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THE FELLOW WHO WON!

A magnificent long complete yarn of school life, featuring the cheery Chums of St. Frank's.

New Series No. 194.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

January 18th, 1930

THIS IS JUST THE KIND OF SCHOOL YARN YOU LIKE—

THE FELLOW WHO WON!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

CHAPTER 1.

Under a Cloud!

WILLIAM NAPOLEON BROWNE, the lean, lanky skipper of the Fifth Form at St. Frank's, paused at the angle of the Fifth Form and Remove passages in the Ancient House.

"One moment, Brother Horace!" he murmured.

Horace Stevens, also of the Fifth, grinned. "Looks like a bit of trouble," he remarked lightly.

"A bit of trouble," brother, is, I venture to suggest, a totally inadequate expression," observed Browne. "It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that a human earthquake is at work with an enthusiasm that can only be admired."

Crash!

A Removite came hurtling out of the Junior Common-room—backwards. He hit the floor with a thud, turned a back somer-

—SETTLE DOWN TO ENJOY IT RIGHT NOW, CHUMS!

About to be expelled! Disaster stares Edgar Fenton in the face. And then comes the surprise—dramatic, unexpected—leaving Fenton, the outcast, the hero of St. Frank's.

sault, and subsided with a gasping grunt. A moment earlier the first victim had fallen. The one who had just appeared was the second.

"Good work!" said Browne critically.

"Here comes another!" murmured Stevens.

There was a confusion of sounds within the Junior Common-room, the door of which

than to witness the simple, harmless pleasures of the juniors."

"Somebody's been committing slaughter, anyhow!" grinned Stevens.

"Without appearing too rash, I think I can venture upon a random guess as to the identity of the slaughterer, Brother Horace," said Browne. "This particular piece of



stood wide open. Fellows were shouting, others were laughing, and one or two were howling. One of the latter tribe—Claude Gore-Pearce, to be exact—now appeared, reeling and staggering. He got just outside the door, when his legs seemed to give way; his knees sagged, and he went into a limp heap on the floor, next to the others.

"We will linger!" said William Napoleon Browne kindly. "Nothing pleases me more

genius bears the unmistakable stamp of Brother Handforth—"

He paused, and for once he allowed an expression of mild astonishment to overspread his features, for Nipper, the skipper of the Remove, now appeared in the doorway. And Nipper was jacketless, and his sleeves were rolled up.

"And if I hear any more of that sort of talk, I'll chuck you out again!" he said

grimly. "Fenton is one of the best chaps in the school, and I'm not going to stand by and hear him insulted by a miserable crowd of weak-kneed cads!"

"'Weak-kneed' is singularly apt," remarked Browne approvingly. "Yet, Brother Nipper, am I wrong in saying that you are the cause of the aforesaid weakness? A well-timed blow, delivered with accurate effect, has a remarkably groggifying effect upon the ligaments in the southern aspect of the knee-cap."

Nipper glanced at Browne and frowned.

"It may be funny to you, old man, but it's not funny to me!" he said gruffly. "I'm sick and tired of hearing these cads slander a fine chap like Fenton!"

"Alas, Brother Nipper, I fear that St. Frank's is fairly littered with such slanderers," said Browne sadly. "Our esteemed friend, Brother Fenton, is undoubtedly under a cloud. We are all trusting that this cloud possesses a silver lining, but at the moment I must confess it appears to be singularly black and forbidding."

The three groggy juniors picked themselves up, groaning, and they crawled off down the passage, uttering muttered threats of vengeance. At that moment Edward Oswald Handforth arrived on the scene, accompanied by Church and McClure, his faithful chums.

"Hallo!" said the burly leader of Study D. "What's been happening?"

"Too late, Brother Handy!" sighed Browne. "A minute earlier, and you would undoubtedly have thrown yourself wholeheartedly into the fray. But it has been left to Brother Nipper. I am pleased to tell you that there has been a considerable amount of slaughter."

"Pleased?" said Handforth, staring.

"Not to say delighted," nodded Browne. "However, Brother Horace and myself have urgent business elsewhere, so I will leave Brother Nipper to explain the finer details of the recent massacre."

And Browne and Stevens, smiling approvingly, passed on.

"What was the ass talking about?" asked Handforth, looking at Nipper.

They went into the Common-room, and found a few other juniors there. Lessons were over for the day, and the winter's afternoon was drawing to a close.

"It was nothing," said Nipper. "Only Gore-Pearce & Co. running Fenton down again. I'm fed up with it! They made my blood boil, so I let out at them."

"Good man!" said Handforth heartily. "I wish I had been here, and I'd have helped you."

"The trouble is, dear old fellow, it's rather a thankless task sticking up for Fenton these days," remarked Vivian Travers. "I'm for him all along the line, but you can't deny that he is in a bit of a mess."

"He's not in such a mess that he won't get out of it!" retorted Handforth. "And

you're a fine chap to talk, Travers! You're as bad as any of 'em!"

"Well, well!" murmured Travers. "What have I done now?"

"Don't you go to that rotten night club?"

"I will admit that I have been to the night club, but I deny that it is rotten," said Travers. "Upon the whole, it's rather a dull place. Plenty of music and gaiety, but certainly no wickedness."

Nipper donned his jacket, and stood near the fireplace, rubbing his knuckles.

"I'm rather sorry that Uncle Robert wasn't here," he said regretfully. "I was feeling in the mood for knocking him down just then! The contemptible cad! He's the cause of all this trouble. Ever since he came to St. Frank's there's been ructions."

"It was he who introduced the fellows to the night club!" said Handforth indignantly. "And he's Fenton's uncle, too! Imagine it! A kid in the Remove—uncle to the head prefect of the House, and the school captain!"

"He's not school captain now," put in De Valerie. "He's been deposed. And serve him right, too, the hypocrite!"

"Look here——"

"Oh, don't you start, Handforth!" grunted De Valerie. "Everybody knows that Fenton is a humbug! Pretends to be down on smoking and breaking bounds and all that sort of thing—and yet he is just as bad himself! Here, confound it, Nipper! You'd better keep your fists to yourself——"

"Then take my advice, and keep your insults to yourself!" snapped Nipper. "Haven't I told you that I won't hear slander against Fenton?"

"Oh, you're mad!" said De Valerie as he walked out.

Nipper and Handforth were silent, and neither Church nor McClure felt like speaking. They were all thinking about Edgar Fenton, the once popular skipper of St. Frank's. Nobody knew any exact details, but for two or three days Fenton had been under a cloud. He had been deprived of the captaincy, and it was generally suspected that inquiries were being made.

"If Fenton is proved guilty of any rottenness, then I've nothing more to say," remarked Nipper at length. "But at present he's on remand, as it were. No official action has been taken, and it's confoundedly unfair to be down on the man until he's been proved guilty."

"Hear, hear!" said Handforth. "And I can tell you one thing, my son! Fenton's not going to be proved guilty! I happen to know a thing or two!"

"Oh, do you?" said Nipper, staring. "What do you know?"

Handforth opened his mouth to speak, but at that moment he became aware of nudges in the rear. Hastily, Handy closed his mouth again.

"Eh?" he said at length. "Oh, well, it doesn't matter! All the same, I *do* know a thing or two!"

And with that cryptic remark Edward Oswald Handforth sauntered out of the Common-room.

EDGAR FENTON, of the Sixth, sprawled in the arm-chair in his study. His feet were on a corner of the mantelpiece, and he was looking unseeingly into the fire. His handsome face was rather haggard, and his eyes were full of bitterness and worry.

It was not a very elegant attitude to be in; it was certainly not becoming. The dignity of the school captain would hardly be upheld if somebody suddenly barged into his study. But there was not much fear of this. Nobody had entered Fenton's study uninvited for quite a few days. He was left very severely alone. Although he was not actually shunned, he was undoubtedly avoided.

"It's a pity they can't trust me!" he muttered resentfully. "What's the good of having a reputation? The tiniest thing comes along, and it's torn to shreds! A fellow can be years in a school and never do anything rotten, yet when there's a whisper of suspicion against him everybody thinks he's the worst!"

He took his feet from off the mantelpiece, rose, and paced up and down. Of late he had done so much pacing that it was rather surprising that the carpet was not showing signs of wear.

Fenton knew he was innocent of wrongdoing, and yet the school—or, at least, a big section of the school—was ready enough to sneer at him. He resented the school's attitude. Why couldn't they trust him?

A few nights earlier he had been caught

breaking bounds in the small hours of the morning by Mr. Pagett, of the Fifth. Because of this he had been deprived of the captaincy; and nobody doubted that he had been guilty of some shady act.

Yet, in all truth, Fenton's mission on that eventful night had been a very praiseworthy one. He had broken bounds in order to uphold the discipline of the school. He

had gone down to Bellton on purpose to interview Mr. Simon Clegg, the new tenant of Moat Hollow—the proprietor of the night club which was causing such a stir at St. Frank's.

Over a week ago Fenton had visited the night club—to see, with his own eyes, what kind of a place it was. It was then that he had earned the sneers of the cads; for he had taken no action, and the school believed that he had gone to the night club for his own enjoyment.

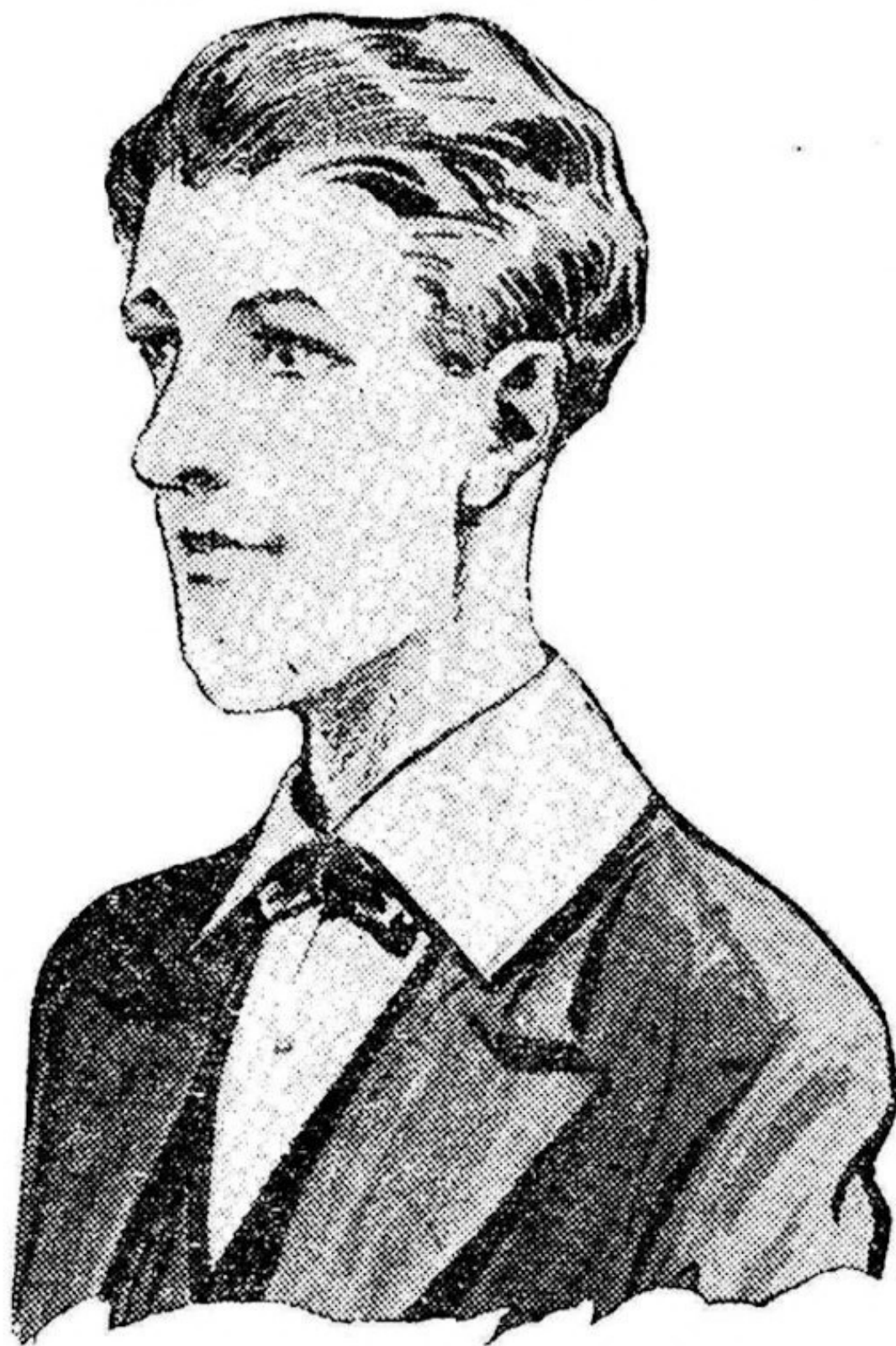
But the school did not know the inner facts.

They did not know that Olive Clegg—the proprietor's step-daughter—had begged him to hold his hand. She had only just come from a boarding school, and Mr. Clegg was compelling her to sing and dance in the club. She detested the life, and she was anxious to avoid any scandal.

And there would certainly have been a scandal if Fenton had reported the culprits to the headmaster! All of them would have been flogged—some, perhaps, expelled—and also Dr. Nicholls would have informed the police about the night club.

Fenton, caught in the glamour of the girl's personality, had succumbed to her pleadings. He had promised her that he would take no action—no official action.

