

THE NELSON LEE

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THE LIVING GUY!

Guy Fawkes' Day at St. Frank's! A stirring long complete yarn of schoolboy mystery and adventure, introducing Nipper & Co., and many other favourites.

Now Series No. 183.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

November 2nd, 1929.

PREPARE YOURSELVES FOR "FIREWORKS" IN—

THE LIVING GUY!



By **EDWY
SEARLES BROOKS.**

CHAPTER 1.

The Yellow Face!

THE wind came moaning and whistling through the trees of Bellton Wood, and Eric Gates, of the Third Form at St. Frank's, hurried his footsteps. It was dark and lonely in the lane, and Gates was not famous for his pluck.

The November evening was wild and dark; thick masses of clouds were scudding across the heavens. In the distance, the gleaming lights of St. Frank's could be seen, and the fag broke into a run. He would be glad when he turned into the Triangle, leaving this dark lane behind him.

Eric was an extremely simple youth. So simple, indeed, that amongst his fellow-fags he was known as "Soppy."

—THIS STUNNING "FIFTH OF NOVEMBER" YARN!

Fifth of November at St. Frank's—and never before has the school known such an exciting "Fifth"! Mystery after mystery, sensation after sensation; they happen with a rapidity which will leave you gasping. There's hours of enjoyment in this magnificent yarn, chums!

Eric Gates was very scared of the darkness, and it was this fact, perhaps, which had induced Willy Handforth to send him down to the village to buy some fireworks. Willy didn't believe in any of the fags being nervous, and perhaps he felt that an object lesson or two would do Gates good. There was nothing to be afraid of in the lane, and Gates was only a silly young ass to be scared.

It was ridiculously early in the evening—not yet six o'clock—so what on earth was there to be afraid of?

Not that the hour made any difference to Eric Gates. The darkness enveloped him; that was sufficient. He saw grotesque and menacing shapes in every sapling along the hedgerows. He imagined that lurking figures were about to spring out on him. He had a horrible feeling that something was following behind, reaching out to grab him. Even as he ran he kept turning his head, glancing fearfully back, and once or twice he could have sworn that he heard soft, padding footsteps.

It was all imagination, of course.

And it seemed to Gates that the lights of St. Frank's grew farther away, instead of nearer. Would he never reach the Triangle? Once there he would be all right, for there were plenty of friendly windows, glowingly illuminated. There would be fellows moving about, crossing from one House to another. And it was certain, too, that some of the juniors would be out, letting off fireworks.



The famous "Fifth" was near at hand, and St. Frank's—particularly the Junior School—had caught the prevalent fever. Everybody who could afford fireworks was buying fireworks. Letting them off in the precincts of the school was prohibited, but who took any notice of such absurd orders? Crackers and squibs and Roman candles had been seen in abundance already. And as long as the fellows kept well away from the school buildings, none of the prefects or masters took any notice.

On the big night there would be an impressive demonstration—a more or less semi-official affair. The seniors were arranging it, and a large fund had been raised. Set pieces were being fixed up, and there would be a huge bonfire, too. The juniors were looking forward to the occasion with much joy.

However, splendid as this spectacle would be, there was nothing quite so pleasurable as letting off the fireworks themselves. Watching a display is all very fine, but to handle squibs and Roman candles, and to experience the thrill of personally lighting the fuses, was worth a great deal.

Gates, who was stony—a condition he invariably found himself in by Monday morning—had been promised by Willy that he should have the honour of letting off at least three jumping crackers as a reward for his trip to the village.

He was eager to get back into the Triangle, where Willy and a gang of fags would be waiting. There was some scheme afoot—so Gates believed—for preparing an ambush for a couple of Fifth-Formers who had incurred Willy's disfavour. It was only natural, therefore, that Gates should be filled with eager anticipation, since anything up against the seniors was to the good.

At last Gates reached the school wall. He slowed down a bit, breathing heavily after his run. He was nearly home now, and he felt somewhat sheepish because of his former fears. The wall was on his right, so high that the lights of the school were no longer visible. On his left stretched the high hedge, with a big meadow beyond.

Suddenly Gates faltered in his stride. He stared fascinatedly at a point of the wall some yards farther on, about midway between him and the main gateway. There were heavy stone buttresses jutting out from the wall, which was itself separated from the lane by a grassy bank. And Gates was ready to swear that a vague, indistinct figure was standing close to one particular buttress.

He knew there was no bush there, for ordinarily there was just the grassy bank. Now there was this motionless, silent figure—this thing! It had a human shape, too. As Gates halted, irresolute, he could see the head and shoulders, and it seemed to him that the head was crowned by an unusual type of hat.

With his heart beating rapidly, Gates stood still, staring. He was afraid to pass, and although he knew he was afraid he told himself that he was a silly young ass. It wasn't a man at all. Of course not! It was just a

shadow, or something. Not a bush, because there weren't any bushes there, but perhaps a fallen branch, which had blown down from one of the neighbouring trees.

And yet—and yet— The thing moved! It turned its head! Then, without a sound, it retreated behind the cover of the buttress.

Gates panted with fear now. It wasn't a fallen branch—it was something alive! Something lurking there, ready to spring out on him! He almost turned pale, and fled back to the way he had come. But what was the good of doing that? He had to get to the school—and the gateway was invitingly close. One dash, and he would be in the Triangle. He tried to gather up sufficient nerve for the move.

A squib exploded on the other side of the wall, and there was a brief flash of fire reflected. Gates felt comforted. It was good to know that some of the fellows were only just on the other side of the wall.

Perhaps that object on the other side of the buttress wasn't anything to be scared of, anyhow. Gates advanced a step or two, falteringly, uncertainly.

He stopped again. He couldn't quite manage to gather up the necessary amount of courage for the dash past. He had a horrible feeling that the thing would spring out on him and grab him.

Just then a roaring noise sounded on the other side of the wall, and Gates, glancing up, saw some sparks shooting into the air. A Roman candle, by the sound of it. It was a Roman candle, too, for immediately afterwards a red star was shot upwards, following a tremendous bang. Yells came from the Triangle, and Gates took a grip on himself and prepared to make his dash. It was so utterly ridiculous, standing out here like this, getting more and more scared. Well, thank goodness none of the other fags would ever know.

Bang!

Another star shot upwards from that unseen Roman candle, and this one, caught by the wind, was blown over the wall. For a brief second it fell towards the road, the star—a green one—blazing brilliantly.

But Gates was not looking at it. He was still staring fascinatedly towards that buttress where he had seen the lurking figure. And now the momentary green blaze revealed something which caused Soppy to let out a shriek of wild terror.

He saw a hideous yellow face, perched on a pair of narrow shoulders—a face that was appalling in its ugliness; a face that possessed two gleaming, evil eyes. Those eyes were looking at him, sinister and menacing.

Then the green star exhausted itself, and the darkness shut down again. Gates had only seen that dreadful apparition for a brief moment, but it was enough. Terror had got him in its grip.

He shrieked again, and ran to the gateway, braving the lurking figure. He ran into the Triangle, his screams rising above the whistling of the wind.

"WHAT the dickens is that?" asked Chubby Heath, in a startled voice.

"Somebody hurt, by the sound of it," remarked Juicy Lemon.

Willy Handforth made no comment. He stared across the darkness of the Triangle, his eyes keen, his senses alert. The three fags were over by the Ancient House steps, where they had been letting off a few fireworks. Chubby had just been preparing to set fire to the fuse of a squib when the interruption occurred.

"Better lend a hand, you chaps," said Willy briefly.

He had just caught sight of Gates' figure. He ran forward, and Heath and Lemon went with him. They caught hold of Eric Gates as the latter came stumbling and tottering into the zone of light.

"Steady, fat-head!" said Willy. "Don't yell like that!"

"Great Scott!" gasped Chubby Heath. "He's as white as a sheet!"

"Scared," nodded Willy. "Now then, Sopp y—pull yourself together! Don't be a young ass! There's nothing to be afraid of!"

Eric Gates stared wildly at Willy & Co. for a moment, then he seemed to recognise them, and a sob of relief came from his half-open mouth.

"It's—it's out there!" he panted. "I believe it's after me—"

"Nothing's after you, angel-face," said Willy.

"Don't stay here!" urged Gates tremulously. "Let's—let's get indoors! Oh, let's get indoors! I'm frightened!"

"Huh!" grunted Willy. "Aren't you ashamed to admit it?"

"No!" sobbed Gates. "Anybody would have been frightened! It's out there, I tell you—a horrible thing with a yellow face!"

"My only sainted aunt!" breathed Chubby.

"I don't think he meant your only sainted aunt, Chubby," said Willy. "He must have seen something else—probably a bush waving in the wind. Better get him indoors."

They half-dragged, half-carried the frightened fag up the steps of the Ancient House, and in the lobby he seemed to recover somewhat. But even now his eyes were wild, and his face was deathly pale. He stared fascinatedly out through the open doorway into the darkness.

"H a l l o ! What's wrong?" asked a boisterous voice.

Willy glanced round.

"Of course, you would butt in, Ted!" he said impatiently. "This is our affair. Sopp y has seen a ghost—or he thinks he has."

"He's old enough to know better," said Edward Oswald Handforth sternly. "There aren't any such things as ghosts. What rot! Better give the kid a good shaking and a punch on the head. There's nothing to beat it."

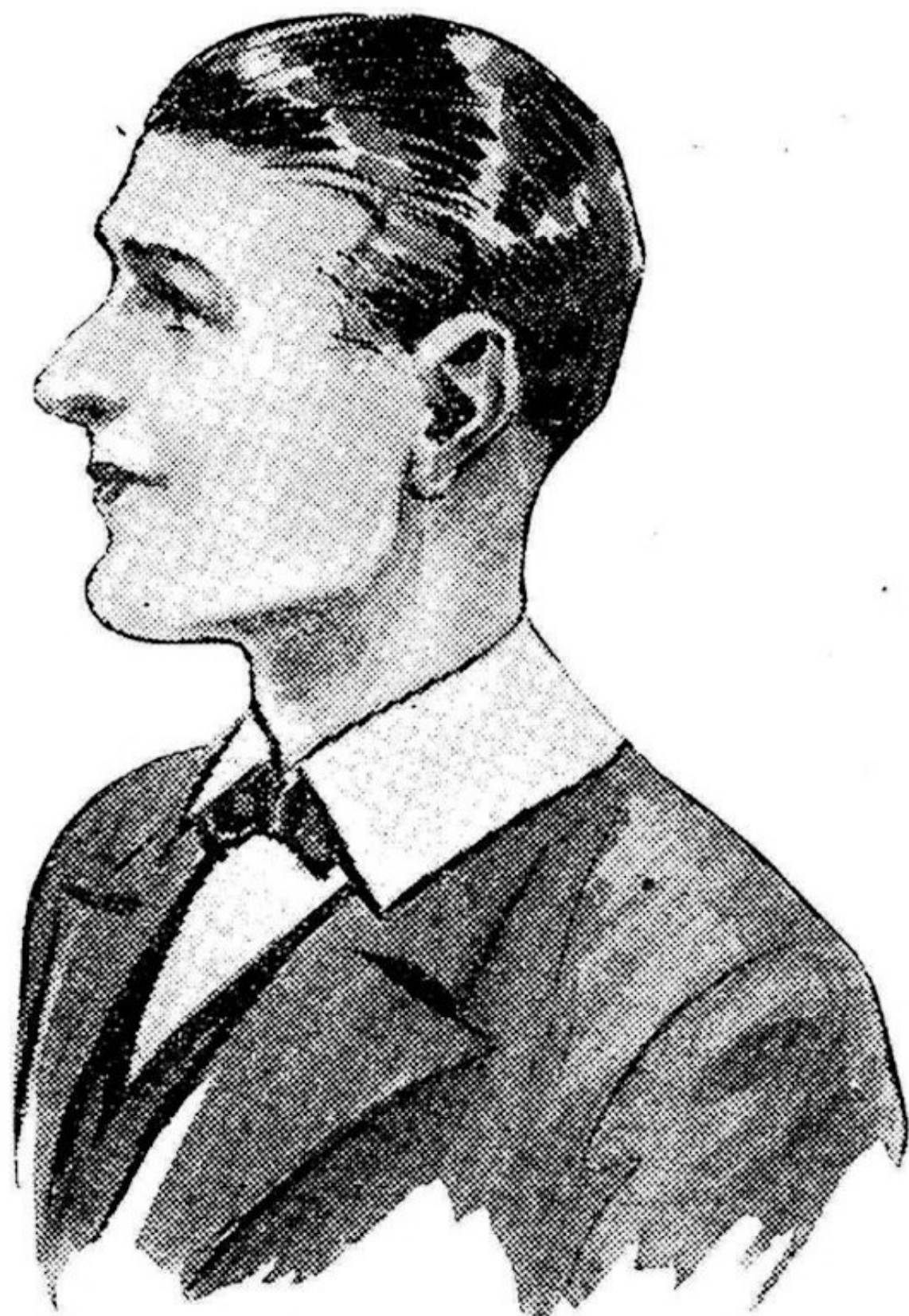
Church and McClure were with Handforth, as was to be expected—since these three

Removites were inseparable. Nipper came along, too—Nipper, the cheery, capable skipper of the Remove. Tregellis-West and Watson were with him, and they were all impressed by Eric Gates' pallor.

"I'm glad you're all here!" panted the frightened fag. "I'm not fooling! There's something out there—in the lane—"

"Hold on!" said Willy. "Tell us exactly what you saw—and where you saw it."

WHO'S WHO AT ST. FRANK'S.



RALPH LESLIE FULLWOOD.

A one-time rotter, he has now reformed and is one of Nipper's staunchest supporters. A popular and prominent member of the Remove, and a clever footballer.

"Only just outside the gates," said the fag. "I was coming along when I saw something standing against one of the buttresses—near the wall. I didn't know what it was at first—I thought it was a sort of shadow. Then somebody let off a firework, and a green star came over into the lane——"

"Must have been from that Roman candle of ours," said Juicy Lemon, nodding.

"And that green star allowed me to see the thing that was standing against the buttress," went on Gates hoarsely. "Oh, it was awful! A horrible, ghastly-looking man, with a fiendish, yellow face. A hideous thing like—like you see in a nightmare. And the eyes! Awful eyes, staring at me——"

"Cheese it!" interrupted Tommy Watson. "There's nobody about here with a yellow face! You must have imagined it, Gates!"

"Of course he imagined it!" said Handforth impatiently. "What absolute piffle!"

"But it's true!" insisted the scared fag. "I saw it there——"

"You saw nothing!" broke in Willy sternly. "We all know what a frightened baby you are, Soppy! I thought that run to the village would do you a bit of good—but I was wrong. Isn't it marvellous what the imagination can do?"

"Help—help!"

It was a wild yell from the Triangle, and as everybody turned to the open doorway a wild, dishevelled figure came tearing in.

CHAPTER 2.

The Scare!

"ANOTHER of 'em!" said Handforth, in astonishment.

The newcomer was Teddy Long, of the Remove—and Teddy was well known to be a coward. He was almost as frightened of the dark as "Soppy" himself. And Teddy now ran into the lobby, stared round at the circle of juniors, and pressed in amongst them as though seeking protection. His face was ashen, and his eyes were filled with dread.

"Shut the door!" he babbled. "Shut the door! It's after me!"

"Well I'm jiggered!" said Chubby Heath, staring outside with growing uneasiness.

"What's after you, lunatic?" asked Handforth. "A dragon, with fire pouring out of its mouth? Or an ogre, with a whacking great club?"

"Steady, Handy!" said Nipper. "Long is genuinely frightened—as frightened as Gates. Look at them!"

"They're a pair!" nodded Handforth disparagingly. "Just because it happens to be a dark evening they get the wind up. Never known such boobies. What's St. Frank's coming to?"

"It's out there—in the shrubbery!" faltered Teddy.

"In the shrubbery now!" said Willy. "Not long ago it was outside in the lane!"

Gates pulled himself together, and grabbed at Teddy Long's arm.

"What—what did you see?" he asked breathlessly.

"His own shadow!" said Handforth, with a sniff.

"I didn't!" shouted Teddy. "It—it was something awful!"

"If it was your own shadow it would be awful," nodded Handforth.

"It was a thing with a horrid face," babbled Teddy. "A yellow face——"

"What!"

"A yellow face."

"Well I'm blessed!" said Willy. "Two of 'em! And they've both seen the same thing!"

"Can't be imagination, then," said Nipper. "They couldn't both imagine a yellow face—independently. It's rather a good thing for Gates that Long has come in—he's corroborated Gates' evidence. Let's hear your story, Teddy. What did you actually see?"

Long managed to pull himself together.

"I—I was out in the Triangle, and I happened to be near the shrubbery," he said. "I was just waiting there, you know——"

"What was the idea?" asked Handforth suspiciously. "Who were you spying on?"

"I wasn't spying!" protested Teddy, with such readiness that it was fairly clear that Handforth had scored a bullseye. "I was just there, near the shrubbery. I forget why, now. And suddenly I noticed something creeping towards me. I thought it was one of the fellows, and I asked him what he was doing."

"And what happened?" asked Nipper curiously.

"He stopped—as though startled," said Teddy, shivering. "I don't suppose he knew I was there."

"I don't suppose so, either," nodded Handforth. "You're pretty clever at lurking in dark corners, aren't you, Teddy?"

"Well, I didn't like the way the figure stood there, so I struck a match," continued Long. "I saw a horrible, yellow face with gleaming eyes——"

"That's right!" panted Gates. "Just the same as I saw out in the lane!"

"The awful thing turned away and bolted!" said Long. "I bolted, too. I don't mind admitting it," he added defiantly. "Any chap would have bolted! That thing was horrible—ghastly! I don't believe it was human!"

"Rubbish!" said Nipper. "The fellow may have been a tramp of some kind. Both you two fatheads saw him in a sudden flash of light, after the darkness, and you only saw him for a tick. A tramp with an ugly face would have scared the pair of you. Anyhow, I think some of us had better go out and search."

"Rather!" agreed Handforth briskly. "I was just going to suggest the same thing. I'm not scared of this apparition with the yellow face, anyhow. What rot!"

"Don't go out!" urged Gates feverishly. "Don't go out there! It wasn't a tramp! I wouldn't have been scared by a tramp like that, Handforth! It was something different—something too awful for words!"

BUT nobody took any notice of Eric Gates. Nipper and Handforth and Travers and several others marched out into the Triangle. Electric torches were produced, and a thorough search of the shrubbery was made. Other juniors went to all parts of the Triangle, and they penetrated out into the lane, too. Willy & Co. also helped in the search. Nothing unusual was found. And after about fifteen minutes, the various parties collected in the Triangle and reported.

