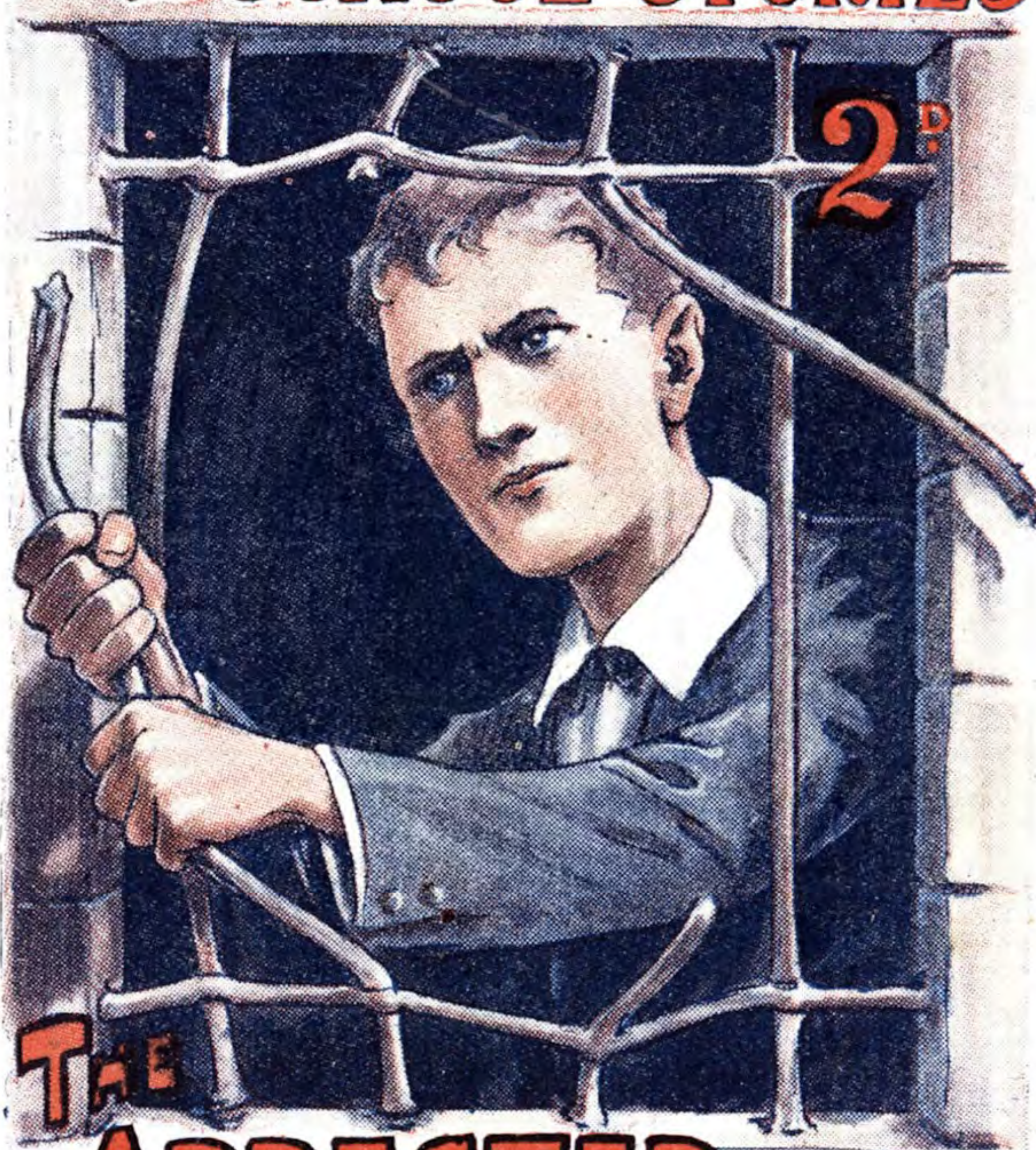


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THE

ARRESTED

SCHOOLBOY!

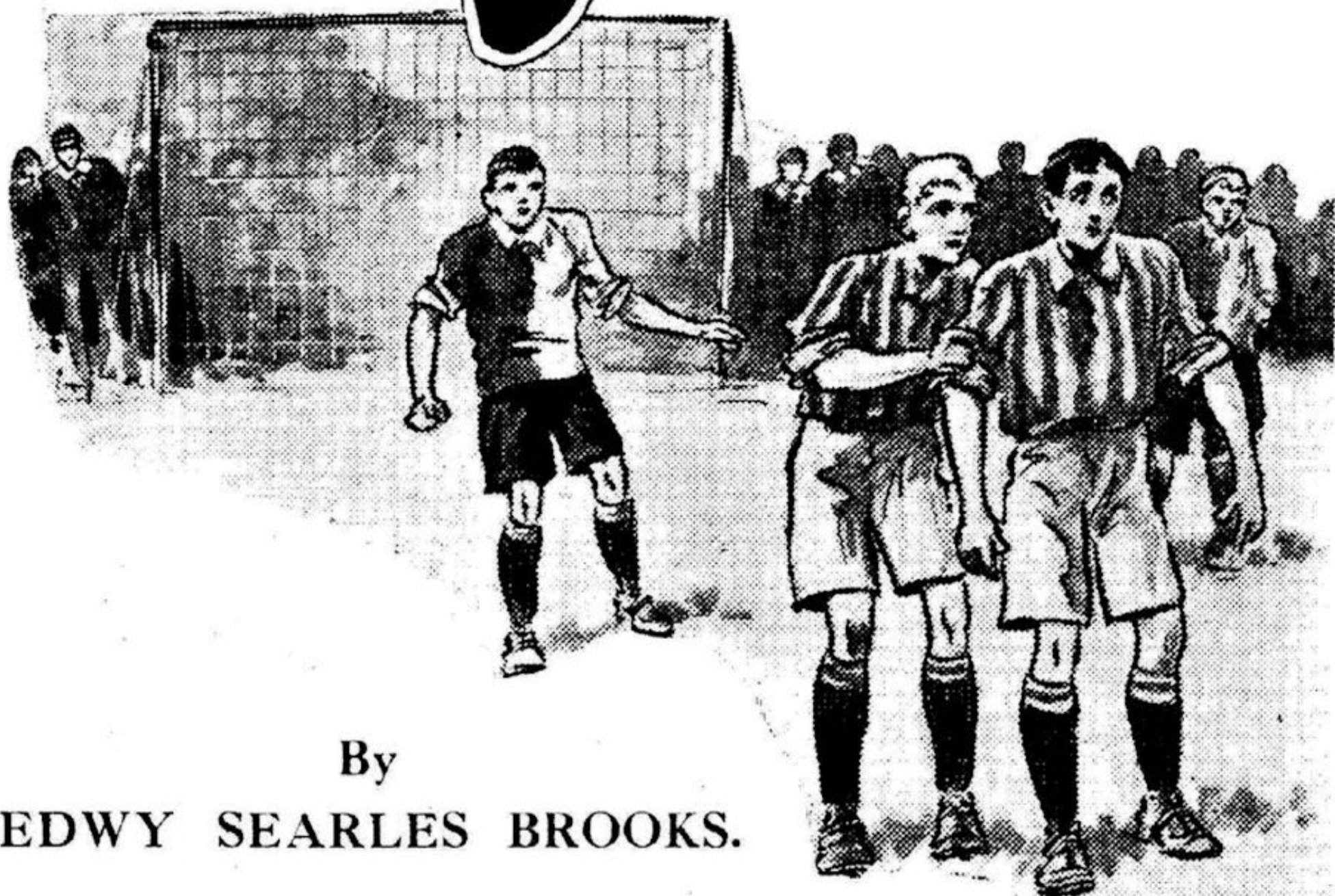
A Startling incident from the grand long complete yarn of the chums
of St. Frank's, and Waldo the Wonder Boy!

New Series No. 178.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

September 28th, 1929.

THE ARRESTED SCHOOLBOY!



By

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

Stanley Waldo—arrested on a charge of robbery! What a sensation it causes at St. Frank's. The only person who remains unruffled is Waldo himself. But, then, Waldo knows that the rascally Sam Wilkes is at the bottom of all the trouble, and Waldo is determined to bring that rascal to book!

CHAPTER 1.

A Startling Rumour!

“WELL kicked, Waldo!”
 “Jolly good shot!”
 “Rather!”

It was Saturday morning, and Little Side, at St. Frank's, was bathed in the early morning sunshine of the September day. A number of junior footballers were hard at practice.

Nipper, the cheery Junior sports skipper, was getting his men ready for the big match of the afternoon—the match against Hal Brewster & Co., of the River House School. All the members of the team were present, and a few others besides. Amongst these others was Stanley Waldo, the new fellow in the Remove.

He was the son of the celebrated Waldo, the Peril Expert. He inherited many of his father's amazing characteristics; he was phenomenally strong, he was as agile as a monkey.

“I'm not so sure that the chap ought to be allowed here,” said Handforth, in a stern voice.

“Who? Waldo?” asked Church.

"Yes, Waldo," replied Handforth. "He didn't give us a satisfactory explanation last night, and he won't say anything this morning. It's my belief that he went out on the razzle."

"Rats!" said McClure, the Scottish junior. "He's not that kind of a chap, Handy!"

Handforth was the goalkeeper, and Church and McClure were the backs. They generally played together in these positions. Just at the moment there was a lull at this end of the field.

"I hope he isn't that kind of a chap," said Handforth, "but it looks fishy to me. Waldo goes off last night and climbs the tower of the old Priory; he doesn't get back until after midnight, and then he tells us some yarn that he was imprisoned in one of the dungeons, and he didn't get out until half-past ten."

"Well, I expect the story was true," said Church.

"If he got out at half-past ten, how was it that he didn't come back to the school until midnight?" demanded Edward Oswald. "We asked him to explain, and he wouldn't. I've asked him again this morning, and he's just as obstinate."



"Oh, let it drop," said McClure. "Mr. Lee saw him and accepted his explanation, and the whole thing is finished. If Mr. Lee is willing to accept Waldo's explanation, why can't you?"

"I suppose I shall have to," admitted Handforth reluctantly. "But I don't like a chap who's secretive."

Church and McClure, like the rest of the fellows, were disposed to forget the entire incident. They argued that, if Mr. Lee was satisfied, there was no reason why they shouldn't be. But Handforth, of course, was different. He always liked to do something that was in direct opposition to the others.

However, he would soon have reason to forget Waldo, for something of an unusual nature was brewing that morning!

"YOU'RE good, Waldo, and I expect you'll improve," said Nipper, after the practice was over. "If you go on like this, I might be able to find you a place in the team for some of the big matches."

"Thanks awfully," said Waldo, flushing with pleasure. "I didn't expect anything so topping as that, you know, especially as this is my first term."

"I believe in playing the best available men," said Nipper. "It doesn't matter to me whether they're old-timers or new boys. If they can play football, they'll get into the team."

"I like playing goalie best," said Waldo.

"Oh, do you?" said Handforth warmly. "I'm the goalie of the Junior Eleven, my son, and you'll never get a chance in that position!"

"One never knows, Handy," said Reggie Pitt, of the West House. "You might get crocked."

"Crocked? Me?" said Handforth scornfully. "Fathead! I never get crocked! I'm not so careless as some of you other fellows!"

"You're just as careless, Handy—in fact, more careless—but you're lucky," explained Nipper. "Your luck is proverbial, old man. It's something we can't hope to equal." He turned to Waldo. "I'd give you a chance this afternoon, old son, but I'm afraid it can't be done. All the regular members of the team are fit, and it wouldn't be fair if I—"

"Don't think of it!" interrupted Stanley Waldo. "I shall be jolly pleased to play in a House match, or something like that."

"You'll never play as goalie in a House match," said Handforth. "It's like your nerve to—"

"Heard the latest, you chaps?" interrupted Buster Boots, of the Fourth, as he came running up.

"I was talking!" said Handforth coldly.

"I can't help that—"

"When I'm talking, I don't like to be interrupted!"

"If I waited for you to stop, Handy, I should wait all day!" retorted Buster Boots. "So I must interrupt, mustn't I? Have you heard the yarn that's going about?"

"That one about Biggleswade?" asked Travers. "Personally, dear old fellow, I don't believe it. We all know that Biggy is a good-natured chap, but when we hear that he slept on the floor just because he didn't like to disturb the House cat, which had planted itself in the middle of his bed, I'm inclined to think that somebody has been exaggerating."

"Blow Biggleswade!" said Buster Boots. "Have you heard about Edgemore Castle?"

"We've more than heard about it," said Travers. "We've seen it!"

"You funny Remove fathead!" roared Boots. "I mean, have you heard that the Castle has been burgled?"

"Great Scott!"

"Is this a fact, Boots?"

"Everybody's talking about it," said John Busterfield Boots. "Edgemore Castle was burgled during the night. They say that Inspector Jameson, of Bannington, has been called into the case, and that he's going to make immediate investigations."

"Then I'm sorry for the Earl of Edgemore," said Nipper, with a chuckle. "He's a nice old boy, and we can regard him as one of our pals. And if Inspector Jameson is in charge of the case, there's not much hope."

"I don't suppose it's much," said Reggie Pitt. "Some tramp got in, I expect, and boned a few things out of the larder. You can't take any notice of rumours."

But by the time breakfast was ready the whole school was talking about the burglary at Edgemore Castle. Reliable information had come in that it was no mere trivial job. The famous Edgemore emerald necklace had been stolen—an heirloom of immense value. Lord Edgemore's priceless coin collection had gone, too. The burglar had made a thorough job of it.

"It's rough on the old earl," said Nipper regretfully. "He's such a nice old boy that I feel we ought to go over and sympathise with him."

"The best way to sympathise with him is to help him!" said Handforth, his eyes gleaming. "By George! Here's a chance, you chaps! I'm going over to Edgemore Castle, and I mean to investigate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Inspector Jameson's deadly rival!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses!" said Handforth, glaring round. "I'm not joking!"

"You think you're not, Handy, but you really are," said Travers, shaking his head. "Well, well! There's nothing like being ambitious, dear old fellow. But you may have overlooked the fact that your status in this school is not such that you can go out just when you please. For example, what will Mr. Crowell say if you don't show up for morning lessons?"

"Morning lessons?" repeated Handforth, with contempt. "What are morning lessons compared with the recovery of Lord Edgemore's stolen property?"

"Mr. Crowell, in his pitiful ignorance, may assume that the police can look after the case without your help, Handy," said Nipper sadly.

"Besides, there's breakfast," said Travers.

"When a detective is on a case, he doesn't bother about meals," said Handforth. "A real investigator is so wrapped up in his work that he doesn't even get hungry. Anyhow, I'm going over to Edgemore Castle."

"My hat! I believe he means it!" said Tommy Watson.

"Of course I mean it!" said Handforth. "I don't often get a chance of investigating a real detective case."

"Are you sure that you'll get a chance this morning?" asked Nipper wonderingly.

"Lord Edgemore's place has been burgled, hasn't it?"

"Yes, but will Inspector Jameson allow you to conduct a private inquiry of your own?" asked Nipper. "I'm afraid that the answer will be in the negative."

"Who's talking about negatives?" said Handforth, staring. "I'm not going to take my camera."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows drifted away, leaving Handforth alone with his two faithful chums.

"Well, we'd better go straight away," said Edward Oswald. "There's nothing like being on the scene early. Don't forget that the early bird catches the worm."

"Look here, Handy, pull yourself together," said McClure sternly.

"Eh?"

"You don't think that you'll be allowed to make an independent investigation, do you?" went on the Scottish junior. "Inspector Jameson is a pompous old duffer, anyway, and he won't allow you to remain on the premises for two minutes."

"Oh, won't he?" said Handforth. "They're not his premises, are they? What about Lord Edgemore?"

"He won't have anything to say in the matter."

"Not in his own house?" retorted Handforth. "If the old earl invites me to conduct an investigation, I shall conduct one!"

"But will he ask you?" said Church dubiously.

"If you're trying to be funny——"

"It's imposs., Handy," urged Mac. "We could go over there now and miss breakfast,

but what about lessons? If we miss lessons there'll be trouble——"

"Only a few lines, or detention."

"Do you want to be detained for the afternoon?" asked Mac warmly. "Because, if you do, I don't. Have you forgotten the match against the River House?"

"Football is important, but not so important as this investigation," replied

Handforth promptly.

"You mean that you'd sacrifice the game?" asked Church in astonishment. "How do you expect St. Frank's to get on without you in goal?"

"H'm! I hadn't thought of that," admitted Edward Oswald.

"Nipper will give your place to Waldo if you fail to turn up."

"It's a rotten shame, but duty comes first," said Handforth, after a moment's consideration. "I'm going to Edgemore Castle straight away, and if the investigation takes me all the morning I shall carry on with it. In fact, I might not be done until tea-time."

"I suppose you'll catch the burglar by then?" asked Church sarcastically.

"The main thing is to get on the trail," said Handforth. "And if we get to work early——"

"We?" interrupted McClure. "Where do you get the 'we' from?"

"You fellows

are coming with me."

"Don't you believe it," said Church. "We want to play in that match this afternoon——"

"You're coming with me—as my assistants," declared Handforth aggressively. "And if there's any jibbing, I'll knock your heads together! Now, what's it going to be?"

WHO'S WHO AT ST. FRANK'S.



MR. HORACE PYCRAFT.

The most unpopular master at St. Frank's is Mr. Pycraft, who rules over the Fourth Form. Bad tempered at the best of times, he's ever ready to get anybody into trouble. Inclined to toady to the wealthy fellows; a snob.

"We'll go," said McClure meekly.

Church looked at him in surprise. Of late, the Scottish junior had been resisting Handforth quite a lot, and it was unusual for him to be so easily led. But Mac gave Church a slight wink.

"We'll be back before lessons start," he murmured, pulling Church aside. "Might as well humour him. It'll mean missing breakfast, worse luck, but if we allow him to go alone he'll only get himself into a pile of trouble."

"That's what I was thinking," breathed Church.

Handforth stared at them.

"What are you muttering about?" he demanded suspiciously. "You'd better not try to give me the slip——"

"Let's have breakfast first, Handy," said Church. "The bell will go in a couple of ticks——"

Clang-clang!

"It's going now," said Mac.

"Then it's our signal to get off to Edgemore," said Handforth briskly. "Think of the time we shall waste if we go in to breakfast."

"It's all a matter of opinion," said Church, with a sad shake of his head. "Personally, I don't call it a waste of time to sit down and eat a rasher of bacon——"

"Come on!" said Handforth brusquely.

He marshalled his chums out of the Triangle, and they were soon trudging up the road.

"If you're so jolly keen on saving time, Handy, why didn't you use your Austin Seven?" asked Church.

Handforth came to an abrupt halt.

"By George," he ejaculated, "I'd forgotten! It'll be a lot quicker to go by car, won't it? Besides, it'll look better. We'll go back and fetch her."

"And he calls himself a detective!" said Mac bitterly.

CHAPTER 2.

Handforth Investigates!

EDGEMORE CASTLE had an almost medieval aspect. It was an ancient Norman building, with turrets and battlements, and surrounded by a wide expanse of parkland.

Strictly speaking, the place was really called Edgemore Manor, and it had been known as such for generations. But owing to the castle-like appearance of the rambling building, the country people always referred to it as the "Castle." And it was becoming a common practice to drop the "Manor" altogether.

When Handforth's little Austin Seven sped up to the big main steps, there was another car outside.

"The inspector's come, I suppose," said Handforth, as they halted. "I hope he won't cause any trouble."

"No harm in hoping," said Church.

"If he does, I'll have a word with the earl, and he'll set matters right," continued Handforth.

"You're an optimist," commented McClure.

They got out of the little car, walked up the wide steps, and Handforth pulled at the great bell. The door was opened presently by Jenkins, the earl's faithful old butler.

"Ah, good-morning, young gentlemen," said Jenkins, smiling upon them.

"Morning, Mr. Jenkins," said Handforth briskly. "I understand there's been a burglary here?"

"I'm afraid there has, Master Handforth," said the butler gravely, his smile vanishing. "The police are here now."

"Have they got on the track of the burglar yet?"

"I'm afraid not" said Jenkins.

"Just as I thought" said Handforth.

"Well I've come to investigate."

"I beg your pardon, sir?"

"I say, I've come to investigate," repeated Handforth. "I'm going to take up the case."

"Oh!" said Jenkins.

He glanced at Church and McClure, evidently under the impression that this was some joke. But Church and McClure were studiously looking the other way.

"I'm afraid I can't ask you in, young gentlemen," said the butler hesitatingly. "His lordship is engaged with Inspector Jameson in the library."

"Can't you take us to them?" asked Handforth. "Be sensible, Mr. Jenkins! I can't investigate on the front step, can I?"

