

THE NELSON LEE

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Schoolboy adventure, mystery—and thrills! A magnificent long complete yarn featuring the cheery chums of St. Frank's.

New Series No. 184.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

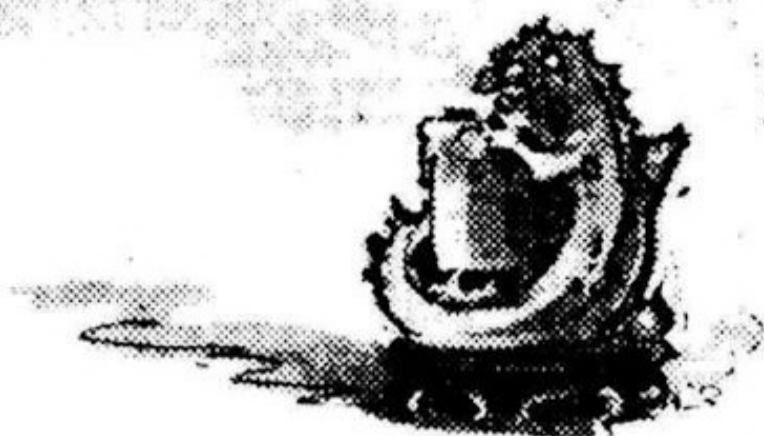
November 9th, 1929.

ARE YOU READING THIS AMAZING NEW SERIES—

By ORDER of the TONG!



By
EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.



Already the mysterious "unknown menace" has made itself felt at St. Frank's. This week it strikes again, involving Nelson Lee and Nipper and the other juniors in a series of the most amazing and dramatic adventures!

CHAPTER 1.

The Figure in the Fog!

CLICK!
The golf-club came down cleanly, and the little white ball went soaring over the fairway, well on its journey towards the sixth hole.
"Good drive, sir," said Willy Handforth approvingly.
Nelson Lee smiled. He slipped the driver back into the bag, and Willy shouldered it comfortably.

-OF SCHOOL AND MYSTERY YARNS, CHUMS?

"Your honour, Joyce," said Mr. Stokes.

"It's really too bad, Barry," laughed Mrs. Beverley Stokes. "You're not playing as you should do to-day, or I shouldn't have beaten you on that last hole."

"Don't you believe it," said her husband. "I'm playing at about my average—but you're too good for me."

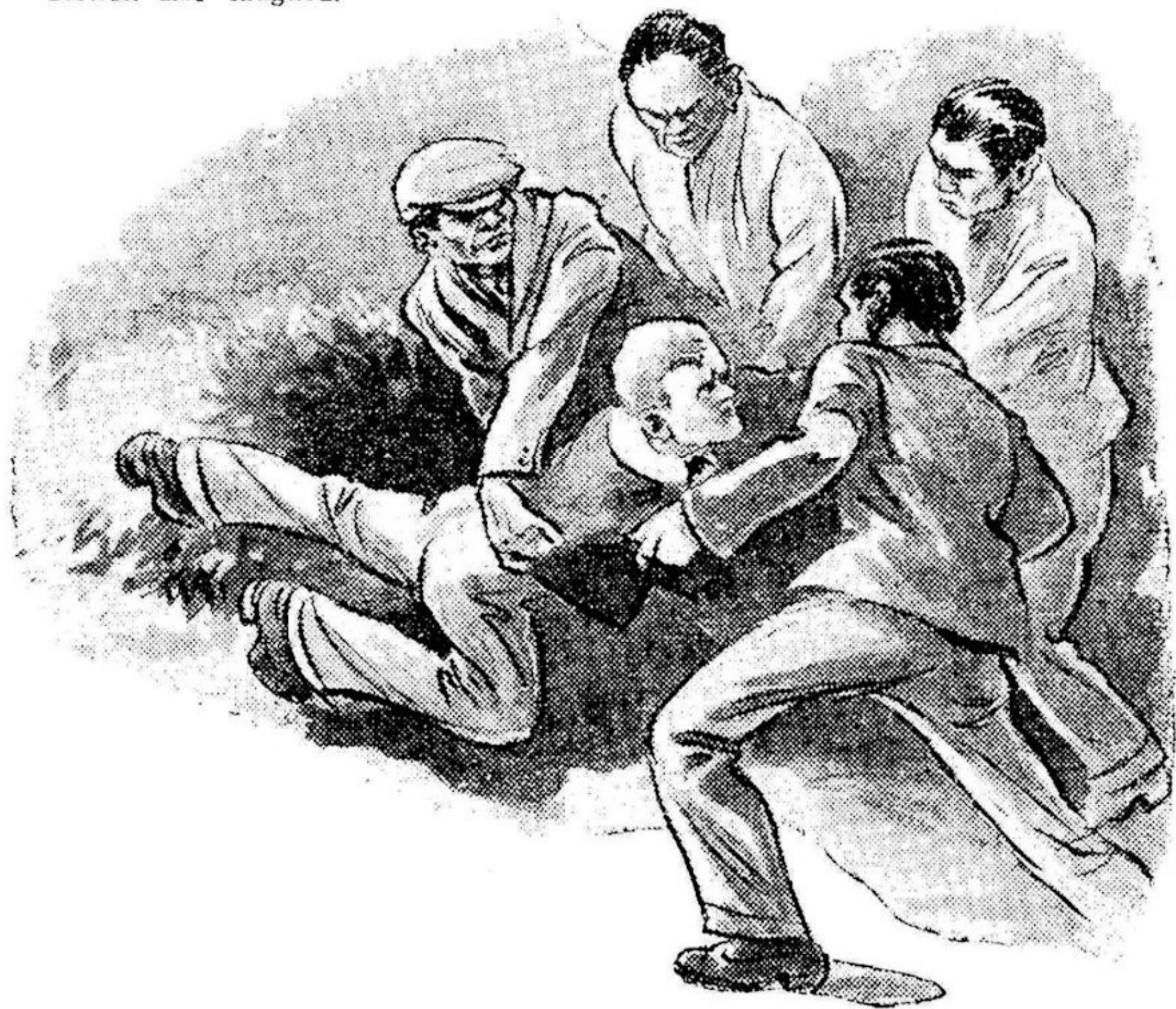
They drove off, one after the other, and then all three players walked away across the fairway, separating slightly so that they could reach their respective balls. They were each attended by a caddie. These caddies were Willy Handforth, Chubby Heath, and Juicy Lemon. The fags were only too willing to make themselves useful in this way. There was no official payment for such services, but it was pretty certain that they would get tipped at the end of the game.

It was a raw November afternoon; the sky was overcast, and the air damp and windless. The St. Frank's Golf Links were looking drab and rather dreary—particularly as this part of the course adjoined Bannington Moor. As far as the eye could see, the moorland rolled away, undulating and bleak, into the hazy distance.

Nelson Lee was a keen golfer, and when Mr. Beverley Stokes, the Housemaster of the West House, had suggested that Lee should join in to make a threesome, Lee had willingly consented.

"I'm not altogether sure, Lee, that it's wise for you to be out here in the open," remarked "Barry" Stokes, as he and Nelson Lee walked along together, with Mrs. Stokes between them. "I haven't forgotten what happened last week."

Nelson Lee laughed.



"Then you should have forgotten, Barry," he said admonishingly. "When you're on the golf-course, you should forget everything. The great secret of this game is to concentrate on the ball."

"I think Barry is right, Mr. Lee," said Mrs. Stokes, who was young and active and very attractive. "I've been thinking the same thing, only I didn't like to mention it."

"If I were to adopt such a policy as you suggest, I should be a coward," said Nelson Lee quietly. "I know you don't mean to imply any such thing—but perhaps I look at the matter in a different light."

"It's not cowardly to be cautious," said Mrs. Stokes bluntly.

"I am carrying on with my duties and my activities just the same as usual," said Nelson Lee. "Any other policy is abhorrent to me. If I am to be attacked by some unknown assassin——"

"Please don't speak like that, Mr. Lee," put in Mrs. Stokes.

"Perhaps I am somewhat a fatalist," smiled the famous schoolmaster detective. "But, come! Here's your ball, Barry, and I should advise you to use a mashie. You're in a bit of a hollow there, and you'll have some trouble in getting out of it."

The young Housemaster grunted, and took his mashie from the bag which Chubby Heath was carrying. He made a very imperfect stroke, the ball slicing off at a tangent.

"I warned you," chuckled Lee. "You must concentrate on the ball, Barry."

They said no more until the next green was reached. But after they had holed out, Mr. Stokes renewed the subject.

"Look here, Lee, I'm uncomfortable," he said gruffly. "Joyce is uncomfortable, too. When we asked you to join us, we had forgotten that danger of yours. I'm feeling responsible——"

"My dear fellow, forget it," interrupted Lee. "I was coming to the links this afternoon, anyhow, for a practice round. If there really is any danger, I'm safer with you than I should be by myself."

"That affair on Guy Fawkes night was dreadful," said Mrs. Stokes gravely. "You were attacked unexpectedly, Mr. Lee—and you were rendered helpless before you could put up any fight."

"I know," nodded Lee. "A simple plan. A tiny dart was thrown at me, probably from a blow-pipe, and within ten seconds I was unconscious."

"It might have been a poisoned dart," said Mr. Stokes. "Ye gods! You might have been killed on the spot, Lee."

"But I wasn't killed—I was only drugged," said Lee. "Then I was carried to a big bonfire that had been prepared by the River House boys, and I was placed on the top."

"Substituted on that fire for a guy!" said Mrs. Stokes with a shiver. "And those boys came along and lit the fire without knowing that any change had taken place! Oh, how awful! You were only rescued by a hair's breadth, Mr. Lee."

"Yes, it was a narrow escape," admitted the detective. "The trouble is, I don't know who my assailants were."

"Haven't you any inkling regarding their identities?" asked Mr. Stokes.

"Not the faintest," replied Lee. "Naturally, the police have been making inquiries, but they have discovered absolutely nothing. As far as I know, there are no enemies of mine who would adopt such devilish methods. No suspicious characters have been seen in the neighbourhood——"

a scare at the school last week," put in Mrs. Stokes quickly.

Nelson Lee looked thoughtful.

"The yellow-faced man," he mused. "I wonder if there really was such a man?"

"But you saw him yourself, didn't you?"

"I saw somebody, Barry," answered Lee. "A man threw a stone through my study window—and on that stone there was a warning message. At the time I thought it was a practical joke—and I had an idea that the mysterious figure was wearing a mask. Perhaps it was a mask."

"But the fact remains that you were attacked, and that you were nearly done for," said Mr. Stokes. "And now you're out here on the links. If those dangerous beggars can go for you once, they can go for you again."

Nelson Lee smiled.

"Aren't we playing golf?" he asked mildly.

THEY went to the next tee, but while Nelson Lee was looking quite contented, Mr. and Mrs. Stokes were obviously uneasy. Not until they were on the links had they realised that they might have brought Nelson Lee into danger. Ordinarily, of course, they would never have dreamed of such a thing. But they could not forget those startling incidents of the previous week.

Lee had been attacked by unknown, mysterious enemies. Nothing had transpired since to clear up the mystery.

But Nelson Lee was not the kind of man to skulk in hiding, and he was carrying on in exactly the same way as usual, even though he knew, better than anybody else, that his danger was as acute as ever.

Yet he was so capable of concentrating on one thing at a time that he had played perfect golf this afternoon. At the next tee, however, his drive was well off the mark. He pulled the ball badly, and it left the fairway and vanished amidst some clumps of bracken, well in the rough.

"I know the place, sir," said Willy promptly.

"You see?" smiled Lee, turning to his companions. "That's what you've done for me!"

"Oh, Mr. Lee, it's too bad of us——" began Mrs. Stokes.

"I'm only joking, of course," smiled Lee. "We're all liable to pull or slice, no matter how much we concentrate."

Mr. and Mrs. Stokes drove in turn, and they kept to the fairway. Lee went off to help Willy in the search for the elusive "pill." And it was at this point that Lee noticed, for the first time, that the greater bulk of Bannington Moor had vanished. He stood still, watching the fog which was slowly but relentlessly rolling across the moors, enveloping everything and everywhere in a blanket of gloom.

"Afraid we shall have to chuck it up!" came a hail from Mr. Stokes, some distance away. "Look at this fog! Never knew it to come down so quickly before!"

It was quite dramatic. As Lee watched, the figures of Mr. and Mrs. Stokes and Chubby Heath and Juicy Lemon vanished, swallowed up in the encroaching mist.

"A pity," murmured Lee. "It's impossible to finish the game now."

He looked round for Willy, but Willy, too, had vanished in the fog. Of course, at this time of the year a fog was always liable

to descend over the moor; but it was only on rare occasions that it dropped as suddenly as this.

Lee could not help thinking of those mysterious enemies of his. What a chance for them now—if it should happen that they were on the watch! Then he laughed to himself. There was not one chance in a thousand that anything sensational could happen.

He hurried on, surprised by the density of the fog. He had seen it coming, but he had thought that it would only be an ordinary mist. It had dropped like a blanket, and was so thick that he could hardly see a yard in any direction. And all sounds, naturally, had become deadened. Fog—and particularly thick fog—has the quality of muffling all sounds.

"Willy!" shouted Lee, as he hurried forward.

There came no reply. And then, abruptly, a figure rose from behind a heavy clump of gorse. It confronted Lee menacingly.

"Just a minute, guv'nor!" said a hoarse, strained voice.

Lee stepped nearer, and at the first glance he could tell that this man was not one of his mysterious enemies. He was fairly big, and he was dressed in rags and tatters. He was a tramp. His face was ugly, and set into an expression of menacing aggression.

"What do you want?" asked Lee.

"Money, guv'nor," replied the other.

"Be a sport, sir! Spring us a quid! I haven't eaten a square meal for days, and I hardly remember what it's like to have a night's lodging."

Lee pulled out some silver, and handed the man half-a-crown. He wasn't in the least alarmed, but he was by nature charitable. No doubt this fellow would squander the money, but—

WHO'S WHO AT ST. FRANK'S.



CECIL DE VALERIE.

A fairly prominent member of the Remore. A capable junior, very keen on all sports, but inclined to be weak in character.

"Half-a-crown?" said the man hoarsely. "Ain't you got no more than that for me, guv'nor?"

"Don't you want it?" asked Lee, his voice suddenly becoming sharp.

"I asked you for a quid, didn't I?"

"And, like a n idiot, I offered you half-a-crown," said Lee, putting the coin back into his pocket. "You'd better not bother me—"

"I'm desperate, hang you!" snarled the other, his voice becoming menacing. "You'll give me a quid, or I'll take all you've got on you! Do you hear me?"

"You've made a mistake this time, my friend," replied Lee curtly. "I am not to be intimidated by your threats."

He made as if to brush past, but the tramp, with a shout of rage, made a sudden move. Lee had expected a punch, or a kick, perhaps. He had seen, from the light in the man's eyes, that he was a dangerous character. But, keen as Lee was, he had not anticipated the other's move.

For, like a flash, the man reached sideways and

grasped the golf club which Nelson Lee was carrying. Willy had the bag, but Lee had taken this mid-iron in readiness for his next shot. And now the tramp whipped it from Lee's hand before the detective could guess his motive.

"Won't give me a quid, won't you?" panted the fellow. "All right—we'll see!"

He whirled the club round, and Lee only just dodged in the nick of time. The shaft caught him across the shoulder, and split with a shattering crack. The club did not completely break, however—the iron head was still firmly held by the splintered shaft—and, grasping it savagely, the tramp again charged to the attack.

Nelson Lee rushed forward to close with the man, but one of his feet caught in a projecting tuft of grass, and he half stumbled.

Before he could recover, his assailant swung the club round again, and there was a dull, ugly thud. Without a cry, Nelson Lee collapsed. The iron club had caught him on the side of the head, and he was stunned.

"Well, you asked for it!" panted the tramp savagely.

He flung the club away from him—flung it far into the fog. Then he knelt down by Lee's side, and took possession of Lee's pocket-book.

"Five quid—ten quid—fifteen!" he muttered gloatingly. "Thunder! What a find! This'll see me clear out of the neighbourhood."

He was about to stumble away into the fog when another thought struck him. He caught sight of his own tattered garments, and he looked at Nelson Lee's thick, warm, Harris-tweed, plus-four suit.

"Why not?" he muttered. "Might as well make a proper job of it while I'm about it!"

CHAPTER 2.

Mystery I

"**G**OT you, you little beggar!" said Willy Handforth triumphantly.

He dived behind a clump of heather, and picked up a clean white ball with mesh markings.

"That's the chap!" he told himself. "Practically a new one, and too good to lose."

He pocketed the ball, and then glanced ruefully at the enveloping fog.

"No more play to-day, by the look of it," he muttered. "Hard lines! And Mr. Lee was whacking old Barry Stokes hollow. Even Mrs. Stokes has been better than Barty this afternoon."

It was natural that Willy should desire the victory to go to his own Housemaster. He regarded Mr. Beverley Stokes as a rival—Mr. Stokes being the Housemaster of the West House.

"Ahoy, there!" sang out Willy, placing his hands to his mouth, cup-like. "Mr. Lee! This way, sir! I've found it, sir!"

No reply came from the fog, and after a while Willy tried to find his way back to the fairway. He thought he had a good idea as to where the green was situated;

but when he came to walk forward into the fog he was soon muddled up. He possessed a keen sense of direction, but this fog was so dense that he had already lost his bearings.

There was nothing by which he could guide himself. Every clump of bracken and gorse looked the same. There were no trees, no landmarks of any description. He walked blindly forward, shouting now and again.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he muttered at length. "Who'd have thought it? I'll bet I've walked in the wrong direction, and that I'm half a mile away from the rest. What a fathead!"

He came to a halt, and listened. The silence was uncanny. With the lowering of the fog, an intense, brooding silence had descended upon the links. Suddenly, a faint, vague, far-away shout reached Willy's ears, and he recognised the voice of Mr. Stokes.

"All right, sir!" he shouted. "I'm here!"

He ran in the direction from which the voice had seemed to sound. After a while he paused and shouted again.

"Is that you, Handforth minor?" came a hail.

"Yes, sir!" yelled Willy.

"Well, stop where you are, but keep shouting now and again," called Mr. Stokes. "This fog is tricky, and I'm not sure yet in which direction you are."

Willy kept giving a hail every now and again; and presently, with dramatic suddenness, some figures materialised out of the dense white fog. The foremost were Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, and they nearly fell over Willy before he could get out of their way.

"Oh, here you are," said the Housemaster. "Isn't Mr. Lee with you?"

"Haven't you seen him, sir?" replied Willy. "I thought he was with you."

"But didn't he go in the same direction as you?" asked Mrs. Stokes. "How ridiculous!"

"I hope he's all right!" muttered Barry Stokes anxiously.

Willy saw that Chubby Heath and Juicy Lemon were here, too, for the two fags had kept close to Mr. and Mrs. Stokes.

"Well, he can't be far off, sir," said Willy. "He's probably searching for us. Fancy this fog coming down so suddenly. Let's hope it lifts just as quickly."