WHO'S WHO AT ST. FRANK'S.



CLARENCE FELLOWE.

The poet of the Remove—and so much of a poet that even his ordinary conversation rhymes. Very lean and lanky; a good fellow at heart.

And he had kept his promise. Yet he was still determined to get the night club closed, and so he had decided upon another course of action.

His problem had been a serious one, but it seemed to him that there was a solution. He went down to Mr. Clegg, to argue with him—to urge the man to close his night club. If he couldn't close it completely, then he could at least close it to anybody connected with the school. If Fenton could only have accomplished that, he would have fulfilled his duty. It was the discipline of St. Frank's that counted, and if the night club was barred to the boys, then there would be no more breaking bounds.

But there had been some very dramatic events on that fateful night.

There had been a thick fog, and Olive Clegg, ill with a bad cold, had had a misunderstanding with her stepfather. He had flown into a terrible rage, and she, frightened, had run out into the fog.

Fenton himself had found her, huddled in a little shed in the corner of a meadow. The unfortunate girl had been delirious; feverish. And Fenton had vowed that he would never take her back to Moat Hollow—where she was again likely to suffer cruelty at the hands of Mr. Clegg.

So, then and there, in the fog, Fenton carried the girl to a little cottage off the beaten track. He had left her in the gentle care of Mrs. White, the wife of an old basket-maker. And there she was still—hovering between life and death, stricken with pneumonia.

How could Edgar Fenton explain anything to the headmaster? How could he tell Dr. Nicholls that he had visited this night club—that he had promised not to reveal the names of any of the culprits? How could he explain that he had agreed to shield the daughter of the proprietor? Realising the impossibility of any such explanation, he had held his tongue. And so he had been misunderstood.

Yet Fenton was as upright as a ramrod; he was honourable to a degree. He had worried himself haggard over the problem—striving, always striving, to restore the discipline of the school, and to put an end to that night club.

Not that the night club itself was in any way disreputable. It was a harmless kind of resort, for Mr. Clegg was no rascal. Indeed, except for his sudden fits of temper, he was a genial kind of man. Ordinarily, he would never have dreamed of treating Olive as he had done.

But now he was receiving his punishment!

The girl had gone—out into the fog—and Mr. Clegg had not seen her since. He did not know where she was, and he had been afraid to make inquiries. During these anxious days Mr. Simon Clegg was, perhaps, the most anxious individual in the whole neighbourhood.

CHAPTER 2.

The Unseen Watchers!

FENTON suddenly took out his watch and examined it.

"Ten minutes to four!" he muttered. "Well, I suppose I had better be going. I might as well take it easily."

He had an appointment at four-thirty—at Joe White's little cottage. And it was an appointment that Fenton would not miss for anything.

Yesterday he had been at the same hour, and he had learned that Olive was slightly better, but by no means out of danger. To-day, perhaps, there would be more definite news. He was hopeful. The fact that no message had come up to him during the day from Doctor Brett, who was in charge of the case, seemed to indicate that the girl had taken a turn for the better.

Fenton went out of his study, and he noticed that Wilson and Conroy major and Reynolds, of the Sixth, were chatting just outside Wilson's door. They glanced round as Fenton appeared, and with a muttered word they all vanished into Wilson's study. Fenton strode past, his lips set. They had deliberately avoided him—they had given him the cold shoulder!

At the corner of the passage he ran into Love and Hitchin, of the Fifth, and they both studiously looked the other way. He was upon them so quickly that they had had no time to shift, but those averted glances were significant enough. Fenton's bitterness increased. They were decent fellows, on the whole, and yet they did not possess the courage to ignore the rumours that were floating about.

Fenton turned into the lobby, and he noticed that William Napoleon Browne was standing in the doorway, chatting with Morrow, the head prefect of the West House. Stevens of the Fifth, and Biggleswade of the Sixth, were also present, and there was no room for Fenton to pass.

"Excuse me!" he said quietly.

Browne turned, beaming.

"Ah, Brother Fenton, this is an unexpected pleasure!" he said gracefully. "I take it that you are about to venture upon a little constitutional?"

"If you mean am I going for a walk—yes," replied Fenton.

"Splendid!" said Browne. "If you would care for the company of a silent, unassuming companion, I am entirely at your service. It is for you to say the word, brother."

"Yes, rather!" put in Morrow quickly. "I'll gladly go for a stroll with you, if you like, Fenton, old fellow."

"Same here!" murmured Biggleswade, grinning amiably. "Oh, rather! Only too jolly pleased to."

Fenton was grateful. These seniors were going out of their way to press their companionship upon him. Not one of them really wanted to go for a walk; yet they

(Continued on page 8.)

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St. Frank's razed to the ground, a burning ruin, after being struck by a wrecked airship. Nipper and his chums, left without a school, thrust by circumstances into new and novel rôles. In the background the sinister menace of Professor Cyrus Zingrave and that dreaded criminal organisation, the League of the Green Triangle—which is bent on making a spectacular "come-back." Nelson Lee fighting grimly to beat the professor, beset by perils on all sides. What a stirring series of yarns all this makes. Exciting, packed with thrills throughout. Look out for the first story next Wednesday:

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THE FELLOW WHO WON!

(Continued from page 6.)

were eager to accompany him if he pleased. It was their way of expressing their friendliness—in spite of the cloud which hovered over him.

"Thanks very much, you chaps, but it really doesn't matter," said Fenton uncomfortably. "I'm not going far."

"The distance, brother, is a matter of no importance," said Browne. "A stroll in the Triangle, perhaps? A saunter round the secluded precincts of the cloisters? If I go with you, you will at least be assured of a meditative stroll, since I regard all idle chatter with strong disapproval."

Morrow chuckled.

"That remark, coming from the world's greatest gasbag, is rather the limit!" he observed. "If you don't mind, Browne, you can go and boil your head."

Browne sighed.

"Such a proposition is not merely unseemly, but tragic," he replied. "Think, Brother Morrow! This head—which you refer to so lightly—is destined to figure largely in the coming problems of the world."

"It will figure largely all right!" agreed Morrow. "It couldn't do anything else!"

Fenton waited, trying to smile carelessly.

"Thanks," he said suggestively. "You don't mind if I pass, do you?"

They parted, and he was allowed to make his exit. He was glad that they had not pressed him further—for, of course, it was impossible for any of them to accompany him. His mission was a private one. At the same time, he felt warmly grateful towards those seniors. They had been friendly enough towards him; they had not shunned him like the others.

It was rather a good thing that Fenton had started out early, for he was destined to have another interruption before he escaped from the precincts of St. Frank's.

Handforth & Co. at that very minute were lounging against the wall of the gymnasium, and the redoubtable Edward Oswald was looking troubled.

"Of course, it was jolly smart of Nipper to slosh those cads," he was saying. "Just the thing I should have done! But Nipper doesn't know as much as we do."

"He jolly nearly did, though!" said Church tartly. "In another minute you would have let the cat out of the bag! Even as it was, you told him that you knew a thing or two about Fenton!"

"Well, so I do!" retorted Handforth.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Church. "Does that make any difference? We know that Fenton only went to the night club because he wanted to shut the place up. Then he found that if he did his duty he would be bringing a lot of suffering on the head of that girl. So, like a sportsman, he held his hand."

A soft look had come into Handforth's eyes.

"Olive Clegg is a ripper!" he murmured. "Jolly pretty and dainty and— Eh? What are you jackasses grinning for?"

"Oh, nothing!" said McClure. "Only you'd better go easy about Miss Olive! As far as I can see, you're going to be cut out by Fenton! Why don't you remember Irene? You've hardly mentioned her for weeks!"

But Handforth was not listening.

"There's something rummy about Olive Clegg," he said slowly. "I don't mean about the girl herself—but about the way she's disappeared. We haven't seen her for days, and there may be something in what the villagers are saying. Somebody told me yesterday that she had gone away."

"If she has gone away, she's shown her sense!" remarked Church. "She's better out of it—particularly as it will leave Fenton free to get busy with that beastly night club."

"By George!" said Handforth suddenly. "Here's Fenton himself! Come on, my sons! Now's our chance—we want to have a word with Fenton!"

AFTER Fenton had reached the lane he felt better. There was not much chance of running into anybody now.

However, he congratulated himself too soon, for he became aware of hurrying footsteps. He glanced round, and beheld Handforth & Co. just behind him. They came swarming round him.

"Just a minute, Fenton!" said Handforth briskly. "You don't mind if we have a word with you, do you?"

"If it's only a word, you can go ahead," replied Fenton. "But I'm in a bit of a hurry—"

"Shan't keep you long!" interrupted Edward Oswald. "The fact is, do you know anything about Miss Olive?"

Fenton started—which was only natural, considering that he was even now on his way to Olive Clegg's bedside. It struck him as being singular that Handforth should ask such a question.

"What do you mean?" he said sharply. "How should I know anything about the girl?"

Handforth winked.

"Come off it!" he said, with a grin. "We're not so green, Fenton."

The Sixth-Former stared harder than ever.

"Look here, Handforth, if you're making any insinuations, I'll punch your head!" he said darkly. "I'll forget that I'm in the Sixth, and I'll—"

"Here, steady!" interrupted Handforth, with some haste. "Don't misunderstand me, old man! But we know more than the other chaps—and perhaps more than you think! And we're absolutely on your side—all the way through! We think you've behaved like a brick, and we know that you're a sportsman."

"Hear, hear!" said Church and McClure, in one voice.

"What on earth——" began Fenton.

"Do you remember a message from Olive Clegg the other night?" went on Handforth. "Do you remember how it came through your window, after somebody had tapped on the glass in the fog?"

Fenton jumped.

"Why, yes!" he said. "But what do you know about it?"

"It was I who chucked the note into your study!" replied Handforth calmly.

"You!"

"Of course!" nodded Handforth. "We had just come up from Moat Hollow, after seeing Miss Olive. She gave us that note, and asked us to deliver it. We kept mum about it at the time, but I don't see why we should be secretive any longer. We want to know where Miss Olive is, and what's been happening."

Fenton was aware of a feeling of quick alarm. This was the first he knew of these juniors' activities.

"Why did you go down to Moat Hollow to see Miss Clegg?" he asked. "If you thought it was clever to interfere——"

"Well, I like that!" said Handforth indignantly. "We were jolly certain that Miss Olive couldn't be the sort of girl that some of the chaps were saying! And we went down to see her, because we wanted to find out the truth about you, too."

"About me!"

"Yes," said Handforth. "Lots of chaps were saying that you were a humbug, and we knew jolly well that you weren't. So we saw Miss Olive, and she told us just why you had kept mum about all the rotters visiting the club. You kept the secret for her sake, and we don't blame you. She's a ripping girl, Fenton."

Fenton felt that he was getting rather out of his depth.

"I didn't mean what I just said about interfering," he said slowly. "It was very decent of you, Handforth, to have such a good opinion of me. Thanks, young 'un. I'm not quite so black as the school paints me—and after I have closed that club up I may be able to come out with the full truth."

"By George! Is that the wheeze?" asked Handforth eagerly. "We want to help, Fenton! If we can do anything, just say the word."

"I'd rather you left it to me," said Fenton promptly. "Thanks all the same, but——"

"And what about Miss Olive?" went on Handforth. "People in the village are saying that she has gone away. I heard one man say that she had bolted. Somebody else was idiot enough to say that she was lost."

"They're fond of talking scandal," said Fenton coldly. "You mustn't take any notice. Miss Clegg isn't lost."

"Then you know something about her?" put in Church quickly.

Fenton pulled himself up.

"Whether I do or not makes no difference," he said. "But I can tell you this much—she hasn't run away. So don't get that silly idea into your head."

"Then where is she?" asked Handforth. "She's not at Moat Hollow! I've seen old Clegg once or twice lately, and he's looking almost like a ghost. As pale as anything—and haggard. Something's happened, I know!"

Edgar Fenton took Handforth by the shoulder.

"Look here, kid, you mean well, and I know that you're a sport," he said kindly. "Will you do me a favour, and leave this thing in my hands?"

"Why, of course!"

"Thank you," said Fenton quietly. "One day, perhaps, I may be able to tell you a lot more, but just at present I'm—I'm—Well, I just can't say anything more, that's all. I don't suppose you'll be satisfied, but I can't help it."

And giving Handforth's shoulder another tap, he walked quickly on.

Edward Oswald made a move as though to follow, but his chums held him back.

"Easy, old man," murmured Church. "You can see that he doesn't want us to



question him, and he doesn't want any help, either."

Handforth did see, and much as he disliked it, he realised that he could do nothing at the moment.

FENTON felt rather uneasy as he crossed the stile into Bellton Wood, and plunged through the trees. He was taking the footpath because it was a short cut; moreover, it was lonely and secluded.

"Goodness only knows what will happen now!" he told himself. "If Handforth says anything, the whole school will soon be talking. And that young ass is famous for his tactlessness!"

But he consoled himself by the thought that Church and McClure acted as a constant brake upon Handforth's impulsive spirit. They, at all events, would remain discreet, and perhaps they would be able to curb their leader.

"All this trouble because I made a thoughtless promise!" muttered Fenton, as he walked on. "Yet I don't regret it. Why should I?"

Then he thought of Mr. Clegg, and his face hardened. Mr. Clegg was an old theatrical man, and he had thought it a very clever scheme to open a harmless sort of night club. He charged a high rate of admission, and he had soon obtained a large number of patrons. His one mistake—his unforgivable blunder—had been to induce the St. Frank's boys to patronise his establishment. For he knew well enough that they could only do so by breaking the rules and regulations of the school. His night club was a direct incitement to them, and it had become a menace to the school's discipline.

