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HIS HONOUR AT STAKE !

A stirring long complete yarn of school life at St. Frank's, introducing Nipper and Co., and many other popular characters.

New Series No. 192.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

January 4th, 1920

HIS HONOUR AT STAKE !



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

CHAPTER 1.

Handy, the Investigator!

BIGGLESWADE, of the Sixth Form, put his head into one of the Junior dormitories in the Ancient House at St. Frank's. Handforth and Church and McClure, of the Remove, who occupied the dormitory, were in bed.

"Everything all right here?" asked Biggleswade, looking round.

"Only waiting for you to put the light out, Biggy," said Handforth, with a yawn.

"Good enough!" said the prefect. "Good-night, kids!"

"Good-night, Biggy."

A moment later Biggleswade had departed, and the little dormitory was in darkness. Not complete darkness, however; for a stray moonbeam was stealing in through the window, peeping over the top of the West House opposite.

"Well, that's that!" murmured Handforth contentedly. "Now we're going to wait, my sons!"

"Eh?" said Church, starting up. "Wait? What are we going to wait for?"

"Eleven o'clock!" said Handforth. "At eleven o'clock we'll slip our things on, and then creep out."

"Here, hold on!" gasped McClure. "We came into this dormitory to sleep, Handy—not to keep awake!"

"What's more," said Church, "I'm going to sleep now."

Edward Oswald Handforth grunted.

"Don't be silly," he said impatiently. "It's all arranged."

This was the first Church and McClure had heard of it. Not that they were surprised. The celebrated leader of Study D was always

—THAT'LL BE YOUR OPINION OF THIS GRAND STORY, CHUMS!

Lights out! St. Frank's settles down for slumber. Then the sounds of stealthy movement; shadowy figures climbing over the school wall—breaking bounds—the "sports" of St. Frank's are off to a night club!



arranging things for himself and his chums; and he generally neglected to tell Church and McClure about it.

"What is arranged?" asked Mac, staring across the gloom.

"We're going to investigate to-night," replied Handforth, his voice dropping mysteriously. "We're going to do a bit of detective work, my lads! In fact, we're going to find out if those rumours have any foundation!"

Church and McClure groaned.

"Cheese it, Handy!" protested Church. "It's pretty certain that some fatheads in this House have been breaking bounds recently, but we don't want to start the same game. Besides, it's risky! We're liable

to be flogged, or even sacked, for breaking bounds after lights-out."

Handforth sniffed.

"Rot!" he said. "How can we be flogged, or sacked, for doing something for the school's good? If we're collared, we can easily explain that we were only out on an investigation."

"Oh, easily!" said Church sarcastically. "And who the dickens is going to believe us? If we break bounds, and we're collared by a prefect or a master, do you think they'll credit a yarn like that?"

"They'll take my word, I should hope!" said Handforth sternly.

"Ahem! They might, of course," murmured McClure. "On the other hand——"

"You will never get anywhere in this world unless you take a chance now and again!" said Handforth. "There have been some queer things going on just recently. Lots of the chaps have been breaking bounds—Gore-Pearce, Gulliver, Bell, Sinclair, Grayson, and others. And it's a pretty certain thing that Uncle Robert is the fellow who started the game."

"Uncle Robert" was a new fellow in the Remove. His name was Chester, and curiously enough, he happened to be the uncle of Edward Fenton, of the Sixth. It was a topsy-turvy sort of business, but there wasn't any question about Chester's relationship. He was really and truly Fenton's uncle. He was the youngest member of a very large family, his eldest sister being Fenton's mother.

And Uncle Robert had proved himself to be very much of an "outsider." St. Frank's had been rather shocked, since Fenton was such a genuine brick—such a sportsman. It was hard lines on him to have a youthful uncle in the school—an uncle who was, moreover, a liar and every kind of a rotter.

"Uncle Robert is the leading spirit!" repeated Handforth sternly. "And if all the rumours are true, there's a night club in this district. Everybody has been talking about it recently!"

"But a rumour, after all——" began Church.

"I know it!" interrupted Handforth. "You can't take too much notice of rumours. That's why we're going out to-night—to make sure! I dare say you've noticed that Gore-Pearce and those other cads have generally looked washed-out on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays?"

"Well, yes," admitted McClure.

"Well, I have been making some deductions!" said Handforth triumphantly. "After a lot of thought, I have come to the conclusion that the night club must be open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. These cads visit the place on those nights, and, consequently, they're as limp as wet rags on Tuesday morning, Thursday morning, and Saturday morning."

"Great Scott!" said Mac admiringly. "Did you work all that out in your own head, Handy?"

"Yes, I did!"

"The chap's a marvel!" said Church, with a sigh.

Fortunately, Handforth did not notice that his chum was being sarcastic. He regarded his obvious piece of reasoning as a masterpiece of deduction.

"And to-night," said Handforth meaningly, "is Monday."

"Go hon!" yawned Church. "Did you hear that, Mac? It's Monday night!"

"Another of Handy's marvellous deductions, I suppose," said McClure.

Edward Oswald frowned.

"You needn't be funny!" he said sternly. "It's Monday night—and that means that the night club will be open. It also means that Uncle Robert and Gore-Pearce and a

few other fellows will creep out at about eleven o'clock, and buzz off to the night club. Well, my sons, we're going to be on the watch!"

"Are we?" said Church rebelliously. "Look here, Handy, you can go and watch, if you like, but I don't see why we should lose a night's sleep——"

"By George!" interrupted Handforth, getting out of bed. "Rebellion, eh? Mutiny! Why, you silly asses! If I have any more of this piffle I'll empty the cold-water jug over your heads! Are you going to agree to this investigation, or not?"

Church and McClure, who had decided objections to cold water being flung over their heads in the month of January, decided that, on the whole, an investigation would be agreeable to them.

HANDFORTH went back to bed satisfied.

"Well, that's settled!" he grunted.

"Now we've got to keep awake until eleven o'clock. Those cads aren't likely to break bounds until after eleven. My wheeze is to get out first, and to hang about in the lane, so that we can follow the rotters when they come down."

"Yes, and we shall freeze to death while we're waiting!" said Church bitterly.

"We can take our overcoats," said Handforth, "and I don't suppose we shall have to wait long. Then we can follow the beggars, and find out where they go."

"Shall we have our bikes?" asked McClure.

"No."

"Then what's the good of it?" said Mac. "You jolly well know there's no night club about here. They're bound to go to Bannington—and in that case they'll have their bikes. We'd better give it up for to-night, Handy. Let's leave it until Wednesday."

"Good idea!" said Church enthusiastically. Edward Oswald Handforth grinned.

"You're dished, my sons!" he said coolly. "I made a point of going to the bike-shed just before it was locked up, and not a single jigger has been touched. If those cads were going anywhere on their bikes, they would have left them out of the shed, so that they couldn't be locked up."

Church and McClure were surprised at Handforth's unusual thoroughness.

"Well, if you ask me, Nipper's policy is the best," said Church, changing the subject. "Nipper's the captain of the Remove——"

"Don't talk to me about Nipper," said Handforth gruffly.

"Why not?"

"And don't talk to me about his policy, either," continued Handforth. "Nipper's idea is to let things rip. I had a chat with him to-day, and he told me he's not going to interfere. By George! Interfere! That's a fine word to use!"

"Well, it's the only word, isn't it?"

"The good name of St. Frank's is suffering——" began Handforth.

"If you're going to set yourself up as a protector for the school, then you've given yourself a job!" said McClure tartly. "I agree with Nipper's policy. If a few of the cads like to make fools of themselves—well, let 'em! As long as we're doing right, we've got nothing to worry about. And, after all, it isn't Nipper's place to spy on the other fellows in the Remove."

Handforth bristled.

"Are you suggesting that I'm going to spy?" he demanded thickly.

"Nunno!" said Church. "I—I was only speaking generally. Nipper reckons that if these fellows are allowed to go their own road, they'll soon come a cropper. Give them enough rope, and they'll hang themselves."

"That's the idea!" agreed McClure. "Why should we take any action? If the prefects or masters like to get up and watch, all well and good. It's their duty. But it isn't ours."

This was a perfectly sound argument, as most of the sensible fellows in the Remove had agreed. Nipper, the popular skipper, took the view that the cads would only have themselves to blame if they were bowled out. It wasn't his—Nipper's—business to assist in their downfall. But to use these arguments with Handforth was useless.

"This is what comes of a chance incident in Bellton!" said Church, after a pause.

"What are you driving at?" demanded Handforth suspiciously.

"Well, isn't it true?" went on Church. "Don't you remember that fog last week? That girl who lives at Moat Hollow was being attacked by a bullock, and you went

for the giddy thing and stopped it. And then, after that, you went soft over the girl!"

Handforth turned red in the darkness.

"If you're asking for a thick ear, my lad——" he began.

"Rats!" said Church. "You've been talking about Olive Clegg for days! In fact, you've gone down to the village lots of

times just on the off-chance of seeing her! We're not blind!"

Handforth breathed hard; but he said nothing for a few moments. Indeed, there was very little to say. It was perfectly true that he was very interested in the rather timid, gentle girl who had come to live at Moat Hollow with her stepfather and her aunt.

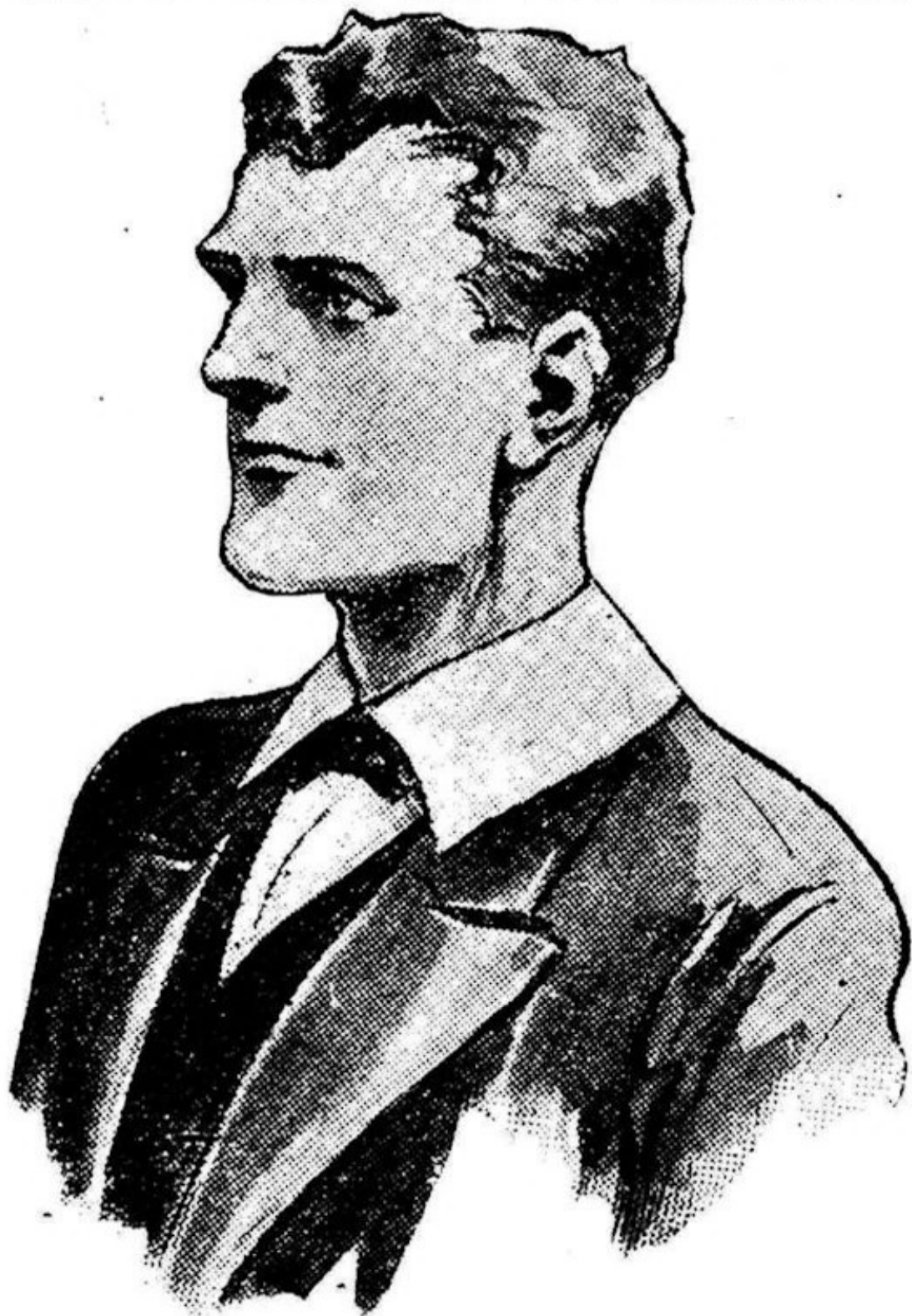
Moat Hollow was an old house on the edge of the village, and for many months it had been empty. The St. Frank's fellows were very well acquainted with Moat Hollow, since it had once been the River House School—and, later on, the St. Frank's juniors themselves had experienced many exciting adventures there.

But now it was a private residence once more, and it had been

leased by a Mr. Simon Clegg. This gentleman was a bluff individual, and everybody in Bellton liked him immensely. It was generally supposed that he was a retired merchant. His sister was his housekeeper, and he lived there with his daughter. Nobody quite knew where the mother was.

Undoubtedly Olive Clegg was a very pretty girl. She was of a gentle and retiring nature, and Handforth had been particularly attracted by her.

WHO'S WHO AT ST. FRANK'S



ERNEST LAWRENCE.

This stalwart Fourth-Former is undoubtedly the best boxer in the Junior school at St. Frank's. Well liked because of his cheery and good-natured disposition.

"You've been keen on this giddy investigation ever since you heard a rumour last week!" grunted McClure. "Some of the fellows were saying that the cads had been to a night club, and that they had danced with Olive Clegg."

"I don't believe it!" burst out Handforth. "She isn't the kind of girl to go to night clubs! It's all rot! Yes, that is one reason why I'm so jolly keen on this—to prove that the yarn is a lie!"

"If you're so certain about Miss Clegg, why go to the trouble of disproving the rumours?" asked Church dryly. "It seems to prove, Handy, that you have your own suspicions."

Handforth shifted impatiently in bed.

"It's not fair that that girl's name should be connected with a night club!" he declared. "She's a wonderful girl!"

"But, my dear chap, you don't know anything about her!" grinned McClure. "You've only seen her once or twice in the village."

"I'm a good judge of character!" retorted Handforth. "And I know jolly well that Olive Clegg isn't the kind of girl to frequent night clubs."

Church and McClure thought it advisable to drop the subject. Handforth had been "smitten" very badly, and to argue with him was hopeless.

CHAPTER 2.

The Bold, Bad Lads!

"ANOTHER twenty minutes!" said Uncle Robert, as he glanced at his watch.

"I hope it'll be safe!" said Gulliver uneasily.

"Safe?" echoed Chester of the Remove. "My dear chap! Haven't we proved that it's

Handforth's plan, taking everything into consideration, was not far off the mark. He reckoned to be outside soon after eleven, so that he could be on the watch. And the young "bloods" of the Remove were arranging matters so that they should leave the school shortly after eleven-thirty.

"There'll be a big party to-night!" said Uncle Robert complacently. "Things are looking up, my sons!"

"Well, the more the merrier!" said Gore-Pearce. "There's one dashed good thing about this night club. It's within an easy walk and we can get to it without once going on the road. And the place doesn't really open until midnight—so we can always be there at the start. If ever we've broken bounds and sneaked off to Bannington for some affair, we've generally arrived when everything is half-over."

"That's just the point!" nodded Uncle Robert. "Mr. Clegg opened this night club with half an eye on St. Frank's, you know. He gets a number of chaps from the River House School, too. Mr. Clegg is a born showman, and his job is to study his patrons. Well, he's studying us all right."

"And who the dickens would suspect that there's a night club in the cellars of Moat Hollow?" chuckled Gulliver. "By gad! What a wheeze!"

The four young rascals were sitting on the edges of their beds. They were fully dressed, and the little dormitory was in darkness. When the right moment came, they would pick up their boots, creep out, and be downstairs within a couple of minutes.

"How many coming to-night?" asked Bell softly.

"Oh, a whole crowd!" replied Uncle Robert. "The usual gang, of course—Sinclair and Grayson and those other chaps. Then there'll be Parkin and Mills, of the Sixth; and Chambers and Drake and Simms of the Fifth."

"Chambers, eh?" whistled Gulliver. "I didn't think he was reckless enough to break bounds."

"There's nothing reckless in it, you ass!" said Gore-Pearce. "It's as

easy as falling off a form. I understand that Adams and Singleton and De Valerie are coming down to-night, too."

"That's right," said Uncle Robert. "I've been having a chat with them, and they're keen. Then there's Armstrong and Griffith and Freeman and Steele of the Fourth. Oh, yes! Quite a gang of us!"

There were many new recruits for the night club on this occasion. Uncle Robert, who unofficially was Mr. Clegg's agent, had been very busy. It was his job to go about the school, whispering here and there,



safe? Masters and prefects don't lurk about the school like a lot of detectives in a stage melodrama! There's not one chance in a thousand that we shall ever be caught; and if anybody is caught, it'll be his own fault."

There were four juniors in the dormitory—Claude Gore-Pearce, "Uncle Robert," Gulliver, and Bell. It was ten-past eleven, and the young rascals had planned to slip out of the school at eleven-thirty. By then everybody would be peacefully asleep—including the masters. There would be very little risk attached to their midnight jaunt.

and putting it to any likely fellow. At first Chester had not dared to approach such juniors as Singleton and De Valerie and Armstrong. But these young gentlemen had grown accustomed to the idea of a night club by now; and after Uncle Robert had had a chat with them they could see nothing particularly wrong in going to the place.

"Well, we shall soon be making a move," remarked Uncle Robert. "I shall be glad, too. My feet are itching. I want to be dancing——"

Tap, tap!

"Cave!" gurgled Gulliver. "Somebody at the door!"

"Into bed, quick!" hissed Uncle Robert. "Hallo!" he added, in a sleepy voice. "Who's that? Come in!"

The door opened and a figure slipped into the dormitory.

"Well, well!" murmured a voice. "Smartly done, dear old fellows!"

Chester sat up in bed.

"Idiot!" he said tartly.

"It's you, Travers, isn't it?"

"Guilty, my lord!" murmured Vivian Travers coolly.

Gore-Pearce and Gulliver and Bell remained apparently asleep, but Uncle Robert slipped out of bed. He noted that Travers was fully dressed.

"Coming with us?" he asked with a grin.

"Well, that was the general idea," said Vivian Travers smoothly. "I've been hearing some rumours, and I'm curious. I suppose you've no objection if I join the happy throng?"

"Not a bit!" replied Uncle Robert, glad to get another recruit. "But you'll have to pledge yourself to secrecy."

"I'll pledge myself to anything," said Travers promptly. "I'm a gay dog on the quiet, and to-night I feel like sampling a slice of the hectic life. When do we start on the downward path?"

THE unexpected arrival of Vivian Travers afforded Uncle Robert a great deal of satisfaction. He had tackled Travers several times, but that cool junior had given him little or no encouragement.

Travers was an unknown quantity. He was one of the finest footballers in the Remove, and he was also hot stuff at cricket. Yet when he liked he would throw himself wholeheartedly into any kind of questionable, forbidden gaiety.

"I thought I'd just come along to have a look at the place," he said, after a pause. "Where's this night club situated, anyhow?"

"If it's all the same to you, old man, we'll leave that until later," he said. "You'll see when you get there."

"Just as you like," said Travers. "You think I might be a spy, eh? But after I'm in the place I'm as black as anybody else, what? And I shan't dare to blab because I shall be tarred with the same brush."

"Well, that's not far from the mark," admitted Chester. "We have to take these precautions, you know."

"There's nothing like it," said Travers. "And it does us good to be reckless now and again."

He suddenly turned his head.

"Did you hear a creak just now?" he murmured abruptly.

"I believe I did!" said Uncle Robert. "It's nothing—only some of the fellows going down. We'd better do the same."

And while the young rascals were preparing to steal out of their dormitories, three cold and shivering figures were crouching behind the hedge a little distance down the lane. In a word, Handforth & Co. were on

the job. The moon was shining quite brightly, and Handforth was by no means pleased. He had bestowed several glares upon the moon, not that that satellite took the slightest notice.

"Bother this moonlight!" grunted Handforth in a complaining voice. "We shall have to go jolly easy when

those cads come along the lane. They're liable to spot us when we start following them."

"Yes, it'll be a risk!" muttered Church. "Mac and I don't know much about shadowing people, Handy. Wouldn't it be a good idea for us to stay behind?"

"No, it wouldn't!"

"But think of the advantage!" urged Church. "You're an expert tracker, Handy, and naturally there'll be no possibility of your being spotted."

"And you fellows will go back to bed, eh?" said Handforth tartly. "Not likely! I'll admit that you'll probably give yourselves away if you start shadowing the rotters, but we can easily get over that difficulty."

"Oh!" said Church, with a shiver.

He hadn't had much hope that the wheeze would succeed. Still, it had been worth trying. If Handforth had approved, his chums would have been back in bed within five minutes. But Edward Oswald wasn't taking any.

"No!" he said firmly. "There's only one thing to be done. When the cads come by, I'll follow them at a safe distance. I'll be the chief shadower. You fellows will keep back, and it'll be your job to shadow me. Understand? You keep me in sight and everything will be all serene. I'll do the actual work."

YOUR EDITOR takes this opportunity of wishing **A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR** to all his reader chums of the **NELSON LEE LIBRARY.**

"But why do you want us to shadow you?" asked McClure in astonishment.