"Not much hope of that, I'm afraid," said Mr. Stokes, glancing round. "Looks like settling on us for the night. That's the worst of this moorland—you never know when you're going to be caught. Mr. Lee!" he added, raising his voice. "Mr. Lee!"

They waited, but no answering hail came to their ears.

"You don't think anything's happened to him, do you, sir?" asked Willy, with

a sudden note of anxiety in his voice. "I mean, that affair last week——"

"Now, don't get any silly ideas into your head, young 'un," broke in Mr. Stokes, fully aware that the same "silly" ideas were in his own head. "No need to make a mystery out of nothing. Mr. Lee is probably within a hundred yards of us at this very moment."

"How about spreading out, sir, and making a search?" suggested Chubby Heath.

"We shall do no spreading out," replied Mr. Stokes promptly. "You youngsters must keep with us—or you'll get yourselves lost. Even as it is, we shall have enough trouble to find our way."

He shouted again, but there was still no reply. And soon, as they were walking over the springy turf, Willy darted off to the left and vanished into the fog.

"Come back, you young idiot!" shouted Mr. Stokes. "What are you doing?"

"It's all right, sir—I'm here," said Willy. "My only sainted aunt! Look at this! Something must have happened!"

He appeared in view again, and now he held a smashed golf-club in his hand. He had caught the glint of the metal head as it lay in the grass.

"What is it?" asked Barry Stokes sharply.

"One of Mr. Lee's clubs, sir—his mid-iron," said Willy. "And look at it—nearly smashed in two!"

Mr. Stokes took the club and exchanged a swift glance with his wife. Mrs. Stokes was looking worried now.

"What do you think can have happened, Barry?" she asked in a low voice.

"Heaven only knows!" muttered her husband. "Why should this mid-iron be smashed? It looks to me as though it might have been used as a weapon. It was broken in the struggle. I don't like it, Joyce."

"Oh, but we mustn't think such things," said Mrs. Stokes. "There may be a perfectly simple explanation, Barry. Mr. Lee might have stumbled, and the club was smashed, perhaps, as he tried to save himself."

"I wish I could believe you," said Mr. Stokes grimly.

They went round aimlessly in circles, wandering over the course, and shouting occasionally. But still they found no other sign of Nelson Lee, and all their shouts were unanswered. They found themselves unexpectedly at the third green—when Barry could have sworn that he was near the sixth green.

Willy & Co., following behind, were whispering amongst themselves. They, too, knew all about the narrow escape from death that

Lee had had on the fateful Fifth. And Willy, at least, didn't like the look of things at all.

"Seems to me that somebody must have been lying in wait for him," he muttered. "Then, when the fog came down, the rotter took advantage of it."

"Well, we can't do anything," said Chubby Heath nervously. "It's no good messing about here on the links. We might search for hours and find nothing."

"I don't like that club being smashed," said Willy, frowning. "I wonder what the dickens can have happened?"

"There wasn't anybody on the course," said Juicy Lemon, glancing over his shoulder into the fog. "We had the whole place to ourselves. We didn't see a living thing—and the links were clear enough before the fog came down."

"There's no telling," replied Willy. "There are a good many clumps of gorse, and some rotter might easily have been lurking behind one of them. And there are some bunkers, too—and what about the old sand-pit?"

"The fog's getting thicker," said Chubby with

a shiver.

Mr. Stokes glanced back at the fags.

"You boys had better keep close," he said. "We'll get back to the road—if we can find it."

"But we can't leave Mr. Lee like this, sir!" protested Willy.

"The chances are that Mr. Lee has already gone home," replied the Housemaster of the West House. "Having failed to find us, he, no doubt, made tracks for St. Frank's. And that's what we'll do."

WHEN they got to the road, they found that the fog was not so thick here. It was at its worst on the moor. And when they arrived in the Triangle of St. Frank's they could see gleams of light streaming from the lighted windows. It was getting dusky now, and most of the school lights had been switched on. There was nobody within sight, and Mr. Stokes turned to his wife.

"You'd better hurry indoors, dear," he advised. "If I can find Mr. Lee I'll bring him along."

"You must," said Mrs. Stokes. "We invited him to tea with us, don't forget."

She went into the West House, and her husband, with Willy & Co. at his heels, entered the Ancient House. In the lobby they came across Gulliver and Bell, of Study A, with some small paper packages in their hands.

"Just off to the sanny, sir," volunteered Gulliver. "Taking a few tit-bits to Forrest."



Mr. Stokes was not interested in Bernard Forrest—who, by the way, was due to come out of the sanatorium within a few days now. His broken arm was mending well, and he would soon be fit to resume his normal place in the Remove. His other injuries were practically well.

"Never mind Forrest," said Barry Stokes. "Have you seen Mr. Lee?"

"Not since the middle of the afternoon, sir," said Gulliver. "Didn't he go off with you on to the golf links?"

"I saw him go out in plus fours, sir," put in Bell.

"We lost one another in the fog," explained Mr. Stokes. "If you haven't seen him come in, I needn't question you any further."

He strode on, and went to Nelson Lee's study. It was empty, and the fire was burning low. In the meantime, Willy & Co. had dashed upstairs—to Lee's bed-room. This was empty, too. They came down and reported, and then Mr. Stokes made some systematic inquiries. They led to the definite certainty that Nelson Lee had not yet returned.

"Well, it's infernally queer," said Mr. Stokes, removing his tweed cap and scratching his head. "The only thing I can think is that he must have remained on the links—probably searching for us."

"Unless something else happened, sir," said Willy.

"Something else? What could have happened?"

"I don't like that club being smashed, sir."

"Neither do I," grunted Mr. Stokes, frowning. "Why was it smashed? And how was it smashed? If there had been a fight, we should have heard it."

"I don't think so, sir," said Willy, shaking his head. "That fog muffled all sounds—unless they were right near us."

"I'm wondering if we'd better tell the police," said the Housemaster anxiously. "I can't believe that Mr. Lee has been kidnapped, or anything like that—but it looks nasty. It looks ugly, young 'un. What a pity he got separated from us!"

Mr. Stokes went to the door and stared out into the foggy Triangle.

"I think you'd better go indoors to tea, sir," advised Willy. "I'll keep my eyes open, and as soon as Mr. Lee comes in I'll pop along and give you the word."

"Good man!" said Barry approvingly. "I know I can rely upon you, Handforth minor."

They all went out into the Triangle together, and Mr. Stokes vanished into his own House. A figure had come out from the Ancient House in their rear. It was the figure of Teddy Long, of the Remove, and Teddy was looking excited and eager.

He was bursting with curiosity, and he badly wanted to question Willy. But just then voices—many voices—came out of the fog from the direction of the main gates. Willy & Co. hurried forward, and found

themselves confronted by a big party of Removites and Fourth-Formers, all of them overcoated, and some carrying bags.

"Well, thank goodness we're back," came the voice of Edward Oswald Handforth. "What a beastly shame, this fog messing up our game!"

"Can't be helped, Handy," said Nipper, the junior captain. "We must expect these things in November. They're sent to try us!"

"We were winning hands down, too," grumbled Handforth. "We were already two goals ahead, and then this fog had to roll up! Rats to it!"

"It's a lot worse here than at Helmford," came the voice of Vivian Travers.

The junior eleven were rather fed-up. They had been playing an away fixture this afternoon—a match against Helmford College Juniors—and things had been going well with them until the fog had stopped the game. So they had come home by an earlier train, and were in time for tea.

"I say, you chaps, have you heard the news?" burst out Teddy Long, as he rushed up.

"Oh, you're always full of news!" said Nipper. "What is it this time? Has Mr. Crowell been flirting with one of the housemaids?"

"Oh, don't be funny!" panted Teddy. "Mr. Lee has been kidnapped!"

"What!" went up a general yell.

"It's a fact!" shouted Teddy, overjoyed at the sensation he was creating. "I heard it from Mr. Stokes! Mr. Lee went out for a game of golf, and he hasn't come back! He's been kidnapped by somebody, and perhaps murdered! Mr. Stokes is going to tell the police!"

"Look here, Long!" snapped Nipper, gripping Teddy Long fiercely by the arm. "Is this true? If you're spinning a yarn, you young blighter—"

"Oh! You're hurting me!" gasped Teddy, in agony.

"Just a minute!" said Willy, pushing forward. "Don't take any notice of that gasbag."

Nipper released the howling Teddy.

"I knew it," he grunted. "One of these days I'll give him a thorough thrashing. I suppose there's no truth in the yarn at all?"

Willy didn't answer.

"Is there any truth in it?" added Nipper sharply.

"Well, I don't know—it's difficult to say," replied Willy. "Mr. Lee went on to the links, and he hasn't come back yet; but there's no absolute evidence that he was kidnapped, or that he met with foul play."

"But he's disappeared?" asked Handforth tensely. "By George! I've been afraid of this all the week."

Nipper had gone pale. For days he had been uneasy; he had urged his beloved "guv'nor" to be extra careful. And Nelson Lee had always told him to make his mind easy. Lee had refused to acknowledge that there was any danger.



Nelson Lee made to rush in and close with the tramp, but he slipped and stumbled. Before he could recover his balance, his assailant had swung the golf club round and there came a dull thud. Without a cry Nelson Lee collapsed to the ground.

"Do you know exactly what did happen?" asked Nipper, turning to Willy.

"That's just the trouble," replied the fag. "I was on the links at the time, but the fog hid everything."

And he gave the full details of what had happened, as far as he knew. The Removites and Fourth-Formers, crowding round, were excited and uneasy.

There was a sinister look about this affair.

CHAPTER 3.

A Grim Discovery!

"**W**HAT was the golf club smashed?" asked Nipper wonderingly. "You say that you found the club, but that Mr. Lee himself had gone?"

"There wasn't any sign of him at all," replied Willy.

"And he hasn't come back yet?"

"I'm afraid not."

"There was a fight," said Handforth excitedly. "Isn't it as clear as daylight? Some crooks must have rushed at Mr. Lee, and he tried to defend himself with the golf club—and smashed it in the process. But they were too many for him, and they carried him off."

"Well, well," said Travers. "Handy, dear old fellow, there's no evidence to prove that Mr. Lee was attacked at all."

"No evidence?" echoed Handforth. "How did the golf club get smashed, then?"

"I'm not rash enough to suggest any theory," replied Travers. "At the same time, there's no harm in assuming that Mr. Lee might have broken the club by accident. What kind of accident, I don't know. But to jump to the conclusion that he had a fight with some crooks, and that he got the worst of it, is a bit too thick."

"What about those crooks who grabbed him the other night?" demanded Handforth. "They put him on the top of that bonfire, near the River House School, and meant to burn him alive! Rotters like that wouldn't stick at anything. I think we ought to get up some search parties, and go out on to the links."

"We'll think about it after tea," murmured Travers.

"After tea!" shouted Handforth. "Do you put your tea before Mr. Lee is found? We ought to go now—without a minute's delay! We might be able to get on his track, and rescue him——"

"Cheese it, Handy," put in Nipper. "We couldn't do anything on the links. It's practically dark by now—and the fog is thicker there than it is here. We might search all night long, and find nothing in this smother."

"You're a fine sort of chap," said Handforth accusingly. "Mr. Lee is your guardian, and you don't seem to care twopence!"

"I care for the guv'nor more-than anybody," replied Nipper calmly. "But I happen to have confidence in his ability. Mr. Lee isn't the kind of man to get caught twice."

"If he wasn't caught, where is he?" asked Harry Gresham. "Why didn't he come back from the links?"

"He might have lost himself, and perhaps he's wandering over the moor now, trying to find his bearings," suggested Boots, of the Fourth. "It's easy enough to get lost in a fog—especially on the links. They're next to the moor, and there's nothing to tell where they end, and where the moor begins."

"Well, let's get indoors," said Nipper. "After tea we'll see how things stand—and if the guv'nor hasn't come back we'll go along to Mr. Stokes, and ask his advice."

Nipper's calmness reassured the others. And although they were puzzled about Nelson Lee's disappearance, they were by no means alarmed. They might have thought differently if they had seen Nipper, three minutes later, when he had reached the privacy of Study C.

Sir Montie Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson had gone into the study with him, and it was not until the light was switched on that they noticed any change in their leader.

"Begad!" ejaculated Sir Montie, adjusting his pince-nez, and eyeing Nipper with concern. "You're looking frightfully seedy, dear old boy—you are, really!"

"I'm very worried, you chaps," said Nipper in a low voice.

"But just now you told us that——" began Tommy Watson.

"I know!" interrupted Nipper. "I didn't want to get the fellows into a scare. But I'm worried, all the same. I can't help thinking that something awful might have happened to the guv'nor."

"Well, of course, it looks really frightfully bad," admitted Tregellis-West. "We shouldn't have thought anything ordinarily, but after that horrid business of last week, a chap gets the wind up."

Nipper paced up and down, all his indifference gone. His face was tense, his eyes filled with trouble. His chums watched him uncomfortably.

"Perhaps Handy was right, after all," said Watson, in a tentative way. "I mean, perhaps we ought to get up some search parties, and go to the links."

"If I thought it would be any good, I'd go," replied Nipper, halting. "But in this fog we should be all at sea. Even with lanterns we couldn't keep our bearings. There aren't any lanes or hedges or trees to guide us. If the fog lifts we might get up a search party—but by that time, perhaps, the guv'nor will have come back."

"Let's hope so, dear old boy," murmured Montie.

"Besides, we should look awful asses if nothing dramatic had really happened," continued Nipper. "There's no telling with

the guv'nor; he might have spotted something, and perhaps he went off on the trail. We're only alarmed because of what happened on the Fifth. And if he got back and found that we were making a panic-stricken search for him, he'd never forgive me."

"That's just it," grunted Watson. "And while we're messing about here, like this, he might be in danger."

"We've got to keep level-headed," said Nipper steadily. "No good getting into a scare. On the face of it, there's nothing conclusive. Mr. and Mrs. Stokes and those fags lost sight of the guv'nor on the links, when the fog came down. They found his mid-iron smashed—and that's all. Nothing to point to foul play, really. Let's stick to facts. I know the guv'nor as well as you chaps—a lot better, in fact—and I know that he isn't the man to go under easily."

Tregellis-West shook his head.

"It's no good, Nipper, old boy," he said. "You can't spoof us, you know. You're pretending to be calm and cool—and yet, all the while, you're bubbling with worry."

"Well, perhaps I am," confessed Nipper. "The trouble is, I don't know what to do. You chaps had better be getting tea ready, and I'll pop to the guv'nor's study, on the off-chance that he's come back."

AT just about this same time, a two-seater motor-car was crawling through the fog out of Bellton. It had come from Caistowe, and was now on its way to Bannington, and the man at the wheel was Inspector Pearce, of the Caistowe Police. The man beside him was Sergeant Warren, also of the Caistowe Police. They had been out on a special mission that afternoon, and the fog had unexpectedly caught them. Now they were attempting to get through to Bannington.

"Fog's thinning a bit along this road, sir, I think," remarked the sergeant, after the last house of the village had been left behind.

"Yes, it seems a bit better," agreed his superior officer. "Can't get into top, though. Keep your eye on that side of the road, Warren."

"Yes, sir."

They continued to crawl, the headlights serving them but poorly. There was plenty of light, but it was only beaten back and reflected by the fog. The car was not fitted with any special fog-light, and it was difficult for the inspector to see the grass border of the road. However, his companion warned him if he grew too near, or went too far away.

As they crawled along the sergeant caught sight of something dark and still lying in the grass, near the roadside. The car had gone past before Warren could definitely distinguish what the object was.

"Just a minute, sir," he said in a startled voice. "I saw something just now."

"What do you mean—you saw something?"

"Lying on the grass, sir," replied the sergeant. "I only caught a glimpse of it as

we went by, but it seemed to me that it was like somebody lying there."

"A heap of stones, I expect—or perhaps an old log," said Inspector Pearce. "I don't think I shall trouble to stop, Warren."

"You'd better, sir," urged the sergeant. "I'm sure it was a man."

The inspector grunted, and stopped the car.

"All right—run back and see," he said shortly.

The sergeant climbed out and made his way back along the foggy road. The inspector waited impatiently in the meantime—for he was convinced that his subordinate had allowed his imagination to get the better of him. But a moment later he had reason to change his mind.

"Quick, sir!" came a gasping shout. "I was right! It is a man!"

"Well, I'm hanged!" muttered the inspector, leaping out.

He ran back, and found Sergeant Warren bending over something in the damp grass.

"Drunk?" asked the inspector.

"Dead, sir!"

"How do you know?" demanded the inspector sharply. "Here, let me come there!"

"He's cold, sir, and getting stiff, I believe," muttered the sergeant in a shaky voice. "Don't you think we'd better back the car, so that we can get a bit of light?"

"That a good idea," said the other. "You back the car, Warren—I'll stay here."

The sergeant was so agitated that he caused the gears to fairly shriek before he got them properly engaged. Then he backed the car erratically, until it was beyond the point where the figure lay in the wet grass.

"Turn her in a bit," said the inspector. "We want those headlights over this way. Yes, that's right. She'll do just like that."

The headlamps were now showing full upon the grass border of the road, but the fog was still curling round in thick, swirling masses.

"A gentleman, by the look of him," said the inspector, as he gazed down at the silent figure, which was clothed in a plus-four

suit of distinctive pattern. "Help me to turn him over, Warren."

The figure of the man in plus-fours was lying face downwards, in an unnatural attitude. One glance had been sufficient to show Inspector Pearce that the man was dead. And now, gently and gingerly, the two police officers turned the body over.

"Probably had a fit of some kind, sir," suggested the sergeant. "Or he might have been taken bad by a sudden heart attack."

The inspector caught his breath in with a startled gulp.

"Look at this, Warren!" he ejaculated hoarsely. "Look here!"

He pointed, and the sergeant stared open-eyed, dumb. The dead man's waistcoat, on the left side, was soaking. A dark, ominous

stain was showing—and in one spot there was a jagged hole in the cloth.

"This man was murdered!" said the inspector grimly. "A bullet wound, Warren! He was shot—either by a rifle or a revolver!"

"Mightn't it have been suicide, sir?" suggested the startled sergeant. "We'd better look round for the weapon, hadn't we?"

Before doing so, Inspector Pearce made a quick examination. He tore open the waistcoat and bared the chest. This unfortunate man had been shot through the heart, and his death must have been instantaneous.

He had probably been walking along the road, and he had staggered into the grass in his death fall.

When a quick search was made, no weapon was found. There was no indication of a revolver or a rifle. Near the body was a cap of the same material as the suit. It had fallen off when the man had crashed down.

"There's no weapon—and that proves that it's a case of murder," said the inspector, taking a deep breath. "An ugly business, Warren. Robbery might have been the motive—Doesn't look like it, though," he added.

He had removed the leather wallet from the coat inside pocket, and a glance showed him that there were many notes in it. He took out a card, and then he gave a shout of astonishment and consternation.



The Unknown Menace!