"Well, we've found nothing," said Nipper. "I didn't expect we should."

"Neither did I," said Handforth, with a grunt. "Those two idiots were only imagining—"

"Hardly that, dear old fellow!" put in Vivian Travers. "They couldn't both imagine the same thing — independently. And we know for a fact that Gates and Long hadn't met one another until Long came into the lobby. They both saw this merchant with the rummy face. Either he was a ghost or else a tramp. Personally, I'm in favour of the ghost story."

"You're mad!" said Handforth, staring.

"There's something intriguing and fascinating about a ghost," continued Travers smoothly. "Those two kids probably saw the spectre of an old monk—one of the johnnies who used to inhabit the monastery. Perhaps there was a murder committed seven or eight hundred years ago, and the ghost walks on this particular night every year."

"Shut up, you ass!" said Jimmy Potts.

"Of course, it's far more likely that the figure was merely a tramp," continued Travers dryly. "But that theory is so disappointing. I mean, it's so ordinary. It's the logical one, but I'm not in favour of it—I'd much rather think of that mysterious figure as a ghost. Let's conclude that it was a ghost, dear old fellows. Awfully thrilling, what?"

"Cheese it, Travers," said Nipper. "This affair isn't a joke. Gates and Long were so scared that it'll probably take them a day or two to get over it. We don't want the whole Junior School to become nervous. The less talk of ghosts, the better."

"Just as you like, dear old fellow," drawled Travers. "But I can't help thinking that ghosts—"

He broke off as a sudden scream arose on the evening air, above the buffeting of the wind. All the juniors stood stock-still, startled. That scream had come from the rear of the West House, some little distance away.

It rose again, this time very alarmingly—a scream of sheer, unnameable terror. It died away, and then there was silence.

"What was that?" muttered Tommy Watson shakily.

"Better go and see," said Handforth, with a gulp. "My only hat! It sounded like a girl!"

"It was a girl—or a woman, anyhow," said Nipper grimly. "She's horribly frightened, too, and after what's been happening—"

"Come on, you chaps! We'd better go and have a look!"

They dashed through West Arch, some of them not particularly eager. But as Nipper and Handforth had led the way they were reluctant to hang back. More than one of



those juniors felt a keen desire to dash indoors, and to slam and lock the door.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Nipper, startled.

The gleam from his electric torch had revealed a prostrate figure on the ground, some little distance from the rear door of the West House—not the door through which the juniors were in the habit of gaining entry, but another door used only by the domestic staff.

"You were right, Nipper—it's a girl!" said Willy tensely.

The prostrate figure was significantly still. The juniors caught a glimpse of slim legs, encased in silk stockings, peeping out from beneath the folds of the warm winter coat. One of the girl's arms was flung outwards, and she was lying face downwards with her other arm twisted beneath her. Her hat had gone, and her shingled hair was blowing about in the wind.

"She's dead—she's dead!" wailed one of the fags. "Help—help!"

"Keep quiet, you young idiot!" growled Handforth. "Don't make all that noise!"

Nipper and Travers were already on their knees, and they raised the girl gently. Her face was deathly pale, and she was breathing heavily.

"She's fainted," said Nipper. "Somebody bring some water—quickly! Get a capful out of the fountain pool."

"Hadn't we better carry her indoors?" suggested Travers.

"Who is she, anyway?" asked Handforth, looking down at the pallid face.

"One of the West House maidservants, I think," said Nipper. "Yes, I recognise her now. We've generally seen her in her cap and apron, and she looks different in ordinary clothes. I wonder what can have happened! What did she see—to cause her to faint away like this?"

"Goodness only knows!" muttered Jimmy Potts, glancing round.

It was certainly extraordinary. There was nothing here to account for the girl's terror.

However, there was no sense in wasting time in looking about; the main thing was to render first aid. Four of the juniors lifted the girl from the ground, and she was carried swiftly into the rear lobby of the West House. Here she was placed on the wooden settee under the notice-board. By now, somebody had come along with a capful of water.

Nipper sprinkled a little on the girl's face, and the rest of the juniors crowded round, watching. Other fellows were coming up—Reggie Pitt and Grey and Castleton and more of the West House stalwarts. Everybody was asking questions.

"Don't crowd round so much," said Nipper. "Hang it, you know jolly well that a fainting person needs plenty of air. Give her a chance!"

The crowd took no notice, but continued to press forward round the fainting girl and her attendants. In the middle of it all, Morrow came along. Arthur Morrow was the head prefect of the West House, and his voice had immediate effect.

"What's all this?" he demanded. "Let me get through, you young asses! Now then—keep back!"

"She's coming round now," Nipper said, with relief.

"What on earth's happened?" asked Morrow, as he arrived by Nipper's side. "Well I'm hanged! It's Elsie! She's one of our housemaids! Somebody had better fetch Mrs. Carr."

He gave quick orders to one of the fags to dash off and fetch the House matron. Then he turned back to the girl.

"What's wrong, Elsie?" he asked gently. "Feeling ill, or something?"

"She's had a fright, I think," said Nipper. "We heard a sudden scream, and when we found her she was lying on the ground in a dead faint."

"She must have seen that awful chap with the yellow face!" said Teddy Long fearfully.

"Yellow face?" repeated Morrow sharply. "What nonsense is this?"

"It's true!" insisted Long.

"Where is it?" breathed the girl, suddenly sitting up and looking about her with frightened eyes. "Oh, I didn't know that—Where's that awful man?" she added, with a sudden catch in her voice. "Did I faint? I don't seem to remember—"

"It's all right, Elsie," said Morrow. "These fellows say that they found you outside. What happened?"

"There was a horrible man out there," breathed Elsie. "I was just going out of doors when I caught sight of him in the gleam of light. He must have been passing the doorway as I opened—"

"I knew it!" chimed in Teddy excitedly. "She saw him, too!"

"Shut up!" snapped Morrow. "Now, Elsie, what did you see?"

"I don't seem to remember very well," whispered the girl. "I only saw him for a moment—a strange-looking man with a hideous yellow face!"

"Ye gods!" ejaculated the prefect, startled.

ELSIE was given into the care of Mrs. Carr, and after that there was a general wave of excitement. It spread from the West House to the Ancient House—and then across the Triangle throughout the Modern and East Houses. Everybody was talking about the mysterious "phantom" with the evil, yellow face. A proper scare went round the Junior School.

There was no doubt about it now. That weird thing had been seen by three independent witnesses. Two of them were somewhat unreliable, but Elsie was known to be a steady, quiet girl who wasn't particularly nervous. Her evidence was reliable. And she had seen exactly the same as Eric Gates and Teddy Long. Without any doubt, some hideous creature was lurking about the school property. There was another search, but not many fellows joined in it. Most of the juniors, at all events, preferred to remain indoors where there was plenty of friendly light.

Fireworks were forgotten. Plenty of juniors had intended venturing out to let off some squibs and crackers, but their plans were now abandoned. There was a general feeling of uneasiness.

CHAPTER 3.

The Mysterious Warning!

M^{R.} NELSON LEE, the Housemaster of the Ancient House, listened thoughtfully while Fenton gave an account of what had been happening.

The famous schoolmaster-detective was looking annoyed. He had heard rumours of the scare, and he had sent for Edgar Fenton. The head prefect of the Ancient House—who was also captain of the school—had already had a conference with Morrow and some of the other prefects. So Fenton had all the facts at his finger-tips.

"That's about all, sir," he concluded. "It's all very vague. We only know that these two juniors saw a strange figure with a yellow face. If it wasn't for that West House maidservant's evidence, I might be



Gates uttered a wild shriek of terror. For standing against the wall was a menacing, sinister figure ; the figure of a man whose face was appalling in its ugliness !

disposed to disbelieve Gates and Long. They're both nervous youngsters. But the girl swears that she saw a stranger with a yellow face, and she was so frightened that she fainted. And according to Mrs. Carr, she's not the kind of girl to be frightened over a trifle."

"You'll have to do your best, Fenton, to reassure the juniors," said Nelson Lee. "It's a bad thing if the younger boys get frightened. The sooner we get to the bottom of this little mystery, the better. It ought not to be difficult to find the culprit."

"Culprit, sir?" said Fenton. "Do you think, then, that it was a trick?"

"What else?" replied Lee. "Think, Fenton. It isn't usual, is it, for people with yellow faces to be lurking round the school property? Such a thing, indeed, is too bizarre for serious consideration."

"A practical joker, you mean, sir?"

"I think it is fairly obvious, Fenton," nodded Nelson Lee. "Some ill-natured fellow is having a bit of fun—or what he considers to be fun. You musn't forget that the Fifth of November is quite near."

"By Jove! That's a point, sir," said the head prefect.

"It is most likely that some boy has manufactured a guy—or, at least, a mask," con-

tinued Lee. "He thought it an excellent opportunity to play a few tricks upon his schoolfellows, and the girl, no doubt, was also regarded as fair game. If this young rascal can be discovered, I shall see that he gets a flogging. There's no fun in such malicious tactics."

"He'll probably go easy now, sir—now that there's such a scare," said Fenton. "It's pretty certain, anyhow, that he didn't expect that girl to faint. Must have given him a shock, and I dare say he'll abandon the whole thing. And that'll make it difficult for us to get hold of him."

"That's what I'm afraid of," replied Nelson Lee gruffly. "The young rascal looks like getting off scot-free. Anyhow, Fenton, you'd better make all the inquiries possible."

"I will, sir."

And Fenton took his departure, looking grim. After he had gone, Nelson Lee sat back in his chair, frowning. He disliked anything of this sort. It was almost a criminal thing deliberately to frighten the more nervous boys. In some instances permanent harm could be done, and boys who were normally steady enough might easily become nervous wrecks.

"If the young rascal is detected, I shall certainly take him to the headmaster for a

flogging," Lee told himself. "Perhaps I had better go out myself——"

His thoughts were interrupted at that second by a splintering crash of glass.

Swiftly he swung round in his swivel-chair. Fragments of glass fell upon the floor as he did so, and at the same second a heavy stone dropped on to his desk. He did not give it a glance. He left his chair as though he had suddenly been propelled by a powerful spring.

In one leap he was at the window, the glass of which was shattered. He flung the frame wide open, and he caught his breath in sharply.

For a brief instant he glimpsed a hideous yellow face, just visible in the radius of the light from the study. Then it vanished amidst the shadows. And Nelson Lee, in that dramatic moment, did not blame the juniors or the servant-girl for being so frightened. That face had been utterly sinister and horrifying. The eyes, in particular, had possessed a quality of evil which brought a doubt into Lee's mind regarding his first theory. A mask—yes. But could any practical joker kindle that devilish gleam in his eyes?

In one movement, Lee was out of the window. He caught sight of a vague shape in the distance, moving rapidly away.

"No you don't, my friend!" muttered Lee angrily.

He dashed off in pursuit, but he had taken only three strides before he crashed to the ground with great violence. Something had apparently caught him round the ankles, and he tripped over and went headlong.

He was taken completely by surprise. Ready as he had been for trickery, he had not suspected such a dodge as this. When he picked himself up, bruised and battered, he knew that it would be useless to continue the chase. That vague figure had gone, and by this time there would be no telling which direction it had taken. The ground was hard, and there would be no footprints. The darkness was intense, and any effort to find the culprit would be doomed to failure.

He examined the stretched wire with great interest. It had been placed in position quite near the window, unseen and deadly. It was about eight inches from the ground, and was stretched so taut that Lee had a very ugly bruise on his left shin—for it was this leg which had caught the full force of the trip.

"This infernal joker believes in being thorough," muttered Lee angrily. "He shall receive full punishment for this outrage, but I'm beginning to suspect that he is no mere junior."

He removed the treacherous wire, and went back into his study. He picked up the heavy stone which lay on his desk, and he was not particularly surprised when he found that there was a card attached to the stone. On this card were the three words, in printed characters:

"TWO DAYS MORE."

"A warning, eh?" muttered Lee ominously. "Crude and absurd!"

A doubt crept into his mind for a second. Was it really the work of a practical joker, or was there something else—something really and truly menacing? He remembered those eyes, but he shook himself and dismissed the melodramatic theory.

"A malicious practical joke—nothing more," he decided. "Probably the work of a man rather than a boy. But who can be responsible?"

He could think of nobody in the school who would get up to such malevolent tricks.

He examined the card with greater care. There was nothing about it which could serve as a clue. It was merely an ordinary piece of cardboard, and the printed characters had been written with commonplace blue-black ink. There was no sense in looking for finger-prints, for even if any existed they would mean nothing. There was no record of finger-prints at St. Frank's.

"I doubt if any St. Frank's boy would have dared to play this trick on me," mused Lee. "What could have been his object, anyhow? Surely he did not think that I should be frightened by such nonsense?"

He thought of the fellows who might conceivably have been guilty of such a "jest." There was Gore-Pearce, of the Remove; but Gore-Pearce, so far as Lee knew, had no grudge against him. And there was Bernard Forrest; but Forrest was in the sanatorium, recovering from the effects of a recent fall he had had from the Ancient House roof. Forrest would not be out for a week or two. There were some seniors who might possibly have a grudge against him, but none belonging to the Ancient House. No, Lee was inclined to believe that this was the work of some outsider.

But he would not give the culprit the satisfaction of further gloating. He would say nothing about this fresh incident, for, if he did, there would only be another scare throughout the school. He would keep it to himself, and he would quietly pursue a few inquiries.

HANDFORTH, in the doorway of the Ancient House, gave one of his most expressive grunts.

"Never known such rot!" he said indignantly. "It's only about half-past six, and it's an hour before locking-up. And yet we're not allowed out of doors! We can't even go out into the Triangle!"

"Who wants to go out into the Triangle?" asked Church.

"I do!"

"Well, we all have our fads and fancies," put in McClure, the Scottish junior. "I'm not frightened, or anything like that, but I don't mind admitting that I'd rather stay indoors."

The order had gone round that no juniors were to leave their respective Houses. And Handforth, who was opposed to all restric-

tions, spoke frankly on the subject. In his opinion, it was all rot. Yet actually it was a sensible move. If there was a practical joker abroad he would be only too glad of further opportunities of scaring his victims. And many of the juniors, while professing themselves ready enough to make a search, might easily be badly frightened if they came into contact with this yellow-faced mystery figure. Far better rob the joker of further victims.

Handforth stared out into the darkness of the Triangle, but he did not venture down the steps. Everything was very gloomy out there. The wind was howling more boisterously than ever, too. It was an unfriendly evening.

"Better shut the door, Handy," said Church. "There's an awful draught, you know."

Handforth made no reply, and Church and McClure moved back towards a group of other fellows. They all went off into the corridor, bound for the Common-room. Church and McClure had an idea that Handforth would follow; but just at that moment Handforth was bent on another move.

His nerves were on the stretch. Suddenly, unexpectedly, he had caught sight of a lurking figure near the shrubbery. He was sure that his imagination was not playing him false. Something was there—something mysterious and vague.

"There he is!" panted Handforth, pointing. "Quick, you chaps! Come on! Now's our chance to grab him!"

He glanced round, and uttered a growl of annoyance when he found that he was alone.

"By George!" he said grimly. "I'll collar the rotter single-handed, then! I'll show 'em!"

He dashed down the steps, ran across the Triangle, and plunged into the blackness of the shrubbery. It was a reckless thing to do, but very characteristic of Edward Oswald. Hands reached out for him. The next second he was pulled over on his back, and he felt sundry knees digging into his anatomy.

"Got him!" chuckled a low voice. "Our old pal, Handy! Couldn't have wished for a better victim, what?"

"Better shove something over his mouth," said another voice. "He'll only yell if we don't!"

Handforth struggled madly.

"Hi!" he gasped. "What the— Let me go, you rotters!"

"Sorry, Handy, old gargoyle," said the first voice. "You won't mind this cap being pushed into your mouth, will you?"

"Wellborne!" gurgled Handforth furiously.

He recognised his captors as Wellborne & Co., of the River House School. There were three of them, and if he had only had a chance to tackle them in a stand-up fight, he would have wiped them up. As it was, they were sprawling all over him, holding him down, and he was at a disadvantage.

The Hon. Aubrey de Vere Wellborne was aided and abetted by the Hon. Bertram Carstairs and the Hon. Cyril Coates. It was

because these three had "the Hon." tacked to their names, and because they were the leaders of the River House rotters, that the whole party was known as "the Honourables." They were, generally speaking, snobs and cads. They were of a totally different type from Hal Brewster and his merry chums—who were the friendly rivals of the St. Frank's juniors.

"That's got him!" said Wellborne, as he proceeded ruthlessly to push the folded cap into Handforth's mouth. "Anybody got a scarf or something? Better tie his face up so that he can't get this gag out.

What about the ropes, too?"

Within three minutes the unfortunate Handforth was trussed up and gagged. But only his arms were tied. His legs were left free. Then he was dragged to his feet and held in position whilst one of the Honourables proceeded to get busy at the rear.

As a matter of fact, strings of jumping crackers were tied to the back of Handforth's jacket and left dangling. Wellborne & Co. considered that this was a priceless practical joke—and, certainly, there was nothing particularly malicious about it. It was just an unpleasant sort of joke.

"Got the match ready?" chuckled the Hon. Aubrey.

"Here it is!" murmured Carstairs. "Shall I light these fuses now?"



YELLOW FACE!

Who is this sinister man who has been skulking around St. Frank's?

And what is his object in wanting to

kill Nelson Lee—for that is his object, sure enough?

The mystery is revealed in next week's yarn, chums. And what a yarn it is, too! Edwy Searles Brooks has really excelled himself. Full of thrilling incidents and dramatic situations, the story will grip you from the very first chapter.

It's coming next Wednesday, chums. Look out for this title:

"BY ORDER OF THE TONG!"

"Rather! Then we'll let him go!"

A match was struck, and then came some ominous sizzling sounds. At the same second the River House juniors dashed away through the shrubbery, chuckling with glee. It was fairly evident that they knew nothing about the events which had been recently taking place—and they were in no fear of the stranger with the yellow face!

CHAPTER 4

Another Sensation!

BANG-BANG! Crack-crack-bang!

Before Handforth got to the Ancient House he was converted into a human machine-gun. Those jumping crackers, tied securely to him, were going off with terrific effect, the continuous explosions creating a shattering din.

"Help!" howled Handforth wildly.

If he had kept his head he would have run straight to the fountain-pool and sat in it. This would have very effectually brought the explosions to an end. But Handforth never thought of the fountain-pool. He only knew that a series of violent and alarming explosions were occurring immediately behind him, and he simply ran as fast as his legs would carry him.