It was for this reason that Fenton had made personal investigations—and, in consequence, he had got himself into this morass.

He thought of all these things as he paced along the footpath through the wood. It was very gloomy here, for the dusk was deepening. Emerging from the wood, he crossed one or two open meadows, and then made his way over a rustic bridge which spanned the River Stowe.

It was an isolated part of the country here—right off the beaten track. There was only a tiny, grass-grown lane, and one solitary cottage. This was the cottage of Joe White, the basket maker.

The grass-grown lane, however, had one disadvantage—which Fenton had never thought of. It was a short cut from the River House School to the village. Mostly, the River House boys used the bigger lane which ran from Edgemore to Bellton, and on which the River House School was situated. Occasionally, the fellows would come along this little track, past Joe White's cottage. The saving of distance, perhaps, was only trivial, and the wiser boys generally chose the better road, since there was practically no mud.

Fenton had never given them a thought; he believed that the little cottage was never passed by anybody except a farm labourer or two sometimes, or a tradesman who came purposely to the tiny dwelling.

Therefore he did not even trouble to look up and down the little lane as he joined it from the footpath. He was hurrying now, for it was nearly four-thirty, and he wanted to be there on time. The doctor was coming at four-thirty, and Fenton was very anxious to hear his report. By getting there a minute or two in advance, too, he would be able to have a little chat with Mrs. White.

So Fenton turned into the gateway, and he was totally unaware of three figures which watched him in the dusk. They had paused a little distance up the lane, and, in

fact, they had drawn back against the hedge, so that he should not see them if he chanced to glance up.

He reached the little porch, and rapped softly on the old-fashioned door. Within a few moments it was opened by a buxom-looking lady, and she smiled a welcome as she saw who the visitor was.

"Come in, Mr. Fenton, sir!" she said softly. "I thought it might be you."

"How is she, Mrs. White?" asked Fenton, in an eager voice.

"Better, heaven be praised!" said the good lady. "Lor', Mr. Fenton, if I know anything, she's well on the turn. A rare fine sight it is to see her smiling once again—"

Fenton went in, and the door closed.

And up the lane, in the dusk, the three figures glanced at one another inquiringly.

"Rummy!" said one of them.

"Dashed suspicious!" said another.

"Fishy, if you ask me!" said the third.

The Hon. Aubrey de Vero Wellborne, of the River House School, grinned at his two boon chums. They were the Hon. Cyril Coates and the Hon. Bertram Carstairs. In a word, the three ultra-snobs of the River House. A trio of unmitigated young rascals into the bargain.

They were on their way to the village, and, incidentally, they were three of Mr. Simon Clegg's most prominent habitués. They were the leaders of that party at the River House School which was known as "The Honourables." It was a somewhat misleading name, for all the members of that party were dishonourable to a degree. Hal Brewster & Co. were the decent juniors of the River House—and they were known as "The Commoners," as a distinction from the others.

"That chap was Fenton, of St. Frank's," said Carstairs, with a nod.

"We know that, dear boy!" murmured the Hon. Aubrey. "The lordly Fenton—calmly walking into a dashed labourer's cottage! And he seemed to be welcome, too! Yes, there's something fishy about it."

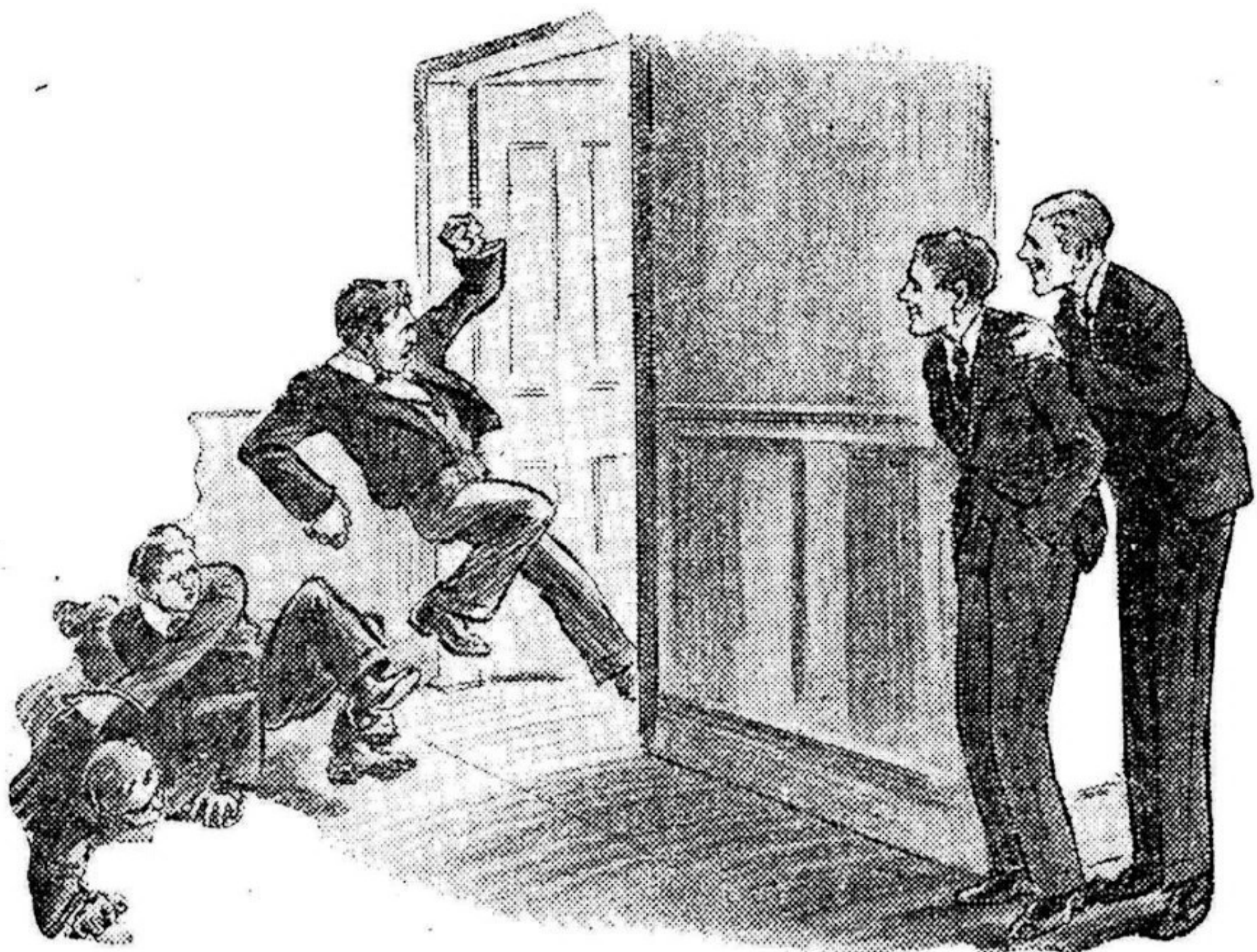
"Shall we wait?" asked Coates.

"What's the good of waitin'?" said Carstairs impatiently. "We want to get to the village, and then hurry back for tea. It's too confoundedly cold to hang about here. We can only see Fenton come out again, anyhow."

But Wellborne seemed reluctant to go.

"There's no hurry!" he murmured. "We'll hang about for a bit. Perhaps Fenton will come out with somebody else, and then we might be able to get hold of somethin'. Fenton isn't in good odour at St. Frank's just at present, you know. I don't know all the facts, but he's in a bit of trouble. I shouldn't be surprised if we've hit upon the spot, my sons!"

"It may be somethin' to do with that uncle of his," said Carstairs. "Fancy a Sixth-Former having an uncle in the Remove! A bit rotten for the chap, I must say!"



Crash! And a figure came hurtling out of the Junior Common-room backwards. "Good work!" commented William Napoleon Browne critically, as he watched from the corridor.

"Fenton's uncle is a sport!" grinned Wellborne. "He's one of the bloods all right! If we can give him the tip about his lovely nephew, it might lead to somethin' interestin'. Anyhow, we'll wait for five or ten minutes, just to see what happens."

And the cads of the River House remained there in the gloom—waiting—their unpleasant curiosity aroused.

CHAPTER 3.

The Cunning of Gore-Pearce!

INSIDE the cottage Edgar Fenton was sitting in an easy-chair, listening eagerly to the homely Mrs. White.

They were in the parlour, and the little room was cosy and warm. A shaded paraffin lamp was burning on the table, and it cast a friendly glow throughout the apartment.

"She's really better, then, Mrs. White?" Fenton was asking.

"Better!" smiled the good lady. "Lor' bless your life, Mr. Fenton, she's took the turn, I tell ye. Yesterday I wasn't so sure, but last night she was a rare lot better—and to-day you wouldn't know her for the same girl."

"True enough, old girl—true enough!" observed Mr. White, as he came in from the kitchen. "Evenin', Mr. Fenton, sir! No need for you to look so worried. There's goin' to be no funeral, if I'm any judge."

"Don't talk so, Joe!" said Mrs. White severely.

"No harm, old lady—no harm!" smiled Mr. White as he sat down heavily in a chair.

"It's the rest that's done her so much good, Mr. Fenton," said the old lady, turning to the visitor. "The young lady has had peace while she's been here. No visitors, no distractions—There! It's the doctor!"

A crunch of feet had sounded on the garden path, and a moment later there was a tap on the door. Mrs. White opened it instantly, and Dr. Brett entered.

"All present, eh?" he said cheerily. "Evening, Mrs. White! Evening, Joe! I thought I should find you here, young man," he added, glancing at Fenton.

The doctor was a breezy, likable man. He had a fairly big practice in the village, and he was also the official medico at St. Frank's.

"Well, nurse, what's the report?" he asked after he had shed his overcoat and hat.

"She's better, doctor—ever so much better," said Mrs. White. "But you'd best come straight up. I'll warrant you'll get a pleasant surprise."

They vanished, and a rather anxious period of waiting developed. Fenton did not feel much like talking, and Mr. White was not much of a conversationalist. He referred casually to the crops, and made some vague remarks about turnips and parsnips, adding, in a rather sad tone of voice, that the frost

had got at his potatoes. He also informed Fenton that there was a bit of a slump in the basket trade, and he was filling in a good deal of his time by making hurdles.

Not that Fenton was interested. He was listening to the footsteps overhead, and he jumped to his feet as he heard Dr. Brett coming down the narrow stairs.

"Well, young man, you can go up if you like," said the doctor, smiling. "As a matter of fact, the patient has asked to see you."

"Really?" said Fenton eagerly. "Thanks awfully, doctor! How is she?"

"Mrs. White is an excellent judge," smiled the doctor. "She's better—mending rapidly."

"I say, that's fine!" said Fenton happily.

He pushed past the doctor and mounted the stairs. There was no landing at the top—only an extra wide stairway, with two doors, one to the right and one to the left. The left door stood partially open, and a light was gleaming from within the room.

Fenton tapped on the door.

"Come in, sir!" called Mrs. White.

Fenton entered, and he found the good lady sitting beside the bed. Olive Clegg was lying there, looking woefully pale, but there was a smile on her face.

"It's awfully good of you to come—Edgar!" murmured the girl, looking at him with grateful eyes.

Fenton felt tongue-tied. He had always thought that she was pretty, but somehow her face seemed even prettier now, in spite of her illness. Her eyes were brighter, and there was a little colour in her cheeks. Her hair, all curly and untidy, was scattered over the white pillow.

"I—I didn't hope that I should be able to see you, Olive!" said Fenton huskily. "I say, you're looking heaps better, you know!"

She allowed her fingers to creep out of the bedclothes, and she gripped Fenton's hand.

"Mrs. White has told me what you did," she said softly. "I don't think I shall ever be able to thank you. If you hadn't found me that night, I should have died. Even as it was, you were only just in time. The doctor says that it was touch and go, and another hour of exposure would have—"

"Why talk about it?" interrupted Fenton. "You're better now, and before long you'll be out again. I shall never forgive your stepfather for what he did to you, Olive!"

She looked rather grave.

"Does he know?" she asked.

"No; he doesn't know where you are," replied Fenton quietly. "He deserves to have a lesson, and the longer he is kept in ignorance the better. After this he may not be so brutal again."

A sad, troubled look came into Olive's eyes.

"Oh, I don't think he could have meant it, Edgar!" she whispered. "It wasn't like father at all! He was so—so different! I think you ought to tell him—now. I mean, now that I'm better. I don't like to feel that he's worrying about me. And he must be

worrying, you know," she added wistfully. "Please say that you will tell him."

And Fenton, of course, could not refuse.

FENTON was so pleased, in fact, by the girl's wonderful improvement that he would have promised anything. But he did not commit himself to a definite time.

"I'll see Mr. Clegg some time before I come again to-morrow," he declared. "Perhaps he'll come with me to-morrow. It all depends upon how he takes it."

"Oh, I know he'll be dreadfully sorry for what he has done," said the girl. "As a rule father is quite kindly and generous. It's only since he has had this night club that he has been so touchy and worried. I don't think he really enjoys this sort of life. I believe he realises that he has made a mistake—only he won't admit it."

A soft call came from the bottom of the stairs.

"Time's up, young man!" said Dr. Brett's voice. "Mustn't stay up there too long, you know. Don't forget your duty, Mrs. White."