Unseen, unheard, the sinister figure crept towards the armchair in which sat Nelson Lee. In one hand he held a knife.

Nearer and nearer . . . now he was immediately behind the unsuspecting Housemaster-detective. Up went the man's hand; the knife gleamed dully as it flashed downwards . . .

And the deadly Fu Chang Tong had struck once more!

This is only one of the many thrilling incidents in next week's stunning school yarn, chums, which is entitled:

'FU CHANG, THE TERRIBLE!'

"What is it, sir?" gasped the sergeant.

"They've got him, Warren!" said the inspector, with a whistle. "Don't you remember that affair of last week? It was reported to us, but we could make nothing of it."

"You—you don't mean Mr. Lee, sir?"

"I do!"

"They tried to burn him, and now they've shot him!" panted the sergeant. "Mr. Nelson Lee!"

The inspector looked at the face of the dead man—and Sergeant Warren looked, too. It was not exactly the type of face they had expected to see. Neither of them had ever met Nelson Lee, for, as it happened, they were both comparatively new to Caistowe, having been drafted there from a rural district, many miles farther along the coast.

But never for an instant did they doubt that this body was not the body of Nelson Lee. The dead man's face was distorted, and that, alone, would have been sufficient to render it unrecognisable. And in that light, and what with the fog, it was hard, indeed, to make a definite identification.

"There'll be a sensation over this, sir," said the sergeant, in a hoarse whisper. "I mean, Mr. Nelson Lee, the famous private detective! Why, the London papers will be full of it in the morning."

"Never mind the London papers," said the inspector. "Confound the hounds who did this, Warren! Look here! I'll swear that the cloth is scorched. The poor man must have been shot at close quarters."

The inspector found a few letters in one of the pockets—addressed to Nelson Lee—and he found Lee's name engraved on the back of the gold watch. There seemed to be no shadow of doubt that this was actually the body of the great detective.

"What do you think we'd better do, sir?" asked the sergeant.

"We must take this body into the village," replied the inspector. "You'll have to help me to lift it aboard the car, Warren. We'll take it to the George Tavern."

"The landlord might object."

"I can't help that—we'd better not take this body up to the school," said the inspector, shaking his head. "I dare say there's a shed at the George which will serve as a mortuary for the time being. The inquest will have to be held there, too. Come along, Warren—it's ugly work, but it's got to be done."

CHAPTER 4.

A Shock for St. Frank's!

DR. MORRISON NICHOLLS, the headmaster of St. Frank's, reached for the telephone.

He had just finished his tea, and he had come into his study to do a little work. It was very cosy in there, with a

bright fire burning in the grate, and with the softly-shaded lights glowing.

"Hallo!" called the Head, as he placed the receiver to his ear. "Who is that, please?"

"I want to speak to the headmaster," came a grave voice.

"You are speaking to him—I am Dr. Nicholls," replied the Head.

"I am afraid I have some bad news for you, sir," said the voice. "I'm Inspector Pearce, of the Caistowe Police."

"Well?"

"It's about Mr. Nelson Lee, sir. He's one of your Housemasters—"

"I know that!" said the Head sharply. "What of him? Has anything happened to him? I heard a rumour, some time ago, that he had failed to come back from the golf course, but I did not imagine that there was anything serious—"

"It is serious, sir," interrupted the inspector. "Very serious indeed."

"You mean that he has met with an accident?"

"Worse than that, sir."

"Not—dead!" ejaculated the Head, in horror.

"I'm very much afraid that I do mean that, sir," said Inspector Pearce, who was doing his best to break it gently.

"Mr. Lee dead!" said Dr. Nicholls, in agony. "This is appalling! How did it happen? Did he meet with an accident? Tell me, inspector! This is a dreadful shock to me."

"I was sure it would be, sir, and I fear there's another shock," came Inspector Pearce's voice. "There's no doubt that Mr. Lee was—murdered."

Dr. Nicholls said nothing; he sat there, with the receiver held tightly to his ear, staring dully across at the wall on the other side of the room. His face had become pale and haggard.

"Did you hear me, sir?" came the police officer's voice.

"I heard you," said the Head, trying to speak steadily. "I am stunned, Inspector Pearce. You tell me that Mr. Lee is dead, and that he has been murdered? It is horrible—horrible! I cannot believe it!"

"It's true, sir, all the same—although I hate telling you so," said the inspector kindly. "I've taken the body to a shed at the back of the George Tavern, and I'm arranging for the inquest to be held there to-morrow."

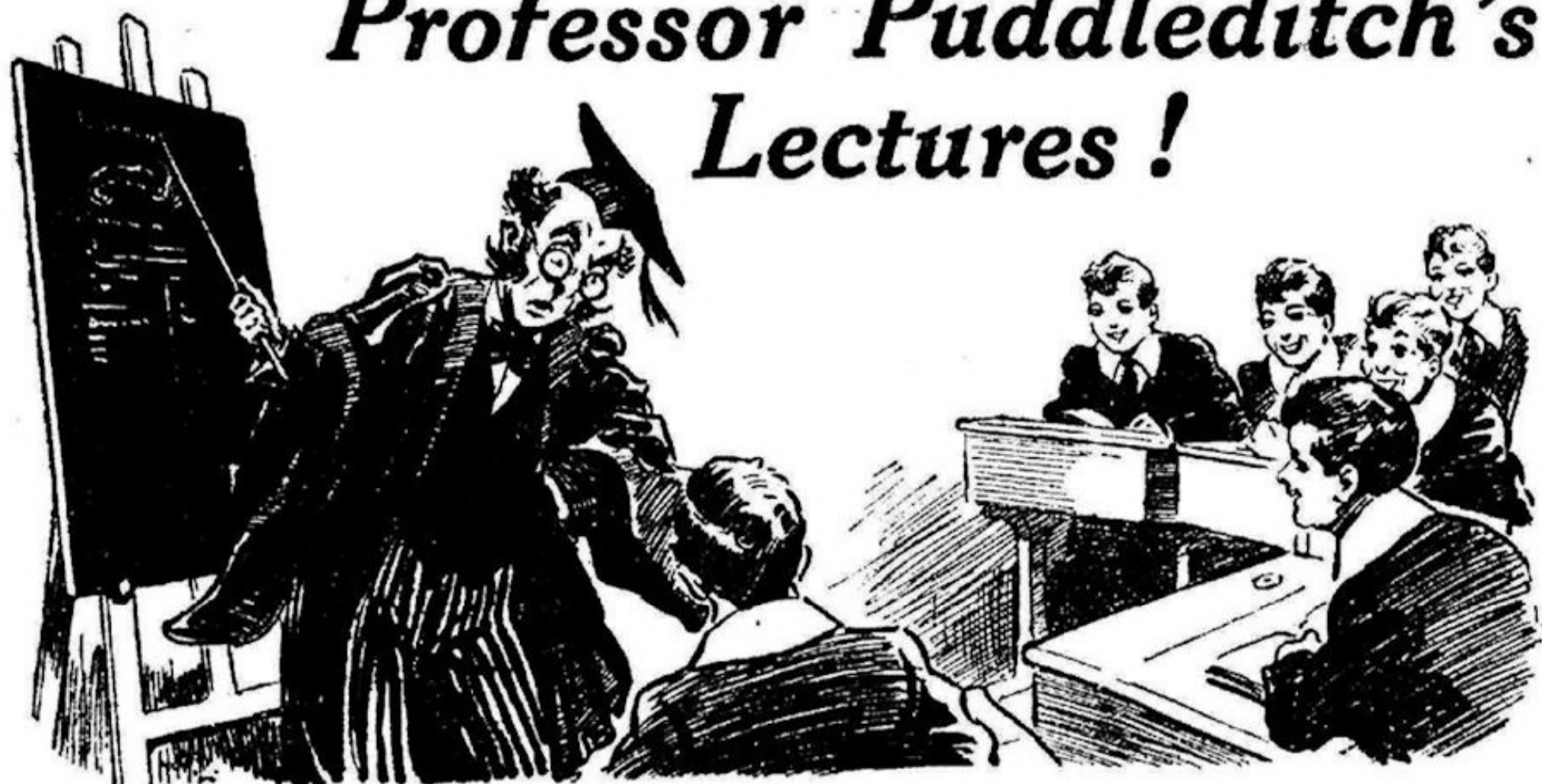
"Inquest!" panted the Head. "This sounds ghastly, inspector! The George Tavern, you say?"

"I thought it better not to bring the body to the school, sir."

"You were very sensible—and I must compliment you for your thoughtfulness," said Dr. Nicholls gratefully. "Thank you very much indeed, inspector. It was better—far better—that the body should be kept away from the school."

(Continued on page 14.)

Professor Puddleditch's Lectures!



In response to many requests from readers of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Professor Puddleditch continues his amusing lectures on "unnatural" history.

By Reggie Pitt

Lecture 5—THE RADISH

THE boys of the Fourth Form of St. Sycamore's were already in the Hall when the door banged open and in shuffled Professor Puddleditch, burdened with his almost unportable dictionary, without which reference book he rarely appeared. In his buttonhole, partly concealed by his swaying white beard, reposed a small bunch of radishes.

He tottered up the steps to the platform and puffed his cheeks at the Form with the exertion of his efforts.

"This morning, boys," he began, when he had recovered his breath, "our weekly talk will be on some of the lesser known aspects of that every-day article of garden produce—the radish.

"The radish is generally spherical in shape to begin with, changing sometimes to half-moon; this being, of course, after somebody has taken a bite out of it." The professor illustrated this by removing his buttonhole of radishes and biting one, holding it up for examination to the class. "If I may be a little facetious, I should describe its colour as—radish—er—reddish, see? He, he, he!"

The professor raised two fingers gently.

"Ssh! Not too much laughter, boys," he begged of a stony-faced audience which showed no signs of exercising its risible faculties. "I always believe in lightening the text of these serious talks by the introduction of sundry witticisms which fall so readily from my tongue.

"Well! To continue our topic; the radish is closely allied to the watercress. As you

probably know, it has been described by that clever American botanist, Al Lotment, as watercress with knobs on. These knobs or protuberances, he avers, fix the plant so firmly in the ground that the weekly tornado fails entirely to uproot the sturdy little growths. Thus nature counterbalances her elements and preserves the food of the people from destructive forces which otherwise would successfully assail it.

"The flavour of this little red vegetable appeals to some people. There are, in fact, two flavours. One is reminiscent of tough string, while the other savours of aerated cotton wool. The composition or substance, or whatever you call it, also varies; sometimes being as hard and as unyielding as a pebble, at others, possessing the spongy resilience of rubber. Why folk eat the things at all is a mystery which has never been solved."

At this juncture, the professor carefully polished his spectacle case, put the spectacles back into his pocket and attempted to fix the case on his nose. Failing in this, he reversed the process and continued his discourse.

"The radish has also some historical notoriety," he went on. "We read in a pamphlet by Watteau Chump entitled 'Historical Inaccuracies,' that William Rufus was referred to as Red Nob or Radish Head. Also that this remark once so incensed him that he shot his companion in the—er—New Forest."

One of the boys couldn't stand this and interrupted the lecture by exclaiming:

(Continued on page 44.)

BY ORDER OF THE TONG!

(Continued from page 12.)

"I rang you up, sir, because I thought you ought to know as quickly as possible," continued the police officer. "Perhaps you will come down, or send somebody——"

"Yes, yes, of course!" broke in the Head in agitation. "I will certainly do that, inspector. But are you sure? Man alive! Is there no possibility that you may be mistaken? What does the doctor say? Is there no hope at all?"

"I tried to get hold of Dr. Brett, sir, but he's been called away on an urgent case in Edgemore," replied the inspector. "Not that it matters. It'll do when he comes back. Mr. Lee is dead—and has been dead for at least an hour."

"Beyond all possibility of doubt?"

"I think I know a dead man when I see one, sir," replied the inspector quietly. "Mr. Lee was shot through the heart. We haven't found any weapon, and so far there is no clue to his murderer. But I am getting to work almost at once——"

"Shot through the heart!" muttered the Head. "Worse and worse! Then, indeed, there is no possibility of your being wrong. The George Tavern, you say? I will come down at once!"

He hung up the receiver abruptly, and sat back in his chair, looking years older.

"Horrible—horrible!" he muttered huskily.

He had valued Nelson Lee as a friend, and this news of his tragic death appalled him. And as the responsible controller of this great school, too, he had other matters to think about. There would be an ugly sensation over this. All the newspapers would make as much capital out of this as possible, and throughout the length and breadth of the land St. Frank's would be discussed—and discussed in an unsavoury way.

Yet, to do Dr. Nicholls justice, he only gave this side of the affair a passing thought. All his concern was for Nelson Lee himself.

There came a tap at the door, and Mr. Pagett entered.

"GOOD gracious!" ejaculated Mr. Pagett, startled.

He had received no invitation to enter, and now he beheld Dr. Nicholls, sitting back in his chair, and staring straight in front of him—his face pale, his whole figure looking shrunken. The master of the Fifth Form stepped forward, filled with concern.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" he asked anxiously. "Are you ill?"

Dr. Nicholls started, and sat forward.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Pagett," he said. "I really did not know that you had entered the room."

"I came to ask your advice on the subject of those examination papers, sir——"

"Examination papers!" echoed the Head bitterly. "They can be put aside, Mr. Pagett. I have just heard some terrible news; Mr. Lee, of the Ancient House, is dead."

"De-dead!" stuttered Mr. Pagett, horrified. "Mr. Lee!"

"And worse than that, Mr. Pagett—he was murdered!"

"Good Heavens!"

"Shot through the heart, and found somewhere near the village, I understand," continued Dr. Nicholls. "A ghastly affair, Mr. Pagett. I trust you will forgive me if I ask you to leave me now. I want to think; I must decide what shall be done."

"But—but can you give me no details, sir?"

"Are details necessary?" asked Dr. Nicholls wearily. "Is it not sufficient, Mr. Pagett, to know that Mr. Nelson Lee has been murdered? In any case, I know scarcely any details. He was found shot, and he has been carried to the George Tavern."

Mr. Pagett stammered something, and backed out of the study. Some few minutes after he had gone the Head uttered an ejaculation of annoyance, and he ran to the door. But by this time Mr. Pagett was gone, and was probably in the Ancient House.

"A pity—a great pity," muttered the Head. "I should have told him to keep the news to himself for the present. I hope he will not be unwise enough to mention this matter to any of the boys."

But Mr. William Pagett had already been unwise.

He was so startled that he blurted out the dreadful news to the first person he met—who happened to be Morrow, of the Sixth. Morrow was in the Triangle, on his way into the Ancient House to have a friendly debate with Fenton, the captain of the school. He suddenly found a figure running up out of the fog, and when it arrived it clutched him fiercely by the arm.

"Hallo! What's wrong, Mr. Pagett?" he asked in surprise. "You look a bit groggy, sir."

"Have you heard the news, Morrow?" asked the Fifth Form master huskily. "Mr. Nelson Lee has been murdered!"

"Wha-a-a-at!" gasped Morrow, jumping back in startled amazement.

"I am sorry, Morrow—I should not have spoken so bluntly," said Mr. Pagett. "But, unhappily, it is a fact that Mr. Lee is dead. I am staggered—I am bewildered by the shock of it!"

"It's too awful to be true, sir," said Morrow, with a gulp. "Mr. Lee! Dead?"

It only took Mr. Pagett a minute to blurt out everything he had heard in the headmaster's study, and then, of course, the news spread like wildfire.

MORROW, having got into the Ancient House, came upon William Napoleon Browne and Stevens of the Fifth. He told them, and Browne and Stevens were stunned. One of the Removites overheard the news, and before long there were swarms of juniors crowding round, shouting for details.

"It can't be true!" said Travers, when he heard. "I don't believe it! It's only some silly exaggeration—some idiotic yarn!"

"But Love, of the Fifth, says that Browne told him!" panted Harry Gresham. "And Browne got it from Mr. Pagett, I believe!"

They ran into the lobby, where there was a seething crowd. Everybody was shouting at once, and in the middle of it all Mr. Crowell, the Remove-master, came in. One look at his face was sufficient. Mr. Crowell was pale and haggard.

"Is it true, sir?" went up a dozen excited inquiries.

"Boys—boys!" said Mr. Crowell, holding up a hand. "For Heaven's sake control yourselves! Do not make all this noise!"

"Is it true that Mr. Lee is dead, sir?"

"There is no shadow of doubt," replied Mr. Crowell sadly. "I have spoken with Mr. Pagett—and Mr. Pagett heard these awful tidings from the headmaster's own lips. Our Housemaster has gone, boys—and it is your duty to behave yourselves decently and quietly in this great hour of trial."

"I don't believe it—it can't be true!" said Handforth, with a gulp. "Mr. Lee, you know! Our Housemaster! Oh, it's too ghastly to be true, sir! The finest Housemaster in the world——"

"Control yourself, Handforth," broke in Mr. Crowell. "No useful purpose can be served by any demonstration. Do not ask me for details, because I do not know them. The only facts known at present are that Mr. Lee was found shot through the heart, and that his body has been taken to the George Tavern. I need hardly add that every boy is strictly confined to gates."

He went away, leaving the crowd stunned into silence.

And if there had been any doubts in the minds of any of the fellows, they were soon set at rest. For Biggleswade and Conroy major, of the Sixth, came in from the fog. They were both looking gravely troubled.

They brought definite confirmation of the shocking news.

They had been in the village when the police car had driven up to the George Tavern; they had actually seen the body carried into the hotel yard, and they had heard, there, that it was the body of Nelson Lee.

The whole school was staggered. But it was the Ancient House which felt the blow the most—since Nelson Lee had been the Housemaster of the Ancient House. He had been loved by nearly all his boys—seniors and juniors alike. He had never been as boisterous and as "pally" as Mr. Stokes, of the West House; but all those fellows who had thoroughly known him had loved him.

"I can't believe it," said Handforth dully. "Mr. Lee, you know! One of the best—one of the straightest and truest! What shall we do without him?"

"It's no good talking like that, Handy," said Church huskily. "There's no doubt about it—everybody says the same thing. Biggleswade even saw him carried into the George Tavern! Those fiends have got him at last."

"Yes, they tried to burn him on that bonfire—and now they've shot him," said Travers sombrely. "By Samson! I shan't be satisfied, at least, until his murderers have been caught!"

"I'll catch them myself!" panted Handforth desperately. "The brutes! The hounds! Oh, can't we do something?"

"For goodness' sake, Handy, control yourself!" urged McClure. "What can we do? It's a job for the police—and if we try to interfere we shall only get snubbed."

"I say, I've just thought of something!" put in Reggie Pitt, of the West House. "Where's Nipper?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Perhaps he hasn't heard the news yet!" said Travers, with a startled look on his face. "I say, how awful! Poor old Nipper! He'll be bowled completely over when he hears this!"

It was strange, indeed, that Nipper, of all the Removites, was the one who hadn't heard the terrible news. But Nipper, at that moment, was in Nelson Lee's study. It was because of this that he had so far been spared.

CHAPTER 5.