"Really, Master Handforth, I'm not sure that the inspector would welcome your—your—assistance," said Jenkins. "I really think it would be better if you left the matter entirely in the hands of the police."

Just then voices were heard in the big hall, and Handforth looked eager.

"Just a minute!" he said briskly, pushing past the butler.

Church and McClure followed, and they found the old Earl of Edgemore in the great hall, talking with Inspector Jameson of Bannington. The earl was tall and rather gaunt, with a lined, wrinkled face. But it was a face of much kindness, although, at the moment, it was expressive of deep concern.

"I can only hope, inspector, that your inquiry will be successful," he was saying.

"Leave it to me, my lord," replied Inspector Jameson, in his pompous voice. "I don't think it'll be long before we capture the thief. He can't have got far."

The inspector was inclined to be stout, and he carried himself with an air of great importance. He did not know anything about the presence of Handforth & Co., until Lord Edgemore's face suddenly lighted up and broke into a smile.

"Ah, my boys," he said genially. "I am glad to see you here. No doubt you have heard of my little trouble?"

"Yes, sir—and we're awfully sorry," said Handforth.

The inspector frowned upon them.

"You boys shouldn't have come here this morning," he said severely. "Really, my lord, I must ask you to get rid of these youngsters."

"Don't be so hard on them, inspector," said the old peer. "They have only come to sympathise with me in my trouble."

"More than that, sir!" said Handforth briskly. "We've come to help!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir. I've decided to conduct an investigation."

"Really, that is very good of you, young man," said his lordship mildly.

Inspector Jameson frowned more than ever.

"You've come to do what?" he said, looking at Handforth with disfavour. "You'd better understand, my boy, that this is no time for joking. There has been a serious burglary here, and I am about to conduct an inquiry."

"Great Scott! Haven't you started yet, sir?" asked Handforth, in astonishment.

"I have only been here half an hour," replied the inspector coldly. "And I am certainly not going to waste any time by answering your questions. You had better go back to your school at once."

"Do you want us to go, sir?" asked Handforth, looking at the earl.

The old man glanced at the inspector.

"I am afraid, my boy, that I have no say in the matter," he replied. "The premises are entirely in the charge of Inspector Jameson. For the time being he is in full control, and if he says that you must go, I am afraid you must go."

"But you're the boss here, sir!" protested Handforth.

"Ordinarily, yes, I believe I am," admitted Lord Edgemore. "But just at present, while the police are holding this inquiry, I am of minor importance. Really, inspector, I see no reason why these boys should not remain—"

"I am sorry, my lord, but I see many reasons," interrupted the inspector coldly.

"I can't be bothered with schoolboys at such a time as this. Now then, young men, I shall be glad when you go."

Handforth was looking rather startled, although Church and McClure were quietly grinning. They had anticipated something like this—and if Handforth hadn't been such an optimist, he would have anticipated it, too—

Lord Edgemore discreetly retired, and Inspector Jameson was glad. He took Hand-

forth by the arm, and commenced to propel him towards the open front door.

"This way, Master Handforth," he said firmly.

"Here, steady on!" ejaculated Edward Oswald. "You can't do this, inspector! I've come here to investigate this burglary."

"It's a good thing I know you, young man," said the inspector, "otherwise I might suspect that you were guilty of deliberate impertinence. I don't need your help in this investigation—or anybody else's help, either."

"But look here—"

"Good-morning, boys!" said the inspector, with a note of finality in his voice.

"You can't put me out like this," said Handforth excitedly. "I tell you I've come here to investigate! I haven't any faith in your police—"

"What?"

"You'll only make a hash of it," continued Handforth recklessly. "It needs a private detective on the job—a fellow with plenty of push and go."

The police officer breathed hard.

"You'll get pushed, young man, unless you're outside this door within ten seconds," he said grimly. "And you'll go, too! Do you think I can waste my time standing here arguing with you?"

"What about my time being wasted?" said Handforth. "I want to get on the trail while it's hot. I shan't interrupt you, inspector. I'm going to conduct this case in my own way."

"Good heavens!" said the inspector,



staring. "I do believe the boy means it!"

"Of course I mean it," said Handforth. "In a serious affair like this—"

"Get outside before I lose my temper!" fumed the inspector, his face red. "You impertinent young rascal! I won't have you on these premises!"

"I think we'd better go, Handy," said Church gently.

"Good-morning, inspector!" murmured McClure.

"Here, hold on!" said Handforth, with a start. "I'm not going—neither are you chaps! Not likely! We've come here to conduct—"

"If you say that again, I shall get really angry!" broke in the inspector fiercely. "Now then, young man! Out with you!"

"No fear!" roared Handforth. "You can't put me out like this——"

"Can't I?" snapped the inspector. "Upon my word! I've had quite enough of your saxe!"

He seized Handforth by the shoulder, propelled him through the open doorway, and half-pushed him down the steps. Church and McClure did not wish to be thrown out like this. They hopped out with alacrity—and the heavy door closed with a slam.

"Well, that's done it," said Church, not without satisfaction. "The only thing we can do, Handy, is to go home."

Handforth gulped.

"You—you rotters!" he panted, glaring at his chums. "You miserable weaklings! Didn't I bring you along as my assistants?"

"Cheeso it, Handy——"

"You not only see me chucked out, but you bolt like a couple of rabbits," went on Handforth accusingly. "Why didn't you help? Why didn't you grab the inspector and make him release me?"

"Are you dotty?" demanded Church, with a sniff. "We couldn't assault the police, could we? We should get run in if we tried anything like that!"

"You're a couple of wash-outs!" said Handforth bitterly. "And as for Inspector Jameson, I can't find the words I need! I offer him my help, and he scorns me!"

"Awful!"

"I tell him I've come here to investigate, and he practically laughs in my face!" continued Handforth wrathfully.

"Terrible!"

"But I'm not going to stand it!" said Handforth grimly. "Not me! I've come here to conduct this investigation——"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Mac.

"I'm not going to be put off!" snorted Handforth. "Come on! We'll go round to the back and get in that way."

"You can't!" protested Church. "If Jameson finds you, he'll only chuck you out again."

But Handforth would not listen. His mind was fully made up, and, being about the most obstinate fellow at St. Frank's, he disregarded the warnings of his chums.

CHURCH and McClure remained outside. No amount of talk from Handforth had shifted them. For once they were firm. So they hovered about the terrace whilst Handforth made his way round the old walls to a back entrance.

"He won't be long," said Church. "That's one consolation, anyway. We shall probably see him biffed out on his neck."

"He'll deserve it, too," said Mac. "The silly ass! I can understand him taking no notice of us—but when he ignores the inspector it's time he came to his senses."

"He can't come to something he hasn't got," said Church caustically.

Their wait was not a long one.

After about five minutes the front door suddenly opened, and the voice of Inspector Jameson floated out into the sunshiny September air.

"Take him right back to the school, Thomson," he said, in a voice that was charged with wrath. "Don't leave hold of him until you get there—until you hand him over to one of the masters."

"Right, sir," said another voice.

"Quick!" gasped Mac.

"What the dickens——"

McClure dragged Church behind the shelter of a bush.

"If Handy spots us, he'll expect us to biff the constable over," said Mac breathlessly. "Keep in the background, Churchy."

"It's a good idea," said Church.

Through the branches of the bush they could see Handforth struggling in the grasp of a burly police-constable. He was roaring at the top of his voice, too.

"You'll be sorry for this!" he was shouting. "By George! This is a fine way to treat a detective! I came here to conduct——"

"Take him away!" panted Inspector Jameson.

"Yes, sir," said Constable Thomson.

He did not even allow Handforth to use his Austin Seven, but he marched the junior all the way back to St. Frank's—and Church and McClure hovered somewhere in the background. Handforth soon found that it was impossible to get away from this burly officer of the law.

"You wait!" he said thickly. "Taking me along the road like this—as if I'd been arrested!"

"It's not my fault, young gent," said the policeman. "The inspector gave me his orders, and I've got to obey 'em."

"I'm not blaming you," replied Handforth. "It's that fatheaded Jameson I'm wild with! He doesn't know when he's lucky. If he had allowed me to help, I should soon have got on the trail."

"Ahem! The inspector prefers to work alone, sir," said P.-c. Thomson discreetly.

"He hasn't finished with me yet," went on Handforth, with a threatening air. "By George! He can't mess me about like this! I told him that I'm going to conduct an investigation, and I'll conduct one yet in spite of him!"

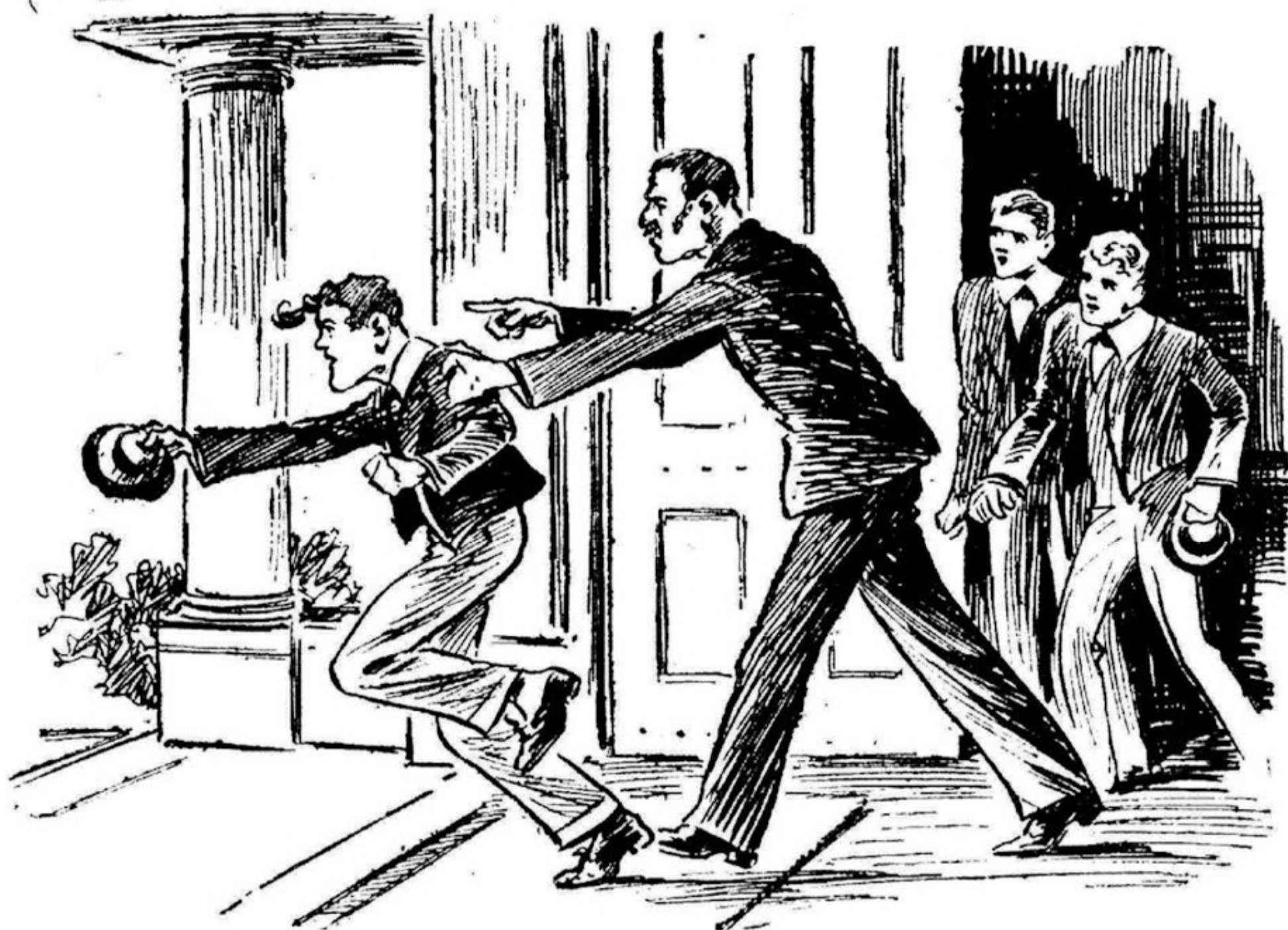
AT St. Frank's, Mr. Crowell was looking round the Remove Form-room with a severe eye.

"Three boys are missing," he said sternly. "Handforth and Church and McClure. Does anybody know anything about these boys?"

"They don't appear to be here, sir," said Travers.

"If you cannot say anything more sensible than that, Travers, you had better remain silent," retorted Mr. Crowell tartly. "Does anybody know where those three boys are?"

There was a complete silence.



"Out with you!" snorted Inspector Jameson. He seized the protesting Handforth by the shoulders, propelled him through the open doorway, and half pushed him down the steps. The inspector did not seem to appreciate Handy's offer to help him in his investigations!

"Very well," said Mr. Crowell. "I will deal with them when they come in. We will get on with the first lesson."

Most of the fellows knew where Handforth & Co. had gone, but they hardly thought it necessary to explain matters to Mr. Crowell. And the Form-master, who suspected that they knew, did not press his inquiry.

As it happened, he had not long to wait.

After about five minutes, there came a loud thump on the door, and Mr. Crowell looked round sharply.

"Come in," he said. "Who is it?"

The door opened, revealing a burly, apologetic-looking constable. And in the constable's grasp was a hot, red-faced, dishevelled Handforth.

"I'm told that this young gent belongs here, sir," said the policeman.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mr. Crowell, adjusting his glasses. "What on earth is this?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Handy!"

"They've got him at last!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" commanded the Form-master, striding towards the door. "Handforth, where have you been? And why have you come back like this—in the grasp of a police-constable?"

"My orders from the inspector, sir, were to bring this young gent right to the school,"

said the constable. "He was told to go, and he wouldn't go. So the inspector got a bit fed-up like, and I've brought the young gent back."

Church and McClure, who were hovering in the background, seized their opportunity to slip into the room and get to their places. Not that Mr. Crowell failed to spot them.

The Remove looked on with genuine pleasure. This was rich. Handy brought back from Edgemore Castle in the firm grasp of the law! They had expected something funny—but hardly anything as joyous as this.

"What have you been doing, Handforth?" asked Mr. Crowell sternly.

"Nothing, sir! The inspector wouldn't give me a chance to do anything!" panted Handforth. "I went to Edgemore Castle to investigate the burglary——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, indeed!" said Mr. Crowell. "You went to Edgemore Castle to investigate the burglary, did you, Handforth? That was very thoughtful of you!"

"Inspector Jameson threw me out, sir, and when I got back he told this bobby to bring me back to the school."

"Inspector Jameson appears to be singularly lacking in shrewdness," said Mr. Crowell, with heavy sarcasm. "What could he have been thinking about, Handforth, to refuse your services?"

The Form tittered, and Mr. Crowell turned to the policeman.

"You can go now, officer," he said. "Thank you for bringing this boy back. I will deal with him, and you can tell Inspector Jameson that he will not be bothered again."

"Yes, sir," said the constable, grinning and saluting.

He made a hasty exit, whilst the Remove gave him a subdued cheer.

"Silence!" shouted the Form-master. "Handforth, had you forgotten that there were lessons this morning?"

"No, sir."

"You deliberately played truant, then?"

"There was something more important for me to do, sir," said Handforth defiantly. "Edgemore Castle has been burgled——"

"I know all about it, thank you, Handforth," cut in Mr. Crowell coldly. "You will go to your place, and you will take five hundred lines for deliberately ignoring lessons."

"But look here, sir——"

"Go to your place, Handforth!" commanded the master. "Church! McClure! Stand up!"

Church and McClure stood up.

"You two boys will take fifty lines each," said Mr. Crowell. "I realise that you were probably coerced by Handforth, and so I have made your punishment correspondingly lighter. Now we will get on with the morning's work."

And Handforth, disgusted and disillusioned, was kept hard at it. Somehow his abilities as a detective were not appreciated!

CHAPTER 3.

The Inquiry!

INSPECTOR JAMESON, notebook in hand, was sitting in the library at Edgemore Castle, and the old earl was standing by the fireplace.

"Now, sir—I mean, my lord—perhaps you will give me all the details possible?" the inspector was saying. "We have got rid of that boy, and perhaps we can carry on. You say that the household went to bed as usual last night?"

"That is so," said Lord Edgemore. "My household is an early one, inspector, and we generally retire at about ten p.m."

"And last night was not an exception?"

"It was not."

"Do you know if any of the servants were disturbed in the night?"

"I have already had my butler make careful inquiries in the servants' hall," replied his lordship. "Nobody was disturbed in the night, inspector. I am generally a sound

sleeper myself, and I knew nothing whatever of the burglary until this morning."

"It was not discovered until this morning, was it?"

"None of us had any inkling of it until a maid came into the library here to do the usual cleaning," said Lord Edgemore. "Even this girl knew nothing at first. But when she found my desk smashed, she grew alarmed and called Jenkins' attention to it. Jenkins, greatly flustered, came up to me and begged me to come down."

"Do you know the full extent of your loss?"

"As far as I can ascertain at present, at least two hundred pounds in notes have vanished from the desk," said his lordship. "But that, of course, is a very minor matter. It is the Edgemore emerald necklace that is of such importance, inspector. As you may know, the necklace is a very valuable one, and it has been in this family for generations—indeed, for centuries."

"Anything else missing, my lord?"

"There is my collection of old and unique coins," replied the earl. "I prized that collection greatly, inspector. There are coins from almost every country in the world in that collection. I generally kept them in a glass case on the other side of the room, as you see. The case was forced open and the coins extracted."

"Now, about this necklace," said Inspector Jameson. "I suppose it has been valued at some time or other?"

"Its value, I believe, is in the region of twenty thousand pounds."

"Phew! As much as that?"

"That is the intrinsic value, but I need hardly tell you that I would not sell the necklace for any amount of money," said the old earl. "You will realise, inspector, that this robbery is a very serious one. I really think that it would be advisable to call in the assistance of Scotland Yard."

The inspector frowned.

"It is entirely unnecessary," he replied

coldly. "You may rely upon me, my lord, to do everything in my power to apprehend the thief. I have already spread the net. The police of the entire county are on the alert. Roads are being watched, railway stations are under observation."

"I am glad to hear it," said the earl.

"Now, there's one thing I want to say, my lord," went on the inspector, his voice becoming stern. "You tell me that the emerald necklace was kept in this desk?"

"Yes."

The inspector moved across to the desk—a fine, antique piece of furniture, massive and handsome. One of the drawers was



badly broken, and the desk was damaged in other ways, too.

"I am not denying that this is a wonderful piece of furniture, my lord," said the inspector, "but is it the right kind of place to use for the safe-keeping of a valuable necklace?"

"Is it a wrong kind of place?"

"Certainly it is," said the inspector sternly. "A necklace of that sort, my lord, should have been kept in a safe or a strong-room."

"I have neither," replied Lord Edgemore.

"In that case, why did you not keep the necklace in a safe deposit?"

"Really, inspector, I do not see why you should talk so severely," said his lordship.

"I am an old-fashioned man, and I did not think it necessary to instal a safe in this house. Perhaps I was wrong — perhaps I should have left the necklace with my bankers. But so many people have asked to see it—so many friends have been curious about the necklace—that I decided to keep it here, in my own library."

"Was it generally known that the necklace was kept here?"

"I did not advertise the fact, if that is what you mean," replied the old man. "Neither, for that matter, did I keep it a secret. Jenkins knew it was here, and probably some of the other servants, too."

"Ah!" said the inspector, making a note.

"You need not suspect any of the servants, however," continued the earl. "I do not believe for one moment that you will find the thief in this house."

"You can never be too sure, my lord," said the police officer. "There's one other thing. Was the necklace insured?"

"Of course."

"And the coin collection?"

"That was insured, too."

"I shall have to get into communication with the insurance company," said the inspector. "In the meantime, the thief will probably be caught. And now, with your permission, my lord, I will conduct an investigation."

He started slightly at the phrase, remembering how Handforth had used it. He frowned, and put Handforth out of his mind. He did not wish to be disturbed by the recollection of that troublesome schoolboy now.

WALKING over to one of the big windows, Inspector Jameson closely examined the catch. It was broken—roughly broken. The burglar had made no attempt to conceal his methods. The inspector opened the window and leaned out.

"It is obvious, of course," he said, "that the thief climbed up this ivy and gained admittance by forcing this window. That indicates that he knew the exact position of the library."

"A fairly easy assumption, inspector," said the earl drily.

"My point, my lord, is that the thief must have known the exact geography of the castle," said Inspector Jameson. "And that indicates that he knew the place well. By the way, have you had occasion to dismiss any servants recently?"

"No; my servants have been with me for years."

"At least, since you restored the Castle?"