The old lady stirred herself.

"There! And I'm supposed to be nurse!" she said. "Ye'll have to be goin', Mr. Fenton. Maybe the doctor will give you more time to-morrow."

Fenton bade the girl good-night, and then he went downstairs, his face glowing, his eyes sparkling. He had seen with his own eyes, and he knew that the girl was indeed well on the road to recovery.

"Well?" smiled the doctor when he got down.

"You're a wonder, Dr. Brett!" said Fenton admiringly. "You've pulled her through."

"Nonsense!" said the doctor. "It's her strong constitution that has pulled her through—not me."

"Her life never ought to have been in danger," said Fenton. "That's why I can't forgive her stepfather. He drove her from Moat Hollow, and that was bad enough. But it was ten times worse for him to attend to his rotten patrons instead of going out at once in search of the girl! That's what I can't forget!" he added in a hard voice. "He didn't take any steps to find her."

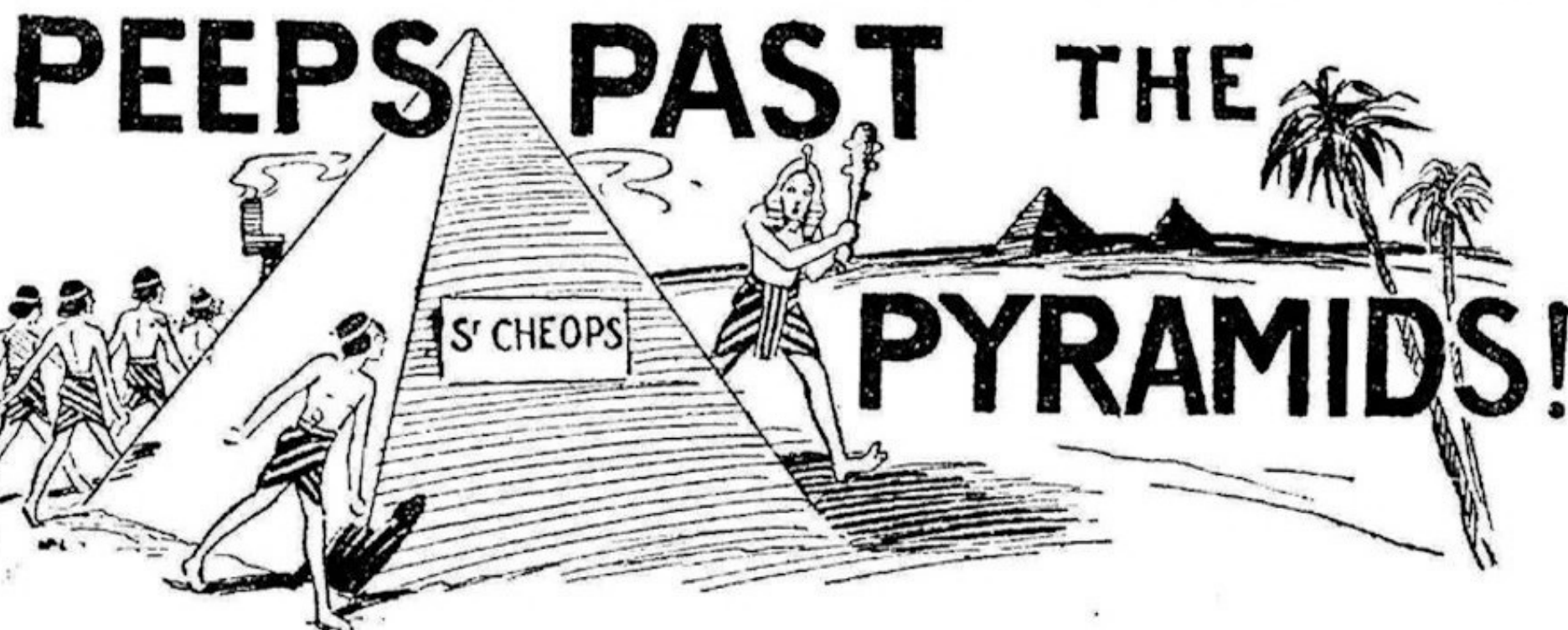
"And yet, Fenton, there is a certain amount of excuse for the man," said Dr. Brett gently.

"According to what he told you, he expected the girl would return at any minute, and he did not realise the gravity of the situation. When it did dawn upon him, he was well-nigh crazy with anguish. He acted badly, but he was in an uncontrollable temper, and I dare say he has experienced terrible suffering since. I don't think Mr. Clegg is really an unkindly man."

"Well, perhaps he has suffered enough," admitted Fenton. "I'll see him to-night, and tell him."

Before long they left the little cottage, and found that darkness had practically descended over the countryside. They bade old Joe a warm good-night, and ventured out into the raw air.

(Continued on page 14.)



AND lo! In the playing fields of St. Cheop's the Fourth Form were assembled. And the sun rode high in the heavens and shone furiously upon them.

And the boys groaned aloud softly; yea! many were the moans and lamentations of the boys of the Fourth; for their discomfort was great. For the whole of the Form was upside down; each and every member thereof standing upon his head—the lesson being physical jerks. And when they had postured thus for the space of many moments, a murmuring arose from the ground amidst the forest of waving legs.

"O master!" wailed a voice. "Unless ye release us from this upside down-ness, we shall all, of a truth, get a crick in the nek!"

"I have even got one already," cried another voice. "My nek is crooked with cricks!"

But no answer came from Dr. Potiphar, the master. And the Form muttered rebellious mutterings amongst themselves, for they were fedd up with their inverted position.

"Perchance he sleepeth with the heat," whispered one boy, "and hath forgotten how he hath left us."

But still Dr. Potiphar spake not. For behold! After he had instructed the boys to stand upon their heads, there chanced close at hand a scarab beetle with fine plumage. And the master, being an ardent bug hunter, spied the scarab and crept towards it.

"O scarab," he spake to himself, "thou art a rare specimen; I will gather thee for my collection."

But the scarab looked upon the suggestion with disfavour, and moved quickly away. And Dr. Potiphar followed the scarab, but caught it not. And in the heat of the chase the master forgot his class; also forgot he that, according to his last command, they still stood even upon their heads.

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

VIVIAN TRAVERS,

of the St. Frank's Remove

And it happened that the boys of a rival school passed the gates of St. Cheop's; yea! even the boys of St. Obelisk's passed they by in great numbers. And when they saw their enemies standing upon their heads, and

no master being nigh, they conspired one with the other to defeat them, for a great feud existed between the schools.

And the boys of St. Obelisk's entered the gates of St. Cheop's, approaching with great stealth, lest they be heard while still afar off. And they fell upon the Fourth of St. Cheop's and smote them hip and thigh.

AND Dr. Potiphar, not having captured the scarab, was wroth. And when he entered into the class-room he looked around. And behold! It was empty! For he had forgotten the previous lesson and how he had left the boys upside down in the playing fields.

Then did he have speech with himself crossly, and tooted fiercely on the conch shell, so that the Form might know that the time of the next lesson had come. And even as he tooted, the boys began to trickle through the trapdoor entrance into the class-room; and they were greatly dishevelled.

Then, the last youth having taken his appointed place, Dr. Potiphar rose from his desk and gazed upon them. And the master rubbed his eyes unbelievably; yea! he knuckled his peepers with bewilderment. For the countenance of every boy in the Form was of a bright redd.

And Dr. Potiphar snorted great snorts through his nostrils as he beheld the Form.

"O Form!" he said, with ominousness in his voice, "O Form! What have ye done? Ye have been up to no good, I'll bett? Can I not see with mine own eyes that the face of each and every of ye is covered with guilt, and that ye blush to be before me? Never have I heard of such a thing as thou hast committed."

(Continued on page 42.)

THE FELLOW WHO WON!

(Continued from page 12).

"Well, there's no more fog, thank goodness," said the doctor, as they turned out of the little gateway.

"I'm awfully glad of that," said Fenton. "Fog wouldn't do Miss Clegg any good, would it?"

"Well, as long as her room is kept warm she won't come to any harm, fog or no fog," replied the doctor. "Still, I'm glad the weather is clearer. I'm feeling so hopeful that I believe she will be out in less than a week."

"By Jove!" said Fenton, as they strode off down the dark track. "That's good hearing!"

"Thanks to you, young man," added the doctor. "You certainly saved that girl's life——"

"I say, hang it all!" growled Fenton. "You're not going to start that again, are you?"

Dr. Brett chuckled.

"Very well," he said. "We'll talk about something else."

They passed on down the lane, and three figures, crouching in the gloom, moved out from the shadow of the hedge. They were cold, and their feet felt numb. But they now considered that they were well rewarded for their wait.

"By gad! Did you hear?" murmured Carstairs.

"Every word," said the Hon. Aubrey, with a chuckle. "Oh-ho! So that's the game, is it? Fenton, the knight-errant! Savin' girls' lives, and payin' secret visits to the secluded retreat, what?"

"Don't be an ass!" grinned Coates. "Dr. Brett was with him."

"Then the doctor must be in the secret," said Wellborne, nodding. "Anyhow, nobody in the village knows where Clegg's daughter has got to. There are all sorts of stories goin' about; some people say that she has bolted, and we've never been able to find out the truth. Now, we've got it by a bit of luck."

"So Fenton saved her life?" muttered Carstairs. "I wonder how?"

"It doesn't matter how," replied the Hon. Aubrey. "We've got a first-class story here to circulate at St. Frank's, my sons! Fenton is in pretty bad odour already—and this will finish him!"

"Will it?" said Coates, staring. "How? It's not a disgraceful thing to save somebody's life——"

"Don't be an idiot!" frowned Wellborne. "What about the other part of the yarn? Fenton takes the girl away from Moat Hollow—robs her from her stepfather—and instals her in this beastly labourer's cottage! Then he comes here on secret visits! Isn't that a pretty story to put into circulation? Why, he'll be the laughing stock of the whole school within an hour!"

"You bet!" said Carstairs gloatingly. "Fenton, the lady-killer! Fenton, the knight-errant! Gad! This will just about settle his hash!"

The three young rascals chuckled unrestrainedly as they stumbled on down the rutty lane. And instead of going to the village, as they had originally intended, they branched off towards St. Frank's.

This discovery of theirs was too good to keep to themselves.

CLAUDE GORE-PEARCE, of the Remove, hastily put a pink newspaper behind his back as the door of Study A suddenly opened.

"Anybody at home?" said a languid voice.

Wellborne & Co. strolled in, and Gore-Pearce glared.

"Idiots!" he said tartly. "Why couldn't you cough, or something? I was just trying to pick out a winner."

The visitors grinned as they closed the door.

"No chance nowadays, old fellow," said the Hon. Aubrey de Vere Wellborne. "I've packed it up until the flat racin' season starts. The game's too risky just now. You're looking a bit peeved," he added. "Been having a scrap with somebody, eh? That left eye of yours doesn't look any too handsome. Who did the deed?"

Gore-Pearce scowled.

"Nipper," he said fiercely. "The interfeerin' busybody! Just because I said that Fenton was a mug and a fraud, Nipper jumps up and sashes me in the eye!"

"Fenton, eh?" said Wellborne, with a grin. "That's funny! We came here to tell you somethin' about Fenton—somethin' that will make you open your eyes."

"Can't you leave my eyes alone?" growled Gore-Pearce.

"Sorry, old man! I didn't intend to touch you on a sore point," murmured the Hon. Aubrey. "The fact is, we've made a bit of a discovery."

Gore-Pearce didn't seem very impressed; he was inspecting his bruised eye in the mirror.

"About Fenton," added Wellborne casually.

"Eh?" said Gore-Pearce, turning round. "You've made a discovery about Fenton?"

"Yes."

"Let's hear it, then," said the cad of Study A. "By gad! I'd like to have somethin' against him! Everybody knows that he's a gay dog on the quiet, and if I can bring some definite proof——"

"Well, we'll give you the information for what it's worth," interrupted Wellborne. "I dare say you'll be able to make something of it, old fellow. To put it briefly, Fenton knows where Olive Clegg is."

Gore-Pearce looked eager.

"How do you know?" he asked quickly. "Old Clegg is nearly off his head about that

girl! I haven't seen him for a day or two, but Uncle Robert tells us that Clegg is nearly crazy. The girl has vanished, and he doesn't know where she is."

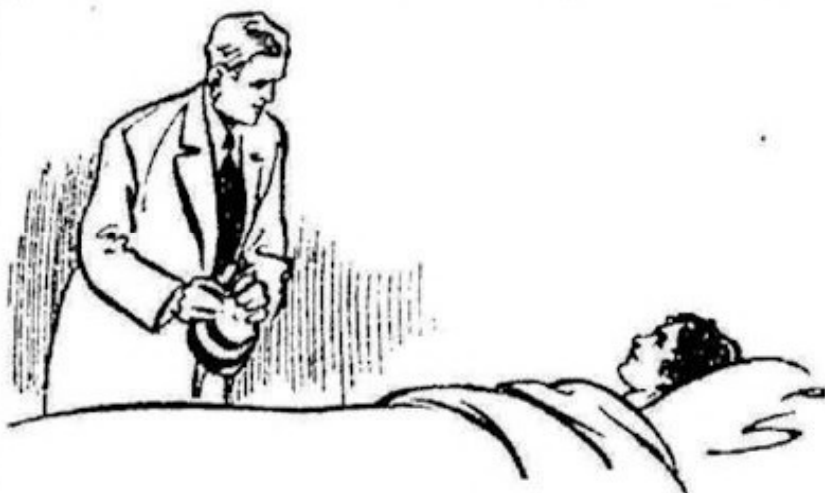
"Fenton does!" grinned Carstairs.