And his yell for help was more or less futile because of the gag that was in his mouth. He meant to yell "Help!" but only a sort of muffled gurgle came.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three River House rotters yelled with laughter. To their minds, there was something extraordinarily funny in Handforth dashing into the Ancient House, with all those explosions taking place in his immediate rear.

"What a pity we can't see the rest of it!" grinned Carstairs.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He'll create old Harry indoors!" chuckled Wellborne. "Gad! There'll be some excitement soon, my sons!"

They had a last vision of Handforth as he ran up the steps of the Ancient House, and vanished into the lobby. The explosions were now becoming more rapid, more continuous. Practically all the jumping crackers were on the go, and as yet they were not a third of the way through their course.

"This was worth all the trouble of coming here and lying in wait," grinned the Hon. Aubrey. "What do you say, you fellows?"

"Yes, rather!" said the other pair.

"Handforth will get into a heap of trouble over this business," continued Wellborne. "Of course, he won't sneak, and we're safe."

A form loomed up out of the darkness.

"Not so safe as you seem to imagine!" said a stern voice. "No, don't attempt to run away! Wellborne—Carstairs—Coates! Stand just where you are!"

The three River House rotters seemed frozen to the ground. There was something extraordinarily compelling in that sharp voice, and although they wanted to bolt, they could not move a limb. Other fellows—St.

Frank's juniors—had many times noted that quality in Nelson Lee's voice.

"You mischievous young rascals!" said Lee sternly. "Come indoors with me at once!"

"We—we were only having a bit of fun, sir!" gasped Wellborne. "We're not doing any harm here! We came to see some of our friends——"

"And you wiled away your time by tying fireworks to Handforth, after roping him up?" interrupted Lee grimly. "That is a practical joke, Wellborne, which is both dangerous and foolish. You will all three come indoors with me."

"Yes, sir, but——"

"Come!" commanded Lee.

Wellborne & Co. hadn't the courage to resist. They indignantly told themselves that Nelson Lee had no authority over them; but, at the same time, they quailed before the sternness of his voice. They had been caught red-handed, and their little game was ruined.

Nelson Lee, in fact, had come across them quite by accident. He had been quietly moving about, hoping to find some trace of the mysterious marauder, and while on this mission he had been attracted by the first explosions. Then he had found Wellborne & Co.

FOR the love of Samson!" ejaculated Vivian Travers mildly.

He and Jimmy Potts and Harry Gresham were walking down the Remove passage. Suddenly a figure had appeared in sight—a wild, dishevelled, frantic figure. It was running at full speed, and cascades of sparks were shooting out from its rear, accompanied by devastating explosions. At least, they sound devastating within the confines of the passage.

"It's Handy!" ejaculated Gresham.

"He appears to be in something of a mess," nodded Travers. "Well, well! What a queer form of amusement some fellows indulge in!"

Handforth, with his arms bound to his sides, and with a scarf covering the lower portion of his face, rushed along. Doors were opening all along the passage, and juniors were pouring out.

"Gangway!" sang out Travers. "Look out, there! Give him room, you fellows!"

"Great Scott!"

"What's happening?"

"Get outside, you idiot! Don't bring those fireworks in here!"

Bang-bang! Crack-crack-bang!

It seemed to Handforth that the bombardment would never cease. He was momentarily expecting to be burnt, but so far he was unharmed. Ill-natured as this practical joke was, there was no real harm in it—there was very little risk of Handforth getting injured.

"Whoa! Steady, you ass!" yelled De Valerie. "Mind where you're coming!"

Everybody wanted to help the unfortunate Edward Oswald, but it was difficult. In that confined space it was well-nigh impossible to

(Continued on page 14.)

FIGHTS OF ST. FRANK'S!



LOOKING through an old volume of the "History of St. Frank's" the other day, I came across an interesting account of a fight that occurred between the boys of St. Frank's and the lads of Bannington. And—But let me put it as Dr. Thimbleby, the author of the history, recounts it:

An interesting article, specially written by NIPPER, in which he takes readers back into the "good old days" at St. Frank's.

retire in confusion. The Royalist was thus enabled to make good his escape to the King, who sent a special messenger back to St. Frank's requesting the venerable headmaster

"Thursday, 24th of August, 1643. I fear me that boys nowadays are getting rougher than ever. Yesterday evening several boys from this school did leave without permission and enter the hamlet of Bannington, hard by. News had reached the school that some wondrously clever mummers had arrived in Bannington, which, I doubt me not, was the reason for their going. There has always been enmity between the boys of the school and the apprentices of Bannington. One Tom Townsend, a hulking youth, and leader of the Bannington boys, did molest the St. Frank's boys as they entered the place. The Bannington boys were armed with stout clubs, while the St. Frank's lads had naught but their hands.

"Owing to superior numbers and clubs, the village boys beat back the school lads; but these, rallied by their leader, James Merryweather, fought hard with their fists, dodging the blows from the cudgels. Some of the St. Frank's boys were grievously hurt, I fear, but eventually they overcame the Bannington lads, and things were going well with them when up dashed a horseman, pursued closely by several more.

"The first horseman was an escaping Royalist being sorely pressed by the Roundheads. The Bannington people were in sympathy with the Royalist cause, owing to the Lord of Bannington being so good to them. Therefore, St. Frank's boys and Bannington boys closed in and protected the fleeing Royalist from the Roundheads. Clubs clashed with swords, but the Roundheads were in the minority, and were forced to

to give the whole school a holiday. The news arrived early this morning, and as I write this in my study, I can hear the shouts and cheers of the boys as they stream out to the fields and the mummers at Bannington."

THERE is another story of a terrific fight which occurred at St. Frank's in the "good old days." Perhaps I had better tell it in my own words.

In the early part of 1735 a wave of smuggling swept over the coast near St. Frank's. The coast thereabouts was a barren, sandy waste, with here and there high cliffs honeycombed with caves. A band of smugglers started operations not far from where Caistowe now stands. These men prospered until their smuggling took on gigantic proportions, and the coastguards were powerless against them. The smugglers were all desperate ruffians and armed to the teeth. However, a brigade of soldiers was sent down to scour the countryside. And one night, when the smugglers were at their activities, they were chased by the soldiers. The only safe refuge was St. Frank's, which, once they entered it, would afford them a garrison to repel the soldiers. But the gates of the school were locked, and the Head refused them admittance. Thus balked, the smugglers forced the gates down, and a lively set-to started between the boys of St. Frank's and the armed smugglers. Several of the lads were hurt by the muskets, but they held the smugglers up long enough for the soldiers to arrive and capture them. Whether the boys were rewarded for their bravery is not recorded, but they jolly well deserved to be!

(Look out for an amusing article by Reggie Pitt next Wednesday, chums!)

THE LIVING GUY!

(Continued from page 12.)

get near him. Juniors dodged out of the way frantically, backing into doorways; the confusion was tremendous.

"You shouldn't have come indoors, Handy!" shouted Church in alarm. "Run straight through—get out at the back! We'll come and untie you!"

It was doubtful if Handforth understood. But as nobody offered to help him he ran straight on, and when he got to the rear lobby he dived outside, with a whole crowd of juniors hard on his heels.

The jumping crackers were on their last lap, and they were making a terrific din.

"Hi! Get away from here!" roared an alarmed voice.

Just outside the rear door—by a remarkably unlucky chance—Chambers, of the Fifth, was pouring some petrol into the tank of his motor-bike. Nothing could have been more unlucky. Chambers had wheeled his machine into the light of the doorway, so that he could see what he was doing, and Handforth, before he could swerve, almost collided with the machine, which was backed up on to its stand.

"Look out!" howled Chambers.

Some instinct seemed to warn him that the situation was desperately perilous. If he had stuck to that petrol-can everything might have been all right; the chances were that Handforth would have rushed on without causing any damage.

But Cuthbert Chambers, of the Fifth, had always been something of an ass, and he was an ass now. He dropped the petrol-can, then bolted—the sight of those flying sparks being a bit too much for him. He wasn't afraid of the sparks themselves, but he was well acquainted with the highly inflammable qualities of petrol.

The can dropped on its side, there was a gush of petrol over the ground—and, not unnaturally, many of the flying sparks fell into the rapidly spreading pool of volatile spirit.

Wooooosh!

It was a most curious sound, half-explosive, half-puff.

Handforth leapt about a yard into the air, and the great sheet of flame missed him by inches only.

"Keep back!" yelled Nipper warningly. "Great Scott! Chambers' motor-bike is on fire!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Stand back, you chaps!"

"My bike!" shrieked Chambers. "Put the fire out, somebody!"

It had all taken place within a second or two. Handforth, running on into the square, was unharmed. Chambers, having backed away in time was also out of danger, and the juniors who had been following Handforth had all come to a halt. There stood the motor-cycle, enveloped in a livid, roaring sheet of flame. In an instant, the West Square was illuminated in every corner

by that lurid glare. Shouts were sounding from the Ancient House and the West House, and more and more boys were arriving on the scene.

"For Heaven's sake, keep back!" shouted Nipper. "That tank's going to explode——"

Boom-oom!

Nipper hadn't time to finish before the explosion happened. It wasn't a very powerful one, for fortunately Chambers had only just started pouring the petrol into the tank. However, there was sufficient to cause another terrific burst of flame. The motor-cycle seemed to lift itself into the air, and then it crashed over on its side, the tank shattered, the whole machine nearly invisible in the roaring flames.

It was a totally unexpected outcome of that firework trick. In common fairness to Wellborne & Co., it must be said that they had had no inkling that anything alarming like this would develop.

HANDFORTH, on the other side of the square, had stumbled, and he was rolling over and over. Without intending to, he put the last of those crackers out, and he was astonished to find he wasn't burnt. Reggie Pitt and Castleton and a number of other West House fellows were buzzing round him, cutting the ropes and releasing him from the enveloping scarf. Nipper & Co. had not yet been able to get out of the Ancient House—for the rear doorway was completely blocked by the leaping flames.

"By George!" gargled Handforth when he found his voice.

"What on earth happened?" asked Pitt, in amazement.

"I might have been killed!" panted Handforth. "I might have been burnt to death!"

"But you're not—so don't worry," said Reggie. "How did you manage to set fire to old Chambers' jigger?"

"I didn't do it!" shouted Handforth. "Those River House cads tied me up, and shoved those fireworks on to me. It was Chambers' fault for dropping the petrol-can—the silly chump!"

"So some of those River House fellows have been here?" said Reggie. "It was a dirty trick to tie crackers to your jacket, Handy. I gave Brewster credit for more commonsense——"

"It wasn't Brewster!" interrupted Handforth. "It was that cad, Wellborne!"

"Ah, that explains it," nodded Reggie. "My hat! Look at that fire!"

"Hadn't we better do something?" asked Castleton. "What about some fire extinguishers?"

"Morrow and some of the other prefects are rushing up with them," said Reggie, as he looked across the square. "Not that they'll do much good. That petrol will soon burn itself out—and the flames are blowing away from the school, anyhow."

A wild figure came flying through West Arch, and it revealed itself as Mr. Pycraft, the master of the Fourth Form.

"Fire! Fire!" he bellowed. "Help! Call the Fire Brigade!"

"Steady, sir!" said Fenton. "Nothing to be alarmed about."

"The school's on fire!" gasped Mr. Pycraft. "Good heavens! We shall all be burnt out! Where are the hoses? Why doesn't somebody——"

"There's no need to get into a panic, sir," snapped Fenton. "It's only some petrol, and it'll burn itself out within a minute or two. There's been a slight accident, but it's not serious."

Chambers, who had overheard, rushed up, quivering with excitement and consternation.

"Not serious!" he hooted. "You're mad! My motor-bike's burnt all up!"

"Well, you needn't make a fuss!"

"It's my new jigger!" howled Chambers. "I've only had it a month! It's gone! It's wrecked! It's nothing but scrap-iron!"

"Cool down, you idiot!" said Fenton. "What's the good of crying over spilt milk? It won't help you to rave on like this, will it? Your bike's gone and there's an end of it."

Chambers stood there gazing frantically at the now-dying flames—and at the heap of blackened mangled wreckage in the middle of them.

"My new jigger!" he groaned hoarsely. "Gone! Wrecked! Oh, my hat! My new jigger!"

Nelson Lee now came striding up. He had left the shivering Wellborne & Co. in charge of Wilson and Biggleswade, of the Sixth, in West Arch.

"How did this happen?" demanded Nelson Lee, taking in the situation at a glance.

"It was Handforth's fault, sir!" panted Chambers, clutching at Nelson Lee's sleeve. "He came rushing out with some fireworks——"

"I couldn't help it!" broke in Handforth. "The fireworks were tied to me!"

"You needn't have come near my motor-bike, need you?" asked the Fifth-Former bitterly.

"How was I to know that your bike was just outside the door, lumbering up the steps?" retorted Handforth. "Besides, you shouldn't have dropped the petrol can like that!"

"Some of the sparks fell into the spilt petrol, sir, and there was a big burst of

flame," explained Nipper. "I don't think it was anybody's fault. Just an accident."

"It was the fault of the boys who tied those fireworks to Handforth's coat," said Lee curtly. "A dangerous practical joke, for which the culprits will pay dearly. Fenton, see after things here, please."

"All right, sir," promised the school captain. "There's no danger—the fire's nearly out now, anyhow. Rather a pity about Chambers' machine—it's completely done for."

"What am I going to do about it, sir?" asked Chambers frantically.

"You will get a new machine, Chambers—have no fear," replied Nelson Lee. "You shall have full compensation for this accident—with as little delay as possible."

He went off, leaving Chambers much relieved. In the meantime Wilson and Biggleswade were keeping a tight hold on Wellborne and Carstairs and Coates.

"You're going to get into a fine bowl of hot water for this," Biggleswade was saying. "You kids tied those fireworks to Handforth's coat, didn't you?"

"We didn't know he'd set fire to a lot of petrol!" sobbed Coates. "It's not our fault! We didn't mean to do any harm!"

"Well, you've done it—and it's lucky for you that the whole school wasn't set on fire," said Wilson curtly. "I shouldn't be surprised if you got the sack for this job!"

CHAPTER 5.

Trouble for Wellborne & Co.!

NELSON LEE strode up, his face stern and angry.

"Thank you, Wilson," he said. "Thank you, Biggleswade. Bring these three boys to the headmaster's house, please."

"Certainly, sir," said the two prefects.

"I say, sir, half a minute!" protested the Hon. Aubrey. "It's

not fair to blame us for what's happened. That petrol was set on fire by accident——"

"That will do, Wellborne," interrupted Lee. "You can say all that you wish to say to the headmaster."

"He's not our headmaster, sir," retorted Wellborne boldly.

"I am well aware of that fact, Wellborne—but Dr. Nicholls is Handforth's headmaster—and Handforth is the boy you so foolishly victimised. It is very lucky for you that he is unhurt. Come! I want no more argument."



Quaking with apprehension, Wellborne & Co. were taken to the Head's house, and soon they were ushered into the presence of Dr. Morrison Nicholls.

It did not take Nelson Lee long to give an account of exactly what had happened, and the headmaster listened with growing gravity.

"This is very serious, Mr. Lee—very serious, indeed," he said, at length. "I have seldom heard of such folly."

"We didn't mean to set anything on fire, sir," sobbed Carstairs.

"You set those crackers on fire!" said the Head sternly. "You tied them to that boy, and you bound his arms so that he could not free himself from the menace; you bound his mouth so that he could not shout for help."

"It was only a joke, sir!" protested Wellborne. "We didn't mean any harm."

"Your sense of humour, young man, is very remarkable," said Dr. Nicholls coldly. "You tie fireworks to this boy, set them off, and then shout with laughter as he runs away. That, in itself, was bad enough. But you might have known that there would be the risk of fire—serious fire. As you have seen, a serious fire did occur. And all because of your incredibly foolish trick."

The River House boys were silent.

"Then there was always the danger that Handforth himself would be burned," continued Dr. Nicholls. "I am afraid that boys, as a class, regard fireworks as a perfectly safe form of amusement. But fireworks should be handled with care—and to tie them to a boy's coat-tails is exceedingly dangerous. I regret that it is not within my power to punish you for this offence."

Wellborne & Co. brightened up.

"However, I shall send you back to your own school without delay," continued the Head. "I shall ring up Dr. Hogge and give him full details of the whole occurrence, and he no doubt will punish you with fitting severity."

Wellborne & Co. drooped again.

"I hope this will be a very stern lesson to you," said the Head. "Fireworks should not be employed for such ill-natured purposes."

"We only thought it was a joke, sir," muttered Wellborne sullenly.

"After Dr. Hogge has dealt with you, I dare say you will change your opinion on the subject of jokes," said the Head. "I shall now send you back to your own school under escort—"

"One moment, sir, if you don't mind," interrupted Nelson Lee. "I would like to question these boys on another matter."

"By all means, Mr. Lee."

"Do you know anything, Wellborne, about a grotesque figure which has been terrifying some of the boys this evening?" asked Nelson Lee, looking steadily at Wellborne. "I suspect that you boys are responsible. Have you—or has one of your companions—been lurking about in the darkness, wearing a yellow mask?"

Wellborne & Co. looked blank.

"A yellow mask, sir?" repeated the Hon. Aubrey. "I don't now what you're talking about."

"We haven't seen anybody like that, sir," said Carstairs. "We don't understand, sir. A yellow mask? Do you mean a yellow face?"

"A mask or a face—as yet I cannot be sure which," replied Lee. "It occurred to me that you boys might know something, but I am satisfied that you do not."

Those blank expressions had told him all he wanted to know. Wellborne & Co. had had no hand in that other alarming affair!

THEY had every reason to regret their visit to St. Frank's, however. They had come to indulge in a "lark," and they went back to the River House to act their parts in a painful drama in which Dr. Molyneux Hogge, was, without dispute, the chief performer.

The three Honourables were taken straight before him by the St. Frank's prefects who had brought them home. And Dr. Hogge was looking very dangerous. He had had a long conversation with Dr. Nicholls over the telephone.

The St. Frank's prefects discreetly took their leave, and the three River House juniors were left "in the lion's den." The Hon. Aubrey was not gifted with the power of prophecy, neither were his companions. Yet they all three had an inkling that the next fifteen minutes were going to be decidedly uncomfortable.

"Wellborne, Carstairs, Coates!" said Dr. Hogge ominously. "I have heard that you have brought disgrace upon your school this evening. You have been to St. Frank's, and you have played a singularly dangerous and ill-natured joke upon a St. Frank's boy."

"It was only a fireworks jape, sir," replied Wellborne.

