ship's boy. But, to their stupefying astonishment, they now beheld Irene Manners, of the Moor View School!

"Please," she exclaimed breathlessly, "I—I don't feel very safe!"

Half a dozen fellows made a move at once, and Irene was pulled out of the cradle and landed safely on to the balcony. She was rather pale with excitement and fatigue, but otherwise she seemed herself. And, owing to the fact that the life-line was high above the sea all the way, she was not even soaked. A little dash of spray here and there were the only signs of wetness.

"But—but I don't understand!" ejaculated Handforth, staring.

"Oh, it's been too wonderful for words!" panted Irene. "Willy's down there, too—they're going to send him up next—"

"Willy?" gasped Handforth. "My minor?"

"Yes."

"But—but what on earth—"

Handforth broke off, and the amazed expression in his eyes changed to one of keen anxiety.

"Quick!" he shouted. "Send that cradle down again! My minor! He's down there on that wreck—"

"Keep your hair on!" panted Church. "The cradle's gone!"

Handforth watched it, most of the colour having died out of his cheeks. His face became suddenly haggard. His deep concern for his minor gave the direct lie to his usual indifference concerning Willy's welfare. Now that it came to a crisis, he was nearly mad with anxiety.

"Some of you chaps take Irene indoors!" commanded Nipper. "Take her in the living-room and make her comfortable—you'll find blankets and rugs—"

"No, certainly not!" interrupted Irene. "I'm all right! Oh, this is too amazing! Fancy you boys being here and doing all this—"

"Yes, but how did you get on that fishing smack?" asked Brent.

"We were rescued."

"Rescued? I thought you were wrecked."

"I mean, we were rescued before we were wrecked," explained Irene. "We went out in the lifeboat, you know, to help Reggie Pitt and the other Hawks. On the way back I was swept out of the boat by a wave, and Willy dived after me. Oh, it was the most wonderful thing I've ever seen! He dived straight in to my rescue, although it seemed certain death."

Handforth flushed.

"Good little chap—my minor!" he said gruffly.

"He's a brick—and he saved my life!" said Irene, with a catch in her voice. "He pulled me up when I was about to sink, and we both clung to a piece of wreckage. It was that piece of wreckage, in fact, which caught my oar, and caused me to fall overboard—"

Further explanations were delayed, owing to the fact that Willy was now being hauled up to safety. Handforth's anxiety was painful to witness. At any moment a hitch might occur, and Willy might go hurtling down to certain death. But at last he was pulled over the rail into safety, and he took in the situation with all his usual calmness.

"Jolly good, you chaps!" he remarked. "Thanks awfully! Buck up with that buoy, though—there are three fishermen to be rescued, first-rate chaps, too! They saved our lives!"

"Yes, Willy and I were drifting with that piece of wreckage," explained Irene, her eyes sparkling. "We were almost done for when those men on the fishing smack hooked us in. Oh, they were splendid! They put me down into the cabin, and after I'd recovered a bit I found these clothes—"

"You look ripping in them!" said Handforth promptly.

"I don't—and you know I don't!" said Irene indignantly. "I look a perfect sight! But they're dry—and I haven't come to much harm. I'm afraid Willy is dreadfully wet—"

"Only sea-water," interrupted Willy carelessly. "Sea-water never hurts anybody. Besides, what do I care? I thought it was jolly smart of you to change into those togs, Irene. Now that you're dry, I don't worry so much— Hallo, here comes the next passenger up the escalator!"

The fishing smack boasted a skipper and two men. And while they were being drawn up into safety the scouts gained an insight into the night's adventures. The smack had been lost in the smother, blinded by the fact that the Shingle Light was not serving to guide her. In the midst of the storm, Irene and Willy had been seen drifting by, clinging to that piece of wreckage. So, miraculously, they had been saved

—and were, indeed, hardly any the worse for their stirring adventure.

Thus, there had been no casualties at all.

But it was the Scouts on the lighthouse who had covered themselves with glory. In the supreme moment they had risen to the occasion—they had proved themselves worthy substitutes as keepers of the light.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PASSING OF THE STORM.



ONE more thrill—another moment of tense suspense!

It was during the hauling-up of old Sam Wells, the owner and skipper of the ill-fated fishing smack. His son and another man—the crew—had been safely brought up, and were now helping with the tackle.

All the boys believed that the danger was over.

First Irene had been rescued, then Willy, then the two men, and now only the skipper remained. And he was dangling in the breeches-buoy, midway between the wreck and the lighthouse. It was only a matter of minutes before he would be hauled over the balcony rail into perfect safety.

"Ay, but I'm glad!" exclaimed young Wells. "I never thought she'd stand it, young gents! I've been expecting her to slip off that reef for the last twenty minutes. But we're all right now—"

"Look out!" shouted Handforth suddenly.

The hawsers had suddenly drawn tight, straining and shrieking. Down below the Scouts caught a glimpse of the wreck heaving in the sudden strain of several enormous waves. And at last she gave up the fight.

She lurched, heeled over, and disappeared among the smother of waves. And the tackle was torn asunder and wrenched loose—with the skipper in mid-air between life and death.

The breeches-buoy sagged, skidded down the loosened line, and for a dreadful moment it seemed that the last survivor would go hurtling down into the foaming sea.

But the tackle became jammed, and old Sam Wells swung helplessly in mid-air—the lines sagging towards the lighthouse with a swoop. Fortunately, the wind carried the helpless man past the cruel granite wall in a long swing. There had been a chance of him being dashed to death. But that peril was now over.

"Up with him—together!" shouted Nipper desperately.

The Scouts were rather pale now, for they suddenly realised how narrow the margin between death and life had been.

It seemed only a moment or two ago that Irene and Willy had been hauled up. If they had bungled over the firing of the line, and fixing up the breeches-buoy, all those on the smack would have gone down.

The smack itself had vanished. Having been swept off the reef, the succeeding waves had sent her crashing against the rocks. In the space of a few seconds she had been battered to pulp—smashed like an egg-shell, and distributed over the angry water in a mass of minute wreckage.

Owing to the fouling of the line, the skipper was safe. He was hauled up by the willing Scouts and by his own crew. And at length he was pulled over the rail, safe and unharmed. His lined, weather-beaten face wore a softened expression as he was helped out of the apparatus.

"Thank ye, young gents—thank ye kindly!" he said huskily. "I thought 'twas all up just then. The old boat's gone, but there are no lives lost. How's the young leddy?"

"Oh, I'm fine, thanks, skipper!" said Irene, answering for herself. "I'm awfully pleased to see you here—I half-thought you'd be drowned. We're all right now. The danger's all over."

Old Wells was amazed to find the lighthouse swarming with schoolboys, but no explanations were gone into at the moment. He and his crew were escorted below—Willy Handforth with them. And they made a raid on the clothes chests of the two lighthouse-keepers.

The Scouts themselves were comparatively dry. For the rain had ceased long since, and their own exertions had had the effect of drying them. Irene was in no need of another change. She had already donned rough fishermen's clothing, and her champions had taken such care of her that she was scarcely damp. Her terrible experience in the water had left her little the worse. For the sea, after all, was comparatively warm, and Irene was an athletic girl, in fine physical condition. She ached from head to foot, but there was nothing alarming in this.

In the meantime, the storm was swiftly passing.

Already the stars were gleaming out, and the wind had dropped to a mere breeze. There was no more lightning, and the heavens had found peace. Nobody thought of the time, or of going to sleep. But Nipper urged Handforth and several of the others to dash down to the living-room and make plenty of jugs of hot cocoa, and to prepare some food.

Then tension was now over, and a slight reaction had set in. All the fellows were feeling tired and hungry and thirsty. And they all glowed with the pride of achievement. They were conscious that they had

done well, that their efforts in the cause of humanity had been crowned with success.

And up and down the coast there were many groups of wakeful fishermen, coast-guards, and others. It had been a night of uncertainties. But the Shingle Rock Lighthouse was flashing out its warning as of old, and so everything was well.

The Scouts considered that they had saved five lives that night. But in reality they had saved fifty, a hundred—perhaps two or three hundred. For not only had the Wanderer been saved from disaster in the nick of time, but many other ships had found their bearings at the height of the storm, and had crept safely into harbour.

Indeed, the work of the Lions and the Tigers could never be estimated at its true value. There was not an inhabitant along the whole coastline who would ever forget this famous night, when the St. Frank's Boy Scouts had taken charge of the Shingle Rock Lighthouse, and had saved many a gallant ship from dire destruction.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE QUEEN OF THE LIGHTHOUSE.



DAWN!

Nipper felt grateful as he saw the first flush of coming day in the eastern sky. Except for Tommy Watson and Archie Glenthorne, Nipper had the balcony to himself. The others were down in the lighthouse, busily preparing food.

Sir Montie Tregellis-West was in the lamp-room, it being his turn to watch the working of the apparatus. Should there be any hitch he would instantly report the matter to Nipper.

But the great light was still flashing out; the shutter was working creakily and reluctantly, but it was working.

"Well, thank goodness it's pretty nearly over!" exclaimed Nipper. "In another twenty minutes we shall be able to breathe freely. The light won't matter, and even if the machinery busts up, we shall have done our bit."

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie Glenthorne. "Besides, the storm is practically over, old chestnut. I mean to say, what are the wild waves saying, and all that sort of thing? It strikes me they're telling us they want forty of the best after this frightful burst of energy."

Nipper smiled.

"Yes, the sea's going down now," he said. "The wind's practically dropped to nothing, and with the dawn I expect there'll be a dead calm. At this time of the year

we soon get a calm, and at low water there'll hardly be anything else but a sluggish swell."

"Let's hope so, anyway," said Tommy Watson. "They'll be able to bring some boats out here, and then we can get ashore. I don't mind admitting I've had enough of lighthouses to last me a lifetime!"

"What-ho!" agreed Archie, leaning against the rail, and inspecting the reddening sky with approval. "I mean to say, the old tissues are absolutely exhausted. It wouldn't be so bad if Phipps were in the offing. Good old Phipps!" he added dreamily. "I haven't seen the lad for weeks. This Boy Scout stuff is dashed exciting, and so forth, but give me the simple life!"

"Well, we shall soon have the holidays here," smiled Nipper. "Only a few days now, Archie, and it'll be going-away day at St. Frank's, and then our camp automatically comes to an end, too."

Archie continued to look dreamy.

"The summer vac., what?" he murmured. "All I want, laddies, is to be left alone in some woodland dell. A hammock, cushions, and what not! After this frightful experience it'll take me two bally months to recuperate."

"Don't you fellows want any cocoa?"

It was McClure who sang out the words. He had just put his head out of the doorway, and he was looking tired but happy. He gave a glance at the eastern sky and grinned.

"Nearly daylight!" he said. "Good!"

"Watchman, what of the night?" murmured Archie. "I may be wrong, but it seems to me that the night is just about to do a flit into the offing. And a bally good thing, too. These dashed stormy nights oughtn't to be allowed. I mean, think of the bally trouble!"

"I'll bet the gov'nor's anxious," said Nipper, as he passed inside. "Of course, Reggie Pitt has told him that we're all on the lighthouse, but he's bound to be worried. I shall be glad when we get ashore. Who would have thought yesterday that we should have walked into all this excitement?"

They passed through the lantern-room, down the stairs through the service-room, and came upon a scene of much animation. The living-quarters were crowded, and noise was the order of the hour.