"I want you at hand, in case of emergencies," replied Handforth promptly. "Every detective has an assistant with him on a case."

Church and McClure gave it up. Of course, it was possible for them to desert their leader there and then; they could easily have walked off, leaving him to himself. But it wasn't in their natures to do a thing like that. They felt that Handforth needed their protection; he had to be looked after and cared for. Needless to say, neither of the juniors thought it advisable to tell Handforth this.

It was a cold business. The night air was very sharp. There was a ground frost, and the wind was bitter. It was a splendid night for a brisk walk along the road, but crouching there behind a hedge was quite a different proposition. Handforth & Co. had long since ceased to feel their feet.

Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!

"Quarter to twelve!" murmured Handforth anxiously. "By George! I thought those cads would be out before this. I wonder if they've gone some other way?"

Church and McClure thought it very likely; but what was the good of starting another argument? If midnight came and there was still no sign of the quarry, then they would be justified in going back to bed. Even Handforth would probably agree to accompany them.

Handforth was a fellow of intense activity; he hated this present vigil. He wanted to be "up and doing." And as the minutes passed his impatience grew.

"Look here! I'm getting fed up with this!" he murmured at last. "I believe those rotters have slipped across the playing fields, or probably they've gone in the other direction, towards the moor. The trouble is, we don't know where this giddy night club is situated!"

"I don't believe there is a night club," said Church grumpily. "Why, the very idea is—is dotty on the face of it. How can there be a night club in a district like this? They only have night clubs in London."

"Hold on!" whispered McClure, suddenly clutching at Handforth's sleeve. "Go easy, Churchy! Look up there! There's something moving! By jingo! Here they come!"

Handforth thrust his head through the gap in the hedge, and he drew his breath in sharply. His heart commenced beating with greater rapidity. The lonely wait was over.

Many silent, mysterious figures had appeared in the lane. As yet they were very indistinct, very phantom-like. They kept to the shadows, near the hedge, and they came silently and stealthily away from the school wall. Not until they were nearly opposite the spot where Handforth & Co. were crouching did they venture out upon the open road.

"Safe enough now!" came a murmured voice. "There's no chance of anybody hearing our footsteps. Come on, you fellows. Step lively!"

The voice belonged to Uncle Robert. And in his rear were Gore-Pearce & Co., Sinclair of the Sixth, Grayson of the Fifth, and a number of other seniors and juniors.

The participators in this "midnight folly" were well on the way to visit the local night club. Handforth, crouching behind that hedge, quivered with renewed excitement. Now was his chance!

EDWARD OSWALD turned swiftly to his two chums.

"Remember the plan!" he whispered. "I'm going out first, and you fellows had better give me about a hundred yards start. Then you can follow, and just keep me in sight. Is that clear?"

"Of course it is," breathed Church. "Go ahead!"

"And if you need us, Handy—yell!" said McClure.

Now that something had actually happened, Handforth's chums were nearly as excited as their leader. They were mildly astonished, too—astonished that Handy looked like being successful in his midnight enterprise.

It came as rather a shock to them to discover that Handforth's vigil was justified. They had had an idea that a few of the St. Frank's cads were making a practice of going off on "the razzle" now and again. There was nothing very unusual in this, although at any time it was a risky proceeding, and therefore the participators in the game were few.

But Church and McClure had just seen a whole host of fellows stealthily creeping down the lane—Sixth-Formers, Fifth-Formers, Removites, and Fourth-Formers. Twenty of them, at the very least; and this, as Church and McClure were ready to admit, was an extraordinary phenomenon. Two or three "bloods" going off on a spree was understandable, but twenty—Clearly there must be something very unusual to attract all these fellows.

Handforth waited until the crowd had passed a good way down the lane; then he slipped through the gap in the hedge and sprawled headlong in the roadway. Handy had not intended to sprawl headlong. That was an accident, brought about by the fact that his feet had become so numbed with the cold that they refused to function. For a second or two Handforth had had the extraordinary sensation of walking on two stumps; and then, his feet being out of control, he crashed over.

It was not a very good beginning.

"Crumbs!" he muttered in alarm.

Somehow he managed to get to his feet. He was experiencing acute "pins and needles," and when he went off on the track he hobbled along like a cripple.



There came the sounds of movement in the barn. Handforth switched on his torch and found himself looking into the solemn face of—a goat!

"Listen!" murmured Church. "He sounds like an old cart-horse going along! Oh, my hat! He's a fine sort of shadower—I don't think!"

Handforth's chums had been more thoughtful. During the last few moments they had stamped their feet up and down on the turf in an endeavour to restore circulation. Thus, when they crept through the gap into the lane, they were able to move silently.

By this time Handforth was practically himself again, and he was well on the track. His momentary alarm was over; he could see the figures of the midnight party farther down the road, making no efforts now to keep in the shadow. Handforth himself avoided the moonlight as much as possible. He was glowing inwardly. Anything that savoured of mystery attracted him; any kind of detective work appealed to him. And now he was "well away."

But that stumble of his had had an effect of which he was not aware. Vivian Travers, who was amongst the rearguard of the party, had heard a curious sound, and, glancing round, his keen eyes had detected the sprawling figure on the road. Travers had seen Handforth pick himself up; had seen him vanish into the shadows.

"Well, well!" murmured Travers.

He knew that that figure had belonged to Handforth. True, he hadn't recognised the leader of Study D, but there had been something in the figure's very movement that gave Travers the clue. Every person has certain characteristic actions; the turn of a head, the shrug of a shoulder; the motion of a limb; any little triviality, in fact. And

as that shadowy figure had slipped out of the moonlight into the gloom, Travers had "sensed" that it belonged to Edward Oswald Handforth.

None of the others, apparently, had noticed anything. Travers quickened his pace, and arrived at the head of the party, where Uncle Robert was walking with Sinclair of the Sixth.

"Just a minute, dear old fellows!" said Travers coolly. "It might interest you to know that we're being followed."

"What!" ejaculated Sinclair with a start.

"Easy—easy!" said Travers. "Don't look round, any of you! We don't want to let the shadower know that we've spotted him. The thing to do is to decide upon a course of action."

"My hat!" muttered Armstrong of the Fourth. "One of the masters, I expect! Look here, Griffith! We'd better bunk back! I was half-afraid that——"

"Then you needn't be half-afraid any longer!" interrupted Travers. "The chap who is following us is only Handy."

"Handforth of the Remove?" snapped Sinclair.

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I recognised him," said Travers. "And you can be pretty certain that Church and McClure are with him. Probably they're following somewhere in the rear."

Uncle Robert grunted.

"I've been expecting something like this," he said with a scowl. "Handforth is always shoving his nose into other people's business."

Well, thank goodness we know! We can lead him on a false trail now."

Word was quickly passed round, and the party continued walking on as unconcerned as though the discovery had not been made.

"We can't take any chances," continued Uncle Robert. "We mustn't go anywhere near Moat Hollow! We mustn't let that ass Handforth know the truth."

"Why not leave this to me?" suggested Travers coolly. "I know the district better than you do, Chester—and an idea's just occurred to me. We shall only be delayed by about ten minutes, and I rather fancy that the Handforth problem will be effectually dealt with."

Travers rather liked Handforth; they were, indeed, on very friendly terms. But this did not prevent Travers from enjoying the prospect of leading Handforth into a trap. Not that there was anything vindictive or malicious about Travers' mind.

"This way," he said with a grin.

Before the end of the lane was reached—before Moat Hollow had come into sight—the party climbed a gate and commenced crossing a meadow. There was a big stretch of open country on the other side of the road, with Holt's Farm in the distance. Bell-ton Wood stretched away on the other side of the lane, with Moat Hollow crouching close at hand, as though sheltering under the high trees. The party was now going directly away from the old house.

Handforth, when he reached the gate, could see the figures hurrying along on the other side of the meadow. They showed up very distinctly in the moonlight. And now Church and McClure came running up.

"Good!" said Handforth briskly. "No need for us to be spread out now. Come on, you chaps! This is easy!"

"It's a bit too easy!" said Church suspiciously. "You'd better be careful, Handy——"

"Rats!" interrupted Handforth. "We're well on the track!"

CHAPTER 3.

The Trap!

CHURCH and McClure were not so impulsive as their leader. They couldn't quite understand why the party had gone across that meadow so openly. It seemed to them that it was folly to do such a thing. Was it being done deliberately?

"There's something rummy about this, Handy!" said Church earnestly. "Unless we're cautious, we shall find ourselves in an ambush!"

"What the dickens do you mean?" demanded Handforth.

"Why, I believe we've been spotted!" said Church. "Those chaps will pounce on us——"

"You're dotty!" cut in Handforth with a laugh. "They're on their way to that night club, and now that they're off the road they think themselves safe. My dear fathead, we're right on the track, I tell you!"

The chums of Study D were hurrying across the meadow. The party ahead had vanished over a stile, and Handforth wanted to get to that stile quickly so that he could sight the quarry again.

Church and McClure were full of doubts, but Handforth was so certain that everything was all right that it was quite idle to talk to him. And as the stile was approached the two juniors hung back, half-expecting to see Handforth grabbed by lurking figures from behind the hedge. However, nothing of this sort happened. The stile was reached, and Handforth pointed eagerly. In the distance, approaching an isolated barn, which stood out like a great black shadow amid the moonlight, was the party.

"Down — down!" muttered Handforth dramatically.

They all flopped down into the grass, and crouched there. They watched eagerly, and they were gratified by the spectacle of the entire party passing, one by one, into the barn. At last every one of those figures had vanished, and then the barn door was closed.

"By George!" murmured Handforth. "What did I tell you? I knew that night club was about here somewhere!"

"But—but——"

"They're using this barn as a sort of headquarters!" went on Handforth. "It's as clear as daylight! That rotten night club is held inside the barn!"

Even Church and McClure were becoming convinced. It seemed so obvious. It was only natural to suppose that there couldn't be any genuine night club in the district. It was only a name that had been applied to some secret meeting-place; and this barn was the place.

"Come on!" muttered Handforth, as he rose to his feet. "There's only one thing to do now, my lads!"

"What's that?" asked Mac.

"We're going into that barn!" replied Handforth.

"But why?" asked Church in alarm. "We know where the place is, and we ought to be satisfied. What's the good of getting ourselves into trouble?"

"Bold action is required!" said Handforth sternly. "We'll get into the barn, and then we'll let all those rotters know that we've spotted them! They'll be scared out of their wits, and they'll probably bolt in all directions."

Church and McClure were not so optimistic. They thought it far more likely that the cads would collar these intruders, and give them a considerable amount of rough treatment. But as Handforth was already pressing on, Church and McClure could do nothing else but follow him. He needed their help more

than ever. It was certainly not the time to desert him.

Handforth approached the barn openly, and when he arrived at the door he grinned.

"Now for the surprise!" he murmured gloatingly.

He lifted the old-fashioned wooden latch, and pulled the door slightly open. He expected to see dim lights within, and figures moving about. He was surprised, therefore, when utter darkness confronted him.

"Hallo!" he muttered, frowning. "This seems rummy——"

He broke off, and caught in his breath. He could hear the sounds of movements from within. He opened the door a little wider, and crept into the darkness of the barn. At the same time, he fumbled for his electric torch—which he had not forgotten to bring. As Handforth well knew, all good detectives carried electric torches on them.

"It's no good, you rotters!" he said loudly. "The game's up! You're trapped!"

Before he could get out his torch, and switch it on, there came a couple of startled gasps from the rear. He half turned, and he could dimly see the opening of the doorway. Church and McClure had suddenly appeared.

"Look out!" Church was gasping. "They're on us, Handy! We told you it was an ambush——"

He didn't get any further. Suddenly, violently, both Church and McClure were thrust headlong into the darkness of the barn. They collided with Handforth, and all three of them sprawled over on the straw-littered floor.

Slam!

The barn door closed with a dull thud, and there came the sound of bolts being shot. Then a few chuckles arose on the night.

"What—what's happened?" gasped Handforth, sitting up. "You silly asses! What do you mean by barging into me——"

"We couldn't help it!" panted McClure. "Directly you went into the barn a crowd of chaps came round and they went for us. We tried to warn you, but it was too late! They simply shoved us in here and slammed the door!"

"We knew it was a trap!" said Church bitterly.

Handforth rose to his feet, alarmed, indignant, and filled with consternation.

"But—but I thought——" he began.

"You always think the wrong thing!" snapped McClure. "If you had acted cautiously, instead of like a blundering ass, we shouldn't have been in this mess!"

"But—but I can't understand it!" ejaculated Handforth, startled. "All those chaps came in here! And they didn't come out again! So they must be in here still!"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Church. "Hasn't it occurred to you, Handy, that there's probably another door at the back?"

"Great Scott!"

"Those chaps came straight through—knowing we should blunder in!" continued Church. "And you can be jolly certain that the other door is bolted, too! We're trapped in here—we're bottled up!"

This theory was correct. Indeed, it was obvious. The tricksters had entered the

barn, had slipped out by another door, and thus when the shadows had arrived they had been very easily dealt with. Handforth & Co. were now imprisoned in the old barn.

Handforth was boiling with rage; but his chums felt relieved. On the whole, the situation wasn't so bad. They had expected something far worse. And the affair was satisfactory in the sense that Handforth would be prevented from making any further investigations.

At least, so thought Church and McClure.

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Great things are going to happen at St. Frank's very soon, boys—such events as will make you rub your eyes with astonishment.

Always has the NELSON LEE LIBRARY been in the forefront of boys' papers—the first to show the way to its contemporaries.

New ideas!

Novel ideas!

Sensational ideas!

Those are some of our watchwords. Just keep your peepers open for some pleasant surprises. They're not far distant. Fuller details of your Editor's great scheme will be given next Wednesday.

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH was by no means baffled, however.

"They've tricked us," he panted, but, by George, they needn't think that I'm whacked! It won't take us long to get out of this barn, and then we'll be on the trail again!"

"Oh, help!" groaned Church.

It was perfectly true that Handforth never knew when he was beaten. His spirit was an indomitable one—as he had often proved. Now and again his chums sighed, and rather wished that he did not possess so much of the bulldog spirit. It was a fine quality—when directed in the right channels; but it was liable to be irksome at other times. Handforth was a stickler, and the more opposition he met with the more grimly he stuck.

"No!" he said firmly. "They needn't think they've beaten me. They haven't!"

"Well, switch on that light, and let's see where we are!" said McClure wearily. "It's easy enough to talk about getting out of this barn, but a bit of action wouldn't come amiss."

Meanwhile, the night club party had

doubled back, and was now nearing the lane again.

"There's no need to worry about Handforth," Travers was saying. "He won't be out of that place for half-an-hour, at least, and then he'll probably go back to the school, fed up. Anyhow, it'll be a difficult task for him to find where we've gone."

"Yes, I think we've dealt with him pretty smartly," said Uncle Robert, nodding.

Vivian Travers smiled. It had been his idea all along, but it was characteristic of Uncle Robert to claim at least some of the credit.

Handforth, of course, with his usual optimism, believed that he could find a way out of the barn within the first minute. Unfortunately, he soon encountered unexpected difficulties. To begin with, his electric torch wouldn't work. Church and McClure weren't in the least surprised; they had never expected the torch to work. They said so, too—in bitter tones.

"Oh, dry up!" growled Handforth. "I can't understand what's the matter with the thing! It was all right before we started. I switched it on. The catch doesn't seem to work right."

Church wanted to point out that all really able detectives never went out on an investigation until they had satisfied themselves that their electric torches were in perfect working order, but he thought it advisable, on second thoughts, to keep these reflections to himself. Handforth wasn't in the mood for such talk.

"Listen!" said McClure suddenly. "Here, I say, you chaps! There's—there's somebody in this barn!"

"We're in it!" said Handforth coldly.

"No! Somebody else!" retorted McClure. "Didn't you hear something moving just then?"

They all stood rigid, and, sure enough, there came the sound of stealthy movements—not from one place, but from two or three. The blackness inside that barn was so intense that the juniors could see nothing. They found themselves instinctively clenching their fists; they were filled with a feeling of helplessness. In that darkness they could do nothing against this unseen, stealthily-moving enemy.

"Chuck it, you silly idiots!" shouted Handforth. "You can't scare us like this! I suppose some of you stayed behind, eh? Well, if you think it's funny, we don't!"

Handforth was assuming that the mysterious sounds were caused by some of the St. Frank's fellows; but Church and McClure was not quite so sure. Perhaps a gang of tramps had taken possession of the barn, and were now intent upon attacking the intruders who had disturbed their night's rest.

Handforth instinctively gripped the electric torch harder with the vague idea of using it as a weapon. As he did so his fingers snapped on a kind of knob, and there was a click. A flood of light shot up from Edward Oswald's hand and flooded into his face.

"My only hat!" he gasped.

With a shock he realised that he had been trying to light the torch by pressing the wrong switch. Now, by sheer chance, he had touched the correct switch. In a second, confidence returned to Handforth. He slid his hand down the torch, swung it round, and sent a beam of light shooting across the straw-littered floor of the barn.

"Great jumping corks!" he ejaculated blankly.

He had just seen two luminous eyes staring at him from a deep recess of the barn, and now, as he steadied the torch, he beheld a long, solemn face, with a straggly beard hanging from its chin; in other words, a large-sized goat.

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Church, with relief. "Only a goat! I—I thought there were some tramps in here—"

"Huh! Fancy being scared of a goat!" said Handforth, bending down, and peering at the animal. "I'm trying to see whether he's roped up or not—"

"Here, look out!" gurgled McClure abruptly.

There came a terrific scuttle from their rear, and before Handforth could turn, something shot out of the blackness like a stone from a catapult. Actually, it was another goat, and, as Handforth was bending down in a most inviting position, the goat saw no reason why he should not practise some of his favourite sport.

Thud!

Before Handforth could draw himself upright he was butted. It was a glorious charge—an absolute bull's-eye. Handforth went sprawling forward with a wild howl. By a miracle of good fortune, the torch rolled along the floor, and came to no harm. And as Handforth sprawled there, the goat leapt clean over him and joined his companion.

"Handy!" gasped Church, running up. "Are—are you hurt much?"

Handforth sat up dizzily.

"Hurt?" he repeated. "Oh, no, not a bit! What's happened? Did the rotter score a goal?"

"Eh?"

"It was a foul!" said Handforth thickly. "I don't mind a fair charge, but— Hallo! What the— Ow! I—I thought—"

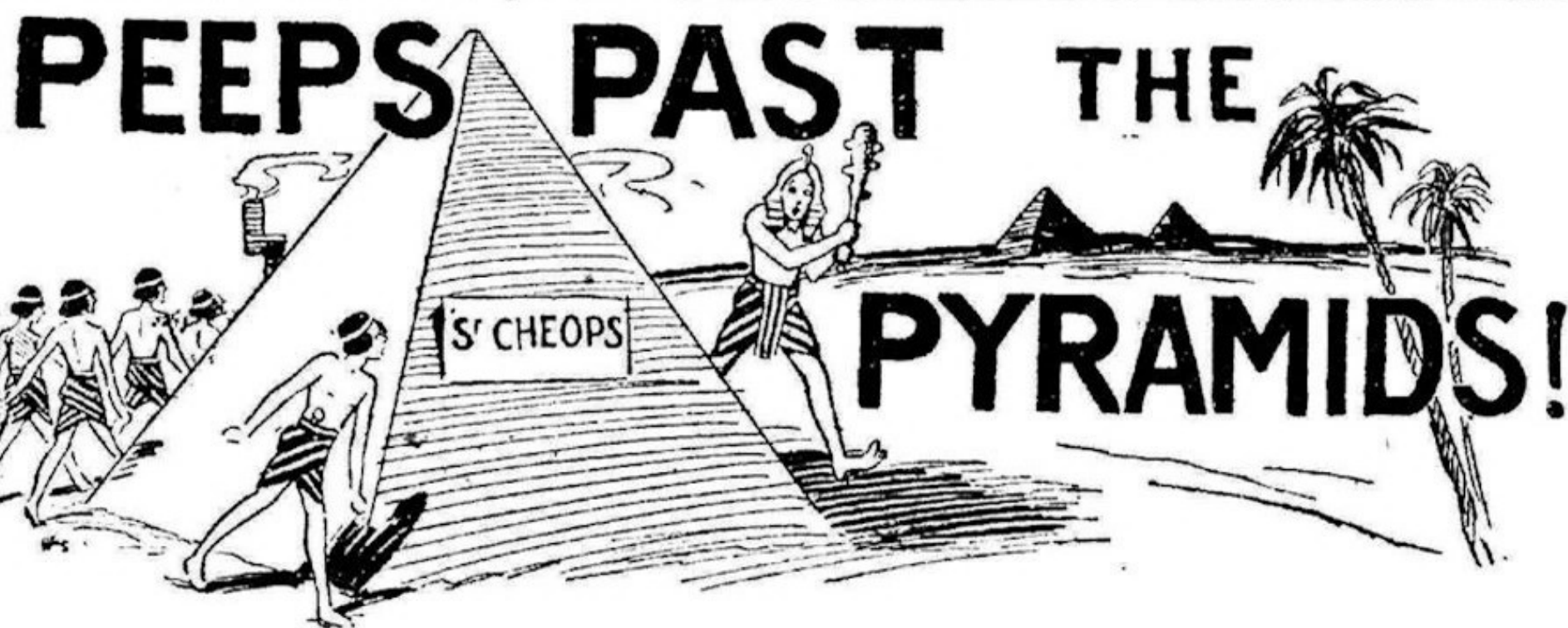
"Pull yourself together, old man!" said Mac. "You're not on the football field now. You were butted by a goat. By jingo! He's going to do some more butting unless we get out of his way."