Another Mystery!

NIPPER grunted and turned away from the fireplace.

He had just put some more coal on, and he remembered that Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West were waiting for



him out in the passage. They had said that they would come along after preparing tea. But Nipper wanted no tea. He was so anxious about his "guy'nor" that food or drink had no appeal. He couldn't get the idea out of his head that Nelson Lee had met with some misadventure.

"The guy'nor's been pretty secretive of late," he told himself disconsolately. "When I asked him about those mysterious men who attacked him last week, he put me off. Tried to make me believe that it was only a trifle. But there's something behind it all

—something that he suspects. By Jove! I wish I could get hold of a clue!"

He moved over to the desk, and sat down in Nelson Lee's chair. Idly, absent-mindedly, he pulled open the drawer in front of him. He had no intention of making any search of that drawer, but his gaze happened to light upon a card. It was in full view, and he could hardly miss seeing it.

"Hallo! What's this?" he muttered wonderingly.

He took the card out, turned it over, and then caught in his breath. There were some printed characters on it—executed in ordinary blue-black ink, and apparently with an ordinary pen. He read the words:

"The last time we failed. The next time we shall succeed. You have three days more."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Nipper.

Three days more! When had this card been delivered? And how? Nipper looked into the drawer again, and found an envelope. It was addressed in the same printed characters as the card. And the postmark on it was four days old!

So when that message had been delivered, there were three days of grace for Nelson Lee. The time was up! And now Nelson Lee had vanished! There was something horribly significant in this discovery of Nipper's—coming, as it did, immediately after Nelson Lee's strange disappearance.

"They've got him!" muttered Nipper frantically. "Something must have happened out there on the golf course! They took advantage of the fog—"

He hurried to the door, and dashed out. As he had half-expected, Tregellis-West and Watson were hanging about in the passage.

"Begad!" groaned Sir Montie.

He and Tommy Watson had only just come along; they had heard the awful news, and now they were in agony. They did not know how they could tell their chum. At the very moment of Nipper's exit from the Housemaster's study, they had been discussing, in low tones, how they could break the news. They now looked at him with sad, compassionate eyes.

"I'm glad you're here, you chaps," said Nipper earnestly. "I'm pretty certain that something has happened to the guv'nor."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Watson.

"I've found a card in his study," continued Nipper. "Look at this! 'Three days more.' That means to-day, because the postmark—"

He broke off, noticing for the first time the pallor in his chums' cheeks.

"You needn't be so scared about it," he said, thinking that his own words had upset them in this way. "It may not be as serious as all that. Perhaps I'm getting the wind up for nothing. After all, the guv'nor might have lost his way in the fog—"

"Don't, old boy—don't!" murmured Sir Montie.

"Anyhow, we're going out to make a search," said Nipper briskly. "You chaps had better get your overcoats on. We'll take electric torches—"

"It's no good," broke in Watson, almost harshly.

"What do you mean—no good?"

"It's—it's too late."

"Too late?" said Nipper, staring.

"I'm afraid so, dear old man," said Tregellis-West gently. "It will be most frightfully difficult to tell you, but something pretty awful has happened."

Nipper stared at them, and then he clutched at their arms.

"What do you mean?" he demanded hoarsely. "What's happened? What have you heard? Come on—out with it!"

Tregellis-West and Watson were tongue-tied. They did not know what to say. And then Handforth unconsciously came to their rescue. His voice made itself heard from round an angle of the passage.

"We've got to find him and tell him!" he was saying. "He must know sooner or later, and I'm the best chap to break it gently."

"Grab him!" came Church's voice. "We know Handy's way of breaking things gently, Mac!"

"Let me go!" shouted Handforth. "Mr. Lee's dead, and Nipper must know about it. It isn't as if he had died in an ordinary way. He's been murdered—"

"Nipper, old boy!" breathed Tregellis-West. "Begad! We wanted to let you down lightly, but—"

"You're mad—you're all mad!" shouted Nipper wildly.

He tore along the corridor, turned the corner, and charged into Handforth & Co. They regarded him with startled faces. Instinctively, they knew that he had overheard their recent talk.

"My only sainted aunt!" gurgled Handforth.

"What's that you were saying just now, Handy?" demanded Nipper. "Tell me that you were rotting! You *must* have been rotting! What's that you were saying about my guv'nor?"

Handforth gulped.

"I—I wanted to break it gently—" he began.

"Never mind breaking it gently!" panted Nipper. "Tell me the truth! Out with it! Anything is better than suspense! What's happened?"

"Mr. Lee—is dead!" breathed Handforth miserably.

"He was found on the roadside, near Bell-ton," added Church, before Nipper could speak. "Shot through the heart—murdered! It's no good, Nipper, old man—it's no good hoping."

Nipper had gone as pale as a sheet, but he remained steady. He just stood there, overwhelmed by the brutal nature of this stunning blow.



“Great Scott!” gasped Nipper in alarm as he read the card. Nelson Lee had disappeared, and now came this discovery. The significance hit Nipper like a blow. “They’ve got the gov’nor!” he muttered frantically.

“You’d better come along to Study C,” said Tommy Watson softly. “You’ll need to be quiet for a bit—”

“Where is he?” panted Nipper, suddenly finding his voice. “Where have they taken him? I don’t believe it—and I shan’t believe it until I see him with my own eyes! Where is he?”

“They took him to the George Tavern,” said Handforth. “Hold him, you fellows! He mustn’t go down there. Things are bad enough already.”

But they had as much chance of holding Nipper as they had of holding a cyclone. He went tearing down the passage, his eyes now alight with wild anxiety and agony.

IN the lobby, he found Mr. Crowell having a word with Mr. Beverley Stokes, and there were crowds of juniors and seniors standing about, too—all whispering together.

“Is it true, sir?” asked Nipper, clutching at Barry Stokes’ arm. “The gov’nor! Has he been killed? Is he dead, sir?”

“I only wish I could give you a ray of hope,” replied Mr. Stokes, “but the facts are established beyond doubt. You are a level-headed youngster, Nipper, and I am sure that you will take this blow bravely.”

Nipper did not seem to hear. He turned aside, and made for the open doorway. He

plunged out into the fog. Mr. Crowell made half a move forward, but Barry Stokes held him back.

“Let the boy go,” he muttered. “He is different from the others. Mr. Lee was practically a father to him. It would be cruel to keep him here.”

Outside, just at the foot of the Ancient House steps, Nipper nearly ran into a motor-cycle which was standing there, its electric headlamp glowing. It belonged to Travers, and Travers was close by, talking with Jimmy Potts.

“I’m taking this machine!” shouted Nipper fiercely.

“I’ll drive you down if you like,” said Travers. “You can sit on the pillion, and we’ll be in the village within two or three minutes, Nipper.”

“You’ll be too slow!” replied Nipper, seizing the machine. “And I want to be alone, too.”

“Go ahead, dear old fellow,” said Travers. “You’re quite welcome.”

And over near the gateway a vague figure, lurking in the fog, darted out into the lane and went speeding towards the village. Those words of Nipper’s had apparently electrified this mysterious stranger into activity.

Nipper had already kicked the engine into life, and now he let the clutch in with a

jerk and drove towards the gateway. Waldo, of the Remove, was compelled to make a wild dive for safety as the machine charged down upon him.

"Here, steady!" he shouted. "Of all the reckless— Oh!"

He had caught a glimpse of Nipper's set face, and he understood. He watched the motor-cycle and its rider as it was swallowed up in the swirling fog.

Nipper drove as though there was no fog at all. Bending low over the handlebars, he went tearing down the lane. He was grief-stricken, and nearly in a panic. The one thing he wanted to do was to get to the George Tavern, so that he could find out for certain the actual truth of the story that he had heard. Nothing else in the world mattered.

His mind was deadened. He felt that he had received a crushing blow on the head. And the very thought that Nelson Lee was dead was like a knife stabbing into him. Fog or no fog, he had to get down to the George!

Some little distance down the lane, the fog was not quite so thick. It was patchy, anyway, some tracts of land being almost clear, and others enveloped in an impenetrable murk.

Suddenly, just ahead of Nipper, something big and yellowish was flung from the side of the road right into his path. It was all done so quickly that Nipper had no time even to apply the brakes. The thing came almost at him, alighting in the road not five yards ahead of his machine. To swerve was out of the question.

He struck the obstruction head-on, his agonised thoughts scattered by this dramatic development. And as he went sprawling over he realised that the obstruction was nothing more nor less than a big bale of straw.

His machine plunged into it; he soared over the handlebars, over the straw bale, and crashed into the road.

And on the instant four figures bore down upon him—two from either hedge. They seized him, flung a heavy blanket over his head, drew it tight, and whirled him off into one of the fog-ridden meadows!

AT St. Frank's, Handforth was hurrying round to the garage. Church, and McClure were with him—and Travers and two or three others.

"Nipper's gone, so why shouldn't we go?" Handforth was saying. "I'm going to get out my Austin Seven, and we'll go down to the village."

"But we're all gated!" protested Church.

"Who cares?" said Handforth witheringly.

"In a crisis like this, we're not going to be bound down by rules and regulations I should hope! We've got to go to the George—to make certain that Mr. Lee is dead!"

"Oh, Handy, we know he's dead," said McClure. "Why talk like that? The Head says so—Mr. Pagett says so—Mr. Crowell says so—"

"They all may be mistaken," interrupted Handforth. "Perhaps Mr. Lee is only badly injured. Anyhow, I'm going down to find out for myself!"

"Wouldn't it be better to walk?" asked Church. "You might go into the ditch in this fog."

Handforth, however, was as obstinate as usual. He quickly got his Austin Seven out, and the engine was soon running. Church and McClure piled in, and Travers and Reggie Pitt and Jimmy Potts found places, too. They sat upon one another, but it didn't matter in an emergency of this kind.

A prefect shouted to them as the little car purred out through the gateway, but Handforth took no notice.

"There'll be trouble when we get back, but it doesn't matter," remarked Travers. "I'm as keen on this trip as you are, Handy."

Once in the lane, Handforth opened the throttle, and the faithful little Austin hummed along towards the village.

"I say, you'd better go easy!" said McClure. "If something else is coming along you'll go into it before you can swerve or pull up! Don't be so reckless, Handy! There's no violent hurry."

"There's not likely to be anybody else on the road in this fog," replied Handforth, as he bent low over the steering-wheel, peering searchingly ahead. "And as for there being no hurry, I'm not so sure. If Mr. Lee isn't dead, we might have to rush for the doctor, and there's no telling—"

"Whoa! Look out!" yelled Church. "There's something in the way!"

Handforth jammed his foot down and pulled at the hand-lever at the same time. The four-wheel brakes came into operation, the wheels skidding. Even then, Handforth failed to clear the obstruction.

There was something big looming in the road, indistinct in the fog. It looked like a great pile of sand, and Handforth expected a severe shock. But there wasn't one. And he saw, with amazement, that the front of the Austin was smothered in a mass of straw.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he ejaculated, opening the door and getting out. "It's only a bale of straw! We're not even scratched. Who the dickens can have been so careless as to have left this in the middle of the road?"

"Perhaps it fell from a wagon?" suggested Church, with relief.

"It might have sent us into the ditch," said Handforth gruffly. "Somebody ought to be prosecuted for this! Come and lend a hand, you chaps. We've got to shift it out of the way."

The others piled out, and Reggie Pitt suddenly uttered an ejaculation of astonishment.

"Look here!" he said. "There's something else—a motor-bike!"

The machine was lying on its side, midway between the straw and the grass border of the road. Vivian Travers nodded as he bent over it and lifted it up.

(Continued on page 20.)



The juniors rescued the motor-bike from the roadway and examined it feverishly. They knew that Nipper had been riding it ; that there had been a crash. But where was Nipper ?

"No need to be frightened of me, constable," he said. "Is there anybody in this shed?"

"Only—only the body, sir."

"Do you know if Hamilton has been here—Nipper?"

"He ain't bin here, sir," replied Sparrow. "There's no tellin' but what he might come, though. 'Im and Mr. Lee was sort o' like father and son, wasn't they? Mebbe this is him now," he added, as another figure materialised out of the fog.

But it was only Handforth.

"Is he here, sir?" asked Edward Oswald eagerly.

"No," replied Mr. Stokes. "You stay where you are, Handforth. I will join you soon. I'm going into this shed."

"Going in, sir?" asked the constable nervously. "I don't know as you ought. The inspector told me that nobody wasn't to pass—"

"Never mind what the inspector told you," interrupted Barry Stokes. "By the way, Sparrow, have you seen the body?"

"Me? Seen the body?" repeated the village policeman, with a shiver. "Not likely! I don't want to see no bodies—not unless I have to! I saw the poor gent carried in, but I ain't inquisitive."

Mr. Stokes opened the door of the shed, strode in, and closed the door after him. Another hurricane lamp was burning at the end of the shed, hanging from a beam. It was casting a yellowish glow upon an old trestle. On this trestle there was a still, silent figure, covered with a white sheet.

Mr. Stokes hesitated for a moment, and then he compressed his lips and tip-toed forward. He gingerly pulled the sheet back, but even now he could not see the dead man's features, for a handkerchief was covering the face. But Barry Stokes immediately recognised Nelson Lee's plus-four suit, which was of a distinctive pattern. He caught his breath in as he saw the ugly stain upon the waistcoat, and the jagged hole in the cloth.

"I don't suppose he had a dog's chance," muttered Mr. Stokes. "Shot at close quarters. Somebody must have leapt out at him in the fog, and shot him before he could attempt to defend himself. But I wonder why he was on the Bannington Road? What could he have been doing there?"

He gently lifted the handkerchief, for he could not resist the temptation to have a glance at Nelson Lee's features. It was not morbid curiosity, but a genuine expression of affection for his old friend.

Then, suddenly, Mr. Stokes uttered a shout of amazement. He felt the blood rush to his face, causing him to go hot. He stared down at that dead face.



The juniors rescued the motor-bike from the road that there had

"It's not Lee!" he gasped. "This man isn't Lee!"

Handforth, outside, heard those words; and in a flash Handforth was in the shed, easily avoiding the clumsy grab of P.O. Sparrow.

"What—what did you say, sir?" he asked hoarsely.

Barry Stokes twirled round.

"Come here, Handforth!" he said tensely. "Either I'm mad, or there's something



d it feverishly. They knew that Nipper had been riding it ;
but where was Nipper ?

wrong with my eyesight. This man isn't Nelson Lee at all!"

"Here, you come back, young gent!" exclaimed the constable, running into the shed.

But Handforth was beside the trestle, and he was staring at the face of the dead man.

"It's not Mr. Lee!" he said breathlessly. "You're right, sir! It's—it's somebody else—somebody altogether different!"

"You'll get me into trouble over this, Mr. Stokes, sir," complained the policeman. "The inspector told me——"

"Come here, Sparrow!" interrupted Mr. Stokes. "Handforth, I ought not to have called you. You had better go outside. But I was so excited that I hardly knew what I was doing. Sparrow, come here. Look at this face."

"I—I rather not, sir——"

"Don't be a fool, Sparrow!" snapped Mr. Stokes. "Come here!"

The constable went, and he, too, gulped.

"Why, bust my eyes! It ain't Mr. Lee!" he ejaculated.

"Yet this is Mr. Lee's plus-four suit," said Barry Stokes grimly. "And Mr. Lee himself is missing! The mystery is deeper than ever, Sparrow—but, thank Heaven, there is a chance that Mr. Lee is still alive!"

IN the meantime, Handforth had dashed out of the yard and he was plunging in amongst the other St. Frank's fellows, who were still hovering about the main doorway of the inn. And Handforth was shouting at the top of his voice.

"Grab him, you chaps!" urged Church. "The silly idiot! Making all this din! Handy—Handy! Haven't you any respect for——"

"It's not Mr. Lee!" shouted Handforth, wild with excitement. "It's somebody else! Mr. Lee isn't dead, after all!"

"He's gone off his rocker!" said Jimmy Potts disbelievingly.

At that moment Mr. Stokes arrived, accompanied by the village constable.

"What's all this?" demanded Inspector Pearce, coming out of the inn and speaking angrily. "Can't you boys behave yourselves?"

"Just a minute, inspector," said Barry Stokes. "There has been some big mistake. The man in that shed—the dead man—is not Mr. Nelson Lee."

The inspector's jaw sagged.

"Not—not Mr. Lee!" he repeated amazedly.

"That man is a total stranger," continued the Housemaster. "He is wearing Mr. Lee's clothes, and from a distance I dare say he would look like Mr. Lee—being a man of the same build and height. But he is definitely not Mr. Lee."

For a few moments there was complete silence. Inspector Pearce blinked in astonishment. The St. Frank's juniors, having already heard the news from Handforth, but disbelieving it, gazed at Barry Stokes in dumbfounded amazement, with which was soon mingled hope. Then:

Somebody sent up a cheer; within ten seconds it was echoed by others, and a regular burst of cheering broke out!

BY ORDER OF THE TONG!

(Continued from page 18.)

"It's mine," he said, with a strange note in his voice.

"Yours!" ejaculated Handforth. "Then—then Nipper must have had a smash!"

"Great Scott!"

"My only sainted aunt!"

"Where is he?" went on Handforth, looking round. "Hi! Nipper! Are you anywhere here?"

But there came no reply, and the fog was now getting thicker, drifting along from one of the neighbouring meadows.

"He's not here!" said Jimmy Potts anxiously. "I wonder what can have happened?"

The others were wondering, too. They searched all round, examining the road and the grass borders and the ditch carefully. But Nipper was not there.

What new horror was this?

CHAPTER 6.

Barry Stokes' Discovery!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH took a deep, deep breath.

"My sons, this looks bad to me," he said ominously.

"It can't be very bad," objected Pitt. "If Nipper had been injured, he couldn't have gone on. It seems to me that he hit this bundle of straw, crashed over, and then ran on to the village."

"Is that the kind of thing that Nipper would do?" demanded Handforth. "That machine isn't disabled, is it, Travers?"

"Doesn't seem to be," replied Travers. "Handlebars are a bit bent, and one of the footrests is twisted. But they're only trifles. She's still rideable."

"Then why did Nipper leave the machine behind and go on foot?" asked Handforth. "He didn't go on foot! He was grabbed by somebody!"

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"Cheese it, Handy!"

"Those murderous rotters have got Mr. Lee, and now they've got Nipper!" said Handforth shrewdly. "Isn't it as clear as daylight? That bundle of straw didn't get into the road by accident—it was put there deliberately, so that Nipper should run into it and come a cropper."

"By Samson! I believe he's right, dear old fellows," said Travers, taking a deep breath. "Well, well! What are we coming to now?"

"If Nipper was unhurt, and if he ran on to the village, he might just as well have cleared his machine out of the road—and the straw, too," said Handforth. "Nipper isn't the kind of chap to leave an obstruction in the road for other people to hit. I

tell you, he was collared by the same people who murdered Mr. Lee."

"But how did they know?" asked Church. "How did they know that Nipper would be coming down on a motor-bike? It's not his own motor-bike, either."