Irene was in full command.

She had taken charge of the cooking arrangements, and was pouring out cocoa into every kind of receptable—cups, mugs, and even tins. The Scouts weren't at all particular.

"What-ho!" beamed Archie. "Queen of the lighthouse, what?"

"Don't be silly, Archie!" exclaimed Irene.

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "That is, of



"By George, that's the style!" said Handforth enthusiastically, holding a big flare high above his head in the raging wind.

course, absolutely not. Irene, old robin, allow me to say that you look somewhat priceless. Why, dash it, you've never looked better!"

"Never!" agreed Handforth, after a gulp of cocoa. "You rotter! I was just going to say that. I think Irene looks ripping in those clothes."

Being a sensible girl, Irene took very little notice of these compliments. She continued her duties in the same calm, matter-of-fact way as before. Now that all the danger was over she was fairly revelling in the adventure. It was rather exciting to be on a lighthouse—the only girl among sixteen mere males.

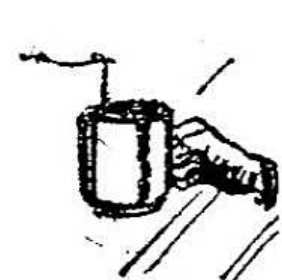
But Archie was quite correct in what he had said.

Irene was looking quite charming. Her hair was unruly and wavy after its wetting in the seawater, her cheeks were aglow with good health and excitement, and the lines of tiredness and fatigue were practically wiped out in the excitement of her novel surroundings. Dressed in the old blue jersey and wide trousers, she looked quaintly picturesque, particularly as the trousers were rolled up over her ankles. Handforth would have given a month's pocket-money for a snapshot of Irene as she now stood.

The cocoa was grateful, and the Scouts were only just beginning to realise how badly they needed it. They were all feeling enormously hungry, positively ravenous, in fact.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLEARING UP A FEW POINTS.



"THIS cocoa's all very well, but it doesn't seem substantial enough to me," remarked Owen major. "I could eat a giddy house. I'm starving. Do you realise we haven't had a proper meal since midday yesterday?"

"My hat, I don't believe we have!" said Church.

"We're all famished!"

"Yes, rather!"

"All right, don't all speak at once!" laughed Irene. "You've had some cocoa, and that'll do to be going on with. I'm going to prepare a big meal now; I've found heaps of things to eat in the store cupboard. I shall want two helpers."

"I'm on!" said Handforth promptly.

"Thanks all the same, Ted, but I don't think you're suitable," said Irene sweetly.

"I don't mind Willy—"

"Good!" grinned Willy. "Count on me!" Handforth went nearly green with jealousy.

"You young rotter!" he hissed. "If you think you're going to oust me—"

"A fellow of your strength and power oughtn't to waste his time on cooking," went on Irene diplomatically. "Aren't there some bigger things you can do, Ted? Can't you devise some scheme for us all to get ashore?"

Handforth started.

"By George!" he breathed. "You're right! Why should I waste my time on cooking?"

"Why, indeed?" murmured Willy. "Or to be more exact, why should you waste a lot of good food in attempting to cook it?"

Handforth didn't hear the insult. A gleam had come into his eyes, and he stood there thinking deeply. The others were grinning. They could easily understand why Irene didn't want Handforth to help her, for he was always inclined to cause ructions.

Nipper had gone up into the lantern-room, accompanied by Sam Wells and the other two fishermen. And Nipper briefly explained what he had done to get the lamp into temporary working order.

"A wunnerful piece of work, young gent," said Wells nodding. "There's many lives ye've saved to-night, I'll warrant.

You could have knocked me down with a feather when I found you boys in charge here."

"We couldn't help ourselves," explained Nipper. "We were marooned on here by chance, and we had to do our best. I'm worrying about old Dan Nash. He went mad, you know—I've already told you about that."

"Poor old Dan!" said the fisherman. "I've known him these fifteen years; and he went mad, eh? It's a mercy some of you young gents weren't hurt. He must have been violent, the way he smashed up that lamp."

"We managed to get him into a store cupboard, and we locked him in," explained Nipper. "Then the storm came on, and we couldn't think of anything but flares and repairing the lamp. We've been busy every minute of the time. But now I think we ought to have a look at Dan, and see how he's getting on."

"That's what I think, too," said Watson. "He may be dead, for all we know. We haven't heard a sound of him for hours. We daren't open the door, because he was absolutely murderous just before we locked him in."

"I'll have a look at him!" said the old fisherman gruffly.

He was a huge man, powerful, and as strong as a lion in spite of his years. His son was no less a giant, and with the third man in reserve, there was little chance of the mad lighthouse-keeper doing any damage. While the Scouts had not dared to risk an encounter with the madman, these burly fishermen were quite ready for the ordeal.

Nipper led them down into the lighthouse, through the living-room, where Irene and her helpers were already getting busy. And they halted before the store cupboard where Daniel Nash was a prisoner.

"I'll ask you young gents to stand back a bit," said Wells. "You'd best keep close against me, Tim," he added to his son. "If the old feller shows fight, we've got to hold him."

The door was suddenly flung open; but there was no necessity for the precautions. There was no attack. Everything was dark and silent within the cupboard.

"There you are—he's dead!" breathed Watson huskily.

"Take this!" said Nipper, pushing forward.

He thrust his electric-torch into the fisherman's hand. They entered the deep store cupboard. And one beam from the torch revealed the truth. The unfortunate lighthouse-keeper was stretched on the floor in a state of unconsciousness. He was not dead as Tommy had supposed, but his sanity had taken another turn. The violent,

homicidal spell had had a brief life, and now the poor old fellow was desperately ill. "It's brain fever!" muttered Nipper, as he bent over the unconscious man. "He's in a bad way, by the look of him—but it's just as well. When he recovers he'll probably get his sanity back. If he hadn't had this stroke he may have remained insane for the rest of his life."

"So even brain fever has its compensations," said old Wells, nodding his head grimly. "Young gents, we'd better lift the old feller out of here and put him in one of the beds. Might as well make him comfortable until he can be taken off."

"Yes, that's the best way," agreed Nipper.

And the unfortunate Daniel Nash—the original cause of all the trouble—was gently lifted by willing hands, and carried to one of the bed-rooms, further down in the lighthouse.

CHAPTER XIX.

GETTING A MOVE ON.



NELSON LEE nodded with relief and satisfaction. "Yes, she's the Wanderer," he declared. "Splendid, Mr. Stokes! The yacht must have crept in before the dawn—after waiting for an hour or two outside the harbour, I suspect."

"So it would appear," said Mr. Beverley Stokes.

The two Scoutmasters were standing on one of the piers in Caistowe Harbour. Although dawn had only just come, there were plenty of people about. For on this exciting night there was hardly a fisherman or a member of his family who had retired to rest.

After the storm had come the calm.

The sky was clear and cloudless, and not a breath of wind disturbed the tranquility of the July dawn. It seemed impossible that a hurricane could have been blowing only a few hours since. But the sea gave the game away. It was still restless—still strong and treacherous.

But the waves were losing their power rapidly, and with the ebbing of the tide there would soon be a great difference.

Nelson Lee was peering out into the bay. Some distance from the pier the graceful lines of a steam-yacht could be picked out from the other vessels—for the harbour was crowded with shipping which had sought refuge from the storm.

"We must get a boat of some kind, and go out to her," said Lee, after a few moments. "Even if we find Mr. Fielding, it is doubtful if he will consent to take one of his boats to the Shingle Rock until the sea goes down a bit. We might as well employ the time."

Lee had come to Caistowe with the ob-

ject of seeking out a certain Mr. Fielding, a local sportsman whose chief hobby was the constructing and racing of powerful motor boats. Nelson Lee knew him well, and indeed, the St. Frank's fellows had every good reason to know Mr. Fielding for a real sport.

Although Lee was relieved to see the Wanderer safe and sound, he was, nevertheless, heavy-hearted over the tragic happenings of the night. For, as far as he could see, both Irene Manners and Willy Handforth had gone to certain death. He did not think it possible that they could have been saved.

They had been swept away at the height of the storm, and nothing had been seen of them since—although watchers had kept a constant vigil on the beach. Even now there were fishermen and others searching the shingle and the rocks, in the hope of finding the poor, battered bodies.

Lee had come away just before the dawn, intent on getting one of Mr. Fielding's boats and paying a visit to the lighthouse. Even if a close approach was impossible, he could, at least, establish communication with the boys, and find out how things were going.

The sudden resumption of the great light had brought relief to everybody, and Nelson Lee was proud of the fact that his own boys were responsible. For he needed no telling that Nipper and his stalwarts had succeeded in putting the light in order.

The necessity to take a boat out to the Wanderer was obviated. For while Lee and Stokes stood on the quay, they beheld a launch coming in. And as it drew nearer Lee recognised the familiar figure of Lord Dorrimore.

The famous explorer and big game hunter was looking as bronzed and cheerful as ever. He caught sight of Lee at a distance, and waved a cheery hand. And soon afterwards they were clasping hands at close quarters.

"By gad, Lee, I hardly expected to see you again!" declared his lordship. "It was touch an' go with us durin' the night."

"I was afraid the Wanderer might be in danger—"

"In danger?" repeated Dorrie. "By the Lord Harry! Do you realise that the old tub was drivin' straight for the rocks when that light started goin' again? We missed 'em by a few feet, old man. It's the nearest shave we've ever had!"

"Well, you've got to thank the Fourth Form!" said Lee quietly. "I can't go into all the details now, Dorrie, but the lighthouse is in the charge of a dozen of my boys. The light was wrecked by the keeper—he went suddenly mad. The boys somehow got the apparatus to function again."

"Good luck to 'em!" said Dorrie enthusiastically. "As a matter of fact, you're not tellin' me any news. We saw

the youngsters through a telescope—five or six of 'em on the lighthouse balcony. By gad! They've done some wonderful work, Lee, an' they deserve every credit!"

Nelson Lee shook his head sadly.

"But for one tragedy there would be much to be elated over," he said. "But one of the younger boys and a girl belonging to the Moor View School have, I fear, gone to their deaths."

"I say, that's terrible," said Dorrie gravely. "One of the younger boys? Do I know him?"

"Handforth minor, of the Third Form—Willy."

Lord Dorrimore stared, aghast.

"Willy!" he echoed huskily. "Lee! You don't mean it! Why, I liked the cheeky youngster better than all the others! An' he's gone—drowned? I can't believe it, old man—I can't believe it!"

"I wish I could say the same!" exclaimed Lee, with a sigh. "The girl, too—you know her, Dorrie. Irene Manners, the daughter of Mr. Hobart Manners, who was with us in the Sahara adventure. She and five of the other girls went out in a lifeboat to rescue some boys off the rocks. A wonderful piece of work—a superb achievement. The tragedy occurred on the return trip—when Irene and Willy were washed overboard. That was hours ago. They haven't been seen since."

Lord Dorrimore's face was pale and grave.

"This is terrible news, Lee," he said quietly.

"It is, indeed," agreed the Scoutmaster-detective. "I am about to get hold of a motor-boat, so that we can visit the lighthouse; the sea is now much calmer—"

"Why get hold of a motor-boat?" interrupted Dorrie. "My launch is here—waitin' to be used. You're welcome to it, Lee."

And a few minutes later they started off for the Shingle Rock.

CHAPTER XX.

BREAKFAST.