Church had snatched up the torch, and he and McClure helped Handforth to his feet, and then they retreated to the far side of the barn, until they had their backs to the wall.

They were half expecting to be attacked from other quarters; but to their relief they now found that these two goats were the only enemies, and one of them at least appeared to be quite docile.

(Continued on page 14.)

There's a Laugh in Every Line of this Screamingly-Funny Feature!



IT was the new Term, day one, at St. Cheop's School. Into the classroom, shaped like an inverted pyramid (as was the fashion in those days) entered the master, one Dr. Potiphar.

And he entered through a trapdoor in the floor, in the usual manner, to prepare himself for the day's subjects; for it was before morning school.

The sun being risen just above the neighbouring sphinx, denoting thereby that school-time should commence, Dr. Potiphar lifted the trapdoor in the floor and blew twelve mighty blasts on a conch shell, this being the signal for the Form to assemble.

And lo! Amongst the new youths attending St. Cheop's for the first time was a boy called Phatt-Ee, the son of Ton.

And Phatt-Ee was of great girth and slow of movement. Also was he nearest the trapdoor from without when the conch shell sounded its mighty blasts. Up the few steps he waddled, and thrust his head through the trap in the floor, diffidence shewing on his rubicund countenance.

And Dr. Potiphar beamed at him; for a new boy meant much silver further to be accumulated into his pouch.

"Come right in, bo'," said the master in a pleasing voice, and, enticed thus, Phatt-Ee, son of Ton, essayed to emerge into the classroom.

And Phatt-Ee, being of spherical build, stuck in the trap and could move not, neither the one way nor the other. Then Dr. Potiphar, seeing his predicament, said unto the boy:

"Try sideways, boy!" he said.

But the boy, being round, had no sideways; all sides (if there be sides to a sphere) being of equal cubits breadth. And he stuck! Nay, he was jammed!

"O, master!" he cried. "I cannot move in nor out. How then shall I get home to

Being fragmentary records of School Days in the time of the Ancient Egyptians as collected by

VIVIAN TRAVERS,

of the St. Frank's Remove.

lunch?" For he was ever thinking of eatables.

"Lunch, boy?" said the master. "Thou has not even started the day. Perchance, by lunch-time, thy girth will be thinner and release thee."

And he laughed with grimness, for he thought that with assistance the boy would be pulled through the trap.

Therefore he seized him by the hands and pulled; but the boy moved not.

"Truly," the master stated, "thou art a round peg in a square hole, and, notwithstanding the proverb to the contrary, thou dost, of a certainty, fit snugly." And he tugged again until the boy yelled; but nothing resulted from his efforts.

At the other side of the trap—that is to say, outside the classroom, a great commotion prevailed, for the rest of the Form had congregated thereat, and could find no entrance.

Therefore they were full of joy; for they loved not their lessons. And they shouted and teased the lower extremities of the human wedge, so that he squirmed.

"Truly, a balloon hath fastened itself in the entrance," they quoth mirthfully, one to the other.

"Stick ye a pin in it, and see if it will deflate," recommended one cruel youth.

"Remove his sandals and tickle ye his feet with a camel's feather," suggested another.

And these torments were carried out by the boys who waited on the outside of the trap. Then Phatt-Ee became frantic, being attacked both fore and aft. And still he moved not up, neither moved he down, in the trapdoor wherein he was fixed. And he lifted up his voice and wailed:

"O master!" he burred. "I am in a hole!"

"Verily thou art," was the reply, and Dr. Potiphar tugged at his beard—softly. "More—

(Continued on page 42.)

HIS HONOUR AT STAKE!

(Continued from page 12.)

But the problem remained unsolved. Handforth & Co. were still prisoners.

"LOOK out!" said Church in alarm.

The aggressive goat was returning to the attack. Possibly he was fascinated by the light from the electric torch; at all events, he suddenly lowered his head and came shooting across the floor of the barn. Handforth & Co. scattered in all directions, and the goat slewed round just in time to save himself from charging headlong into the wall.

"Good egg!" yelled Handforth. "Look here, you chaps. Here's a ladder!"

"Then get up it!" gasped Church.

They all went scrambling up as quickly as they could go. It was an old wooden ladder, fixed to the wall, and it led upwards through a big hole in the floor to the loft. When they got to the top they were breathless, but relieved. There was no further danger of being butted.

"Oh, my hat!" said Handforth. "I'm sore, you know."

"Well, it serves you right!" said Church crossly. "You shouldn't have come out on this silly expedition. Just look at the trouble you've got us into!"

"And we shall be looking washed out to-morrow," said McClure bitterly. "Everybody will be saying that we went to that rotten night club. We shan't have more than three or four hours sleep to-night. It wouldn't matter if we had accomplished something; but we've done nothing."

"The night isn't over yet!" said Handforth gruffly.

"And we're not out of this barn!" said Church.

Handforth grunted, and flashed his torch-light round. There was plenty of hay in the loft, and over on the other side there was a big door. Handforth strode across to it, his eyes gleaming.

"Now we shan't be long!" he said with satisfaction, as he marched round a big chaff-cutting machine, keeping the light from his torch concentrated upon the door. "We'll soon be down now!" he declared.

Never had Handforth spoken a truer word.

Church and McClure, who were just behind him, saw the whole thing beautifully. Handforth suddenly gave a wild yell, and then he vanished. He seemed to step into space, and he dropped sheer through the floor. As he went there came a thud, a slithering sound, and then a dull kind of "plop."

"Handy!" gasped Church in alarm.

"He's—he's gone!" breathed McClure. "There—there's a trapdoor there. Poor Handy—"

"Listen!" urged Church.

Strange sounds were coming upwards.

Church and McClure did not dare to move, for they were in the darkness, and they were afraid that they, too, might tumble through the opening in the floor. And now they were aware of gasps and grunts. Then in a vague and uncertain kind of way the light of the electric torch waved about, bright one second and dim the next.

Fortunately, Handforth wasn't hurt at all.

There was a big wooden chute close to that chaff-cutter, and it led downwards at a steep angle into a big bin in the barn. Handforth, stepping into the chute, had been precipitated downwards with the speed of lightning, and he had charged feet foremost into an enormous pile of chaff, to be completely buried by the stuff.

For the first moment or two Handforth was dazed and dumbfounded. He hadn't the faintest idea what had happened. He was still clutching the electric torch, however, and when he fought his way to the surface of that sea of chaff he realised the truth.

"Crumbs!" he murmured. "I—I thought it was all up with me!"

He staggered about in the chaff, and reached the edge of the bin. Then his torch-light chanced to hit upon the ladder, which was fixed to the opposite wall.

"Oh, there it is!" murmured Handforth.

He looked for the goats, but couldn't find them. So, making a sudden rush, he tore across the floor and went flying up the ladder. Only just in time, too, for the aggressive goat came hurtling across at full speed.

"Too late, old chum!" grunted Handforth.

He joined his chums in the loft, and now that they had had time to get over their alarm they were inclined to be sarcastic.

"Well, you said you would soon be down, Handy!" remarked Church. "My hat! You do things in a funny way!"

Handforth frowned, and he wriggled about like a snake.

"How the dickens was I to know that I should fall down the giddy chute?" he demanded. "These farmers ought to be prosecuted. Why can't they put guards round these holes?"

"Especially for the benefit of trespassers?" asked Mac. "You'd better write to the papers about it. And what's the matter with you, anyhow? What are you wriggling about like that for?"

Handforth ceased his efforts, breathing hard.

"There's about a hundredweight of chaff down my neck!" he growled. "I can feel it all the way down my back. And you know what chaff is!"

There was no trace of sympathy in the expressions of Church and McClure.

"Oh, let's get out!" said Church impatiently. "Let's get out before we find ourselves in further trouble!"

Getting out, after all, was a comparatively simple job. They reached that door safely

this time, and after it was opened they found that there was a sheer drop to the ground—the door opening far up in the wall of the barn. However, there was a stout rope leading downwards from a sort of winch which projected from a big beam overhead. It was used, no doubt, to hoist up the hay.

It only took Handforth & Co. a bare minute or two to swarm down the rope. They did not trouble to close the door, and they were thankful to be out in the moonlight once more. The night was quiet and undisturbed.

"Well, let's be getting back!" said Church. "It isn't one o'clock yet, thank goodness, and we'll soon be in bed——"

"Wait a minute!" interrupted Handforth, with a queer catch in his voice. "Look here, my sons! Look at this trail!"

"Eh?" said Church, staring. "Trail?"

There was a sharp frost that night, and the meadows were covered with a layer of white. Handforth was pointing to a kind of wide pathway across the grass, where the frost had been trampled off the delicate blades. There was a distinct trail leading off into the adjoining meadow.

"Come on!" said Handforth eagerly. "This is the way those chaps went. Can't you see? We can follow them as easy as winking!"

Church and McClure gazed at one another. They had their own opinion; but what was the good of arguing with Handforth? They resigned themselves to the inevitable, and followed their impulsive, indomitable leader.

CHAPTER 4.

The Gay Life!

UNCLE ROBERT bent down and pressed his finger against a little knob in the woodwork of the door before him. Then he straightened into an upright position and glanced coolly at the faces round him in the gloom.

"Now we shan't be long!" he murmured.

They were at the rear of Moat Hollow, where the high wall overlooked the dark recesses of Bellton Wood. This small door, set low in the great wall, was hardly noticeable. It was reached by a narrow footpath which led through the wood, and which joined up with the lane some distance farther on. Thus it was easily possible for the secret visitors to approach the night club without attracting any attention from possible wayfarers.

Sinclair and Parkin and such giants of the Sixth did not relish the idea of being escorted by a mere junior. Uncle Robert, moreover, was exasperatingly cool and collected. On many occasions the seniors

had felt like grasping the junior and giving him a thorough shaking.

But they always remembered that Uncle Robert was the fellow who had introduced them into the night club, and a word from him could bring about their expulsion. He was "in" with Mr. Simon Clegg, the proprietor. Indeed, Uncle Robert's position was very secure.

In a way he was Mr. Clegg's agent; he received a commission for every new St. Frank's fellow he introduced into the club. And the rascally Removite was making a good thing out of it.

Nobody at St. Frank's could quite forget that Chester was Fenton's uncle. Fenton was the captain of the school, and a fellow who had very strict ideas on discipline. Edgar Fenton was one of the very best, but the fellows who frequented the night club did not think so. They were not his sort. Fenton, incidentally, had been very much concerned of late over his youthful uncle.

Click!

A tiny square opened in the door, and a face appeared for a moment. Sinclair and Gore-Pearce and Grayson were accustomed to this—they had been to the night club before—but all the newcomers, including Parkin and Chambers and Singleton and Armstrong, were rather thrilled. There was something very secretive about this night club, something fascinating. Anything forbidden, anything prohibited, was naturally attractive.

"All right!" whispered Uncle Robert. "I'm in charge here—and we're all

friends."

The little slide closed, and a moment later the door was opened. The whole crowd was admitted into the garden of Moat Hollow. Uncle Robert's word was sufficient.

"A rummy sort of business!" murmured the Hon. Douglas Singleton, as he found himself side by side with De Valerie and Adams. "I wonder if it's worth while?"

"I doubt it!" said De Valerie, with a grin. "I've only come along because I'm curious. I don't suppose we shall want to come a second time."

"You whispered a mouthful!" murmured Adams, the American junior. "Say, if you want to see some real night clubs——"

"Go to New York, eh?" chuckled De Valerie. "Yes, we know all about it, Adams!"

"Aw, shucks!" said Adams. "I guess this joint will be just about two cents!"

Crossing the garden silently, they reached the back door of the old house. Then, having entered, they found themselves in a dimly-lit passage with a stone floor. Certainly they had seen nothing very interesting yet. A night club is supposed to be a place of gaiety, of light, of laughter; but



here, at Moat Hollow, there was nothing but gloom and silence and shadows.

And then, within the space of twenty seconds, came the change.

A startling change—a miraculous transformation. Passing through a secret door in that passage, the visitors found themselves on a carpeted stairway. They were going downwards into a place of warmth, and from which the strains of music came floating upwards—bright music, jolly and lively; a place of gleaming, glittering light. A few seconds later they found themselves within the night club—which had originally been the enormous cellars extending right beneath the old house.

But now—what a change!

The place was a blaze of colour; the walls were hung with silk. In the centre was a highly-polished floor for dancing. At the moment it was crowded with couples who were gliding round to the strains of a lilting waltz that was being rendered by a small dance band set upon a stage.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" ejaculated Cecil de Valerie. "This—this is amazing, you chaps!"

"I never expected anything like it!" exclaimed Chambers of the Fifth. "Oh, my hat!"

"Geel!" muttered Adams. "It sure is the elephant's elbow!"

The St. Frank's fellows—that is to say, those who had never been here before—were astonished to find a considerable number of strangers in the night club. This was no mean, tawdry place! Many of the young fellows were in evening-dress, and they appeared to be enjoying themselves hugely. There were girls, too. Dressed in gay dancing frocks, laughing and talking, they added greatly to the charm of the picture.

Mr. Simon Clegg, the proprietor, was standing near the stage on which the band was performing. Mr. Clegg was very pleased. Night after night his patrons were increasing in number. The club was gaining popularity, so there was every reason for Mr. Clegg's satisfaction.

Nobody could obtain admittance into the club unless they paid ten shillings each, and then, too, there were other expenses. One had to pay for everything here. Nobody seemed to mind. Here, after midnight, there was laughter and jollity—dancing and bright sociability.

"By Jove!" said De Valerie, as he stood looking on. "I think I'll change my mind about not coming here again!"

"Same here!" said Singleton. "This is the life, by jingo! It's worth breaking bounds for!"

And all the others, reckless and without a thought for the precious hours of sleep they were losing, heartily agreed.

OUTSIDE, hidden in the gloom of Bell-ton Wood, a figure moved. It was crouching down between some low bushes. And that figure had been observing much during the past hour.

Uncle Robert had had no notion that he and his party had been observed. It had not occurred to any of them to look amongst the trees—those trees which overlooked the wall of Moat Hollow. Even Handforth & Co. had been forgotten after the party had reached the old house.

"It's worse than I thought!" muttered the crouching figure, in a troubled voice. "Far worse!"

This figure belonged to Fenton, the captain of St. Frank's, and there was certainly good reason for him to be worried. He had definitely established the fact that not merely a handful of juniors and seniors were attending this night club, but large numbers. He had counted more than twenty; he had seen the arrival of several fellows from the River House School, too—although the doings of these boys did not concern him.

He was thinking solely of St. Frank's.

Fenton was a conscientious captain; and his concern now was deep. He was alarmed; he was filled with consternation. Never once during his captaincy had he been called upon to deal with such an extraordinary situation as this.

It caused him much bitterness to realise that his own uncle—that junior in the Remove—was the leading spirit in this unsavoury enterprise. And when the crash came Uncle Robert would receive the most severe punishment; for it would be established, beyond doubt, that it was owing to his introductions that the other St. Frank's fellows had been admitted into the club.

Uncle Robert would be expelled. Nothing could save him from that fate.

Yet Edgar Fenton did not hesitate.

Here was a situation which called for strong action; it was no time for personal or private considerations. Indeed, if the truth be told, Fenton was so disgusted and exasperated with his young uncle that he would be heartily glad to see the last of him. Moreover, Uncle Robert deserved to be expelled, and Fenton told himself that he would have no compunction in taking the action that would ultimately bring about the sentence.

Ever since his uncle had come to St. Frank's, Fenton had been suspicious.

The junior had been too sure of himself. His confidence had been excessive. Fenton had found it impossible to ignore the rumours that had been floating round the school. Everybody knew—unofficially—that his young uncle was responsible for a great deal of bounds breaking after lights-out.

At first, Fenton had taken no action, since he did not believe in listening to rumours. But at last he had felt that something drastic was necessary. It was no good letting a thing like this run on; it would only become worse and worse. It had to be nipped in the bud.

Fenton's own good name was suffering. His prestige was being lowered by the activities of his rascally young uncle.

Fenton hated his present task. He loathed the idea of spying on these wrongdoers.



Handforth was precipitated down the chute and he landed feet foremost into a large bin of chaff which completely buried him.

The night club itself did not interest him greatly; he was concerned with the flagrant breaking of bounds. All these juniors and seniors were flouting the St. Frank's rules, and Fenton felt that it was up to him, as captain, to "throw a spanner into the works." So to-night he had followed Uncle Robert and the others to Moat Hollow.

He rose stiffly to his feet now, thinking deeply.

"It's tricky!" he muttered, frowning. "If I take action to-night, half the beggars will escape punishment. I can only recognise one or two of them, and I can't go back to the school and ransack every House to find how many fellows are missing. Besides, even if I took any action like that it wouldn't be drastic enough."

He continued to think deeply.

He was shocked at the discoveries he had made, and he was alarmed when he realised that this "rot" would probably spread. Unless it was quickly scotched it would get worse and worse.

And Fenton knew well enough that a sudden dramatic move would be the best. In order to put an end to this reckless breaking of bounds he would have to explode a bombshell. Yes, and he would have to be ruthless, too. Every one of those culprits would have to be reported to the headmaster. Fenton knew that the school would respect him for his strength. A certain section of fellows, no doubt, would revile him, but

he could afford to ignore all these. The main body of St. Frank's—the real St. Frank's—would understand.

Suddenly he made up his mind, and his brow cleared.

"Yes, that will be the better way!" he decided. "Well, I'm glad! I don't want to half do the thing."

Having made up his mind he walked stiffly away and very soon he was striding back towards St. Frank's. He arrived indoors, went straight to his bed-room and climbed into bed. A few minutes later he was sleeping peacefully.

For Edgar Fenton had come to a very startling decision.

He felt that the only way to put a sudden and definite end to the folly was to visit the night club himself. In that way he would catch the culprits redhanded. They would have no opportunity of eluding him, and he would take their names, and then sternly order them back to the school. Afterwards he would hand his report to the headmaster, and he would see that Mr. Simon Clegg was duly warned.

Edgar Fenton was nothing if not thorough. His plan was to make a clean sweep of these reckless young fools. It would be far better than doing the thing half-heartedly, and allowing the majority of the culprits to elude punishment.

"G O easy now!" murmured Handforth, under his breath. "Not a sound, you fellows. They're only just ahead!"

Church yawned.

"Oh, let's get back to bed!" he said wearily.

"You silly ass!" frowned Handforth.

"We've been stalking these rotters for ten minutes, and——"

"And now that we're within sight of them we can see that they're a flock of sheep!" put in McClure tartly. "I guessed it long ago, only I didn't like to say anything. You're such a pig-headed chap, Handy!"

Handforth gave a violent start.

"Sheep!" he ejaculated blankly.

"Yes, sheep!" snapped Mac.

Handforth could hardly believe it. It was a terrible blow to his prestige as a private investigator. For a considerable time he had been stealthily creeping across the meadows, with Church and McClure in his rear. He had been following that track through the grass—the trail that had been left by the night marauders.

If Church and McClure had not been so tired they would have laughed. But they were fed up with the whole game. They had lost an hour or two of sleep, and they were by no means pleased about it. All they wanted to do was to get back to St. Frank's and to snuggle down into their beds. These night investigations were not to their liking.

Besides, it was too risky. They were laying themselves open to the same punishment as the rotters. Who would believe them if they were caught? Who would believe that they had been out with Handforth on a so-called "investigation"? The game wasn't worth the candle.

Handforth ran forward into the next meadow, and he soon satisfied himself that he had indeed been stalking a harmless flock of sheep. The effect upon Handforth was unexpected. He crumpled up. He became humble and mild.

"You're right!" he growled, looking at Church and McClure in sorrow. "I'm a hulking great idiot!"

His chums were silent.

"I'm a blithering fathead!" continued Handforth bitterly. "By George! This'll be a lesson to me. I thought I was pretty smart as a detective, but I'm only a dud. I've made a mess of the whole business, and I shall be awfully obliged if you fellows will kick me."

Such humility from Handforth was uncommon, and Church and McClure felt uncomfortable.

"Cheese it, old man," said Church. "Let's get back to bed."

"Aren't you going to kick me?" demanded Handforth aggressively.

"Let's leave it until to-morrow," said McClure.

"All right, then; but I'm several kinds of a fool, don't forget!" said Handforth dully.

"By George! I've often been called an ass,

and now I know I *am* an ass! Oh, come on!"

He led the way back across the meadows towards Bellton Lane. His one desire now was to get back into his dormitory. He was disgusted with himself. Church and McClure silently shook hands as they followed in their leader's rear. They had not hoped for such success as this, and perhaps this would act as a lesson to Handy.

They skirted the River Stowe and came out into Bellton Lane, close by the bridge. This meant that they would have to pass Moat Hollow on their way back to the school, and Handforth cast a rather soft glance at the grim old house as they drew near. He knew that Olive Clegg lived here, and it worried him considerably because he had had no opportunities of again meeting the girl.

Church and McClure grinned to themselves as they noted Handforth's expression. They made no noise as they walked, for they kept to the side of the road. And suddenly on the night air they heard a sound of subdued laughter. Handforth halted in his tracks.

"By George!" he murmured. "What was that?"

They all listened. The laughter was coming from beyond the high wall of the old house. It sounded as though a number of people were moving about. Abruptly the laughter ceased, as though it had been suddenly smothered by a word of warning.

"I say, this is queer, isn't it?" said Church with a frown. "I could swear that I heard De Valerie laughing over there."

"De Valerie!" echoed Handforth. "Oh, don't be an ass! How could one of our chaps be in the grounds of Moat Hollow?"

"It's a funny thing for anybody to be there, if it comes to that," said Church. "Especially at this hour of the night—and laughing, too. I'm jiggered if I can understand it!"