"Great Scott!" gasped Gore-Pearce. "You don't mean to say that Fenton helped her to run away from home?"

"Accordin' to our information, he saved her life," said Wellborne. "I don't know how he did it, but that's only a detail. And now she's safely tucked away in a labourer's cottage, just beyond the river. And Fenton pops there now and again to see how she's gettin' on!"

The other cads roared with laughter, and Gore-Pearce listened eagerly while they gave him all the details. By the time they had finished his eyes were gleaming evilly.

"I say, what a joke!" he ejaculated. "We shall make Fenton the laughin' stock of the school!"



The visitors chuckled, and presently they took their departure. As there was no prospect of any tea, they went off on their original errand—feeling, however, that they were well repaid for going out of their way. They could trust Claude Gore-Pearce to circulate that choice little story.

After they had gone Gore-Pearce sat on the edge of the table in Study A, a very satisfied expression in his eyes. He decided that he would run over to the East House at once and begin the game by telling his own pals. Then, after that, they would go round the school, telling the story to all and sundry.

"Naturally, the yarn will get a little warped in the course of tellin'," murmured Gore-Pearce, with a chuckle. "It might get a bit exaggerated, too. But that won't matter. All the better! Anyhow, Fenton will have a warm time of it to-night."

He laughed aloud, and got up to go to the door.

"There's old Clegg, too," he muttered. "Clegg will be jolly glad to hear of this. Uncle Robert says that he's mad with anxiety. Naturally, he'll buzz to that cottage, and get his daughter away—"

Gore-Pearce's thoughts came to a halt. Something had occurred to him—something rather startling. It caused him to readjust his entire focus, as it were.

"By gad!" he muttered. "Those River House fellows haven't told anybody but me! They're relyin' on me to circulate the yarn! So if I don't say anythin' the story will still be a secret."

He knew that he would be going down to the club that night—and therefore he would be able to see Mr. Simon Clegg.

"Why should I say anythin'?" he murmured, a cunning expression coming into his face. "It'll do to-morrow, just as well as to-day. And this night club is infernally expensive! If I can get old Clegg aside to-night, and tip him the wink, he'll probably feel a bit generous—No, that won't do, though!" he added. "Mustn't leave it to chance."

He paced up and down the study for a few minutes, thinking deeply.

"Clegg will give everythin' to know where his daughter is!" he told himself.

"He's nearly off his head with worry about her! By gad! I'll put it to him straight! I'll ask him for twenty quid!"

The more Gore-Pearce thought it out, the more satisfied he became.

"Twenty quid is nothin' to old Clegg!" he muttered. "And for a piece of information

like this he'll hand it over without a word! Why shouldn't I make a bit of cash on the deal?"

And Claude Gore-Pearce, having made up his mind, kept as mum as an oyster regarding Olive Clegg's present whereabouts. Money was rather tight with him at the moment—in spite of the fact that he was a millionaire's son—and here was a way to obtain some very easy cash!

CHAPTER 4.

The Head Makes a Move!

DR. MORRISON NICHOLLS, the headmaster of St. Frank's, leaned back in his chair, frowning.

"I'm sure I don't know what to do about it, Mr. Lee," he was saying. "It is a very difficult problem."

"Fenton maintains a stubborn silence, I understand?"

"He refuses to give any account of his movements," replied the Head, frowning.

"A most obstinate young man! I would like to believe that he had a legitimate reason for being out of bounds in the small hours of the morning, but how can I believe it when he refuses to give any explanation?"

They were in the headmaster's study, and Mr. Pagett, the master of the Fifth, was there in addition to Mr. Nelson Lee.

"There can be no doubt, sir, that Fenton's silence is due solely to the fact that he knows he is guilty," said Mr. Pagett, with an air of impatience. "I found him out in the lane, long after midnight—on that occasion when I was delayed by the fog. Fenton point-blank refused to say where he had been, or why he was out."

"And in consequence of that he has been suspended from the captaincy," nodded the

Head. "Yet we cannot let the thing go on like this. Something must be done. It is only fair to Fenton that the matter should be decided. Where do you think he had been that night, Mr. Lee?"

"I'm afraid that 'thinking' won't be of much service to us," said Nelson Lee quietly. "We've got to know definitely, sir. We shall only do more harm than good if we start making guesses."

Mr. Pagett gave an expressive snort.

"In my opinion, sir, there is no guesswork about it!" he said tartly. "Fenton had been to this disreputable night club! Why delude ourselves any longer?" he added, appealing to the Head. "These rumours cannot be all false. I am convinced that there is a night club in this district."

Dr. Nicholls shook his head.

"I heard one or two similar rumours," he said, "but they are ridiculous, Mr. Pagett! On the very face of it, the story is absurd! A night club—in a quiet neighbourhood of this kind! No, I cannot credit it."

"Nevertheless, Dr. Nicholls, there is undoubtedly some strong attraction," said Nelson Lee. "My eyes have not been entirely closed of late. Many boys—juniors and seniors—have been listless and dull. They have lost their sleep—they have been breaking bounds after lights-out."

"And Fenton is one of them?" said the Head angrily. "Fenton—the captain of the school! No wonder the boys are ignoring the rules and regulations, if the school captain sets them such a bad example. I wish we could discover something really definite."

"If Fenton would only talk——" began Mr. Pagett.

"I had a long talk with Fenton yesterday, and I got absolutely nothing out of him," interrupted the Head, with a frown. "He maintained that he had been guilty of no wrong-doing, but he steadfastly refused to explain his presence out of doors at such an hour of the night. What was I to do? If a boy won't speak, he won't—and there's an end of it. But I am really alarmed at the situation. We cannot have the school discipline ignored and flouted in this way!"

"Personally, I am inclined to believe that Fenton broke bounds that night because he wished to find out what was actually going on," said Nelson Lee. "Fenton's character is good; he is sound and honourable. I do not believe for one moment that he did anything wrong."

"Then why did he not explain—and so clear up this mystery?" asked the Head. "After all, Mr. Lee, it was his duty. If he knew who these boys were, he should have reported the names to me. As school captain, it was his only course."

"Naturally," nodded Nelson Lee. "Fenton's refusal to say anything merely indicated—to my mind—that he had some special reason for maintaining his silence. He is the head prefect of my House, and I have always found him to be reliable and truthful and straightforward."

Mr. Pagett gave another grunt, but he offered no comment.

"In my opinion, the matter is essentially one for the police," continued Nelson Lee.

"The police!" ejaculated the Head. "Good gracious! What do you mean, Mr. Lee?"

"If there is a disreputable night club in this district, the police should close it," replied Lee. "There is nothing else to think. The whole thing is perfectly simple and straightforward. We know that there is a midnight resort, and that some of our boys are attracted to it. If this place is closed down by the police, then there will naturally be no more irregularities."

"But I hesitate to take such a step!" said the Head, drumming his fingers on his blotting-pad. "What if some of our boys are actually caught in this club by the police? Have you thought of that possibility, Mr. Lee?"

"I have!" replied Nelson Lee, with a smile. "I have made no investigations into this curious affair, but I have an inkling that the so-called night club is a comparatively harmless place. Well, if the police discover it—and actually raid it—it will be all to the good if a few St. Frank's boys are found on the premises."

"All to the good" echoed the Head, staring.

"It will give them a fright they will not forget in a hurry!" replied Lee dryly. "Naturally, matters can be so arranged that there will be no publicity. These boys will be dealt with by yourself, sir—here, at the school. But a good, sound fright will be the most severe punishment of all."

"Do you think the police will be able to find the—er—club?" asked the Head thoughtfully.

"I'm afraid the police in this district are rather slow," replied Lee, "but with some sort of information to work on, I dare say they will meet with quick success. You must realise that this night club—if, indeed, such a place really does exist—is not a criminal resort. My suggestion of a raid is not meant seriously; but, as I have said, it will scare the culprits as nothing else could."

And as they continued discussing the matter both Dr. Nicholls and Mr. Pagett became more accustomed to the idea. Indeed, before very long they were smiling, and they were beginning to see the possibilities.

UNCLE ROBERT of the Remove tapped lightly on the panels of Fenton's bed-room door and then calmly strode in. The school clock had just chimed out the hour of eleven, and St. Frank's was quiet and dark. Outside a fairly high wind was whistling round the angles of the old buildings.

The junior grinned knowingly when he saw that Fenton was fully dressed.

"Oh-ho!" murmured Uncle Robert. "All ready to slip down to the dance, eh?"

"I'm all ready to give you a good thrashing!" retorted Fenton, between his teeth. "I'm just about fed up with you, my lad! Whether I'm dressed or not is no concern



One by one the juniors slipped out of the study window. The "sports" of St. Frank's were on their way to the Moat Hollow night club.

of yours! You've no right to be out of bed at this hour——"

"Come off it!" said Uncle Robert, grinning. "I'm just off down to the club."

"Oh, are you?" said Fenton. "By Jove! You've got a nerve to come here and tell me that! I suppose there's a whole crowd of you going down there to-night, eh?"

"A fairish number."

"Young fools!" frowned Fenton. "Well, there'll be an end to this game before long."

The junior stared at him curiously.

"I'm jiggered if I can understand you," he said. "You pretend to be against the club, and yet you go there for your own enjoyment. No wonder the fellows are calling you a humbug."

"I'm not going to argue with you," said Fenton coldly.

"You are afraid to!" sneered his youthful uncle. "You know jolly well that you're with me, and why not say that you are going on the ran-dan? Where's the sense in being so huffy? I shall see you down there, shan't I?"

Fenton realised that it was quite useless to

talk. He wanted to catch this youngster by his coat collar and give him a terrific caning, but in the circumstances such a move would have been unwise. So he held himself in check and merely glared.

"Is that all you've come here to say?" he asked steadily.

"That's all," said Uncle Robert. "I thought we might stroll down together——"

"Then you thought wrong!" broke in Fenton. "You can clear off!"

"All right, then. If you choose to be so beastly unsociable," said the junior, shrugging his shoulders, "I don't want to force my company on you. But I had an idea that you were now 'one of us.' Jiggered if I can understand your game!"

He went out without another word, and Edgar Fenton breathed hard. He told himself that his young uncle would soon receive a big shock. For Fenton fully intended to bring the whole matter to a head to-night. He was going to see Mr. Simon Clegg, and he was going to force an issue.

Uncle Robert returned to the Junior passage feeling very irritable. He found Gore-

Pearce and Gulliver and Bell waiting for him.

"Well?" asked Gore-Pearce.

"The fool wouldn't come," said Uncle Robert, frowning. "Yet he was all dressed. Preferred to sneak down on his own, I suppose."

"He was all dressed, eh?" said Gore-Pearce, with relish. "And he refused to come to Moat Hollow? Perhaps he's thinking about going somewhere else!"

"What do you mean—somewhere else?"

"Oh, you never know!" said Gore-Pearce coolly.

Here was an added tit-bit to tell the school on the morrow, after he had collected money from Mr. Clegg! The more Gore-Pearce thought of it, the more certain he became that Mr. Clegg would "whack out" for the information that he was in a position to impart.

Little did these young rascals dream of the movements that were being set in motion that night!

They crept downstairs, slipped out of their study window into the West Square, and within three minutes they were outside in the lane.

"Easy as winking!" grinned Uncle Robert. "Some fellows seem to think that it's a risky business to break bounds after lights out, but we've proved that it's child's play, haven't we?"

"Yes, rather!" said Gulliver, with a grin. "And now that we've got used to the game, we're getting more brainy, too. I had a long nap this evenin', and I'm feelin' as fresh as paint."

CHAPTER 5.

The Night Club!

CECIL DE VALERIE looked into one of the dormitories in the Remove passage and grunted. He had arranged to go out "on the spree" with Vivian Travers, but Travers was in bed, and apparently asleep.

"Hey!" murmured De Valerie. "Are you ready, Travers?"

Travers stirred and then sat up, yawning. De Valerie was astonished to see that the recent sleeper was in his pyjamas.

"Why, you're not even dressed!" he said impatiently. "I thought you arranged with me—"

"Sorry, dear old fellow," murmured Travers. "but I've changed my mind."

"What?"

"We're all privileged to do that, you know," went on Travers. "It's a silly game, Val. It's not worth the candle. Take my advice, and go back to bed."

De Valerie positively glared.

"What's the idea of kidding me like this?" he demanded sourly.

"My dear old fellow, there's no intention of kidding you!" protested Travers. "It's an absolute fact that I'm not coming to Mr. Clegg's precious night club. It was

all right for once, perhaps—just for the novelty of it; but to make a practice of going is—well, candidly, foolish. It's a mug's game, Val."

Jimmy Potts, who shared this particular dormitory with Travers, now sat up.

"I'm jolly glad to hear you say it!" he declared. "You're getting some sense at last, Travers."

"Our esteemed friend, Sir James, approves of my decision," murmured Travers coolly. "So you see, Val, dear old fellow, there's nothing doing. Go back to bed like a good little boy, and keep your money in your pockets."

De Valerie snorted, and went out of the room without even saying "Good-night." He hesitated in the corridor, and then he made his way downstairs. He wasn't going to be put off by Travers' nonsense.