"I T won't be long before there's some kind of activity," said Nipper, as he walked round the balcony. The sea's getting calmer every minute, and there'll soon be a swarm of boats round here."

"Including coastguards, and Trinity House officials, and probably the Navy!" said Tommy Watson, with a grin. "They couldn't get near us during the night, but now that the sea is getting calm, they'll simply buzz round."

There were six or seven Scouts on the

balcony. They could hardly believe that such dramatic adventures had happened to them so recently. For all signs of the storm were rapidly passing.

The sun had just risen, and the air was filled with the brilliant rays of a summer's sunrise. Flocks of gulls circled about the lighthouse, and the beach, apparently so near, was not as deserted as one might have expected. Figures could be seen here and there on the shingle. Other figures were visible along the cliffs.

Everything, in fact, was calm and serene. And now that the tide was rapidly going out, the sea itself wore a subdued, half-ashamed look. The heavy waves were reluctantly falling, and the surf and spray at the base of the lighthouse were greatly lessened.

"I expect the gov'nor will be here before long, too," said Nipper thoughtfully. "I hope he comes along soon. Even if he can't land on the rock, we shall be able to shout the news to him."

"What news?" asked Brent.

"About Irene and Willy—and those fishermen," replied Nipper. "They must be in a terrible stew ashore. Miss Bond and all the Girl Guides are probably half mad with worry about Irene. And what about the Third? How do you think they're getting along without Willy in command? Their anxiety must be terrific."

"Yes, I hadn't thought of that," said Watson slowly. "And those fishermen, too—their families, you know. The sooner we can get the news ashore the better."

The big lamp was out now, and the apparatus was silent. It had performed its duty. And before nightfall, no doubt, experts would arrive on the scene, and make a more substantial repair. The St. Frank's Scouts had done their part—and had done it amazingly well.

"Breakfast, you chaps!" said Willy Handforth, appearing on the balcony. "Come on—eggs and bacon—coffee—biscuits—marmalade—"

"That's enough!" shouted Watson. "Lead me to it!"

"You don't need any leading—follow your nose!" said Willy. "I don't know how I've helped with the cooking—I felt like eating the giddy frying-pan! Where's my major?"

"Haven't seen him for over half-an-hour," replied Nipper. "He seems to have disappeared somewhere—Church and McClure, too. You'd better go and look for them—"

"Who, me?" asked Willy. "Not likely! If they can't find their own way to the grub department, it's their funeral! Archie seems to have vanished, too. I thought he was up here—"

"You'll find him down in the service-room, fast asleep on a pile of old rubbish," grinned Brent. "I wondered what had happened to him, and had a search. He's as happy as a lark—he couldn't be

more contented if he was sleeping in a feather bed!"

Willy had a look in the corner of the service-room as he went down again. Archie Glenthorne was sound asleep—in the most uncomfortable attitude, according to appearances. His body was reclining on some bundles, and his head rested against a drum of oil. There was a contented smile on his face, and he was breathing peacefully.

"Wake up, Archie!" said Willy sternly. "Great Scott! You haven't even washed! Breakfast's all ready——"

"Absolutely!" murmured Archie dreamily. "That's all right, laddie. That's all right! You can pass me some of the muffins! What-ho! Muffins and a cup of the good old priceless tea—— Eh?"

Archie started up out of his dream, and blinked at Willy.

"You won't get muffins and tea, but we can supply you with biscuits and coffee," said Willy calmly. "Do you realise that Irene is waiting for you? Do you appreciate the fact that your face looks like a sweep's? Are you aware that you absolutely whiff of oil?"

"Oddslife and good gad!" gasped Archie, starting to his feet. "Absolutely! I meant to have a wash, and decided on stealing forty of the best and brightest as a dashed preliminary."

"Well, you must have taken an overdose!" said Willy. "Better buzz down and have a wash in record time."

Soon afterwards all the Scouts were merry and happy. Breakfast was an entirely informal meal; but Irene and her assistants had provided a big supply of eatables, and the manner in which they vanished was an eye-opener. The juniors had got beyond sleep now. They weren't likely to want any until later on in the day.

And while breakfast proceeded, nobody seemed to notice that three fellows were missing. Handforth & Co., for some unexplained reason, remained absent. Considering that Irene was the hostess, this was all the more remarkable.

CHAPTER XXI.

HANDY'S GREAT IDEA.



"**B**ACON!" said Church hungrily, as he sniffed the air.

"Eggs!" breathed McClure intoxicatingly.

They stood there, their noses up, sniffing like a pair of retrievers. Down the stairs came a gloriously appetising waft of cooking. It was so wonderful that Church and McClure forgot about their task, and made an instinctive move towards the stairs.

"Hi! Come here!" commanded Handforth.

"Breakfast!" explained Church briefly.

"Blow breakfast!" snorted Edward Oswald.

"We've got to get this thing finished before we do anything else——"

"But we haven't eaten anything since yesterday afternoon!" roared McClure. "I'm nearly famished, and I'm not going to stay here——"

"It'll only take us another ten minutes, fathead!" interrupted Handforth. "You weaklings! Are you going to peter out now—within sight of success? Where's your will-power? They'll be plenty of grub left for us. Come on—just one more effort, and the thing's done."

Church and McClure groaned.

"Oh, all right!" growled Church.

They turned back to their work—consoled by the thought that they were possibly premature. The smell of cooking did not imply that breakfast was actually ready. It would probably be ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before the meal was served.

Handforth & Co. were in the lower store-room. It was half-filled with empty oil-drums, and the remembrance of these had given Handforth a brilliant idea. Some little time earlier he had dragged his chums down, and they had brought with them an enormous amount of thick rope.

And the result of their labour was now taking definite shape.

A raft was in the course of construction—in fact, it was nearly completed. It was composed of a large number of the empty drums placed flat, and roped securely together. The entire floor of the store-room was covered with them.

"Why should we wait until a boat comes out?" Handforth had demanded. "We've got to show that we're independent! We've only got to build this raft, and we can launch it from the steps outside, and drift ashore in no time. This is where you want brains!"

"But why go to all the trouble?" asked Church. "There are bound to be plenty of boats soon——"

"We want to show everybody that we are capable of dealing with our own problems," replied Handforth promptly. "We'll give the other chaps a surprise, too. As a matter of fact, I'm thinking about Irene."

"Yes, but——"

"Doris and Marjorie and the others must be nearly off their rockers with worry," went on Handforth. "They haven't had any news, and they think that Irene's dead. We're going to take her ashore on this raft."

In vain Church and McClure had protested. In the end Handforth grew so insulting that they deliberately allowed him to go on. They failed to point out a very obvious drawback to the scheme.

And in the end they helped him with enthusiasm—not because they thought the raft would ever be floated, but because they were anxious to show him up in front of Irene. He deserved to be laughed at for his pigheadedness.

The smell of breakfast made them waver, but they fought it down.

"All right—we'll go ahead!" declared

Church gruffly. "Come on, Mac—let's have those ropes. This is going to be a wonderful raft, Handy. Where do you get your brainy ideas?"

"They come to me naturally," said Handforth modestly. "I can't help it, you know—they just come. And they always come easier when there's a big emergency. We've got to hustle now, because my minor might come nosing down here. I don't want him to know anything about it until we've finished."

They worked on tirelessly.

"These empty drums are a lot better than logs of wood," remarked McClure, as he drew one of the ropes tight. "They'll float high, and the raft ought to be able to support a dozen——"

"It'll only have to support four," interrupted Handforth. "We three are going to take Irene ashore—nobody else will be allowed."

"Good!"

"It's my idea, and we'll get all the credit," said Handforth.

"Of course, there may be a bit of trouble in the launching," said Church thoughtfully. "For example, I don't quite see how we shall get the raft——"

"Oh, that'll be easy," interrupted McClure hastily.

He gave his chum a warning look, and they continued the work. And at last, after nearly another half an hour had elapsed, the famous raft was completed. It was certainly a creditable piece of work.

"Now we'll go and have breakfast!" said Church eagerly.

"Yes, we can go up now—I expect it's ready," agreed Handforth. "Phew! That was warm work, you know! But just look at the result! Won't the other chaps go green with envy!"

Somehow, Church and McClure felt that the others would be affected in quite a different way.

CHAPTER XXII.

A LITTLE DRAWBACK.



"YOU don't expect any breakfast now, surely?" asked Willy, as Handforth & Co. appeared in the living-room. "We've done ages ago—and there's nothing left to eat——"

"Nothing left?" gasped Church. "There you are, Handy—what did we tell you? You ass! And we're nearly starved——"

"At least, there wouldn't have been anything but for Irene," went on Willy. "She's saved a few eggs and some bacon, and some coffee, and some biscuits, and I believe there are some fried potatoes. But you're jolly lucky! That's the best of being on good terms with the cook!"

"Willy, don't be so absurd!" said Irene, frowning.

"Just as you like," said Willy calmly. "I wouldn't dream of arguing with a girl. Well, I'm going up on the balcony—— My hat, you chaps look pretty hot!" he added, eyeing the trio. "What the dickens have you been doing? I thought you were having a nap?"

"Your mind would naturally run on some lazy subject of that sort," sneered his major. "We've been busy—working hard. If you'd care to come ashore, Irene, we can start as soon as you like."

Irene looked up eagerly.

"I'd love to!" she exclaimed. "But——"

"Oh, you can rely on Ted," interrupted Willy. "He's probably rigged up a wire between here and the shore—or he's going to shoot you out of a catapult. He has wonderful ideas, you know. There's no telling what he'll do next."

Handforth smiled serenely.

"You can be as sarcastic as you like; but I've done the trick, and we can go ashore in no time," he said carelessly. "If you'd like to come downstairs, Irene, I'll show you what we've been doing!"

"I should love it!" said Irene.

"Good!"

"But what about breakfast——" began Church.

"We can leave that till afterwards."

"Yes, but——"

"Afterwards!" insisted Handforth firmly.

"We're hungry!" roared McClure.

"Don't bother," said Irene, turning to them with a smile. "Ted will take me down. You stay here and be having your breakfast. You'd better come with us, Willy."

"Rather!" said Willy promptly.

Handforth gave his minor a look that ought to have shrivelled him up, but the leader of the Panthers didn't even quail. He was so used to his major's black looks that he took them as a matter of course.

There were other juniors who went down, too, for their curiosity had been piqued. Owen major and Brent and Singleton followed Irene and Handforth and Willy. And Church and McClure looked at one another and hesitated.

"Just our luck!" growled Church. "We've either got to miss the look on Handy's face, or wait a bit longer for breakfast!"

"Let's wait!" grinned McClure. "We can't be out of the last scene!"

They hurried down into the depths of the lighthouse, and overtook the others just as they arrived in the store-room where the raft was ready. Handforth was pointing to it with an air of modest pride.

"There you are!" he said. "That's it!"

"It?" repeated Irene. "They look like a lot of empty cans——"

"It's a raft!" said Handforth, with dignity.

"A raft!" exclaimed Irene excitedly. "Oh,

how lovely! You mean, we can float it, and then— Oh, but how— But how—”

“Exactly!” said Willy. “How?”

“How?” repeated Handforth, staring.

“That, as Hamlet once said, is the question,” Willy nodded. “In other words, to be or not to be? Somehow, I think it’s decidedly not!”