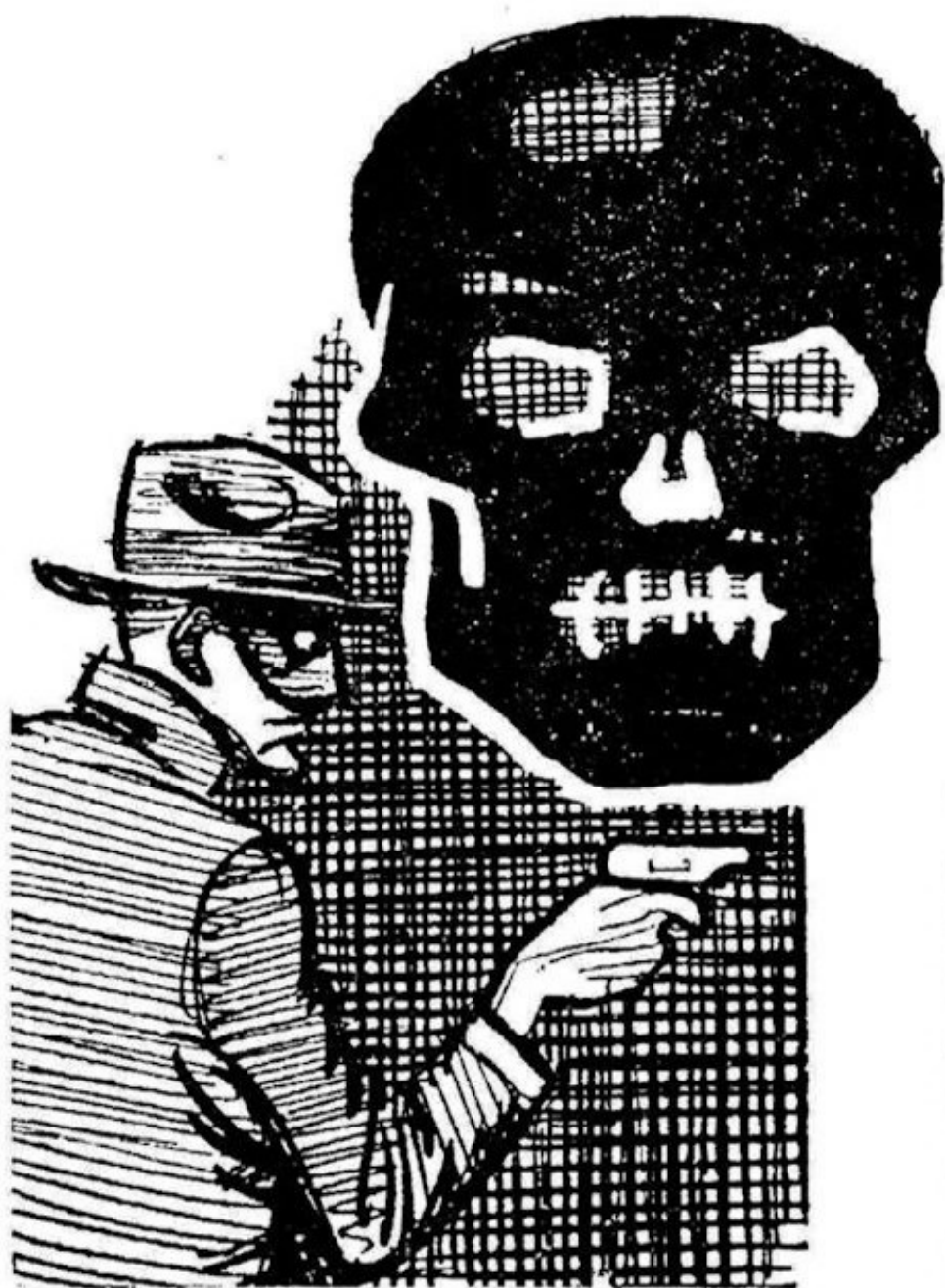
The three juniors were puzzled, and they walked on thoughtfully. Then came another surprise. Some figures appeared in the moonlight, emerging from Bellton Wood, a little distance ahead. Instinctively, Handforth pushed his chums into the hedge and crouched there himself. They held their breaths.

"All clear!" came a soft voice. "Not a soul about! Now sharp's the word!"

It was the voice of Uncle Robert of the Remove. And the startled trio of Study D recognised De Valerie, too, and Gore-Pearce and one or two others. They were all hurrying up the lane towards St. Frank's.

Handforth was fairly quivering with excitement. What he had failed to discover by design he had discovered by accident. It was just the sort of thing that *would* happen to Handforth.

"But—but it's dotty!" muttered Church. "Don't you understand what this means, Handy? Those fellows who have just come out of the Moat Hollow grounds were some



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of the crowd that went down to the night club!"

"I know—I know!" said Handforth tensely.

"Then the night club must be in Moat Hollow!" breathed Church. "My stars! That explains it, then! Don't you remember the rumours? They said that there was a night club, and that Olive Clegg was connected with it. The night club is at Moat Hollow!"

Handforth breathed hard.

"Rot!" he said fiercely. "I'm not going to believe a rotten thing like that. Not likely! Miss Clegg isn't that sort of girl!"

"But there's the evidence——" began Church.

"Blow the evidence!" snorted Handforth. "I don't care what you say! And on Wednesday night I'm going to make another investigation. I mean to get to the bottom of this mystery."

Church and McClure stared at him.

"Another investigation!" ejaculated Church. "But—but you said that you were a hulking idiot! You told us that you had learned your lesson!"

"Rats!" said Handforth, frowning. "That's over now! This—this discovery makes all the difference. And I'm not going to let you fellows kick me, either!" he added abruptly. "By George! This proves that all my suspicions were right! But I'm jolly well not going to believe that Olive Clegg is mixed up with any rotten night club!"

CHAPTER 5.

The School Captain's Decision!

NEXT day there were several puzzled fellows at St. Frank's.

Edgar Fenton was one of them; Handforth was another. And Uncle Robert was a third.

Uncle Robert had been expecting Handforth to speak to him about the previous night's affair, and he couldn't understand Handforth's complete indifference. The leader of Study D had not once approached him, and had, apparently, forgotten all about the adventure.

But Handforth, as he explained to his chums, was "biding his time." According to his calculations, the night club would be open again on Wednesday. Therefore, Handforth argued, the best thing to do was to wait patiently until Wednesday night. Then he would be able to make that "further investigation."

It was noticed that day that there were many seniors and juniors going about with heavy eyes. They had had a very short night's rest, and now they were paying the penalty. Not that they really minded; they always told themselves that they could take a nap in their studies during the day. The trouble was, quite a few of them started taking naps in the class-rooms; and this was a very unprofitable proceeding, as they soon discovered.

During the day Edgar Fenton made a close study of various seniors. He was quite satisfied that Cuthbert Chambers, of the Fifth, had been to the night club. Chambers was looking dull, heavy-eyed, and listless; and Fenton was positive that he had recognised Chambers at the back gate of Moat Hollow, too. This Fifth-Former was several kinds of an ass; he was also dull-witted. Fenton decided that he was just the fellow who would be able to help him in his plan of campaign, and yet not realise he was doing so.

That evening the school captain invited Chambers into his study, and for a time they talked about football and various other school matters. Chambers was feeling rather surprised, and not a little pleased. It wasn't often that he was invited into the captain's study like this. Chambers was a bombastic sort of fellow, and he began to believe that his importance was at last being recognised.

"Well, look here, Chambers," said Fenton, at length. "Possibly you've guessed that I didn't ask you here just to have an ordinary chat with you."

"No?" said Chambers, his vanity somewhat jarred.

"No," said Fenton. "There is something else."

This sort of thing went against the grain with him, but he had had to go through with it. Whenever he hesitated, whenever he had a feeling of reluctance, he saw the word "duty" hovering in front of his eyes.

He steeled himself and gave Chambers a knowing grin.

"The fact is," said Fenton, "I'd rather like you to give me an introduction to this—well, this select club I've been hearing about."

Chambers started, and turned pasty.

"Club!" he ejaculated. "I—I don't know what you mean, Fenton!"

"Oh, yes, you do!" laughed Fenton. "This night club. You were there last night Chambers, weren't you?"

Chambers gulped, all his assurance deserting him. He did not realise that he had given himself away.

"Nunno!" he stammered. "Of course I wasn't there! I don't even know where it is!"

"This won't do, old fellow!" said Fenton. "I'm not quite so green! And if you can go to the place and enjoy yourself, what about me? But I understand that a new member has to be officially introduced?"

"I tell you I don't know anything about it!" panted Chambers.

"The night club isn't held at Moat Hollow, is it?" asked Fenton blandly.

"Eh? Then—then you know!"

"Of course I know!" said Fenton with perfect coolness. "What's the good of pretending, Chambers? The next time you go, I'd like you to take me with you. It's safe enough, isn't it?"

Chambers breathed a little more freely. He stared at Fenton with wonder and embarrassment. He suddenly realised that Fenton was not the stiff, formal chap he had always believed him to be. Fenton wanted a little of the gay life, too!

As for Fenton, he waited anxiously. He felt sure that Chambers would be too dull to guess the real truth; and Fenton was right. Within a minute or two Chambers was grinning.

"You gay dog!" he said slyly. "All right, then! I'll introduce you, if you like! But remember—it's on the strict q.t.!"

"Oh, rather!" said Fenton, with a chuckle.

"That's settled, then? Good man! Thanks awfully, Chambers!"

AFTER Chambers had gone—having definitely arranged to take Fenton to the night club on the following night—the St. Frank's captain paced up and down his study, biting his lip and frowning worriedly.

"It's despicable!" he muttered, coming to a halt. "It's a hateful business! I'm acting like a cad—a traitor—but what else is there for me to do?"



THE ST. FRANK'S QUESTIONNAIRE!

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

1. Who are occupants of Study I in the Ancient House?
2. When is Stanley Waldo's birthday?
3. What was the story called in which Archie Glenthorne first came to St. Frank's, and what was the number?
4. Which Third-Former is nicknamed "The Cherub"?
5. Who is the most untidy junior at St. Frank's?
6. Who is the best-dressed junior at St. Frank's?
7. Who is the junior who is always quoting proverbs?
8. What was St. Frank's before it became a school?

9. Who is the greatest tomboy at the Moor View School?
10. On which side of the Triangle as you go in the gateway is the Ancient House situated?
11. Who is the rascal of the Third?
12. What was Jack Grey called when he first came to St. Frank's?

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUESTIONS:

1. *The East House.*
2. *Sessue Yakama.*
3. *John Busterfield Boots.*
4. *"Sports Mad at St. Frank's."*
5. *July 31st.*
6. *Colonel Clinton.*
7. *Twenty-two.*
8. *Yes: four grass and two hard.*
9. *An old travelling showman, who gave Horace Stevens his first chance as an actor.*
10. *Billy Nation.*
11. *Bannington 112.*
12. *Edward Oswald Handforth.*

Edgar Fenton's position was certainly an unenviable one. He had made up his mind that it was necessary for him to get into the night club; and, therefore, he had to victimise somebody. He had chosen Cuthbert Chambers.

Not that Chambers would suffer. He had promised to take Fenton into the night club, but Fenton felt that it would be a rascally thing for him to include Chambers in his list of delinquents.

No; he would send Chambers back to St. Frank's on some errand before the denouement. And later Fenton would give Chambers a severe lecture and a stern warning. After all, Chambers was an ass; he had been led into this thing by others. He was not naturally a rotter.

And so, while these various plans were being made at St. Frank's—by Fenton and by Handforth—Uncle Robert ventured out during the evening hours, and he casually dropped into Moat Hollow. He went openly this time, and was admitted by Mr. Simon Clegg's sister—an altogether unpretentious lady with no particular characteristics. She neither approved nor disapproved of her brother's activities. She didn't concern herself with them; her job was to look after the housekeeping, and she was doing this satisfactorily.

The rascally St. Frank's junior was taken into the small sitting-room, and there he found Mr. Clegg smoking and reading.

"Hallo, young 'un!" said the night club proprietor. "I'm not altogether sure that I like you coming here in this way. Isn't it a bit too conspicuous?"

"Safe as houses!" said Uncle Robert, as he sat down. "It's as dark as pitch outside,

and a bit misty, too. People aren't watching your house, Mr. Clegg! Surely an ordinary visitor can come at an early, respectable hour of the evening?"

Mr. Clegg laid his paper aside, and laughed.

"Well, perhaps you're right," he said. "I dare say you've come to collect your commission, eh?"

"Well, that was the idea," said the junior, his eyes taking on a greedy glitter.

Uncle Robert was mean—he was grasping. He seized every penny he could, and, in the Remove, he had the reputation of being a miser. He always partook of tea in hall, because he refused to stand his "whack" in the study.

"Now I come to think of it, I'm rather glad you've come," said Mr. Clegg thoughtfully. "There's something I want to say to you, Bob. How many St. Frank's boys did you bring along last night?"

"Just about twenty."

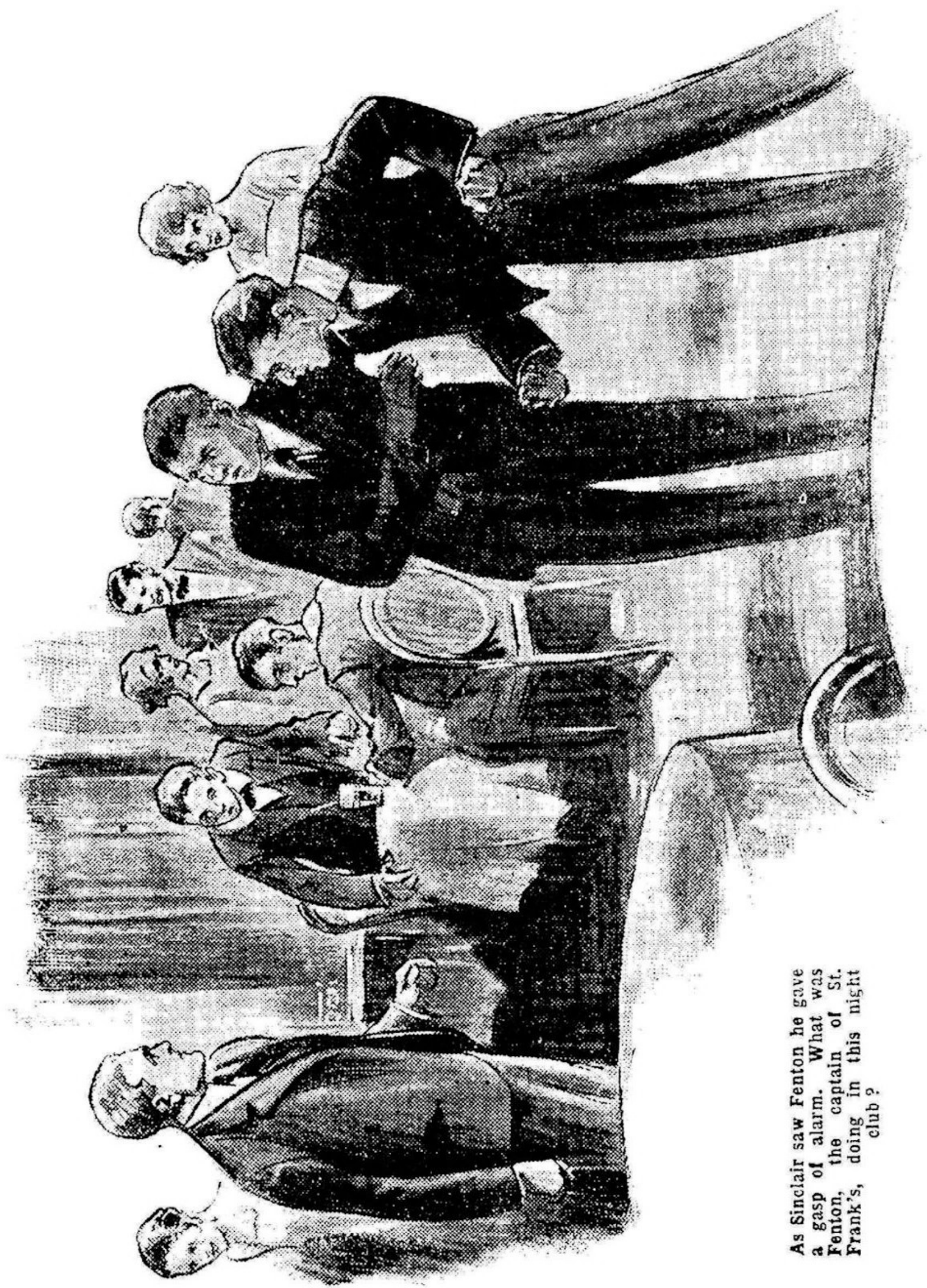
"And there was some talk of other St. Frank's boys following you, wasn't there?"

"Oh, Handforth?" said Uncle Robert. "You needn't worry about him. Handforth is an ass! We led him a fine dance, and locked him up in a barn."

Mr. Clegg frowned.

"All the same, I don't quite like it," he said. "I know Handforth—and he's a decent sort of chap. Not the sort to come to our club, perhaps, but a good plucked 'un. I don't forget how he saved Olive from that bullock."

"Oh, that was nothing!" sneered Uncle Robert.



As Sinclair saw Fenton he gave a gasp of alarm. What was Fenton, the captain of St. Frank's, doing in this night club?

"In my opinion, it was a great deal!" retorted Mr. Clegg sharply. "And I don't want anything like last night's affair to happen again. The club is a big success, and if only we maintain the proper precautions, it'll continue to be a success. But I must impress upon you, Bob, that we shall have to be careful."

"We are careful, aren't we?"

"Not careful enough," said Mr. Clegg, rising to his feet, and pacing up and down. "In future you mustn't bring any more big parties."

Uncle Robert, who was thinking of his commission, looked dismayed.

"But lots of fellows are asking about the club!" he protested. "They all want to come——"

"That's all right—that's very satisfactory," said Mr. Clegg. "But the doorkeeper knows nearly all of you by now. It will be far better if you come down in twos and threes to-morrow night. Do you understand?"

The junior was relieved.

"Oh, so that's what you mean?" he asked. "Well, of course, that won't make much difference. Sinclair can bring two or three of his pals; Gore-Pearce can do the same; and so on."

"That's exactly what I mean," said Mr. Clegg. "It will avoid any big crowd. Where there is a crowd, Bob, there is almost certain to be noise. And you really must impress upon these boys that they'll have to keep quiet."

"All right," said Uncle Robert. "You can leave that to me. I'll go round to-morrow and give a word of warning. And I'll tell the chaps of the new arrangement, too."

Mr. Clegg suddenly sat down, filled his pipe, lit it, and sat puffing for several minutes in silence. He looked so worried, indeed, that the junior became fidgety.

"You're not worrying about it, are you?" he asked at length.

"Eh?" grunted Mr. Clegg.

"About the fellows? You can leave them to me——"

"I wasn't thinking about you, or your young companions, either, Bob," said Mr. Clegg, taking the pipe out of his mouth. "I was thinking about Olive."

The junior was not particularly interested.

"I can't understand the girl," continued Mr. Clegg, frowning again. "She's obstinate—she's self-willed. Won't enter willingly into the spirit of this night club business. Anybody might think I was ill-treating her by the way she goes on!"



As Sinclair saw Fenton he gave a gasp of alarm. What was Fenton, the captain of St. Frank's, doing in this night club?

"You can't do without her, Mr. Clegg!" said Uncle Robert pointedly.

"You think that, eh?"

"I know it!" said the Removite. "She's one of the chief attractions—if not the chief attraction."

"That's what I thought, too."

"She sings wonderfully—and dances just as well!" continued the junior. "She's the star cabaret turn."

"And yet she doesn't like it!" growled Mr. Clegg impatiently. "Hates the work—and loathes me for making her do it. It isn't as though her mother didn't agree; she does agree. Says it will be good practice for the girl. Only Olive persistently says that she doesn't want to go on the stage. Yet her talent is fairly oozing out of her. She's brilliant, boy!"

CHAPTER 6.

Fenton Sees for Himself!

NEXT day Uncle Robert cautiously passed the word round.

Some of the fellows were inclined to scoff, and they considered that Mr. Clegg's word of warning was entirely unnecessary. Still, perhaps it was a good idea for them to go down to Moat Hollow in twos or threes, instead of making it a big party, as previously.

"It'll be a lot better!" said Gore-Pearce. "It'll be better because it'll be easier."

He was talking with Gulliver and Bell in the Ancient House lobby.

"How will it be easier?" asked Gulliver.

"Well, we can buzz off independently at eleven o'clock, if we want to," said Gore-Pearce. "There'll be no need to wait about outside for the others."

"Yes, and there'll be less chance of anybody spotting us," said Bell. "Oh, by the way, Gore-Pearce, are you going to stand treat to-night?"

"Be a sport, old man!" said Gulliver eagerly.

Gore-Pearce grinned.

"Broke, eh?" he asked.

"Well, I've got five bob," said Bell, "but that's not much good. And old Gully is down to his last sixpence."

"Shan't get any more until Saturday, either," pointed out Gulliver, gloomily.

Gore-Pearce chuckled.

"All right—leave it to me!" he said. "I'll see you through."

Money was no object to the millionaire's son; at the same time, he was by no means a mean fellow. Gulliver and Bell were treated very well by their leader. They were ready to for-

give him lots of his faults, if only for his generosity.

By now it was common talk throughout the school that there was a night club in the district, and that various fellows were visiting it. The great majority of the fellows just talked about it, and there the matter ended for them. They were far too sensible even to think of visiting the place. Besides, it cost money, according to the rumours. And it wasn't everybody who could afford ten shillings admission. They were lucky enough, on the average, if they could rake up a modest ninepence to go into the pictures on a half-holiday.

So when bed-time came that night the various Forms went upstairs to their dormitories, and there were all sorts of whispers going about. Who was going to-night?