"Yes," said the earl quietly.

It was a reminder that the Castle, not so long ago, had been half a ruin and the grounds a wilderness. It was not so very long ago since the Earl of Edgemore had been a kind of hermit, nearly penniless, with bailiffs at his door.

But his fortunes had been restored to him,

and since then he had performed wonders with the old place.

"There appear to be some footprints on the flower-beds down here," said the inspector as he continued to lean out. "I shall have to examine those, my lord. Perhaps I had better go down at once."

The library was on the first floor, and there was plenty of strong ivy clinging to the wall. The thief had had no difficulty in climbing that ivy, perching himself on the window-sill, and forcing the window-catch.

"**H**'M!" said the inspector.

He was outside, on the hard gravel path. There were very distinct footprints on the flower-bed. In fact, they were so distinct that the inspector was more than ever convinced that the thief was a raw amateur. No self-respecting cracksman would have been as careless as this. His offence was aggravated by the fact that he had been wearing rubber-soled shoes with a curious and distinctive ribbing. The impressions were clear and distinct on the soft soil at the foot of the ivy-covered wall.

The inspector turned to a constable who was with him.

"We shall have to take some casts of these footprints, Beckett," he said. "This is a very important clue. You had better get some plaster-of-Paris from the village, and get back here as quickly as possible."

"Yes, sir," said the constable, saluting.

The inspector went down on his knees, and he was about to examine the footprints more closely when something which glinted

BERNARD FORREST

is returning to
St. Frank's
NEXT WEEK!

TURN TO PAGE 31 FOR
FULL DETAILS!

beneath a little clump of flowers close by caught his eye.

"Hallo! What's this?" he said.

He put his hand under the plant, and found a small, neat, silver pencil. He gazed at it quite excitedly—particularly when he found that there were some initials engraved upon it.

"Another clue!" he muttered. "This is even more important than the footprints! What are these initials? 'S.W.' by the look of them. H'm! I'd better be careful with it."

He remembered, after he had been handling it for some moments, that there might be some finger-prints. So he hastily wrapped the silver pencil in his handkerchief, and tucked it away.

"A silver pencil—with the initials 'S.W.'," he murmured, frowning. "'S.W.'? I wonder who the man can be? Without doubt, that pencil was dropped by the thief, and the deeper I go into this affair the more certain I am that it is the work of a novice."

He searched about for further clues, but found none. The garden path was hard, and it was clear that the thief had come along this way and had then stepped on to the flower bed so that he could reach the ivy. It was not likely that there would be any other footprints.

So Inspector Jameson went indoors, convinced that he would soon be on a hot trail.

CHAPTER 4.

The Inspector's Theory!

LORD EDMORE met the inspector in the hall.

"I think you have overlooked something, inspector," he said. "There appear to be some ashes in the fireplace of the library."

"Ashes?" repeated the inspector, staring. "Where else would they be but in the fireplace?"

"I don't think you quite follow me," said the old peer mildly. "There are the ashes, of course, of last night's fire. This morning the room has not been disturbed—even a fire has not been lit. You may remember, inspector, that you asked me to leave the room entirely undisturbed. You were most emphatic over the telephone—"

"And rightly, too, my lord," said the inspector. "It is highly important that nothing should be touched before the police arrive on the scene. But about these ashes?"

"I happened to be glancing into the fireplace a few minutes ago, and I noticed some scraps of cloth, burned and blackened," said his lordship. "I think some paper has been burnt, too. And I know that these ashes were not in the fireplace last night. I was the last to leave the library, and the fire was burning low. There was nothing of that sort in there then."

The inspector, although he had missed the fireplace altogether, waved a pompous hand.

"We can't do everything at once, my lord," he said importantly. "It was my

intention to examine the fireplace later. For the moment, I have been investigating outside. I may as well tell you that I have found some important clues."

"I am very glad to hear it."

"Do you happen to know anybody whose initials are 'S.W.'?" asked the inspector abruptly.

"Let me think," said the earl, frowning. "'S.W.'? No, I don't seem to remember— But wait! There is a gentleman of my acquaintance in Bannington named Stephen Woodbridge, but I hardly think he is your man, inspector."

"Nevertheless, I should like to know more about him."

"I should have said the Rev. Stephen Woodbridge," smiled the old earl. "He happens to be the Vicar of St. Andrew's Church, and, moreover, he is unfortunate enough to be crippled. Really, inspector, I don't think the Vicar of St. Andrew's climbed the ivy to the library window last night."

The inspector grunted.

"I should have known," he said, somewhat sourly. "The name was familiar to me when you first mentioned it. I have met Mr. Woodbridge, of course, and I know that he is a man of unimpeachable character. H'm! Perhaps you know somebody else whose initials are 'S.W.' my lord?"

"I really don't think I do."

"I found a silver pencil under the library window," said the inspector. "There are the initials 'S.W.' engraved on it—and there can be no doubt that it was dropped by the thief."

"Certainly an excellent clue."

"And now we'll see about these ashes in the fireplace," continued the inspector, moving towards the stairs. "I should like to examine them at once, if you don't mind."

"By all means," said his lordship.

He was rather tired of Inspector Jameson. No doubt he was an excellent officer for the ordinary run of police duties, but when it came to an investigation of this kind Jameson was rather slow-witted. The earl was most anxious to call in the assistance of Scotland Yard, yet he hesitated to do so whilst the inspector was so opposed to the idea.

In the library, the stout police officer knelt on the hearthrug and gazed intently into the fireplace. It was a large one fitted with a modern grate, in which was a number of dead cinders. On the top of these lay some scraps of different ash. Evidently some paper had been burned, and also something which looked very much like linen.

"A handkerchief, I should say," said the inspector.

This was not a very brilliant shot, for the handkerchief was not entirely burned, and a portion of one hem could be distinctly seen. Most of the handkerchief was a mere blackened pile of ash, but this portion of it was only brown, having been considerably scorched by the flames.

Spreading out a newspaper, the inspector recovered these ashes, and some of the paper

(Continued on page 14.)



"WHEN I GROW UP"

In which many prominent St. Frank's fellows air their views on the interesting subject of what they would like to do or be when they reach the adult stage.

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH.—Very obviously I'm cut out to be either a detective or an author or an actor. Why, even when I was a toddler I used to crawl about the house on my hands and knees on the trail of the kitchen cat, keenly looking for clues, like one of its missing whiskers. Yes, I am a born 'tec. The same remark applies to writing. When I was quite young—say three or four years old—I used to delight in scribbling lines and crosses and all sorts of funny marks on a piece of paper. To my unappreciative parents and relatives, etc., they meant nothing. They meant nothing to me then. But, by George, I realise now that those marks represented literary gems, pearls of wisdom, only I was unable to express them in the orthodox way. Then, regarding my acting ability, that was also born in me. I've often heard the pater tell people that he's never known anybody cry and howl and shriek and register the various other emotions like I did. So when I grow up I shall first of all be a great detective. Then, when I've brought to book all the criminals in the world, I shall write my experiences in a series of "best sellers," and after that I shall proceed to startle an already awed world with my marvellous acting.

BUSTERFIELD BOOTS.—I think I shall open up a publicity agency. I've always had a hankering in this direction. My slogans would be known the world over. Kill Your Cold Cold by Taking Dr. Codger's Cold Cachous; Knock-Knees Knocked Straight by Professor Knockem's Wonderful Rolling-Pin System; Furnish at Baylems and Keep the Bailiffs at Bay. That's the kind of slogans I should hand to my clients—ones that "catch the eye," that grip the imagination—and these slogans would glitter from thousands of enormous electric signs. Startling processions advertising various commodities would pass down main thoroughfares.

An army of aeroplanes and sausage balloons would play an important part in my publicity schemes, too.

CHUBBY HEATH.—I'd love to be an engine-driver when I grow up. How thrilling to regulate a huge iron monster as it flies through the country side at eighty miles an hour!

VIVIAN TRAVERS.—Well, well, you fellows, it's rather difficult to say what I shall do when I get older. I suppose I've got what people call a reckless nature. I always want to be doing something that's got a risk attached to it, something exciting and thrilling. And those are the three main things I shall seek when I reach the age of discretion. I shall go anywhere and do anything to attain them.

CLAUDE GORE-PEARCE.—I shall be a gentleman of leisure. After all, my pater is a millionaire, so why should I do anything except have a high old time?

HORACE STEVENS.—My ambition is to go on the stage. A friend of mine who is something "big" in the theatrical world has promised to give me a chance when the time is ripe.

ARCHIE GLENTHORNE.—Nothing too energetic is indicated for Archie when he gets older. I mean to say, the good old tissues wouldn't stand the strain. However, to show the jolly old populace that I wasn't a waster, I should regularly sally forth to Savile Row and environs and purchase sundry suitings, toppers, ties, shirts, spats, etc.

THOMAS HARBOROUGH.—When I leave St. Frank's, I should very much like to play football for one of the big amateur clubs, such as the Corinthians. Although I should not earn my living in this manner, it is what I should like most to do—it is what appeals to me, having played for the Blue Crusaders before coming to St. Frank's.

THE ARRESTED SCHOOLBOY!

(Continued from page 12.)

ashes, too. Then he took them all to the window.

"Hallo, hallo!" he said excitedly. "Look at this, my lord! Blood stains!"

"Indeed?"

"As plain as daylight—blood stains!" continued the inspector. "There's one on the hem, here, and another a little farther in. The thief must have injured himself—probably in opening the desk. That's it! He gashed himself, used his handkerchief to staunch the blood, and then thought it advisable to burn the handkerchief completely. But in his haste he only half-burnt it. Another clue!"

"We're getting on," said his lordship dryly.

"We are, my lord—we are!" said Jameson, his voice positively trembling. "Look here! The same initials—'S. W.'! Look at them! Here they are, in the corner!"

His lordship adjusted his glasses, and looked.

"They are certainly the same initials," he admitted. "But doesn't it strike you as odd, inspector, that the thief should have left these clues?"

"Odd?"

"He must have been singularly careless," said Lord Edgemore. "One would have thought that he would at least have burned the handkerchief thoroughly. I cannot help thinking that this evidence might have been 'planted,' on purpose to put you on a false scent."

The inspector looked startled for a moment, and then he shook his head.

"I don't think so, my lord," he said firmly. "This half-burnt paper and handkerchief tallies with all the rest of the evidence. It merely goes to prove that the thief was an amateur. Even a schoolboy might have done better—Why, hallo! What's this? Look at this paper! Funny thing I should mention schoolboys. This paper looks as though it might have been torn from an exercise book."

He unfolded one or two of the half-burnt scraps. Ruled lines could be seen on them, and there were traces of boyish handwriting, too.

"Remarkable," said the earl.

"There are some words here!" exclaimed the inspector. "I can read some of them—'The coming exam. will be a severe test—' That smacks of school, eh?"

"Surely you are not suggesting, inspector, that a schoolboy could have had anything to do with this robbery?" asked Lord Edgemore sceptically. "The very idea is preposterous!"

"There's something else," said the inspector keenly. "There seems to be a peculiar word. I can make out 'sifra,' and then the paper is burnt and blackened. 'Sifra' is evidently a part of a word, but I can't quite—Wait a minute, though! I'm wrong, of course."

"Really?" murmured his lordship, in surprise.

"The word isn't 'sifra' at all," said the inspector. "The handwriting is rather bad. What I mistook for an 'i' is really a full stop. This word is part of 'St. Frank's,' you see?"

"Then you must have mistaken the 't' for an 'i,' inspector," said the earl mildly. "The full stop appears to be missing altogether. But I can't quite follow your line of reasoning—"

"A schoolboy!" said the inspector excitedly. "Didn't I say, from the very first, that this work was done by a raw amateur? Rubber-soled shoes, too! Just the kind of shoes that schoolboys wear. And that silver pencil—"

"Good heavens!" said the earl, almost angrily. "You are not suggesting that a schoolboy committed this burglary, are you?"

"I must draw my conclusions according to the evidence," retorted the inspector, with some asperity. "I will agree with you that the possibility seems absurd, but these facts are very significant. You must remember, my lord, that a big school like St. Frank's contains a large number of senior boys. Many of them are seventeen or eighteen years of age. One of these seniors might be in difficulties. Perhaps he has been gambling; perhaps he has become desperate, and he committed this crime in his extremity. He took the money, naturally—it was the cash he needed—and when he saw the necklace, he was tempted. In all probability he did not realise its value."

"Really, Inspector Jameson, I protest against this!" said the earl heatedly. "I certainly do not want you to go making inquiries at St. Frank's. The whole thing is—well, it's outrageous. Many of these St. Frank's boys are on the friendliest possible terms with me—"

"They are, are they?" broke in the inspector sharply. "That's all the more reason, my lord, why I should make inquiries! These boys no doubt know the entire geography of the Castle. They know where the library is situated—"

"I won't have it!" broke in his lordship. "Upon my soul, inspector, I am amazed that you should jump to such hasty conclusions."

"We'll see, my lord—we'll see," grunted the inspector, annoyed by the old peer's tone.

He stood there, re-examining the scraps of half-burnt paper and linen. And then, suddenly, a gleam came into his eyes. He frowned, flushed, and then he slapped one of his plump knees.

"I've got it!" he ejaculated triumphantly.

"If you are going to mention one of the schoolboys—"

"I don't think he is known to you, my lord," interrupted the inspector. "He is a new boy in the school this term. Waldo's son."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Have you never heard of a man named Rupert Waldo?"

"Not to my recollection."

"I thought everybody had heard of him," said the inspector. "He was known as the Wonder Man. One of the cleverest crooks in the world. Scotland Yard could never lay its hands on him. It was a fortunate thing for the law when Waldo decided to earn an honest living. He now calls himself the Peril Expert."

"Quite a remarkable man, I should imagine," commented the earl.

"An extraordinary man," said the inspector. "Personally, I regard this Peril Expert business with a suspicious eye. I'm not altogether sure that Waldo is on the straight. However, we needn't go into that discussion now. Unless I'm very much mistaken, we have to deal with his son."

"You must allow me to remark, Inspector Jameson, that I regard this theory of yours as absurd," said Lord Edgemore stiffly. "That a boy of St. Frank's could be guilty of this crime is not only improbable, but well nigh impossible."

"This boy is different from the others," declared the inspector. "He is the son of a man who is known to have been a crook. And his initials, let me tell you, my lord, are 'S.W.'. His name is Stanley Waldo."

"That may be only a coincidence."

"I can hardly think so," said the inspector, shaking his head. "There are other features in this case, in addition to the initials, my lord. We know that the thief climbed the ivy in order to get into this library. Young Waldo would have absolutely no difficulty in climbing the ivy. Then there are these scraps of paper, torn from a school exercise book."

"Considering that this boy is supposed to be the son of a notorious crook, he must be singularly unlike his father," said the Earl impatiently. "He seems to have gone out of his way to leave a large number of clues for you to follow, inspector. I do not pretend to be an expert in these matters, but it really seems to me that this trail is a false one—laid down deliberately so that you should be hoodwinked."

The inspector shook his head.

"I might think that in certain circumstances—but not in these," he replied. "From the very first I have suspected that this job was done by a mere novice. This boy fits in exactly—and I shall certainly make it my business to make some very keen inquiries at St. Frank's."

"Well, I shall not presume to interfere," said his lordship, "but I really cannot believe that a schoolboy is responsible for this burglary."

"We'll see, my lord," said Inspector Jameson. "And by the time I have finished my inquiries, I think you will agree that there is no need to enlist the services of Scotland Yard."

CHAPTER 5.

Teddy Long's Find!

"I SAY, Handy——"

"Talking to me?" said Handforth, staring.

"Yes, Handy," replied Teddy Long, in a friendly tone.

The tubby junior did not often speak to Handforth. He was not one of Handforth's friends. In fact, it would be difficult to say who were his friends. For Teddy Long was such a sneak that the juniors generally made a point of ignoring him. He was a fellow of no importance.

"I'm only 'Handy' to my pals," said Edward Oswald stiffly. "I can't be bothered with you, Long! Buzz off!"

"I was wondering if you could lend me five bob," said Teddy hopefully.

"Then you can stop wondering at once—because I shan't."

"I'll let you have it back next week——"

"No, you won't."

"But I will, really!" insisted Teddy.

"You won't—because I'm not going to lend you any five bob," said Handforth. "You can go and eat coke, my lad! I'm busy! I can't be bothered."

Morning lessons were over, and Handforth was preparing to set out for Edgemore Castle again. His rebuff at the hands of Inspector Jameson had not dampened his ardour. He was determined to carry on



with that investigation. Church and McClure, incidentally, had made themselves scarce. They had no desire to be dragged into another fiasco.

"I suppose you couldn't make it half-a-crown?" suggested Teddy eagerly.

"I'll make it a thick ear, if you like!" retorted Handforth. "Clear out of my way, you—you fat nuisance!"

"Or even a bob——"

"I wouldn't lend you a penny!" said Handforth indignantly. "Where's your week's pocket-money, anyhow? To-day's Saturday, isn't it?"

Teddy Long looked wrathful.

"My week's money is all gone," he said. "I've been borrowing from the chaps since Monday, and when I had my pocket-money this morning they boned the lot!"

"And even then I'll bet you owed them something!" said Handforth, with a snort. "If you wanted the money for something important, I might lend it to you——"

"It is for something important!" interrupted Teddy promptly.

"Eh?"

"I—I've got to send it to a—a cousin of mine," said Long. "He's in a hole, and I promised to help him out. If he doesn't get five bob by tea-time, he'll be in awful mess. You might lend me the cash, Handy, so that I can help my cousin out of his trouble."

"I never knew you had a cousin," said Handforth suspiciously. "Where does he live?"

"Oh, in—in Southampton."

"And you expect to get five bob to him by tea-time?" said Handforth. "You can't stuff me up with these lies. If you don't move out of my way, I'll give you a thick ear!"

Teddy Long tried to keep it up, but just then Nipper appeared, with Travers and Reggie Pitt and a few more of the junior footballers. They were all ready for the field.

"Better buck up, Handy," said Nipper. "You haven't changed yet."

"Changed?" said Handforth. "What for?"

"We're going to put in a final practice——"

"Bother the practice!" interrupted Handforth. "I can't mess about with football now. I'm just off to Edgemore Castle to continue that investigation."

"I didn't know you'd even started one," said Nipper.

"Well, I'm going straight off," said Handforth. "If I'm not back to dinner, don't worry about me."

"We shan't worry, dear old fellow," said Travers, with conviction. "We shall all be miserable, of course, and I dare say our appetites will be affected, but we'll do our best to live through the dull and dreary hours."

"Idiot!" said Handforth. "I shan't be gone for hours. I expect to conclude my investigation before two o'clock."

"One moment, Handforth," said Mr. Crowell, in an icy voice.

Handforth jumped, having been unaware of the Form-master's proximity.

"Oh, hallo, sir!" he ejaculated. "Didn't know you were there, sir!"

"I can well believe it," said Mr. Crowell.

"I gave you an imposition of five hundred lines, Handforth."

"By George! So you did, sir!"

"Is that imposition done?"

"Oh, draw it mild, sir!" protested Handforth. "Lessons haven't been over long, and I haven't had a chance——"

"You have a chance now," said Mr. Crowell. "You will go indoors immediately, Handforth, and commence work upon that imposition."

"But it's impossible, sir!" gasped Handforth, in dismay. "I've got to go to Edgemore Castle——"

"Come with me, Handforth," said Mr. Crowell gently.

He marshalled Handforth indoors, the latter protesting vehemently. But it was no good. When Mr. Crowell was on the war-path, there was no denying him.

"It's a swindle!" said Teddy Long unhappily. "I was just going to touch him for five bob!"

"**P**OOOR old Handy!" said Church sympathetically.

"Rats! He's lucky!" said McClure.

"If he had gone to Edgemore Castle he would only have been biffed out again. We know he's safe indoors, doing that impot."

"Perhaps we ought to go and lend him a hand?"

"No fear!" said Mac. "The longer that impot takes him, the better! By the time it's over he may be sane again."

In the meantime, Teddy Long was mooching about in the Triangle with his hands thrust deeply into his trousers pockets. He was disgusted with the world in general.

"They're a lot of rotters!" he muttered fiercely. "Won't lend a chap a few bob!"

He kicked against something which gave forth a dull metallic ring. He looked down, expecting to see a nail, or something like that. Then his eyes grew round. At his feet there was a coin. It was a large coin, dull in colour. It seemed to be slightly yellowish, and for this reason, no doubt, had lain unnoticed in the gravel.

"My only hat!" muttered Teddy, bending down and seizing it.