“You silly young ass—”

“One moment!” interrupted Willy, holding up an admonishing finger. “One moment before you let yourself go. I know exactly what Irene’s thinking about—I’m a thought reader. This raft is great—wonderful! It ought to float like a cork!”

“It will!” said Handforth firmly.

“Exactly—after we’ve got it outside!” smiled Willy. “If you’ll explain how an eight-foot raft is going through a three-foot doorway, we shall all grovel at your feet with gratitude. I didn’t know you were a magician—”

“Great pip!” ejaculated Handforth, with a violent start.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

The expression on his face was so extraordinary that the other fellows burst into a howl of laughter. Church and McClure considered that this one moment was a full reward for all their efforts.

“It—it won’t go through the doorway!” panted Handforth.

“No?” asked Willy. “You don’t say so!”

“Oh, but Ted!” protested Irene. “Surely you thought of a little thing like that beforehand? You didn’t really build this raft in here, forgetting all about the doorway?”

Handforth turned so red that Willy moved hastily away, remarking that he didn’t want to be scorched. The others were grinning with enjoyment.

“I—I— That is, you see—” gurgled Handforth.

He turned, and glared at Church and McClure.

“You helped me with that raft!” he roared. “Why didn’t you tell me about the door?”

“I like that!” snorted Church. “It was your idea, and you wouldn’t listen to us when we started objecting, so we let you go on. You ought to be satisfied now! The only thing is to get a charge of dynamite, and blow the lighthouse down!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Hi! you chaps!” came a hail from above. “There’s a boat in sight—coming straight towards the lighthouse.”

“A boat?” yelled Willy. “Hurrah! Come on!”

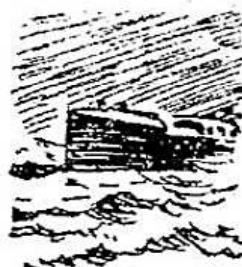
And, much to Handforth’s relief, everybody fled. They were far more interested in a strange boat than in his wonderful raft! Under the circumstances, they could hardly be blamed.



“Quick!” he shouted. “Send that cradle down again! My Minor! He’s down there on the wreck!”

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE END OF THE ADVENTURE.



“IT’S a motor launch,” said Nipper contentedly. “I’m not sure whether she’ll be able to come up close, but the sea’s a lot calmer now. Anyhow, we’ll be able to shout the news.”

“Rather!”

“Absolutely,” said Archie. “Personally, I’m thinking about swimming ashore, dear old laddies! I’m feeling frightfully grubby—”

“We shall all be ashore soon, Archie,” said Brent.

The balcony was crowded. The Scouts were feeling practically themselves again. The lack of one night’s sleep did not worry them in the least—and there had been so much excitement that they hardly needed any sleep now. They had breakfasted well, and they were feeling fit.

The sun was higher now, and the tide had receded still further. The sea was correspondingly calmer—until, indeed, scarcely any surf washed round the Shingle Rock. The waves rose and fell sullenly without breaking.

Some distance away, a motor launch was heading straight for the lighthouse. She

was coming up fairly rapidly, having appeared round the adjacent headland a few minutes earlier—obviously on her way from Caistowe.

"Hallo! It never rains but it pours!" exclaimed Willy, who was looking the other way. "There are two more boats coming out—rowing boats this time. We shall soon have a swarm round us."

From the nearest land two small boats were pulling out from the neighbourhood of Shingle Bay. But they would be much longer in reaching the lighthouse than the motor launch. The latter was coming up apace.

the Wanderer's launch, too! That proves she got into harbour all right."

There was fresh excitement when everybody knew that Lord Dorrimore himself was in the launch. He was popular with all the boys, and his very presence in Caistowe with the Wanderer was significant. For the holidays were near at hand, and perhaps Dorrie had some special reason for arriving at such a time.

"I say, why should we stay up here?" asked Irene eagerly. "It's low tide, and there's a big granite platform down below. It's safe on there, isn't it? Why shouldn't we go down?"

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"Let's have the telescope!" said Nipper briskly. "Do you mind, Willy? You'll find it just inside—"

"Right you are!" said Willy.

He ran in and fetched the telescope, and Nipper placed it to his eye. The approaching launch sprang into prominence at once. And after a moment Nipper gave a start of surprise and delight.

"Good!" he ejaculated. "The guv'nor!"

"Mr. Lee?" said Willy. "That's fine!"

"Wait a minute!" went on Nipper. "There's somebody else— Yes, by Jove, it's Dorrie! Good old Dorrie! It's

"Hear, hear!" echoed the others.

"Come on—we'll go!" said Nipper, nodding.

"Oh, but I'd forgotten!" went on Irene, flushing. "My clothes— Or, rather, these things I'm wearing—"

"It doesn't matter about them," chuckled Nipper. "You may look a bit unusual, but that's a detail. The main thing is to show yourself to the guv'nor, so that he can be relieved as soon as possible. I suppose he's fearfully worried."

So Irene accompanied them down. And Handforth was picked up on the way—for he had remained in the store-room, taking

his wonderful raft to pieces. He had determined, in fact, to build it again outside.

Arriving on the last floor of all, the heavy door of the lighthouse was opened, and the Scouts trooped down the steep granite steps—Handforth himself being careful to assist Irene—although she really needed no assistance.

Surrounding the lighthouse was a great granite platform, with further steps leading down to the water's edge. At high tide it was practically covered, and any exit from the lighthouse was perilous. But at low water there was no danger whatever.

As the Scouts spread themselves out on the platform, the launch was growing quite near. Sam Wells and the other fishermen had come down, too. In fact, everybody was waiting for the rescuers to arrive.

In the motor launch, Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore were standing up, scanning the figures through their binoculars. And Lee felt relieved and happy as he saw the obvious liveliness of the boys—proving that they had come to no harm. He recognised them one after the other, but there was one figure which puzzled him at first. And before he could think who it could be, he caught sight of another.

"I say, Lee, old man," came Dorrie's voice near by. "I thought you told me that young Willy Handforth was deceased? Unless I am vastly mistaken, he's caperin' about on that platform—"

"Good heavens, Dorrie, you're right," broke in Lee tensely. "I've just seen him myself. But I don't understand—it's amazing—"

He broke off, and fairly gave a shout.

"Dorrie!" he ejaculated. "That other figure! Do you see? I thought it was a boy at first—but it's Irene Manners! She is safe, too! This is the most glorious news we could possibly have!"

Five minutes later the launch, by skilful handling, had succeeded in approaching the steps. And Nelson Lee and Dorrie were on the Rock—surrounded by the cheering, excited Scouts.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GLORIOUS DAYS AHEAD.



"**S**UCH," said Reggie Pitt, "is fame!"

He leisurely threw a fresh log on to the camp fire, and stretched himself luxuriously. Overhead, the first stars were beginning to gleam, and the peace of the July evening was perfect.

The day had passed—a day of excitement and celebration.

Long before noon all the Scouts had been brought from the Shingle Rock, and landed in the bay. More than this. The un-

fortunate Daniel Nash had been conveyed to the Bannington hospital, and a preliminary report indicated that he would ultimately recover, although he would never be fit for duty again.

The Trinity House authorities had now taken possession of the Shingle Rock Lighthouse, and big activities had been going on all day. To-night the light would blaze out as steadily and as regularly as ever.

There was only one tragic feature in connection with the entire adventure—and that was the fate of the under-keeper. Even now it was not known whether he had accidentally fallen over the balcony, or whether Nash, in his madness, had flung him over. It was a point which was never likely to be cleared up.

The Scouts were all in camp again, and they were excitedly discussing affairs round the various camp fires. Those Patrols who had not taken part in the night's excitement were crowding round, listening to the breathless tales of the others. And a further interest was occasioned by the fact that Irene & Co. had promised to come round during the evening. Needless to say, Miss Bond and all her Girl Guides had been delirious with joy to find that Irene was safe and sound—particularly as they had almost regarded her as dead.

And this evening, too, the Scouts had the newspapers to read.

"Such is fame!" repeated Pitt, as he held out the front page of one of the London evening journals. "Gaze at it, my sons! For the first time in history, we occupy the whole front sheet! We, the St. Frank's Fourth Form, claim the attention of the nation!"

"And so you jolly well ought!" said De Valerie. "I only wish we Eagles had been in the affair! Some chaps get all the luck!"

Reggie shook his head.

"He calls it luck to cling to a rock, and nearly get drowned!" he said sadly. "There's no accounting for tastes! In the morning papers, don't forget, we shall have all our photographs in!"

This was true enough. Newspaper photographers had been swarming round the camp all the afternoon. For the affair had aroused the interest of the entire country. The London newspapers were making the very most of the story—for it had come along during a period when there was a dearth of exciting "copy." The great thunderstorm was fully reported, of course—but the exploits of the St. Frank's Fourth were given the greatest prominence of all.

To the juniors themselves, the adventure was now assuming a kind of unreality. They could hardly believe that those stirring events had actually happened. And there was something else for them to

discuss and to grow excited about. One thing was coming on top of another.

Lord Dorrimore's arrival in Caistowe was no coincidence. The summer holidays would commence within a few days. And Dorrie was thinking of a trip—a wonderful yachting cruise to some distant, tropical part of the globe.

Nothing was known for certain yet, but the juniors were convinced that a party of them would be invited. They were all on tenterhooks—anxious and eager.

There was even talk of the Moor View girls participating in the summer holiday adventure—and this time Mr. Beverley Stokes and his wife would be included.

"It's too early to say anything yet, but I don't mind venturing that this summer

vacation is going to be the most wonderful we've ever had," said Nipper calmly, as he discussed affairs with the crowd round the Lions' camp fire. "There's something big brewing, you chaps—just mark my words."

"Of course there is," said Handforth. "Dorrie wouldn't come here for nothing! I believe we're going to the South Sea Islands——"

"Or up the Amazon," said Church.

"Or off to the North Pole!" put in McClure.

"It's no good guessing—we don't know anything for certain yet," replied Nipper. "Let's leave it to Dorrie—we can rely on him every time!"

And the rest of the Fourth were in whole-hearted agreement.

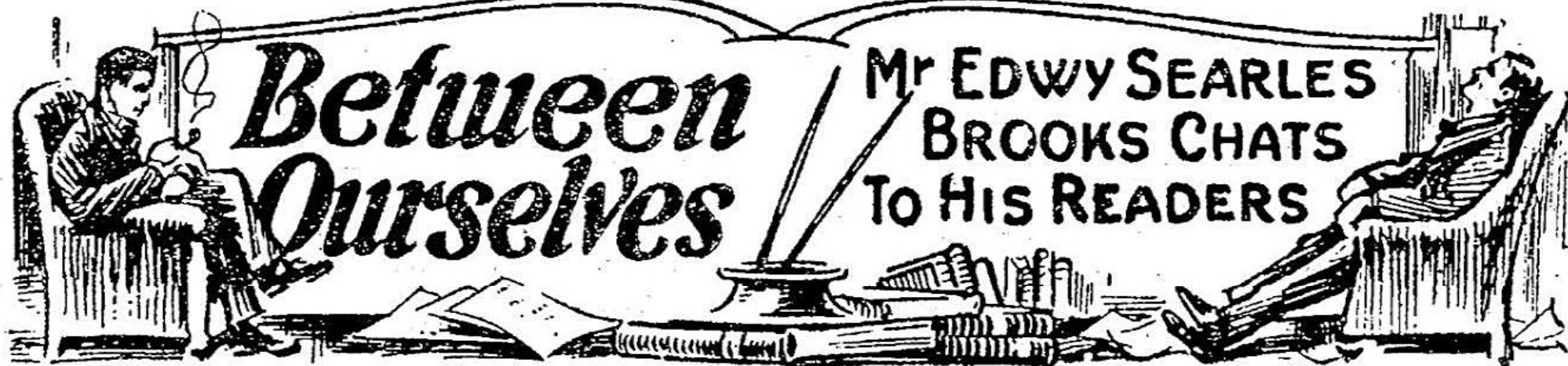
THE END.