"I know it, sir," agreed Uncle Robert, nodding.

"These girls—these girls!" sighed Mr. Clegg. "I always had trouble with the girls in my revue days. They're all right in the main—bless 'em!—but, by gosh, can't they worry a man!"

He held his hands up in a gesture of helplessness, and Uncle Robert grinned.

"I dare say you'll break her in soon, Mr. Clegg," he said hopefully.

"I'm going to break her in!" vowed Mr. Clegg, his voice becoming grim. "I'm not going to be thwarted by my own step-daughter! She's clever—she's built for the stage—and, by glory, I'm not going to have any more of her nonsense!"

Two minutes later Uncle Robert bade Mr. Clegg good-night and returned to St. Frank's.

How many fathoms were deciding to "chance their arm" by breaking bounds? And how the dickens did they expect to carry on throughout the term if they lost half their sleep every other night?

And so the talk went on, the fellows who weren't going being nearly as interested as those who had arranged to go. The whole thing was becoming a sort of nine days' wonder.

It was indeed high time that Fenton took some sort of drastic action.

Fenton himself was waiting in the shadow of the school wall at half-past eleven. There was no moon to-night, and the sky was clouded. It was very dark out there, and a little drizzle was beginning to fall.

Fenton had seen various forms flitting to the wall and climbing over. He had been startled by the number of these forms. It had seemed to him that about twenty-five per cent of the school was sneaking out.

"By Jove!" muttered Fenton grimly. "I've been wondering to-day if I'm doing right. Now I'm satisfied. If I don't take action pretty soon there'll be an awful scandal. Even as it is, I shall only nip it in the bud just in time!"

A scandal! Fenton was horrified at the thought. The fair name of St. Frank's was sacred to him. He felt his responsibilities weighing heavily upon his shoulders; but it was not his way to shirk them.

A figure loomed up out of the gloom.

"Hallo, there!" said a nervous voice.

"It's all right!" muttered Fenton. "That you, Chambers?"

"Yes!" said Chambers, coming up. "Glory! I'm glad to see you, Fenton! I was beginning to think that—that—"

"That I had developed cold feet?" asked Fenton dryly. "Not likely! I'm as keen as mustard to see the inside of this club."

"Well, you see, as a matter of fact, I thought it was a trap or something," said Chambers. "At least, I didn't actually think so, but the idea crossed my mind—"

"Forget it!" said Fenton lightly. "Let's go down to Moat Hollow and have a good time!"

And Cuthbert Chambers' doubts were set at rest.

"**H**ERE we are!" said Chambers importantly.

They had reached that little door in the back wall of Moat Hollow. Chambers was feeling very pleased with himself. He was delighted at the new

plan, for it enabled him to be so much more important. He was one of the "regulars" now; he could introduce anybody he liked.

And, sure enough, when the doorkeeper recognised him he at once admitted the pair. Chambers was all right. Chambers was in the know.

The doorkeeper, by the way, was a man Mr. Clegg had imported from London, and during the daytime he spent his time by tending the garden. He was the official gardener of Moat Hollow. He received liberal extra wages for his night work.

Fenton had no compunction in entering this secret club. At first he had felt that he was acting in a despicable way, but that sensation had now passed. The necessity for him to do his duty was so great that it overshadowed everything else. The honour of St. Frank's was menaced.

He had formed no conception as to what the night club would actually be like. He had not concerned himself much about the place. His main thoughts were for the school, and his general idea was to catch the culprits red-handed. It would be better, indeed, not to emphasise the night club too much. In his report to the Head he would give the names of all these boys as reckless, thoughtless breakers of the school rules. There would probably be no expulsions, only an epidemic of floggings and other severe punishments.

Fenton had almost ceased to think of his Uncle Robert. He, of course, would go under with the rest. Never for a moment did Fenton dream of getting special treatment for his young relative. On the contrary, he felt that Uncle Robert deserved the most severe punishment of all.

The school captain followed Chambers mechanically, for he was deep in thought. And thus, when he entered the night club, he was aghast. He had not been prepared for anything like this. The lights, the music, the general air of respectable gaiety—Fenton was astonished. In a vague sort of way he now realised that he had dimly pictured the night club as a drab sort of place, where most of the fellows perhaps were gambling.

But here was a superbly appointed dancing resort, with dozens of strangers present in addition to the St. Frank's fellows. Young men in evening dress—girls in dance frocks. A jazz band, waitresses flitting to and fro with refreshments.

It came as a staggering shock to Fenton. It caused all his prearranged plans to go by the board. He hardly knew what to do for the moment, for he was so bewildered.

He felt like a fish out of water; he felt very sorry that he had entered. He ought to have considered more carefully; he ought to have taken a peep from cover. But now he was in, and he was painfully aware of the fact that many pairs of eyes were gazing at him with startled consternation.

What could he do?

(Continued on page 26.)

The POPULAR
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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.

I. B. (Penarth) would like to know Irene Manners' address. You can go on liking, I. B. The only time I'm green, if ever, is when I go for a long sea voyage.

J. STAPLES (Swindon) calls me an old turnip. Well, an old turnip is better than a cross-eyed spud, and that's what you are. I shall not thank you for your suggestion, because it deserves to be dumped in the nearest dustbin. P.S.—Having failed to locate a handy dustbin, I have deposited the aforesaid suggestion in the next best thing—the w.p.b.

"TOM" (Christchurch, New Zealand). Yes, I have made some New Year's resolutions. One of them is to come along and biff chaps like you who persist in calling me impolite names. So look out for yourself.

B. L. C. (Stockport). Thanks for your letter and enclosed photo. You wouldn't like to meet me in the dark, eh? I was thinking the same thing, too, old man.

WILLIAM PRESCESKY (Saskatoon, Canada). Glad to hear you like my detective stories, Bill. I should like to say the same about your drawings, but as you allege they are of me I find myself unable to do so.

DAVID BARTHOLOMEW (Ealing) thinks I would look nice in a red-and-yellow bow. I think there's something wrong with your thinking apparatus, Dave. Have another go at making a sensible suggestion when you've cleared away the cobwebs from your brain-box and have oiled the rusty works.

"CRICKETER" (Manchester) tells me he admires me for my cricketing ability, and asks me to give him a few tips. Delighted,

by George! The successful batsman must remember that his job is to get runs. This can be done quite easily just by hitting the ball with the bat as hard as possible. Another important point to remember is not to let the ball hit the wicket. Hope these two tips will prove useful to you, old man.

"MISS INQUISITIVE" (Tottenham). No, there is no truth in the rumour that I obtained my Austin Seven by making faces at a garage proprietor who threw it at me in his anger. Your offer to buy me a bloater if I answer your other questions is er—er much appreciated, but—I'm not answering them. Give the bloater to the cat with my compliments and best wishes for its safe arrival.

"OLD SALT" (Southsea). Sorry you were hurt because I didn't reply to your other letter. I've got my mighty brain to work, and I've deduced that you're a girl—which is perhaps lucky for you. I'm very pained to hear that you "cannot see anything in Irene Manners." We don't agree on that point, I can assure you. I could write pages and pages about Irene. She's the— (That's quite sufficient, Handy; this is not a double number of the Old Paper.—ED.)

J. LEVERS (Chesterfield) asks me why did the kitchen sink? Sink me! Blowed if I know! Where did it sink to, anyway?

"TWO SCHOOLGIRL ADMIRERS" (Fulham). I am amazed that two girls could write such a letter to a poor, inoffensive little lad like myself. I am quite incapable of commenting upon it. The letter was written in green ink—but I'm seeing red!

EDWARD OSWALD.

HIS HONOUR AT STAKE!*(Continued from page 24.)*

Expecting to find only St. Frank's fellows there, with perhaps Mr. Clegg presiding, he had mentally planned to call all the fellows to attention, to take their names, and to order them back to the school. But how could he do that here? How could he make such a commotion? Over half the people were local residents. People from Caistowe, Bannington, and from the surrounding farms. Even in that first glance he recognised one or two prominent local residents—sons and daughters of rich people. The place wasn't mean or sordid in the least. It was a well-equipped, efficiently-run dance club. And everybody here who didn't belong to St. Frank's had a perfect right to be here, since they were doing no wrong.

While Fenton stood there, the consternation spread.

"Chester!" snapped Sinclair, as he grasped at Uncle Robert's shoulder. "What does this mean? Fenton's here! You didn't tell us that—"

"It's no good growling at me!" interrupted Uncle Robert sourly. "I didn't tell Fenton to come. I never dreamed that he knew anything about the place!"

"There's going to be trouble!" said Armstrong nervously. "We'd better clear out, you chaps!"

"Yes, rather!" muttered Grayson. "Fenton's as hot as mustard. He'll be down on the lot of us!"

Uncle Robert smiled.

"Why—all the excitement?" he asked. "Keep your heads, for goodness sake!"

Sinclair and Grayson scowled at this self-possessed junior.

"What the deuce do you mean, kid?" demanded Sinclair.

"Why, isn't it obvious?" asked Uncle Robert. "This is the very best thing that could have happened!"

"What—Fenton coming here?"

"Don't talk rot!" said Gore-Pearce frantically. "Fenton will report the lot of us—"

"Oh!" said Uncle Robert. "And what about us reporting him?"

The others stared at Fenton's youthful uncle in wonder.

"It's easy enough!" continued Uncle Robert. "Fenton daren't say a word now. He's one of us!"

"Eh?" gasped Grayson, a new light coming into his eyes. "You—you mean—"

"Exactly!" said Uncle Robert. "Fenton has broken bounds after lights-out, too. We're all safe, and we've always been safe. Every new fellow who comes daren't breathe a word because he's burnt his boats. If he does speak, he's liable to be hauled over the coals, the same as anybody else. And

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why should Fenton be different? He may be the captain of the school, but who cares? He's come into this place, and that means that he has broken bounds. Personally, I'm jolly pleased to see him here. We're safer than ever now."

"Gad!" muttered Sinclair. "I believe the kid's right!"

And all the other St. Frank's fellows, when the word went round, were enormously relieved. Edgar Fenton's arrival had scared them at first, but now a great load was taken off their minds.

Fenton, the skipper—here!

It was a staggering event, particularly when the young "bloods" saw that Fenton was strolling about easily and unconcerned. Sinclair made a point of brushing against the school skipper as he crossed the dance floor during an interval.

"Hallo, Fenton!" he said. "Not bad here, is it?"

"First class!" said Fenton coolly. "Everybody merry and bright, eh?"

"That's it!" grinned Sinclair.

He joined Shaw and Grayson at one of the tables.

"By gad!" he said, with gleaming eyes. "There's not a doubt about it, you fellows. Fenton's one of us!"

But appearances are sometimes deceptive.

CHAPTER 7.

Fenton Delays Action!

EDGAR FENTON was only reconsidering the position.

And while he strolled about he made a mental note of every St. Frank's senior and junior present. He had been so greatly taken aback upon entering this place that he felt that any precipitate action would be a mistake. It was up to him to go warily.

In the first place, there were ladies present. He could not do anything violent. Furthermore, it would not be playing the game to ruin the enjoyment of all these other people. He did not want to make a scene.

If the St. Frank's fellows misunderstood him for a few minutes, all well and good. It wouldn't make any difference in the long run. He could easily afford to take his time.

He had seen, almost at a glance, that this night club was no vicious resort. The amusement here was, on the whole, innocent enough. Mr. Simon Clegg was only catering for the youngsters of the district who thought it very clever to come here in secret and have a good time. In fact, Fenton was decidedly relieved.

But nothing could alter the fact that disciplinary action was called for; and very stern action, too. All these St. Frank's boys were breaking the school rules, and flouting the recognised authority. Where they came to after leaving the school premises, or what they did, was beside the mark. Still, Fen-

ton was relieved to find that this night club was more or less innocuous.

Yet, in another sense, it wasn't. Fenton did not lose sight of the fact that this club, tame though it was, could be raided at any time by the police.

Intoxicating drinks were being sold, and Mr. Clegg was laying himself open to arrest. Being an old hand, he probably laughed up his sleeve at the police, but it would be no laughing matter if a number of St. Frank's boys were captured during a police raid! It would be an appalling scandal for the school!



Fenton sat down at one of the empty tables. It was a small table, and it was close to a little curtained alcove—which was, apparently, a miniature stage. Fenton sat there, thinking hard, while another dance started.

"It won't do!" he told himself. "The place is well run, and I dare say Mr. Clegg considers himself to be an honest man. That's not my business, anyhow. But, by Jove, I'm going to have all these fellows out of here within the next five minutes!"

He had had time to think, and, coolly and collectedly, he had decided upon his course of action.

Incidentally, perhaps it had better be mentioned here that the redoubtable Edward Oswald Handforth, still as keen as ever on making "further investigations," had sallied out of St. Frank's, accompanied by his two chums, soon after eleven-thirty. And Handforth, having reached Moat Hollow, had met with another reverse. Even while Fenton was sitting at that little table, Handforth was raving against Fate.

He and his chums had seen various people entering the back door of Moat Hollow, but when Handforth had knocked upon that door nobody had come.

He even tried to climb the wall, but it was so high that this was out of the question. In the end, Church and McClure had marched off back to St. Frank's, and Handforth, in a fine rage, had chased them. But he didn't overtake them until the school was reached, and then he decided that he had better go back to bed.

It had been another frost, but it had also been a lesson. Handforth had learnt that

there was no admittance to Moat Hollow unless he was introduced by a member of the club. And this caused him to think out a new scheme, which he was determined to put into practice towards the end of the week.

So Fenton, although he didn't know it, was saved from a further complication. And as the school skipper sat at that little table, he prepared for his next action.

"Most of these lunatics are probably believing that I'm in this club to enjoy myself," he murmured. "Well, that doesn't matter. They'll soon learn differently. And I am afraid it will be a bit of a shock for them."

During the last five minutes Fenton had made a complete list in his pocket-book. He had noted every senior and junior who was there, and he had jotted down the names. It was his intention to make a little roll-call presently—just to convince the culprits that there would be no escape for them.

Fenton steeled himself for the big moment.

First of all, he would have a word with Mr. Clegg, and point out to the proprietor earnestly that every St. Frank's fellow would have to leave. If Mr. Clegg objected, it would make no difference. Fenton was determined to have his way.

Then he would ask permission of the general company to excuse a brief interruption, and he would tell all the fellows that he had taken their names, and that it was his duty to report them to the headmaster on the morrow. Finally, he would order them out of the place, and convince them, once and for all, that he was there, not for pleasure, but from a point of view of duty. In no circumstances must there be any misunderstanding on that point!

He looked round for Mr. Clegg, half-rising as he did so, but Mr. Clegg was not to be seen. Just then the music stopped. A certain amount of clapping broke out, but it soon died down. And then, in a brief interval of silence before the chattering started, Fenton heard a new sound—a strange sound in that place of gaiety.

He heard the unmistakable sobbing of a girl!

IT was a strange sound to hear in such a place.

After the first moment or two, Fenton half-believed that he had been mistaken. It was so incongruous—so unexpected. There had been a pitiful quality about that sobbing, too—a note that had gone straight to Fenton's heart. He was always greatly affected when he heard a woman crying.

He glanced round, wondering where the sounds could be coming from. He soon discovered. The girl, whoever she was, was behind the curtains. She was in that alcove.

Fenton did not move, but he felt uncomfortable. The girl's sobbing was louder, and he found that he could hear it quite distinctly, even though the big place was filled

with laughter and chatter. Then Fenton heard a man's voice. He started. It was Mr. Clegg's voice; and he remembered that he had been looking for Mr. Clegg. He waited, wondering how long the proprietor would be. And now he could hear Mr. Clegg's words, for the voice was raised.

"That's about enough of this, girlie!" came the harsh tones. "Pull yourself together! Don't make all this silly fuss! The cabaret starts within ten minutes, and you've got to appear. Understand? I won't have any more of this nonsense!"

"Please, dad!" came the sobbing voice of the girl. "I can't—I can't!"

"Good heavens, Olive, how many more times must we quarrel?" shouted Mr. Clegg, his voice coming very plainly to Fenton's ears through the curtains. "My patrons are expecting you to dance—and to sing. And, by Heaven, you'll do it! Now, let me have no more of this foolery!"

Fenton bristled. He hated to hear this bullying. Yet what could he do?

The girl's voice had rang in his ears in a strange way. There was something plaintive about it—and yet, at the same time, something sweetly charming. He could not remember ever having heard such a pretty voice. He shook himself. This was imbecility! What was he thinking of?

"Please excuse me to-night, dad!" came the girl's pleading tones. "Oh, I can't dance—really I can't! I don't feel well, dad! I'm ill! I'm so dizzy that I can't stand properly! Oh, why will you be so cruel?"

"If I believed that you were ill, I might take some notice of you!" said Mr. Clegg harshly. "But you're not ill! You've got a wonderful colour! You're just pretending—so that I shall excuse you. But I'm not going to, girlie! Oh, no! You've got to dance for the pleasure of my clients."

Fenton felt himself going hot and cold. He felt that he was an eavesdropper; yet he was sitting at one of the tables, and anybody else might have been there.

"Well?" came Mr. Clegg's voice, the tone still more rough. "Have you got over your tantrums?"

"I won't dance—I won't!" cried the girl, her voice unsteady and faint. "Oh, dad, I didn't think you could be so unkind to me! No, no! Don't touch me! If you do, I shall scream!"

"By heaven, if you scream you'll be sorry for it for the rest of your born days!" panted Mr. Clegg. "You'd better not make a scene here, my girl!"

Olive's voice had become frightened—terrified. Fenton was on his feet now, and his face was flushed. His eyes were gleaming. There was no longer the slightest doubt. Mr. Simon Clegg was acting like a bully and a blackguard. Fenton clenched his fists, and his hesitation was nearly at an end. He knew that this girl was Olive, Clegg's daughter. He had heard about her, but he had never seen her. Suddenly he heard a scuffle,

followed by a plaintive cry. Then came a little thud.

"Oh, father!" came a faint little shriek. "Please—please don't! Oh, you're hurting me—"

Fenton flung the curtain aside, and strode through into the alcove. It was a little stage, only partially lighted. The curtain fell back into place, and Fenton stood there, staring before him with amazed eyes.

For an instant he saw Mr. Simon Clegg bending over the slim, slight figure of the girl. She was in a chair, and she was attired in a brief, silky sort of costume. Fenton looked at her wonderingly. Perhaps it was the peculiar nature of the situation, but it seemed to him that never before had he seen a girl so pitifully in need of help; never before had he seen a girl so sweet and so charming. Even with the tears on her cheeks, and with her eyes expressive of fear, she was wonderful. Her beauty was only enhanced by her distress. And as she looked at Fenton there was a frightened appealing look in her eyes.

Mr. Clegg glanced round, his brow black.

"Excuse me—" began Fenton thickly.

"What the deuce do you mean by butting in here?" demanded Mr. Clegg angrily. "What do you mean, boy?"

"I rather thought my presence was necessary," said Fenton, steadying himself and speaking quietly. "If I was mistaken, Mr. Clegg, I will apologise, but it seems to me that this young lady was in deep distress."

"Let me tell you, my friend, that you have an infernal nerve!" retorted Mr. Clegg. "This young lady is my daughter. She is not in distress at all! You'll oblige me by getting on the other side of that curtain!"

Fenton hesitated. Olive had fallen back into the chair, and it seemed to Fenton that her slim legs were unable to support the weight of her body. She looked weak—ill. There was a hectic flush on her cheeks. And then, suddenly, she had a fit of coughing. In an instant Fenton knew the truth. The girl really was ill. And here was Mr. Clegg threatening her!

"Don't you think you'd better cool down, sir?" asked Fenton quietly. "It seems to me that the young lady is ill—"

"You can mind your own confounded business!" roared Mr. Clegg, turning and seizing Olive roughly by the arms. "She's no more ill than I am! Come on, Olive! Get up! I'm tired of this!"