"I do not object to fireworks at this particular time of the year, although, as you know, I have issued stern warnings regarding the misuse of them," said Dr. Hogge. "You are permitted to indulge in this—er—noisy form of pleasure if you take due precautions. When I hear that you three boys have deliberately tied jumping-crackers to another boy's coat-tails, I can only characterise the trick as malicious and perilous."

"Handforth wasn't hurt by the fireworks, sir," protested Wellborne, with truth. "We tied them in such a way that he couldn't come to any harm. Mr. Lee must have given you a wrong account of the affair."

"It was Dr. Nicholls who gave me all the details," said the Head coldly.

"But Dr. Nicholls got them from Mr. Lee, sir," said the Hon. Aubrey. "It's not fair! We only had a bit of a lark, and I don't see why Mr. Lee and Dr. Nicholls should have made all this fuss. Mr. Lee's always had his knife into us—"

"Silence!" commanded Dr. Hogge angrily. "How dare you, Wellborne? I am amazed



Crash ! There came the sound of splintering glass from the direction of the window, and as Nelson Lee swung round a heavy stone dropped on to his desk !

that you should attempt to excuse yourself. You bound Handforth's arms, you gagged him, and you tied fireworks to his coat-tails. That in itself was an outrage which compels me to punish you with the utmost severity. But there is more."

"We didn't do anything else, sir," put in Carstairs miserably.

"Your practical joke resulted in the total destruction of a motor-cycle," went on Dr. Hogge relentlessly. "That machine, I must inform you, has been valued at sixty-five pounds."

"But we didn't destroy it!" said Wellborne excitedly. "It was Chambers' own fault for dropping the petrol-can. I heard some of the St. Frank's fellows talking——"

"Whatever you heard, it makes no difference to the fact that the machine was destroyed," said Dr. Hogge sternly. "And it was destroyed because of your outrageous conduct."

"It was the spilt petrol which caused the fire, sir," said Coates.

"It was those fireworks, which you attached to your victim's coat-tails, which caused the fire," said the River House Head ominously. "You three boys, by your preposterous folly, endangered the life of Chambers and the lives of other boys. Fortunately, that motor-cycle was insured, and it is possible that the insurance company will admit the claim. If it does not, however, your parents will be informed of the full facts, and they will be

required to make full and absolute compensation."

Dr. Hogge rose to his feet and reached for his cane.

"Now," he went on, "I shall deal with you first, Wellborne. Come over here!"

BY the time Dr. Molyneux Hogge had finished he was breathing heavily, and his right arm ached as it had seldom ached before. Needless to say, Wellborne & Co. also ached—very much so.

They had received the severest flogging of their young lives. They were positively pale and shaky from the effects. They were racked with pain. And, as if this wasn't sufficient, Dr. Hogge dismissed them with staggeringly-heavy impositions. Their leisure time for many a coming evening would be fully occupied. The chopper had come down with fearful force.

On their way to Wragg's House, Wellborne & Co. encountered Hal Brewster and Dave Ascott and a crowd of other Commoners.

"What's the trouble?" asked Brewster curiously. "My hat! You fellows look pretty pinched! You've had it hot, haven't you?"

"Mind your own confounded business!" snarled Wellborne.

"I'll bet they deserved it, whatever they got," said Glynn.

"We saw you brought in by those St. Frank's prefects," remarked Kingswood.

"Naughty boys! What have you been doing over at St. Frank's?"

The three Honourables pushed past, breathing hard. They were not on friendly terms with Brewster & Co., of Marshall's House. They went into their own quarters—into Study No 10—and Wellborne closed the door. Singularly enough, he seemed to have no inclination to sit down, notwithstanding his obvious distress. Carstairs and Coates were equally reluctant to take advantage of the chairs. What they longed for more than anything else was a block of ice apiece. They felt that they could have sat upon blocks of ice with some relief.

"The rotter!" panted Wellborne fiercely. "The miserable, sneaking, mischief-making rotter!"

"You're not talking about Handforth, are you?" asked Coates. "He didn't sneak on us—"

"I'm talking about Lee!" snapped the Hon. Aubrey. "By gad, we'll get our own back, my sons! We'll make him sit up for this!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Carstairs sourly. "What the dickens can we do to Lee? He's a Housemaster at St. Frank's, isn't he? We can't touch him!"

"Can't we?" said Wellborne. "Wait and see! If he hadn't collared us we should have been all right. We should have got away, and nobody would have known."

And Carstairs and Coates, having had the lead, proceeded to vent their own venom upon the head of Nelson Lee. It was most uncalled for and most unreasonable, but the three pain-racked Honourables were not in the mood to consider all the points. Had they done so, they would have known that the destruction of the motor-cycle would have led to searching inquiries, and they would have been howled out just the same.

Simply because Nelson Lee had caught them red-handed, they poured out the vials of their wrath upon his head. He it was who had secured them this flogging; he it was who had caused them all this suffering; he it was who should be the object of their revenge!

CHAPTER 6.

Wellborne's Wheeze!

"HALLO, Yellow Face!" said Travers casually.

Teddy Long turned red.

"Chuck it!" he protested. "No need to be funny, Travers!"

It was the next morning, and Travers was not the only one who had been chipping Teddy Long. It was a fine, clear morning, with plenty of wintry sunshine, and with a continuation of the high wind. But now that full daylight had come the scare had dropped. The juniors were laughing and joking over the events of the previous evening. Teddy Long and Eric Gates, in particular, were the butt of much good-natured banter.

"I hope you slept well, dear old fellow?" asked Travers concernedly, as he studied

Teddy's face. "I think I detect lines of care upon your visage—or is it that you haven't washed properly this morning? Did you suffer from nightmares, or—"

"You can jeer all you like, but I *did* see something last night!" interrupted Teddy defiantly. "A horrible man with an awful yellow face—"

"Exactly!" said Travers hastily. "We've heard it before, dear old fellow. But if it wasn't for the evidence of the fair Elsie, I shouldn't place much reliance on your yarn. It's pretty certain that you did see something. But what?"

"A mask, of course!" said Jimmy Potts, who was standing near by. "Some funny fathead has built a guy for to-morrow evening, I expect, and he thought he'd play a joke. I dare say he would have come out into the open if that servant-girl hadn't fainted. But that scared him, and so he didn't let on who he was."

This was the general opinion in the Junior School. It was felt that "Yellow Face" had been a Fourth-Former, perhaps—somebody from the Modern House or East House. Or, possibly, a youth from the village. And he had been afraid to reveal himself after the servant-girl's fainting-fit.

Certainly nobody believed that there could be anything really sinister in those peculiar incidents. Nelson Lee himself—after a few futile inquiries—was inclined to dismiss the whole matter. He had taken no serious notice of that melodramatic warning. But he badly wanted to get hold of the practical joker; he must be a daring fellow to smash a window and throw a stone on to a Housemaster's desk.

Yet, although Lee was so disposed to banish the whole thing from his mind, there was a vague, lingering doubt. Was he wise to ignore the warning? For wasn't it possible, by some chance, that there was really something evil in it?

Handforth, that morning, gave no thought to the "Yellow Face" incident. His mind was too full of another subject. Almost as soon as he was down he wanted to hurry off to the River House School—and he would have done so, only Church and McClure held him back by force.

"If you fellows don't stop this rot, I'll smash the pair of you!" threatened Handforth, after a bit of a struggle in the Ancient House lobby. "What's the matter with you? I'm going over to the River House, and I'm going to slaughter those cads!"

"It'll be breakfast-time soon—"

"Do you think I care about breakfast, Walter Church?" snapped Handforth. "Those rotters played a beastly trick on me, and I haven't had a chance of smashing them. That gating order doesn't apply now, and I'm going off—"

"But Wellborne and those other chaps have been punished already," put in McClure. "I hear they had a terrific flogging last night from Dr. Hogge."

"What's a flogging, anyway?" Handforth retorted. "They can have a dozen floggings, and nothing will show!"

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"But it feels!" said Church. "I've had some before now—and I know!"

"My idea," said Handforth, "is to take Wellborne first. I'll black both his eyes, make his nose about twice the size it is now, and batter his ears until they look like cauliflowers. Then I'm going to do the same to Coates and Carstairs. I only want about ten minutes with them, and they'll be pulverised!"

Fortunately, Nipper and Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West came along just then, and they helped Church and McClure in keeping Handforth back.

OVER at the River House School, Wellborne & Co. were in a different mood this morning. Their enmity against Nelson Lee was as strong as ever, but they had come to the conclusion—after sleeping on the idea—that it would be decidedly unwise to take any direct steps of revenge against Nelson Lee.

Their decision, after a lot of talk, was

singularly peurile. In a word, it was characteristic of them.

"We'll make a guy," said the Hon. Aubrey. "We'll make it look just like Lee, and we'll shove it on the top of our own bonfire and burn it to-morrow evening! We'll burn that blighter, Lee, in effigy!"

"That'll show him!" said Carstairs vindictively.

"Oh, rather!" agreed Coates.

And they proceeded to enlarge upon the wheeze. They were having a very special bonfire of their own for the "night." They had even hired a corner of a meadow, and had paid a lot of money to have an enormous bonfire built.

It was really intended as a demonstration of their wealth. It was a blatant display. They had pots of money, and so they could afford to have their own bonfire. It was to be far bigger than any other bonfire, and it would make the rest of the chaps green with jealousy. At least, so the Hon Aubrey believed. None of the Commoners would be admitted into that meadow, so they wouldn't

be able to enjoy the special blaze. It would be reserved for Wellborne & Co. and all their pals.

As for the effigy, Wellborne soon had an idea.

One of the Honourables was rather clever at clay modelling, and he readily consented to try his hand at the special job which Wellborne outlined.

"It oughtn't to be difficult," said the Hon. Aubrey. "We've got a good photo of Nelson Lee handy, and you can have it in front of you while you're working. What we want you to do is to make a proper effigy—one that looks just like Lee himself. You need only do the head—we can do the rest. We'll make a proper body, with arms and everything. We can shove a wig on the clay head, and a hat on top. By the time we've finished we'll have a first-class guy of that beast, Lee."

And they went ahead with this ineffable scheme. Second thoughts had shown them that it would be most unwise—most dangerous—to adopt any form of revenge which meant actual contact with Nelson Lee himself. But they would be safe in doing anything they liked with Nelson Lee's effigy! They could burn it, and jeer at it while it was being burnt. And this, in the eyes of the Hon. Aubrey & Co., would be an excellent form of amusement.

Boxley was the fellow who tackled the clay modelling, and he was quite clever at it. Out in an old shed he proceeded to commence work, with an admiring audience of Honourables all round him.

"You needn't expect anything yet," said Boxley, who was a thin, studious sort of fellow. "It'll take me hours to get it into shape."

"I don't believe you'll ever get it into shape," remarked Delaney, of Study No. 3. "You might produce some sort of face out

presently the audience drifted away, leaving the amateur sculptor to himself. Modelling was Boxley's passion, and now he had something definite to do—something that he had been challenged to do—he was putting his best into it. The one snag, in his opinion, was that his masterpiece would be burned when it was finished. It seemed a pity to take all this trouble for such an ignominious dénouement.

LATER in the day Wellborne & Co. came along and inspected the progress of the work.

They were agreeably surprised. Boxley was hard at it, his hands daubed with clay, and he was putting deft touches here and there. The other fellows gathered round in a critical audience.

"Well, it looks a bit like a head, anyhow," said Coates. "I can even see a couple of ears."

"Ears?" said Delaney. "I thought they were horns. Aren't you going to provide the blighter with any horns, Boxley?"

"That's not a bad idea, though," grinned the Hon. Aubrey. "Shove a couple of horns on, Boxley. It'll look more realistic."

"Rot!" said Boxley. "If I provided horns, they'd only be symbolic—and I don't believe in symbolism. I'm going to make this a life-like portrait."

"You've got your work cut out," said Delaney caustically. "Why, I could have done better myself!"

"All right—try it!" shouted Boxley in a sudden fury. "Clay modelling isn't so jolly easy as—"

"Steady!" interrupted Wellborne. "No need to start any rows, Boxley."

"Well, take this sneering idiot out!" fumed the amateur modeller.

After tea, Delaney was called upon to apologise. Boxley had managed to escape afternoon lessons—he had pleaded a headache, and Mr. Wragg, his Form-master, had allowed him to go and have a nap. Actually, Boxley had sneaked to the shed and had put in some good hours of work. Now the Honourables had come round to inspect the result.

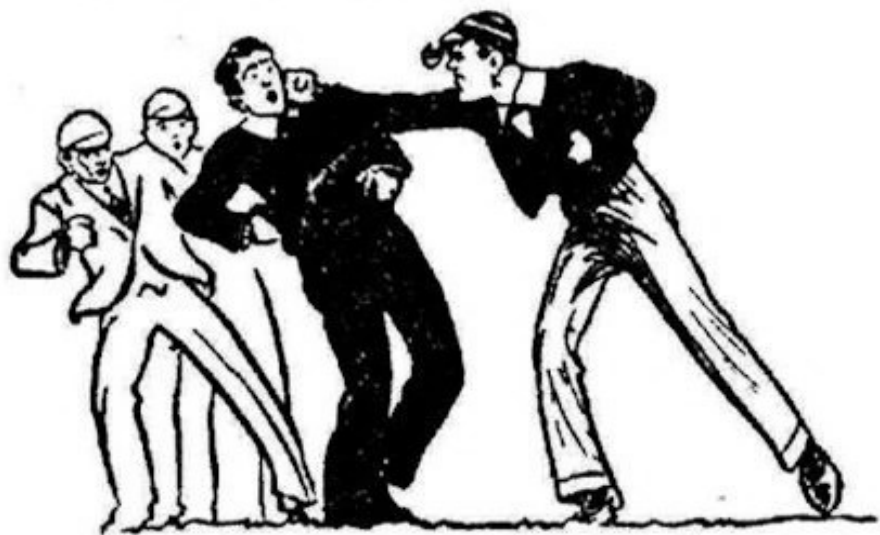
It was astonishing. The model was nearly complete, and Boxley had produced a very creditable life-size bust of Nelson Lee. Not that Delaney apologised. He professed that he was right, and that nobody on earth would ever recognise Nelson Lee's features in this "blob of clay." But Delaney was pushed aside, and nobody took any notice of him.

"It's first-class, Boxley!" declared the Hon. Aubrey enthusiastically. "Gad! You've done wonders! There's only one improvement that I can suggest."

"Oh?" said Boxley, with the quick jealousy of the true artist.

"We ought to put some paint on it," said Wellborne. "Make it sort of pink—like a real human face. And how about using a couple of glass marbles for eyes?"

"Great wheeze!" said Carstairs, nodding. Boxley was horrified.



of that muddy-looking clay, but if it ever looks like Lee, I'll eat my boots!"

Boxley stiffened.

"Think I can't do it?" he challenged.

"Let's see you!" grinned Delaney.

"Shut up, and don't disturb the artist!" said the Hon. Aubrey. "One of these days Boxley is going to be a famous sculptor. He'll produce horses that look like prehistoric monsters, and he'll be acclaimed as the cleverest sculptor in the world!"

The others chuckled, and Boxley proceeded with the preliminary part of his job. It was not particularly exciting to watch, and

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.—What is the name of the Third-Former who is known as "Soppy"?
- 2.—Who is the senior at St. Frank's who is a brilliant actor?
- 3.—What is the date of Nipper's birthday?
- 4.—What is the name of the prefect who, although a rotter, is also a brilliant cricketer?
- 5.—How many Houses are there at the River House School; and what are their names?
- 6.—How many holes has the St. Frank's golf course?
- 7.—Where is Edward Oswald Handforth's country home situated?

- 8.—What is the name of Willy Handforth's pet snake?
- 9.—Who is the chaplain at St. Frank's?
- 10.—Who are the occupants of Study No. 8 in the Modern House?
- 11.—Who is the "handy man" in the Remove?
- 12.—What is the colour of Walter Church's eyes?

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUESTIONS:

1. *Lightning.* 2. *Phyllis Palmer.* 3. *Yes.* 4. *Richard Hamilton.* 5. *Solomon Levi.* 6. *Timothy Tucker, Clarence Fellowe and Robert Canham.* 7. *In the School House.* 8. *Mr. Arthur Blake.* 9. *Holt's Farm.* 10. *The River Nare.* 11. *Blue.* 12. *Jack Owen.*

"You'll ruin it!" he protested. "I won't let you do it! You'll spoil all my work if you mess about like that!"

But Wellborne and one or two others messed about. The model was painted, and glass marbles were used as eyes. From a distance the result was startling. With a wig on that clay head, and a hat perched on the top of the wig, there was something uncannily lifelike about the figure.

Not that it really resembled Nelson Lee. The features were somewhat the same, but there the resemblance ended. It was only from a distance that the thing actually looked human. And those glass eyes were staring and awful. Boxley considered that he had done all his work for nothing—that this "improvement" was ruinous, but perhaps he was wrong. As a guy, the wretched thing was just about as good as it could be.

It was a sidelight on the mentality of Wellborne & Co. that they could spend so much time on this absurd effigy. They told themselves that they would get a large measure of amusement later on when the bonfire was lighted—when they saw the guy sitting amidst the flames, slowly crumpling. As they couldn't very well burn Nelson Lee himself, they were determined to do the next best thing and to burn his image.

The pitiful feature of the whole affair was that Boxley should have lent his efforts to such a purpose; for Boxley was really clever. And, being clever, he was the only Honourable who really felt sad about the business.

THAT evening at St. Frank's, Handforth caused more trouble. He wasn't vindictive, but he considered it his duty to pay a personal visit to the River House School, to seek out Wellborne & Co., and to pulverise them. The fact that they

had already been thrashed by their own headmaster made no difference; Handforth regarded a Head's swishing as a mere trifle. What those cads needed were a few black eyes and a sundry assortment of thick ears.

"They played a dirty trick on me last night!" he declared. "They tied fireworks to my coat-tails, they bound my arms—"

"We know all about it, old man," interrupted Nipper gently. "Chambers' motor-bike was burnt—and we know all about that, too. Chambers has been raving throughout the school ever since this morning. He's been going from House to House, and from study to study, until some of the fellows have been forced to kick him out. They're sick of his motor-bike, and they hope he'll never get another one."

"That doesn't alter the fact that those Honourables deserve a hiding," argued Handforth. "I'm the chap to do the job—and I'm going!"

"And what do you think'll happen if you do?" asked Church tartly. "Do you suppose that Wellborne will keep quiet about it? He'll sneak to Wragg. He's Wragg's favourite."

"What about it?" asked Handforth. "Wragg's nothing to me, is he? I'm not afraid of him?"

"But Wragg will peach," said Church. "He'll tell Dr. Nicholls, and then you'll be shoved on the carpet."