Now is the time to introduce our paper to your friends and add to the membership of the League, for next week will appear the opening story of our Grand Summer Holiday Adventure Series entitled:—

"ADVENTURE BOUND!"

In these fine yarns of the Boys of St. Frank's abroad, Mr. Brooks has produced a wonderful series of narratives which easily secures him a place among the foremost writers of boys' stories.

Beginning Next Week these new stories of the Boys of St. Frank's will be greatly increased in length.



MR EDWY SEARLES
BROOKS CHATS
TO HIS READERS

(NOTE.—If any readers care to 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 St. Frank's Weekly," 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.)

As I want to have a little chat with you all about The St. Frank's League this week, I'm afraid I shall have to postpone my individual replies to many of the enthusiastic correspondents whose letters I will now proceed to acknowledge. But if your letter has dealt with a subject likely to arouse universal interest you may be quite sure that I have set it aside for attention on an early future occasion.

Billy J. Benton (Hythe), Kangaroo (Bondi, Sydney, Australia), A. H. Towers (Horsham, Victoria, Australia), Bruce Rose (Belsize Park, N.W.3), Joe Smith (Rosyth), Leslie T. Holland (Wimbledon, S.W.19), A. Well-Wisher (Olney), Brian Anthony Sadler (Gillingham), Ethel Jowsey (Scarborough), T. Blackburn (Coventry), A. Shingled Tomboy (Luton), Lancastrian (Rio de Janeiro), Dudley Lister (Southoweram, Halifax), Um-losi II. (Notting Hill Gate, W.11), George Burgess (Selsey), S. E. Bate (Warrington), Raymond St. John (South Shields), Eugene Girdt (Lez-Gand, Belgium), Girl Chums (Melton Mowbray), Charles R. Colwell (Birmingham), J. Bebbington (Manchester), F. Monkhouse (Walworth, S.E.17), Nipper II. (Manchester), Orlando Crowther (Sheffield), John C. White (Southall), S. H. Yeo (Wallasey), Wilton Butterworth (Rochdale).

"Inquisitive One" (Worthing), Karl Tschulkoiski Ivanoff (Broadstairs), P. H. Rowe (Frankton Junction, New Zealand), J. Keith (Christchurch, New Zealand), Jack L. Molomby (Melbourne), Kenneth E. Lucas

(Gawler, S. Australia), Dick Jackson (Burnside, S. Australia), Bob Berger (Bulawayo, S. Rhodesia), Julius Herman (Graaff-Reinet, S. Africa), Martin Luther (Twickenham), A.S.D. (Bridlington), G. Turncock (Chichester), Herbert Wilkinson (Torquay), Brian Steele (Southend-on Sea), "Connie" (Fulham, S.W.6), Sydney Atherstone (Leicester), Jim Bannister (Sheffield), "A Faithful Reader" (Halifax), Professor Locke (Tavistock).

N.H. (Llandrindod), Thomas J. Dickens (Birmingham), Sydney Lobb (Finsbury Park, N.4), Frank Jerram (Selsey), "A Soldier Reader (No Address), A. Anderson (Aberdeen), Stuart Johnson (Dulwich, S.E.22), Richard Edward Long (Brighton), J. Keith (Christchurch, New Zealand), G. A. Hunt (Farnham), Ernest Reynolds (Dublin), David S. (Huddersfield), "Nipper" (Ireland), Percy Young (Liverpool), F. Clarke (Manchester), M. McCarthy (Dublin), G. Forbes (Kingston-on-Thames), Arthur Mervyn Schofield (Lymm, Cheshire), Edward R. Simmons (Southampton), Jack D. Hutchinson (Upper Norwood, S.E.19).

Leonard Bailey (Raunds, Wellingborough), Frank Hollingworth (Oldham), F. V. Lionel Thorpe (Aylesbury), "Tarzan" (Putney), S. L. Rushworth (Huddersfield), Doreen Finlay (Wandsworth Common), Elsie Stuttard (Hobart, Tasmania), "Buster II" (Durban, Natal, S.A.), "Old-Timer" (Dulwich), L. G. Felthouse (Oxford), Charles A. Watts (Islington, N.1), C. E. Bullock (Gloucester), Jack Ricketts (Hayle, Cornwall), Richard Ferrell (Gateshead-on-Tyne), Basil R. Bradfield (Pimlico, S.W.1), "Saucy Sis" (Sydenham), P. G. Norman (Southampton), Crispin Dennis Brown (Carshalton), Thomas Gilpin (Penrith, Cumberland), Frank Voce, Jr. (Seaforth, Liverpool).

Robert Whitehead (Burgess Hill, Sussex), Cyril Rundle (Blackheath, S.E.3), Chapman Lowrie Wilson (Leith), B. A. Simkins (Harlesden, N.W.10), Stephen B. Cravos (Cardiff), L. W. Steer, W. Stanley, M. Gee and R. B. Steel (Southend-on Sea), George Trusty (London, N.W.1), Joseph B. Taylor (Bradford), A. Anderson (Aberdeen), William Johnson, Jr. (East Ham, E.6), William Olley, Jr. (East Ham, E. 6), Thomas C.

Styles (Colchester), George Burgess (Selsey), Harold Denial (Woodseats, Sheffield), Edward M. Stainer (Lee, S.E.13), Cyril Prescud (Leytonstone, E.11), Cecil Lawrence (Fareham, Hants), R. McKeown (Wellington, New Zealand).

* * *

F. Betteridge (Taranaki, New Zealand), H. Rumball (Douglas, New Zealand), Donald Bentley (Manor Park, E.12), Clifford H. Griffin (Balham), William Holland (Stockport), Donald Chapman (Limehouse, E.14), S. Lanegreels (Wood Green, N.), D. Bishop (New Cross, S.E.), Orlando Crowther (Sheffield), Edward L. Roberts (Brislington, Bristol), Kenneth James (Solihull, Birmingham), W. V. Thomson (Great Burstead, Essex), Harold Joseph Faulks (Honor Oak Park, S.E.23), Tommy Thornhill (Clapham, S.W.4).

* * *

This acknowledges every letter I have received up to date of writing—June 12th. I ought to be a very happy man after reading your many expressions of delight. And so I am. For I cannot doubt the evident sincerity with which so many of you write. But, my word! This generous encouragement has given me a proper twisting. You see, I am now in constant fear of letting you down. And to go backwards wouldn't do at all, would it? Oh, well, I'll go on finding my highest pleasure in trying hard to beat my own little best. If I don't succeed, let me down as lightly as you can, won't you?

* * *

I'm glad to see so many applications among your letters for appointments as Organising Officers in connection with The St. Frank's League. And long before this appears in print I hope you will all have received your Certificates as Foundation Members of the League.

* * *

I wonder if our worthy Editor—and Chief Officer of The St. Frank's League—will kick up a fuss if I now proceed to further invade the territory which has been given over to his capable hands. In other words, if I wander for a brief spell from my usual path of generalities, and take a temporary stroll in the garden where my own hand implanted the seeds. Those seeds have now started to fertilise with a vengeance, and as I am a very ardent gardener I take the keenest pleasure in watching the forthcoming flowers. They are being tended by other hands than mine, but my delight in them will continue to increase as the blossoms develop.

* * *

For the past five weeks, our Chief Officer has been explaining the objects and benefits of the League to you all. He has also tried to make clear to you, in simple, straightforward language, the ease with which you may become Members. It IS easy, isn't it?

No introductions, or fees, of any kind. Just make Our Paper known to one non-reader (who immediately, of course, becomes a prospective League Member) and you at once receive your Certificate of Membership. Introduce Our Paper to six more non-readers, and you gain your Bronze Medal.

* * *

Those holding Bronze Medals are a grade above Certificated Members, and will share greater benefits. Moreover, they can immediately become Organising Officers in their respective districts, and qualify (by their continued efforts in securing new League Members among present non-readers) to receive Illuminated Scrolls and Prizes. These will all be awarded in accordance with the number of Members standing to each Organising Officer's credit by the end of the year. There are three grades in the Illuminated Scrolls, and quite a large list of handsome Prizes.

* * *

When the League has reached a Membership of 25,000, the more important benefits which it will confer on its Members will commence to operate. Local Chiefs will also then be selected from among the entire band of Organising Officers who are acting for the League at that time. The best pioneer work which has been displayed in multiplying the League will count importantly in this selection. Other simple tests of aptitude for the posts of District Superintendents will be applied. Finally, the chosen candidates (all over the world) will be given charge of the League interests in their respective localities. The duties of these Local Chiefs, or District Superintendents, will be simple, but important. To hold one of these positions will be a very real honour.