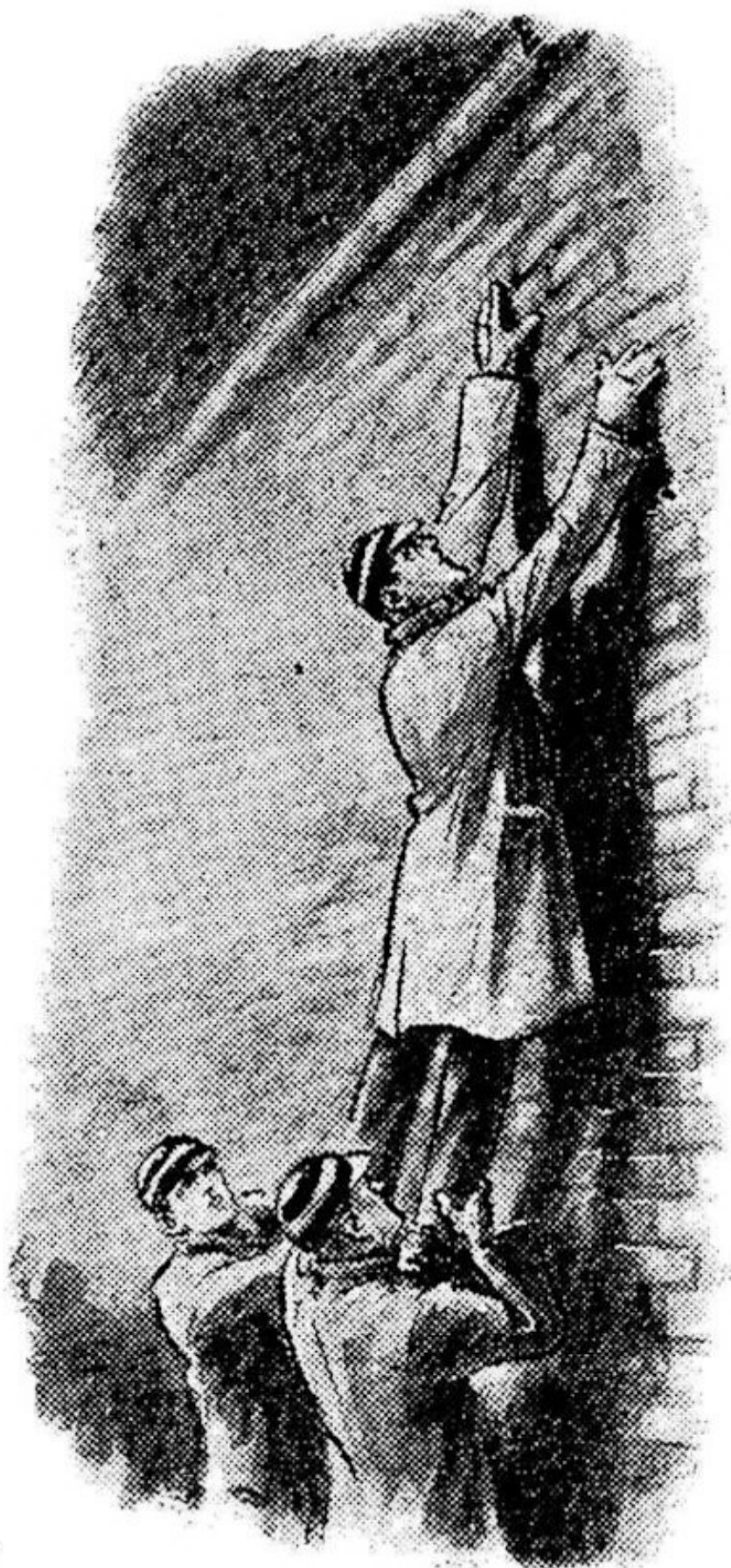
He gave the girl a powerful wrench, and pulled her out of the chair with excessive roughness. Undoubtedly, Mr. Clegg was not acting like himself. He was so angry that he hardly knew what he was doing.

"Oh!" sobbed the girl.

She staggered and nearly fell.

"You're going to appear to-night!" snarled her stepfather. "My patrons come first. Now!"

He commenced shaking her, and Edgar Fenton could stand no more.



Hoisted up by his two chums, Handforth endeavoured to gain access into Moat Hollow by climbing over the high wall, but he found it impossible. Handforth the investigator was foiled!

WITH two quick strides Fenton reached the girl's side, and he took her firmly by the shoulders.

"Come, Miss Clegg!" he said softly.

He pulled her backwards, and allowed her to sink into the chair. Then he twirled round and faced the enraged Mr. Clegg.

"You brute," he said furiously.

"Why, confound you—"

Crash!

Fenton could not help himself. It was an extraordinary thing for him to do, for usually he was very level-headed and calm. But bullying he could never stand—and bullying a girl, in his eyes, was a crime of the worst type.

He knocked Mr. Simon Clegg down with real enthusiasm, and he did not experience any feeling of regret afterwards. He only

wanted Mr. Clegg to get up, so that he could knock him down a second time.

But even before the startled night club proprietor could scramble to his feet Olive had intervened. Pulling herself together with an effort, she came forward, and she held Fenton back. Her pretty face was full of anxiety; her eyes were flooding with tears.

"Please—please!" she panted. "Oh, don't make a scene! Don't let anybody know!"

Mr. Clegg scrambled to his feet, and his face was distorted with anger.

"Get out of this, Olive!" he said harshly. "As for you, boy, I'll thrash you within an inch of your life——"

"If you touch this girl again, I'll forget that you are her father!" broke in Fenton. "I've forgotten it once—and I'll forget it again! Calm yourself, Mr. Clegg! What do you mean by this? Have you gone mad?"

Mr. Clegg passed a hand over his brow. He suddenly became subdued, sobered, by Fenton's action, and by Fenton's words.

"Boy, you did right!" he said in a muttered voice. "I'm sorry, Olive. It was just as well this youngster knocked me down. I—I hardly knew what I was doing. Forgive me, girlie."

"Oh, dad!" faltered the girl.

She gave Fenton a grateful glance—a glance that filled him with a strange thrill. He had never known anything like it before, and he tried to shake himself—to throw off this glamour. He was forgetting his grim purpose—his duty.

But he was glad that he had intervened. He had brought Mr. Clegg to his senses, and was glad to find that the man realised it.

There was a short silence. Olive sat down, trying hard to hold back her sobs. Mr. Clegg stood there, breathing hard and trying to get a firm hold on himself. At last he looked up.

"How did you know?" he asked, gazing at Fenton.

"I heard—through the curtains," said the St. Frank's captain.

"Fool—fool!" muttered Mr. Clegg. "I ought to have known better. Gad, boy, I'm glad you stopped me. When I get into a temper, I don't know what I'm doing! Girlie, I'm sorry—I'm really sorry!"

"She's ill, sir," said Fenton.

"Yes, I can see it now!" muttered Mr. Clegg. "I thought she was only shamming. I believe I've been terribly cruel—although I didn't mean to be. What's your name, boy?" he added abruptly.

"Fenton," said the prefect. "I have been seeking an opportunity of having a few private words with you."

"Well, you can say them now," said Mr. Clegg. "Olive, you sit there for a bit. Take it easily, girlie. It's all right—don't worry. I'll let you off for to-night."

Fenton waited, half expecting the girl would go. Somehow, he didn't want her to go—although he knew that she ought to

be in bed, and between blankets. Her temperature was obviously high. But as she still continued to sit there, Mr. Clegg motioned Fenton aside.

"Leave her alone for a bit," he muttered. "She'll soon be better. Well, young man, what is it you want to speak to me about? I would like you to forget the incident which has just happened. And I would also like you to know that I am ashamed of myself, and that I bear you no grudge for knocking me down."

Fenton felt warmed towards this remarkable man.

"That's all right, sir," he said. "The fact

COMING NEXT WEEK! ~~~~~



is, I came to your club because I have a duty to perform. I am captain of St. Frank's."

"Oh, indeed!" said Mr. Clegg sharply, his business instincts aroused.

"I am sorry to tell you, Mr. Clegg, that the presence of all these St. Frank's boys here must cease!" continued Fenton. "I have taken all their names, and it will be my duty to report them to the headmaster to-morrow. I want your permission to order them all off these premises at once."

Mr. Clegg looked alarmed, and he frowned. "I don't see why you should interfere," he said curtly. "It is no business of yours——"

"There, Mr. Clegg, you are wrong," interrupted Fenton. "As captain of the school, it is my duty to take these boys back. Fur-

thermore, I shall be compelled to inform the police of this club. The honour of St. Frank's comes before everything else with me. I am giving you a fair warning. This club of yours is a menace to the discipline of St. Frank's, and as long as it remains open the menace will persist."

Mr. Clegg stared at him blankly.

"Boy!" he burst out blankly. "Do you know what you are saying?"

"I think I do," said Fenton quietly.

"I doubt it!" snapped Mr. Clegg. "You—a schoolboy—threatening me! Telling me my business! First of all you interfere in

"BOUND BY A PROMISE!"

Rashly, Edgar Fenton, the captain of St. Frank's, has promised Olive Clegg that he will not expose the night club at Moat Hollow. He little realises how he is to suffer because of that. For, unable to take any action, he finds himself regarded as one of the "sports"! He is sneered at by the school; he falls from the pedestal of popularity. Disaster looms ahead for Fenton; disaster overtakes him, engulfs him!

Next week's story is the best in the series so far. Full of dramatic situations, superbly written by Edwy Searles Brooks, it will grip readers from the first chapter. This is a story not to be missed, chums!

"THE FOUR-LEGGED EAGLE!"

There's thrill after thrill in next Wednesday's stirring instalment of this popular detective serial featuring Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant, Jack Drake!

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

my personal family affair and you knock me down, and then——"

"I would remind you, Mr. Clegg, that you have already approved of that action!" said Fenton quietly.

"Approved be hanged!" shouted Mr. Clegg. "I take back what I said! And unless you get off these premises at once I'll have you thrown off! I'm not going to have you coming here ordering me——"

"Father—father!" panted Olive, getting out of the chair and running to Mr. Clegg. "People will hear you!"

He pulled himself together with an effort.

"Here, Olive!" he said thickly. "You deal with this boy, then. Of all the impertinent jackanapes——"

Olive turned, and she looked at Fenton out of her burning, saddened eyes.

"You don't mean it, do you?" she asked tremblingly.

"I'm afraid I do!" said Fenton, hardly able to meet her gaze.

"Oh, but you can't—you can't!" she said, tugging at his arm. "You're not going to expose my father. You're not going to make a scene here. Please, for my sake, go away quietly. Please don't do anything to-night!"

"But—but——"

"The boys are doing no harm!" continued Olive breathlessly. "If you turn them all out, as you say, there can be only one result. Your headmaster will get to know——"

"I shall make my report to him," said Fenton, nodding.

"And then it won't make any difference whether you tell the police or not!" cried Olive. "Your headmaster will do so. Oh, please don't do this thing! I beg of you not to!"

And Edgar Fenton, as he looked into those eyes of hers, felt himself weakening. He pulled himself together, but it was no good. It was as though a spell had been cast over him. He knew, all the time, that he was cowardly; but this girl's appealing voice, her distress, robbed him of all his strength.

CHAPTER 8.

The Promise!

UNDOUBTEDLY, Olive Clegg had cast a sudden spell of enchantment over Fenton.

It was so unexpected that it was startling. Fenton himself would have laughed aloud at such a thing had somebody told him of it. At any ordinary time perhaps he could have looked into Olive's eyes with equanimity; but now it was different.

She was ill; she was pleading with him; she was so pitiful in her weakness. His heart went straight out towards her; his determination oozed out of his very pores. And curiously enough, he was aware of it. He knew, even while he stood there, that he was weak. But he could do nothing; in her presence he was helpless.

His mind was bewildered, disordered. During one second he thought of all those St. Frank's fellows, enjoying themselves in the club; in the next second he wonderingly told himself that Olive was the sweetest thing he had ever seen, and that he was the luckiest fellow alive to have been able to go to her assistance. And then in still another second he recalled himself to his sense of duty.

"Miss Clegg," he said unsteadily, "I've got to go on with it. I'm dreadfully sorry, but I must!"

"But why—why?" she asked.

"I came to this place for one purpose," said Fenton, trying to quiet the tumult within him. "It is my duty to take all these boys back and to report them to the

headmaster. I must do it, Miss Clegg. Please don't try to stop me!"

"But I shall—I shall!" she breathed. "If you tell your headmaster it will mean—the police. And then—and then what will become of me?"

"Talk sense, Olive!" put in Mr. Clegg. "You will come to no harm."

"Oh, you don't understand!" panted Olive desperately. "If the police know, if this house is ordered to be shut up the papers will be full of the story!"

"And what if they are?" demanded her father. "Do you think I care about the newspapers?"

"No, of course you don't," said the girl bitterly. "And you don't care about me, either. People won't look at me after the exposure!"

"Won't look at you!" said Fenton aghast.

"I mean, they'll think dreadful things," said Olive. "My father arrested for running a night club and for inducing schoolboys to attend it. You know how these things get exaggerated. And I've got friends—friends I love. My old school chums. They'll all turn against me, or their parents, at least, will prevent me from seeing them. Oh, it all seems so trivial to you, but it's really everything to me! Besides, decent people will look at me with suspicion. They'll think—they'll think— Oh, *can't* you understand?" she burst out. "I shall be the one to suffer. My father doesn't care. But it's different with a girl. Please—please promise me that you won't take any action!"

Fenton was finally robbed of his last atom of strength. She was looking straight into his eyes. Never before had he seen such wonderful eyes as hers. And how could he refuse her? How could he brutally say that he didn't care a snap for her feelings or her fears?

"Very well!" he said impulsively. "I—I'll think about it."

"You mean that you won't order these boys back, and that you won't make any report to your headmaster?" she asked breathlessly.

"Yes!" muttered Fenton, still looking at her with a kind of wonder.

"You promise, don't you?" she asked, pressing tightly on his arm.

That pressure was enough. Fenton found himself unable to refuse such an appeal, coming as it did from so charming a girl.

"Yes, I promise!" he said, nodding. "Of course I promise, Miss Clegg. I wouldn't do anything to hurt you. I'll—I'll go away. And please don't worry."

She felt for his hand and gripped it tightly. And Fenton felt his heart thumping within him.

"Thank you—oh, thank you so much!" she said, her lips quivering. "It's good of you."

Fenton stood there, even after she had vanished through the little doorway at the back of the small stage. He was picturing

her slim figure as she had disappeared, walking unsteadily. And she had looked so pitiful, so frail. Just as that particular moment Fenton felt very proud. This girl had asked him a favour and he had granted it. It seemed to him that he had done a fine thing.

And then Mr. Simon Clegg caught him by the shoulder.

"Come, boy!" he said. "Pull yourself together. Let's forget this unhappy little incident. And, really, you needn't worry about these schoolboys. They'll come to no harm here."

Fenton shook himself. Now that Olive had gone he was gradually regaining his mental equilibrium.

"If you don't mind," he muttered, "I'll go outside."

He turned and pushed his way through the curtains. The next moment he was mingling with the crowds. A brief period of confusion and then he found the stairs. He went up, and not until he got out into the open, into the drizzle, did he pause.

He saw nothing of the untidy wilderness of the Moat Hollow garden; he only saw the picture of that wistful, sad-eyed girl. He felt very pleased because he had caused her stepfather to give way. She wasn't going to appear to-night. Owing to his—Fenton's—intervention, Mr. Clegg had excused her.

Fenton felt that he had achieved something.

EDGAR FENTON obtained no sleep that night.

When he eventually reached his bed-room in the Ancient House, he undressed and prepared himself for bed mechanically. He hardly realised his actions. Instead of getting into bed, he put on his dressing-gown and sat in an easy-chair.

He was now experiencing a sensation of hammer-like blows. With a dull shock he remembered that he had gone to Moat Hollow to order all those young fools back—and here he was in the school again, and his mission was still unaccomplished.

He went over everything that had happened, and the more he thought, the greater became his concern.

Olive was now a mythical sort of figure in his mind. He could see her still, and when he thought of her his mood softened. He assured himself that he had done right. He could not have been such a brute as to ignore her pleadings. She was such a sweet, tender, helpless little thing—

Fenton shook himself.

He did not realise it, perhaps, but his chief emotion with regard to Olive Clegg was—pity. He had met her for the first time in such pitiful circumstances; from first to last during their brief association she had been either sobbing or pleading with him to hold his hand.

Now that he was back at St. Frank's; now that he was no longer under the spell cast

by Olive's presence, things seemed different. He could think over the situation in a more normal frame of mind.

Fenton did not sit in the chair long. He was soon out, pacing up and down the confines of his small bed-room. Once or twice he heard creaks from the corridor. He knew what they meant. The roysterers were coming back and seeking their beds.

He thought of the morrow, and his heart nearly stood still. He did not know how he could face the morrow. He had gone to Moat Hollow to do his duty, and during his first quarter of an hour there all the other St. Frank's fellows had taken it for granted that he was sampling some of the delights of the night club.

He had intended giving them a shock—a big surprise.

But he had done nothing! And their assumption would obviously be taken as the correct solution. They knew nothing of his interview with Mr. Clegg; they had heard nothing of that brief altercation.

The more Fenton thought about the situation, the greater became his anguish.

He had failed! Miserably, inexcusably, he had failed! He had neglected his duty, and all because of that girl!

What could he do now?

He had the list of names, it was true, but that sheet of paper might as well have been blank, for he could do nothing with the list. He had promised Olive Clegg that he would take no action. He had given her his word that he would not go to the headmaster or make any report.

"Fool—fool!" he muttered bitterly. "What was I thinking about? I promised her! And now my hands are tied."

He reviled himself for his weakness; and yet, at Moat Hollow, he had admired himself for his strength. He was the head prefect of the school—the captain—and he had allowed himself to be influenced. The thought appalled him. He had succumbed to the pleadings of a highly hysterical girl. Well, he had given his promise, and with Fenton a promise was a bond.

And then, unexpectedly, the vision of Olive Clegg would come before him again. On the instant, his mood would soften. He would cease to revile himself.

"What else could I have done?" he muttered tensely. "She asked me, and I couldn't be such a confounded brute as to ignore her! And what she said was perfectly true, too! Everybody likes to talk scandal, and—and— Oh, what's the use?"

He became aware of the fact that the door had opened. He sat up abruptly in bed and looked round.

"Who's that?" he asked sharply, startled by the hoarse tone of his own voice.

"Congrats, my dear nephew!" came a chuckling murmur. "It's only me—little Uncle Robert!"

Fenton became rigid.

"Go to your dormitory!" he said harshly.

"Feeling a bit peevish after your round of gaiety?" murmured Uncle Robert. "All right, old man! I won't stay here, unless you like. But I thought I'd just pop in to congratulate you. I was awfully pleased to see you in the good old club."

Fenton sprang out of the bed.

"Either you'll get out of this room or I'll throw you out!" he said furiously. "You young rat! You're the cause of all this trouble! If it hadn't been for you——"

He broke off, gulping. He was amazed to find himself putting the blame on the shoulders of his young uncle.

"Clear off, kid!" he said gruffly.

Uncle Robert went, surprised and puzzled by Fenton's attitude. And Fenton sank down on the bed again, holding his head in his hands. How weak he was becoming! It was his own fault—nobody else's! His strength had deserted him, and he had failed in his duty!

These were the thoughts that seared like hot irons into his brain.

CHAPTER 9.

The Finger of Scorn!

"HUMBUG!"

Fenton pursed his lips as he heard that word whispered in a chuckling tone. He was walking through the Ancient House lobby, on his way outside. But he did not turn his head—he did not give any indication that he had heard.

It was morning at last—and breakfast was over. Fenton got into the Triangle, and he knew that that word—"humbug"—had been uttered by Gulliver, of the Remove.

And, furthermore, the word had been directed at him—the school captain!

He took no action because he realised that Gulliver had every reason for thinking that he was a humbug. Had he not visited that night club as an ordinary patron? Had he not gone away, his duty unfulfilled, leaving all the rotters to draw their own conclusions?

Fenton was the centre of attention this morning. Everybody looked at him curiously—wonderingly. For even those who knew nothing about last night's affair could see a startling difference in the school captain.

He was pale, haggard, and he looked positively ill. His face seemed drawn and lined; in his eyes there was a dullness, a listlessness. And all this was so unusual in Fenton, the brisk, good-natured, cheery skipper.

The rotters, of course, openly laughed at him. Everywhere he went he could see fellows with sneering smiles on their faces. They were all pleased—they were all hugging themselves with delight. Fenton had visited that night club, and thus he had acknowledged himself to be a bird of the same plumage as themselves.

He wandered into West Square, his hands thrust deeply into his trousers-pockets.

"Personally, I admire the man," he heard a voice saying. "He's as much a blood as any of us! Good luck to him."

"Rot!" said another voice. "He's always pretended to be a saint, and now we find that he's only made of plaster! I had a bit of respect for him until now, but he's beneath contempt."

Fenton walked on, and the voices became silent. He knew that a group of juniors were staring at his back. He did not take the trouble to look at them to find out who they were, but, of course, they had been talking about him.

A murmur of laughter followed as he vanished—mocking, derisive laughter.

And he was bound in a promise and could do nothing. He could not go to the headmaster and make his report. Even now he was out here because he was afraid of facing his fellow-prefects. Rumours were already flying about—they were more than rumours, indeed. Sinclair had sent the story scurrying throughout the Sixth, and every other Form was talking on the same subject.

Fenton found himself suddenly confronted by Morrow, the head prefect of the West House.

"Oh, hallo, Fenton!" said Morrow, staring at him curiously. "Just the fellow I've been looking for!"

"Good-morning, Morrow!" said Fenton steadily.

"What's all this rot I hear about you being at that night club?" went on Morrow. "It's a lie, of course?"

Fenton bit his lip.

"Why trouble, old man?" he asked evasively. "Is it worth while taking any notice of these stories?"

"But you weren't really there, were you?" ejaculated Morrow, in amazement.

"So you don't trust me?" asked Fenton bitterly.

He walked on without saying anything else, for the simple reason that there was nothing else to say. He knew that Morrow was staring after him.

"Well, I'm hanged!" muttered Morrow blankly. "It can't be true! There must be something behind this. Old Fenton! Oh, rot!"

Fenton got to his study, and he sagged wearily into an easy chair. But in another moment he was on his feet again, pacing restlessly up and down. Loss of sleep and worry had wrought a big change in him.

Hitherto he had always held such a good name in the school. Seniors and juniors alike had respected him. Wherever he went the fellows had looked up to him. But this morning—what a difference! Sly smiles, contemptuous chuckles, insulting remarks, openly uttered. And he was powerless to

take the slightest action, knowing, as he did, that he was deserving of all this scorn.

Naturally, Fenton exaggerated the situation.

It was not nearly so bad as he imagined. The vast majority of the fellows took no notice of the story—which they characterised as ridiculous. As for the rotters, they didn't count much. However, unless Fenton became more resolute, unless he took some sort of action against the ones who openly sneered, the others would begin to wonder, and then they would lose their faith.

Suddenly out of all the murk and gloom a flash of hope came into Edgar Fenton's brain. He stood stock still, his eyes opening wider, his cheeks slowly becoming flushed. A possible solution to the problem had come to him.

"Why not?" he said fiercely. "It's the only way—now! Last night I failed in my duty, but perhaps I can make amends. And then I shall be able to hold my head up again."

He hardly thought of Olive Clegg now; the glamour of her personality had faded. His own position was so acute indeed that he could think of little else.