"Who cares?" said Edward Oswald. "I shall have had the satisfaction of swiping Wellborne & Co."

"And you'll have the dissatisfaction of being gated all to-morrow," said Nipper.

"Eh?"

"And to-morrow's the Fifth," said Church. "It's not worth the risk, Handy. You won't



Just as Nelson Lee approached the stile, he felt a sudden sting at the side of his neck; at the same time his legs sagged beneath him. He did not see the sinister faces peering behind the hedge.

be able to enjoy any of the fireworks, or anything."

Handforth snorted.

"I've had enough of fireworks to last me until next year!" he retorted. "Do you think I care about fireworks?"

The others chuckled, but Handforth was finally persuaded. Not that he had the slightest intention of letting Wellborne & Co. off. Their punishment was merely postponed!

CHAPTER 7.

An Amazing Development!

"GOOD egg!" said Handforth, in a tone of serene contentment.

He was striding across Little Side in the gloom of the November evening. Five minutes earlier he had mentioned to Church and McClure that he was "popping out for something." They thought that he had gone to the school shop—as he had intended them to think. But he had dodged them, and was now on his way across the fields to the River House School.

It was the great day—the famous "Fifth"—and tea was already over. The evening celebrations would soon be commencing. The weather was fine, and the conditions were excellent for fireworks.

Handforth, however, had a few fireworks of a different kind to let off before he could enjoy the rockets and Roman candles and set pieces. His knuckles were fairly itching to get at the noses of the Hon. Aubrey, the Hon. Bertram, and the Hon. Cyril.

At last he had managed to get off on his mission. The other Removites had taken it for granted that he would do nothing now until after this display. But that was just where they were wrong. Handforth had promised them that he would give Wellborne & Co. a respite; but he had made no definite time period. He thought it a brilliant scheme to pop over to the River House now, and to get the thing done with at once.

He was glad that he hadn't committed the slaughter yesterday. If he had done so, Wellborne & Co. would have had a chance to recover before to-night. But as it was, he would smash them up, and leave them scattered over various parts of the River House grounds. It was a moral certainty that they would be quite unable to enjoy any of the firework celebrations. It would be a fitting punishment.

Thus thought Handforth as he serenely continued on his way. Handy was on the warpath!

WHILE Edward Oswald Handforth was hurrying across the meadows with these warlike thoughts in his mind, Wellborne & Co. were hard at work on a special task of their own.

In a word, they were fixing Nelson Lee's effigy on the top of their bonfire.

It was rather a ticklish job. The effigy itself was an excellent piece of work. Boxley's masterpiece had been fitted on to the



Just as Nelson Lee approached the stile, he felt sagged beneath him. He did not

body—this body being mainly constructed of hay stuffed into an old suit of clothes. The whole thing had been fastened to an ancient chair, and the idea was to rope this chair securely on to the very top of the great bonfire. There it would be perched, to be re-

vealed by the leaping flames after the fire had been lit.

Wellborne & Co. were doing the job on their own. The Hon. Aubrey rather wanted to give the rest of the Honourables a surprise. So for once he and his two pals were doing a bit of work. They had ladders propped against the bonfire, and they were hoisting the chair and its burden on to the top of the unlit bonfire.



the side of his neck; at the same time his legs faces peering behind the hedge.

"Easy, now," said Wellborne, as they were half-way up. "For goodness' sake, Bertie, be careful! If we drop this thing, it'll be ruined."

"We shan't drop it," said the Hon. Bertram.

The bonfire was a very big affair. It had cost the Honourables a pretty penny. The base was built up of faggots, and there were empty tar barrels incorporated, too. The bonfire tapered slightly, and it was all of twenty feet in height, so it was necessary to use ladders in order to perch that effigy on the top.

At last they succeeded in their task. They secured the chair, roping it firmly. The top of this great pile was so stable that the three River House boys could almost stand up there.

"That's done the trick," said Wellborne gloatingly. "Gad! It'll look fine from the ground—when the flames begin to curl up. Won't we groan and jeer as Lee begins to burn!"

Little did they realise that eyes were watching them—keen, mysterious eyes. Over by a neighbouring hedge there were two silent, motionless figures. They had been there for some little time, and they had seen everything. Not that they made the slightest attempt to interfere. They watched, and their faces were yellow and evil!

"WELL, that's that!" said the Hon. Aubrey complacently. "We'll give the chaps a bit of a surprise later on, eh?"

"You bet!" said Carstairs. "We've got to do our prep. first, haven't we? That's the order, I believe."

"Hogge ought to be burnt in effigy, too!" growled Coates. "Fancy making us do our prep, before the celebrations! A rotten idea!"

"Well, it won't take long," said the Hon. Aubrey. "After that we shall have the evening to ourselves, and we're all prepared now. Besides, Wragg's going to be a sport. I had a word with him this afternoon, and although he didn't promise anything, he hinted that he'll let us out of prep. after about twenty minutes. We shall be able to start our display half an hour before the rotten Commoners."

"G o o d!" said Carstairs. "Wragg's a sportsman!"

They were near to the River House grounds by now, and a dim figure suddenly loomed out of the surrounding gloom. It came towards them menacingly, and halted in their path, barring their way.

"What's the idea?" asked Wellborne, peering forward. "Who's this?"

"It's me!" said a well-known voice, with a total disregard of grammar. "It's me, you cads! And, by George, I'm going to slaughter you!"

"Handforth!" breathed Coates, in alarm. "Hi! Help!"

"We'd better bolt!" ejaculated Carstairs. "There might be some of the other St. Frank's chaps, and it's an ambush! Run for it!"

"You needn't be scared!" said Handforth contemptuously. "I'm all alone! And I'm going to give myself the pleasure of thrashing you. So you'd tie fireworks to me, would you? You'd rope me up, and make a fool of me?"

"Nature did that!" said Wellborne sourly.

"By George!" roared Edward Oswald, rushing forward.

He went for the Hon. Aubrey bald-headed, and the Hon. Aubrey scarcely had time to put up his fists.

Crash!

Handforth's right landed on Wellborne's nose, and the leader of the Honourables toppled over with a wild, anguished howl. Carstairs and Coates were already beginning to run.

"Come on!" bellowed Handforth. "Get up, you cad! Get up, so that I can knock you down again!"

"You fool!" snarled Wellborne, picking himself up. "Keep your dirty hands to yourself! I'm not going to fight you!"

"Aren't you?" said Handforth. "All right! If you won't fight me, I'll get your head in chancery and pulverise your features! Now then, are you going to put up your fists?"

"Yes," snarled Wellborne. "Hi, Bertie! Cyril! Lend a hand here! This idiot has asked for trouble, and we'll give it to him!"

"Do you think I care a jot about Bertie and Cyril?" laughed Handforth. "Let 'em all come! I'll fight the lot!"

The Hon. Bertram and the Hon. Cyril, feeling that their leader needed them, rushed to the attack. They knew that Handforth was a great fighter, but they felt that it would be quite easy for them to overwhelm him. It was a case of three against one, anyhow, and the one was bound to go under.

"Come on!" panted Wellborne. "He's asked for it, and we'll give it to him! We'll smash him until he's black and blue all over, and then we'll paint him with tar! There's plenty in one of those old barrels that wasn't used! We'll send him back to St. Frank's in such a mess that——"

He got no further, Handforth's fist having effectually closed his mouth. Carstairs and Coates, at the same moment, dashed into the battle. This suited Handforth down to the ground. Out came his left, round swung his right, and his blows were lightning-like in their speed, and sledgehammer-like in their force.

He enjoyed himself immensely.

Down went Wellborne, and down went Carstairs. Coates managed to get a feeble thrust home, but a second later he went down, too. The three cads picked themselves up, nearly foaming with rage. They hurled themselves at the sturdy Removite once more, only to meet with the same fate again. Even the three of them could do nothing

against this valiant fighter. Handforth was impregnable. His blood was up, and he was having the time of his life.

A glorious scrap of this sort did not come his way very often. He couldn't very well go about fighting people just for the sake of fighting. He might have enjoyed it, but it wouldn't have been fair to the others. But now he had a strong case. He felt that it was necessary for him to reduce Wellborne & Co. to pulp. And he was certainly doing his best to accomplish this feat.

"Come on! What's the matter with you?" panted Handforth as he stared down at the three squirming figures on the ground. "You haven't had enough, have you? By George, three against one—and you haven't the pluck to keep it up! What's the matter with you?"

It was an unnecessary question, for he knew exactly what was the matter with Wellborne and his pals. They were dazed from the effects of the blows that he had just delivered. And it was a fact that Edward Oswald himself was not even marked. His knuckles, perhaps, were bruised a bit, but he didn't mind this.

"You—you dangerous cad!" panted Wellborne, half sitting up. "Clear off from here! We're not going to do any more fighting. We've finished with you."

"Oh, have you?" said Handforth. "Well, I haven't finished with you! I've only just started!"

"Call some of the other chaps!" groaned Carstairs.

"My only sainted aunt!" ejaculated Handforth, in amazement. "Do you admit that I've bested you? Three of you! Three to one, and you can't fight me! Well, I knew you were cowards, but I didn't think that you were such milksops as this!"

"Come on!" grated Wellborne, nearly beside himself.

He dashed to the attack again, and Coates and Carstairs, following his example, rushed in. They hoped to trip their tormentor up, and to get him down. Once that was done—once they got hold of him—they could get their revenge.

But Handforth was not so easily "downed." He knew what to expect from these fellows, and he avoided their foul tactics. He side-stepped, landed a smasher on Wellborne's right ear, side-stepped again, and caught Coates and Carstairs in his grip, banging their heads together with such force that they shrieked in agony and toppled over.

"So you'd fight dirty, would you?" panted Handforth disgustedly. "By George, you're not worth the trouble I'm taking to teach you a lesson!"

In any case, the battle was over. Coates was already staggering off, and Carstairs was following him. The Hon. Aubrey, left alone, felt that the atmosphere was unhealthy. He reeled to his feet and fled.

Edward Oswald was left in triumphant possession of the battlefield.

(Continued on page 26.)



Edward Oswald 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.

R. D. (Nottingham) writes me a very doleful letter in which he tells me he is slow-thinking and slow-moving. Can I suggest anything which will put some pep into him. Most certainly, old man. Just try out this little stunt and I guarantee effective results. Place some short tin-tacks on a chair, then stand with your back to the chair and sit down upon it forcibly. Immediately you sit down the thought will flash to your mind that you will want to get up again; and you will do this with alacrity. Get the idea? In this way both your mind and movement will work with lightning-like rapidity. Repeat the performance at least a dozen times daily for a week, and you'll soon be O.K.

"NORA" (Glasgow). Your P.S. to the effect that if I don't acknowledge this letter you will never write me again leaves me cold. In fact, I refuse to be intimidated by any such threat, and so I shall not acknowledge your letter at all.

K. M. (Edinburgh) asks which Scout at St. Frank's has the most badges. Can't you guess? Why, you can't see my uniform for badges.

"JOAN" (Bath). Thanks for your very charming letter. I was very interested to hear that you're swimming for the Championship of Bath, and wish you success. Yes, I am keen on swimming, but haven't much use for polo. Of course, I'd make a fine player, for I can ride a horse with the best of 'em, and no doubt I'd score umpteen goals or chukkers, or whatever you call the blessed things. I should imagine it is rather a dangerous sport, too. Some of the Removites are clumsy fatheads, and life wouldn't be safe if they went about swinging those hefty poles with knobs on—you know, the things with which they score goals. (Trust old Handy to get mixed. He hasn't realised that his correspondent was talking about water polo!—Ed.)

G. E. BUCK (Homerton) suggests that I should throw Gore-Pearce into the fountain. The said suggestion has been carried out.

You'd better write me at least once a day, old man, if you're going to make such sensible suggestions!

D. A. HANLON (West Australia) wants to know how to stop toothache. Give the offending molar a good, hearty tap with a sledgehammer. This will have the effect of knocking the nerve senseless. If ever you yourself get toothache, just come along to St. Frank's and I'll do the deed for you. I've got a jolly fine sledgehammer in the study. And I hope the question of travelling expenses won't deter my Aussie correspondent, for he can always get a cheap day return ticket.

LEONARD M. JONES (????). This is not the age of miracles, so I shall certainly not give Willy 10/- when he asks for 5/-. Glad you think I'm an everlasting joke. If only you knew what I think about you—

M. KOJI MOHAMED (Singapore). Thanks for your letter. Yes, do write and tell me something about Singapore. I'm afraid my knowledge of Japan is rather rocky.

L. COOK (Lynmouth) says he wants to ask me two questions, and proceeds to ask three. Where's your arithmetic? The most popular person at St. Frank's is—no, I don't think I'll answer this question; it's too dangerous! There are many chaps interested in photography at the school; I'm an expert, you know. How many times do I kiss Irene a week? What's that got to do with you, O Jealous One?

REG THOMPSON (Melbourne). Interested to hear that you're called Rastus for short. If you think Rastus is shorter than Reg—well, good luck to you! I quite agree with you when you say your two questions are silly ones, but I'll answer them all the same. "Which came first; the hen or the egg?" Write to Mr. Adam for an answer; sorry, but I can't give you his address. "Who is going to bury the last person who dies?" Himself, I suppose.

EDWARD OSWALD.

THE LIVING GUY!

(Continued from page 24.)

AT just about this same time Nelson Lee was walking up to St. Frank's from the village. He was in a thoughtful mood. He arrived opposite the stile near Bellton Wood at just about the moment when Handforth was commencing his scrap with the River House cads. But Nelson Lee, of course, knew nothing whatever about that encounter.

He had been to the village to question one or two people there. He had heard rumours during the day that mysterious figures had been seen lurking about after nightfall. Joe Catchpole, of Holt's Farm, had sworn that he had seen a stranger in one of the meadows. There was a feeling getting about in the village that there was something mysterious going on, and more than one village mother had forbidden her children to venture out of doors after dark.

Lee's inquiries had not led to much. He had only heard rumours; nobody had definitely stated that there were mysterious strangers in the neighbourhood. Lee was already beginning to suspect that it was Elsie who had set the rumours going. Probably the girl hadn't intended to create any scare. But she had certainly seen something very remarkable two nights earlier, and even now she had not fully recovered from the effects. She persisted in stating that the man she had seen was a foreigner—a horrible-looking indi-

vidual with a yellow face. Lee was puzzled over the whole occurrence, and he was doing his utmost to elucidate the little mystery. He had an idea that the explanation would turn out to be simple. He had not forgotten that warning which had been flung into his own study, attached to the stone.

If that stone had been flung by a practical joker, what was the object of it? Who was the joker? Lee was satisfied that nobody at St. Frank's was guilty.

If an outsider was responsible, who was this outsider?

The thing was puzzling and irritating. It didn't seem to be worthy of any really serious investigation; and yet, now and again, Lee had a vague impression that there might be something big behind it all.

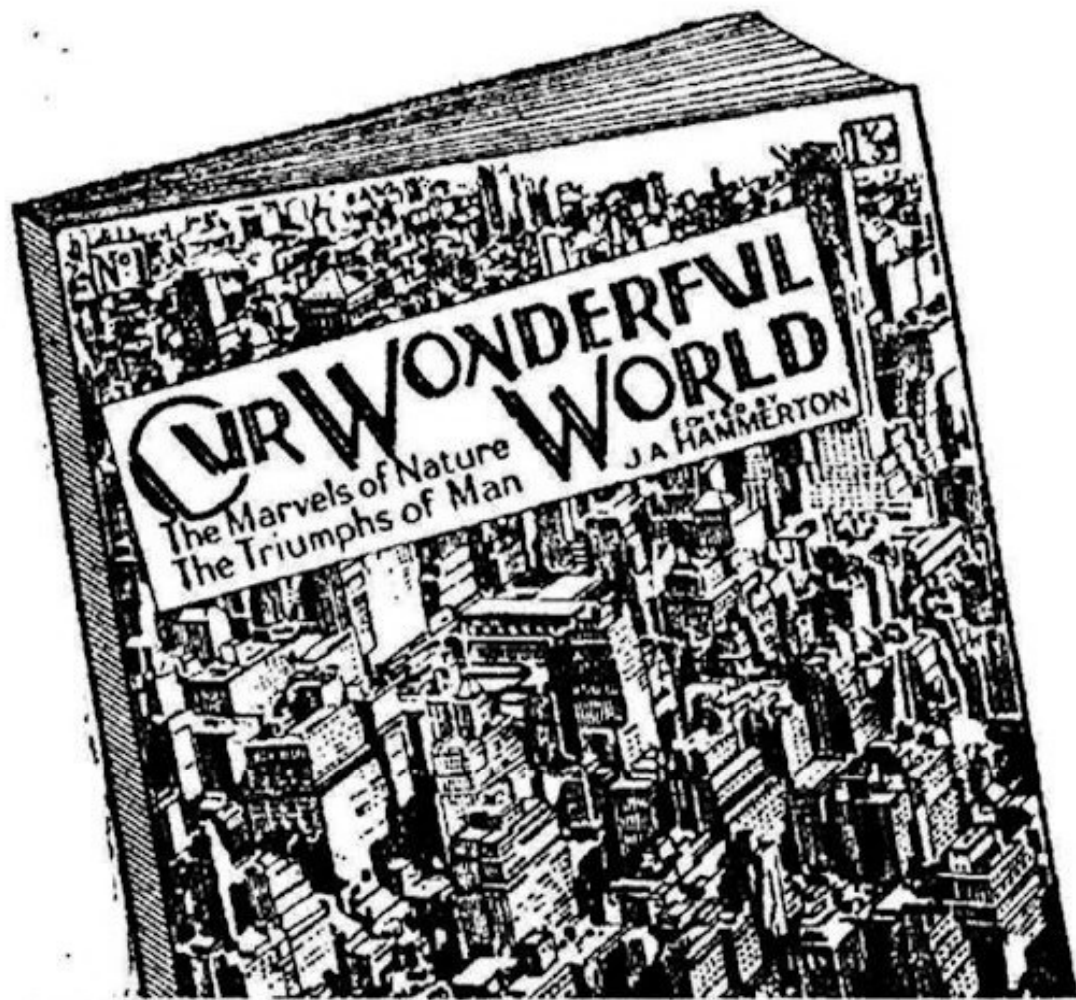
Just as Lee got opposite the stile he felt a kind of sting at the side of his neck. It was a most peculiar sensation—a quick thrust, as though a wasp had stung him. There were no wasps at this time of the year, or stinging insects of any kind. He put his hand up to the spot instinctively, and as he did so his knees sagged, and he fell in a disordered heap.