He experienced a shock. The coin was extraordinarily heavy. He examined it intently, his heart beating with greater rapidity than usual. The coin was certainly not an English one. The wording on it was unfamiliar, and the designs were strange, too. It was fairly obvious, in fact, that the coin was exceedingly ancient, although in a state of good preservation. And the colour of it, and the weight, indicated that the metal was gold.

"Gold!" breathed Teddy. "Oh, my hat! I know it's gold—it can't be anything else! I wonder where it came from? I wonder if Mrs. Hake will take it over the counter? I don't suppose she will, though—she's too jolly careful! Well, anyhow, findings keepings!"

He spotted Archie Glenthorne, lounging elegantly out of the Ancient House at that moment, and Archie happened to be alone. On the spur of the moment, Teddy Long ran over to him.

"I say, Archie, old man," said Teddy, trying to speak in a careless voice.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie.

He came to a halt, adjusted his monocle, and surveyed Teddy with disfavour.

"Were you speaking to me?" he asked coldly.



Nipper looked at the coin in Archie's hand—and then he gave a start. "The last time I saw this coin, Archie, it was in Lord Edgemore's collection!" he said pointedly. What was Archie doing with one of the coins which had been stolen from Lord Edgemore?

"Have a look at this, Archie——"

"I refuse to look at 'this'—or that, either," said Archie. "Kindly remove yourself from my gaze, dash you! I don't approve of you, you frightful pain in the neck!"

"Oh, but look here——"

"Your trousers are a horrible sight," said Archie, with a shudder. "They're so dashed baggy at the knees that they look like a pair of dashed carbuncles. You've got ink-stains on your collar, and I believe—— Good gad! It's the same collar as you were wearing yesterday, isn't it?"

"I—I haven't had time to change it," said Teddy hastily. "Look here, Archie, I'm short of money——"

"If you think you can borrow anything from me, laddie, you've made a dashed mistake!" interrupted Archie icily. "If you took some pride in your appearance, I might stretch a point now and again and lend you a bit here and there, so to speak, now and then. But you're a disgrace to the dashed school. When I look at you I feel cold shivers going up and down the good old spine."

"I don't want to borrow any money," said Teddy indignantly. "I'm not that kind of chap."

"Odds fibs and whoppers!"

"I'm hard up," confided Teddy. "Here's an old coin, Archie—a special sort of coin. Solid gold, you know. I thought perhaps

that you would like to buy it. I don't mind selling it for a quid."

Archie's monocle dropped out of his eye, and he took the coin in a dazed kind of way.

"Good gad!" he said, gazing at it. "Where did you get this from, old lemon squash?"

"It's—it's been in the family for years," said Teddy glibly. "I wouldn't sell it, only I need the money so badly. Solid gold, you know. It's really worth two or three quid."

Archie Glenthorne was no duffer. He could tell at a glance that the coin was gold, and he strongly suspected that Teddy Long had no right to sell it. It occurred to him that it would be safer in his possession than Teddy's. A few discreet inquiries might be useful.

"Sorry, old thing, but I couldn't possibly think of buying it," he said, shaking his head.

"It's real gold——"

"I'll lend you ten bob, if you like," proceeded Archie, "on the condition that you place this coin in my care——"

"That's all right!" said Teddy eagerly. "Done! Where's your ten bob?"

Archie produced a ten-shilling note, and Teddy grabbed it with such eagerness that he nearly tore it in half. And within a couple of seconds he was off—making a bee-

line for the school shop. He could hardly believe in his good fortune.

IT was not until after the midday meal that Archie Glenthorne showed that quaint old coin to anybody. Then he happened to bring it out with some other money while he was in the Common-room. Somebody was raising a subscription for some good cause, and Archie, naturally, had been approached.

"Hallo! What's that rummy coin amongst all that silver, Archie?" asked Fullwood, who was standing near.

"Oh, this? You mean this dashed thing?" asked Archie. "Oh, rather! It's a coin, you know."

"I can see that, you ass," said Fullwood, taking it. "Great Scott! It's heavy! Gold, isn't it?"

"I believe it is, old tulip," said Archie. "Rather interesting, what?"

"Come and look at this, you fellows," said Fullwood, as he went over to the window. "I believe it's an old Greek coin. Must be centuries old, too."

Nipper looked at it keenly, and Handforth gave it a glance, too. Handforth was not in the best of humours. He had been writing lines until dinner-time, and Mr. Crowell had forbidden him to go to Edgemore Castle during the afternoon. In consequence, he was thoroughly fed-up.

"By Jove!" said Nipper, with a whistle.

"Where did you get this coin from, Archie?"

"Eh? I mean, what?"

"Where did you get this coin from?"

"Oh, rather! You mean, where did I get it from?" asked Archie vaguely. "Absolutely! I see what you mean! If you don't mind, old chestnut, I'd rather not say."

Nipper gave him a strange look.

"The last time I saw this coin, Archie, it was in Lord Edgemore's collection!" he said pointedly.

"What!" went up a general yell.

"This is one of the earl's most prized possessions," went on Nipper. "He pointed it out to me particularly. Said he had an awful trouble to get it. It's the only one of its kind in the world—and it's worth an awful lot of money—fifty or sixty quid."

"My only sainted aunt!"

"Draw it mild, Nipper!"

"It's a fact!" said Nipper. "And Archie whacks it out among his silver as though it wasn't worth twopence."

"By George!" said Handforth, his eyes gleaming. "So Archie had this coin, eh? And he won't say where he got it from?"

"Really, Handy, old cyclone—"

"This looks bad, dear old fellows," said Travers, shaking his head. "And we never suspected that we harboured a burglar in our midst! Archie must be the miscreant who boned the goods and chattels from Lord Edgemore's place during the night."

Nobody took any notice of Travers' facetious remark. The other fellows were staring at Archie, and Handforth, in particular, was agog with excitement.

"It's a clue!" he declared. "Come on, Archie, you fathead! Where did you get this coin from? It belongs to Lord Edgemore! It's one of the missing—"

"Kindly allow me some air, laddies!" protested Archie, as they pressed round him. "I mean, dash it, a chappie must breathe! Is it a fact that this coin is one of Lord Edgemore's priceless collection?"

"Yes," said Nipper. "I recognised it at once."

"Good gad!"

"Where did you get it from, Archie?" went on Nipper. "I think you ought to tell us, you know."

"Oh, rather! I wasn't going to say anything," explained Archie. "In the cirs., though, I suppose I'd better say how I got it. I don't want you chappies to think that I had anything to do with that dashed burglary."

"We don't think that, you chump," said Nipper. "But this might be an important clue—"

"It is an important clue," said Handforth. "Buck up, Archie! We're waiting!"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I got it from that young blighter, Long," said Archie.

"Teddy Long?"

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "I ran across him in the Triangle, and he offered to sell me the coin for a quid."

"A quid?" said Nipper, with a whistle. "He couldn't have known its real worth!"

"I told him I wouldn't buy it, but I lent him ten bob," continued Archie. "I rather thought that the coin wouldn't be very safe in his possession. Might sell it to a passing tramp, or somebody like that. I could see that it was a gold coin—"

"That's enough, Archie," said Nipper. "Where's Long? We'll make him explain where he got it from. This looks like being important!"

And there was an immediate search for Teddy Long.

CHAPTER 6.

On the Trail!

FINDING Teddy Long was a simple matter.

He was run to earth in the school shop. He was looking rather puffy and heavy. The last shilling of Archie's ten bob had just gone into Mrs. Hake's till.

"We want you, Long," said Nipper grimly.

"Oh, I say, really!" protested Teddy. "I can't come now—I'm busy."

"Ever seen this before?" demanded Nipper, thrusting the old coin under Teddy's nose.

"N-no!" gasped Teddy, thoroughly scared. "I—I've never seen it before."

"You frightful whopper!" said Archie indignantly. "I mean, what you've just said is a frightful whopper. Didn't you offer to sell that coin to me?"

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“Never!” gasped Teddy. “I’ve never seen it before! I don’t know anything about it!”

“Grab him!” said Handforth, grimly. “We’ll bump him until he tells us the truth!”

“Hi! Let me go!” howled Teddy, in alarm. “Help!”

“That coin was stolen from Edgemore Castle last night,” said Handforth, seizing Teddy Long by the shoulder. “You’re not the thief—you wouldn’t have nerve enough to take a saucerful of milk from a kitten—but it’s clear enough that you know something about the burglary. Who gave you this coin, Long?”

“Nobody!” panted Teddy, thoroughly scared. “I—I found it!”

“It’s no good,” said Travers, shaking his head. “We shall have to bump him, dear old fellows.”

“I tell you I found it!” yelled Teddy. “In the triangle! It was lying in the gravel, and I picked it up—”

He proceeded to explain exactly how he had found the coin. The other juniors refused to believe him, and Teddy was bumped severely. He continued to tell the same

story, and he was bumped again. Even then he reiterated the same explanation.

“It must be true, then,” said Nipper, at last. “We’ve bumped him for nothing!”

“It’ll do him good, anyway,” said Handforth. “By George! What does it mean? How can that coin have got to St. Frank’s? The thief didn’t come to the school, did he?”

“It’s a puzzle,” said Nipper, frowning. “I think I’d better take this to Mr. Leo at once. And some of us had better search the Triangle, in case there are some other coins knocking about. It’s mysterious.”

They went outside, and before they could start any search they were astonished to see Inspector Jameson’s car driving through the main gateway. They all halted, staring.

“Jameson — here!” muttered Nipper. “What’s he come here for?”

“To look for that coin, perhaps,” suggested Travers brilliantly.

The other fellows would have allowed the inspector to drive on—for it was evident that he was going straight through Big Arch towards the Head’s house; but Handforth dashed up, and nearly got himself

run over. The inspector, who was driving himself, pulled up with a jerk.

"Didn't you give me enough trouble this morning, young man, without pestering me now?" he fumed. "How dare you stop me—"

"Keep your hair on, sir," said Handforth.

The inspector went red in the face with anger. Considering that he was practically bald-headed, Handforth's remark was unfortunate.

"You—you impertinent young rascal——"

"We've got a clue, sir," said Handforth. "One of those missing coins."

The inspector started, and forgot what he was going to say.

"One of those missing coins!" he ejaculated, sitting bolt upright. "Let me see! Where did you find it?"

He fairly trembled with inward excitement. He had come to St. Frank's on a curious mission—to tell the headmaster that one of his boys was a thief. And he had an idea that he would have some trouble with Dr. Morrison Nicholls. But if he could produce evidence that some of the missing property had actually been found on the school premises, his interview would be made all the easier.

"Perhaps you had better take charge of this, inspector," said Nipper. "I meant to give it to Mr. Lee, but as you are here——"

"Certainly," said Jameson. "Let me see. Upon my word!"

He grabbed the coin, and the boys gathered round his car interestedly.

"I assume that somebody in this school—a certain boy—attempted to sell this coin?" asked the inspector.

"Yes, sir."

"And his name?" said Jameson sharply.

"Teddy Long, sir."

The inspector's jaw dropped.

"Long?" he said, fearing that his theory was tottering. "Nonsense! There must be some mistake!"

"Long found it in the Triangle, sir—in this gravel," explained Nipper. "He's quite a chump, and he didn't realise the value of the thing. He hadn't sense enough to connect it with the burglary at the Castle. We're just going to look through the gravel, in case there are some other coins knocking about."

"Oh!" said the inspector. "So it was found in the gravel? Yes, you had better look at once. I'll help you. This is most important."

He eased himself out of the car and bustled about, pompous and eager. It was quite evident to him that Stanley Waldo had dropped that coin by accident. The net was drawing tighter!

NO other coins were found, and after ten minutes of fruitless search, Inspector Jameson got into his car again and drove straight towards the Head's house.

"What's he going to see the Head about?" asked Nipper thoughtfully.

"About that coin, I suppose," said Tommy Watson.

"But he was going to the Head before he knew anything about the coin," Nipper pointed out. "There's something rummy about this, you chaps."

"Never mind that old coin," said Reggie Pitt. "What about our football match? Brewster and the other River House chaps will be here soon, and we haven't even changed. The game's due to start in about twenty minutes."

"Yes, we'd better get the team together," said Nipper, looking round. "By the way, where's Handy? He was here a couple of minutes ago."

"He's gone," said Church, in a tired voice.

"Gone? Gone where?"

"To Edgemore Castle."

"What the dickens——"

"He seized the opportunity," explained McClure, with a grin. "While the inspector is with the Head, Handy has dodged off to the castle. He probably thinks he'll be allowed to conduct his fatheaded investigation now. He wanted Church and me to go, but we refused."

"Didn't you remind him of the game?"

"Of course we did," said Church. "But you don't suppose he took any notice?"

"Where's Waldo?" asked Nipper crisply. "We can't mess about like this. Anybody seen Waldo? I'm going to give him Handy's place as goalie."

STANLEY WALDO could scarcely believe his good fortune when he heard the news. He was as keen as mustard, of course; and he lost no time in dashing indoors to change into his footer things. He certainly had no inkling of the web of circumstantial evidence that was being woven around him.

"This is awfully decent of you, Nipper," he said, when he came out. "I didn't expect to play to-day——"

"Nobody expected it," said Nipper. "But Handforth has dodged away, and I've got to play a substitute. It's a good chance for you, Waldo."

"Watch me take it!" said Waldo enthusiastically.

When they got out to Little Side, they found that Brewster & Co. had arrived.

"Aren't we going to start this match?" asked Hal Brewster, a grin on his cheery, open face. "We've been waiting ages."

"We're making a little change in our team, Hal," said Nipper. "We're playing Waldo instead of Handy."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Ascott.

"Waldo!" said Kingswood, in dismay. "Are you going to allow it, Brewster? Waldo is an awful handful!"

"I don't see how I can prevent it," said Hal Brewster, grinning. "Waldo's a

THE ST. FRANK'S QUESTIONNAIRE!

Here are twelve testers for you, chums—questions which refer to St. Frank's and its members. Give them the "once-over," jot down the answers to those which you know, and then compare them with the correct list which will be given, together with another set of questions, next week.

- 1.—Who is the master of the Fourth Form?
- 2.—What is Lord Pippinton's full family name?
- 3.—Who is the matron of the West House?
- 4.—What is the name of the farmer whom the St. Frank's fellows detest?
- 5.—Who are the occupants of Study G in the Ancient House?
- 6.—What is the West House Junior Common-room Telephone Number?
- 7.—Who is the Housemaster of the Ancient House?
- 8.—Which Moor View School girl is Reggie Pitt's particular chum?
- 9.—What is the name of the Japanese boy in the Fourth?

- 10.—What is the name of the old porter at Bellton Station?
- 11.—What is the name of the dense wood near St. Frank's?
- 12.—What is the name of the big reservoir which supplies Bannington with water?

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUESTIONS

1. Mr. Robert Langton. 2. Sir Lancelot Montgomery Tregellis-West. 3. Joe Spence. 4. Bob Catchpole. 5. Mr. William Tapley. 6. Jerrold Dodd, Hubert Jarrow, and Charlie (Boomerang) Bangs. 7. Bannington. 8. Mr. Beverley Stokes. 9. Irene Manners. 10. P.-c. Sparrow. 11. Mrs. Riley. 12. Clive Russell.

Remove chap, and Nipper is perfectly at liberty to play him."

The River House boys had vivid recollections of Stanley Waldo. He had been used to spoof them up to their eyes, and they still owed one to St. Frank's for that memorable jape.

"What's the matter with Handy, anyway?" asked Glynn. "Is he crocked?"

"He's gone to Edgemore Castle—to investigate the burglary," grinned Nipper. "He'll probably turn up soon after we've started—after they've kicked him out of the Castle—but it'll be too late then."

Bryant, of the Fifth, had promised to referee the match, and he was already on the field, blowing his whistle. The teams trotted on, and the toss was taken. Nipper won, but it made very little difference, for the sun was hidden behind a bank of clouds and there was scarcely any wind.

Stanley Waldo, in goal, was aglow with happiness. He had hoped that he might get a chance in a big game, but he had never dreamed that his chance would come so early.

A minute after the kick-off, Reggie Pitt, on the right wing, received the leather from the St. Frank's centre-half, and in a flash he was away on one of his celebrated runs. He streaked down the touch-line like lightning, and he had no difficulty in baffling the River House back who tried to rob him.

His centre was beautifully timed, and Nipper trapped the ball, steadied himself, and sent in a rasping shot which had the River House goalie beaten all the way.

Slam!

"Goal!"

"Well kicked, Nipper!"

"Oh, good man!"

It was an early goal, and the St. Frank's footballers were in high good humour. The River House fellows were looking grim and determined. This early reverse had the effect of bucking them up. They weren't the kind of footballers to lose heart because they were one goal down. Rather the reverse. They knew that it was up to them to play harder than ever.

And within three minutes Waldo was given his first serious test. Hal Brewster managed to get away, and he made a run for it. He tricked Church, and then McClure came rushing across, only to be beaten just as easily.

"Shoot, Hal!" yelled the River House fellows, who were standing round the ropes.

Hal Brewster shot. It was a glorious kick, low, swift, and tricky.

Stanley Waldo fairly leapt out of the goal-mouth, his movements being bewilderingly quick. He met the ball with the point of his right toe, and it went soaring away into midfield, accompanied by a curious dull sound. And when the leather stopped it remained on the ground. There wasn't an atom of bounce in it. It fell like a wet sack.

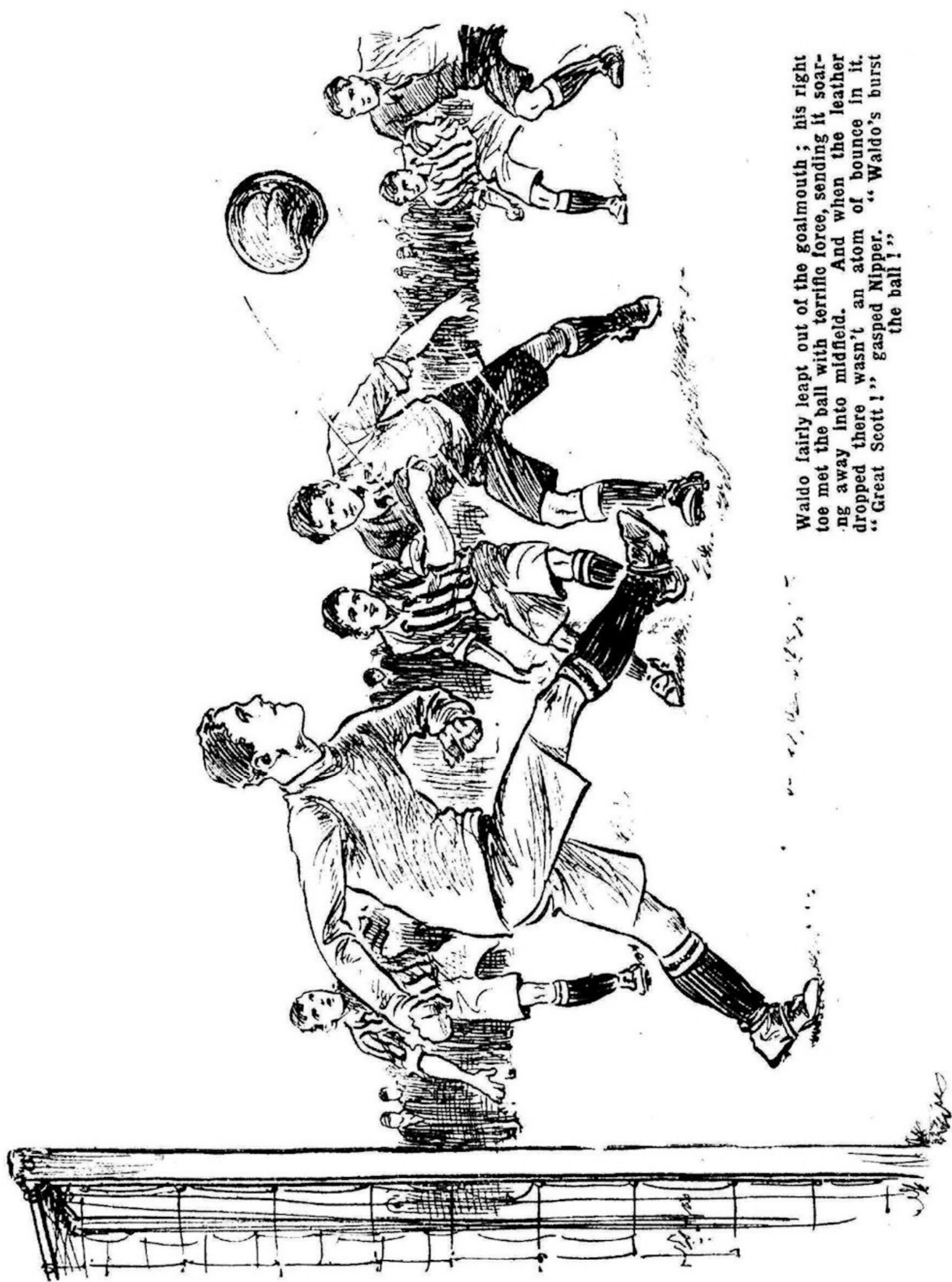
"Great Scott!" said Nipper. "Waldo's burst the ball!"