But he had made his promise to the girl, and although he had let himself in for all this trouble, he was determined that that promise should be kept. At all costs, no matter what happened to himself, he would keep faith with the girl.

"Sooner or later that night club is bound to be exposed!" Fenton told himself. "It's inevitable. She'll feel the disgrace of it just as much as if I had taken action, and she mustn't be exposed to such a danger!"

He paced up and down, his thoughts becoming clearer.

"There's only one thing to do!" he repeated to himself. "It's impossible for me to report the fellows to the Head now, but if that night club is closed down this epidemic of breaking bounds will cease. Therefore, my only course is to concentrate on the night club. Once it's closed everything will be all right."

He couldn't tell the police—he couldn't give any information. There was always the barrier of his promise to Olive Clegg.

But there was one other possibility. He would hustle Mr. Simon Clegg himself. He would concentrate upon the man, and make him close the place down or shift it to some other locality. In that way all scandal would be avoided, all the trouble would be at an end. And Fenton would be able to hold up his head again. If he did this thing by his own efforts he would redeem himself.

He had made up his mind, and he would not falter until the night club was obliterated! (Fenton's fight for his honour, and his efforts to close down the night club that is menacing St. Frank's, makes stirring reading in next week's grand long school yarn, which is entitled: "Bound by a Promise!")

GOSSIP ABOUT ST. FRANK'S

Things Heard and Seen By
EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

THIS week's reader's photo shows you Harry Flanagan, of Sheffield. He wrote to me some months ago and asked that his photo should be published in this particular issue, as he intends to bind the Old Paper from the beginning of the year, and would like to have his dial in the first one. Well, it's a small thing to ask, and as he is the only one who has asked this, there can't be any objections about it.

THERE'S a point in a letter from Charles A. Webb, of Walthamstow, which seems to be of interest. He mentions the Triangle of St. Frank's, and I would like to point out that it is only the boys who have named it thus. Actually it is the quad, but as it is shaped something after the fashion of a triangle, the boys have always dubbed it one. This really applied more to the old days than to now. Before St. Frank's was rebuilt—that is, before the new Houses were added—this piece of courtyard actually was a perfect triangle—a three-cornered space. It has been greatly changed, and nowadays there are really four sides, and not three only. Yet it still goes by its old name and is always called the Triangle.

CEDRIC L. WOODS, of Brandon, Suffolk, is rather annoyed with me for making a reference in a previous Gossip to the League of the Green Triangle. He says he is as keen as mustard on Professor Cyrus Zingrave coming into the stories again, but he says that Zingrave is associated with the Circle of Terror, and not with the League of the Green Triangle. Here are his words: "On all the occasions that Zingrave and his cronies have appeared in *the stories proper* since the St. Frank's tales commenced they have been styled the Circle of Terror. I don't count the short stories that have been tucked in at the end of the St. Frank's story." But Mr. Woods is wrong—as I'll proceed to prove. Those Circle of Terror, I don't count the short. They appeared long before the first St. Frank's story ever came out. When Zingrave first commenced his criminal activities he was

the chief of the Green Triangle, and all the stories dealing with Nelson Lee's fight against that organisation were long stories. After Nelson Lee had smashed up the gang, Zingrave was quiet for a spell, and then he tried to make a "come back" as the chief of the Circle of Terror. Nelson Lee smashed this up, too. Since that time Zingrave has made more than one attempt to start his old games again, but he has never made much of a success of it. In *the stories proper*, to use Mr. Woods' own words (and in my opinion the stories proper are those which appeared in the early days) Professor Zingrave was associated with the League of the Green Triangle. That was his original organisation. The Circle of Terror was a mere imitation. The rascally professor has always longed to revive his old love. Mr. Woods says "Oh, for a real old-time yarn!" If he means by this the sort of yarn that is full of thrills and detective work, he'll soon get his wish, I think. But I urge him not to be impatient. It may be some weeks before Zingrave makes his bid, but I'm positively convinced that the old rascal is very busy preparing something particularly startling. And I am sure he won't call his new organisation the Circle of Terror.

OUR READERS' PORTRAIT GALLERY



Harry Flanagan

WELL, well! Still they come in! Here's Jack W. Boucher, of Camberwell, one of our staunchest readers, putting on the same record! He says that he has had letters from two readers who are both over fifty years of age, and he adds: "I am glad to tell you that they still enjoy your yarns, but they both think your older yarns more thrilling, when Nelson Lee and Nipper were detectives."

JOHAN WALSH, of Hamilton, Ontario, tells me that he is a new reader, and he wants to know what the Trackett Grim stories are, and why don't I write some more? If he wasn't such a new reader he would know that Handforth is the guilty party. It was he who created Trackett Grim, he who wrote some of the weird and wonderful detective yarns for the St. Frank's Junior

Magazine. I've sometimes wondered why none of Trackett Grim's latest exploits has been reprinted in the Old Paper, and I have just discovered the reason. Handforth, it seems, has been doing more talking than writing. He's so busy with football and with punching chaps on the nose, and Mr. Crowell has been "after him" so relentlessly over arrears of work, that he hasn't been able to write any Trackett Grim stories. Hence their non-appearance.

Our Hamilton reader also wants me to write a short article especially for new readers, all about St. Frank's. At first sight this seems to be a good idea, for, as John Walsh points out, there are lots of other new readers like him who want to read about the old school's history, etc. But I'm afraid it's impracticable. The Old Paper gets new readers every week, and it would be necessary to print that blessed article as a permanency.

* * *

PAT BYRNE, of Maitland, Cape Town, wonders if a non-League reader can answer the advertisers for correspondence. Of course! Why not? These advertisers don't state that they only want to correspond with League members, do they? If a reader gives his or her name and address and asks for letters it is up to anybody in the whole wide world to answer.

* * *

"CRITICER" (I suppose he means "Criticiser") of Clapham, thinks that Irene Manners and Doris Berkeley and the other Moor View girls act too much like boys. He seems to think that it's my fault. But how can I help it? As a matter of fact, many modern girls *do* act very much like boys. And I'm not sure that I disapprove. Why shouldn't schoolgirls be free and easy and sporting and full of healthy fun? I am well aware that Irene & Co. use quite a lot of slang, and that many of their ways are distinctly boyish, but I've never come across a more jolly, healthy collection of girls.

* * *

HERE'S an inquiry from George T. Putterill, of Adelaide, South Australia, and I'm answering it because I am sure that heaps of other readers will be interested. When was Lord Dorrimore first introduced into the stories? Well, the genial Dorrie was first brought in in No. 105, Old Series. It was a story called "The Ivory Seekers," and dealt with Nelson Lee's and Nipper's adventures in Africa. That was before they came to St. Frank's. The second story in which Lord Dorrimore appeared was No. 119—"The City of Burnished Bronze." Since then his lordship has appeared from time to time, and, if I know anything about him at all, he'll continue to appear from time to time.

SHALL I cease to record any of Handy's adventures? It would be quite easy to do so. I have always felt that the general run of readers like to read of Edward Oswald's doings, so I have featured him a good deal. If I thought that the yarns would be better without him, however, I could still include his part in any adventure, but dismiss it in a few lines. For example: "When Handforth went to the village after tea he was unfortunate enough to encounter Lumpy Bill and his pals; and, judging by Handy's appearance when he returned, he had had a pretty rough time." That bit could be a whole chapter if I told it in full. The question is, shall I tell it in full, or shall I dismiss it as above? Not merely this incident, but all such incidents in which Handforth appears.

* * *

I AM saying this because W. Naylor, of Manchester, has put a doubt into my head. He writes: "I have an idea that old readers will agree with me when I say that Handforth has been done to death, that he has gone stale. *I will go so far as to say that Handy is not half as popular as you imagine him to be.* And yet, week after week, he is to the fore, and always in the limelight. Really, Mr. Brooks, I think you must have E.O.H. on the brain. It pains me to write in this strain, but I know that you always welcome frank criticism. I would like you to publish this part of the letter in your Gossip, then perhaps we shall get to know for sure the general feeling on this matter. If by any chance I have made a blunder, that Handy is as popular as ever, well, then, I will stand the racket. But old Handy apart, let me say right here that the Old Paper is THE GOODS. I've read it a good many years, and I know." Those italics up there are mine, and I emphasise that particular passage because it is the crux of the matter. Is our Manchester reader right? Is Handy much less popular than I imagine him to be? If so, I'll keep the brake on him. He's got to be in the stories—he won't be kept out—but, of course, it's up to me to describe his adventures in full or in brief. If in brief, you'll hardly notice him at all.

* * *

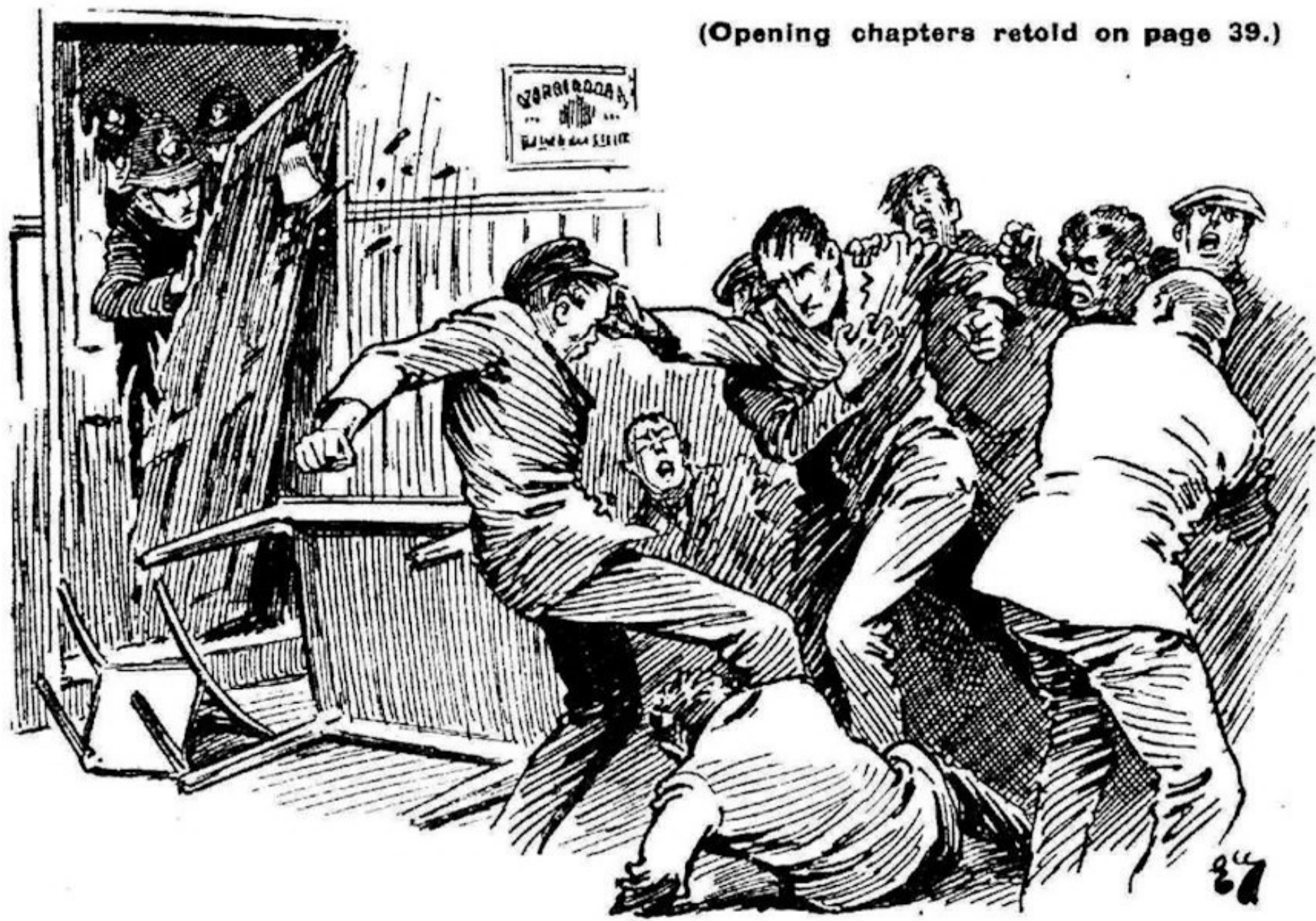
"TWO Tomboys," of Fulham, want to know how Dick Hamilton obtained the nick-name of "Nipper." Well, Nipper's parentage was uncertain when Nelson Lee first became his guardian. He was, indeed, a mere street urchin, known among his pals as "Nipper," he having no other known name. Actually, however, Nipper's parentage is quite good; and, although his parents are dead, to the best of my belief, and he has no brothers or sisters, it has been established that he is entitled to the honourable name of Richard Hamilton. If "Two Tomboys" want any more details, I shall have to ask Nelson Lee about this matter the next time I see him. I can't very well ask Nipper because the subject is a delicate one.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

ANOTHER CORKING FULL-O-THRILLS INSTALMENT THIS WEEK, CHUMS !

THE FOUR-LEGGED EAGLE!

(Opening chapters retold on page 39.)



In Desperate Straits!

A BOTTLE sailed past Locke's head. A glass struck his chest and fell to the floor at his feet, smashing into fragments. Locke saw the ruffians coming at him. He grabbed a chair and swung it round his head, using it like a flail.

Major Patens and the Grand Seigneur of Perilla had vanished. Locke could see nothing but dirty, unshaven faces leering at him, great hands clawing at him. He had his back to the bar, and he fought frantically.

Fireman Pete clambered up on to the bar, yelling at his shady customers.

"Boys, pack it up, will you? It's all a mistake!"

But in that uproar his voice was not heard. At any rate, the infuriated thieves continued attacking Ferrers Locke, and the famous detective found himself fighting desperately. He hit out at the faces that loomed up before him. Again and again men went down beneath the savage blows of his fists. The chair he had first wielded had long since been shattered and cast aside.

But as one man went down, two men came

forward. There was no lack of reinforcements for the thieves. As it happened, their number was a disadvantage. Locke had room in which to swing his arms, but the ruffians, pressing forward to strike at him, were crowding themselves. Those in front felt the weight of Locke's fists, and could not dodge back to escape his blows because those behind were pressing forward. Missiles of all sorts sailed over their heads, but more often than not those missiles either went over the bar or fell short, to crash on the cranium of one of Locke's opponents.

Yet the unequal combat could not last. Fireman Pete was in a frenzy. If the police heard the fracas and

came in force to investigate, it would mean trouble for him. In one way and another he had broken the law a good many times himself, and he didn't covet dealings with magistrates.

He stood on the top of the bar, waving his fat arms like windmills.

"Listen, boys! You're ruining me, that's what you're doing! It's a mistake! He isn't here after any of you——"

Fighting: Ten Seconds: K.O.

**Fighting Fury: Ten Crooks:
Ten Seconds: K.O'd!**

A bottle came sailing from nowhere in particular. It caught Fireman Pete full in the chest. He lost his balance, staggered back, and fell off the bar with a crash amongst a lot of glasses that splintered to fragments beneath his bulk.

Then one ruffian got a fierce blow to Locke's face. The detective was forced to his knees, and it seemed all up with him, for the ruffians refused to show mercy. Then suddenly from outside came the shrill sound of a police whistle!

Ferrers Locke was almost at the end of his tether. He felt his brain reeling; his vision was blurred. Heavy fists crashed against his face and his body. The odds were too great for him. Yet he fought on, grimly, automatically. Ugly, unshaven faces loomed up before him out of the mists, and he hit out at them fiercely.

Outside was a din and confusion equalling the pandemonium inside Fireman Pete's den. Police-whistles shrilled, men shouted. They were battering on the door and yelling for it to be opened in the name of the law. They thundered on the wooden shutters that protected the grimy windows, and Fireman Pete was in a frenzy. He stood behind the wrecked bar, wringing his fat hands in dismay.

"You'll ruin me!" he moaned. "This is what I gets for helping other blokes! But never again! I've ruined meself, and somebody'll have to smart for it!"

No one paid any heed to Pete. The ruffians assailed Ferrers Locke until it dawned upon them that the police were outside in force. The whistles and the shouting affected them not a bit, but when the woodwork of the door began to splinter beneath the blows of the axes wielded by burly constables, the hooligans suddenly realised that they had better make themselves scarce.

One by one they slipped away from the fight, strode swiftly behind the wrecked bar and through Fireman Pete's back parlour. Pete had constructed several secret means of exit for the benefit of his shady customers, and those secret runs came in useful now.

The door was almost open. The gleaming blade of an axe showed through the wood, a plank split and was thrust aside. A blue-clad arm came through the aperture and turned the key in the lock and slipped back the bolts. But by that time the last hooligan had vanished.

Ferrers Locke was leaning weakly against the wall. He was bruised and bleeding; he was utterly exhausted. Fireman Pete came waddling round from behind the bar, practically in tears. The door swung open and the police surged in, with truncheons drawn. Not that Pete cared a rap about them now. The damage was done, both to his nefarious saloon and his reputation with the police. He stood before Locke and brandished his fat fist.

"Ruined me!" he cried shrilly. "That's

what you've done! And I'll get you for this, you dirty 'tec, if it takes me a lifetime! I'll do for you before I'm through with you! I'll——"

But the police seized him from behind, and a plain-clothes man grinned at him.

"Cut it short, Pete," he said. "It looks as if we've got you fixed properly this time."

"Wasn't my fault!" whined Pete. "I haven't hurt a fly!"

"Oh, no, you've only half-murdered this chap!"

"I didn't!" screamed Pete, in terror. "Never touched him!"

"We heard you threatening him!"

Locke was leaning weakly against the wall. The police helped him to a chair that had somehow managed to escape getting smashed completely. They sat him down and brought him water. Slowly he began to recover. The police, unaware of his identity, grouped around him to prevent any attempt at escape he might make. Pete was firmly held by two burly constables, while other policemen ransacked the premises for any criminals who might be in hiding, but they found no one.

The inspector in charge of the raiding party stood before Locke.

"Well, my man," he said curtly, "what's all this about? Let's have your name, and all that. You make it easy for us, and it'll be all the easier for you."

Locke gazed at the man, then grinned. He was feeling heaps better now.

"I'm all right now, thanks!" he said. "But you came only just in time, Johnson."

The inspector's jaw sagged with amazement, and his eyes bulged. This man—battered and bruised, and dressed like the usual riverside loafer—was calling him by name!

But as Ferrers Locke looked up at him, that brutal, sullen expression which he had adopted with the disguise faded out, and his face became just the face of Ferrers Locke, the detective.

"Come, Johnson," laughed Locke, "I'm togged up to mix with the local gentry, that's all."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the inspector, recognition dawning in his eyes. "I've got you. You're Locke—Ferrers Locke!"

"That's right," admitted Locke.

"Glad to see you, Mister Locke!" said the inspector, not quite sure what to say next.

"And I was glad to see you and your men," retorted Locke. "I was nearly done for!"

"It looks bad for Pete," said the inspector. "I take it he spotted you in spite of your disguise and set his toughs on you. Pete doesn't hanker after people like you patronising his show."

"I never touched him!" whined Pete. "It wasn't me. I did my best to help and this is what I gets for my trouble. I'm ruined—smashed. And if I get at you, Mister Interfering Locke——"

"As a rule," said Locke, interrupting him, "I try not to brag about anything I've done."

If I hadn't interfered, Pete, you'd be lying behind your bar with a knife in your ribs."

That reminded Pete that he owed his life to Locke, and he altered his tune a trifle, but he still kept on whining.

"I'm ruined—ruined——"

"I'm still in the dark," said the inspector.

"It wasn't Pete," explained Locke. "I was in here looking for a couple of men, and—well, you know how Pete's customers behave when they think there's a detective anywhere about. They tried to get me. That's all. But Pete did not put them up to it. In fact, he nearly lost his own life in the racket."

The inspector turned to Pete.

"That clears you. You're lucky. But I'll have to charge you for allowing a disturbance of the peace on your premises, and all that. Understand. You'll get a pretty heavy fine, I reckon, because your reputation isn't any too good."

"That's all I get for helping other people," grumbled Pete.

"Don't let that worry you," said Locke.

"I'll pay your fine. I promised you that you wouldn't lose by helping me."

"You mean that, guv'nor?" asked Pete.

"I do."

"Gosh, then you're a gent, and I takes back all I said. I won't forget how you stopped that dago chap tickling my ribs with his knife. If ever Pete can help you, guv'nor——"

"Who are you after?" cut in the inspector.

"Nothing to do with you, Johnson," said Locke, with a grin.

"But we may be able to help you."

"You can't help me," said Locke. "And I am ordered not to bring you into the case. It isn't an ordinary case at all. Thanks very much, but I am forced to play a lone hand. If ever I need you I'll soon let you know."

"But I've got to report on this racket," said the inspector.

"Charge Pete for allowing disorderly and riotous behaviour on licensed premises, and let it go at that. Free fights are not unknown in this district. The principals concerned got away before the scrap started, so you, inspector, won't get into trouble for not

getting your men. And now if Pete will lead me to a water-tap and lend me a basin I'd like to wash my dirty face and bathe my bruises."

"This way, guv'nor," said Pete.

The affair was over. The police dispersed, leaving Pete with the certain knowledge that he had a bad half-hour to come to him when he faced the magistrate, but that Locke would pay his fine. And Ferrers Locke tended his wounds, and when he felt fit enough he departed from Fireman Pete's den. His next task was to rescue Jack Drake, who was a prisoner in the hands of Prince Carlos.

But much valuable time had been lost. Obviously, after Perilla and Major Patens had aroused such a riot in Firemen Pete's place it was not likely that Prince Carlos and his fellow-conspirators would stay over long in that locality. But there was only one course open to Locke; that was to go to the dingy house which had been occupied by the Abronians and find out how matters stood. After that he must be guided by circumstances.