Instantly four figures appeared—two from either hedge. They seized Lee, and whisked him into the wood within the space of ten seconds. Once there, they produced thin cords and trussed him up. There was something sinister in the proficiency of these unknown enemies. They worked without exchanging a word, and it was obvious that their whole procedure had been rehearsed.

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Having tied Lee securely, they lifted him from the ground and carried him along the woodland footpath. Then presently they came out into the open and made off across a meadow. It was not long before they reached the dark, silent pile which represented Wellborne & Co.'s unlit bonfire.

Apparently these mysterious men had observed what had been going on at the bonfire, and now they were seizing upon a sudden opportunity. There was, perhaps, an element of chance in this, for they could not have known that Nelson Lee would be walking up the lane at that particular hour.

The bonfire was deserted; but it was about the same time that Wellborne & Co. finished their hectic scrap with Handforth.

Nelson Lee was placed on the ground, two ladders were swiftly brought and reared up against the bonfire. Two men mounted, and with great precision and speed they cut the bonds of the effigy at the top of the pile, and carried it down.

Then these mysterious men—these shadowy unknowns—carried the unconscious figure of Nelson Lee up the ladders. They tied him securely to the chair that was perched on the top of the bonfire.

They made him secure, then descended, and carried the ladders back to the place where they had found them.

They disappeared into the darkness of the November night, removing the effigy with them.

And there, on the top of that bonfire, sat the unconscious form of Nelson Lee—in place of the guy!

CHAPTER 8.

The Living Guy!

“GUY, guy, guy!”

Handforth heard somebody chanting monotonously, and there were some yells of laughter, too. Handforth was just on the point of returning to St. Frank's, having come to the conclusion that he had finished his job satisfactorily.

“We don't care who'll see, we're out for a spree!” chanted the voice. “Three cheers for the three, and we'll burn Nelson Lee!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Guy, guy, guy—we'll do Lee in the eye!”

There appeared to be quite a few revellers, judging by the laughter; and Handforth, hearing these sounds waited to him on the night air, was puzzled. He might have understood it if the chanters had been talking about Mr. Wragg. But why Nelson Lee? He considered that the matter wasn't worth investigating, and he turned on his heel and hurried off across the meadow, in the direction of St. Frank's.

After a bit he paused, glancing over towards his left. Something was sticking up into the sky—something which should not have been there—like a kind of tower. Handforth wasn't an observant fellow as a rule, but this thing obtruded itself so much that he could not avoid noticing it.

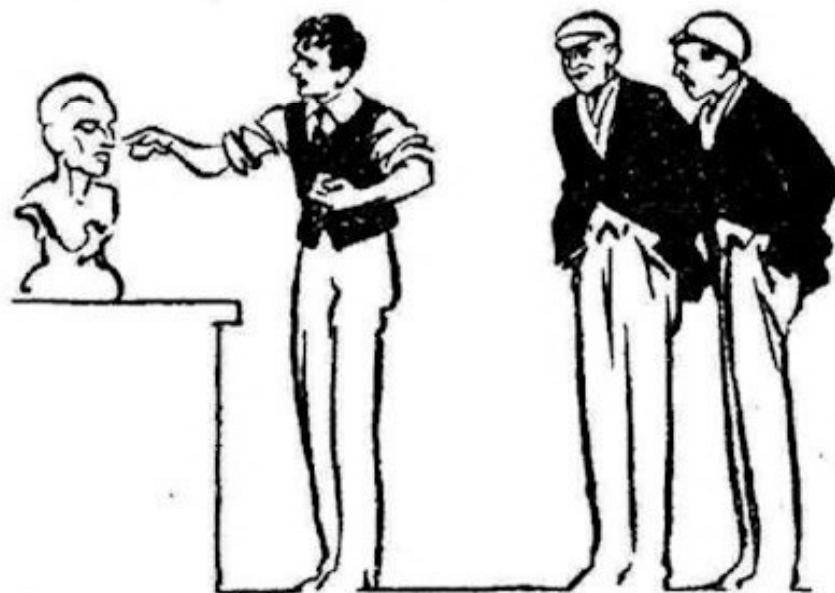
He had seen it on the way to the River House, too, but he had been so intent upon

his mission that he had not paused to investigate. Now that his task was done, he felt that he had more time. He had altered his direction, wondering what the big pile would prove to be.

He couldn't remember that any building operations were going on just here, and he could think of no other possible explanation. Why build anything in this meadow, anyhow? It was low-lying, and very often, in the winter-time, it was flooded.

“My only sainted aunt!” ejaculated Handforth abruptly.

He could see now. The thing was a huge bonfire. He was at close quarters, and he stared at it fascinatedly. He had never seen



such a big bonfire before. There was nothing at St. Frank's like it.

“By George! These River House chaps mean to do the thing in style, by the look of it,” he muttered. “When this is set alight, it'll be worth watching!”

Up against the skyline something was silhouetted. Handforth frowned at it. It seemed to him that it was almost like a human figure sitting on a chair. But it was difficult to see clearly, because of the faggots which surrounded the chair. A thought occurred to him, and he pulled out an electric torch.

He flashed it on, and directed the beam upwards towards that thing at the top.

“Well I'm jiggered!” he ejaculated, startled.

He could see that it was only a guy—but a remarkably lifelike one. Just like the figure of a man sitting in a chair, surmounted by a battered old hat. The light from the torch fell upon the face of the supposed effigy. The battery was getting rather weak, and the beam was not very powerful. But there was sufficient light for Handforth to notice something significant. He gave a violent start. Was it imagination, or was the face of that guy like Nelson Lee?

“The rotters!” panted Handforth abruptly. “Great Scott! The insulting rotters! This must be Wellborne's work! Wellborne and his beastly pals!”

He remembered those chanting words which had drifted across to him on the night air:

“Three cheers for the three, and we'll burn Nelson Lee!”

So this was what those words meant! Wellborne & Co. had made a guy, and they were going to burn it on the top of their

bonfire—and the guy was supposed to be Nelson Lee!

Handforth was no fool. He remembered what had happened at St. Frank's, and how Nelson Lee had carried Wellborne & Co. off to the Head. This was the Hon. Aubrey's idea of getting his own back! Nelson Lee was to be burnt as a guy!

He stared up fascinatedly, finding it difficult to believe that the River House cads could have made such a remarkably good image. It was uncannily lifelike.

But its very silence and stillness proved that it must indeed be a thing of straw and stuffing. Besides, how could it be, by any wild stretch of the imagination, anything else but a guy? Handforth was impressed by the lifelike appearance of it, but it was out of the question that he should have any real inkling of the dreadful truth.

He only knew that this affair was an insult to his own Housemaster. And these River House cads were responsible! His first impulse was to dash back to the River House and to tackle Wellborne again.

But he wisely dismissed this idea. He would only be grabbed, and probably be made a prisoner until after this display was over. It would be well-nigh impossible for him to climb up this bonfire and remove that outrageous effigy.

"There's only one thing to do—I'll have to fetch the chaps," muttered Handforth grimly. "It's early yet—and I don't suppose they'll light this fire for another half-hour. Time for a crowd of us to come along and destroy the whole thing. By George! We'll show 'em!"

He dashed off, and when he arrived at St. Frank's he was hot and breathless. He ran into Church and McClure in the Triangle. They were looking for him.

"Where the dickens have you been, Handy?" demanded Church, seizing his arm.

"Never mind that—where's Nipper?" panted Handforth. "Where's Travers and Pitt and the rest of the fellows? They're needed!"

"They're indoors, somewhere," said McClure. "Cool down, Handy! What's the excitement about?"

"Hi! Come here, everybody!" yelled Handforth, as he spotted some figures in the doorways of the Ancient House and the West House. "Rescue, Remove!"

"He's off his rocker!" said Church.

"Am I?" snorted Handforth. "I've just come from the River House. I've smashed Wellborne and his two pals, and when you see them you won't know them."

"So that's where you went to?" said the Scottish junior, with a whistle. "You reckless fathead! You might have been slaughtered! Fancy going into the enemy's camp like that!"

"Never mind the enemy's camp!" said Handforth. "There's something more important to talk about—something vital! Those River House rotters are going to burn Mr. Lee!"

"Going to do what?" gasped Church.

"They're going to burn him—on their rotten bonfire!" said Handforth indignantly.

"What the dickens——"

"I've seen him—strapped to a chair at the top of their bonfire!" continued Handforth. "It hasn't been lit yet, but——"

"He must have had a knock on the head," said Mac. "His brain's gone!"

"He never had a brain!" growled Church. "Only a piece of sponge!"

Handforth took no notice of these insults. By now Nipper and Watson and Tregellis-West and Travers and Gresham and a crowd of others had gathered round. More were coming up.

"Good!" said Handforth. "Come on, you fellows! We're needed! We've got to go over to the River House!"

"Not to-night, Handy!" said Nipper. "We can't have any japes on the Fifth of November evening. Our own programme is too full. Besides, it wouldn't be sporting——"

"You don't understand," broke in Handforth. "Wellborne & Co. have prepared a whacking great bonfire in a meadow—and they've stuck Mr. Lee on the top of it."

"What!" went up a general yell.

"We've got to drag that guy down before those cads can set light to the bonfire," continued Handforth quickly. "Come on! We're not going to permit this insult to St. Frank's, are we? Our own Housemaster, too!"

"Oh, a guy?" said Nipper. "Just now you said that Mr. Lee himself was on the top of the bonfire!"

"Don't be an ass!" snapped Handforth. "The thing's a guy. The most lifelike guy I ever saw, too!"

The Removites were very indignant. Handforth gave a few details. It was obvious enough that Wellborne & Co., infuriated with Nelson Lee, had adopted this plan to "avenge" themselves. And not unnaturally the Remove fellows waxed angry.

"Something will have to be done, of course," said Nipper.

"Yes, rather!"

"Down with those River House cads!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Come on, Remove—let's get busy!"

"It won't take us long!" shouted Handforth, gratified by this ready response. "We'll be there in five minutes, and we can pull that rotten bonfire to pieces and destroy the guy. Are we going to allow Wellborne & Co. to burn it—to burn an image of Mr. Lee?"

"No fear!"

"Not likely, Handy!"

There was indignation as well as anger now. Everybody was eager to hurry off to the River House School.

MR. BERNARD WRAGG, of the River House School, was a most unpleasant gentleman in the eyes of Hal Brewster and all the other really decent fellows. It naturally stood to reason, therefore, that he was on friendly terms with the Hon. Aubrey de Vere Wellborne and this young gentleman's own particular clique.

Mr. Wragg was more than usually pleasant that evening—to Wellborne & Co. He released them from prep. after they had only made a pretence of work, and all the Honourables, to a man, were allowed to go out to enjoy themselves in their own way.

Mr. Wragg had noticed that Wellborne and Carstairs and Coates were slightly battered, but he made no inquiries. He generally avoided such embarrassing situations unless his favourites happened to come to him with complaints. Then he would do everything within his power to aid them.

But Wellborne felt that it would be unwise to make any fuss about what Handforth had done. For the cads of Study No. 10 had set a yarn going that they had been attacked by about a dozen St. Frank's Removites. It would have been humiliating indeed to have confessed that Handforth, single-handed, had marked them in this way. And if they had complained to Mr. Wragg, there would have been an inquiry, and then the truth might have come out.

So it happened that the big crowd of Honourables, led by Wellborne, marched to the great bonfire, in the corner of the adjacent meadow. They reached the spot soon after Handforth had left—while Handforth, in fact, was arousing the St. Frank's fellows in the Triangle.

"Here we are!" said Wellborne, as they reached the dark pile. "Who's got matches? Before we have the fireworks we'll set the bonfire going. Look at that beast Lee, sitting up there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll watch him burn," grinned Delaney.

"I don't think it'll be funny," said Boxley, with a sniff. "After all the trouble I took with that modelling, it's a bit thick to burn the thing—"

"Oh, you dry up!" interrupted Wellborne.

There were some prepared torches lying ready, and these were soon lit up. They were bunches of thin sticks, wrapped round with tarred string, and the ends of the torches were soaked in tar. Once they were alight, therefore, they burned with tremendous ferocity.

Four of them were soon going, and Wellborne, who was holding one, looked round.



In a moment the huge bonfire had caught alight, and the River House cads looked on in glee as the flames roared skywards. Little did the schoolboys realise that the figure at the top of the bonfire was not a guy but—Nelson Lee himself!

"Ready?" he asked. "These four torches have got to be shoved into the fire at the same minute. We don't want it to burn lopsided. By gad! This is going to be a tidy blaze!"

It was an impressive sight. The lurid flames from the torches leapt upwards, and the shadows of the River House boys danced up and down grotesquely. The smoke from the burning tar went upwards in coiling, suffocating masses.

There, on the top of the big bonfire, that still figure was perched. Nobody thought of giving it any close attention.

Nelson Lee's unknown enemies had taken it for granted that the fire would be lit before the substitution could be discovered. Once the fire was fully ignited, it would be too late to save the victim, whether the spectators knew of the substitution or not. With the base of the fire well alight, it would be humanly impossible to get

anywhere near the helpless prisoner.

"You chaps ready?" repeated the Hon. Aubrey.

"Yes, go ahead!" sang out Carstairs.

Simultaneously, the four blazing torches were thrust deeply into the base of the great bonfire—one on each side, the bonfire being squarely constructed.

For a moment the flames were half-smothered, and then they leapt up with renewed vigour, catching at the faggots and the tarred material which formed the foundation of the pile.

Clouds of smoke arose, half enveloping that figure at the top, and quickly flames licked up the sides!

CHAPTER 9.

At the Mercy of the Fire!

"**W**E'RE too late!" said Nipper, disappointed.

He and Handforth were in the forefront of the Removites who hurried across the meadows towards the River House School. They had seen a glare of light in the distance, and they felt sure that the glare came from the bonfire.

"Well, if we're too late to save that guy, we'll stop those rotten Honourables from jeering!" said Handforth darkly. "By George! Listen to 'em! You can hear 'em already!"

Shouts of laughter came to the ears of the St. Frank's juniors on the night air, and they could even distinguish some of the words that the River House boys were yelling.

"We're burning Lee, the rotter—he's getting hotter and hotter!" went up a kind of chant. "Guy, guy, guy—we'll do him in the eye!"

"Handy was right!" said Church. "They are guying Mr. Lee!"

There came the sound of explosions and sudden bursts of yellow fire, with red and green stars shooting upwards into the black sky. Fireworks were being let off, too. Now and again a rocket would soar gracefully heavenwards.

The Removites had broken into a run now, and when they suddenly burst into the meadow where the River House School fellows were, they found that the great bonfire was only just alight. The glare which they had previously seen had been coming from the torches, evidently.

"Buck up, Remove!"

"Down with the River House cads!"

"Hurrah!"

The invaders swept to the attack, and Wellborne & Co., taken by surprise, backed away.

"Confound your nerve, clear off!" roared the Hon. Aubrey furiously. "You're trespassing on this field!"

"Never mind that!" snapped Nipper. "We understand that you're going to burn a guy of Mr. Nelson Lee."

Wellborne pointed.

"There it is!" he jeered. "Try and get it down!"

"You're five minutes too late," said Carstairs. "The best thing you can do is to stand by and see Mr. Lee go up in smoke."

"You rotter!" roared Handforth. "I've given you one hiding this evening—but I didn't know about this guy then. I'm going to give you a second hiding!"

"Keep him back!" ejaculated the Hon. Aubrey in alarm. "Hang it, why can't this fellow be restrained? He ought to be put into an asylum!"

"Yes, you St. Frank's chaps clear off!" shouted Carstairs. "We hired this field, and

COMING NEXT WEEK!



it's ours. You've got no right to push your way in here—"

"You're burning an effigy of our House-master!" interrupted Fullwood.

"Well, it's ours to burn, if we like!" said Wellborne, with savage unpleasantness. "You mind your own business!"

"I say, you know, that guy looks uncannily lifelike," said Harry Gresham, as he stared up. "Never seen anything so rummy in all my life! I'd swear it was really Mr. Lee up there!"

"We do things thoroughly at the River House!" said Coates.

Everybody was staring up now. The flames at the base of the pile had not yet gained a firm hold, and the flames were not leaping high. There was a great deal of

smoke, and this partially obscured the figure at the top of the bonfire.

There was a sudden exclamation from one of the St. Frank's juniors—an exclamation of horror and incredulity. He ran up to Wellborne & Co., and stared at them.

"Have you chaps gone mad?" he panted. "Mr. Lee might be burnt to death! How are you going to get him down in time?"

"We're not going to—we're going to let him burn," said Wellborne.

"What do you mean?" gasped the Removite—who happened to be Stanley Waldo. "You can't—you can't! You mad fools!"

"Here, steady——" began Carstairs.

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

"He'll burn, I tell you!" said Waldo, in horror. "Quick! What are we going to do?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Honourables yelled with laughter.

"Why, you simpleton, it's only an effigy," said the Hon. Aubrey contemptuously. "It's only made of straw—with a clay head!"

Waldo looked at him, and then he glanced once more at the top of the bonfire. His eyes were alight with consternation. And those eyes of Waldo's were unusually acute. In every respect this Removite was abnormally gifted. His eyesight, his sense of hearing, his strength—in every way he took after his famous father, the celebrated Rupert Waldo, the Peril Expert.

"I tell you it's madness!" shouted Waldo. "It's no effigy up there! It's Mr. Lee himself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is funny," grinned Wellborne. "I knew we'd made a good guy, but I didn't believe that we could deceive you so——"

"Look!" screamed Coates suddenly.

He was pointing, and the tone he used was so arresting that the other Honourables stared upwards with sudden fear. Everybody, in fact, fastened their gaze upon the supposed image, which was still half obscured by the smoke.

"It's moving!" screamed Coates. "Am I mad, or——"

"Yes, it's moving!" choked Delaney. "Look! It's not a guy at all! It's a real man up there! It's Mr. Lee himself!"

"Impossible!" panted Wellborne, white to the lips.

Yet, without any shadow of doubt, there was a movement from that figure! The effigy was coming to life! It was only a small movement—just a turn of the head, but it was sufficient.

"Didn't I tell you?" said Stanley Waldo, his voice quivering with alarm. "What have you fellows done?"

"I tell you it's only a guy!" choked Wellborne wildly. "It's only a guy! We made it ourselves, and——"

"It's not—it's not!" yelled Handforth. "It's moving now! It's Mr. Lee!"

"You're all talking piffle!" gabbled Wellborne, his gaze fixed upon the top of the bonfire. "I suppose the heat must be shifting it somehow. It's not a real head up there—only a thing made of clay——"

"Clay?" shouted Harry Gresham. "Can clay open its eyes? Look there!"