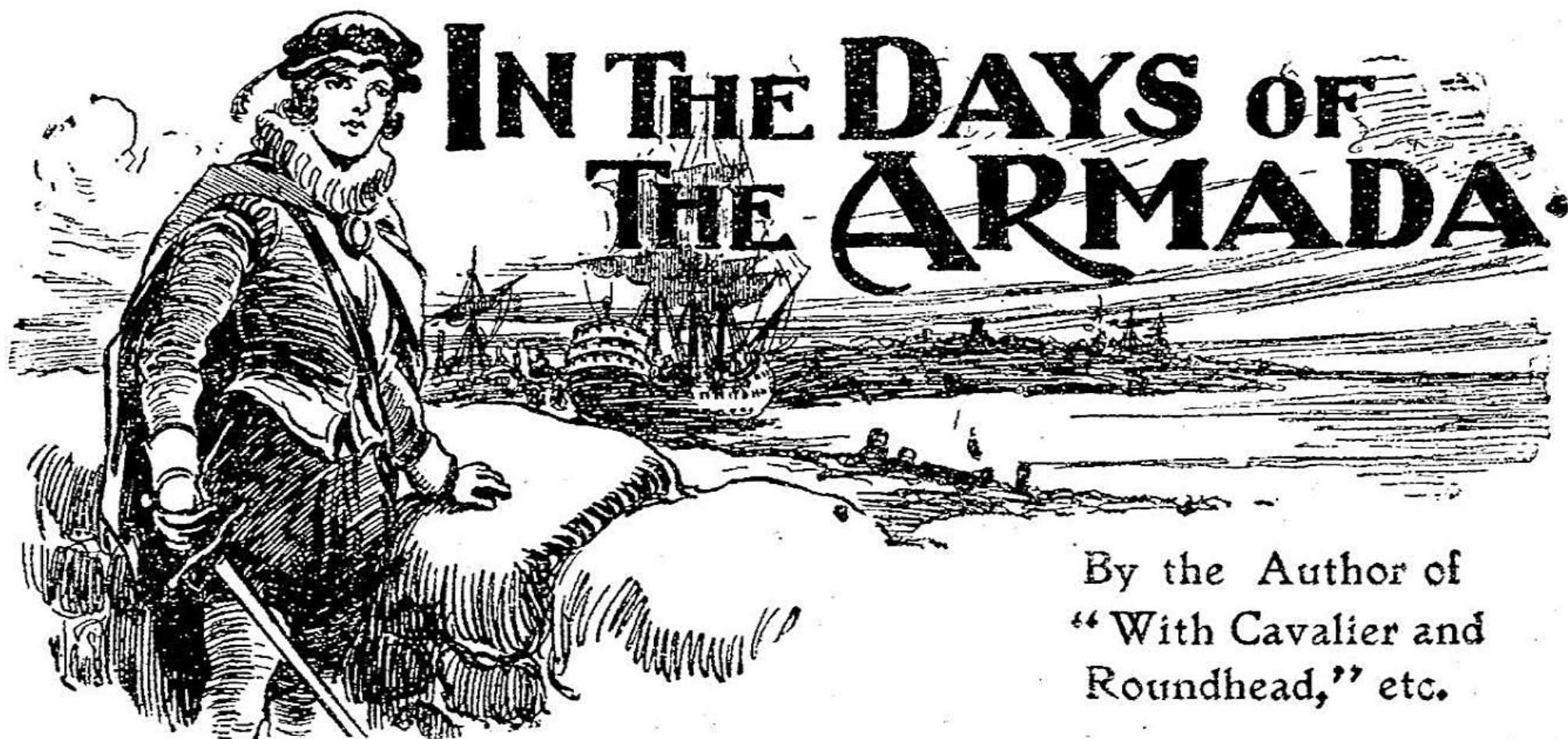
* * *

So the first thing for all of us to concentrate upon is getting the League 25,000 strong. And although The St. Frank's League bids fair to become the biggest Club for boys which has ever been established, it must not be confined to boys. Our Paper, while appealing most to boys, has many thousands of girl readers, besides an astonishing number of adult adherents, of both sexes. So with the League. In unity is strength. And in these enlightened days we cannot afford to disparage feminine help, while adult aid for the League will be particularly valued. Both, indeed, will be most heartily welcomed. The ranks of our Organising Officers are already adorned by many of the fair sex and strengthened by adults. The more of both we get, the better—provided they are in earnest.

* * *

Boys and girls, men and women, mothers and fathers, uncles and aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers, bachelors and old maids—we want you ALL in The St. Frank's League!

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.

(Continued from last week.)

THE earl rose with a smile, and warmly greeted his old friends.

"Odds fish, 'tis a strange place to meet," he said, "and I am right sorry to see three such brave fighting men within the precincts of the Tower; I have heard of your late doings in the South and in Holland.

"Also have good reports of you come to my ears, Master Van Hartsen," he added, as he turned to the burgomaster. "Your name was mentioned in dispatches more than once while Sir Roger Williams was conducting the defence of Sluys; indeed, I have but just come from Holland myself to spend a few days. In these times innocent and guilty are often confounded, and her Majesty learned but a few hours since of her trusty servants that were confined in the Tower. So now tell your story to Sir Francis, and I doubt not that it will lead to good results."

The burgomaster needed no further invitation, and in a voice that frequently shook with emotion he related his family troubles, and explained how he and his companions had come innocently to the Nag and Pillion Inn on the night of their arrest.

Sir Francis listened without comment, and then closely questioned Trent and Giles concerning their knowledge of Simon Baillie. He seemed to be disturbed by what they had told him of the mysterious events at Mount Edgumbe on that long-ago foggy night when they had fought with the Spaniards along the shore.

"It would appear that Sir Richard Edgumbe hath more pressing duties at home than abroad," he remarked. "Then, my good Sir Constable," he added, "I authorise you to discharge the prisoners. I will answer

for their innocence. Also, I would caution them against venturing into unknown places during these times of plotting and treachery."

With this Sir Richard Walsingham rose, and after a severe look at the prisoners he took his departure. They gathered round the Earl of Essex, and thanked him warmly for his services.

"Nay, it was but a pleasure," declared the earl, "and I heartily congratulate you on being free. Had not timely word come to my ears you might have languished here for months, since prisoners suspected of treason are not hastily dealt with. The constable will shortly have horses ready outside, and I pray that you will honour me by a visit to Essex House."

To this the burgomaster objected, insisting that they should go home with him, and as the earl saw that his friends were of the same mind he did not press the invitation. In answer to questions, he stated that Simon Baillie had not been taken, but that spies were watching Mount Edgumbe in the hope that the knave would venture back there.

"And what of Humphrey Jocelyn?" asked Giles. "Is he still in the Tower?"

"I learn from Sir Francis that he secured his freedom ten days ago," replied the earl. "It seems that he had been tracking Simon Baillie himself, and would likely have taken him into custody had not the royal pikemen spoiled his game. Certainly no suspicion can rest upon Humphrey Jocelyn, for, as captain of dragoons, he hath done long and trusty service to his country."

"Ay, so say I," exclaimed Trent. "I would stake much on his innocence."

"The man sorely puzzles me," declared the burgomaster. "If he was playing the spy upon Simon Baillie at the inn that night he

can hardly be the mysterious Septimus Tulworthy. Ah, but I am sure of it! He must be the same, since I am satisfied that it was his face I saw in Sluys on the night my grandson was stolen."

"The innkeeper might give you some information," suggested Sydney.

"His lips are sealed for ever," the earl said solemnly. "He proved to be a fugitive criminal who had been long sought for. The axe and the block ended his career two weeks ago."

"Then there is naught to do but lay hold of Master Jocelyn and try to wring his secret from him," muttered the burgomaster. "I will go down into Devonshire with you at once, my friends, and with your aid—"

"Odds fish," interrupted the earl, "I quite forgot to tell you the news. The Armada sailed for England on the nineteenth of last month, and is constantly expected to arrive. The country is in a stew, and musters of men are crowding to the coast like flies to a barrel of sweets. Drake—who is now a vice-admiral—is lying in harbour at Plymouth, and is doubtless perplexed that you do not join him. So speed thither with all haste."

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH MASTER VAN HARTSEN FAILS IN HIS SEARCH.

HAVING imparted this amazing piece of news the Earl of Essex added a few words of farewell, and then hurriedly took his departure, explaining that he had to present himself at the Palace of St. James within an hour.

Trent and his companions could hardly restrain their impatience during the brief time they were compelled to await the constable's pleasure. They eagerly discussed the great invasion which was about to come at last, and Giles and Sydney made the grim old walls ring with the echo of their shrill voices. Master Van Hartsen was little less excited, and he vowed that if Drake would have him he would take a part in the fighting.

The constable very graciously provided the liberated prisoners with decent clothing in place of their ill-looking disguises, and accompanied them through the Tower grounds to the iron gate, where he had horses in waiting, and also a soldier who was to ride along and bring the steeds back.

Great was the joy of the burgomaster's servants when he and his friends arrived, and such a feast was prepared as the house in Bishopsgate Street had never yet beheld. But, hungry and thirsty as the lads and Trent were, they had more important things to think about. They gave but scanty time to the meal, and soon after midday they were riding fast and hard through the green lanes and orchards of

Surrey. The burgomaster was with them, for he was determined to seek an interview with Humphrey Jocelyn. The latter had reported for duty to his regiment at Plymouth.

On the evening of the third day the travellers reached Templeton, after a long ride through a most grievously alarmed and disturbed section of the country. On the following morning they hurried down to Plymouth, and happily encountered Sir Francis Drake on the *Hoe*. He gave them a warm and cordial greeting, and declared that he had not been able to learn a word concerning their whereabouts since they had gone up to London in June.

He had a hearty laugh at the adventure which had landed them in the Tower, and he seemed to be much taken with Master Van Hartsen. He accepted his services, and assured him that there would shortly be no lack of opportunity for fighting.

"But the time is uncertain," he added; "the invasion may be within a week—perhaps not for a month. For the present it will be just as well if you take up your quarters at Templeton, which is within easy reach."

This was satisfactory to Trent and the lads, and was even more so to the burgomaster, since it allowed him every opportunity of getting Humphrey Jocelyn into his clutches. He had a strong conviction that the captain of dragoons might not be averse to owing up to the personification of Septimus Tulworthy, providing a secret and private interview could be obtained.

While it was true that the Armada had sailed on May 19th, there were rumours of its having been delayed and scattered by a great storm, and the time when it might be expected was as uncertain as Sir Francis Drake had stated.

There was less uncertainty, however, as to its strength. The Spanish fleet was said on good authority to consist of one hundred and twenty-nine vessels, carrying nearly five thousand cannon, as well as an enormous quantity of provisions for the use of the army after it should be landed on English soil.

Of this vast fleet sixty-five were warships of immense size, built high like castles, with musket-proof upper works, and with timbers from four to five feet thick. In addition to these galleons—as they were called—were eight galleys, fifty-six huge merchant ships, and twenty caravels.

The crews of the Armada amounted to more than thirty thousand men, comprising Spanish soldiers, sailors, and gentlemen volunteers, as well as a large force of faithful Catholics from all countries—Italy, Portugal, France, Scotland, England, and Ireland.

It was truly a fearful array to meet the limited resources of the English, and yet

there were plenty of hope and confidence in the country as the peril loomed steadily nearer. In May Admiral Lord Howard had sailed down the Channel with his fleet of thirty-nine small ships to Plymouth, where he joined Drake with his fleet of forty-three privateers. The aggregate of men on board was something over nine thousand.

Here the English Navy had been lying ever since, waiting and ready to oppose the dreaded invaders. In addition to Drake, Admiral Howard had under him such renowned seamen as Sir John Hawkins and Martin Frobisher. Meanwhile, Lord Henry Seymour, with a squadron of men-of-war and privateers, was lying off Dunkirk, and keeping a watch on the army of the Duke of Parma that was encamped there.

The preparations might have been much more complete but for the stinginess and uncertain character of Queen Elizabeth. Sir John Hawkins, who was at the head of the naval administration, could not induce her to open the royal purse-strings sufficiently even to provide the necessary rations for the fleet, and such as the men had were of a quality to cause a great deal of sickness.

Within a short time after their arrival from London, Giles and his friends were thoroughly acquainted with every detail of the above situation. Though not quartered on board the fleet, they were, nevertheless, under Drake's command, and the bearing of messages and the collecting of stores and ammunition kept Trent and the two lads pretty actively employed. They were often absent from Templeton for several days at a time.

Master Van Hartsen, sad to say, met with no success in the purpose that had led him to exchange his luxurious house in Bishopsgate Street for the doubtful comforts of a West-country home. That he failed was owing to a combination of baffling and vexatious circumstances.

In short, Captain Humphrey Jocelyn had been assigned to the very formidable task of inspecting and drilling the different corps of men who had mustered for the coast defence, and in formulating and instructing them in a plan of quick and concerted action. Whatever might be his failings, Humphrey Jocelyn was certainly a skilled and experienced officer, and understood the handling of raw levies of men.

The gallant captain had left Plymouth just a day before Master Van Hartsen arrived at the garrison in that town to inquire for him. Then ensued a weary and fruitless chase for the worthy burgomaster. He rode daily through the west of England from county to county, from village to village, only to find that he was a few hours late, or nine times out of ten to learn that

Captain Jocelyn's next destination was unknown.

After three or four weeks of this useless chase, during which time he was twice within half a day's ride of London, Master Van Hartsen fell from his horse on the morning of July 19th, and broke his right wrist. This ended his jaunting for the present, for the physician who was summoned from Plymouth ordered the burgomaster to keep his arm quiet and remain in the house for a few days.