Travers whistled.

"Perhaps they were lurking about in the fog near the Triangle?" he suggested. "When Nipper borrowed my machine, he shouted out to me, and anybody might have overheard his words—and there would have been time, too, to chuck this bale of straw into the road. All the same, if it was done deliberately it must have been done with lightning-like speed!"

"Well, what are we going to do?" asked Jimmy Potts, rather helplessly. "We can't follow—in this fog."

"We'd better get down to the village first of all," replied Handforth. "There's just a bare chance that Nipper is there, after all—although I don't believe it. Let's get down to the village, make certain about Mr. Lee, and then we'll come back and thoroughly investigate at this spot."

"And we'll bring the police with us, too," said Reggie Pitt grimly.

They cleared the straw out of the road, and Travers and Potts continued towards the village on the motor-bike—which proved to be practically unharmed. They kept behind the Austin Seven, and they all arrived at the George Tavern together.

A little knot of villagers stood outside, talking in whispers. Other people were standing about on the opposite side of the road, too. The whole village street seemed to be hushed.

As it happened, Mr. Tapley, the landlord, was standing in the porch, talking to one or two people.

"Is it true?" asked Handforth, as he ran up. "Is it true about Mr. Nelson Lee?"

"Steady, young gent, steady," said Mr. Tapley.

"I was told that you youngsters wouldn't be allowed down in the village this evening. Yes, it's true, worse luck. One of the best gents living, was Mr. Lee."

"Oh, crumbs!" muttered Handforth miserably. "I was hoping that—that there might have been some mistake —"

"We all hoped that," said Mr. Tapley gravely. "But there's no mistake, young gents. The police have identified the body, and there's no doubt that poor Mr. Lee was murdered. Shot through the heart at close quarters. Devil's work, if you ask me!"

"Has Nipper been down here?" put in Reggie Pitt.

"Nipper? Ah, that'll be Master Hamilton, won't it?" said the landlord with a nod. "No, I haven't seen him. Gosh! It'll be rough on him, won't it?" added Mr. Tapley. "I'd forgotten about young Master



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.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the name of the deaf West House Removite? 2. Who are the occupants of Study No. 6 in the Modern House? 3. What is the name of the Remove Form-master? 4. Where is, and what is, Pelton's Bend? 5. Where is the nearest A.A. Telephone Box to St. Frank's? 6. What is the name of the principal Cais-towe cinema? 7. Who is the Welsh Removite in the West House? 8. What is the name of Stanley Waldo's father? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. In what Form and House is Parry minor's elder brother? 10. What is Parry minor's full name? 11. What is the usual Junior Football XI? 12. What is the name of Willy Handforth's pet parrot? |
|---|---|

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUESTIONS:

1. Eric Gates. 2. Horace Stevens, of the Fifth Form. 3. July 31st. 4. Guy Sinclair. 5. Three Houses: Marshall's House, Wragg's House, and the School House. 6. Nine holes. 7. Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. 8. Septimus. 9. The Rev. David Smythe. 10. Terence O'Grady and Herbert Vandyke. 11. Dick Goodwin. 12. Brown.

Hamilton! Kind of attached to Mr. Lee, wasn't he?"

"I knew something had happened!" said Handforth, breathing hard. "Where are the police? Those murderers have got hold of Nipper, too!"

"There, young gent, you mustn't get these foolish ideas into your head," said Mr. Tapley. "There's no sense in getting excited, or in raising your voice. It ain't seemly, anyhow."

"I suppose there's no chance of our seeing the—body?" asked Travers.

"No, there isn't!" replied the landlord sharply. "It's bad enough for the police to make a mortuary out of one of my sheds, without you young gents being so morbid as to want to look——"

"It isn't that," interrupted Travers. "I'm really thinking about Nipper. He'll want to have a look at his guv'nor, you know."

"But Nipper's been collared," said Jimmy Potts excitedly. "Handforth is right! Nipper must have been collared! If not, where is he? He ought to have been down here long before us."

"Where's Handforth?" asked Church suddenly.

But Edward Oswald was not in evidence. Without saying anything to the others, he had slipped off into the fog, and had had no difficulty in getting through the open gateway into the George Tavern yard.

He had heard that one of the sheds had been converted into a mortuary, and it had occurred to him that Nipper might be there. Perhaps Nipper had gone straight to that shed without Mr. Tapley's knowledge. It would be just as well, anyhow, to make sure.

But Handforth ran into somebody before he had got fairly into the yard, and a familiar voice struck his ears.

"Now, Handforth, you know perfectly well that you shouldn't come here," said Mr. Beverley Stokes kindly. "This terrible affair is bad enough without you causing any trouble."

"It's not that, sir," protested Handforth. "Nipper started for the village, and he hasn't arrived. I thought perhaps he'd be round in the—the shed, and I was on my way to see."

"Good heavens! You're not suggesting that something has happened to Nipper, too?" asked Barry Stokes quickly.

"I don't know, sir—but it looks rummy," replied Handforth.

And he gave a few details of what they had found in the lane. Mr. Stokes listened, his expression becoming more and more grim and anxious.

"Who can these demons be?" he muttered. "First Mr. Lee—and now Nipper! It will be an appalling thing, Handforth, if Nipper—— No, I won't believe it! It's too ghastly! Wait here, and I'll ascertain if Nipper is in that shed. There is a policeman on guard, and he'll know."

He plunged through the fog, and presently he saw the gleam of a lantern shining eerily through the swirling mist. He found P.-c. Sparrow, the local constable, on guard outside a closed door. A lantern of the hurricane type was hanging from a nail.

"My! You gave me a start, sir!" said the policeman, as Mr. Stokes came out of the fog.

A glance told Mr. Stokes that Sparrow was rather scared.

CHAPTER 7.

The Lone Tracker!

THE St. Frank's fellows were half mad with joy.

To refrain from cheering was well-nigh impossible—and yet, after a while, they were reminded that there was really a dead man in that temporary mortuary. Out of respect for him it was only seemly that they should subdue their high spirits.

"I can't believe it—it's too good to be true!" said Reggie Pitt breathlessly. "Mr. Lee's not my Housemaster, but everybody in the school is fond of him."

"How can you be sure of this?" asked Church, pulling at Handforth's sleeve. "You say that the dead man isn't Mr. Lee? How do you know?"

"Because I saw him!"

"Yes, but you can't be sure——"

"Mr. Stokes made the discovery," continued Handforth, his eyes gleaming. "Then he called me in, and I had a look, too. Do you think we shouldn't recognise Mr. Lee? This man's different—a rough-looking fellow. But the rummy thing is, he's wearing Mr. Lee's clothes!"

"That's what gave rise to the mistake," said Mr. Stokes, as he stood with Inspector Pearce. "I take it that you don't know Mr. Nelson Lee personally, inspector?"

"That's right, sir," said the inspector. "But when I went through the pockets and found Mr. Lee's visiting cards, and all sorts of letters, and an engraved watch——"

"Yes, of course, you naturally jumped to the conclusion that the body was that of Mr. Lee," said Barry Stokes. "You could really do nothing else. But Mr. Tapley knew Mr. Lee well by sight."

"Mr. Tapley didn't look at the body—neither did Sparrow," replied the Caistowe inspector. "That's how the error came to be made. I don't mind admitting that I'm bewildered, sir. What does it mean?"

"Well, it looks very much as though this poor man received a bullet that was intended for Mr. Lee," replied the Housemaster grimly. "What else can it mean? By Jove! And that reminds me!"

"Reminds you of what, sir?"

"Mr. Lee vanished on the golf links," replied Barry. "This man—this fellow who is dead—must have changed places with Mr. Lee there. How it was done, we don't know. Perhaps there was some sort of violence. I can hardly imagine Mr. Lee giving up his

clothes willingly. We'd better make a systematic search of the links—and the sooner it is done, the better."

"And what of Nipper, sir?" put in Tommy Watson excitedly. "Hadn't we better search for him, too?"

Watson and Tregellis-West had arrived, and they were greatly relieved when they had heard the great news. Other fellows, too, had come down by now—for the example of Handforth & Co. had been followed by lots of others. The prefects and the masters had found it well-nigh impossible to keep the boys confined to gates.

"We're going to make a search," said Handforth tensely. "Mr. Lee isn't dead—and that proves he must be somewhere else. And where else but on those links? There was foul play, and it's up to us to get to the bottom of the mystery."

There was a regular commotion in the usually quiet Bellton High Street. Tradesmen and villagers were hurrying about, spreading the remarkable news. Inspector Pearce was bustling to and fro, giving orders, and he was most anxious that Mr. Stokes should give him full details of what had happened on the golf course, immediately after the fog had descended. The discovery that the body was not that of Mr. Nelson Lee meant that an immediate search had to be made.

It was a sensational development, and the whole village was bubbling with excitement.

In the middle of it all, Fullwood and Russell, of Study I, were going about asking if anybody had seen their study-mate, Waldo.

"Can't make it out," said Ralph Leslie Fullwood, frowning. "I'm afraid that something has happened to Waldo, too."

"It's a regular evening of mystery!" said Russell.

"But what can have happened to Waldo?" asked Handforth, who was near by. "Don't be an ass! Isn't it enough to know that Mr. Lee isn't dead? Why bother about that ass, Waldo?"

"He was at the gates when Nipper went out on Travers' motor-bike," explained Fullwood. "We knew he was there, because he told us that he was going to the gates a couple of minutes earlier. But when we went to look for him, after Nipper had gone, we couldn't find him. We thought he had come to the village, but he isn't here. He's vanished, too!"

"My only sainted aunt!" muttered Church, glancing uneasily over his shoulder. "There's no telling who'll go next!"

"Perhaps we're all in danger?" said Tommy Watson. "Perhaps there's some maniac about kidnapping the chaps whenever he gets a chance to lay hold of them? And in this fog, it's easy enough——"

"Cheese it!" interrupted Travers. "No need to manufacture a scare, dear old fellow. Things are quite bad enough as they are. We know that something has happened to Mr. Lee, and we can easily guess that Nipper has met with foul play, too. But

(Continued on page 25.)

The POPULAR
Every Tuesday 2d



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

Write to Handforth, c/o the NELSON LEE LIBRARY, to-day.

E. O. H. (Truro) asks me the name of the chump with the initials, E. O. H. How can I tell you when you didn't give me your full name, old man?

ALFRED STEWART (Arnccliffe, Australia). Thanks for your interesting letter. Congraters on your playing for your school at Soccer. What made you change from goalkeeper to forward? All the sensible fellows are goalies—I'm a goalie—and if you want me to think you're sensible, too, you'd better change back pronto, as you Aussies say. My birthday is on the 18th of April—yes, thanks, I shall be needing a new cricket-bat then. I did note that your birthday was on the 23rd, of the same month, but have since forgotten it!

R. WILLIAMS (Bournemouth) asks how many goals I had scored against me last season. I *could* count them on my fingers—but I've only got two hands. The point is, no goalkeeper in the whole world is impregnable, so I am not ashamed of my admission. Have made Gore-Pearce's nose larger, as per request.

JACK GIBSON (Griffith, Australia). What I know about stamps would fill a stamp, so I have passed on your letter to the Chief Officer who, no doubt, will do his worst with it.

N. NIXEY (Oxford). I'm afraid I cannot tell you why a dog should run away when it sees a picture of me in the NELSON LEE LIBRARY. All I can say is that it must be a very ill-mannered, unappreciative, unintelligent animal. Are you positive that Fido, or whatever his name is, was looking at me? You may be mistaken—for all I know you may be boss-eyed, and the dog was actually looking at Churchy or Mac or some of the other fatheads at St. Frank's. The whole thing would be quite understandable if that were the case, of course.

"TOMBOY" (Glasgow) puts a p.s. to her letter to the effect that if I don't reply

quickly I must beware. Well, I have deliberately delayed answering the letter—and I'm still alive and kicking and punching as lustily as ever. (Just ask Churchy and Mac and a few dozen others for corroboration). Recently I've been a nerve-shattered wreck waiting for the result of your threat to fall upon my harmless cranium, "Tomboy." You don't know the mental agony you've caused me. How could you be so harsh?

"PILOT X" (Leyton). No, I didn't use your letter for keeping flies off the jam as you suggest I might do, although I must admit that I used it for picking up that recalcitrant little sardine I dropped in the coal-scuttle. However, the letter was only a little soiled—and oiled—so there's no need for you to weep tears of anguish.

A. H. G. (Faversham). Sorry, but I haven't been able to speak to Josh Cuttle about that little matter you mentioned. For one thing, I don't agree with you, and, more important, I'm not very keen to see old Josh at the moment, thank you. Last week I stuck a jumping cracker under his feet, and ever since then he's been chasing me round with a coke-hammer. My hair is not untidy, and if you say it is again I'll give you a thick ear. Another thing; my curl in the front does not "stick out a mile." That is a gross exaggeration, and I dislike exaggeration. You'll notice on looking through my replies to other readers, that I *never* exaggerate!

"READER" (Nr. Chelmsford). Thanks for your most polite letter. I am sure that all the nanny goats in this world will be jolly bucked to hear that you consider their faces resemble mine. Here's the answers to your questions: "Why did the chicken cross the road?" To get to the other side. "How many stars are there in the heavens?" 111,111,111—and if you don't believe me, count 'em yourself. "Which football team is going to win the Cup this year?" Why, St. Frank's, of course!

EDWARD OSWALD.

BY ORDER OF THE TONG!*(Continued from page 24.)*

there isn't a shred of evidence that Waldo has found any trouble. He's probably somewhere in the village street now."

BUT Vivian Travers was wrong. Stanley Waldo, at that particular moment, was extremely busy.

Waldo, in fact, had acted with remarkable shrewdness. Not that this was very surprising, considering that he was the son of Rupert Waldo, the famous Peril Expert—the man who had been known in his earlier days as the Wonder Man. Like his famous father, Waldo was abnormal in many ways. His hearing was as acute as that of a forest creature; his eyesight was amazingly keen, and his strength was phenomenal. In all respects Stanley Waldo looked like any ordinary schoolboy and yet in all respects he was different from any ordinary schoolboy.

After Nipper had ridden out of the St. Frank's gateway on Travers' motor-cycle,

Waldo had stood just out in the road, listening to the hum of the engine as it disappeared into the fog. The purr had become less and less as the fog swallowed machine and rider up, and then, just as Waldo had been about to turn back into the Triangle, his acute hearing detected a sudden crash—and then absolute silence.

Any other fellow might not have heard that sound. It had been trifling—insignificant. But Waldo's ears were so acute that they had picked it up. As some of the Removites had sometimes said, Waldo's ears were like microphones!

"My only hat! He's crashed!" he muttered tensely.

On the flash, he sped down the lane, running like a hare. There was something almost uncanny about this run of Waldo's. He covered the ground effortlessly, and yet he covered it with incredible speed. So swiftly, in fact, did he run that he arrived at the fateful spot only a few seconds after Nipper's assailants had carried him off through the hedge.

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Waldo pulled up short as he found himself confronted by a vague mass of something which barred his progress, and he discovered that it was straw. He stood there listening intently.

He fancied he heard the sound of a breaking twig some little distance away. Only his "microphone" ears could have picked up that sound. And he knew that something dramatic must have happened, for here was this straw—and here was the motor-cycle, sprawling on its side, the hot engine crackling now and again as it contracted.

Waldo threw himself to the road, and placed one of his ears to the hard, tarred surface.

Thud-thud-thud!

He heard the sounds of footsteps. Rising to his feet again, he broke through a gap in the hedge and started off across the meadow, his feet making absolutely no sound as he progressed.

He was certain that Nipper had been carried off in this direction. Occasionally he paused and listened, and, at the third time of doing so, he detected the heavy breathing of men, the shuffling of feet. He ran on again, and he came into a little patch of the meadow, where the fog was thin.

For an instant he caught sight of figures moving onwards, carrying something. Then they were swallowed up in the fog, where it became dense once more.

"Something wrong here," muttered Waldo.

He wanted to dash forward, and to give battle to these men who had captured Nipper, but caution bade him hold his hand. It might be better to find out where they were going. He was not afraid of a fight, but he was keen upon discovering the identities of these unknown men.

He could not help remembering that Nelson Lee was dead—murdered. At least, he believed so. Wasn't it obvious that these men were connected with that affair? Having dealt with Nelson Lee, they had now seized Nipper. Was Nipper dead already? This hardly seemed likely, or he would have been left lifeless on the roadside, as Lee had been.

Stanley Waldo's acute senses stood him in good stead now.

Another shadower might have found it necessary to keep within sight of his quarry—and that would have been a risky proceeding in this fog, for the shadower would have been obliged to keep perilously close.

But with Waldo it was different. His sense of hearing was so acute that he could follow the quarry without any trouble. Without once catching sight of them again, he was able to keep in attendance.

And presently, after two other meadows had been traversed, he found himself upon a narrow, rutty lane. The fog was thicker than ever here, for it was near the river, and Waldo could hear the footfalls of the mystery men some little distance ahead. But

soon they ceased. A sound came to his ears like the soft closing of a door. He strained intently, holding his breath. Yes! Bolts had been shot. Faintly enough the sounds had come to him, but they were unmistakable.

Nipper had been carried into some kind of building, and the door had been locked and bolted. This was getting distinctly interesting.

Waldo was almost a newcomer to St. Frank's, and he was not yet familiar with all the local geography. He knew, of course, that this lane was one of the minor byways



which meandered along, joining up an odd cottage or farm with Belton or Edgemoor. The River Stowe was comparatively near at hand.

Waldo softly advanced, acutely cautious. He did not overlook the possibility of a man being left on the watch. But after a while he saw the outlines of a small cottage, and there was no sign of any guard. The cottage stood almost on the roadside, and there were two small windows, both of them closely shuttered. Not a light was gleaming anywhere. The place looked empty and deserted.

And now that Waldo saw it, he recognised it.

This cottage had been empty for months. It had, indeed, the reputation of being haunted. It was partly a ruin, for the plaster of one of the end walls was falling away, showing the laths.

Waldo listened, but no sounds now came to his ears. Those men, with their prisoner, had vanished into this cottage. What were they doing in there? Why had they taken Nipper into the place? What devilry was afoot?

Waldo decided that the front of the cottage presented little or no possibilities. He found a narrow gap low down in the hedge, and he crawled through. He now found himself in a little enclosure which was apparently the cottage garden. It was full of rank weeds and grass and bushes. He picked his way through them until he could obtain a view of the rear of the little building. It loomed up in a ghostly way through the swirling fog. Somewhere overhead there was a moon, and it dispelled the utter darkness.

The windows here were shuttered just like those in front. Waldo began to feel that he could do nothing; he would not be able to get a peep inside. But he noticed that there was something different about the

roof on this side. Gazing intently, he now saw that there was a skylight here—a very big one. It was dark and unpromising. It was unusual for a cottage of this type to have such a skylight, but Waldo did not bother himself with thinking out the explanation.