In the dark, chilly Triangle he met Singleton and Doyle, of the West House, and together they walked down to Moat Hollow. As usual, they were admitted by the little door in the back wall of the garden, and very soon they were in the warmth and brightness of the night club. It was certainly very cheery and gay in that place of music and laughter.

The old house was provided with exceptionally large cellars, extending under the whole house. This great space had been converted, and now it was hung with gaily-coloured draperies; the floor was smooth and glossy for dancing, and the jazz band was intensely active. To-night, too, there was a bigger crowd than ever.

These patrons were not all schoolboys by any means. In fact, the majority of them were young fellows and girls from the neighbouring farms and hamlets and villages. A good many had come from Bannington and from Caistowe. The majority were in evening dress, and they looked upon it as fine sport. It was very thrilling to come to this midnight resort and to indulge in a little harmless dancing and frivolity.

"Seen old Clegg anywhere?"

Claude Gore-Pearce went about, asking this question of many St. Frank's fellows, but none of them could tell him where Mr. Clegg was. Curiously enough, they hadn't seen the proprietor to-night. One of the young fellows, who generally played in the orchestra, was acting as M.C., and Mr. Clegg was conspicuous by his absence.

Not that the crowd cared much. They had come here for their own enjoyment—not to see Mr. Clegg. Everything was going on in just the same way as usual. Mr. Clegg's absence was not a disaster.

To Gore-Pearce, however, the situation was awkward. He wanted to see Mr. Clegg badly. He hovered about near the foot of the stairs, waiting, but after a while he got tired of this. During a dance he approached the M.C.

"Isn't Mr. Clegg here to-night?" he asked casually.

"Yes; he's about somewhere," replied the young fellow.

"I wanted to have a word with him," said Gore-Pearce.

"That ought to be easy enough when he blows in," said the M.C. lightly. "Only you'd better go easy with the old boy. He's not quite himself lately. Better not ask any favours."

"What's the matter with him, then?"

"Oh, family matters, I believe," said the young man. "Something personal, anyhow. It's not our business."

"You think he'll be down later on?"

"He's sure to be," said the M.C. "I'm expecting him down any minute, as a matter of fact."

MR. SIMON CLEGG was not very far off.

He stood in his sitting-room in front of the dying fire; and there did not seem to be much gaiety on Mr. Clegg's brow. Only five minutes earlier he had ventured out and he had gone as far as the top of the stairs, but the strains of lively music, floating up to

his ears, had proved more than he could bear.

He had gone back to his sitting-room, his brain throbbing.

"It's no good!" he muttered. "I can't go down there to-night! The music maddens me—the laughter and the dancing madden me still more! Fools! Frivolous fools! What do they care about my troubles? What do they care about anything—except their own pleasures?"

He fell to pacing up and down the room.

"What can I do?" he asked himself, for the thousandth time. "Where is she now? How is she getting on? What am I going to say to her mother? By hokey! I'm going out of my mind with it all!"

He was thinking of his stepdaughter, Olive.

He had been thinking of nobody else—of nothing else—since she had so mysteriously disappeared. He had driven her out into the fog that night, and since then he had not heard a word about her. And it was impossible for him to set any inquiries

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going; it was equally impossible for him to make any search.

For how could he tell people that he had driven her out, ill as she was, into the fog? It was true that he had spent hours and hours searching round the neighbourhood; he had explored every inch of Bellton Wood. He had searched until his limbs had become weary. And, all the time, he had the fear in his heart that the girl was somewhere in the neighbourhood, lying huddled up, where she had fallen in her weakness, on that fateful night.

Mr. Clegg was horrified by this thought, but he could not keep it out of his head. The absence of news only added to its probability. If she was still alive, why didn't she communicate with him? If somebody had found her, why didn't they inform him? And Mr. Clegg knew how feasible it was for the girl to have collapsed in some hidden, out-of-the-way spot. It might be weeks—months—before somebody accidentally stumbled across her.

With these terrible thoughts in his mind it was small wonder that Mr. Simon Clegg was a changed man.

He looked positively thinner; his clothes seemed to hang loosely on his shrunken frame. His face was haggard and drawn; his eyes were filled with a dull kind of anguish. And remorse was in his soul—keen, agonising remorse.

"It was all my own fault!" he muttered huskily. "Poor girl! I frightened her—I terrified her. It was my temper—my vile, detestable temper! I must have been a brutal hound to act as I did. And people when they know will call me a fiend. Poor Olive! Poor little girl!"

He clenched his fists in his helplessness, and pressed them to his heated brow.

"And I can do nothing—nothing!" he went on tensely. "I've searched—Heaven knows how I've searched! Where can she be? And her mother! What shall I say to her mother?"

It seemed to him that his head was filled with something molten—something which burned and seared. He sat down at the table and stared straight in front of him, his chin propped on his hands.

"And down below they're laughing and singing and dancing!" he said bitterly. "Confound them all! I won't have it! I'll clear them out of here—so that they can take their idiotic laughter elsewhere! It was the sheerest folly to ever open this accursed place!"

He suddenly rose to his feet, and flung his hands upwards.

"Fools—fools!" he repeated harshly. "That's all they are—young, feather-brained fools! And it was to these people that I forced my little Olive to dance and sing! Yes, against her will!" he added. "What a brute I was! I knew all along that she detested that sort of life—and yet I forced her to appear in the cabaret!"

Now that it was too late Mr. Clegg realised how hard and cruel he had been.

All her protests had been justified. From the very first she had detested this night club; and now Mr. Clegg could understand her repugnance.

He had told himself that this night club idea was a very brilliant scheme. He was making money nicely. But, now that he came to look at the thing in its true light, what did it amount to? He was inducing these young people to come to his club in secret—probably against their parents' desires. He was ruining the discipline of St. Frank's, and of other schools. His club was an inducement to all and sundry to disobey.

Mr. Clegg, now that his eyes were opened, did not doubt that nearly all the girls now dancing had sneaked off on the quiet, like thieves in the night. Even the young fellows who had brought them were probably out in defiance of their parents' wishes.

"It's rotten!" declared Mr. Clegg fiercely. "I was a blind, self-satisfied fool not to have realised it before. The whole thing is rotten to the core! And I'm only a despicable hound for being the instigator of the business. The money I'm making may be clean—but, by hokey, it's the coinage of folly!"

A faint sound of music came wafting to his ears.

"I can't stand it!" he panted, striding to the door. "They've got to stop! I'll clear them all out now—this very minute! And never again will there be another gathering! This will be the last night of this club!"

Gradually, day by day, Mr. Simon Clegg had been working himself up to this pitch. Ever since Olive had disappeared, he had lived in torture. He had scarcely had a minute's sleep. Morning, noon, and night he had worried. He had gradually but certainly come to the conclusion that it was upon his shoulders that all the blame should be rested.

And now that he had come to his decision, it was a final one. It was irrevocable. The club should cease! From now onwards it should be but a memory!

Suddenly flinging open the door, Mr. Clegg strode out into the passage, and there was something grimly purposeful in his movements.

"Just a minute, Mr. Clegg!"

The night club proprietor turned. He was aware that a junior schoolboy was standing before him, but he only saw him through a kind of haze. He was near to the secret door, which led down into the night club. The junior had just come up, closing the door after him.

"Can I speak to you for a minute, Mr. Clegg?" he asked eagerly.

Mr. Clegg shook himself.

"Eh?" he said, his voice strangely unnatural. "No. I cannot speak to anybody now! Later, perhaps, but not now!"

"But it's very important, Mr. Clegg," said Claude Gore-Pearce as he pulled at the

man's arm. "I can give you some information—about Miss Olive."

The words had no effect for a second or two; then, drawing his breath in with a sharp hiss, Mr. Simon Clegg twirled round on the junior and seized him fiercely by the shoulders. Gore-Pearce was thoroughly startled.

"Here, I say——" he began.

"What did you say?" panted Mr. Clegg.

"Quick! Tell me! What did you say?"

"I said that I could give you some information about your stepdaughter, sir," gasped Gore-Pearce. "But there's no need to——"

"Boy, if you're lying to me I'll break every bone in your body!" exclaimed Mr. Clegg passionately. "Come with me! We can't talk here—not here. Come, I tell you!"

Gore-Pearce had no choice. He was fairly shot down the passage and bundled into the sitting-room. Mr. Clegg closed the door with a crash, using his foot. He did not release his hold on the Removite.

"Now," he said in a vibrant voice, "tell me! You know something about Olive?"

"Hang it, there's no need to maul me about——"

"Boy," shouted Clegg thickly, "can't you see my agony? Where is she? What do you know of her? In Heaven's name, tell me!"

Gore-Pearce had expected to give Mr. Clegg a bit of a start, but he had never anticipated any such scene as this. He was scared half out of his wits.

"It's all right!"

ejaculated Gore-Pearce hastily. "Go easy, Mr. Clegg! I know where she is, that's all."

"You know—— Is she alive?" demanded Mr. Clegg suddenly. "Tell me, boy—is she alive?"

Gore-Pearce stared in amazement.

"Alive!" he repeated. "Of course she's alive!"

Simon Clegg released his grip, and his hands fell limply to his sides. The room went round and round before his blurred gaze, and he swayed as he stood.

"Here, steady!" said Gore-Pearce, with a gulp.

Mr. Clegg caught hold of the table and steadied himself.

"All right—all right!" he muttered. "I'm better now."

With an effort he recovered himself. He

took a firm grip on his wits, although he felt physically sick with sudden relief. She was alive! For the moment nothing else seemed to matter. And then Mr. Clegg's mood changed; he wanted to know more. He wanted to know the details.

"So—she's alive!" he whispered, looking at Gore-Pearce intently. "How do you know, boy? By heaven, if you've been telling me a lie——"

"No, no; it's true!" insisted Gore-Pearce. "I know where she is, too. Fenton found her the other night—in that fog."

"Fenton!" repeated Mr. Clegg, under his breath.

"Yes, sir," said Gore-Pearce. "He took her to a little cottage, not far from here, and left her in the care of an old couple. The doctor's been there regularly since."

"The doctor!" muttered Mr. Clegg. "The doctor! Why?"

"Well, she must have been jolly ill, after being out in the fog," said Gore-Pearce.

"Pneumonia, I think. Anyhow, she's better now—getting on famously, I understand. Well out of danger."

Mr. Clegg waved his hand impatiently.

"Wait—wait!" he said. "Leave me alone for a minute."

He turned aside, closing his eyes. He felt that he could not hear any more just then. So Edgar Fenton had saved her, had rescued her from the fog, and had taken her to an old couple in the district, who had since been looking after her.

Mr. Clegg almost

choked. His brain was clear enough to understand why Fenton had not brought back the girl to Moat Hollow. She had been driven out, and Fenton was not going to risk another such catastrophe! So he had taken her elsewhere, and had seen that she was well looked after, even to the extent of calling in the doctor.

Mr. Clegg did not harbour any resentment against Fenton for taking the girl to that cottage. On the contrary, he was only aware of a sense of gratitude towards the St. Frank's senior. His heart warmed towards Fenton, who had been right from the first, and who had done so much for his little girl.

"I shall never be able to repay him!" he muttered huskily. "Good fellow—good fellow! So my little girl is safe! Thank Heaven for that! But I have been punished—Heaven knows I have been punished!"

THE ST. FRANK'S QUESTIONNAIRE!

Here are the answers to last week's twelve questions:

1. *Sebastian*. (See footnote). 2. *Troy, New York, U.S.A.* 3. *Solomon Levi, Dick Goodwin and Morgan Evans.* 4. *Jelks.* 5. *Ten.* 6. *April 18th.* 7. *John Busterfield Boots, of the Fourth, Study 6, Modern House.* 8. *Nipper.* 9. *The Hon. Audrey de Vere Wellborne.* 10. *Travis Dene.* 11. *Colonel Glenthorne, of Glenthorne Manor, Bannington.* 12. *General Gregory Bartholomew Handforth, of Handforth Towers, near Mundesley, Norfolk.*

NOTE.—Answer No. 1, above, was incorrectly given as "*Septimus*" in our November 9th issue. "*Septimus*" is the name of Willy's squirrel—not his snake.

How many did you get right, chums?



"The police are here!" came a cry, and immediately there was pandemonium in the night club. The St. Frank's fellows made a wild dash for the exits. To be found here would mean expulsion!

CHAPTER 6.

Revenge!

CLAUDE GORE-PEARCE waited, impatient and furious. Not knowing of the change that had come about in Mr. Simon Clegg, he was completely puzzled by the man's attitude. It had never occurred to Gore-Pearce, either, that Mr. Clegg might have assumed that the girl was dead.

Suddenly the night club proprietor turned.

"I am sorry," he said quietly. "I was unwell. But I am better now, my boy. Tell me, how did you obtain this information, and where is my stepdaughter to be found?"

Mr. Clegg had mastered himself. He was cool now, and the room no longer swayed before his eyes. His agony of suspense was over, and, although the reaction had been severe for the moment, he was now able to control himself.

Gore-Pearce was glad to see the change in his host. He had been rather frightened up till now; but, seeing that Mr. Clegg was now rational, the junior recovered his own coolness.

"You're rather keen on finding out where Miss Olive is, aren't you, Mr. Clegg?" he asked bluntly.

"Keen!" repeated Mr. Clegg. "Don't use such ridiculous terms! Tell me—where is she?"

"Half a tick!" said Gore-Pearce. "By what I can understand, Mr. Clegg, you've had a bit of an anxious time. And now I'm in a position to give you the information that you want. Don't you think it's worth something?"