All doubts were now set at rest. Not only was the "effigy" moving its head, but the eyes were now open, and there were other indications that the figure was human and alive. All those schoolboys round that bonfire were electrified into a horrified activity. Yet they could do nothing but run about, shouting. It was impossible to get anywhere near the fire.

"You hound, Wellborne!" said Nipper, with dangerous ferocity. "I'll settle with you after I've helped the gov'nor——"

"But you're wrong!" babbled the Hon. Aubrey. "We didn't do it, Nipper! We didn't put Mr. Lee up there!"

"We only fixed a guy—a thing made of hay and clay!" said Coates. "I can't understand it! It's—it's uncanny! We didn't put Mr. Lee up there!"

But nobody was listening to the Honourables. Explanations could come afterwards. The one thing to do now was to go to Nelson Lee's assistance. He appeared to be in a daze, as though he had just awakened from a trance. He was making no efforts to free himself.

Panic was spreading throughout the crowd.

"Water!" yelled Handforth, dashing about. "Where's some water?"

"There isn't any!" said Delaney. "There's only the river—and that's nearly half a mile away!"

"Somebody had better rush for the Fire Brigade!" said Travers. "Not that it can possibly get here in time. The flames are gaining hold, and within a minute they'll be leaping up to the top of the bonfire, and nothing on earth can save——"

"Oh, we must do something!" panted Kingswood, in anguish.

The situation was indeed appalling. As far as the juniors could see, they were helpless. To get near the fire was impossible. The base was now fully alight—but, mercifully, the flames were not fierce. The bonfire was taking its time in getting under way, and, as yet, only those choking masses of smoke had enveloped the bound form of Nelson Lee at the top. Yet there was the possibility of Nelson Lee being burnt to death before the eyes of this crowd—and it was a grim, ghastly possibility.

Nipper was like a fellow bereft of his senses for a moment. But only for a moment. Then he recovered himself. He knew that unless something was done within the space of thirty seconds, his beloved guv'nor would perish. It was a time for instant action—for drastic action.

"Where are the ladders?" shouted Carstairs, looking round. "We've got to do something, you chaps! Let's get the ladders——"

"Impossible!" said Nipper. "Anybody who tries to mount a ladder against that bonfire will be burnt to death! We've got to think of something else!"

As he was speaking, his gaze rested upon something vague and indistinct about twenty yards away, close against the hedge. He ran to it like mad, his heart thumping heavily against his ribs. For he had recognised the object as a farm tractor. It was one of those clumsy, cumbersome motors with semi-caterpillar wheels. It was facing towards the fire, too.

Other fellows had rushed after Nipper, wondering what he could have in mind. Nipper was feeling the needle of the carburettor, and his heart gave an added jump as he felt the rush of petrol in the float-chamber.

"Quick—the starting-handle!" he shouted. "Handy! You're the chap! You're the strongest! Crank her!"

Handforth was already doing so, but the bearings were gummy with cold oil, and it was as much as he could do to pull the handle over. He was quickly shoved aside by Stanley Waldo, who seized the handle and whirled it round as though he was dealing with a little Austin Seven. In an emergency of this kind Waldo's strength was invaluable.

Zurrrrrh!

With a sudden burst of noise, the engine came to life. It popped and spluttered for a moment or two, and then settled down to a powerful roar.

Nipper leapt into the driving seat, and the crowd dashed out of the way.

CHAPTER 10.

The Menace of the Unknown!

WITH a violent jerk, the tractor started forward. It gathered speed, and Nipper steered it straight towards the bonfire.

"What are you going to do?" shouted Tommy Watson, in horror. "Stop—stop! You'll kill yourself, Nipper!"

"Clear off!" roared Nipper. "I'm going to charge the fire! It's the only hope!"

"You'll be burnt to death, old boy!" said Tregellis-West. "There's no need for two lives to be lost. Stop him, somebody——"

But Handforth suddenly grabbed a heavy tarpaulin sheet from the rear of the tractor, and, running alongside the cumbersome vehicle, he swung the tarpaulin sheet round.

"Look out!" he yelled. "Keep straight ahead, Nipper—you're going right for the fire. Keep this thing over you, and you'll be protected."

Nipper hated the idea of being blinded in that way—but his common sense told him that Handforth's idea was a good one. The tarpaulin sheet swung over and enveloped him. He crouched low, and now the tractor charged blindly at the bonfire.

A hush fell upon the others.

They stood stock-still, watching, fascinated. The flames were now gaining a good hold, and if this move failed, Nelson Lee would be beyond all human aid.

"This way!" yelled Travers suddenly. "Let's get ready to grab Mr. Lee after the fire is toppled over. Perhaps we shall be able to drag him clear!"

He and Handforth and Pitt and a number of others went tearing round; and at the same second the tractor, now having gained a good speed, struck the bonfire full tilt!

"Oh!" went up a horrified chorus.

There was an appalling burst of flame and smoke, and the tractor was completely hidden in the great smother of smoke and flame. It went plunging through the heart of the fire!

And the mass of that pile, torn from its foundations in that way by the sudden onslaught, tottered and swayed, and finally went crashing over.

The chair, with Nelson Lee bound to it, was flung violently to the ground some distance away, intermingled with a mass of faggots. Blazing brands were flying in all directions, and myriads of sparks went shooting skywards.

Handforth and Travers and the others dashed in, seized the chair, and dragged it clear. Where that slowly burning bonfire had been, there was now a widely scattered mass of roaring flame. The faggots, disturbed, were burning with intense ferocity, and the tar barrels had now gained a full hold. The heat was well-nigh overpowering, and the fumes were suffocating.

But Nelson Lee had been flung clear, and now his rescuers had dragged him safely out of the danger zone.

BUT what of Nipper?

The tractor, plunging straight on, had gone right through the heart of the fire. There were flaming masses of debris festooned round the radiator and the entire forepart.

There came a sudden burst as the carburettor caught alight, and there was an upheaval beneath that protective tarpaulin.

Nipper leapt for his life, half-blinded, scorched, and nearly choked. He managed to get to the ground in safety. The tractor lumbered on, and finally came to a halt in a deep ditch.

Nipper tumbled clear, staggered drunkenly, and ran into a group of fellows who had come to his rescue. They pulled him back.

"We thought you were done for, old man," breathed Tommy Watson thankfully. "Oh, we thought——"

"Never mind!" muttered Nipper. "I'm all right. How's the gov'nor?"

"We got him," said Tregellis-West quickly. "He fell clear, and a crowd of chaps dragged him away."

"Thank Heaven!" breathed Nipper.

He pushed the other fellows aside, and staggered off to where a great crowd was shouting and cheering. Nobody was now taking any notice of the widely-scattered fire, which was burning with appalling swiftness.

Nipper fairly fought his way through the crowd, and when he arrived in the centre he found Waldo and Travers and Handforth squatting round Nelson Lee. Somebody came rushing up with a capful of water from a neighbouring ditch. It wasn't clean water, but it served.

Nelson Lee's bonds had been cut, and he was attempting to get to his feet.

"Gov'nor!" sobbed Nipper.

"You saved my life, my boy—and I am grateful," said Lee quietly.

"But you, sir!" panted Nipper. "Are you all right?"

"Scorched slightly in one or two places, and my left leg is very badly bruised where I fell," replied Lee. "But they are trifles. In all my experience I have never before been in such ghastly peril, and it is gratifying that you should have been the one to come to my rescue."

He spoke with difficulty, for his throat was parched with the fumes.

Everybody else stood round, stunned by the horror of the recent situation. It was hardly possible to realise that the danger was now over, and that nobody had been badly injured.

And by this time, of course, further crowds had arrived—Brewster & Co., numbers of seniors, and even some of the masters. They had gathered from the din that something was badly amiss.

"We didn't do it, sir!" said Wellborne frenziedly, as he pushed his way towards the centre of the crowd. "We didn't tie you to

the top of that bonfire, sir! These chaps are saying——"

"Calm yourself, Wellborne," interrupted Nelson Lee. "I know full well that you did not do any such insane thing. These boys must not get such foolish ideas into their heads."

"But what happened, sir?" asked Handforth. "How did you get on to the top of that bonfire?"

"I was placed there by some fiendish enemy," said Lee, his eyes afire with anger. "These River House boys fixed a mere effigy on to the bonfire—a perfectly natural thing for them to do on the Fifth of November."

"You—you mean that the effigy was cut down by somebody, and that you were put in its place, sir?" asked Nipper in amazement. "But how?"

"I was walking up the lane towards the school," said Lee tensely. "I felt a sudden pain on my neck, and then I remembered no more. There can be no doubt that I was struck by a poisoned dart of some kind."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"When I awoke, I found myself tied in that chair on the top of the bonfire," went on Lee. "I have no doubt that my enemies intended me to awaken in time to suffer the tortures of being burned alive."

"It's horrible, gov'nor!" said Nipper. "Who do you think is responsible?"

"I am as much in the dark as you, Nipper," said the famous schoolmaster-detective. "There was a drug on that dart which penetrated my flesh—it could not really have been poison, for I am now feeling no ill-effects. Those devils meant me to recover consciousness before death came. As for who they were, I know nothing. But I shall know! Make sure of that!"

OF course, there was a tremendous sensation both at St. Frank's and at the River House School. The Fifth of November celebrations were almost forgotten. Nelson Lee and Nipper were taken into the sanatorium, and they were both detained. Mercifully their injuries were slight.

Of course, the school had plenty to talk about. All kinds of wild conjectures were circulated. And it was only natural that the mysterious man with the evil yellow face should be recalled.

Was he responsible?

Nelson Lee himself felt convinced now that that figure had been no practical joker, and that warning had been in deadly earnest!

Who were these fiendish enemies who did not hesitate to adopt such devilish methods?

THE END.

(This series is the "goods," isn't it, chums? But, then, Edwy Searles Brooks is always at his very best when writing a real mystery yarn. "By Order of the Tong!" is the title of the second story in this series. Look out for it next Wednesday!)

GOSSIP ABOUT ST. FRANK'S



Things Heard and Seen By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

WRITING the St. Frank's stories has many compensations. For instance, I am compelled to visit the school frequently in order to see "how things are going," and you'd be surprised how much I enjoy doing so. The more I see of the school and its occupants the more enthusiastic I become. Each visit seems to be more interesting than the previous one. And that's why, when I left the train at Bell-ton the other Wednesday afternoon, and started to walk down the lane towards the old school, I forgot all my worries and troubles in the anticipation of knowing that I should soon be having a jolly good time.

I WAS not disappointed. Even as I reached the gates of St. Frank's I ran into Irene Manners and her chums from the Moor View School, including Doris Berkeley, Marjorie Temple, Ena Handforth, and Mary Summers. And very charming they looked, too, in their winter sports attire. They were all carrying tennis rackets, and I soon gathered that they were off to Bannington to play in a hard court tournament against a local girls' club. Irene & Co. are very keen on tennis, and—this will interest "Flora," of Hackney, London, and one or two other girl readers who have written me on this subject—Irene herself is a good player. She has often induced Edward Oswald Handforth to play her, and every time Edward Oswald has come a nasty cropper. Handforth, of course, is too impetuous to play a good game of tennis. His one desire is to smash at the ball with all his force. An excellent desire, too, providing one keeps the ball within the limits of the

court; and that's a thing that Handforth, unfortunately, fails to do.

I RATHER wondered why it was that Nipper and Handforth and the other juniors were not accompanying the girls to the tournament to cheer them on. Irene herself supplied the answer. The St. Frank's junior eleven had a big match on that afternoon; they were playing a team from Bannington which, up till now, was unbeaten. Naturally, the St. Frank's chaps were keen to break this record, and so they were putting out their strongest side. The Moor View schoolgirls, apparently, had "dropped in" to wish Nipper & Co. good luck. Irene & Co. then took their departure, and I strolled through the gates into the Triangle.

NIPPER and his merry men were just walking towards Little Side, but when they saw me they stopped and waited for me. As I expected, I received an enthusiastic welcome, and was immediately asked to watch the game. I accepted, and so we all strolled on to Little Side. Which reminds me that "Perplexed," a keen reader of the Old Paper from Norwich—has asked me to give him a few details concerning Little Side. This is a point which is bound to interest heaps of other readers, so I will take this opportunity of devoting a paragraph to the subject.

LITTLE SIDE, at St. Frank's, while not as large as the seniors' playing fields, is a fine stretch of ground, level, and the turf is kept in excellent condition. A narrow lane

separates it from the school buildings, while on the opposite side is the lane which leads to Edgemore. Looking down Little Side from the pavilion, one sees a remarkably pretty view of the River Stowe. The pavilion, incidentally, is quite a sumptuous affair, and the juniors are very proud of it.

NIPPER, by the way, could easily make a big name for himself at football, if he so desired. I believe he has already played for a First Division club, in fact—this was when he and Nelson Lee were up North on a detective case—and he was a decided success. But Nipper will never take up Soccer as seriously as all that. I tackled him on this question some time ago, when I asked him what he intended to do after he had finished schooling—this as a result of a letter received from a Cardiff reader who signs himself “Cheery Charlie.” Nipper tells me he wants to follow in Nelson Lee’s footsteps; he wants to become a private detective. As Nelson Lee’s assistant for many years, he received an excellent training, and I certainly think he would make a very clever and successful detective. Nelson Lee himself is all against the idea. He does not want his ward to take up such a dangerous calling. But there it is. Nipper’s ambition in life is to become a detective, and so there’s the possibility that one day he will be just as famous in the world of criminology as his beloved guv’nor.

RETURNING to the match I was asked to see at St. Frank’s, I am pleased to record that, after a gruelling struggle, the home eleven were the winners by the only goal of the match, which was scored by Nipper. In the last few minutes the Bannington players made desperate efforts to save their unbeaten record. They succeeded in completely overrunning the St. Frank’s defence—with the exception of the celebrated Edward Oswald. Good old Handy was like a cat on hot bricks. He hurled himself from one side of the goalmouth to the other with reckless abandon, and there’s no doubt that he really did play a magnificent game.

Handforth, I am convinced, is another fellow who could make a name for himself in the footer world if he liked. And here again there’s not much possibility of this happening. As many readers have gleaned from Handforth himself in his page feature, “Handforth Replies,” he has many weird ideas of becoming author, actor, and detective all at once. What he will actually be when he grows up is something of a puzzler. Certainly I shouldn’t like to make a guess!

THE best swimmer at St. Frank’s—“Leslie,” Norwich—is undoubtedly Tom Burton, of the Remove. Burton, indeed, has already swum the English Channel—which will give my correspondent a good idea of his capabilities. Burton himself is very modest about his prowess in the water, but I know for a fact that at his home there’s a sideboard covered with cups and trophies and medals which he has won, and that his study at St. Frank’s also contains many more trophies.

OUR READERS’ PORTRAIT GALLERY



W. Warner

A PROBLEM not so easily solved is the one asked me by a girl reader from Southampton, who wants to know who is the best-dressed junior at St. Frank’s. This strikes me as being rather a ticklish question. Vivian Travers, Ralph Leslie Fullwood, Sir Montie Tregellis-West, the Hon. Douglas Singleton,

Archie Glenthorne—are all of them always immaculately dressed. However, I should say that Archie is perhaps the most resplendent junior. His expenditure on clothes is enormous—but, then, he can well afford it, for his people are extremely wealthy. Phipps, who acts as Archie’s valet, tells me that his young master never has less than twelve suits, about two dozen shirts, and half a dozen toppers; as for ties—well, their number is legion.

The photograph this week is of William Walter Warner. This cheery lad hails from Exeter, and he tells me he is a most enthusiastic supporter of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY. Which shows he possesses plenty of common sense! Write to me as often as you like, William. I’m doubly pleased to hear from readers such as you.

Our Full-of-Thrills Adventure Serial! Remarkable Developments This Week!

The ISLAND CASTAWAYS!

by ARTHUR S. HARDY



"Look, there's a 'plane!"

"YOU had a dream—that we were rescued?" repeated Tom, looking at Eva half amusedly.

"Yes," replied the girl.

"How would you like it, Tom, if all this were to end suddenly, and we found ourselves mixed up in the whirl and bustle of New York once more?"

"I should like it for lots of reasons, of course," he answered. "But I'll never forget these magic islands, or the wonderful times we have had with Dave. But what ever makes you think we shall be going back soon?"

"I dreamt we were at home. Mother

and dad were there, and your father and mother, Captain Stanton, and all our old friends. There was a big reception and a lot of speechmaking. Tom, I could even see the newspapers with their great black type headlines telling all about our adventures. David Sellwood was there, bewildered by it all, and you had to go to the microphone and make a

speech. Tom, the dream was so vivid that even after I woke up it seemed that everything had actually happened. It was a premonition."

Most times Tom would have laughed at the girl, but her manner, the way she spoke, warned him not to mock her.

"Eve," he said, looking at her seriously, "they say that dreams never come

true. Let us hope that your dream will prove an exception; that it will come true—very word of it."

And then, just at that moment, they heard their names being called. Looking round, they saw David Sellwood approaching.

"Missy, Master Tom," said Dave, as he stood before them, his bare feet set wide apart, "you'd best be coming along quick, or the breakfast won't be worth the eating."

Eva rose with alacrity.

"Lead me to it, Dave!" she said. "I can just do with brekker. I'm as hungry as a hunter."

Dreams never come true. And that's what Tom Perry tells Eva Hanway when she says that she has dreamed they are rescued. But, had Tom only known it, remarkable things were soon to happen which bring that dream nearer to reality!

But Tom did not move. He sat with his feet sprawling wide and his hands gripping the earth. His eyes were directed at the sky, and his face was set in a strained expression as if he were listening intently.

The girl turned round. So did Dave.

"Do you hear a droning sound in the air, Dave?" asked Tom.

"I hear something," replied the old whaler. "It's not guns going off, but it's a rapping sound, and there's a hum. There's no bird I know of about these seas can make a noise like that."

Tom leapt to his feet, and ran, shouting excitedly:

"It's an aeroplane! There's no other sound in the wide world like that. It's coming nearer—over the sea! Listen! It's growing louder and louder. Now, Dave, you'll be able to see one of those airplanes I've told you about. It's coming—it's coming! Look! There it is!"

The noise of the approaching 'plane had echoed from a distance long before Tom dreamed of taking any notice of it. Now it swelled to a roar, and the 'plane swung past them overhead, seeming almost to touch the swaying leaves of the palms. The castaways could see the silver and blue body of it glistening in the sunshine. They could see the head and shoulders of the helmeted pilot showing above the side, and a second head behind him. Hanging from the fuselage were two rounded floats, and the wings of the 'plane sprang out low from her sides.