This sentence was all the more disagreeable because a strong belief prevailed throughout the country that the Armada must be very close to England. But Master Van Hartsen proved an obedient patient, and he resigned himself during the first day of his confinement to the society of the learned Master Tomewell, who, delighted to have a listener who could not slip away from him, discoursed by the hour on the scientific treatises of Erasmus. As a result the unfortunate burgomaster went soundly to sleep after dinner that evening on the great settee in the hall.

Meanwhile—during the past month, that is—Trent and Giles had found no opportunity to give any personal attention to affairs at Mount Edgecombe, though they learned from time to time that Simon Baillie was still a fugitive, and that the mansion was under strict surveillance.

There were rumours of witches and evil spirits haunting Sir Richard's house and grounds, greatly to the fear and disturbance of the servants and the Queen's officers on duty there; but no mention of these tales reached the ears of the occupants of Templeton, else some suspicion of the aforesaid supernatural manifestations might have been aroused. Stephen Trent had no faith in "haunts."

CHAPTER XXX.

IN WHICH SOME STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN ON DARTMOOR.

IT so happened that Trent and the lads were not at home on the day of the burgomaster's accident, which, it will be remembered, was the 19th of July. But they reached Templeton about an hour after dinner, tired and hungry from a long ride into Cornwall and back, whither they had gone to contract for some supplies with the country folk.

They found Master Van Hartsen sound asleep in the hall, and after learning with much sorrow of the accident, they thought it best not to rouse him. As soon as the table could be re-spread they sat down to eat and drink, intending to start shortly for Plymouth; they had word to carry to

Drake, and they were impatient to know if anything had been heard of the Armada.

During the progress of the meal—at which Master Tomewell showed himself a good trencherman for the second time within an hour—a servant entered with a letter, which he handed to Sydney.

The lad opened and read it, and at once his face showed a trace of grief and surprise.

"How did this come?" he asked. "Where is the messenger?"

"He would not wait," replied the servant. "He was a youngish man, and had the look of a sailor. He gave his name as Martin."

"Ay, that's it!" exclaimed Sydney, rising hurriedly to his feet. "I fear I must leave you for a few hours," he added to his companions. "This letter is from old Peter Martin, who lives down by Kingsbridge, and served as first mate under my father for many years. He writes that he is mortally ill, and would see me before he dies. He begs that I will come to him at once. It was no doubt his son who brought the message."

"Let me see it, lad," said Trent in a dry tone.

He took the rudely scrawled paper, and glanced over it keenly. Then he handed it back, evidently satisfied of its genuineness.

"I am sorry to hear of your old friend's illness," said Giles, "and I hope he may recover. Were it not for our duties, Trent and I would ride with you."

"I require no escort," Sydney answered. "The distance is less than ten miles, and I do not expect to be detained long. As soon as I can get away I will come straight to Plymouth."

"You will find us there," declared Trent, "for we shall leave in an hour or so."

This arrangement being settled, Sydney picked up his hat and sword and hastily left the house. A minute or two later the clatter of hoofs told that he had started on his lonely ride across the moor, for the waterside hamlet of Kingsbridge lay some miles to the south-east of Templeton.

About midway between Templeton and Kingsbridge, and close to the right-hand edge of the road, stood one of those gigantic granite tors that are so common in Devonshire. It was called Eagle Tor, from the fact that its lofty summit was a favourite nesting-place for those birds.

Shortly after Sydney had started from Templeton three mounted men rode over the moor from the south, crossed the road, and halted in the deep shadows of Eagle Tor. They dismounted, and staked the horses a few yards to the rear, where there was an abundance of sweet grass for nibbling. Then they threw themselves

down in a row on the edge of the road, amid the fern and scrub.

The towering rock hid them and their steeds from the sight of anyone coming from the west; but the road was in plain view before them, and by craning their necks slightly, they could see for quite a long distance toward Templeton.

These mysterious three were truly ill-assorted companions. One was a burly, broad-shouldered man, with the ruddy face and bushy moustache of a soldier. Another was handsome and swarthy, and though he wore coarse clothing he looked far more accustomed to soft velvet and costly lace. The third was a little, villainous-featured man, with a wrinkled hole where one eye had been, and a wooden stump in place of his left leg.

For nearly an hour, while this odd trio lay hid like serpents in the roadside scrub, scarce a word was spoken. They seemed to be watching and listening intently.

"I fear me the plan has miscarried!" growled the soldier at last. "It is surely time the lad was riding by. I can wait but little longer, comrades. As you know, my duty requires me at Plymouth. I promised to lend my aid to this affair for an hour or two, but I expected to be clear of it ere now."

"Have patience!" muttered the wooden-legged man. "All will come well yet. Still, it would have been better had we bidden the messenger to return."

"Not so," replied the swarthy man, speaking in English, but with a foreign accent. "It was the part of wisdom to send the fellow in the opposite direction after he was done with his errand. Else, had the message caused mistrust, enemies might have followed at his heels, and so found and trapped us."

"Ay, it was wise," admitted the soldier, "though there was slim chance of the letter causing mistrust. I dare say the lad will be along presently. If he come not soon I shall be forced to leave you."

"I would say a word on another matter," he added, "both to you, my Spanish friend, and to you also, Master Hobble-leg. The clink of gold hath ever been my weakness, and therefore I have yielded my services in this matter. But I am as loyal to my country as any officer in the Queen's service, and if I find that ye two are concerned in any treachery—which I have long suspected—assuredly you will rue it."

At this the one-legged man and the Spaniard looked quickly into each other's eyes.

"We have naught to do with the affairs betwixt England and Spain," muttered the former, "save that we are on the side of the Queen."

"He speaks truly," added the Spaniard. "That I am dwelling on a foeman's soil lends colour to your suspicions, my worthy friend, yet I pledge you my word that I am here for naught save the purpose of which you know."

This earnest declaration appeared to satisfy the soldier, but before he could make a reply the dull sound of hoofs came distinctly on the night air from the west. The conversation ended, and the three conspirators stood to their feet in the shadow of the tor. They peered cautiously out, watching and waiting.

Without a thought of the lurking danger, Sydney Rookwood rode on at a brisk trot,

spite of his struggles his wrists were tied behind him and his eyes were blindfolded by a strip of cloth. Then he was hoisted up to a saddle and held there by an arm round his waist.

A moment later the three horsemen and their captive were riding rapidly over the lonely moor in the direction of Kingsbridge.

Tempted by their hunger and thirst, Master Giles and Trent lingered longer at the table than they had intended doing. When they finally rose, the burgomaster was still sound asleep on the settee, and



"Look! The beacons are spreading! We must ride in haste to Plymouth."

and just as he came opposite the tor, a burly figure sprang out into the road and snatched his bridle. He uttered a loud cry as he recognised his assailant, but before he could draw his sword he was dragged from the saddle with such violence that he landed on his head in the hard road.

The fall partly stunned him, but he staggered to his feet and grappled with his assailant. The latter thus fiercely and unexpectedly attacked was compelled to let go of the horse, and the frightened animal at once wheeled round and galloped furiously back in the direction of Templeton.

The two other conspirators pounced upon Sydney from the rear, and he was quickly overpowered and borne to the ground. In

Hereward Tomewell was snoring in the depths of a big chair.

With a laugh and a jest at the expense of the slumberers, they hurried to the stable, and they had just mounted when Sydney's horse came tearing into the yard, trembling and perspiring.

"Our friend hath met with an accident!" cried Giles, in a tone of alarm.

"Ay, or something worse!" exclaimed Trent, as he closely examined the steed.

"I hope he has not fallen in with highwaymen," added. "What is to be done, Stephen? We have lost much time, and Sir Francis will be looking for us. But surely we cannot start for Plymouth till

we have learned what peril hath befallen Master Rookwood?"

"Ay, lad, our duty to our comrade comes first!" replied Trent. "We will be off at once, and since time so presses, let us spare neither bit nor spur."

They urged their horses down the Plymouth road at a gallop, and several minutes later they turned off on the narrower track that led to Kingsbridge. For mile after mile they rode over the solitary moorland, and their anxious and impatient hearts made the journey seem painfully long.

At intervals they called Sydney's name lustily, and kept a keen watch to right and left. The fact that the night was dark, and that the road was covered with spongy turf, made it impossible to tell if any travellers had passed by lately.

When they were half-way to Kingsbridge, from which neighbourhood they calculated that the horse had returned, they stopped a moment to shout together. Hearing and seeing nothing, they rode furiously on, hoping that Sydney had been merely thrown from his steed, and had started to end the journey on foot.

The night was still early when they clattered into the little hamlet of Kingsbridge. A lad showed them Peter Martin's abode, and they pounded on the door of the cabin without dismounting.

After a long delay a cross old woman appeared with a candle, and declared that Peter Martin was out in the Channel fishing, and that his son was with him.

"A purty time o' night to be knockin' bodies up!" the aged crone growled.

She changed her reproaches to a cackle of gratitude as a gold piece fell at her feet, and stood staring after her visitors as they vanished at a gallop.

Without drawing rein Trent and Giles rode furiously back toward Templeton, and they were soon a mile and a half beyond the village. They were at first dazed by the startling plot they had just unearthed, and were at a loss to fathom its meaning.

"Poof Sydney!" exclaimed Giles. "Some enemy has done this to get him into his power. And yet it is strange that anyone should hate him."

"Ay, it is a mystery!" replied Trent. "I can't tell what to make of it. To hunt for the lad over this wide moor would be but folly. The only thing we can do is to ride back slowly and carefully, and when we are half-way to Templeton we will look for signs by the light of my tinder-box. In case the knaves were mounted——"

"Hark!" interrupted Giles. "There, I hear it again!"

As he spoke the dull noise of a galloping horse came faintly over the moor from the south, and a second later the report of a pistol rang out sharply.

Before either Giles or Trent could utter another word something else happened—something that brought a mad cry to their lips, and made their hearts thump and their limbs tremble with excitement.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN WHICH THE GREAT ARMADA IS SIGHTED OFF THE ENGLISH COAST.

IT is not surprising that Giles and Stephen Trent should have forgotten for a moment the ominous sounds which told, beyond much doubt, that Master Rookwood was in peril of his life somewhere in the surrounding darkness of the night.

How could they think of aught else but the great discovery that had burst so suddenly upon them—a discovery that would ere long be thrilling all England from town to town, from coast to coast?

For straight across the moor in the direction of Plymouth a huge beacon-fire was blazing on a lofty hill-top, and a pillar of flame was dancing in a red glare that seemed to reach up to the starry skies.

The beacon-fire was the signal for which hundreds of anxious eyes had watched during many a night past. Now it had come at last, and its flaming message told that the terrible Spanish Armada was in sight off the English coast.

Already the dread message was flashing inland, showing that those appointed to the duty were, not lax in their preparations or steadfastness. As the two eager watchers surveyed the landscape from where they had checked their panting horses, they saw a second fire blaze up over the distant heights of Dartmoor Forest, and another in the direction of Exeter, while yet another stained the night red off toward Lyme Bay.

"Look, they are spreading!" cried Giles. "Ere long the signals will reach to London itself. By this time the muster men are arming and saddling in many a town. What a sight it must be to the Spaniards. They will know that England is ready for them!"