"I don't wonder at it" said Church. "I've never seen such a kick in all my natural! Even Handy couldn't put that force into it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Waldo!"

Another ball was procured and the game went on. The River House boys were playing splendid football, and Waldo was tested again and again. He proved to be a remarkable goalkeeper. He leapt into the air like



Waldo fairly leapt out of the goalmouth ; his right toe met the ball with terrific force, sending it soaring away into midfield. And when the leather dropped there wasn't an atom of bounce in it. "Great Scott!" gasped Nipper. "Waldo's burst the ball!"

Spring-Heeled Jack, and his movements were so rapid that Brewster & Co. felt that they had a hopeless task in front of them.

Yet Ascott managed to score after twenty-two minutes. Waldo was rather too much of a stunt artist to make a steady footballer. He kept the crowd immensely amused, and he did some remarkable things; but after the River House fellows had grown accustomed to his tricks, they had his measure.

And while the game went on, Inspector Jameson was giving the Head a bit of a shock!

CHAPTER 7.

The Closing of the Net!

DR. MORRISON NICHOLLS was a man who could not be easily put out of countenance.

He was generally calm, level-headed, and shrewd. Yet when Inspector Jameson told him that he had come to St. Frank's with the main idea of arresting one of the schoolboys, the Head was more than startled.

"You must be mistaken, inspector," he said firmly. "The suggestion that one of my boys can be connected with that burglary at Edgemore Castle is quite absurd."

"I wish I could agree with you, sir, but I cannot," said the inspector. "The evidence is very conclusive. It is my duty to question this boy—to get an account of his movements."

"I tell you the thing is quite impossible!" said Dr. Nicholls impatiently. "At the time of this burglary, Inspector Jameson, all the boys were in bed and asleep. You know perfectly well that no St. Frank's boys could be absent in the middle of the night."

"This burglary could have been committed between eleven p.m. and midnight," said the inspector. "The whole household went to bed at ten p.m., and the crime was not discovered until this morning. You have a boy in your school, Dr. Nicholls—a new boy—who could easily have committed that burglary."

"Who is this remarkable boy?"

"His name is Stanley Waldo," said the inspector, watching the Head closely.

"Waldo!" ejaculated Dr. Nicholls.

"Ah! You have overlooked him, no doubt?"

"I am beginning to see what you mean, inspector," said the Head quietly. "I am well aware that Waldo's father had an unfortunate period in his life when he was an enemy of law and order, but Mr. Waldo is now a respectable citizen——"

"That is neither here nor there, sir," broke in the inspector impatiently. "This boy is Waldo's son, and I know for a fact that he has many of Waldo's characteristics. Let me give you a few facts, sir."

"But it is preposterous!" protested Dr. Nicholls. "What possible reason could this boy have—even supposing that he does possess many of his father's characteristics—for burgling Edgemore Castle? He is certainly in no need of money, and for him to jeopardise his whole career in this school——"

"The evidence that I discovered at Edgemore Castle is so strong that I must, in the course of my duty, question this boy," said Inspector Jameson



firmly. "Let me assure you, sir, that this is not merely a suspicion on my part. The evidence which points to this boy as the guilty party is overwhelmingly conclusive."

And then, to Dr. Nicholl's consternation, the inspector proceeded to give the facts. He described how he had found the footprints on the flower-bed, and the initialled silver pencil, and the ashes in the library grate.

"On the top of all this, I learn when I get to St. Frank's that an ancient coin has been

found here," concluded the inspector. "That coin belongs to Lord Edgemoor's collection. It was dropped within these grounds by somebody presumably belonging to the school. I am sure you will realise, Dr. Nicholls, that it is my duty to see this boy and to question him very closely."

"I cannot believe it," said the Head, frowning. "It is too—too outrageous. And yet at the same time, inspector, I realise that you are only doing your duty. Come! We will look into this without any further delay."

There was a marked difference in Dr. Nicholls' tone.

"Before we find this boy, I should like to have a look into his bed-room, if you don't

interviewed, and the famous schoolmaster-detective looked grave when all the facts had been placed before him.

"I have something to tell you, inspector, that will no doubt strengthen your case," he said quietly. "Young Waldo was out last night until after midnight."

"What!" ejaculated the inspector excitedly. "Why, then the case against him is stronger than ever, as you say."

"This is the first I have heard of this, Mr. Lee," said the Head sharply.

"I did not think it necessary to bother you with the matter," replied Lee. "Waldo gave me a satisfactory explanation of his absence, and I thought the matter was ended. And even now I am by no means convinced that this boy is responsible for that burglary."

"But the evidence, sir—"

"You may recall, Inspector Jameson, that a convict escaped from the big prison some days ago," said Lee. "A man named Wilkes."

"He has got clear away," said the inspector gruffly. "All our efforts to trace him were in vain."

"Young Waldo tells me that this man attacked him last night at the old Priory ruins," said Nelson Lee. "He imprisoned him in a dungeon, and left him there. That was why the boy failed to turn up at bedtime. It took him several hours to escape from that dungeon."

The inspector looked surprised for a moment, and then he laughed rather scornfully.

"A palpable attempt to provide himself with an alibi—and a very weak attempt at that!" he said scoffingly. "Surely you do not believe that ridiculous story, Mr. Lee? The boy was burgling Edgemoor Castle last night. He was not imprisoned in any dungeon. A preposterously thin story!"

"I don't agree with you, inspector," said Nelson Lee.

"The boy prepared that yarn in advance, realising that he might be called upon to explain his movements," said the inspector. "It was an attempt to provide himself with an alibi—just to fool the police. No, Mr. Lee; the evidence is altogether too strong."

"Let us go to his bed-room," said Lee shortly.



Waldo fairly leapt out of the goalmouth; his right toe met the ball with terrific force, sending it soaring away into midfield. And when the leather dropped there wasn't an atom of bounce in it. "Great Scott!" gasped Nipper. "Waldo's burst the ball!"

mind," said the inspector. "Do you think that could be done without his knowledge?"

"Quite easily."

The Head was looking worried and troubled as he led Inspector Jameson to the Ancient House. On the way he learned that Waldo was on Little Side, playing in a football match. The Head was relieved to know this. There would be no chance of the boy interrupting them while they were examining the bed-room.

In the Ancient House, Mr. Nelson Lee was

IN the bed-room, the first important find was a box of handkerchiefs on the dressing-table. They were exactly similar to the burned handkerchief that had been found in the library grate at Edgemoor Castle, and they each bore Waldo's initials worked in precisely the same way.

On the top of this came another startling discovery. In a cupboard the inspector pounced upon a pair of rubber-soled shoes. They were muddy, and the soles were ribbed.

"Look at these, sir!" ejaculated the inspector triumphantly. "Can there be any further doubt? I told you about those footprints, did I not? They were made with these shoes! The ribbing, as you see, is most peculiar. Why, the case is absolutely complete! Here, in this boy's bed-room, we find these shoes!"

The Head looked grave.

"It is certainly extraordinarily suspicious," he said, glancing at Nelson Lee.

"Waldo must explain why these shoes are in his possession," said Nelson Lee. "The fact that they coincide with the footprints at Edgemore Castle does not necessarily say that Waldo himself was there."

"How can you say that, Mr. Lee?" asked the inspector, staring.

"I have dealt with many curious cases in my time, Inspector Jameson," replied Lee. "However, I will make no further comment at this stage. Let us go out and question this boy at once."

They made their way to Little Side, and Dr. Nicholls was looking very, very grave. At first he had set Inspector Jameson down as a muddling dunderhead; but now he was changing his opinion. The fact that Stanley Waldo had been out the previous night until after midnight was exceedingly disturbing.

"Is Waldo on the field with these other boys?" asked the Head, as they approached.

"Yes," said Lee, nodding. "He is keeping goal."

"We cannot wait until the game is over," said the inspector brusquely. "In fact, it will be all the better to interrupt the game and to seize the boy now—before he can have a chance of escaping. If he is anything like his father, he will be a slippery customer."

He walked straight on to the field, and the referee, after a moment, blew his whistle. The footballers came to a halt, staring at the two masters and the uniformed inspector as they crossed the turf.

"My only sainted aunt!" ejaculated Reggie Pitt. "What's all this?"

"Keep back, boys," said Nelson Lee, as they crowded round. "The inspector wishes to have a few words with Waldo. We're sorry to interrupt your game like this, but you will soon be able to carry on with it."

"Is it serious, sir?" asked Nipper anxiously.

"Fairly so—but not quite so serious as the inspector believes, I fancy," replied Lee.

Jameson was looking sternly at Stanley Waldo, and he had placed an authoritative hand on the boy's shoulder.

"I want a few words with you, my lad," he said ominously. "You had better come aside. I'd like these other boys to be kept out of the way."

"I'll see to them," said Dr. Nicholls.

Waldo, calm and cool, looked at the inspector in a puzzled sort of way.

"What's it all about?" he asked.

"I think you know what it's all about," replied the inspector. "Where were you last night between the hours of ten p.m. and midnight?"

"Most of the time I was bottled up in a dungeon, under the Priory ruins," replied Waldo promptly.

"That same yarn, eh?" grunted the inspector. "That's what you told Mr. Lee, isn't it?"

"It's the truth, sir."

"Now, let's examine this," said the inspector. "How were you trapped in the Priory ruins, in the first place?"

"Some of the fellows got me to climb the tower—for a bet, I think," replied Waldo. "Only don't say anything about that to the masters, because betting isn't allowed here. Still, it doesn't matter, as I haven't mentioned any names. When I got to the top of the tower I was knocked on the head by Wilkes, the escaped convict—"

"Wait a minute!" said the inspector sharply. "How do you know that this man was Wilkes?"

"I saw him just before he hit me."

"And after that?"

"I don't remember anything until I woke up in the dungeon," replied Waldo. "It took me a long time to loosen one of the stones, but I did it at last, and escaped."

"And you were there until after midnight?"

Waldo hesitated.

"No," he said at length.

"Oh, you weren't there until after midnight?" said the inspector. "What time did you escape from this dungeon?" he added, in a tone which implied that he did not believe a word of the story.

"At about half-past ten, I think."

"Half-past ten!" repeated the inspector. "And you didn't get back to the school until after midnight?"

"That's right," admitted Waldo.

"What were you doing between half-past ten and midnight?" demanded Jameson. "The Priory ruins are only ten minutes' walk from this school, I believe. If you escaped at half-past ten, why didn't you return home at once?"

"Something detained me," said Waldo quietly.

He remembered how he had helped Betty Barlowe, of the Moor View School. She had broken bounds in order to see a "talkie" at the Bannington Palladium. She had fallen from her bicycle and had hurt her ankle—and Waldo had gallantly carried the girl home, and had smuggled her in without any

(Continued on page 26.)

The POPULAR
Every Tuesday 2d



Handforth undertakes to answer, in his own unique fashion, any question "N.L." readers care to submit to him. But, although of a certainty the results will be amusing and entertaining, the Editor takes no responsibility for their veracity. Write to Handforth, c/o the NELSON LEE LIBRARY, to-day.

"READER IN CHINA."—Thankee velly muchee for your post-carddee. I'm muchee pleasee to healee ffrom somebody living suchee longee way ffrom homee. What do you think of that for a good specimen of Chinese, eh? I'm going to write in English now. Yes, I suppose Tom Burton and I are the best swimmers at St. Frank's. I've never troubled to count how many prefects there are in the Sixth. A jolly sight too many—I do know that, however!

CHAS. DEAN (Slough) asks who is the best scrapper in the Remove. Well, I like that! Charles, I feel hurt. You ought to know better.

"IRIS" (Cromer) would like to know how many miles an hour I go in my Austin Seven. 'Ssssh! Let me whisper. I daren't tell you because Inspector Jameson might be reading this issue of the Old Paper.

"MOTORIST" (Tottenham).—Sorry to hear your "Lizzie" is far-from being O.K. Has she been vaccinated, old man?

C. C. (Clapton).—"Will you please tell me how to make cokernut toffee?" Sure, laddie! Go to a sweet-shop and buy, say, a pound of plain toffee. Take this home, melt it in a saucepan, add a quantity of dessicated cokernut (borrowed from your mater), let the mixture harden—and there you are. Don't forget to send me a few pounds when you make some, will you?

J. JOHNSON (East Ham).—"I would like to know how you start playing football?" By kicking the football generally. If I learn of another way I'll write and tell you. Yes, I will say sorry to Gore-Pearce the next time I dot him on the boko—sorry that I can't hit him harder and more frequently.

A. PILCHER (Walthamstow).—"Why doesn't a black hen lay a black egg?" Ask it! I'm not a chicken yet, you goose, although I've sometimes been called a duck!

B. M. (Southampton).—You've certainly come to the right place for advice. What I don't know about spelling, pronunciation, grammar and other matters concerning our lingo would fill a postage-stamp. Ask Mr. Crowell. No, on second thoughts perhaps you'd better not! Now what's this long and difficult word that's troubling you? Unfortunately, McClure—the clumsy fathead!—had upset a bottle of ink over your letter, obliterating the word in question. I can't spell it from memory—ahem!—I mean, I can't remember it, but I do know that it is pronounced as spelt. By the way, the best effect is obtained by pronouncing it softly through the left adenoid and right nostril. If you haven't any adenoids—well, buy some!

J. ROBERTSON (Coventry).—I thought I'd received a letter from Clarence Fellowe when I first read your missile—I mean, missive. He talks and writes in poetry, the silly chump, just like you! What do you want to know Ena's age for? I'm not sure she'd like your face. Anyway, I don't want a giddy poet for my brother-in-law.

L. KESSEL (Pretoria, S.A.).—I'm sure you're a cannibal. What else can you be when you say: "You're always threatening to punch someone's nose. Take my tip and cut it out!" I do nothing of the suchwhich. How can you make such a horrible suggestion? I'm quite content with just punching noses, thank you!

L. J. (Enfield).—"I want to be a detective. What kind of dog do you suggest I should have to assist me in tracking down the criminals?" Be original, old man, and have a Pekinese.

FRANK HILL (Tottenham) asks how to play a saxophone. With your mouth and fingers, of course. You didn't think you might have to work the keys with your feet, did you?

EDWARD OSWALD.

THE ARRESTED SCHOOLBOY!*(Continued from page 24.)*

of the Moor View School authorities knowing. He realised that if he said anything about that episode there would be an inquiry at Betty's school, and she would get into hot water. It might even mean her expulsion.

"Come!" said the inspector sharply. "What were you doing between ten-thirty and midnight?"

"I'm sorry, sir, but I can't say," replied Waldo steadily.

"You cannot say, eh? You weren't at Edgemore Castle, by any chance?"

"I wasn't, sir."

"Young man, you had better come out with the full truth!" said the inspector grimly.

"You think that I burgled the castle, don't you?" asked Waldo, in a bitter voice. "Just because my father was a crook at one time, you fasten on me—"

"Just a minute," broke in the inspector. "Look at this pencil. Have you seen it before?"

He thrust the silver pencil under Waldo's gaze.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know who it belongs to?"

"It's mine," said Waldo.

"Yours, eh?" broke in the inspector. "This pencil was found under the library

window at Edgemore Castle. There are some rubber-soled shoes in your bed-room cupboard—and the impression of those shoes are on the flower bed under the library window, too. How do you account for that, young man?"

"Somebody got into my bed-room a few days ago and pinched those shoes, my pencil, an exercise book, and one or two other odds and ends," replied Waldo promptly.

"Upon my word!" said the inspector. "You are certainly quick, my boy!"

"Why was this matter not reported to me?" put in Nelson Lee, looking at Waldo.

"I didn't think it was worth while, sir," replied the new boy.

"In other words, there was no theft from your bed-room at all, eh?" snapped the inspector.

"There was, sir—and several of the fellows can verify my statement," replied Waldo steadily.

"I'm afraid I shall not be able to accept their word," said Jameson. "What's that graze on your forearm?" he added dramatically, pointing.

"I found it there after Wilkes had put me into that dungeon last night," replied Waldo. "He must have gashed my arm as he was dragging me down from the top of the tower."

"Another thing," went on the inspector. "If those shoes of yours were taken some

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nights back, how is it that I found them in your bed-room cupboard?"

"Cuttle, the school porter, brought them to me this morning—or, at least, he brought them indoors," said Waldo. "He said he found them in the wood-shed, and I knew they were mine at once. I put them in the cupboard, and thought no more about them."

"It seems to me, inspector, that there is urgent need for you to investigate this case more thoroughly," said Nelson Lee. "I am inclined to believe this boy. There is every indication that he has been made the victim of a frame-up."

"You think so, sir?" said the inspector pompously. "Well, I don't! I'm satisfied that I've traced the thief. He had better make a full confession, and tell me where the loot is hidden."

Stanley Waldo smiled, and shook his head.

"I can't tell you that, inspector—I haven't seen the stuff," he replied coolly. "I'm absolutely innocent of this charge—"

"You'd better say no more!" broke in the inspector. "I must warn you that if you do say anything, it may be used in evidence against you. It is my duty to place you under arrest!"

CHAPTER 8.

Arrested!

"**W**ALDO'S arrested!"
"Oh, my hat!"
"Good gad!"

There was an absolute sensation. The Junior footballers and numbers of other schoolboys were crowding round, asking questions, shouting, and they were all flushed with excitement. Stanley Waldo was being walked off by Inspector Jameson; and although Waldo looked serene enough, nothing could alter the fact that he was in the grip of the law.

Dr. Nicholls was haggard with worry and concern, and he and Nelson Lee were conferring together—Lee grim, and the Head agitated.

"This is an appalling affair, Mr. Lee," the Head was saying. "I was inclined to set Jameson down as an inefficient booby, but his case is so complete against this boy that I am startled. This will mean a big disgrace for the school, I am afraid. We should never have permitted Waldo's son to enter."

"Jameson is quite a good man in the ordinary way," said Nelson Lee. "His chief fault is that he quickly sees the obvious, and ignores the obscure. This case against Waldo looks conclusive, but I am quite convinced, personally, that he is innocent."

"What makes you think that, Mr. Lee?" asked the Head. "The boy himself admitted that he was out until past midnight; and he refused to say where he was between ten-thirty and twelve. The burglary took place at that time, and there is the evidence

of the shoes and the silver pencil and the handkerchief—"

"That evidence may satisfy Inspector Jameson, but it does not satisfy me," replied Lee, breaking in. "Don't worry about this, Dr. Nicholls. That boy will soon be cleared of this charge, or I am very much mistaken."

INSPECTOR JAMESON looked at his young prisoner with a suspicious eye. "You'd better not try any tricks with me, young man!" he said sternly. "Tricks, inspector?" asked Waldo, in an innocent voice.



"Yes, tricks!" repeated the police officer. "I know that you are as slippery as your father, and that you've got the reputation of being a young Hercules. But you're my prisoner, and you'd better not make any attempts to escape. Get into this car."

"Thanks awfully, inspector," said Waldo. "Are we going for a ride?"

Jameson made no reply. He saw Waldo into his car, and then he entered himself and sat at the driving wheel. Although his prisoner was only a schoolboy, he was feeling decidedly ill at ease. He would not be content until Waldo was in one of the cells at Bannington Police Station.

Apart from this worry, the inspector was highly gratified. He had conducted this investigation in a masterly way, and he had already nabbed the thief. The next move would be to get the boy to confess, and to reveal the hiding-place of the booty.

Waldo seemed in no way scared by this dramatic development. He had realised, of course, that this was Sam Wilkes' revenge. The escaped convict had told him that he would "get him"—and this was Wilkes' way.

P.-c. Sparrow, the village constable, hove into sight near the bridge just before Bellton was reached. The inspector stopped his car, and ordered Sparrow to get in. The village constable looked rather flustered.

"Don't ask questions, Sparrow—do as you are told," said the inspector curtly. "Keep your eye on this boy—in fact, keep close

hand on him. Whatever you do, see that he does not escape."

"It wasn't 'im, was it, sir?" asked the constable, staring. "Not 'im who burgled the Castle?"

The inspector did not reply. Sparrow climbed in, and clutched at Waldo's arm. The schoolboy grinned.

"Hadn't you better handcuff me, while you're about it?" he asked coolly. "It's always safer to handcuff desperate characters."

The car drove on, and glided past the White Harp Inn. And although Waldo had seemed quite at ease just before then, he was perfectly serene afterwards.