Accordingly Locke, still disguised as a riverside loafer, slouched his way to the mean street where the house stood.

Locke did not try to enter that house. Instead he went up the steps of the next house, which was untenanted. Locke carried keys guaranteed to open any ordinary door, and it was easy enough for him to gain access to the house. He went upstairs, little caring if anyone had seen him enter the house or not.

He gained the attic, where a skylight gave access to the roof. Owing to the sloping ceiling it was not difficult to open the skylight and clamber out on to the slates. All these houses were built exactly alike, and Locke reckoned that if he could get out of one house by way of the skylight he could enter the other house in the same manner.

Carefully he crawled along the sooty slates until he came to the skylight of the house which had been occupied by Prince Carlos and his associates. He peered down through the grimy glass, and knew that he was in time. For below he saw Jack lying on the attic floor, securely trussed up.

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous London detective, and his boy assistant, **JACK DRAKE**, are travelling on the Underground when they witness the murder of a foreigner. Following investigations, they discover that the deed was committed by the Grand Seigneur, or Count, of Perilla, working on the instructions of **PRINCE CARLOS OF ABRONIA**. Carlos' ambition is to become king of Abronia, and already he has kidnapped the reigning monarch, King Ferdinand, and brought him over to England. The murdered man was an emissary of Queen Zita of Abronia, who has followed to rescue her husband; hence the man's removal. The queen asks Locke to help her restore King Ferdinand to his country. Later, the queen herself is kidnapped by Carlos, and taken to a house in the East End of London. Disguising themselves as toughs, Locke and Jack go to the house. The detective rescues the queen, but Jack is captured. Later, Ferrers Locke sees two of the Abronian conspirators entering an inn run by Fireman Pete. It was Pete who enabled the detective to rescue Queen Zita, and the Abronians are after Pete's blood. Locke follows them in. He saves Pete's life, but when the crooks who infest the place realise that he is a detective, they immediately attack him.

(Now read on.)

At the same moment Jack saw Locke. He couldn't shout on account of the gag in his mouth, but he jerked his head as best he could towards the door, then shook his head vigorously to imply that no one was there.

Locke understood, and acted quickly. He broke the glass of the skylight with his foot, stretched down with his arm and opened it. Then he lowered himself over the edge and dropped lightly down beside Jack. He snatched the gag from Jack's mouth and cut the cords that bound his limbs.

"Pleased to meet you!" grinned Jack. "I was getting a bit fed up with being trussed up like a chicken, guv'nor!"

"Is there anybody here?" asked Locke.

"No," said Jack. "I heard them all depart a short while ago. And I couldn't get the hang of that because I had an idea they were keeping me a prisoner here because they knew you would come after me, and then they'd collar you as well."

"That was their idea," agreed Locke. "But circumstances alter cases." And Locke told Jack what had happened at Fireman Pete's den. "Since that affair," he finished, "they've had to clear out, in a hurry—and, of course, they've taken King Ferdinand with them. We've got to get on their trail again immediately, but first of all we'll search this house from top to bottom."

On the Trail!

FERRERS LOCKE searched the house thoroughly, although he had not much hope that Prince Carlos had left any clue. He and Jack moved from room to room, searching high and low for anything the traitors of Abronia may have left behind, and which might give some hint of the direction in which they had fled. They found not a clue.

"I'm not surprised," said Locke, in a

matter-of-fact voice. "But there's still the cellar. Do you think we'll find anything down there?"

"Why not come and look?" suggested Jack brightly.

Ferrers Locke nodded. He ran down the short flight of dark stairs that led to the cellar, and, reaching it, opened the door. A damp smell assailed his nostrils. He switched on his electric torch and surveyed the place. It was low, damp and cold; the floor of the cellar was reached by a crazy wooden ladder arrangement.

Locke hardly expected to find clues there, but the light of his torch showed him a piece of paper stuck on a nail on the farther wall. It seemed as if a message had been scrawled upon it. Locke stepped down on to the wooden ladder—in order to clamber down into the cellar—and a second later he realised his mistake.

For suddenly that ladder collapsed; the thing seemed to crumple to nothing beneath his feet. Locke fell headlong, shouting a warning to Jack.

"Get back!"

His electric torch flew from his hand, the door swung to and slammed. He struck the floor and rolled in the grime and dirt. When he picked himself up he found that he was unharmed; but he was angry with himself for having been caught so easily. And yet, who would have suspected such a trick?

The cellar was pitch dark now, but Locke was not worried about that. It was a steady hissing of escaping water that attracted his attention. It was gushing from somewhere and rapidly spreading over the floor; he could feel it soaking into his boots. The floor was being submerged in some way. He tried to regain his torch, but the floor was an inch deep in water already.

Jack was banging on the cellar door. It had locked itself as it slammed shut.

"Guv'nor! You all right?" called the boy.

"Still alive," replied Locke. "But smash the door down, Jack, or I'll be swimming for my life very soon."

The echoes of Jack's exertions boomed in the damp darkness of the cellar. Apparently he was hurling himself again and again at the door, but it was far too stout to be battered down so easily. And the water was rising—steadily rising! Locke could feel it swirling about his knees.

The jarring thuds against the door ceased. Locke could hear nothing now except the regular splashing of the water as it poured into the cellar. Jack had gone, but not for one moment did Locke think that Jack had deserted him. He had merely gone to get some sort of battering-ram with which to smash the door down.

Locke fumbled in his pockets for matches, found a box, and struck a light. He waded through the cold water, and came to the spot where that piece of paper was pinned to the wall. The message was addressed to Locke and Jack.

Read

"The Thriller—"

It's a *Wow!*

"Is it not simple," it ran, "to fool clever people? We are so sorry that your end should be so unpleasant, but you cannot complain. You were warned. We meet, perhaps, in the next world."

It was signed "Carlos." Ferrers Locke smiled grimly to himself. The prince's trap had very nearly succeeded—but not quite. Jack had escaped, and so there was hope for Locke. But the boy would have to hurry, for by now the water had risen about the detective's knees.

Locke struck another match and surveyed the remains of the collapsed ladder. The trick was so simple, as Prince Carlos had said. The main water-pipe entered the house by way of the cellar. The plotters had made a hole in the pipe and had plugged it with a wooden plug, which was connected with the ladder by means of a cord. The ladder had been sawn through and merely lodged in position. Locke's weight had then caused the ladder to collapse; the cord had been jerked, and the plug had come out of the pipe.

Locke smiled to himself as he lit the third match. He waded through the water to the far corner of the cellar, reached up to a tap in the water-pipe and turned the water off from the main. It was strange that so astute a man as Prince Carlos had overlooked that tap.

The splashing of the water from the hole in the pipe grew less and less, then finally ceased altogether. Locke waded to the door and listened for Jack. The boy was just returning.

"All right, guv'nor?" Jack called breathlessly.

"Quite," said Locke. "Only cold and wet!"

"Well, stand away from this door. I've got an axe."

Locke stood away, and Jack attacked the door with vigour. The gleaming blade of the axe crashed through the panels, and in less than five minutes Ferrers Locke was crawling ruefully from the cellar.

"Jack," he said, "it doesn't do for anybody to get swelled head in this world. You never know what you'll fall into next, and it was such a simple trap."

"You weren't to know it was there," argued Jack.

"I should have been more careful," retorted Locke. "And Carlos should have been more thorough. He forgot the tap in there, and I was able to turn the water off. It looks as if Carlos and company were in a hurry to get to their next hiding-place."

"Which we've got to find," said Jack. "Any idea where we've got to look for them, guv'nor?"

"I'm not going to look for them," said Locke.

Jack was puzzled.

"But—guv'nor——"

"I'm going to be led to them," said Locke.

"What's the time, Jack? I smashed my watch tumbling down that ladder."

"Five and twenty to ten," said Jack.

"Taxi to Baker Street!" snapped Locke.

"We've got to hurry!"

Jack was still in the dark, but he knew that he dared not argue when Locke snapped out orders in that curt tone. They left that dingy house in a hurry and hastened away along the street to the main road. Jack fetched a prowling taxi. The driver objected at first, for they both looked like tramps. But when Locke had said three or four words to the taxi-driver there were no more objections. They were whisked away to Baker Street, and the transaction was profitable for the taxi-driver.

At Locke's flat they changed their clothes and snatched a little food as they changed. A quarter of an hour later they emerged once more, looking respectable. It was almost ten o'clock. Jack was still puzzled, but he wasted neither time nor breath asking questions that he knew would not be answered. He waited for time to show what the next move was.

Locke hurried towards the hotel where the Queen of Abronia had been staying. Jack knew that Locke had escaped from that dingy house with Queen Zita, but he did not know that the queen was now on her way back to Abronia with General Morina, and that Locke had instructed the hotel detective not to release the false queen, who had impersonated Zita, until ten o'clock that night!

As they approached the main entrance to the hotel, the clocks chimed ten. The burly commissionaire was signalling for a taxi. The vehicle rolled up to the kerb, and a lady, heavily shrouded, passed across the pavement from the hotel to the taxi.

"There she is!" said Locke.

"Queen Zita?" gasped Jack.

"No!" snapped Locke. "Her double!"

The detective hailed a passing taxi, and a few seconds later they were inside it and were following the other vehicle.

"I'm beginning to understand, I think, guv'nor," said Jack. "You say that woman we're following is Mossman's wife? Then she may lead us to where Prince Carlos——"

"Exactly!" agreed Ferrers Locke. "I'm hoping she's on her way to see him now."

They were taken to the West End, then past the Edgware Road, until the taxi which they were following stopped outside a house. Mossman's wife alighted, but kept the taxi waiting. Ferrers Locke was grimly patient. He and Jack alighted, but instructed their taxi to wait just round the corner.

A few minutes later Isaac Mossman and his wife came out from the house, entered the taxi and were driven back towards the West End. Immediately Locke and Jack returned to their own vehicle and were on the trail again.

"And this trail," said Locke, "will bring us in touch with Prince Carlos. I am convinced of that!"

A Waiting Game!

THERE was nothing very thrilling in that shadowing business. Locke's taxi followed the other along Oxford Street, down Regent Street to Piccadilly Circus. Close to the Pavilion Theatre the taxi stopped. Only Mossman alighted, and he went into the Regent Palace Hotel, but soon appeared again, as if the person he sought was not there.

He re-entered the taxi, and the chase continued up Shaftesbury Avenue to Tottenham Court Road, and down a side street to a respectable-looking but foreign restaurant in the Soho neighbourhood. Here the taxi was dismissed, and Mossman and his wife went inside as if quite sure of themselves.

Locke and Jack dismissed their taxi and followed their quarry into the restaurant. They sat down at the first available table, which was fairly close to the door. At first they could not find Mossman and his wife, but eventually Locke saw them seated at a table in an alcove, and opposite them were Prince Carlos and the Duke of Silene.

If Locke had wanted to capture those two conspirators he had his chance then, for they could not have escaped him. But he did not want to capture them. The fact that only the prince and the duke were there told him, plainly enough, that Patens and Perilla, the two most unscrupulous and daring of the conspirators, had been left somewhere to take care of King Ferdinand of Abronia. When Prince Carlos and the duke left that restaurant they would lead

Locke to where the king was a prisoner, which was what he wanted to discover.

Locke ordered a meal, and when it arrived Jack attacked it with zest. The detective, however, was less concerned about eating; he was surreptitiously watching Prince Carlos and those with him in the alcove.

The conspirators were discussing matters eagerly and, at times, angrily. Prince Carlos was obviously reviling Mossman and his wife for their failure to deceive Locke.

Jack having finished his meal, he now found time to study the four foreigners. He wondered what action Locke intended to take. Glancing at his guv'nor, he saw that the detective was still watching and listening intently. The minutes passed, and Jack grew impatient. This waiting game did not appeal to him; he was all for action.

At that moment he heard the angry voice of Mossman's wife. She was speaking in extra loud tones and, glancing quickly upwards, Jack saw that she was talking to Prince Carlos. His retort obviously made the woman even more angry, for she tossed her head indignantly, and then turned away to survey the crowded restaurant.

Suddenly she became rigid; the colour faded out of her cheeks—and Jack, with a thrill of expectancy, knew that she had seen Ferrers Locke!

(Ferrers Locke and Jack have been seen by the Abronian plotters. What will happen now? Make sure you read next Wednesday's instalment of this fine serial, chums—it's full of excitement and thrills!)

Peeps Past the Pyramids!

(Continued from page 13.)

over and inasmuchas," he continued crossly, "thou art preventing the Form from entering, and art messing up the whole show—blow thee!"

THEN Dr. Potiphar heard the voice of Gho Bang, the son of Busst, calling through the trapdoor.

"O master!" called Gho Bang, who was centurion of the Form. "I have truly a wave of the brain."

"Ghood fel-o!" said Dr. Potiphar. "Transmit thy idea to me, and I will pronounce thereon as to its merit."

"Knowest thou, O master, that there is a circus in the neighbourhood. I have therefore sent, even now, to borrow two elephants, with ropes——"

"Splendid!" broke in the Doctor. "Hasten them along!" And, turning to Phatt-Ee, he said: "Cheer up, O son of Ton. Thou wilt now soon be freed from thy stuckness."

Even as he spake there came the tramp and trumpeting of the two elephants, and loud cheers and cries penetrated the class-room. And Gho Bang, son of Busst, ordered the ropes to be fastened around the middle

of the wedged Phatt-Ee; also to his legs tied the ropes. Then called Gho Bang to Phatt-Ee, saying:

"Look thee out, Phatt-Ee! We are about to pull!"

And Phatt-Ee answered tremulously:

"Go easy, Gho Bang."

And Gho Bang said cheerfully:

"We will go easy—somewhat."

Then did the elephants pull on the ropes with all their strength; but even then Phatt-Ee moved not.

The elephants then said one to the other:

"Would that we had stayed in the circus resting, for this is truly a tuff job!"

And they strained again until a mighty "plop!" was heard as Phatt-Ee suddenly came out of the hole wherein he was stuck, and the air rushed into the class-room. So great was the rush of air that Dr. Potiphar's wig was verily blown to the uttermost corner of the class-room, and he chased it with one hand clapped to his head, which was bare of hair.

And the boys of the Fourth Form of St. Cheop's came into the School, entering through the trapdoor one after another, taking care, however, to tie Phatt-Ee to the steps, lest he should again venture in and bottle them all up.

Thereafter Dr. Potiphar, the master, caused the entrance to be widened, so that the occurrences of this day might not be repeated.

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
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New Year's Resolutions!

FAREWELL 1929—enter 1930! Another year has come and gone, and the good old NELSON LEE LIBRARY is still going as strong as ever; the St. Frank's League is flourishing as it has never flourished before. As far as the Old Paper is concerned, I think I am quite justified in calling 1929 a decided success from all points of view. Let us now set out to make 1930 an even greater success.

And now that the new year is upon us, I expect most of you have been making umpteen resolutions to do this, and not to do that, and so on. If

you have—well, show your strength by keeping 'em, chums! I know jolly well that I have made some, and I'll tell you one of them—one that I'm going to carry out, too. As the Editor of the N.L.L. and Chief Officer of the St. Frank's League I have resolved that I will do all I possibly can to please and help readers and League-ites, and to make their favourite paper a greater success than ever. I can't promise more than that, can I? And just here I may mention that I am working overtime on a very special programme of stories which will be yours to enjoy very shortly. These "star" yarns are on entirely new and novel lines, and I feel sure they will meet with your unanimous approval. And now I hope that you, chums, will resolve to introduce the Old Paper to all those non-readers you know, and continue to buy it regularly yourself in the future. Start the New Year well by asking your newsagent to deliver your copy of N.L.L. regularly each week.

All Letters Welcome!

THERE'S one point I should like to make clear here. Each week I receive many letters from League-ites in 'all parts of the world. Naturally, I reply to those which need answers. In the case of the remainder, however, I am not always able even to acknowledge them, much as I should like to do so. Because of this I do not want the senders to feel that their letters are unappreciated. This, most emphatically, is not so. I am always pleased to hear from all League-ites at any time.

Regarding those of you who send in requests for the "Correspondents' Wanted" feature, I should also like to point out that these cannot be published for at least five weeks after receipt, and even then they will appear strictly in rotation.

THIS WEEK'S WINNING LETTER

DEAR CHIEF OFFICER,—When I inserted an advertisement in the NELSON LEE LIBRARY applying for correspondents I little realised that I should receive such an influx of letters. I always seem to be buying stamps nowadays, but nevertheless I thoroughly enjoy corresponding with my fellow-readers.

I am contemplating setting up a filing system if I continue to receive letters as I have been doing for the past week.

Thanking you most cordially for the facilities offered through the columns of the Old Paper, and wishing you the best of good luck; and may the N.L.L. continue to flourish.

Yours etc.,

(Signed) LEONARD T. GALE, S.F.L. No. 8,971.
(For this interesting letter Leonard T. Gale, of Plymouth, has been awarded a useful penknife.)

Try, Try Again!

ERNIE CARTER,
of Sydney,
Australia.
—Ernie's
League number is
1,074, so he is

obviously one of the "old brigade"—writes to tell me that for some time past he has been endeavouring to form a club, but has encountered one or two difficulties, and so met with little success. However, my chum is not downhearted, and he is going to have another shot at forming this club. He would, therefore, be pleased to hear from anybody living in New South Wales, and especially in Sydney and suburbs. His address is: 5a, Hargrave Street, Puddington, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

Hope you're successful this time, Ernie.

THE CHIEF OFFICER.

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

Tom Hopwood, 24, Hudswell Street, Sandal, Wakefield, Yorks. wants to correspond with readers in the Royal Navy. All letters answered.

Thomas Walters, 23, Babbington, via Strelley, Notts, has back numbers of the N.L.L. old and new series, for sale; also wishes to correspond with readers.

Arthur Rowe, 21, Littlemead, Tppingham Road, Leicester, wants to correspond with a reader in Canada, aged 16-18.

Henry Cathcart, 1421, Gallowgate, Parkhead Cross, Glasgow, E.1, wishes to correspond with readers in Canada, Ireland, U.S.A., Channel Islands, and India.

A. R. West, Station Avenue, McKinnon, Victoria, Australia, wants to hear from stamp collectors, age 18.

Miss Leslie Snell, 9, Chase Road, Grove Road, South Woodford, Essex, has back numbers of the N.L.L. for sale.

Miss Ella Prior, 2, Ridley Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.10, wishes to correspond with girl reader.

Edward William Blatchford, 110, Warner Road, Waltham-tow, London, E.17, wants to hear from readers in his district.

E. McKen, 8, Phoenix Street, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2, wants to hear from an old reader who will exchange copies of the N.L.L. for wireless apparatus.

A. Weath, 204, St. Paul's Road, Islington, London, N.1, wants to correspond with readers in Canada, U.S.A., New Zealand, Australia, Kerguelen Islands, and Hong-Kong.

Cyril B. Warner, Jhansi, High Road, Hayes, Middlesex, wants correspondents in Australia, India, Africa, Canada, etc.; all subjects, including stamps.

Alan Omerod, 111, Milnrow Road, Rochdale, Lancs, wants to hear from readers interested in nature in Poles, Poland, India, Buitani, South America, etc.

Wallace Lawler, 11, Thensant Street, Lewesmoor, Wores, wants to hear from readers who are interested in amateur magazines.

Stanley Hoskins, School Houses, Preston Patrick, near Milnthorpe, Westmorland, wants to correspond with readers interested in music; also

desires back numbers of the N.L.L. up to No. 87, new series.

J. E. Amos, 18, Perch Street, Dalston, London, E.8, wishes to correspond with readers interested in St. John's Ambulance work.

Richard S. Hodgson, Castle Hill, Settle, Yorks, wants a correspondent in France.

John G. Glad, 99, Gibbon Street, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, wants correspondents interested in photography and stamp-collecting. He also wishes to find correspondents in Edmonton, London, and Cabarita, Australia.

Miss Katherine Mary Staples, 38, Hawe Hill View, Normanton, Yorks, wants girl correspondents who are interested in drawing, animals, classical music, and sports. She wishes to form a correspondence club. She asks Miss B. Simper (Australia) to write.

Fred Varley, 2, Harridge Cottages, Healey, Rochdale, Lancs, offers N.L.L. old series, 499-508, and new series, 1-150. Also wishes to correspond with readers, especially overseas, ages 20-21.

Miss Ethel Turner, 27, Whymark Avenue, Wood Green, London, N.22, wants girl correspondents in any foreign country, also British Colonies.

T. F. Shaw, 21, Whymark Avenue, Wood Green, London, N.22, wants correspondents in the British Empire.

Roland C. Beacham, 67, Edgewood Avenue, Toronto 8, Canada, wants N.L.L. before No. 19, new series.

Leon Rothfield, 120, Christopher Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., wants correspondents anywhere; interested in stamp-collecting.

Robert Forbes, The Gardens, Pitfirrane, Dunfermline, Fife-shire, N.B., wants to hear from stamp collectors in Canada, British Guiana, South America, and Straits Settlements.

A. Pilcher, 229, Edward Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17, wants correspondents interested in stamps and wireless.

C. Hyde, 12, North Street, Driffeld, Yorks, wants to hear from readers overseas; also offers back numbers of the N.L.L.

H. K. Stocks, 244, Upper Woodlands Road, Toller Lane, Bradford, wants N.L.L. new series; between No. 1 and 103; also old series prior to 538.

A. W. Topper, Oakdene, 78, Compstall Road, Romiley, Ches., offers N.L.L. new series, from No. 17.

Joseph Mackenzie (ex-Cameron Highlander), 46, Maguire Street, Liverpool, wishes to correspond with readers on the north coast of Scotland and in Lancashire, also with Roland Slater, Wolverhampton.

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