She was a seaplane, and she was gone before Tom, racing frantically into the blaze of sunlight, with Eva after him, and the flabbergasted David slowly following, had a chance of making their presence known.

The deafening roar of the 'plane's engine faded as she went; soon they could hardly hear it, and then it ceased altogether.

For a moment Tom stared at Eva, then, with a whoop of joy, he caught her up and spun her round and round until he was breathless and giddy. The coming of the seaplane had also made Eva intensely excited.

"Tom!" she cried, waving her hands in delight. "Think what it means! We shall be rescued and taken home!"

"We're going home, Dave—we're going home!" shouted the boy excitedly.

Sellwood stood staring along the sunlit beach and was scratching his head thoughtfully. He did not reply at once. Then:

"So that's one of those new fangled things, is it, Master Tom?" he said. "Well, it sure can move!"

What were they to do now? Go back to their camping place and snatch a hasty breakfast before searching for the seaplane, or should they start at once? The castaways decided the point by taking some food and fresh water down to the boat and launching her. Within a few minutes they were sailing before a favourable breeze close into the shore.

"She's come down!" said Tom excitedly. "And she'd have to come down in the sea. We'll come upon her quicker this way, and if she goes up before we get there they'll be bound to see our boat."

Tom was throbbing with nervous excitement born of a fear that the pilot of the seaplane might not see them, for he had missed them in passing. Where there was a seaplane so there was bound to be a ship, and Tom persuaded himself

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. They are plunged into the mountainous seas, and finally are cast upon an unknown island, on which they meet David Sellwood. Later, unknown to the two chums, Hanway's yacht is set on fire by Kemish. The three castaways have many exciting adventures together before sailing for a neighbouring island. Here they are horrified to find the wreck of the *Esmeralda*. Of the passengers there is no sign—only a note, signed by Kemish, which says that everybody has taken to the boats. On the island itself Tom discovers the lifeless body of Kemish. The days pass by, and then one morning Eva tells Tom that she has dreamed they will soon be rescued.

(Now read on.)

that the 'plane had come in search of them.

Dave cocked an eye at the sky as they sailed and ate, and presently he shook his head.

"I don't quite like the look o' things," he remarked, "and I've a feeling that we'll strike foul weather soon."

Eva looked serious, but Tom laughed.

"Rot, Dave!" he cried. "The sea and the sky are just as they have been for days and days."

They sailed on until, rounding a cape, they saw ahead of them the great, wide stretch of golden sand; and close in by the reef, where the waves tumbled lazily, they saw the 'plane at rest. An anchor buoy had been thrown out, and to this she was securely tied. The castaways could see a man leaning over her side. He was standing on one of the floats, looking up and talking to the man above.

Tom could not resist firing his revolver to attract attention, and as the shot echoed loudly the two men looked round and saw the boat. One incredulous glance they gave, then waved their hands. Swiftly the sailing boat approached the 'plane, and as Tom lowered the sail and Dave deftly steered the boat alongside, the man on the float cheered wildly.

"Esmeralda, by gosh!" he shouted, pointing at the name on the front of the boat. "Say, is the little lady Miss Thornton Hanway, by any chance?"

"That's my name," laughed Eva.

The pilot looked hard at Tom. For a moment Tom's long, straggly hair and the growth upon upper lip and chin puzzled him, but the colour of the hair and the blue of Tom's eyes finally chased all doubt away.

"You're Tom Perry!" he cried. "Gee, but this is a bit of luck! Shake!"

Eagerly, Tom grasped the outstretched hand. The pilot then took stock of David Sellwood. The weird and wonderful appearance of the old whaler, his coarse, bleached hair, his straggly moustache and chin, his strange garb and copper tan, puzzled him.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed. "I don't know this fellow!"

"His name is David Sellwood, and he was lost overboard from a whaler years ago," explained Tom.

"My name's Dickson," said the pilot. "My pal above is Conrad Ameson, late commander in the Navy."

"And you've come in search of us?"

"Sure! We've come in search of you, Mr. Perry, and the little lady and all aboard the yacht who were reported lost.

This is the tenth island we have visited since we came to these parts. Our ship, the Patamac, must be a hundred miles from here, and I don't quite know what we are gonner do about it. Ameson could fly you and the lady back, and leave me here with Rip Van Winkle, or else we could report and come and fetch you in the ship to-morrow, say."

Tom cast a wistful glance around him.

"Why not let's go ashore and talk it over?" he suggested.

"That would be a good plan. Con, show a leg, and let's get into the boat. We're off for a pow-wow."

A lithe, active, and athletic figure climbed down from the cockpit and stepped from the float into the boat. Dave then ran the boat ashore and anchored her. The party of five strode over the yielding sand, whilst Dickson offered the castaways his cigarette-case.

Cigarettes were not much in David's line—he much preferring a pipe of strong tobacco—but after a long lay off from smoking, when his only solace had been a puff of dry grass occasionally, he took one greedily.

They settled on a bank that overlooked the sand, and which was in the shade of the trees. The 'plane rocked gently upon the sea right in front of them. Then pilot Dickson told his story.

An Amazing Story!

"YOU'LL be wondering how we happened to come out here, I suppose," he said. "Well, I'm going to tell you.

"In some mysterious way news leaked out that the Esmeralda, Mr. Thornton Hanway's yacht, had been wrecked. It's impossible to say how the rumour started; for no wireless message or S.O.S. had been sent out from the ship. The news could not be verified. But there was a regular panic on Wall Street which ruined quite a lot of folk before the holders of shares in the Hanway enterprises warmed their feet and ceased selling.

"And from the very first there was talk among Hanway's friends about fitting out a rescue ship and sending her into the coral seas.

"Wireless messages were sent out to every port and coaling station in the southern seas for news of the Esmeralda. It was established that the yacht had looked in here and called there, that she had been seen steaming south-west from Caraboo Island, and that all was well. The organising of the rescue ship was



Louder and louder became the humming, roaring noise. And then: "Look!" cried Tom excitedly, pointing. "It's a 'plane!"

suspended for a while, and public confidence being restored, stocks and shares of the Hanway companies began to soar again. But no message came from the chief himself, or from George Perry, your father, sir"—looking at Tom—"or from anyone aboard. Hanway's return was long overdue. Speculators began to panic again. And then at last came definite news that the ship had been lost, and that most of those aboard had been drowned.

"The Malabar, tramp steamer, carrying a miscellaneous cargo, arrived in New York. She brought with her four seamen, Barber, Calhoun, Mordew, and Geogehan; and a stoker named Cribb, and a cook named Freeman, who swore that they were the sole survivors."

"Just those?" cried Tom, with a frown. "It sounds funny that no officer or passenger should have been in the boat with them."

"They said that they had Purvis, the engineer, and a man named Slater in their boat, but Purvis had been badly burnt before he left the ship, and died, while Slater leapt overboard in a delirium after the water had gone," went on Dickson. "They were picked up when on the point of death by the Elder Mary, and were transferred to the Malabar at Carinobo coaling station, the Malabar being bound for New York."

Tom continued to frown; Eva was looking distressed. David Sellwood listened stolidly, betraying no emotion whatsoever.

"What had the rescued men got to say?" asked Tom.

"They told how you and Miss Hanway got lost in the Rosita out-board boat in a hurricane following the strangest and densest sea-fog they had ever known. And I may as well tell you right now, Mr. Perry, that you and Miss Hanway were the two we never thought we were going to meet. You were lost in a crazy boat that couldn't have weathered a storm on a lake, let alone out in the Pacific seas. I'm curious, and so would you mind telling us about it?"

Graphically, Tom told the story, and pilot Dickson nodded.

"That was a miracle all right," he cried; "and the moment we reach the ship we'll flash the news round the world by wireless."

He leant eagerly forward.

"Getting back to that boatload of crooks," he said, "they told how the yacht

rode out the storm and next day went in search of you, but with never a hope of finding you alive, of course. They couldn't find you, and there was dismay aboard, as you

can imagine. Everybody had given you up as lost. Then, after dinner, Dr. Fraser ran into the skipper's cabin with news that the Esmeralda was on fire. The hold was well alight, flames were leaping up the gangways, and the danger of an explosion was so apparent that the boats were lowered and got away after a vain attempt to hose the fire out. The ship blew up, and there was a man named Kemish aboard——"

"Kemish survived, but died by his own hand on a barren coral reef," said Tom, and again he told his tale.

"He got his deserts," commented the pilot. "To resume, Mr. Perry. According to the story the men told, the boats got separated in a storm, and they swore that, to the best of their belief, the other boats foundered. Of course, it was generally thought that Mr. Thornton Hanway and every passenger aboard the yacht had perished, and the men were made a fuss of. But a fortnight later Barber and Cribb were arrested for trying to sell diamonds and jewels of great value to a New York dealer, who had reason to believe that the gems were stolen. Some of the property were still in settings, and

these were identified as the property of Mrs. Thornton Hanway——"

"They belonged to mamma——" exclaimed the girl excitedly.

"They sure did, Miss Hanway. On the strength of that the men were put to the third degree. Barber, snivelling like a cur, turned States evidence, and swore that he and the others, having been thrown upon an island together with the survivors from the other boats, and knowing that the ladies had brought the jewels away with them when they left the ship, planned to steal them, and this they did, and in order that Captain Stanton and the other members of the crew should not pursue them, they stove in and rendered the other boats unseaworthy. Then they pushed their boat into the sea in the dead of night, and, taking a chance, ran up the sail and left the whole party to their fate."

At this juncture, Eva interrupted the story with an excited outburst.

"Oh, Tom, then dad and mum and everybody else are all alive?" she asked.

"According to Barber — yes, miss," said the pilot. "But

listen. After Barber had made and signed his confession we were confronted with this dilemma. Cribb and the other men, when rounded up, denied Barber's story. They said that Barber was out of his mind in the boat, and that from the first they had the jewels with them, Mrs. Thornton Hanway having thrown them into the wrong boat. Mordew testified that he broke the pieces of jewellery up on board the Malabar, having been tempted by the money they represented to steal the gems—but only because the owners were dead! And there was this added snag. We could not discover within a few hundred miles, one way or the other, what was the exact position of the ship when the Esmeralda was wrecked.

"Wireless messages were flashed all over the world; the liner, Patamac, was fitted out as a rescue ship, and furnished with two seaplanes, and an airplane deck as well as two airplanes. We started out—and here we are."

"And you've seen nothing and heard nothing of my father and mother?" said the girl querulously.

"No, miss; and to tell you the truth, after flying over island after island with-

IT'S COMING THE FOUR-LEGGED EAGLE! WATCH OUT FOR DETAILS!

out ever seeing a trace of a man or woman on 'em, Ameson and I were just about giving up hope when your boat came into view and we heard your shot."

"But they can't be far away—they can't be!" said the girl. "Tom, the Esmeralda couldn't have drifted far in her shattered condition before she broke her back on that coral reef. Mr. Dickson, take us to your ship, and in a few days, at most, I am sure we will find my mother."

"We'll do that, certainly," said Dickson. "And I'd flash a message from the 'plane, only the apparatus packed up last night. We can't use it till we've found and repaired the fault."

"We'd better fly back with the news," said Ameson.

Dave had been watching the sky, and eyeing the sea with a growing alarm. He swung himself on to his feet now and pointed.

"Look there!" he cried. "See that bank o' cloud coming up? It's moving as fast as your 'plane could fly, young man, and you'd be crazy to attempt a voyage now. Take an old sailor's advice and stay where you are."

The cloud stretched as wide as the horizon, and everybody could see it approaching rapidly. A black smudge blotted out the sun, the day began to fade. A few moments later came the first drops of rain.

The Coming of the Storm!

THE swift and remorseless advance of that great, sombre cloud was terrifying. Smothering the sun, it brought with it the blackness of night, and yet between it and the sea remained a vivid streak of light. The palm-trees began to bow their plumed heads; large rain spots were now falling. There followed a death-like hush which was succeeded by a moaning as the wind rushed shoreward, bringing with it the deluge.

Pilot Dickson began to run.

"Come on!" he shouted to Ameson. "Let's try and save the old bus if we can."

Tom raced eagerly after them, whilst Eva, afraid lest Tom should run into danger, sped almost as fast as the men in the dash for the beach. David Sellwood followed slowly after, bawling to them to come back.

"You can't do anything!" he shouted. "Come back! There'll be a whirlpool swirling over the reef in no time. Hi,

lend a hand to the boat, or we may lose that, too!"

Tom heard and turned in his tracks.

"The boat is anchored, Dave!" he cried. "She'll ride safely, won't she?"

"I don't know. Maybe. I doubt whether we could draw her up clear of the sand in time, Master Tom. But maybe she's all we'll have between us and rescue if the 'plane is lost."

Dickson and Ameson had established a big lead by this time, and suiting his pace to the girl's, Tom ran on. The incoming wave was assuming formidable proportions, rising like a wall. Then the rain sheeted down, blotting out the figures of the running airmen. It swept the strand and, reaching the three castaways, soaked them to the skin in a flash. It forced them to stop and bow their heads. The wind lashed them, almost beating them to the ground. They could hear the rustle of the swaying palms, and a snapping of timber as one tree after another went down before the hurricane.

The din was frightening. A livid seam split the sombre skies, illuminating every object round them. The crash of thunder that boomed a second later almost deafened the ears. Blinking the rain-water out of his eyes, Tom glanced seaward. A hundred yards or so away, Dickson and Ameson were crouching on their knees, huddled together for protection.

The full force of the cloud-burst had already reached the seaplane, tossing her about like a cork. Tom could see the 'plane tugging frantically at her moorings, like a captive bird fighting for its freedom, and beyond, coming inland at a terrific speed, was the wall of water, growing every moment higher and higher.

Tom caught hold of Eva fiercely.

"Look! The seaplane hasn't a ghost of a chance!" he shouted. "The sea will smash her to matchwood!"

Ameson and Dickson had staggered up. They also must have realised that the 'plane was doomed, for, turning, they came running back, helped in their panic by the driving wind, which almost lifted them clean off their feet.

As they came Dave turned to Tom.

"Get as far away from the shore as you can," he bellowed. "We can't even save our boat. We'll be lucky if we save our lives!"

(Look out for another gripping instalment of this thrilling serial next week, chums!)

HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM No. 116.

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 $\frac{1}{2}$ 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.*

An Extravagant Pal!

A SOMEWHAT doleful letter has come to hand this week from a Midland reader who calls himself "Worried." He tells me that his particular pal, fortunate in having parents who are wealthy, has extravagant tastes, and does not hesitate to indulge these.

This is rather unfortunate for my correspondent, who, not being so lucky as his chum, finds it hard to "keep up the pace." Admitted the other fellow, realising the position, offers to help "Worried" by paying all expenses on occasions, but my chum will not hear of this. He has his pride; and he is to be congratulated on taking such a firm stand.

However, the fact remains that as a result he is forced to borrow money and deny himself many necessities in order to "keep up" with his friend. To continue doing this is, of course, asking for trouble, as "Worried" fully realised; and yet he does not wish to break up the friendship if it can at all be avoided. And so he has written to me for advice.

From my chum's letter I gather that the two of them are firm friends, and that the

monied fellow is a good sort. If that is so, then I think my correspondent should state the facts plainly to his pal, and the other will be sure to understand. Indeed, he will probably agree to "ease up" when in the company of "Worried," and so everything should be O.K.

THIS WEEK'S WINNING LETTER

DEAR CHIEF OFFICER,—Thank you for the certificate of membership and badge. I think the design on the certificate is an excellent one. I shall now try to introduce the Nelson Lee Library to six persons so as to qualify for the bronze medal, and shall then endeavour to win the silver medal.

I am not a new reader of the Old Paper; nor am I an old one. At first I used to read it whenever I could get hold of a copy. Later on I was able to read it fairly regularly by joining a club which was formed by Francis Burrow, a school chum of mine who is already a member of the St. Frank's League.

Each member of this club paid a subscription of a penny per week and with the subscriptions books were bought, including the N.L.L., and read by each member in turn. The club is still running, but the Old Paper is not one of the books which are bought each week—because most of the members buy their own copy of the N.L.L. independently! Needless to say, I am one of those members!

Wishing the N.L.L. and the St. Frank's League good luck.

(Signed) LESLIE D. ROUCH

(S.F.L. No. 10,089.)

(For this interesting letter, Leslie D. Rouch, of Hampstead, London, N.W.3, has been awarded a useful penknife.)

Assistant-Secretary Wanted!

ALEX HENDERSON, the hon. secretary of the "Wide World Wireless and Correspondence Club," writes to tell me that he is faced with a little snag at the moment. The hon. assistant-secretary has unfortunately had to resign, and so Alex is on the look-out for another fellow who will take on the position. A local chap is essential, of course, and anybody who is interested and who would be willing to become the assistant-secretary of this very keen and live-wire club should write to Alex Henderson at

35, Broadlands Road, Hampton Park, Southampton.

Meanwhile, I am pleased to report that this enterprising club is going great guns. Good luck to it!

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 up the form which appears on the opposite page.

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

Wilfred Snowden, 1, Cooper's Terrace, Christchurch Road, Doncaster, wishes to correspond with readers in the Empire; also with stamp collectors.

T. Bengho, 1, Outram Road, Singapore, Straits Settlements, desires to hear from stamp collectors.

W. Emery, 424, New Canterbury Road, Dulwich Hill, Sydney, Australia, wants to hear from cigarette-card collectors.

W. Brittain, 47, Dewhurst Road, London, W.14, offers 6d. for N.L.L. new series, Nos. 165, 167, 168, 169, 171-2.

Alfred J. Patterson, c/o Messrs. F. W. Heritage & Co., Ltd., Collins Street, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, wants correspondents anywhere; ages 16-17.

L. H. Hubbard, 30, Chalfant, Place, Brighton, wants to hear from stamp collectors overseas.

Miss Maisie Toplis, Glen Roy, Thackeray's Lane, Woodthorpe, Daybrook, Notts., wants correspondents.

P. Weiner, 81, Downs Road, Lower Clapton, London, E.5, wishes to hear from stamp collectors.

Geoffrey F. Guest, 11, Vincent Avenue, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, would like to hear from collectors who want foreign stamps.

L. A. Irwin, 19, Earl Street, Barnoldswick, via Colne, Lancs., wants correspondents in U.S.A., Australia and New Zealand; ages 13-14.

H. Titchener, 282, Richmond Road, Hackney, London, E.8, wants correspondents in Siam, Fiji Islands, Egypt, Singapore and South Africa.

Jack Thompson, 354, St. John's Lane, Redmister, Bristol, offers N.L.L. new series, Nos. 124-174.



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All applications for Advertisement spaces in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager "The Nelson Lee Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.