As a matter of fact, the cottage had been occupied a number of years earlier by an artist, who had made a practice of coming down to this rural district during the summer months. And he had converted the upper part of the cottage into a kind of studio. That was the reason for this big skylight.

Waldo walked round a few yards, and now he saw something which brought a gleam to his eyes. A tiny spot of light creeping through a slit in the skylight!

Then the men were in that upper chamber—and the skylight, no doubt, was covered by a blanket, or some such thick material. Perhaps a tiny hole in the blanket was allowing this one gleam to escape out into the fog? At all events, Waldo was provided with the clue he needed.

He crept towards the cottage, holding himself ready for any emergency. He had no fear of being surprised, for if it came to a scrap he would give a good account of himself.

He reached the wall of the little building, and he cautiously tested a gutter-pipe which ran down one corner. It seemed to be strong, and it did not rattle or creak when he placed a lot of weight on it. He came to a quick decision, and started climbing up.

The pipe held him securely, and when he reached the top he had no difficulty in slithering over and laying himself full length on the roof. Only an acrobat could have done the thing as neatly as young Waldo; but then, he was a natural acrobat. Climbing was one of the pastimes he most enjoyed. He frequently did it for the sheer love of it; so when he had a definite objective he was in his element.

With the skill of an old-time Indian, he wormed his way across the roof. He gripped at the edges of the skylight, and now became aware of a hazy, indistinct glow beneath him. He stared down through the dusty glass.

As he had expected, there was a big blanket or rug stretched over the under side of the skylight. On one side, however, there was a little ruck, or fold, and, peering through this, Waldo was enabled to get a glimpse of what was happening in the room below.

He could not see any actual lights, because they were not within his range of vision. But what he did see caused him to catch his breath in sharply.

There, immediately beneath him, was Nipper—alive and alert, but with his arms bound tightly to his sides. He was sitting on a low chair, and round him, in a sort

of semi-circle, were four other figures. These were squatting on the floor.

And Waldo had no difficulty in recognising them as yellow men—Chinese!

CHAPTER 8.

The Vengeance of the Tong!

NIPPER, totally unaware of the fact that a friend was so close at hand, was looking grimly and fiercely at his captors. He had no sense of fear or alarm.

The dreadful news concerning Nelson Lee had stunned him to such an extent that he scarcely cared what happened to himself. He was only irritated, infuriated, that his visit to the George Tavern should have been interrupted. Whoever these yellow men were, he wanted them to deal with him quickly, so that he could complete his mission. Somehow, it did not occur to him that his position was fraught with ghastly peril.

Not a word had been spoken since he had been carried in—indeed, not since he had been captured.

He found himself in an incredibly dusty apartment, where the corners were filled with long, blackened cobwebs. There was not a particle of furniture, and the floor was smothered with grime. Candles were burning on two little ledges, and they cast a flickering, uncertain light on the strange scene.

The four Chinamen were dressed in ordinary lounge suits, shabby and dirty. Three of them looked like the average Chinamen one may see in certain parts of the East End of London.

But the fourth, who was facing Nipper, was a man of a different type. His clothing was no better than that of his companions; but he bore himself with an air of distinction. His face, too, was full of character, and he studied the prisoner with quiet, deliberate impassiveness.

"Well, aren't you going to say anything?" asked Nipper, at length. "You've bound me up and you've brought me here—what do you intend to do with me?"

"Before long, my young friend, you will find out," said the distinguished-looking Chinaman.

"I want to know what you have done to Mr. Lee!" went on Nipper fiercely. "I've heard that Mr. Lee is dead—"

"You have not been misinformed," said the Chinaman, speaking perfect English. "Our enemy, Nelson Lee, is dead. He was executed by the orders of our Chief."

"You brutes—you devils!" panted Nipper. "You've killed my guv'nor! Are you going to kill me, too?"

"It is ordained that you shall die," replied the Chinaman. "I, Yen Sing, have been given my instructions, and those instructions I shall obey."



"It won't take me long to get you out of this hole!" said Waldo coolly to the bound Nipper. He then moved like lightning. Up went his left hand, and he knocked the gleaming knife out of Yen Sing's grip.

"But who are you?" asked Nipper, in wonder. "Why have you done this? Who is your chief? Why should you want us to die?"

"Have you forgotten the Fu Chang Tong?" asked the Chinaman, bending forward suddenly.

Nipper started.

"The Fu Chang Tong!" he repeated, aghast.

"Ah! Your memory, I see, is not dead," murmured Yen Sing.

"But—but you're not agents of the Fu Chang Tong, are you?" asked Nipper, a flood of light bursting upon him. "I thought that Mr. Lee was safe from the Tong!"

"The Tong law is unalterable and inevitable!" said Yen Sing impassively. "It has been written that your master and yourself should die. Your hour has come. Your master's hour has passed."

Nipper felt bewildered. Now that he had been reminded of that old affair, he remembered the Fu Chang Tong quite clearly. Indeed, wasn't it because of that deadly Chinese secret society that both he and Nelson Lee had first come to St. Frank's?

Nelson Lee, in the course of one of his investigations, had incurred the enmity of

the Tong; and Nipper, as his assistant, had been included in the death penalty which the Tong had passed.

For months Lee and Nipper had lived at St. Frank's under assumed names; and then it had been learned that the Tong no longer desired their lives. So they had been safe to resume their own identities.

"I don't understand," said Nipper huskily. "Mr. Lee once told me that the Fu Changs had decided to leave us alone."

"Our old leader was a man of lax and careless ways," replied Yen Sing. "Our new leader is a man of inexorable purpose. He has decided that all enemies of the Tong shall die. One hundred and fifteen have been dealt with—in China, in Australia, in America, in the Argentine. I have been sent to England to deal with Nelson Lee and yourself. To-night the hour has struck. The Tong law is inevitable."

"And you?" asked Nipper. "You've got no grudge against me, have you—and you had no grudge against Mr. Lee? We never did you any harm."

"That is a matter which is beside the point," replied the Chinaman. "I have been ordered by my chief to see to this task, and if I fail I perish. The Tong deals

swiftly with those who blunder. I have not blundered to-night."

"If you shot my guv'nor, why didn't you shoot me?" asked Nipper bitterly.

The Chinaman nodded.

"A point which interests you, eh?" he said. "It was my desire—my will—that Lee should be captured, even as you have been captured. He was shot by one of my assistants, and it was then too late to put the original plan into execution. The opportunity came, and it was seized. But I was ill-pleased when I learned that Lee had died so swiftly. I had other plans."

Nipper caught in his breath.

"You—you demon!" he panted. "You mean that you meant to torture my guv'nor!"

"I am but a pawn, and it is for me to obey orders," replied Yen Sing, shrugging his shoulders. "There are other men in England who must die—who have been indiscreet enough to interfere with the secret affairs of the Tong. When my mission here is completed, I shall transfer my attentions elsewhere. To-night, my young friend, my task in this rural district will be over."

Nipper was secretly horrified, although he maintained a bold front. He knew, now, that his enemies were relentless. He understood why Nelson Lee had been so brutally shot, and he experienced a little sensation of relief. One of the Chinamen had blundered, and Lee had died swiftly. If Yen Sing himself had had his way, Nelson Lee would have been captured and tortured before the relief of death was allowed him.

There was no escape. Nipper had been brought to this place in the fog, and none could know what had happened to him. In the morning, perhaps, he would be found dead, too—and the matter would remain an unsolved mystery.

In all truth, Nipper cared very little what happened to him. He was young and healthy, and his desire to live was great. Yet, knowing that Nelson Lee had perished, he felt dull and listless, and his own fate seemed of little moment.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked dully.

"You shall see," replied Yen Sing. "First, there will be the punishment that the Tong has ordered. I grieve that these methods should be necessary, but I am a mere tool, and must obey. Later, you will be dropped into an old well, not far from this spot. You will never be discovered. You have vanished, and your fate will always be an unfathomable mystery. It was intended that Nelson Lee should share this same fate, but, as I have told you, one of my assistants blundered. For that blunder he has paid the penalty."

"You—you mean that you have killed him?"

"For that blunder he has paid the penalty," replied Yen Sing stolidly.

Nipper was horrified. Merely because one Chinaman had shot Lee down instead of capturing him, so that he could be tortured,

he himself had been murdered. The law of this deadly Tong was indeed relentless!

AND then, like the bursting of a bomb, came the surprise.

Suddenly, from above, there was a shattering crash of glass and wood-work. A form came hurtling down, and it fell sprawling on two of the squatting Chinamen. One was knocked senseless on the instant, and the other shrieked in agony as he rolled over, one leg badly bruised.

"Cheer up, Nipper—you'll soon be out of this!" sang out a familiar voice.

"Waldo!" gasped Nipper.

COMING NEXT WEEK!



Stanley Waldo was on his feet, and he now moved like lightning. Up went his left hand, and he knocked a gleaming knife out of Yen Sing's grip. It soared into the air, and fell point downwards, to dig itself quivering into the floor.

"We don't like knives," said Waldo coolly. "In England we use fists—and we use them effectively!"

Crash!

He sent his clenched fist into Yen Sing's face, and the startled Chinaman nearly turned a backward somersault—for when Waldo punched, there was an incredible force behind it.

The other Chinamen were on their feet now—all except the one who had been knocked out. There was confusion in that dusty, candle-lit cottage. Waldo's dramatic

appearance had completely upset the apple-cart, as it were.

The son of the Peril Expert, overhearing Yen Sing's words, had decided that swift action was necessary. So he had simply risen to his feet and had jumped clean through the skylight, knowing that his arrival would cause a panic.

It would have been dangerous to go back to St. Frank's and fetch help. By then, perhaps, the worst would have happened. Waldo's only course was to go to Nipper's rescue single-handed.

As Yen Sing crashed over, Waldo tore the knife from the floor, and with a couple of

“FU CHANG THE TERRIBLE!”

In the torture chamber—Nelson Lee bound to a trestle over which hangs a huge boulder of stone—Nipper, in terrible agony, holding that boulder in position with a short piece of rope. The enormous strain is too much for him; he can feel the rope slipping, slipping.

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slashes he had cut through Nipper's bonds. Nipper struggled up, clenching his fists automatically as he did so.

“Thanks, old man!” he panted. “Great Scott! Are there any more?”

“Only you and I,” replied Waldo. “But we can deal with these yellow rats! Come on, let 'em have it!”

He whirled round, and he was just in time to save his life. Another of the Chinamen was coming at him with a knife, and Waldo's left foot went up, kicking the brute's forearm. There was a sickening snap as the bone was broken, and the Chinaman shrieked with agony and reeled back.

“It was either your arm or my life,” said Waldo grimly. “Not that I meant to break your arm in that way. Still, this isn't the time for gentle methods.”

The Tong men, at first, had felt that they could easily overwhelm these two schoolboys. But they soon discovered that Waldo, at least, was as good as a dozen. Not only were his movements as swift as a cat's, but his methods were disconcerting. He was as quick with his feet as with his hands, and every one of his blows was terribly effective.

Nipper, too, was making himself useful. He floored one of the yellow men with a well-directed right, and when Yen Sing, partially recovered, pulled out a revolver, Nipper fairly hurled himself upon the man, wrenched the revolver out of his grip, and flung it into a corner of the room.

Then, kneeling on Yen Sing's chest, he proceeded to hammer his face unmercifully.

“That's the stuff!” grinned Young Waldo. “Give him a good pulping, old man. I rather think that we've won the battle, don't you?”

IT was a fact. The four Chinamen were beaten. Two of them were unconscious, another was nearly so, and Yen Sing was a wreck.

Nipper, in his fury, had blackened the Chinaman's eyes, had almost smashed his nose, and had broken his front teeth. And who could blame Nipper for using his fists so forcibly? It was this man who had spoken so callously about the death of Nelson Lee—this man who had ordered Nipper's own torture and execution. And the knowledge that Lee was dead had caused Nipper to fight with an almost ungovernable rage.

“Might as well use these ropes,” said Waldo. “Come along, Nipper. We'll soon have them tied up. Rather a good capture, eh?”

Within five minutes the four Chinamen were bound hand and foot. They had been vanquished by these two British schoolboys—and Yen Sing, at least, was sufficiently in possession of his wits to be amazed and bewildered. Two schoolboys had done this!

“We shall have to leave them here!” said Nipper, panting. “We can't take them with us, Waldo, can we?”

“I'm afraid not,” said Young Waldo regretfully. “But if we leave them bound like this, and take all the knives and other weapons away, I don't think there's much chance for them to escape. We'll leave them locked in here, and we'll run to the village. Within ten minutes we'll have the police on the spot!”

CHAPTER 9.

The Search Party!

OUTSIDE, the fog had thinned somewhat, and Nipper and Waldo were surprised to find that they could see quite a distance down the lane.

In that little cottage, everything had seemed unreal; but out here, in the fog, the two schoolboys were brought back to realities, and it was Waldo who was the most puzzled.

"What's all this about a Tong?" he asked, as he and Nipper ran along. "Who are those beastly Chinamen, anyway?"

"They've killed the gov'nor—and nothing else seems to matter," replied Nipper, in agony. "They're members of a Chinese secret society. A long time ago, Mr. Lee was forced to join the Tong."

"Forced? How do you mean?"

"It was over in the United States," replied Nipper. "He was engaged on a dangerous case, and in order to get his man he was compelled to become a member of the Tong. Afterwards, he found that he had incurred the Tong's bitterest enmity—and I was included because I was Mr. Lee's assistant."

"And since then these brutes have been trying to murder you?"

"At first they tried it, but we understood that they had given us up," replied Nipper. "I expect the police got too hot for them, and they were forced to get out of the country. But now there's a new leader of this Tong, and he has ordered that the gov'nor and I shall die."

Waldo was silent.

"I'm not sure that I want to thank you for having saved me," continued Nipper bitterly. "The gov'nor's gone, and I don't know what I shall do without him."

"You mustn't speak like that, old man," said Waldo quietly, as he took hold of Nipper's arm. "It's an awful blow for you, but in time you'll get over it, I expect."

"Never—never!" muttered Nipper brokenly.

"It's a time when you've got to be plucky—when you've got to face things with a stiff upper lip," continued Waldo. "You've got something to live for, Nipper. You mustn't rest until you have avenged your gov'nor."

"You're right!" panted Nipper fiercely. "These men, here, are nothing. They're merely tools of the Tong. I shan't be satisfied until the Fu Changs are completely wiped out! The bounds—the devils! They've murdered my gov'nor, and they would have murdered me if you hadn't stepped in. It's no good my trying to thank you—"

"Not a bit," interrupted Young Waldo. "I don't need any thanks, anyhow. I thoroughly enjoyed that scrap."

"But how did you know that I was in danger?" asked Nipper, thinking of this point for the first time. "How did you get on the track?"

As they ran along, Waldo explained, and Nipper was impressed by the "Wonder Boy's" story.

"You're a marvel, Waldo," he said at length. "I don't think there's any other chap who could have trailed those Chinamen so successfully."

They had come out by the old house known as Moat Hollow, and they crossed the bridge into the village High Street. The fog was much thinner, and through the swirling mist they could distinctly see crowds and crowds of people—many of them St. Frank's juniors

and seniors. All of them seemed to be carrying lanterns and flaring torches. It was an impressive scene.

"What's all this, I wonder?" asked Waldo. "Goodness knows," said Nipper, as he increased his speed.

"Perhaps they're getting up a search-party—to look for you?" suggested Waldo. "That's about the size of it. Well, we can save them the trouble."

They went running into the crowds, and almost the first people they met were Handforth & Co., and Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West and Traversa. A wild yell of excitement went up when Nipper was recognised.

"It's Nipper!"

"Hurrah!"

"Nipper's safe, you chaps!"

"Oh, thank goodness!"

"Good man!" shouted Handforth enthusiastically. "You're just in time to join the hunt!"

"Hunt!" repeated Nipper. "But weren't you setting out to search for me?"

"Not likely!" replied Tommy Watson. "Nobody knew what had happened to you, and although Montie and I wanted to get up a search-party, the rest thought it was more important to hunt for Mr. Lee."

Nipper reeled, his mind tottering.

"The gov'nor!" he panted, clutching at Tommy Watson's jacket. "What do you mean? The gov'nor's dead?"

"Bogad! Haven't you heard?" shouted Tregellis-West.

"Heard! Heard what?" breathed Nipper.

"The man who was found dead on the road wasn't Mr. Lee at all!" said Handforth. "He was wearing Mr. Lee's clothes, but he's a total stranger. That proves that Mr. Lee is probably alive somewhere—"

"Alive! The gov'nor alive!" said Nipper, his eyes aglow. "You don't mean it, Handy! It's—it's too good to be true! Oh, it's a dirty trick to deceive me like this!" he added hoarsely. "You're only doing it to break the news gently—"

"No, no!" put in Tommy Watson. "It's a fact, Nipper! The dead man isn't your gov'nor! Mr. Lee must have been attacked on the golf course, and that other man pinched his clothes. We're now going on a hunt."

"Oh, thank heaven!" breathed Nipper. "The gov'nor not dead then! And yet he might be!" he added frantically. "That other man might have killed him!"

"Keep your hair on!" said Handforth. "Things are bad enough, without you making them worse. There's a chance that Mr. Lee is still alive, and we've got to go on this search."

Nipper was nearly wild with excitement, and in his concern for his gov'nor he forgot all about those Tong men in the deserted cottage.

But Waldo hadn't forgotten. Waldo was talking to Inspector Pearce—and to Inspector Jamieson, of the Bannington police, who had arrived by this time with several of his own men. The police quickly took in the

situation, and ordered a detachment of men to go to the cottage at once to arrest those Chinamen.

They wanted Waldo to go with them, to act as guide, but he refused. He was keen on joining the hunt for Nelson Lee, and his acute senses, too, would probably come in useful. He was needed for this job.

After all, there was no need for the police to have a guide. Sparrow, the local man, knew the cottage well, and he was instructed to join the police party.

And so the hunt began.

It was an impressive scene, this one in the village street. Mr. Stokes and Mr. Stockdale, and several other St. Frank's masters were in the forefront, with a large number of Beilton residents. Then there were prefects and seniors, too, and whole hosts of Removites and Fourth-Formers. It had been impossible to keep them within gates. The headmaster had felt, too, that they were needed; the more searchers, the better.

Dr. Brett was in the party, and he was carrying a bag containing first-aid necessities. It was felt, beyond question, that Nelson Lee would be found on the golf links, or on the moor.

Willy Handforth was acting as guide. He was the one junior who knew exactly where Nelson Lee had been last seen; he could lead the way to the precise spot. And from here the searchers would spread out, fan-wise, in every direction, going over every inch of ground. Sooner or later, it was felt, Nelson Lee would be located.

IN the meantime, Inspector Jamieson and half a dozen officers were entering the dark cottage down by the river.

"This is the place, sir," P. C. Sparrow was saying. "A rare gloomy cottage, too. They reckon that it's haunted," he added nervously. "There ain't many folks who will come by here after dark."

"Never mind the place being haunted," said the inspector sharply. "Pull yourself together, Sparrow! You are sure that this is the cottage—the one with the studio skylight?"