For he had spotted something as that disreputable inn had been passed. He had seen a dim, shadowy face behind the curtain of an upper window. The owner of that face probably believed that he was safe from being spotted by anybody in the road; but Waldo's remarkably keen eyesight had not failed to recognise—Sam Wilkes!

"**T**HEY'VE got him, Jim!" gloated Mr. Wilkes.

In that upper room of the White Harp, two men were standing near the window. Sam Wilkes was flushed with evil triumph. His associate, Jim Newton, was not looking quite so satisfied.

"We ought to 'ave bin away before this, Sam," he said. "It's madness, stayin' here to-day."

"It would have bin madness to go," retorted Wilkes bluntly. "We don't want suspicion directed ag'inst us, do we? They've got the boy now—an' the case ag'inst 'im is so strong that they won't look for anybody else. So we can slip quietly away, an' there'll be nobody to stop us."

"P'r'aps you're right," admitted Newton. "You're a clever chap, Sam."

"I've got that infernal kid!" muttered Sam viciously. "This will mean his ruin. It'll mean disgrace for his father. They say that revenge is sweet, Jim, and by thunder, so it is!"

Mr. Newton chuckled.

"You can 'ave your revenge, and enjoy it as much as you like," he said, "but I'm thinkin' about that stuff you lifted from the Castle. Do you reckon we shall be able to get rid o' those emeralds?"

"Leave it to me," replied Mr. Wilkes. "I know the very man who'll take them. But the less you speak about that subject, Jim, the better. Porlock is easy-going—he doesn't ask too many questions—but I wouldn't trust 'im an inch. The sooner we're out o' this place, the better."

THE news of Stanley Waldo's arrest spread like lightning. And it was only natural, perhaps, that the girls of the Moor View School should get to hear of it within a very few minutes. As it happened, Irene Manners and some of her friends were passing St. Frank's very

soon after Inspector Jameson's car had gone. It was a half-holiday for the girls, as well as for the boys. They looked into the Triangle as they paused in the big gateway. And they found the Triangle swarming with excited juniors, who were standing about in groups and talking animatedly.

"Something seems to be on," remarked Doris Berkeley.

The other girls were Marjorie Temple, Irene Manners, Mary Summers, Winnie Pitt, Phyllis Palmer, and Betty Barlowe. These two latter girls had chummed up, and were inseparable companions.

"Hallo!" came a sudden shout. "Look who's here, you chaps!"

There was a rush for the gates, and a number of the junior boys came swarming round the schoolgirls. Edward Oswald was prominent. He had just got back from the Castle, having heard that Inspector Jameson had picked up a hot trail which had taken him to St. Frank's. Handforth had since learned of Waldo's dramatic arrest, and the leader of Study D was bubbling with indignation and excitement.

"Have you heard, girls?" he asked breathlessly.

"Heard what?" said Irene. "What's happened?"

"They've arrested that new chap, Waldo!"

"Arrested him?" said Doris. "But whatever for?"

"Inspector Jameson reckons that he burgled Edgemore Castle last night," said Handforth. "I've never heard such rot!"

"I'm not sure about it being rot," said Bray, of the Fourth. "Waldo was out last night, and we all know that he's the son of an ex-crook. I'll bet he did it!"

Betty Barlowe was looking startled. Indeed, she had gone quite pale. Nipper noticed her agitation, and looked at her curiously.

"Aren't you feeling well?" he asked, noticing that one of her ankles was much bandaged, and that she was not only leaning on Phyllis' arm, but using a stick as well.

"It's absurd!" said Betty huskily. "Waldo couldn't have burgled the Castle!"

"That's right!" said Mary excitedly.

"What time does Inspector Jameson say that the Castle was burgled?" asked Betty, before any of the surprised boys could say anything.

"Between eleven and twelve, he reckons," replied Nipper.

Betty caught in her breath. She remembered how Waldo had assisted her home, after her cycling accident. She had fainted, and Waldo had helped her; and they had not got to the Moor View School until nearly midnight.

Waldo had made her promise that she would say nothing about that little episode; but it had been necessary, of course, to tell Irene and the other girls. And if the girls



"Hang you!" snarled Wilkes, and he picked up a chair with the intention of hurling it at Waldo. But before he could even raise it from the floor Nipper and Handforth came charging in, and the man was overwhelmed.

could be told, so could these boys. She felt that she would not be breaking her word.

"Waldo couldn't have burgled the Castle last night between eleven and twelve," she said quietly. "He was with me at that time."

"With you!" went up a general shout.

"Yes."

The fellows looked at Betty in amazement.

"But how could he have been with you?" asked Handforth. "I mean—— You weren't breaking bounds, too, were you?"

"Yes, I was," said Betty. "These other girls can tell you. We weren't going to say anything; but if Waldo has been arrested, we've got to do something."

She explained how she had gone to the pictures, how her machine had run away with her after the brake had failed, and how Waldo had saved her. The boys listened with growing excitement.

"This is jolly important!" said Handforth, at length. "We'd better rush to Bannington and tell Inspector Jameson——"

"Wait a minute!" said Nipper. "When was it, Miss Betty, that Waldo first saw you?"

"I suppose it must have been nearly a quarter to eleven," replied Betty. "I didn't leave Bannington until much before half-past ten."

"Then I'm afraid that your evidence will do more harm than good," said Nipper.

"Oh, but why?"

"Because this accident of yours happened comparatively near to the Castle," replied Nipper. "And the inspector will assume that Waldo had just finished his burglary when he

happened to meet you. He was on his way back from the Castle, you see? There's really nothing to prove that he wasn't."

But Betty shook her head.

"Nobody would burgle a house as early as that," she insisted. "Besides, Waldo had only just escaped from an old dungeon at the Priory. He couldn't have committed that burglary! I'm going to see Inspector Jameson!"

She turned quickly to Harry Gresham, who was standing close by with his bicycle.

"Will you lend me your bike?" she asked eagerly.

"Betty!" protested Irene. "Your ankle is bad, and besides, you can't ride a boy's bike!"

"This is no time for hesitating!" replied Betty. "If this boy will lend me his machine——"

"It's yours!" interrupted Gresham promptly.

Betty wasted no time. She jumped into the saddle, and pedalled off before anybody could stop her. She hardly noticed her sprained ankle. And as she was wearing a short-skirted gym. dress, it was easy for her to ride a boy's bicycle.

She got to Bannington in record time, and she almost fell off the machine outside the police station. She hobbled up the steps, and ran into Inspector Jameson just in the entrance.

"Steady, young lady—steady!" said the inspector. "Upon my word! You must have been riding hard! What on earth——"

"You've made a mistake, inspector!" panted Betty. "You've arrested Waldo, haven't you?"

"He's in one of the cells," said the inspector grimly. "And you mustn't come here telling me that I've made a mistake, missie. You're too excited—"

"Oh, but you have!" insisted the girl. "Will you let me see Waldo, please?"

"Certainly not!"

"Oh, but, please," urged Betty, "I can tell you something about him—something very important! But he made me promise to keep it to myself, and I've got to get him to release me from that promise! I must see him, inspector! I tell you it's terribly important!"

The inspector frowned; he stood there, biting his lip. He was rather impressed by the schoolgirl's earnestness.

"Very well," he said, at length.

He led the way down a stone-floored passage, where the walls were drabably distempered. Halting outside the door of a cell, the inspector turned a key in the lock and flung open the door.

"Wait a minute!" he said as Betty tried to enter. "I'll speak to the boy first—Why, good heavens! What in the name of —"

The inspector broke off, aghast. The cell was empty!

CHAPTER 9.

Waldo Springs a Surprise!

INSPECTOR JAMESON was staggered. "He's gone!" he shouted hoarsely. "The boy's gone!"

"Oh, I'm glad!" breathed Betty.

"Confound it!" roared the inspector. "Hi! Beckett! Come here, Beckett! Where's Sergeant Cooper? That infernal boy has escaped!"

He dashed into the cell and gazed blankly at the little window. The iron bars were not only bent, but broken. The young prisoner had evidently forced them apart, and had squeezed his way to freedom.

"What's wrong, sir?" gasped a flustered-looking sergeant as he appeared.

"What's wrong?" bellowed the inspector. "That boy has escaped! That's what's wrong!"

"Escaped!" repeated the sergeant, as though dazed. "But it isn't possible, sir!"

"Don't stand there gaping!" fumed the inspector. "What do you mean, it isn't possible? Look at this window! I tell you, he's gone! He's as slippery as his confounded father! And as strong, too, by the look of it! I knew we should have trouble with that boy. And this proves, beyond question, that he's guilty!"

"Oh, but it doesn't prove it!" cried Betty indignantly. "How can you say such a thing, inspector? He may have escaped because he knows he is innocent—"

"Young lady, I haven't time to bother with you now!" said the inspector, forcing himself to become somewhat dignified. "I shall be glad if you will leave these premises."

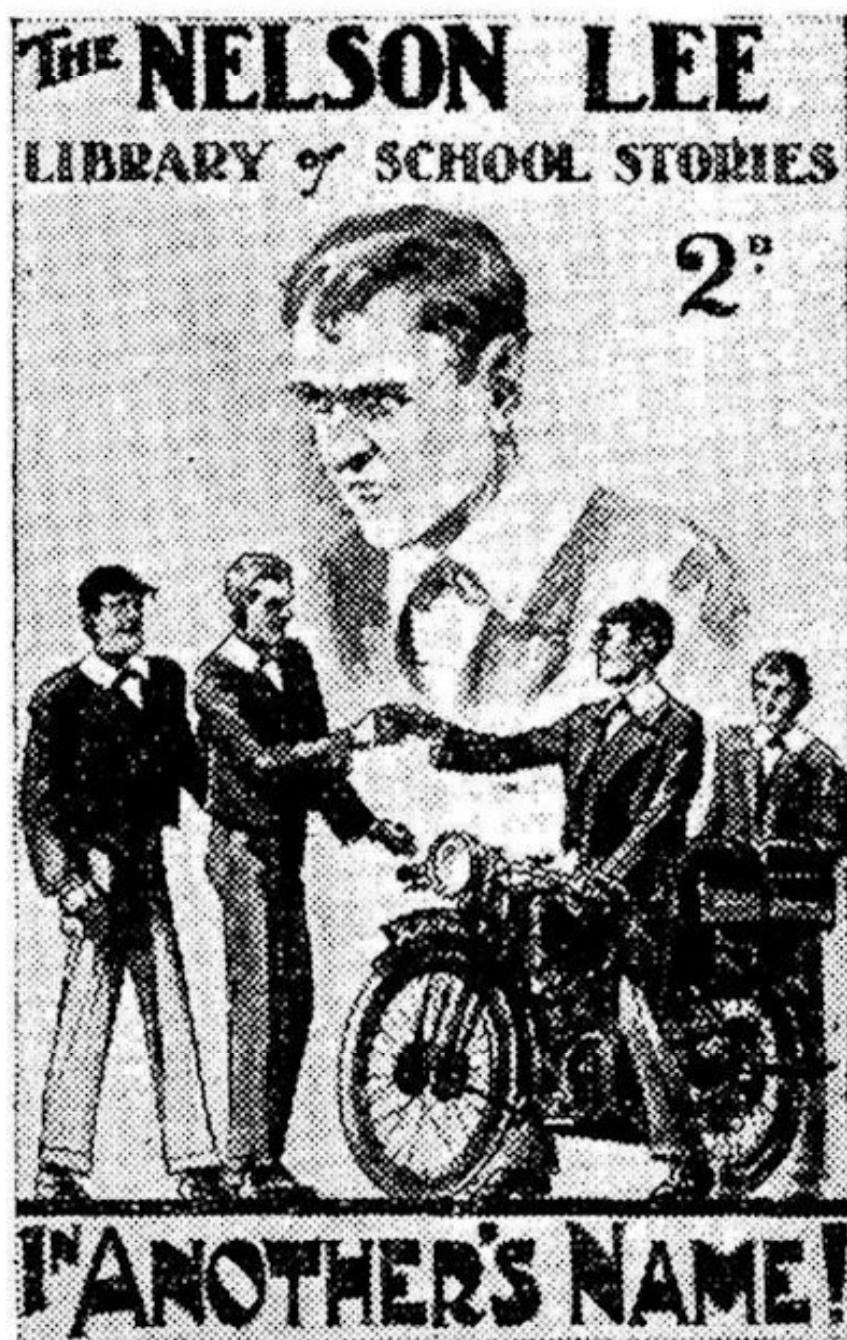
And Betty went, her heart beating rapidly, her eyes glowing. She hoped with all her heart that Stanley Waldo would get clear away.

"I'm glad that girl's gone—and I'm glad she came, too," said the inspector breathlessly. "The boy's escape might not have been discovered for another hour otherwise. Now we can hunt for him without delay. He can't have gone far."

"Better 'phone the station, sir, hadn't I?" asked the sergeant.

"Yes. He'll probably try to get a train for London," replied the inspector, nodding. "We shall have to have the roads watched,

COMING NEXT WEEK!



too—particularly the main London road. It's ten to one he'll have the loot on him."

It was soon found that Waldo had slipped out of the cell into an enclosed yard at the rear of the police station. He must have climbed a high wall here, and got over into the back premises of a furniture dealer. Nobody had seen him leaving, however, and there was no trace of him!

MEANWHILE, Betty Barlowe had the surprise of her life when, cycling home, she overtook Waldo on the road.

She could hardly believe her eyes at first. There he was, striding along quite openly and serenely. She gave such an ejaculation of surprise that Waldo turned, and he was just in time to see her jumping from the machine.

"Why, hallo, Miss Betty!" he exclaimed gladly. "Jolly glad to see you again! The ankle's a good bit better, eh? What's the idea of riding a boy's bike, though?"

"Oh, don't bother about that!" exclaimed the girl. "What are you doing here, Waldo? Here—on the open road! You might be seen, and the police will——"

"I'm not worrying about the police," laughed Waldo. "As a matter of fact, I've just escaped from Bannington Police Station."

"I know!" said the girl, open-eyed.

"Oh, you know?" grinned Waldo. "Well, there was really nothing in it. Those bars

from that promise," said Waldo smoothly. "In any case, there's no need. Within an hour the thief will be collared. Leave it to me."

"It's dreadful!" said Betty indignantly. "I mean, the way Inspector Jameson blundered and arrested you! He ought to be dismissed from the Force!"

Waldo laughed.

"Don't be too hard on the inspector," he chuckled. "He was only doing his duty, and, after all, the evidence was strong against me. It was a frame-up, of course, but the inspector didn't twig that."

"I can't understand how you can be so cool," said Betty, looking at him with wide-open eyes. "And I can't understand what you're going to do, either."

"You'll soon know," laughed the new boy. "Please, Miss Betty, go quietly back to your school and leave this thing to me. Here's a promise! If I haven't nabbed the real thief within an hour, I'll let you tell my headmaster anything you like."

And Betty, bewildered and mystified, had to be content with that.

"IN ANOTHER'S NAME!"

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Bernard Forrest back at St. Frank's!

Although the one-time leader of the "smart set" at St. Frank's was expelled some time ago, he reappears there in next week's story, masquerading under another name. But his scheme to get back to St. Frank's is soon exposed. This masquerade, however, is only the beginning of a cunning plot—a plot which once more gets him admitted to the school. This fine yarn of thrilling schoolboy adventure will hold you spellbound! Don't miss it, whatever you do.

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~~~~~ ORDER IN ADVANCE! ~~~~~

were more rust than metal. You would have laughed if you could have seen me. I walked straight out, and even went past the police station, but nobody spotted me."

"Why did you escape?" asked Betty anxiously. "They'll only get you again!"

"But by the time they get me I shall have got the real thief," said Waldo coolly. "And then their case against me will collapse. Savvy?"

"The real thief?" breathed Betty. "Do you know who he is, then?"

"I've got him nicely taped," replied the remarkable schoolboy.

"I want you to release me from that promise I made you," urged Betty. "I want to tell your headmaster that you couldn't have burgled the Castle between eleven and twelve last night. You were with me——"

"Sorry, old girl, but I can't release you

THE Junior Common-room, in the Ancient House, was filled with excited juniors when Stanley Waldo walked in.

It was nearly tea-time, but nobody was thinking of tea. Handforth was holding forth in a loud voice, demanding that the Remove should rise up and do something drastic. Quite a number of other fellows were convinced that Waldo was the thief, and that St. Frank's was well rid of him.

And in the middle of all this, in walked Waldo himself!

"Sorry to disturb the conference, you fellows, but I rather need your help," said Waldo.

Everybody heard his voice, and there was a sort of stunned silence for a few seconds. The boys turned round and stared at the new arrival. There was a breathless pause. Then pandemonium broke out.

"It's Waldo!"

"Great Scott! He's come back!"

"Good old Waldo!"

"Thief!"

"We don't want burglars at St. Frank's!"

Somebody started hissing, and a few of the other fellows took it up. At the same time, there was some cheering, too.

"Can't you fatheads keep quiet?" roared Nipper, glaring round. "Waldo's very presence here proves that he must be innocent. The police wouldn't have let him go so quickly otherwise!"

"By George! That's true!" yelled Handforth. "Good for you, Waldo! How did you manage it?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I escaped," said Waldo.

There was another sensation.

"You—what?" gasped Nipper.

"I was very naughty, and I broke some of the iron bars of my cell," explained

Waldo. "I didn't like the place very much."

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie Glen-thorne. "I mean, you didn't like it, what? I shouldn't say you did, old tulip!"

"No; the cell wasn't comfortably furnished at all," said Waldo. "There was only a bare sort of bench, and it was stuffy, too. I couldn't stick that, so I walked out."

"My only sainted aunt!"

"He's trying to pull our legs, the silly ass!"

"Look here, Waldo!" said Nipper, grabbing his arm. "We know that your pater was famous for his stunts—before he became a Peril Expert—but we didn't think that you would adopt the same tactics."

"My father still does plenty of stunts, you know," said Waldo calmly.

"Never mind that!" said Nipper. "Did you really break out of the Bannington Police Station?"

"Yes, of course!"

"Then you must have been mad to come back here!" said Handforth excitedly.

"Clean off his rocker!" declared Gresham. "He can't rely upon all the chaps to keep the secret, and it'll be spread over the place in no time."

"You'd better bolt, my son!" said Handforth. "If you don't, the police will have you——"

"I don't mean to bolt," interrupted Waldo. "I didn't burgle Edgemore Castle last night—but I happen to know who did!"

He remembered that evil, gloating face he had seen behind the curtain at that upper window of the White Harp. And he had known, in that second, that Sam Wilkes was the schemer. Wilkes was at the White Harp still—waiting there, probably until evening. The rascal had given himself away—without in the least being aware of the fact.

"By George!" said Handforth, staring at Waldo. "You say that you know who burgled the Castle?"

"Yes."

"Who was it?"

"That escaped convict—Wilkes," replied Waldo. "He was convicted upon evidence that my father provided, and the brute has done this for revenge—and, at the same time, he's made a good haul for himself. Quite a clever little scheme—to get me arrested for the burglary, and so leave himself safe from the police hunt. I dare say he thought it would work like a dream. Sort of combining business with pleasure."

"You're a cool customer, Waldo," said Nipper admiringly.

"Well, I think I did the right thing in coming back here," said Waldo. "You are the fellows who can help me. If we can hand over the real thief to the police, the police won't want me. That's clear enough, isn't it?"

"Yes, rather!" said Handforth. "But where is this chap, Wilkes? He may be hundreds of miles away by now——"

"But he's not," interrupted Waldo. "He's at the White Harp!"

"Great Scott!"

"How do you know?"

"I spotted him at one of the upper windows as the inspector was giving me that nice little ride in his motor-car," explained Waldo. "There's not one chance in a thousand that Wilkes has gone yet. It's almost certain that he'll wait until darkness, because he'll be afraid to show himself in the daylight in spite of the beard that he has grown."

"But what can we do?" asked Nipper. "Wouldn't it have been better, Waldo, if you had told Inspector Jameson about the man? Then the police could have gone to the White Harp and arrested him."

"I thought of that," said Waldo, "but after thinking it over for about ten and a half seconds, I turned it down. Somehow, I don't trust the police—not these police, anyhow. While they were questioning old Porlock, Wilkes would get the tip and make a bolt for it. I don't want to be arrested again, so the only way is to make certain of the job. And the Remove can do it thoroughly—if it likes."

"The Remove?" went up a general shout.

"Yes," said Waldo. "There are two men at the White Harp, and I dare say they were both mixed up in that burglary. One of them is a fellow named Newton."

"By gad!" muttered Claude Gore-Pearce.

"A pal of yours, isn't he?" went on Waldo smoothly. "Awfully sorry, Gore-Pearce, but——"

"You silly fool!" snapped Gore-Pearce. "You can't kid me with all this rot! It was you who burgled the Castle——"

He was shouted down, and Nipper looked hard at Waldo.