Mr. Clegg started, hardly comprehending the rascally schoolboy's purpose.

"Worth something?" he repeated slowly.

"Yes!" said Gore-Pearce. "I've only told you that your stepdaughter is in a little cottage in this district, but there are tons of cottages, don't forget! If you want the full information you can have it, but I rather think it's worth—well, twenty quid, say. How about it, Mr. Clegg?"

Gore-Pearce backed away as he saw the sudden flush on Mr. Clegg's face—as he saw the light of danger leap into Mr. Clegg's eyes.

"You are asking me for—money?" panted the man.

"Why not?" said Gore-Pearce defensively. "You badly wanted some information, and I can supply it. You can't get anything free in this world, Mr. Clegg—as you ought to know! You've been taking my money freely enough for the past week or so, and now I want a bit of yours. Business is business!"

"Business!" thundered Mr. Clegg, seizing Gore-Pearce by the shoulders again. "You little rat! Do you call this business?"

"Take your hands away!" yelled Gore-Pearce. "You're hurting me."



"The police are here!" came a cry, and immediately the demonium in the night club. The St. Frank's fellows dash for the exits. To be found here would mean exp

This was literally true. Mr. Clegg's grip was powerful, and his fingers were digging into the flabby muscles of Gore-Pearce's arms. The cad of Study A had rather expected a little scene—but he had never anticipated any such violence as this.

"Look here, I'll tell you for ten quid!" he ejaculated hastily.

"You unmitigated young scamp!" panted Mr. Clegg, beside himself with fury. "Fenton was right! He told me that I was harbouring the scum of St. Frank's, and I'm having proof of it now!"

"If you call me scum—"

"Tell me where my daughter is to be found!" grated Mr. Clegg. "Now then—out with it!"



"I won't!" reared the junior. "I won't tell you a thing unless you agree to pay me——"

"You won't, eh?" snarled the night club proprietor. "Do you think I'll pay you a solitary cent for such information? By hokey! I'll—I'll——"

He shook Gore-Pearce like a rat, realising, even as he was doing so, that he had flown into another of his dangerous tempers. It was rather a shock to him, and he pulled himself up with a jerk. He compelled himself to become calm—but in this mood he was even more dangerous than before.

"Are you going to tell me?" he demanded, his voice filled with menace. "Once and for all, I shan't pay you a penny! But if you don't give me the information I'll

thrash you within an inch of your life! Here—now! I'll give you just ten seconds!"

Gore-Pearce, scared out of his wits, made a last effort.

"I won't!" he panted. "You're not going to get the better of me like this! It ought to be worth ten quid to you——"

"Very well!" said Mr. Clegg, the coldness of his voice sending a chill down the Removite's back. "Very well! We'll see, young man!"

He suddenly altered his grip, and seized Gore-Pearce by the scruff of the neck. Then he dragged the junior across the room and grabbed a heavy cane. It was a Malacca, and it whistled viciously through the air as he gave it a preliminary swing.

"All right—all right!" gabbled Gore-Pearce. "I'll—I'll tell you! You bully! No wonder the girl ran away! You ought to be locked up for cruelty!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Clegg. "You'll keep your mouth shut—except to answer me the one question that I'm going to ask. Where is my stepdaughter to be found?"

"In—in Joe White's cottage!" panted Gore-Pearce. "It's over the meadows—beyond the river. That's all I can tell you," he added breathlessly. "Now, perhaps you'll let me go!"

"Joe White's cottage—across the meadows!" repeated Mr. Clegg deliberately. "Yes, now I'll let you go. I ought to give you that thrashing, just the same—but your very presence nauseates me."

"You'd better not speak like that!" said Gore-Pearce furiously. "I'll never come to your rotten club again—and I'll jolly well see that the other chaps don't come, either! If you're going to insult me like this—— Ho! What the—— What are you doing, confound you?"

It was quite unnecessary for Gore-Pearce to ask Mr. Clegg what he was doing. Gore-Pearce was being propelled violently towards the door. He was thrust still more violently through the doorway, down the passage, and then outside into the open air.

"You're going off these premises—and if you come back I'll give you that hiding!" ejaculated Mr. Clegg harshly. "You young rascal! You unprincipled scamp! Get off my property! Do you understand? Get off—and never come back again!"

He wasn't content by merely pitching Gore-Pearce out of the house. He thrust him, kicking and struggling and yelling, down the garden. He called to the door-keeper to open the door, and when he arrived he gave Gore-Pearce a final lunge



HOBNOTCH (Wembley Park).—No; I'm not growing onions or turnips on my head. I'm not an allotment, you chump. Why must you make fun of my glorious mop of hair? You wouldn't like me to be bald, would you? Your next question is ridiculous: How many boys like me are there at St. Frank's? Fancy thinking there is more than one Edward Oswald Handforth! It's impossible. And I certainly don't make a habit of walking about the school in sections. What colour kittens will your blue Persian cat have? Wait and see!

A. M. WARRINER (Liverpool).—You're the kind of fellow I like. Fond of scrap-ping, eh? Pleased to hear from you, old son. So you had a punch-ball for Christmas? When you've worn it out let me know, and I'll bring along Gore-Pearce for a substitute.

IRENE RANDALL (Sandwich).—You're inclined to be cheeky to me, but I'll forgive you because your name's Irene. I have a strong partiality for that name, you know. How do I shape in boxing gloves? You should never talk about anything you don't understand, Irene. Boxing gloves are worn on the hand—they're not a suit of clothes. No, I don't always fall asleep the second I get into bed. Would you go to sleep immediately if you found a beetle, or a wet sponge, or a hair brush, or a bag of crumbs reposing in your bed? That's the sort of thing I have to put up with at St. Frank's from time to time.

C. F. VEBEY (Carshalton) tells me that I'm not me. Here's what he says: "Don't you wish you really were Handforth?" By George! If I'm not Handforth, then who the dickens am I? Personally, I'm certain that I *am* Handforth, and surely I ought to know.

NANCY (Norbury).—Your suggestion that I should bang Gore-Pearce's head against the nearest tree is certainly brainy; but what about the tree? I'm a most considerate sort of fellow, and I should hate to hurt an inoffensive tree's feelings.

SCOTSMAN (Thurso).—Here's another reader making insulting remarks about my hair. He suggests that it would come in handy for sweeping out Study D. You're

asking for trouble, my lad. I've a good mind to come up to Thurso during morning break to-morrow and set about you.

A BANBURYITE (Banbury).—This correspondent tells me he is in the false teeth trade, and then says he will send me some home-made banbury cakes if I would like some. No thanks! I can see your little game, my lad. You know that if I eat 'em I shall break all my teeth, and then you'll want me to come to you for some false 'uns. Nothing doing, old man.

BERNARD EGAN (Dublin).—Thanks for your cheery letter. I'm always pleased to hear from Irish readers, indeed to goodness, no, yes, indeed I am! Do the wheels of my Austin Seven go round? When the car is in motion—yes. I certainly will *not* drown myself.

JACK GODDEN (Hilton, South Australia). Glad to hear I'm your favourite character in the St. Frank's yarns, although, of course, I'm not surprised. No, the school has never been down to the South Pole, and you're up a pole to ask such a question.

GEOFFREY DE HOUSTON-POITERRE (Seaford). Sorry, but I can't come along and find the scoundrel who burgled your gold watch and a pearl necklace. The fact is, I've lost my magnifying glass, and I can't find my seventeen-and-a-half ounce calabash pipe which I suck to gain inspiration when working on a case. I shall be only too pleased to act for you in a play. What am I to be—the hero?

"RASTUS" (Melbourne) sends me a letter which he purports to come from his pet cat, Rufus. Me-e-ow-ow-ee-ow! For those of you who don't know, that means thanks in cat language.

"LONG LEGS" & TUBBY (Queens-town). Much regret I can't send you a lock of my hair, but, unfortunately for you, I'm not moulting at the moment. Churchy offered to pull one out, but there was nothing doing.

EDWARD OSWALD.

THE FELLOW WHO WON!

(Continued from page 24.)

There was absolutely no mirth in the sound.

"Here, that's enough of that!" shouted the inspector, shaking the junior.

"A night club?" panted Gore-Pearce, pulling himself up. "You're searching for a night club? Then you've come to the right chap! I can tell you where it is! I've just come from it!"

"What!"

"Moat Hollow!" blurted out Gore-Pearce. "That's the place! Kept by a man named Clegg! It's full up just now—packed to suffocation! You'd better raid the place at once, and you'll make a fine haul! By gad! You'll catch 'em all red-handed!"

And he went off into another peal of laughter.

CHAPTER 7.

To Save His Uncle.

INSPECTOR JAMESON gave a grunt. "The boy's talking nonsense!" he said sourly. "He's out of his mind!"

"I'm not—I'm not!" panted Gore-Pearce. "You do as I say, inspector, and you'll get a surprise!"

His tone was extraordinarily vindictive. At this particular moment all he wanted was to see Mr. Clegg's place raided, so that he could get his revenge. He gave no thought to his companions—to his very own chums. If they were caught, it would serve them right! And what a sensation there would be at St. Frank's! Gore-Pearce revelled in the very thought of it.

The inspector suddenly released his grip, and the junior tore himself away, and bolted.

"Let him go!" grunted the inspector, as two of his men were about to follow. "The kid's off his head, I tell you."

"There might be something in it, sir——"

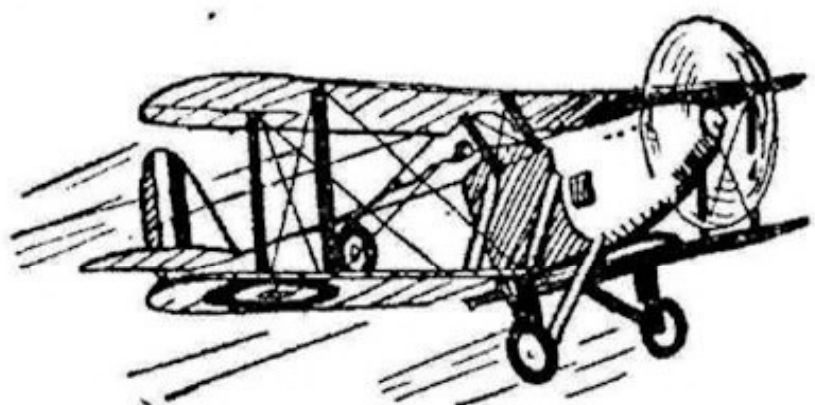
"Nonsense!" said the inspector. "I made very careful inquiries about all the houses in Bellton, and everybody here is above suspicion. Come along! Get back into the car!"

A few moments later the car was gliding down the lane again, and Gore-Pearce halted, staring after it. Suddenly a figure came out of the gloom, and Gore-Pearce started back, terrified.

"Who—who's that?" he gasped.

"You needn't be frightened!" said a grim voice. "Gore-Pearce, what were you saying to those policemen?"

The junior jumped as he recognised Edgar Fenton's voice. Then he was aware of a sensation of relief.



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"You gave me a turn!" he grunted. "What was I saying to those policemen, eh? You'd like to know, wouldn't you?"

"I'm going to know!" retorted Fenton grimly.

"It's all up with that beast, Clegg!" said Gore-Pearce, his voice more malicious than ever. "By gad! I've settled his rotten hash!"

"You—you mean——"

"Yes, I do!" said the junior defiantly. "To put it in polite language, I've blown the gaff! And a dashed good thing, too! I hope Clegg gets seven years!"

Fenton caught his breath in sharply; he was transfixed for the moment. He had caught a few words of Gore-Pearce's raving while the latter had been talking to Inspector Jameson. But now he knew for certain.

Yet he was slightly puzzled.

He stood there, listening intently—and using his eyes, too. He had seen the big car go gliding down the lane, and he had taken particular note of the fact that the lights had risen for a moment, and had then dipped again. Just for a moment the beams from the headlamps had drifted up into the sky, like searchlights. And now there was a faint hum from the distance.

Fenton knew what it meant. The sudden raising of the beams into the air had occurred when the car had gone over the bridge, for the approach was rather steep. This meant, then, that the police had not stopped at Moat Hollow, but had gone straight on into the village. And now the car was some distance away, too. Fenton was aware of a sense of relief. Obviously, Inspector Jameson had taken no notice of the enraged junior's information. He had ignored it, as beneath contempt.

But this did not alter the fact that Gore-Pearce had acted the despicable part of informer.

"You confounded young sneak!" said Fenton, with cold rage. "So you told the police, did you? Why?"

"Because Clegg threw me out!" snarled the cad of Study A. "Chucked me clean out of his rotten hole!"

"Mr. Clegg is getting more sense!" said Fenton acidly. "But what about the other St. Frank's fellows? Did you think of them?"

"What do I care about them?" retorted Gore-Pearce. "Hang them! If they're caught, all the better! There'll be a nice little column in the newspapers! I can't go to that rotten night club any more, so why should anybody else?"

"You're safe, and you don't care a toss about the safety of anybody else, eh?" snapped Fenton, with contempt. "You miserable cur! If I wasn't in a hurry, I'd give you a sound thrashing! And I will give it to you, by Jove! You'll report yourself to my study to-morrow, Gore-Pearce!"

"Oh, will I?" jeered Gore-Pearce. "Do you think I'm going to take any notice of

you, Fenton? You can go and boil yourself! You're not head prefect now! You've been deposed—and before long you'll get the sack! Hang you!"