"There ain't any other like it, not for miles," said the rural constable.

Inspector Jamieson led the way in, and he was filled with curiosity. Although Waldo's story had been so graphic, he could hardly swallow it. It seemed incredible that there could really be Chinamen in the district seeking the lives of Nelson Lee and Nipper. It was so fantastic—so strange. Here, in this quiet bit of Sussex, where a Chinaman was not seen once in a year. How was it that none of these yellow men had been noticed by the villagers?

"Huh! I expected as much!" grunted Jamieson abruptly.

He was in the cottage now, and his men were crowding behind him. They all carried electric torches, and they were flashing their lights all over that dusty, dingy interior.

Overhead there was the smashed skylight, just as Waldo had said.

But there were no Chinamen!

There were not even any scraps of rope, indicating that the prisoners had been bound. There was nothing whatever. Even the candles had been removed. Nothing but dust and odds and ends. As far as Inspector Jamieson could see, Waldo's story was a pure invention. There was that skylight, it was true, but the schoolboys could easily have smashed it.

"There's nobody here!" grunted the inspector sourly. "You men had better spread out and look round. Now that we're here, we've got to search."

They searched. They went over every inch of the ragged little garden, and they spread out in all directions over the countryside. But later they joined forces again, and were compelled to admit that their mission was a failure.

"I'll have a word with those schoolboys later," said the inspector grimly. "Chinamen, eh? I wonder if they deliberately tried to fool me!"

"Looks a bit like it, sir," said one of the policemen. "But, after all, the man in blue-fours was shot, wasn't he?"

"That doesn't prove that there were any Chinamen," retorted the inspector. "I am doubtful about the whole story."

And, in the circumstances, he could hardly be blamed for his attitude.

CHAPTER 10.

Success!

THE hunt was in full progress.

Everybody was eager and excited. Under the leadership of Barry Stokes, the whole thing was being done in a systematic way.

There was no haphazard searching by odd groups. There was no crossing and recrossing of certain sections of the links, and the complete missing of other sections.

Mr. Stokes had formed his men up in three long lines, each line some distance ahead of the next, and slightly overlapping. And they went forward, searching every single inch of ground as they progressed. It was impossible that any spot should be missed. Each clump of gorse was examined. Each hollow and crevice was gone over.

"If he's here, we're bound to find him," said Mr. Stokes grimly. "This afternoon it was totally different. There were only three or four of us, and the fog was as thick as pea-soup. We might have passed within a yard of him without knowing it. But it's impossible now."

"He may not be here at all, sir," said Nipper tensely. "The man who attacked him might have carried him away—perhaps into Beilton Wood. If we can't find anything here we shall have to search the wood in just the same way. The whole countryside must be examined. We've got to find him—we must!"

Just then a shout sounded from the extreme left of the line. The shout was taken up, and then, as Nipper stared, he saw the searchers breaking up. The carefully organised line was shattered, and there were scores of running figures, all making for one spot.

"They've found him!" gasped Nipper wildly.

He ran like mad, overtaking many of the others. And when he arrived he found a great crowd collected round a deep hollow in the ground. Dr. Brett's voice came to his ears above the tumult.

"Stand back, everybody—stand back!" the doctor was shouting. "We've found him. This is Mr. Lee——"

"Is he alive?" went up a general chorus.

"Yes, he's alive!" came Dr. Brett's voice.

"But he seems to be in a bad way——"

"Alive!" panted Nipper.

It was the only word he had heard. He fought his way through the throng desperately, and when he was recognised he was allowed to pass. He dropped into the hollow, the rim of which was entirely surrounded by the searchers, all holding torches and flares, so that the hollow was brilliantly illuminated.

It was a big rabbit-scraper, almost invisible from a distance of ten or fifteen yards. And there, at the bottom of it, was a still figure, with Dr. Brett bending over it.

Nipper dropped down.

"Guv'nor!" he breathed hoarsely.

He found Nelson Lee lying stretched out on the sandy bottom of the hollow. He was unclothed, except for his under-garments, but over him, spread like blankets, were some disreputable clothes—an old tattered suit and a shabby overcoat. The man who had attacked him had had the humanity to cover him up as a protection from the raw cold of the fog; or perhaps he had only done so in order to conceal his victim.

At all events, that clothing had saved Nelson Lee from death by exposure—or, at least, from a grave attack of pneumonia or rheumatic fever.

"Guv'nor!" repeated Nipper, as he dropped on his knees.

"Steady, young 'un," said the doctor. "He's in a pretty bad way—look at this ugly wound on his head. It must have stunned him completely, and it's a wonder that his skull wasn't fractured."

"Are you sure it isn't fractured?" asked Nipper anxiously.

"No, it's whole—but there's concussion of the brain, and there might be complications," said Dr. Brett. "Just hold his head up a bit while I force this brandy down his throat. I believe he's showing some signs of recovery already, and this brandy might help considerably."

"Look! I believe Mr. Lee's coming to his senses!" shouted Church, from the edge of the hollow.

"Hurrah!"

"Thank goodness he's alive!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Good old Mr. Lee!"

There was a fever of excitement—particularly as it was seen that Nelson Lee was now half sitting up. His eyes were open, and although he was pale and haggard, a little spot of colour was coming into each cheek.

"You're all right, guv'nor," said Nipper softly. "We thought that you had been killed, and—and—— Oh, I can't tell you what's been happening!"

"There's no need to," said Dr. Brett. "Lee, old man, don't ask any questions. You're not in a fit state. Just take things easily, and we'll carry you to the school. In half an hour we'll have you in a warm bed, and it won't be long before you're yourself again."

WITHIN half an hour, as Dr. Brett had promised, Nelson Lee was in his own bed, in the Ancient House. And it was now definitely known that he had been found in time—that there was not much risk of pneumonia or rheumatic fever. His iron constitution stood him in good stead, too, and, as he said himself, the thickness of his skull was pretty useful.

The juniors, to their astonishment, found that the hour was not very late. They had had an idea that they were out well beyond their ordinary bed-time. And yet it was not even the hour for supper yet! So much had happened in a little space of time that everybody had lost count of the hours.

In the Common-rooms, in the senior day-rooms and in the studies, in the passages and lobbies, fellows crowded together, eagerly and excitedly discussing the situation. It had become known that Nipper had been seized by Chinamen—and it had also become known that those Chinamen had escaped, and Inspector Jameson doubted the whole story.

So there was plenty for the school to discuss.

And upstairs, in Nelson Lee's bed-room, he and Nipper and Dr. Brett were alone. By this time Lee had completely remembered all the details, and he was looking more like himself. Inspector Jameson was waiting below, with Inspector Pearce—for both the police officers wanted to have a consultation with Lee, and as yet the doctor had not given his sanction.

"A narrow escape, Nipper—for both of us," said Lee quietly.

"And those rotters have escaped, sir," said Nipper. "I can't understand it. Waldo and I tied them up pretty strongly."

"It is more than likely that they had a companion outside—a man, perhaps, who came to the cottage some time after you left," replied Lee. "It was he who released them. Not that it really matters. Other members of the Tong would have come down to give us their attention."

"Things look pretty bad," remarked Dr. Brett. "It strikes me that you and Nipper

(Concluded on page 42.)

Gossip ABOUT St. FRANK'S



Things Heard and Seen By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

DOROTHY LEONORA BABER, of Portsmouth, considers that Church and McClure are very silly not to "stand up" to Handforth more than they do. She is so indignant over this matter that she has written to me twice about it. I'm afraid that Miss Baber, like many other readers, fails to give Church and McClure their due. They are a very diplomatic pair. They frequently allow Handforth to have his head, and they put up with a great deal of his nonsense. But it may have been noticed that if they really make up their minds to have their own way, they have it. Whenever they want to lead Handforth by the nose, they lead him, and Handy hasn't the faintest idea that he's being led. Quite a number of readers believe that Handy is the boss of Study D; he believes it himself; and he is recognised as the boss of Study D in the school. But it's my private opinion that Church and McClure boss Handy more than he bosses them. Only they do it so quietly and so subtly that you don't even notice it unless you read between the lines, so to speak.

I HAVE been asked by Fred Humphreys, of Manchester, if Handforth and Church and McClure were at St. Frank's when the first story of the old school was written. They were. This was in No. 112, Old Series. The great E.O.H. was not so prominent then, but he was just as big a chump. Fred also wants to know when the last of the Old Series came out. It was dated April 24th, 1926. It was No. 568, and it was called "Handy's Round-Up." The first three titles of the New Series were: "Sports Mad at St. Frank's."

"Handforth's Bad Day," and "The Folly of St. Frank's."

OUR READERS' PORTRAIT GALLERY



Miss Thelma Stone

I NOTICED Stanley Clavering, of the East House Sixth, the other day. He was very quiet, as usual. It might be remembered, by old readers—particularly by Albert John Gooderham, of Mellis, Suffolk, who has written to me on the subject—that Clavering had rather an unpleasant adventure when he first came to St. Frank's. He was imprisoned in the old Priory ruins by Eustace Carey, and Carey boldly came to St. Frank's, using his victim's name. I don't quite know what has happened to Carey nowadays. He is Ralph Leslie Fullwood's cousin, and when I asked Fullwood about Eustace he sniffed, and said that he didn't like to admit that Carey was any relation.

I WANT Thomas S. Price, of Port Adelaide, South Australia, to write me about two hundred letters, spread over a period of, say two hundred weeks. Of

course, I'm not really serious, but he has requested me to make out a list of all the boys who are at St. Frank's, with all their ages. This is a pretty tall order, and I'm afraid I cannot devote the entire Gossip, this week and next, to this one subject. I have an idea that lots of other readers might jib. So I can only suggest that when anybody like this Australian reader wants a cartload of information of this kind he should spread his requests over a large number of letters, and get the information piecemeal. But why ask such questions at all? The names of all the boys are going to be published in the Questionnaire.

I SHOULD very much like to please Miss Winifred P. Cull, of Hythe, by assuring her that Tom ("Tich") Harborough is still at St. Frank's, but I cannot do so. As most readers know, Harborough plays regularly for the Blue Crusaders, and Dr. Nicholls wouldn't allow him the necessary freedom to go gallivanting off to all parts of the country with this famous League team. I believe he lives with the Blues at their celebrated headquarters in Bannington—The Stronghold—and he has his own private tutor on the premises. So the Remove has lost this cheery member. However, Lionel Corcoran is, of course, still at St. Frank's—"Corky" being the owner of the Blue Crusaders Club—and he frequently takes a crowd of fellows over to Bannington to see the redoubtable Tich in action. So the noted little schoolboy winger is not really lost to us.

* * *

HARRY, of Huddersfield, wants to know if I wrote the stories about Stanley Waldo's father—"Waldo, the Wonder Man," now "The Peril Expert." So many other readers have also asked this question that I am compelled to make an answer. In fact, I'm compelled to do so in my own defence, for I have been accused of pinching somebody else's character. Naturally, I should not have introduced Stanley Waldo into the St. Frank's stories unless I was also the narrator of his father's adventures.

* * *

IT isn't often that I can find anything in Reg. T. Staples' letters to comment upon. Reg., as you may know, is our Walworth Wonder. I believe he has already worn out about five typewriters in writing letters to me and to hosts of pen friends among fellow-readers of the Old Paper. In a recent letter he wants to know why the "St. Frank's Magazine" is not re-appearing. Either he has omitted to notice that we are publishing extracts from the Mag., or else he refuses to acknowledge these as worthy of attention. The fact is, the "St. Frank's Junior Magazine" has now grown so big that it would be quite impossible to include it among our pages every week. So the Editor, in his wisdom, is doing the next best thing, and publishing extracts from it.

* * *

HERE'S a reader—Arthur Palmer, of Leicester—who tells me that he has been enjoying the Old Paper for a little under three years. And he finished up his letter by asking me when the N.L.L. was first published. Shall I answer his question, or shall I tick him off? I really feel inclined to tick him off. If I have given this information once during the three years that Arthur has been a reader, I believe I have given it a dozen times. And if he fails to keep his eyes open, it's not

my fault. I advise him to look through his back numbers. So there!

* * *

ACHELLENHAM reader is so absent-minded that he has not only forgotten to sign his name to a letter he has written me, but he has also enclosed a snapshot of a river boat instead of one of himself. So what am I to do? He says he is afraid that the snap is not very good, but that I am at liberty to put his dial in the Old Paper. It is quite true that there are two people visible on the boat, but they are just black specks, measuring, I should think, about a hundredth part of an inch. In case this Cheltenham reader is "cussing" me for not sending my dial in exchange, he'd better pull himself together, and send a proper photograph—a good one, if he wants it published, as he suggests.

* * *

THIS week our photograph is of Miss Thelma Stone, of Bristol—and, before that, of Toronto. She tells me that she left Toronto when she was ten, and now she's sixteen. She also mentions that Yonge Street, Toronto, is 95 miles long. I don't disbelieve her, but I naturally assume that this street extends for some distance beyond Toronto itself. And so that Toronto shan't be able to boast too much, what about our own Watling Street, which was built by the Romans heaps of centuries ago, and which runs through Canterbury, London, St. Albans, and right on into Shropshire? Hundreds of miles of it, in fact. Quite a little street!

* * *

ARTHUR E. ANGUS, of Sheffield, has asked for seven titles, and as this is not an unreasonable number, I'll give them. "No. 112—"Nipper at St. Frank's"; No. 495—"Willy Handforth's Windfall"; No. 497—"The Mystery Goal-keeper"; No. 498—"The Ghosts of Glen-thorne Manor"; No. 501—"The School of Hidden Dread." No. 1 (New Series)—"Sports Mad at St. Frank's"; and No. 29 (New Series)—"The Cads of St. Frank's."

* * *

THERE seems to be some confusion in the minds of W. Munday and his friend, both of North Kensington. They tell me that they are trying to fathom the manner in which the boys are distributed among the four boarding-houses of St. Frank's. Well, to put it briefly, boys of all forms, except the Remove and Fourth, are just about evenly boarded throughout the four Houses. The Remove and the Fourth are exceptions, because the Remove boards only in the Ancient House and West House, and the Fourth only in the Modern House and East House. The School House, as I have repeatedly said, is not a boarding House at all.

MORE GRIPPING CHAPTERS OF A. S. HARDY'S POPULAR ADVENTURE SERIAL!

The ISLAND CASTAWAYS!

by ARTHUR S. HARDY



(Introduction on page 39)

Days of Suspense!

DAVE SELLWOOD, Eva, and the two airmen ran on, but Tom could not help but stay a moment to witness the wrecking of the 'plane. The incoming wave towered thirty to forty feet above her, and then came crashing down. Before even the 'plane could be torn away from her secure anchorage, the sea beat her stout wings from the fuselage as if they were made of matchwood, shattered the body of her to splinters, and tore her floats away in one crushing, death-dealing blow. The proud seaplane ceased to be.

As if it needed but the slightest resistance of the 'plane to break it, the wall of water broke and came onward, frothing and bubbling in foam. Tom saw it eat the great expanse of sand and lift the Esmeralda's boat up bodily. Then he turned and ran after the others.

The 'plane had gone! The boat had gone!

They were stranded on another unknown, or unvisited island, and even though he

knew the ship that had brought the seaplane out into the tropic seas would come in search of the lost pilots, Tom did not put aside the possibility of the Patamac being wrecked in such a storm. If she were to founder, then he and his companions were due to stay on the island for an indefinite period.

Tom sped on with long, swift strides, his feet scarcely touching the sand. He was forced to keep up the ridiculous pace by the wind. He gained upon the others, joined them, and as the lightning flashed and the thunder roared, he paced along with them among the rocking palms.

Trees were lying on the ground in dozens, and more came cracking and tumbling down as Tom and the others passed. The boy ran until he felt his heart must burst; ran, ran, with the girl beside him, almost dead from the effort she was forced to make.

Up a bluff they ran and down the other side, beaten by the rain, driven by the wind. At last they came to a spot where

Joy reigns in the castaways' camp. For the arrival of the seaplane means rescue. And then comes the storm—and with it the catastrophe!

the canes had been levelled flat. A hundred yards away a rocky formation jutted up and out. They reached this, and here, scratched, bleeding, and exhausted, they threw themselves down on to the ground and lay there panting in the rain.

They lay still a long while. Slowly Tom recovered and, hearing a distressed sigh, turned his head to find Eva lying near. He managed to draw her close to the sheltering rock. The three men presently joined them. The lightning had almost ceased to play, and the wind had somewhat abated its violence. But the rain still teemed down. It poured off the face of the rock. It surged in eddies around their feet and raced onward down the slope to the sea.

Tom never knew when the rain ceased. He must have been too prostrate from exhaustion to notice, and, he supposed, he slept.

It was the warm sun that awakened him, and, sitting bolt upright and blinking about him, he saw, to his great relief, that the others were all stirring, and their clothes were steaming as the sun's rays dried them.

Above them hung a sky of serenest blue. Birds were singing. Nature was awake. But around them stretched a scene of ruin and desolation. Here and there a tree stood forlornly erect, stripped of boughs and leaves; but the rest were down, levelled by the wind which had swept over the island.

Dave viewed the depressing scene with arms folded.

"There's only one good thing about it, missy," he remarked to Eva. "There's enough food been blown down to last us for months. But the thing I'm most concerned about is our boat."

"I'm afraid that's been smashed to pieces, Dave," answered Tom. "It caught the full force of that huge wave and was carried away. I don't suppose two planks of her remain together."

And so it was for when they made their way disconsolately down towards the sand, having to guess the direction, since they had no landmark to guide them, they came upon splinters of wreckage strewn among dying foliage, a full half a mile from the beach. But, astonishing to relate, they found Eva's jewel-box wedged in the fork of a tree, and, on a broken bough, one of her crêpe-de-Chine dresses was impaled and fluttering like a flag in the gentle breeze.

The vast stretch of sand had taken on a new formation. The old pools had gone,

and a great sea-water lake had formed itself in the middle. The beach had been beaten as flat as a pancake, and was firm underfoot. Myriads of gulls could be seen feasting upon the dead fish that had been hurled up by the storm. Tom and his companions found coral, fantastically shaped, imbedded deep in the golden sand, and presently they came upon the great engine of the seaplane, with two cylinders, and part of a third, showing clear above the spot where it lay buried.

"Poor old bus," sighed Pilot Dickson, as he stared gloomily down at it, his hands thrust deep in his pockets. "She served us well, Ameson, and I hate to think of her smashed up like this. I wish to goodness we'd flown right back to the Patamac."

Dave Sellwood smiled grimly.

"Do you?" he cried. "And what chance of getting back to your ship do you think you would have stood against the fury of that gale? You'd have flown right into the heart of it, boy, and I can tell you right now that you'd never have got through it."

Dickson considered the point a moment, then grinned.

"You're right," he cried. "And therefore I suppose we must consider it an act of providence that we found you on this island."

"Sure," nodded Commander Ameson. "And, as things are, we do stand a chance of being picked up by the Patamac. Shouldn't be surprised if she showed up to-day, or to-morrow morning."