"What exactly do you want us to do?" he asked pointedly.

"I want you to help me to raid the White Harp," replied Waldo.

CHAPTER 10.

All Serene!

"MY only sainted aunt!"

"Great Scott!"

"Draw it mild, Waldo!"

If the Common-room had been excited before, it was now seething. Waldo's suggestion that the White Harp should be raided—by the Remove—was received with incredulity and amazement.

"It ought to be easy," said Waldo. "There are plenty of us, and we can get the whole thing over in about five minutes. And by then we shall have Wilkes and Newton—and the loot, too, probably."

"It's a great idea!" said Handforth enthusiastically. "As a matter of fact, I was

going to suggest something of the same sort myself——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“The idea came to me suddenly!” roared Handforth, glaring round. “But, as it always happens, Waldo put the idea into words before I did.”

“You’ll do, Handy!” chuckled Nipper. “But I’m not so sure about this raid,” he added, becoming dubious. “We haven’t the slightest authority for such a thing, Waldo.”

Young Waldo grinned.

“Does the Remove always need authority for what it does?” he asked dryly.

“Well, no,” admitted Nipper.

“We are only irresponsible schoolboys, after all,” said Waldo, his eyes twinkling. “We’re not supposed to think before we act, are we? And what I want to make plain is that the end will justify the means—and so we shall not even be hauled over the coals for the raid. It will be entirely out of order, naturally, but is a trifle like that going to stop us?”

“What if those men aren’t there?” asked Fullwood. “We should be in an awful mess then, shouldn’t we? The White Harp is strictly out of bounds, and the Head would get to know all about the affair——”

“But I don’t think he would blame us much—when we gave him all the details,” said Nipper. “I’m in favour of helping Waldo. If we succeed in this thing, we shall clear him from all suspicion and he’ll prove his innocence.”

“Well said, dear fellow,” nodded Vivian Travers. “I’m all for it. And the sooner we get down to the raid, the better. While we’re wasting time here, gassing, the police might be on their way. And I’m sure we don’t want the police bothering about while we’re on this raid.”

“I suppose it wouldn’t be any good asking old Porlock to hand the two men over?” suggested Tommy Watson.

“Great Scott, no!” said Handforth. “It’s ten to one that Porlock is hand-in-glove with them. He’d only give them the tip to bunk.”

“I don’t think Porlock is as bad as all that,” said Nipper. “He probably doesn’t know who Wilkes really is—and he thinks it better not to make any close inquiries. No; the only thing is to make a surprise raid, and to take those two men by storm!”

“Absolutely!” declared Archie. “What about it, laddies? Supposing we stagger forth and get busy on this bright scheme?”

STANLEY WALDO was gratified by the eager willingness of the bulk of the Removites to help him. His frankness, and his fearless return to St. Frank’s, had convinced them that he was as true as a die. And they were keen, too, to show proof of their faith by giving him some concrete help.

And what could be better than to capture the real thief? In this way, Waldo’s innocence would be established for all to know.

It was rather a good thing that it was the tea-hour, for hardly anybody was in the Triangle when the Removites began streaming out. They made some pretence of appearing careless and unhurried, but it was more or less a farce. They came along in little groups, some going out through the main gateway, others taking to the playing-fields, so that they could reach the lane by way of the meadows. The idea was to collect farther down the lane, and then make a sudden rush when they got near the White Harp, surround the place, and swarm in.

Fortunately, there were no prefects about, and the juniors were not stopped or questioned. And although Waldo walked boldly through the Triangle, nobody seemed to notice him; not even a prefect or a master. His audacious return, because of its audacity, was successful.

However, Gore-Pearce saw no reason why he should take part in this raid, and he saw no reason, either, why he should keep mum. He consequently lost no time in chatting with a group of Fourth-Formers; and the Fourth-Formers were pounced upon by Mr. Horace Pycraft, their own Form-master. And after that, naturally, it only took Mr. Pycraft about thirty seconds to dash to the nearest telephone and to get into communication with Inspector Jameson, in Bannington. Things were certainly moving rapidly!

“**C**OME on!” roared Handforth enthusiastically.

He was determined to be in the thick of the main excitement. Half the juniors were detailed to remain outside the disreputable inn—to form a complete cordon round the premises, in case Sam Wilkes made a dash for liberty. But Handforth was not content with this; he wanted to be one of the actual raiders.

The White Harp had been reached, and there was now a quick rush. Juniors went running round to take up their positions. Others piled in through the main doorway. Still more crowded into the tap-room and the bar-parlour. The whole thing was done with precision and speed.

Waldo and Nipper and Handforth were among the first to get in, and they found themselves confronted by the bulky figure of Mr. Jonas Porlock, the landlord. He was amazed and startled and furious.

“Here, steady, young gents!” he protested. “What’s all this? What do you think you’re doing?”

“Sorry to force our way in like this, Mr. Porlock, but you have two men here—and we want them,” said Nipper. “A fellow named Newton——”

“It’s like your blamed nerve!” shouted Porlock savagely. “Mr. Newton is a guest of mine, and so is his friend. They can’t be disturbed now.”

“They’re here, then?” asked Nipper quickly.

“I’m not going to have you kids playing any games!” roared the landlord. “Those

two gents are upstairs in their private room—"

"That's good enough!" shouted Waldo. "Upstairs, you fellows! We'll soon have 'em!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hi!" gasped Porlock. "Come down them stairs! Of all the——"

Nobody waited to listen to him. Waldo was the first up the stairs, and he did not fail to notice the opening of a door on the first landing. It closed again at once, and there came the sounds of startled voices from the other side.

Waldo took the door on the run—with his shoulder. It was locked, but such was the force of the schoolboy's charge that the flimsy catch was shattered to atoms. The door flew open, and Waldo went shooting in.

Two men were just on the point of climbing through one of the windows.

"No good getting out that way, Mr. Wilkes," said Waldo coolly. "There are plenty of our chaps outside, and they'll only pounce on you!"

The trapped men turned from the window, their faces expressive of fury and alarm. Sam Wilkes, significantly enough, was grasping a disreputable-looking suitcase.

"Hang you!" snarled Wilkes, glaring at Waldo. "I thought the police had got you? I've settled your hash——"

"Think so?" laughed Waldo. "We all make these little mistakes, Mr. Wilkes."

The man picked up a chair, evidently intending to hurl it at the schoolboy's head. But before he could even raise it from the floor, Handforth and Nipper and Travers and the others came charging in.

Wilkes and Newton were simply overwhelmed. They stood no chance whatever. The Removites swarmed over them, bowled them over, sat on them, and held them down.

"Good work!" said Waldo briskly. "Now we'll have a look in this suitcase."

He tore it open, swiftly went through the odds and ends of clothing, and pounced upon a battered old cigarette tin—one that had originally contained a hundred cigarettes.

"Here we are!" said Waldo contentedly.

The cigarette tin contained a thick bundle of currency notes—and a gleaming, glittering string of emeralds. There wasn't any need to look for the old coins—they were probably packed away somewhere else in the suitcase.

"By Jove! This raid idea was a good one of yours, Waldo!" said Nipper approvingly. "There's the loot, and we've got the crooks. I don't think we shall be dropped on for making this raid!"

"What are we going to do with these rotters?" asked Handforth, who was sitting on Mr. Wilkes' chest.

"Better drag them outside," said Waldo. "I think I can hear a motor-car—and voices. It wouldn't surprise me in the least to find that the police have arrived. For once, they're going to be useful."

It was true. A big car had just pulled up in the road. Two cars, in fact, and police

were swarming out of them. Inspector Jameson, hot and flustered, was accompanied by Mr. Nelson Lee—who, as it happened, had been in the Bannington police-station at the time of the telephone call from Mr. Pycraft. Nelson Lee had gone expressly to Bannington to have a friendly chat with the inspector.

"Evening, inspector," said Waldo, as he came out of the inn. "Sorry I had to leave so hurriedly——"

"You young scamp!" panted the inspector. "Sergeant, seize that boy! Of all the unmitigated young——"

"Don't say it, inspector," interrupted Waldo. "I had to leave Bannington hurriedly because I wanted to pay a visit to this inn. These Remove chaps have helped wonderfully, and here is the burglar who broke into Edgemore Castle last night."

"Wha-a-at!" gabbled the inspector.

He stared blankly at Wilkes and Newton as they were forced out, struggling in the grasp of many boys.

"Wilkes!" ejaculated the inspector sharply. "This is the man who escaped from the convict prison some days ago!"

"He's the man who burgled the castle, too," said Waldo. "We found them in this inn, inspector—and we found a packed suitcase, too. Perhaps you'd like to examine the contents of this suitcase?"

"You don't mean to say——" began the inspector.

"Exactly," murmured Waldo. "I think you'll find Lord Edgemore's missing property quite intact."

INSPECTOR JAMESON was a very crestfallen man after he had made the necessary examination. It was no longer possible for him to detain Stanley Waldo. It was as obvious as daylight that Sam Wilkes was the real burglar, and that Wilkes, all along, had been planning a "frame-up."

Waldo himself was perhaps the coolest fellow of all. He had never really worried over the sensational events, and after he had seen Sam Wilkes at that upper window of the inn he had been quite serene. He had known that he would be able to clear himself without any trouble.

And now Waldo was chatting contentedly with Betty Barlowe. She and many of the other girls had heard of the raid on the White Harp, and they had come along.

"And I didn't release you from that promise, Miss Betty," said Waldo calmly. "Your name won't be mentioned at all—you can trust the fellows to keep mum. The powers that be will never know."

"You're a wonder," said Betty softly.

There were many others who thought the same thing. And at St. Frank's that evening there was much jubilation—and a big celebration feed!

THE END.

(Don't fail to read next week the first stirring story in a splendid new series, featuring Bernard Forrest. Order your copy NOW!)

Gossip ABOUT St. FRANK'S



Things Heard and Seen By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

L EONARD HALL, of Westcliff-on-Sea, whose yard-wide grin adorns our columns this week, accuses me of being unfair. Here's his complaint: "I think it rather unfair of you, for you've had my photograph for six weeks, and have not published it yet." By the time this is printed, the six weeks will have stretched to nearly six months, and I dare say Leonard has been thinking that I'm not only unfair, but positively cruel. I'm afraid he's one of those chaps who are in a bit of a hurry. Some readers write to me and expect to see a reply printed in the Old Paper in the next week's issue. This is not only unlikely, but impossible—for the simple reason that the "N.L.L." goes to press several weeks in advance. And it's a longer business when it comes to publishing photographs. I've got heaps of them on hand for immediate use, and they must appear in their turn. You'll probably be saying that you've caught me, when you remember a paragraph in last week's chat. But you haven't. Although there are a good number of photos in hand, these are wanted almost at once. They're going through the mill now. But we've got to look ahead, and all readers who *do* send me their photos mustn't expect to see them in print for quite a long time.

OUR READERS' PORTRAIT GALLERY



Leonard Hall

holidays at his parents' London house, which is a big place in Grosvenor Avenue, W. John Newton, of Wolverhampton, has asked me about Handy's country home, so this paragraph provides him with an answer. He has also asked me who is the tallest fellow in the Remove, with the exception of Charlie Bangs. Well, there's not much doubt that Clarence Fellowe—who sometimes contributes to the old Mag under the name of "Rhymster"—fills the bill. He's so lanky, in fact, that his nickname in the Junior School is "Longfellow."

W INNIE LEE, of Dagenham, tells me that she is a member of the St. Frank's League, and that she has already had two badges, but has been careless enough to lose them both. She asks me if I can spare another. Well, really, it's nothing to do with me at all. I think it's possible that other Leagueites may be in the same fix. My advice to Winnie Lee—and to these others—is to write a nice, coaxing letter to the Chief Officer, and get round him for another badge. I'm sure

I ONLY found out a few days ago that Handforth's country home is situated near Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk. Sir Edward Handforth, M.P., owns a big estate there, and Edward Oswald doesn't quite approve. In his opinion, the place is too rural. He always prefers to spend the

he'll do his best. But I'd like to add that Leagueites really ought to take the greatest possible care of these badges. A lost badge means, perhaps, a found badge. And we don't want lots of people going about wearing badges who aren't really entitled to them, and who aren't members of the League at all. So please don't forget that these badges are valuable. Not in themselves, perhaps, but for what they stand for.

It's a good idea to fix a safety chain on your badge. One of those thin chains you sometimes see on a brooch will do.

SCHOOLMASTERS, as a general rule, are very sensible people. Now and again we might come across a prejudiced one—such as Mr. Pycraft, for example. Last week he bagged a copy of the Old Paper from somebody in the Fourth, tore it up, and threw it into the classroom fire. Of course, it was wrong of the culprit to be surreptitiously reading it when he should have been attending his lessons. But Mr. Pycraft described the Old Paper as an awful rag, and unfit to be seen in the hands of any decent boy. (On the quiet, I think he's got his knife into me a bit because I paint him in his true colours.) Anyhow, the Fourth-Formers had a good laugh a little later, because they deliberately wangled things so that their Housemaster—Mr. Stockdale—was shown the current issue in the dining-hall, while old Pycraft was present. I understand that Mr. Pycraft's face was an absolute study when Mr. Stockdale not only commended the paper, but advised all his boys to read it regularly. One in the eye for Pycraft, if you like!

AND here's a New Zealand reader—Frank R. Dayman, of Miramar, Wellington—telling me that his schoolmaster purloined a copy of the Old Paper in the class-room, kept it until after luncheon, and then he handed it back, saying: "I hope you continue to read this healthy, clean, and wholesome literature." Our New Zealand chum was tremendously pleased, and he correctly says that lots of people don't know what they're talking about when they run the Old Paper down.

I HAVE been asked by Miss Dorothy Lane, of Gloucester, to tell her the numbers of the "Outcast of the Remove" Series, and here they are: New Series, 103 to 107 inclusive. Miss Lane asked me, in a previous letter, if it wouldn't be possible to get rid of Gore-Pearce, but now she considers that Gore-Pearce is quite villainous enough to carry on. However, that young rascal, Bernard Forrest, is due back again soon at St. Frank's—and when he does arrive he's going to make things hum!

HERE'S D. A. HANLON, of Geraldton, West Australia, wondering if Kenmore has gone back to his old shady habits. Well, there's no need for our Aussie reader to wonder any longer. When I went into the East House a few days ago, I came across Kenmore emerging from Sinclair's study. He reeked of tobacco, and I caught a glimpse of playing-cards on the table, through the half-open door. Of course, there's nothing criminal in a couple of seniors having a game of cards, and as Kenmore is eighteen, he's perfectly at liberty to smoke if he wants to—although

it's against the school rules for any senior to smoke in his own study. However, I'm afraid that Kenmore does worse things than smoke and play cards. He's developing some of his old bullying habits, if I am to believe any of the rumours that are going about. Not that he is as bad as he used to be; and, somehow, I don't think he will ever drop right back into his old vicious ways.

ALBERT G. PATRICK, of Hammersmith, tells me that he and his friend, Francis Burrow, are thinking about producing a little "Trackett Grim" play, and he has asked me if the Editor or myself will have any objection. I'm sure the Editor won't, and I'm equally sure that I won't. But what about Handforth? Edward Oswald is the originator of the famous comic detective, Trackett Grim. Of course, Handy doesn't know that the great T.G. is comic, but that's only a detail. I thought about asking Edward Oswald if our Hammersmith friend could have his permission to produce such a play; but I hesitated. Handy might get jealous, and he might even have insisted upon going to Hammersmith to supervise the production. So, on the whole, I think it might be better to take French leave. Anyhow, I'll stand the racket when Handy sees these lines. He'll probably be indignant about it, and he'll demand to know where Mr. Patrick lives. But I shan't give him any satisfaction, so Albert won't be bothered. There's always the chance that Handy will go to Hammersmith on the off-chance, and wander about trying to find some announcement regarding the production. He'll probably think it's going to be put on at the King's Theatre, or the Lyric, or somewhere like that. We'll let him think. It's only fair, though, to give Handforth, and nobody else, the credit of the authorship.

OUR friend, Reg. T. Staples, of Walworth, whom lots of you know, since he has such a large circle of correspondents, has actually asked me something about St. Frank's in one of his recent letters. I'm awfully pleased, because it's given me something to reply to, and such a hard-working chap as Reg (hard-working when it comes to letter-writing—I don't think he has time to do anything else in life) deserves a whole paragraph to himself more often than most readers. For his information, Ernest Lawrence occupies Study No. 2 in the Modern House, and his study-mates are Hubert Churchman and George Holland. Reg also wants to know if there is a fellow in the Sixth named Hodder. There isn't. There never has been. George Hodder is a lazy beggar, and he has never attained Sixth-Form eminence. He's in the Fifth, and it is the West House which harbours him.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR PALS ABOUT THIS GORKING SERIAL?

The ISLAND CASTAWAYS!

by ARTHUR S. HARDY



(Introduction on page 39)

The Death Ship!

THE great beacon had been well built. Under the bottom of it there were four draught holes all packed with dried grass. Through the middle of the pile ran a sort of chimney towards which the flames raced greedily. In the chimney was more grass which caught and flared furiously.

Tom Perry had lit many a bonfire at home, but never one like this. Setting his arms on his sides, he grinned as he watched the flames roaring up the chimney, and saw the smoke trail away on the wind until it stretched for miles over the sea.

All that he had planned with David Sellwood was more than amply fulfilled. That slowly dying length of rolling black smoke would be visible for miles and miles, and the very nature of the fire would tell those aboard the sailing ship that human hands had lit it.

Sellwood had told of men, shipwrecked among the islands of the Southern Seas, who had remained for years in their imprisonment whilst every now and again ships went by close in to the shore, either failing to see or else ignoring their frantic signalling.

But surely no captain of a ship would fail

to respond to such a call as this signal bonfire made?

Whilst the flames roared higher, and the smoke gained in density, the three castaways drew away out of the scorching heat and took another look at the ship. She seemed scarcely to have moved, and Tom studied the lazy rise and dip of her bows dubiously. Could Dave Sellwood be right? Was there really something wrong with the rescue ship?

Tom longed for glasses that he might bring her close to view. Then he suggested that they should man their sailing boat and go out to meet her.

Sellwood was grumblingly unenthusiastic.

"I don't like the looks o' her," he muttered. "My eyes are not as good as they used to be, and I couldn't quite make her out. But

there's no harm in going out and hailing her, and if we don't like her then we can sail back home again. Let them report and make use of that new-fangled wireless station you talk about, Mr. Perry."

It was always Mr. Perry with Dave when he was on his dignity. All the way down to the lagoon he sulked.

When they raised the sail and sped out to meet the ship, she still seemed as far away as ever. The wind was freshening and the boat made rapid progress, the spindrift

Eagerly Tom Perry and Eva Hanway watched the approaching ship. Were they about to be rescued from their island "prison"?

blowing on to their faces as it was swept from the points of the waves.

Dave held the tiller. Eva and Tom sat in front of him. All eyes were fixed upon the ship. When they were within perhaps a mile of her, Sellwood uttered a shout of astonishment.

"Why, boy," he cried, "her sails are torn, and her wheel's lashed, I should say. And it's no cargo loads her deep down like that. She's waterlogged!"

The girl's lips drooped in disappointment. Even Tom was a trifle dismayed.

"She's right out of her course round here," Sellwood went on. "I knew that. Can you make out anyone aboard her, boy?"

Tom's eyes were keen and he was long-sighted. He could see lines of rust streaking the sides of the sailing ship, could almost make out her name. The detail of her rigging and her deckhouses stood out boldly. But though he scanned her eagerly, fore and aft, he could see no man upon her deck.

"No," he answered.

They approached her rapidly.

Hand to mouth, Sellwood roared out a challenge—"Shi-p A-hoy-y!"

There was no response.

Sellwood's grizzled face set gravely.

"Missy," he said, staring hard at Eva. "I reckon we'd better give this ship a miss and go back home."

The girl looked at Tom uneasily.

"What do you say, Tom?" she asked.

"I'm all for boarding her," the boy answered resolutely. "I hate to think of our making the voyage for nothing, and wasting that wood pile. Besides, I consider it our duty to see what is wrong aboard her, if anything is wrong at all."

Dave cast a gloomy look back at palm island. At that moment it seemed, somehow, more majestic than ever it had been before, and from the very heart of it—from the hill-top where the pile burned—the great smoke cloud billowed magnificently, lending the impression that a volcano was blazing in full activity.

"A lot o' use it was burning up that bon-fire," he grumbled. "Waste, I call it."

"We will build another, Dave," said Tom. "Look out, or we shall go by the ship."

Sellwood groped for the boat's anchor.