"Ay, and here are we wandering about the moor like a pair of blunderheads," exclaimed Trent half angrily, "when we should have been in Plymouth hours ago. It will be sore ill-luck if the fleet sails without us. Come, lad, dig spurs and away!"

"Stop, stop!" shouted Giles. "We have both forgotten Master Rookwood!"

Trent had already started, but at this he checked his steed with a jerk that threw it back upon its haunches.

"Zounds! Master Giles—so we have!" he cried. "Ay, but such news would excuse a man if he forgot his own head!"

"Hark, now," cautioned Giles. "I still hear the clump of hoofs. There is but one horseman, and he is coming this way. It surely must be Sydney."

"Little doubt, Master Giles, and yet it may be another. What meant the pistol-shot? There was but the one report; none followed."

Giles did not reply. He opened his mouth and called Sydney's name three times loudly and clearly. A hearty cheer answered him, and presently a horse and rider loomed out of the darkness. A moment more and Sydney had checked his restless steed alongside of his companions, and was gladly shaking their proffered hands.

But what was wrong with the lad? He had not a word for his own adventure, and all he could talk about was the message of the beacon-fires: He rattled on eagerly and excitedly, giving his friends no chance to put in a word.

"Why are we standing here?" he cried. "Look, the beacons are spreading! We must ride in haste to Plymouth. By this time the fleet may have lifted anchor. I have put you to much trouble to-night, and I see you have ridden hard and long in search of me. So let us be off at once. Why, the Armada may even now be sailing into harbour!"

"But what hath happened to you, Sydney?" Giles demanded. "You have put us at our wits' end, and we feared you were dead. We have been as far as Kingsbridge, and there we learned that Peter Martin and his son were off a-fishing."

"Ay, let us have your story as we jog along, Master Rookwood," added Trent, giving his horse a gentle start. "I'll warrant it be a stirring one. The strange nag you are riding seems a spirited one."

"In truth I have had a strange adventure," Sydney replied, as he made his horse walk alongside those of his companions, "but it will keep for a more favourable time."

"Nay, but we are impatient and curious," said Giles. "I pray you tell us all now. Was it some enemy who decoyed you away from Templeton by craft?"

Sydney shook his head, and his face suddenly became perplexed and worried, though in the gloom his companions could not note this.

"I may tell you but a part of my adventure to-night," he finally said, in a troubled tone. "I would have wished not to speak of it at all, and there are some things that I must keep secret."

"One word, lad, before you begin," interrupted Trent. "Are we in danger from foes?"

"Not a bit," replied Sydney. "After that pistol-shot my pursuers turned back."

He hesitated a moment, and then rapidly described how he had been assaulted and overpowered at Eagle Tor, and how his captors had taken him away in the direction of Kingsbridge.

They turned off toward the sea somewhere about here," he added, "and took me to a lonely hut on the cliff. There they explained their purpose and made me a certain proposition. I refused, in spite of all they could say. They threatened to kill me, and then to keep me a prisoner until I should change my mind."

"At last they fell to quarrelling among themselves, and through carelessness they gave me a chance to escape. I made a dash out of the door, sprang on one of the horses, and spurred blindly over the moor. Two of the men were soon mounted and after me. After a couple of miles they began to gain, and they would surely have caught me had not the beacon-fire blazed up just then. They gave a shout and checked their horses, and Simon Baillie fired his pistol——"

"Simon Baillie?" cried Trent, fairly leaping out of the saddle with surprise. "Was that ruffian one of your captors, my lad?"

"The name fell from my lips unwittingly," muttered Sydney, in a crestfallen tone. "It is useless to deny it now. Yes, Simon Baillie was one of them."

"And who were the others?" asked Giles.

Sydney hesitated, and seemed reluctant to speak.

"I may as well tell you," he said. "In fact, I think it is my duty to do so. One was Captain Humphrey Jocelyn, and the other was Don Ferdinand Gonzales."

"My uncle!" said Giles. "He is in England again? But what did he want with you?"

"That question I cannot answer," said Sydney. "For certain reasons, my lips must be sealed. But I can tell you this much, Giles, you are safe in the future from Don Ferdinand."

"I want to know more," Giles exclaimed bluntly. "I don't think you are treating us fairly, Sydney. This is a tremendous mystery, and you are selfishly keeping it to yourself."

"Don't talk that way," said Sydney, in a husky tone; "it hurts, and I don't deserve it. I want you to promise that you won't ask any more questions about this affair, Giles. It may be speedily cleared up, and it may not. But I assure you that I have good reasons for silence, and reasons that are free from dishonour. If there is anyone living from whom I hate to have a secret it is you, Giles. You, who saved my life at the risk of your own. You, whom I love as a brother——"

Here Sydney's voice broke down, and he could say no more. But for the gloom that masked his face his companions must have seen the depth of grief and affection that shone from his eyes.

There was a lengthy pause, while the horses jogged on side by side. Giles was waging a bitter struggle with self. He was vexed and angered at his friend's obstinacy, and yet not a little stirred by his appealing words. In the end the lad's better side won.

(To be continued).

THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE

(All communications to the League should be addressed to the Chief Officer, Editor of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.)

22nd June, 1925.

My Dear Leagueites,

At the time of writing this letter, we are just on the eve of waiting for the first rush of applicants for membership of the League. I am naturally eagerly looking forward to the first post on Thursday morning in the hopes that it will bring a magnificent response. But, of course, I must not be too sanguine. I know it will take a day or two for applicants to qualify, and therefore I do not expect the full volume of early applications until the Monday morning.

When the list closed on June 20th for Organising Officers to send in their applications, about 300 readers had applied altogether. By the time our friends Overseas have contributed their share of volunteers for Organising Officers, we shall have had the League firmly planted throughout the Empire. It is very gratifying indeed to know that we have so many willing workers distributed throughout this country, who, as I write, are doing all they can to persuade their friends to join the League. I look upon these trusty lieutenants as the backbone of the League, for they are not only adding considerably to our membership numbers, they will be establishing in their districts social or sports clubs affiliated to the League.

The Author, who has been throughout a strong champion of the League, has devoted this week the main part of his "Between Ourselves" to a chat on the subject. He has suggested offering special prizes and illuminated scrolls at the end of the year to Organising Officers. I certainly agree that some special awards should be given to Organising Officers, and although the end of the year is still comparatively a long way off, I see no reason why Mr. Brooks' idea should not be adopted. As to the exact nature of the prizes to be awarded Organising Officers and any other matter concerning them alone, they will be notified individually through the post.

The next step in the development of the League will be the publishing of the names and addresses of Organising Officers in THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY. By that time, it is hoped, the membership will have reached sufficient proportions to warrant social and sports clubs being formed under the auspices of the League. Members will then be invited to communicate with their nearest

Organising Officer, who, in due course, will arrange a meeting at some suitable place. Next comes the actual formation of the local clubs, and Organising Officers will be duly advised from Headquarters how to run these clubs.

Once we get these clubs going, you will then appreciate to the full extent the manifold advantages of the League to the many thousands who ultimately belong to it. I have in my mind now a score of attractions which could be introduced into these clubs. But I will content myself at present with naming a few as they occur to me. In the world of sport, for instance, we can arrange cricket and football inter-club matches, and cups might be offered for the champion St. Frank's team (in both these popular games) of all the clubs in the United Kingdom. In boxing, we could start tournaments in the same way, offering a St. Frank's Belt to the winner. Billiards, swimming, rowing, not to mention many more kinds of sports and pastimes, will also be encouraged.

Apart from sport, I would suggest the formation of concert parties, St. Frank's pierrot troupes, and even a St. Frank's brass band. The last named might come in very useful when we begin our annual rallies. As regards the concert troupe, I suggest that some of the famous boys of St. Frank's (such as Handy & Co., Archie, Tucker, Fatty Little) could be impersonated and acted, if good enough, in public. A troupe of this kind, I am sure, would never fail to attract large audiences at the seaside.

In addition to the above suggestions, I hope later on to put before you a scheme for camping out during the summer months, holiday excursions to places of interest in England and on the Continent. But all these things will depend on a large membership, and that is why, for the time being, I want Organising Officers and Members to concentrate during the next few weeks on a big campaign for recruiting new Members.

Wishing you all every success in your endeavours to propagate the League throughout this country,

Your sincere friend,

THE CHIEF OFFICER.

To Girl Readers.

My Dear Girl Readers,

Last week I promised to address a letter exclusively to my girl readers, and here it is, although I am afraid it will not be as long as I intended owing to the meagre space available.

However, let me thank you one and all for your many kind letters offering to help to popularise the League among your friends. Since some of you are in doubt as to whether, being girls, you may join the League, I feel it necessary to point out that

girl readers are cordially invited to become Members of the League, and there is nothing to prevent them from fulfilling the duties of Organising Officers, if they wish. In that case, of course, they would form girls' social and sports clubs.

So, roll up, girls, in your thousands, and show your boy fellow-readers what you can do when it comes to getting recruits!

Remember that you can qualify for all the awards I am offering, provided you make the Old Paper known, according to the conditions required, to any likely boy or girl reader.

Here's the best of luck to you!

Your sincere friend,

THE CHIEF OFFICER.
(S.F.L.)

AS SIMPLE AS A B C.

INSTRUCTIONS.—Reader Applying for Membership: Cut out TWO complete Application Forms from TWO copies of this week's issue of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY. On one of the forms fill in Section A, crossing out Sections B and C by running the pen diagonally across both Sections. Then write clearly your full name and address at bottom of form. The second form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his name and address at bottom of form. Both forms are then pinned together and sent to the Chief Officer, The St. Frank's League, c/o THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. **Member Applying for Bronze Medal:** It will be necessary for you to obtain six new readers for this award. For each new reader TWO complete forms are needed, and these must be taken from copies of the latest issue of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY at the

time when the forms are sent in. On one of the forms fill in Section B, crossing out Sections A and C, and write your name and address at bottom of form. The other form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his name and address at the bottom of the form. Now pin both forms together and send them to the Chief Officer, as above. One new reader will then be registered against your name, and when six new readers have been registered, you will be sent the St. Frank's League bronze medal. There is nothing to prevent you from sending in forms for two or more new readers at once, provided the forms are taken from the latest issue of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY at the time when the forms are sent in.

These Application Forms can be posted for $\frac{1}{2}$ d., provided the envelope is not sealed and no letter is enclosed.

IMPORTANT.—Complete and post off this form before the next issue of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY is on sale. It then becomes out of date and useless.

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM No. 4. July 18, 1925.

SECTION A	READER'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP. Being a regular reader of "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" since(give date), I desire to become enrolled as a Member of THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE, and to qualify for all such benefits and privileges as are offered to Members of the League. I hereby declare myself to be a staunch supporter of "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" and THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE, and that I have introduced Our Paper to one new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. Will you, therefore, kindly forward me Certificate of Enrolment with Membership Number assigned to me.
SECTION B	MEMBER'S APPLICATION FOR BRONZE MEDAL. I, Member No.....(give Membership No.) hereby declare that I have introduced one more new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. This leaves me (state number, or, if none, signify with a dash) introductions to make to entitle me to a Bronze Medal.
SECTION C	NEW READER'S DECLARATION. I hereby declare that I have been introduced by (give name of introducer) to "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" (No....., dated), which I will read with a view to becoming a regular reader of this paper.
(FULL NAME) (ADDRESS)	

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