Aboard the Patamac!

BUT it was some days before the Patamac arrived. The spell of sunshine proved to be all too elusive, and before the morning was out the sky had clouded over, the sea had risen again to tumble in roaring breakers upon the sand, and the rain was falling with tropical violence.

The heat changed to almost cold, so that the castaways huddled shivering in the shelter they found. For three days and nights, almost without a break, the rain fell and the wind blew. They could only sleep in snatches, they dare not venture far in search of coco-nuts or fruit, of which there was an abundance on the ground.

On the third day, unable to stand the monotony any longer, Pilot Dickson rose abruptly and stalked off, threading his way with difficulty among the fallen trees. When he came back the rain had abated in violence, and he was looking more like himself.

"I say," he shouted, as he hailed them,

"the birds are all huddled under the fallen branches. I've seen thousands of them, some of them so tame you could pick 'em up. And this one made such a clatter, and seemed to want me to bring him back, that I caught him——"

He held a bedraggled bird up to view—a gorgeous bird whose blue body was familiar.

"It's Polly!" yelled Dave, beginning to run.

The bird struggled with Dickson, who let it go, and, with a scream of delight, it flew straight on to Dave's shoulder and nestled there.

"And I thought the bird was dead," Dave choked. "Mr. Dickson, it's a lucky omen—he'll bring us luck! I know he will! He always does. And I thought he must have been drowned when the boat was smashed."

Very gently Eva drew the bird away from Dave and cuddled it in her arms. Oddly enough, one hour later the rain ceased and the wind died down. The day was almost at its close. The castaways were too fatigued and jumpy from want of sleep to wander, and when the night shut down suddenly they turned over, hungry as they were, and passed into the land of dreams. But Tom did not sleep for long.

He was hungry, restless, and his brain was unduly active. He dreamed that he was again in the outboard boat Rosita, Eva with him; every drop of petrol was gone, and they were waiting for the death that seemed must come. Once more Tom enacted his part in the series of amazing adventures that had followed upon their unsought visit to Sellwood Island. He awakened at the very moment when he spun round in his run to shoot the first of the pursuing cannibals, and he shivered and stared ahead as he saw stars blinking

at him lazily in what appeared to be an illuminated sky.

Impatiently Tom awaited the coming of day, and with the dawn he rose and strode to a high point near at hand which overlooked the sea. He reached it as the sun rose, and in the roseate gleam saw the ocean sweeping for miles on either hand. And down below him, looking as if she had been painted by an artist upon a wonderfully realistic canvas, he saw a ship. Tom shut his eyes and held his breath, then looked again.

The ship had not moved. She lay at rest on a sea of glass, and he could make out the anchor chain. Again Tom blinked, again he looked, and then he knew that he was not mistaken.

With cupped hands set to his mouth he let forth a deafening halloo that brought the men up at a run. Eva came after them, pausing in doubt as she saw Tom waving frantically. She did not want to climb the rise unless Tom wanted her.

"Eva, Dave, Dickson! It's a ship—a ship!" bawled Tom as the men came toiling up to him.

They soon took their places beside Tom and stared down. The sky had brightened, and the sea had turned to a lighter blue. The ship gained substance and detail.

"It's the Patamac!" shouted Pilot Dickson, as he began a war-dance.

He screamed, he bellowed, and he shouted, while the others joined in the chorus, but the ship was anchored a mile from the shore and the wind was against their voices.

"Let's get down to the beach. We don't want to lose her," said Tom.

"We shan't lose her, kid," grinned Dickson. "She's come in search of us all right. She was bound to find us if she hadn't

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. 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, but later they find the lifeless body of Kemish. One day a seaplane lands on the island. It has come from the liner *Patamac*, which has been sent out to find the missing Hanway party. Rescue seems in sight for the castaways, but just then comes a terrible storm. A tidal wave appears, and to everybody's horror they see that it is crashing towards the seaplane, which is moored just off the beach! "Run! Run for your lives!" shouts Sellwood.

(Now read on.)

foundered in the hurricane. And, for all we know, she may have been anchored here during that confounded rain."

They hastened to their shelter and searched about among the dying leaves until Tom found his revolver. Then, raising the weapon above his head, he fired until he had emptied the magazine.

"The ship's a long way out, but they'll hear that," he cried.

They had forgotten that they were hungry, and trailed down the winding path to the sand. A boat was being lowered when they came into view of the ship. Already Tom could see the landing deck aboard; could see a 'plane at rest on it. Already he could hear shouting and cheering, and as they ran to the water's edge the castaways waved their arms and shouted back, cheering until they were hoarse.

It was a motor pinnace that raced into the shallows, and as she dug her nose into the sand, an officer jumped out of her, and, running forward, he gripped Dickson by the hand.

"Thank Heaven you're all right, pilot!" he declared. "Somehow or other I reckoned you'd smell that hurricane coming and find a hole to go to. Figured you'd have no chance if you were up when the cloud burst. How do, commander." He gripped hands with Ameson, and then turned his eyes on the three castaways. "Who's the young lady, pilot?"

"Miss Hanway," introduced Dickson, "meet Captain Ibbotson, skipper of the Patamac."

The captain's handsome face lit up.

"The young lady we were looking for," he said as he bowed. "Miss Hanway, this is great. I'll flash the news round the world the moment we get back. You're Mr. Perry?" he hazarded, turning to Tom, and was answered with a nod. "How you two ever survived that gale in a crazy out-board boat like the Rosita is something that'll take a great deal of explaining."

And then David Sellwood was introduced to the captain of the Patamac.

"Glad to meet you, Sellwood," cried the captain after the introduction. "It's a small world. Why, do you know, I can remember as if it were yesterday, the news coming through that you had been lost overboard the whaler, Sea Elf, during a

storm in the coral seas. I'd just shipped as mate aboard the Carolina, under Captain Andrews. She plied regularly between New Orleans and the Indies, and Fergus Andrews, who was your father's best friend, will go frantic with delight when he hears you're alive. He's retired and lives way out on Rhode Island."

David Sellwood's weather-beaten and furry face registered one huge grin.

"Aye, Fergus was a kind of second father to me when I was a kid, captain," he boomed. "I'll just love digging him out and cracking a yarn with him."

"Any more of Hanway's party around?" asked the captain.

"No, sir," replied Pilot Dickson. "Only just these two. But they located the wreck of the Esmeralda before they found us. Maybe we shall come upon some of the others soon."

"Then we'll get aboard. No use hanging around. We only anchored hereabouts because of the nearness of this island. We calculated you'd get to around here, Dickson."

They were about to step into the motor pinnace when Eva remembered her box.

"My jewels," she cried, and they waited while Tom raced back and found them.

Half an hour later they were on board the ship, and Eva had retired to a luxurious cabin to don again the garb of civilisation. In fitting out the Patamac for the rescue expedition nothing had been overlooked. She carried a whole supply of ladies' attire with her, to say nothing of a tailor's shop for the men—should they ever be found.

There were half a dozen business friends of Thornton Hanway's aboard, and their joy at seeing Eva and Tom was almost overpowering.

"Gee, but if you're alive, Tom Perry, and Miss Hanway, too, why, then, it almost seems as if we shall find some of the others," said William Goldwyn, a New York magnate and close friend of the lost millionaire.

"I feel sure we shall," said Tom, who found himself surrounded by an admiring ring of friends.

"Barber and Gribbs and that gang of crooks stopped short at theft, and left Thornton Hanway's party stranded, Mr. Goldwyn," said Pilot Dickson. "I'm

**AN AMAZING
NEW SERIAL IS
COMING SHORTLY.
WATCH OUT FOR
DETAILS
NEXT WEEK!**



Even as Tom watched, the huge wall of water crashed down upon the seaplane, smashing it up completely.

positive we can bank on finding them."

Mr. Goldwyn, who was a stout, florid man, laughed.

"I wasn't sanguine, but I reckon there's a chance now," he cried.

He dropped a hand affectionately on Tom's shoulder.

"Boy, you look wonderful," he cried. "Being castaway seems to have changed you from boy to man all in a flash." He paused as an idea occurred to him. "Say, what would you like now?"

"I'd like a hot bath, sir, a barber, then a change of clothes, and—and—some civilised food!"

"You shall have the lot," said Mr. Goldwyn. "And what about you, Mr. Sellwood? How about a hair cut and a shave—and some clothes, too?"

"I'll have to wear them if I go back to New York."

As Mr. Goldwyn led Tom to a private cabin, the steam winch raced and the anchor chain ran round the barrel. The Patamac swung lazily about, and began to move. As she did so a brilliant blue bird alighted on the roof of the pilot house and screamed noisily. Polly did not intend to be left behind.

Slowly at first the Patamac steamed away, then gained speed, and soon the island was left behind.

The search for Thornton Hanway's party had begun!

(The concluding chapters of this thrilling serial will appear next week—so be sure not to miss reading them, chums!)

BY ORDER OF THE TONG!

(Continued from page 34.)

had better have a strong force of police here, as a protection."

"I hate the idea of it," replied Lee quietly. "I'm not afraid of these Tong men, Brett, and now that Nipper and I know of our peril, we shall naturally be cautious."

"Who was that fellow who knocked you down and changed clothes with you?"

"I don't know—he seemed to be a tramp," replied Lee thoughtfully. "Yet, somehow, I have an idea that he was something more than an ordinary tramp. He demanded money, and when I gave him half a crown he sneered at it. Then he became violent, and more by chance than anything else he managed to strike me with that golf club. The Tong man, seeing him in my clothes, must have mistaken him for me."

"Hard lines on that fellow," said Brett. "Poor devil! Being shot like that, I mean!"

When Inspector Jameson was allowed to come up, he brought some surprising information with him. The dead man had been identified as William Denton, a desperate criminal who had been wanted for murder. He had committed a brutal assault upon a bank clerk in Southampton, and the clerk had died of his injuries. Denton had escaped without securing any spoils—and he

had obviously been wandering near the moor when that fog had come down.

The fact that he was a wanted murderer was rather a relief to Nelson Lee. The fellow had merely paid his due penalty earlier than he would otherwise have done.

Nipper went to bed that night as usual—he refused to have special protection. Nelson Lee was alive, and nothing else really mattered. What was more, Lee would probably be about again within three or four days.

But what of the Fu Chang Tong?

"What are we going to do about it, governor?" asked Nipper, the next morning, when he went to see Nelson Lee. "What are we going to do? If these Tong men can attack us once, they can attack again."

"There is one thing that we shall do, Nipper—and that is, fight!" replied Nelson Lee steadily. "We mustn't allow ourselves to be scared by these Oriental fiends. We're going to fight—and fight to the bitter end!"

THE END.

(And next week the grim fight wages fast and furious. Nelson Lee v. the Fu Chang Tong—who will be the victor? "Fu Chang, the Terrible!" is the title of the next yarn in this magnificent mystery series—and it's the most exciting yet! Order your copy of the Old Paper NOW, chums!)

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

Frank Dayman, 10, Ellesmere Avenue, Miramar, Wellington, **New Zealand**, offers over a hundred back issues of the N.L.L. Wants correspondents interested in films.

Patrick Joseph Roche, Dublin, 14, Mary Street, Coburg, N.13, Melbourne, **Australia**, wants N.L.L., old series; also to hear from readers keen on sport.

Kenneth Pemberton, Royton, West Avenue, Basford Park, **Stoke-on-Trent**, wishes to hear from Cecil Stevenson, of 88, Moorland Road, Burslem.

James W. Cooke, 21, Rook Street, Poplar, **London**, E.14, wants to hear from readers who require a guide to London.

S. W. Ruddock, 268a, Priory Road, St. Denys, **Southampton**, wants N.L.L. No. 94, new series, which contained the story entitled: "The St. Frank's Ice Carnival."

R. A. Lurway, 3, Worfield Street, Battersea, **London**, S.W., wants N.L.L. Nos. 68—71, new series, inclusive.

Louis Van Luyck, 50, Edegem Straat, Oude Goit, nr. Antwerp, **Belgium**, wishes to hear from readers in his country, also to have a correspondence with an accountant of about the same age, namely 30. (This is a chance for someone who is keen on learning French and Flemish). He has back numbers of the N.L.L. for exchange.

Chas. Willes, 73, Marshall Street, **Folkestone**, wants members for the Folkestone Juniors, F.C.

Gerald D. Ryan, Church Road, Warton, nr. **Kirkham**, Lancs., would like correspondents in the United States; interested in films and athletics; ages 16—25.

G. Montgomery, 37, Charleville Road, **London**, W.14, aged 20, wants correspondents in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, West Indies and India. He wants information of M.C.C. tours in those countries.

Miss Gwendoline Williams, c/o Mrs. Palmer, 1, Burnaby Street, King's Road, Chelsea, **London**, S.W.10, wants the issue of the N.L.L. which contained the story entitled: "The Coming of Archie."

G. W. Young, 2, Hamilton Avenue, **Henley-on-Thames**, wishes to hear from Editors of Social Magazines with a view to writing articles, stories, etc. Everything typewritten.

Thomas Moon, 74, Crescent Road, Fazakerley, **Liverpool**, wants correspondents in Australia and Canada.

C. Woodhouse, 7, Farm Road, **Hove**, desires to join a club in his town.

Miss Hilda Bull, 174, Clifton Road, Aston Manor, **Birmingham**, wants girl correspondents overseas.

Ronald Isacs, 3, Blake Road, Kingston, **Jamaica**, wants back numbers of the N.L.L., also to hear from readers in America, Australia, England and India.

G. F. Gerrell, Bridge House, Reydon, **Southwold**, wants correspondents interested in sport.

Miss Gladys Hopkinson, 32, Albany Road, **Reading**, offers back numbers of the N.L.L.

Frank Alsop, 16a, Crabmill Lane, **Coventry**, wants correspondents.

Reg. C. Brain, P.O. Box 88, Knysna, **South Africa**, wants correspondents anywhere.

Miss Nancy G. Lewis, 14, Wilnot Street, Malvern East, Melbourne, C. 1, Victoria, **Australia**, would like correspondents in the United States, (especially Los Angeles), Hawaii, South America, France, etc.

Walter A. Mason, 17, Avoca Street, South Yarra, Melbourne, **Australia**, desires correspondents interested in sport, stamps, etc.

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.*

Progress!

DURING the past few months I have been watching the progress of the St. Frank's League with much interest. And there can be no denying that the League certainly is progressing—by leaps and bounds!

Recently, application forms from prospective members have been pouring in with every post. New readers of the Old Paper have written asking for fuller details of the League. Old readers have written praising the League.

I have received letters from secretaries of correspondence and other clubs, which have been formed under the auspices of the League, telling me that their clubs are all running smoothly and successfully, and that their membership is increasing week in and week out.

This all goes to prove, much to my delight and satisfaction, that the St. Frank's League is more popular than ever.

The sender of this week's prize-winning letter gives it as his opinion that every reader of the Old Paper should belong to the League. Hear, hear! So if any of you Leagueites know of other readers who don't belong to it—get them to join now!

Members Wanted!

THE All Nations Correspondence Club wants new members." So writes Thomas William Hutt, who is in charge of this highly successful Australian club. Overseas members especially are required, and those of you who are

interested should write to Thomas, 58, Union Street, West Kogarah, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

The All Nations Correspondence Club, incidentally, is going great guns at the moment. Already Rugby, cycling, tennis, swimming and baseball sections have been formed. The club numbers forty-nine members at present, and, as my correspondent very proudly puts it, "we can supply information about anything from a pin to an elephant!"

THIS WEEK'S WINNING LETTER

DEAR CHIEF,—It is indeed a great pleasure for me to write to you, the head of so great an organisation as the St. Frank's League.

In my opinion every reader of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY should belong to the League. The good it does is incalculable. It is the means of linking up people who live thousands or miles away from one another.

I am pleased to announce that a friend of mine to whom I have given a copy of the Old Paper is about to join the League. I can assure you that we shall be two of its most enthusiastic supporters.

With good luck to the best League of its kind ever organised, and greetings to you and all fellow-members,

Yours enthusiastically,

(Signed) T. SMYTH,
S.F.L. No. 9638.

(For this interesting letter T. Smyth, of Stockton-on-Tees, has been awarded a useful penknife.)

An Important Announcement.

It concerns the new serial which will be starting in a fortnight's time, chums. As you know, in addition to being Chief Officer I am also the Editor, and I have received many requests from readers for a detective serial. So the new serial will be a detective story. Written by a very popular boys' author. Full details will appear next week.

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, look for the entry form which will appear soon—and then join immediately.

Professor Puddleditch's Lectures!

(Continued from page 13.)

"Please, sir, it was the other chap who shot Rufus and not Rufus who shot the other chap."

"Dear, dear!" said the professor, somewhat testily. "It does not vitally matter at this point whether Rufus shot the radish, or the radish shot Rufus—I mean to say, whether the radish—er—the chap shot himself—er—Rufus— Be quiet, boy! You are musing me ip—tcha—mixing me up."

A silent smile flitted over the faces of the assembly, and the professor, very annoyed, gave a snort which catapulted his wobbly spectacles on to the table. He replaced them on his nasal organ and continued in a sour squeak:

"On another famous occasion the radish assumed an importance unequalled by any other similar object in the annals of the Army. This was at the siege of Chutney. It was here that the natives, having run short of bullets, used radishes instead and fired these from their muskets. The starved defenders, rendered desperate by hunger, caught the radish bullets in their mouths, and were thus saved from starvation by the very foe who blockaded them."

"This went on for some time, until the natives, finding they could make no headway, and suspecting the supernatural, crossed their fingers superstitiously and crept away."

The professor flourished his red handker-

chief, blew his nose with a military blast, and continued to ladle out unwanted information on the subject of his talk.

"The absolute antiquity of the radish is proved beyond argument, although the following episode is only considered legendary by the archaeologist, Derek Dustiface. He has translated from the cuneiform writings of the time of Rameses the twelfth, pardon—the second, a story of how Rameses was once lost in the desert with his personal attendant, Phlat Pheet."

"They were on the point of tossing the loafah—which was the Egyptian equivalent to 'throwing up the sponge'—when Phlat Pheet, after making obeisance seventeen times, addressed his royal master. 'O Rameses,' he said, 'live for ever—and then some. Why not consult the mystic Rhad Ish, who will perhaps show us the way to go home?'"

"Ghood eg," replied the king, and, feeling for his watch-chain, he produced a charm in the shape of a golden radish. "O, Rhad Ish," he addressed the symbol, "god of salads, we do not relish the pickle we are in. Therefore, lead my illustrious self and my servant, Phlat Pheet, out of this dirty desert, and I will make a vow never again to eat another of thy ruby brethren."

"Nuff said," answered Rhad Ish. "Keep the vow lest indigestion befall thee. Now, follow your noses and you will reach the Pyramids in two shakes of a locust's left leg."

"They did so," stated the professor, "and reached the palace in time for supper."

So saying, he heaved the heavy dictionary towards him, and the Form was dismissed.

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