"Lower that sail when I give the word," he cried. "Steady—now—lower away."

Tom let the sail down with a run, and as he did so Dave put the tiller over, driving the sailing boat close in to the rusty sides of the ship. She was alarmingly low in the water, Tom saw, which accounted for her very sluggish pitching. With a heave, Dave sent the little anchor swinging over her side, and pulled the rope taut till the iron gripped. Having made certain that it held securely, he gave the assurance—"All right now, sir."

Tom climbed the rope like a monkey, caught the painter Eva threw up to him, and secured the boat.

"Are you coming up?" he cried to the girl, as he looked about him. "I say, Dave

was right. There's something queer about the ship. There's nobody on deck. Ship ahoy! Ship ahoy—ahoy!"

His voice rang musically, but the call was not answered.

"Help me up, Tom!"

Leaning over the bulwarks, he gave Eva a hand and drew her beside him. Below, Dave sat in the boat with hands clasped, a weird, awe-inspiring figure in his odd clothes.

"You look around, boy," he cried. "I'm superstitious. I'm going to stay where I am."

"There may be something of value aboard," said Tom eagerly. "Tobacco—canned foodstuffs—stores. We could load the boat and run them back."

"I'd give half the years of my life that remain to me for a bit of 'bacca to chew, Mr. Perry," replied Sellwood stubbornly; "but nothing short of compulsion would ever make me board her. You do what you like; I'll wait here!"

It was not use arguing with Dave when he was in such a mood. Tom led Eva round the deck. Hatchways were open, and a queer, musty smell came up from below. Tom fancied he could hear the gurgle of water in her hold as she dipped. The Tioga—Tom had read her name as they sailed up to her—was, as Sellwood had predicted, waterlogged. No doubt her captain and crew had abandoned her. She was a derelict. Hurrying aft, Tom and Eva saw that her wheel was lashed securely, the lashings giving just a little play from side to side as the wind drove the vessel on.

Overhead, tattered canvas hung upon the yards, some of it flapping dismally.

"Dave was right, Tom," said the girl tremulously. "I don't like the look of this vessel. I wish we hadn't come aboard. Let us go back!"

"Very well," he answered, "we'll go soon, Eva. But I still think we ought to investigate. Do you know what I think? I believe the Tioga must have struck a leak during the storm that wrecked us. See; the pumps are all rigged. Then, I suppose, the captain and the crew took to the boats. There's only one remaining on the davits."

He worked one of the pumps strenuously and found it hard to operate. To a gangway he went, and looked down. There was a reek of damp and rot from below. As the ship pitched and half-rolled lazily, settling deeper into the sea, he could hear the surge of the water in her.

Tom shivered.

He, too, began to feel sorry that they had come out to her. After the glory of the island, the abandoned ship was a frightening thing.

"Let us go below, Eva," he said abruptly. "I want to see what is there. I'll go first," he added, "then I can tell you if it's all safe."

She pouted protestingly. She hated to be always treated like a child. After all, she was not so many years younger than Tom.

But she accepted the position, and crept down after him.

He peeped into a cabin and found it empty. On a table stood a bottle and some thick glasses. The place smelt musty.

To a second cabin he went. It was in disorder, but empty like the first. Into a third and larger and more important cabin he peered, and this time he entered, attracted by a paper which was pinned to the table by a knife. The open blade had been driven through the paper deep into the wood. It was with some difficulty Tom managed to withdraw it and to pull the paper free.

Eagerly he read it, and it ran as follows:

"The crew, and all barring Captain Nevinson, Arles the cook, Marchmont and me, left the ship three days ago. Pumps still work, but the water gains. It is a captain's duty to stand by his ship to the last. Now the fever's got us. No food or water for forty-eight hours. The lashed wheel holds. We hope to make port within a week. Weather bids fair. Taken sick to-day. Brandy no good. A favourable wind and a fair night.

"ROGER HARDMANN (Mate)."

Twice Tom puzzled through the roughly-pencilled words, and strove to master their meaning. Then, as Eva filled the doorway, he happened to round the table and look down at the things that lay upon the floor.

The ship rolled, sending the door crashing wide. But it was not the slamming noise which sent him leaping to the door, to push Eva roughly away and up the stairs.

"Go back!" he cried in horror. "You mustn't go in there, Eva!"

Then he looked back and shuddered, and the girl saw that his face was white.

Tom's eyes were wide with horror at what he had seen. For in the cabin, stretched upon the floor, with their faces raised, their fists tight clenched in agony, were the bodies of four dead men!

Tom's Danger!

ALARMED by Tom's voice and manner, the girl fell back against the wall.

"What is the matter, Tom?" she asked.

"We ought never to have come aboard," he answered. "This is a death ship, Eva! The hold is fever-stricken. It isn't safe to stay here. Go up on deck!"

For a moment the girl hesitated, then reluctantly she obeyed him, turning one anxious backward glance as she mounted to the sunlit deck.

By now Tom's eyes had become accustomed to the dim light of the cabin, lit only by a tiny porthole. He studied again the figures of the men that were huddled upon the floor, and as he looked he tried to piece together the story of the tragedy.

The Tioga must have struck a leak a long while ago, perhaps even before the big storm; that was proved by the rigging of the pumps upon the deck. Had the officers and crew aboard been struck with deadly fever before then? Tom wondered. Maybe. But some had been untouched by the deadly scourge, and those had launched some of her boats and left the Tioga to her fate. Maybe until the deserters had abandoned the ship, these men who lay upon the floor—"Captain Nevinson, Arles the cook, Marchmont and me," to quote the tragic document—had stood a chance of recovery. But after the others had fled in terror, perhaps to seek refuge on one of the coral islands, they must have given up all hope, and in the end come to this cabin to die in company.

The bottle and the glasses set out in the other cabin told a tale. As he peered moodily down at the poor wretches, Tom hoped that the end had been mercifully swift.

He began to search the cabin for papers, opening drawers and examining cupboards, but found none. But in a drawer he came upon a revolver, which proved to be loaded, as well as a packet of cartridges. Swiftly

THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

THORNTON HANWAY, American millionaire and business magnate, is the owner of the yacht *Esmeralda*, which is touring among a number of unknown islands in the Southern Pacific. He is accompanied by

EVA HANWAY, his pretty daughter, and her chum,

TOM PERRY, a plucky, adventure-loving English boy. Tom's father,

GEORGE PERRY, a lifelong friend of Hanway's, is also on board. At the moment there is great anxiety on the yacht owing to the pilot,

DANIEL KEMISH, having developed a sudden illness. In years past Dan and his partner, David Sellwood, had owned a small vessel, which traded in these parts. Dan had been the cause of Sellwood losing his life—or so he thought—and since then the former has never forgiven himself. Sailing these seas once more has brought back old memories, and this fact, combined with the heat, has turned his head. Tom and Eva decide to visit a nearby island, but they are caught in a terrible storm, and the motor-boat is swamped. Tom and Eva are plunged into the mountainous seas, and finally are cast upon an unknown island. Later, unknown to the two chums, Hanway's yacht is set on fire by Kemish. Meanwhile, Tom and Eva explore the island and find that it is inhabited by David Sellwood! One day the three castaways find a boat from the *Esmeralda* yacht lying on the beach, and they all fear that something serious has happened aboard her. The three brighten up, however, when an old windjammer is seen drifting towards the island, and the beacon they have made is lighted to attract attention.

(Now read on.)

he thrust the weapon into his pocket. He disliked the deadly things, but he realised that the revolver would come in useful should he ever be called upon to defend himself or Eva or Dave.

If only he could find the ship's log! It would probably give every detail of this tragedy of the sea.

Suddenly Tom heard Dave Sellwood shouting.

"Ahoy! Tom, lad, you'd better come off o' that ship! I don't like the look o' her!"

Dave made no attempt to disguise his anxiety; his deep booming voice shook with it. Tom felt the floor of the cabin quiver under him. A wave splashed upon the ship's deck, and water raced down the gangway stairs.

Tom took them at the run, and, emerging into a blaze of sunlight, blinked about him.

Eva was astride the bulwarks, staring anxiously at him.

"Tom, come quickly!" she cried. "Dave says it isn't safe to stay on board. He says the ship is going down!"

"All right! You go ahead," the boy answered.

Dave had drawn the boat close in to the Tioga's side. Taking the rope in both hands, Eva slid down it into the little craft.

Tom hesitated, casting a last look round. It seemed a shame to quit the waterlogged sailing ship without carrying a boatload of things with them. Everywhere he saw objects that would help to make their life upon the island more civilised. He loosened a coil of rope and heaved it overboard.

"Look after that, Dave!" he cried. "I'm going to take just one quick rake round and see if I can't find some tools."

"Come away!" bawled Dave in a panic. "It isn't safe, I tell you! She's settlin' right down! Missy has told me about the dead men. Don't touch a thing, lad! She's a fever-stricken ship. Come away!"

Tom was surprised at Dave's vehemence, startled to think that a brave man could panic so completely; but then, he supposed, it was a sailor's superstition. He turned away, and, looking for'ard, was surprised to find the bows of the Tioga dipped right down into the swell. Even in that moment a wave broke right over her, so that he had to cling to the bulwarks for support, and he found himself drenched when the wave had passed.

Blinking the sea-water out of his eyes, Tom looked for the sailing-boat, almost choked by the fear that gripped him. But she was there, afloat all right, still riding close to the side of the doomed ship, held by the rope and the anchor Dave had hurled aboard. It was Tom's turn to panic then.

Splashing frantically along the sloping deck, he unhooked the little anchor and hurled it over the side.

"Haul her in, Dave," he cried, "and stand away! I'll swim out to you. But stand away—quick! This boat is capsizing!"

Dave was still calling out to Tom to slide down into the little sailing-boat when the

anchor splashed into the sea and the boat was free.

She literally spun away from the side of the Tioga, and Dave steered her to a safer distance.

The bows of the Tioga were almost level with the water now. The swell towered above the doomed vessel, swept down to break in foam over it and race along the deck until the scuppers ran in spate. Tom watched, fascinated, his hand upon the deck rail.

The water seemed to gurgle with delight as it found the open hatchways and poured below. The Tioga was going down. Yet Tom did not move. He felt the deck beneath him quiver and shake. It was the ship's dying agony.

He looked above, where the sails flapped idly in the breeze. The wind had torn the canvas to shreds—the only thing that had saved the Tioga from foundering long ago.

Next Tom glanced in the direction of their island. Since he and Eva had climbed aboard, the Tioga had scarcely moved, and the island was still a long way off. The great cloud of smoke from their beacon had gained in density, and stretched for miles over the blue sea.

It was a mockery to think they had set fire to it to signal to the waterlogged fever ship. And yet good might come of it, for the smoke would be visible for miles. It would be seen by the look-out of any vessel within a twenty miles radius, Tom believed, and it might bring help after all.

But Eva was calling to him, and Dave, too. Turning his head, Tom saw the sailing boat riding the swell bravely, a hundred and fifty to two hundred yards away. Dave was bent over the tiller, gripping it under his armpit, with his cupped hands to his mouth.

"Jump for it, Tom!" he shouted. "Swim for it! I daren't come nearer or we'd be dragged under. The ship's going down!"

Startled, Tom took a last look along the deck. The bows of the Tioga had disappeared. The blue sea was swallowing her. Her towering masts bearing the flapping canvas were tilting over like giant poles loosened by a heavy storm.

The water raced to meet his feet. It bubbled down the open hatchway for'ard, which Tom had not explored. Tom set his hands upon the bulwarks and vaulted over the side into the sea.

Lowering his head, he began to swim with swift, powerful strokes, while the girl in the boat watched in terror.

He was almost too late, for tilting right up until her stern was high above the water, the Tioga dived to her last resting-place on the bed of the ocean, her plunge creating a vortex which swirled Tom helplessly round.

Even Dave and Eva in the small boat were caught by it and drawn into the suction. Dave leapt to the sail and ran it up, then put the tiller over that the sails might fill. The wind blew her out of the danger zone, and Dave let the sail down again.

He was just in time to prevent Eva from throwing herself over the side.

The doomed vessel slowly dived into the ocean, and Tom, swimming desperately towards the sailing boat, found himself plunged into a vortex which swirled him round helplessly!



"You're mad, missy!" said the seaman hoarsely. "What can you do?"

"Tom's drowning! I must go to him! You are hurting my arm!"

Only the stern of the Tioga was showing, and one mast and the point of another. The rest of the vessel was already under the sea.

And in the bubbling, heaving water a head bobbed about, then two elbows flashed and two hands showed at swift intervals as Tom settled down to it and swam for dear life.

Dave's face was pale beneath the copper tan, but his blue eyes brightened as he watched and set the boat slewing round.

"He's all right, missy. He's out of danger. We'll pick him up in a minute. Just you sit quiet and leave it to me."

Dave hardly saw the stern of the sailing ship vanish and the heaving sea quiet down. His eyes were on that swiftly moving figure that scarcely showed at all, and as he watched he marvelled at the skill of the boy.

Boat and swimmer drew swiftly nearer to each other. From his seat Dave roared out encouragement as if he were helping Tom

in a swimming race. Dave's relief, now that the ghostly ship had sunk to rest, sent his spirits soaring.

"Come on, boy! Come on, laddie!" he yelled.

Eva, too, was smiling. Suddenly she pointed.

"Dave," she said, "what's that?"

Close to Tom, and gaining upon him rapidly, a dark triangle showed. Dave's smile vanished. It was a shark!

(Will Tom reach the safety of the boat before the shark attacks him? Don't miss next week's stunning instalment—it's packed with thrills.)

HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM No. 114.

SECTION

A

READER'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

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 that I have introduced "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" and THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE 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 the Membership Number assigned to me, and Membership Badge.

SECTION

B

MEMBER'S APPLICATION FOR MEDAL AWARDS.

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 makes me (state number of introductions up to date) introductions to my credit.

SECTION

C

NEW READER'S DECLARATION.

I hereby declare that I have been introduced by (give name of introducer) to this issue of "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY."

(FULL NAME).....

(ADDRESS).....

INSTRUCTIONS.

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 leave in Section A, crossing out Sections B and C. 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, 5, Carmelite 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, bearing the same number, are needed. 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, providing that each pair of forms bears the same date and number.

Bronze medallists wishing to qualify for the silver medals can apply in the same way as for the bronze medal, filling in Section B. Every introduction they make will be credited to them, so that when they have secured the requisite number of readers they can exchange their bronze medal for a silver one.

These Application Forms can be posted for £d., providing the envelope is not sealed and no letter is enclosed.

A FEW OF THE ADVANTAGES OF JOINING THE LEAGUE.

You can write to fellow members living at home or in the most distant outposts of the Empire.

You are offered free advice on choosing a trade or calling, and on emigration to the colonies and dependencies.

If you want to form a sports or social club, you can do so amongst local members of the League.

You are offered free hints on holidays, whether walking, biking, or camping.

You can qualify for the various awards by promoting the growth of the League.

If you want help or information on any subject, you will find the Chief Officer ever ready to assist you.

NOTICE.

The St. Frank's League has now attained such proportions that we are compelled to discontinue the offer of gold medals in connection therewith. The silver and bronze medals will still be available, however, as heretofore, to those who qualify for them in accordance with the rules.

The ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE CORNER!



*The Chief Officer Chats
with his Chums.*

*Here's his address if you want to
write to him: The Chief Officer, The
Nelson Lee Library, Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

The League and the Letter.

THERE isn't any special need that I can see to say much about this week's winning letter. You can judge for yourselves about that. It has got the right spirit in it, and so have hosts of other friendly missives which reach me every day.

Our League is spreading in grand style, and as it increases in usefulness so, too, does the popularity of the N.L.L. I set the League going in the first instance as a friendly sort of union, with possibilities of interchange of views between members, but often enough, as in this instance, what began in a small way ends up as something pretty big. Everybody can join the S.F.L. All are welcome. Find your new reader—he is not difficult to catch—and your badge and certificate will follow on.

Enter Autumn.

VERY pleased to see it, and all that. Autumn has its points.

What a lot of posh has been written about the sadness of summer packing up! Fact is the end of the summer is a right down glorious time. If I could take another holiday I should make tracks for the country now. Then the autumn is a topping time. For most of us there is less outdoors, but hobbies

crop up, and you hear the pheeep of the whistle on the footer ground. Also, you find a bit more time for reading, and that reminds me of the *Annuals* now on sale, and each with a special claim to the notice of all readers of the N.L.L.

THIS WEEK'S WINNING LETTER

DEAR CHIEF,—Since the publication of my advertisement in the "Correspondents Wanted" column, I have been the recipient of letters from different parts of the world, and I am now exchanging letters with over ten members daily—and some are still coming in.

In point of fact, the "St. Frank's League" plays an important part in the different channels that enables us to know the world better than our forefathers did, and it also facilitates the means of universal brotherhood. Thousands of miles we are apart from each other, but the League links us together, and through its medium, teaches us about other races and lands.

Considering the advantages afforded by the League, I will frankly say I am proud to be a member.

I am very pleased to inform you that the NELSON LEE LIBRARY has brought about a change in one of my friends, who condemned the reading of papers of the NELSON LEE type, and he is now a regular reader.

With best of luck to the greatest League ever formed, and greetings to you and fellow-members.

I am, your devoted member,

(Signed) E. O. HAMMOND.

(For this interesting letter E. O. Hammond, Victoriaborg, Accra, has been awarded a handsome pocket wallet.)

Annuals Four.

AT my earnest request our freak poet tackled the subject of the four famous *Annuals*, but he made a hash of the job.

Annuals Four,
Yarns galore,
The "Hobby" and
"Pop"
On sale at the shop.
The "Holiday" and
"Nature"
Most sensibly cater
For readers who run
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But that only tells half the story. The new "Nature" *Annual* is a treat for everybody. The old friend, the "Holiday *Annual*," goes one better. The

"Hobby" puts the lid on things as a marvel of efficient hobby work, and last, but, don't think it, not by any means least, the "Popular Book of Boys' Stories" starts in with a brilliant new line of tales of adventure at home and over the foam.

THE CHIEF OFFICER.

All members of the St. Frank's League are invited to send to the Chief Officer letters of interest concerning the League. The most interesting will be published week by week, and the senders will receive pocket wallets or penknives. If you don't belong to the League, join immediately by filling in the form which appears on the opposite page.

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

Walter Rousseau, 19, Valletort Place, Stoke, Plymouth, wants correspondents in Yorkshire.

R. T. Peacock, 2, Oliver Park, Hawick, N.B., wants the "Reformation of Fullwood" series, also the "Indian" series.

Francis G. Casey, 497, 13th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y., U.S.A., wants correspondents; interested in stamp collecting.

George E. Low, 40, Stock Orchard Crescent, Holloway, London, N.7, wants to hear from readers in Australia who have migrated from England; ages 16-17.

J. B. Conolly, Beresford, Colburn Road, Caterham, Surrey, wants back numbers, new series up to 90.

Kenneth Bruce, 2, Lambeth Villas, Portsmouth Road, Surbiton, Surrey, wants correspondents in his district.

Arthur R. Shaw, 2, St. Mary's Road, Luton, Beds., wants correspondents, especially stamp collectors.

J. Murphy, Neill Street, Harden, N.S.W., Australia, wants correspondents.

Jack Suttrill, 21, Darlington Street, Thornaby-on-Tees, Yorks, wants to hear from readers interested in sports and stamp collecting, in U.S.A., Australia, Canada, and British Isles.

Fred D. Bloomfield, 30, Monson Road, Harlesden, N.W.10, wants correspondents in Penzance and Marazion, Cornwall.

Leslie Norton, 42, Oxford Street, Liverpool, offers new series from 22; also wants correspondents interested in music.

Arthur Smith, 10, Trafalgar Place, Stoke, Devonport, wants correspondents in Africa and India.

Frederick Ford, 88, Hillingdon Street, Walworth, S.E.17, wants to hear from stamp collectors.

N. V. Fidgeon (16), The Antlers, Engayne Gardens, Upminster, Essex, wants correspondents in Canada, New Zealand and Africa; also wants to hear from readers keen on cricket and golf.

Frederick Williams, Junr., 5, Casino Avenue, Herne Hill, S.E.24, wants correspondents in India and South Africa; ages, 15-16.



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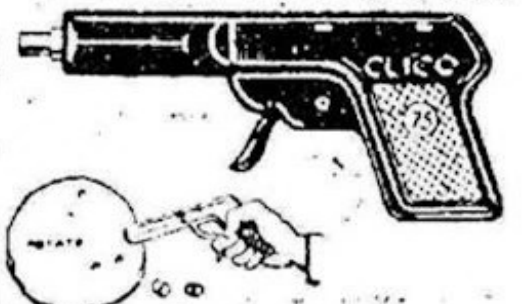
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