And Gore-Pearce ran off into the darkness before Fenton could grab at him. The Sixth-Former made no attempt to follow; for another thought had just occurred to him.

He had deliberately come down much later than any of the others so that he



should avoid being seen. His idea was to have a few quiet words with Mr. Clegg while the dancing was in progress. Fenton was keeping his promise to Olive; he was going to tell her stepfather all about her. But this new development had rather taken him unawares.

And now he wondered if he had been right about the police. Had they really gone? Or was it merely a trick? Now that he came to think of the matter carefully he realised that the police would hardly drive up boldly to Moat Hollow and knock on the door as though they were conducting an ordinary visit. It was far more likely that they would pretend to drive straight past, and then suddenly make a swoop out of the darkness.

This thought caused Fenton to hurry with all speed to that secret door in the back wall of the old garden. His main idea now was to save his rascally young uncle.

He did not deserve saving—for it was he who had introduced the St. Frank's fellows to this night club. But, after all, Robert Chester was Fenton's real uncle, and if it was in any way possible Fenton wanted to avoid the disgrace of having the junior found by the police in that night club.

By hurrying he might be able to give the warning in time.

He reached the little door, and rapped upon it sharply. He did not know that at least two pairs of eyes were watching from the depths of the wood; he did not know that ears were eagerly listening.

A tiny hole opened in the door, and a face dimly appeared.

"It's all right—only me!" said the Sixth-Former quickly. "I'm Fenton. Let me in."

"Right you are, young gent!" said the doorkeeper cheerfully. "I thought it was that other youngster trying to get back."

A bolt was shot back, and the door opened. Edgar Fenton entered. And one of the lurking figures crept off to make his report.

MR. SIMON CLEGG was very calm and collected as he walked down the carpeted stairs into the night club. And yet, at the same time, he was looking grim.

All his doubts and difficulties were over. There was no more suspense. He had definitely made up his mind, and now he was going to work with calmness and with resolution. The one fact which steadied his nerves was the knowledge that Olive was alive and well looked after. She was in Joe White's cottage, and the doctor was in attendance. Before long Mr. Clegg would go there, and he would seek her forgiveness.

But there was a duty to be performed first.

Uncle Robert, Grayson, Sinclair and a few other St. Frank's fellows noticed Mr. Clegg coming down the stairs, and they looked at him in some surprise. They could see at a glance that there was something different about their host. There was a pallor in his face, but there was also a kind of quiet contentment. A dance was in progress, and the whole place was filled with noise and laughter.

"Stop!" said Mr. Simon Clegg, raising his hand.

The leader of the orchestra caught his eye, and for a moment did not comprehend. He continued his music, puzzled.

"Stop!" commanded Mr. Clegg, in a louder voice.

At this the orchestra suddenly ceased, and all the dancers fell apart, wondering what the explanation of this interruption could be. Everybody stared at Mr. Clegg as he stood there, two or three stairs from the bottom.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have something important to say!"

There was a hush. Mr. Clegg's voice was quiet, but determined. The crowd believed that he had merely come in order to make some announcement or other—probably about the next meeting.

"I want everybody to go!" said Mr. Clegg steadily. "I have come to a certain decision, and it is just as well that you should know the facts promptly and definitely. From this minute onwards the night club ceases to exist. Do you all understand?"

There were many murmurs, and, after a moment or two, a number of shouts.

"What do you mean?" asked Sinclair.

"You're not turning us out, are you?"

"I am turning you out!" replied Mr. Clegg. "This night club is now a thing of the past. I want you all to go from these premises, and to go as quietly and as quickly as possible. The orchestra has played its last beat, and the last dance step has been taken on this floor."

There were ejaculations of amazement now. Mr. Clegg had taken everybody by surprise. Never had they expected any such announcement as this. For it seemed to them that the night club was at the height of its success. It had been getting better and better ever since the commencement, and to-night there were more people present than ever before.

"What's the idea, Mr. Clegg?" asked Uncle Robert, running up anxiously. "Everything's going fine! Why should you close the club like this? I've just arranged for a lot of fresh people to come——"

"Those arrangements will have to be cancelled!" interrupted Mr. Clegg steadily. "Ladies and gentlemen, I do not intend to offer any explanations, or to make any excuses. This is my property, and I am at liberty to do as I please. And it pleases me to close this club forthwith. I shall be obliged if you will quietly get your overcoats and hats and take your departure. I bid you all good-night—and good-bye!"

There was a complete silence at this. Mr. Clegg's tone was final and there was nothing more to be said. Whatever his reasons, there was no doubt about his determination.

And then, in the middle of that tense silence, a bell suddenly sounded. It shattered the stillness, ringing insistently, and causing everybody to jump.

"Police!" gasped Uncle Robert.

"Police—police!" went up the echoing cry.

Everybody knew what that bell meant—they had been warned in advance. If that bell rang, then it would mean that a raid had commenced! The patrons had been told that there was not one chance in a million that the bell would ever ring, yet now it was sounding, just as Mr. Clegg was telling everybody that the night club was closed! Was it coincidence, or had Mr. Clegg himself planned this surprise?

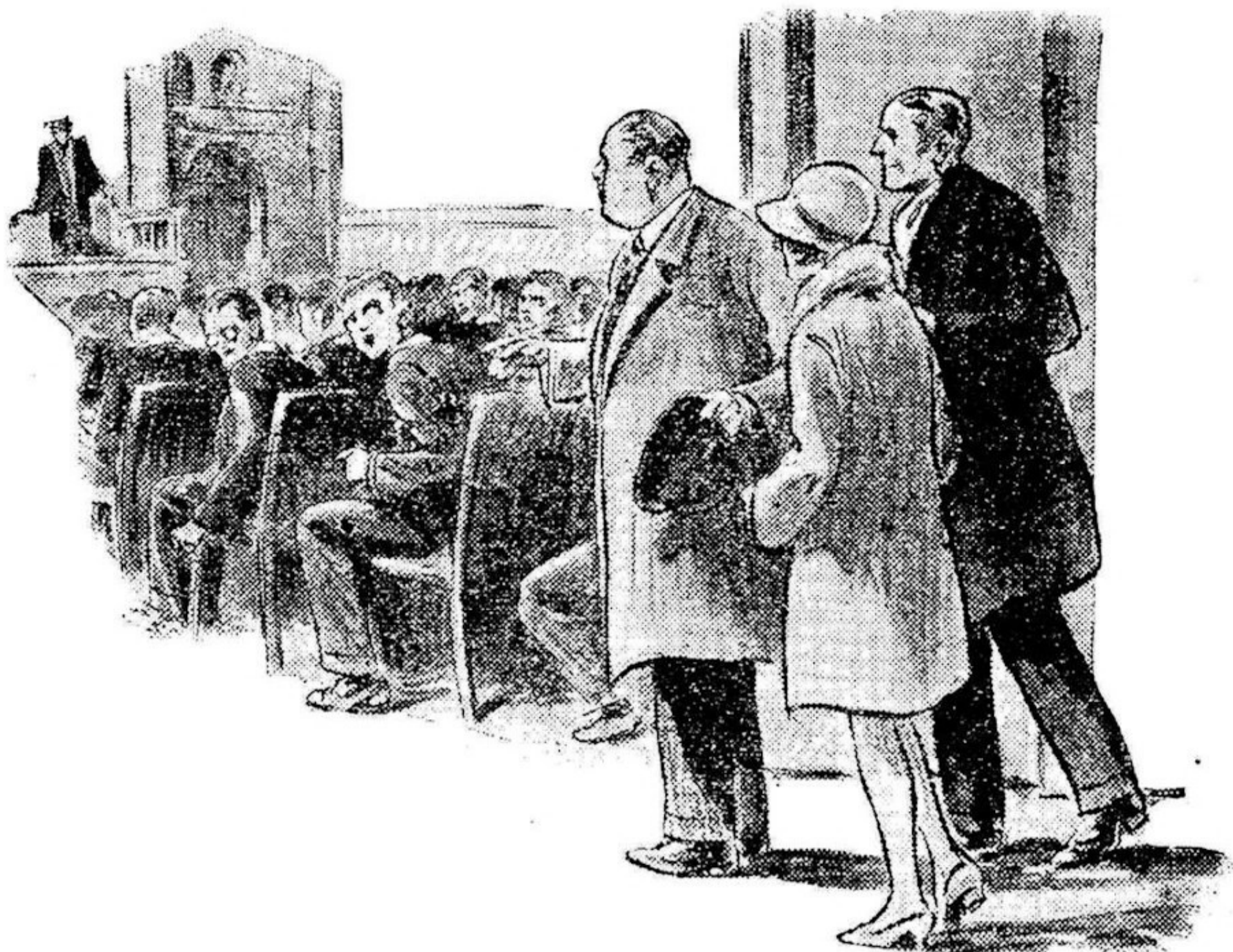
And then, before even Mr. Clegg himself could utter a word, the doorkeeper came flying down the stairs, his face alight with alarm.

"Quick—quick!" he gasped. "Police! Mr. Clegg, sir, the police are swarming in! They've smashed the door down, and——"

His voice was drowned in the uproar that arose. Mr. Clegg himself stood there, apparently indifferent. On any other night, perhaps, he would have been greatly alarmed. But now he didn't seem to care. Yet he was filled with keen regret. If only he had turned his clients out an hour earlier! What a pity it was that he had delayed! These were the thoughts that flashed through his mind.

"Silence!" he shouted, his voice steady and authoritative. "There's no need for you to get into a panic. Keep your heads, and everything will be well. You know the secret door, and you will be able to escape."

One or two of the bandsmen had sprung into activity, and they ran across to the far side of the cellar and opened up a hidden door behind the draperies. And immediately there was a stampede in that direction.



"I can take no other course than to expel you!" said the Head, addressing Edgar Fenton. And then, at that moment, there came a dramatic interruption as Mr. Simon Clegg and his daughter, Olive, entered Big Hall.

Some of the girls were sobbing, others were uttering little screams of terror. The St. Frank's fellows were pale with agitation. They were, in fact, badly frightened. They could see expulsion looming before them.

But so perfect were Mr. Clegg's plans that within three minutes the entire club was empty. Everybody had piled into that tunnel, which led from the Moat Hollow cellars underground.

This tunnel had not been of Mr. Clegg's construction. It had been in existence for many years, and the other end of it came out near the River Stowe, almost half a mile away.

All the people were safe. They reached the exit and dispersed successfully, without being seen or heard by any of the police officers. But it had been touch and go! And now, beyond all doubt, the night club was for ever closed!

CHAPTER 3.

Caught!

EDGAR FENTON entered Moat Hollow with two ideas in his mind. First, he wanted to tell Mr. Clegg that Olive was alive and recovering rapidly, and secondly he thought that it would be advis-

able to mention that the police were active in the district, and that they had been definitely informed that Moat Hollow was the headquarters of the night club.

Fenton entered the house easily enough, but when he approached those carpeted stairs which led down into the cellar he heard Mr. Clegg's voice. He gathered that the proprietor was making some announcement to his patrons. So Fenton retreated, and, seeing an open door, he went into it. He was in Mr. Clegg's sitting-room, and he waited there.

He had no idea that the police had actually seen him entering—that they had obtained part of the evidence they needed! At all events, Inspector Jameson felt justified in making a sudden forced entry, and, having once started on the job, the police acted with great promptitude.

Fenton suddenly became aware that something unusual was happening.

A man rushed down the passage, and Fenton could hear him shouting. But the words were only a blur; and then came other shouts, and a good deal of confusion. Fenton went to the sitting-room door and listened, frowning. He wondered if the police raid had actually happened. If so, his own position was by no means satisfactory. For

a moment he thought about making a dash outside, then he changed his mind. He might run right into the police if he did that.

A vague alarm now filled him. Ought he to wait here? Wouldn't it be better to hurry down into the night club, and to give his warning straight to Mr. Clegg? He decided that this would be the better course, and, darting along the passage, he found the door leading down into the cellar wide open. He hurried down the carpeted stairs, and then he came to a halt, looking blank.

He had expected to find the place filled with people, but, except for Mr. Clegg's solitary figure, the place was absolutely empty!

There was a haze of tobacco-smoke in the air, clear proof that a crowd had recently been present. But now Mr. Clegg was in sole occupation. He stood in the centre of that dancing-floor, thoughtful and abstracted.

"Mr. Clegg," shouted Fenton, "what's happened?"

The night club proprietor swung round.

"The very fellow I wanted to see!" ejaculated Mr. Clegg eagerly. "Fenton, you don't know how delighted I am that you've come!"

Fenton stared harder than ever.

"But—but what does it mean?" he panted.

"Why has everybody gone?"

Mr. Clegg waved his hand.

"The police are here!" he said indifferently.

Fenton was amazed, for Mr. Clegg did not seem to mind the police in the least. He dismissed them with a mere wave of his hand! Fenton hardly knew whether to be relieved or alarmed. It was good to know that the night club was practically dead; but there was Fenton's own position to consider. Here he was in the place, alone with Mr. Clegg!

"It makes no difference," said Simon Clegg quickly. "Curiously enough, I had already told the people that the club was to be closed. A pity, Fenton—a great pity! I wish I had made my decision an hour earlier."

"Have they all escaped?" asked Fenton quickly.

"Everyone of them—including my assistants," replied the other.

"And that confounded young uncle of mine?"

"He went, too," nodded Mr. Clegg. "There is something that I must say to you, Fenton—something very grave. I want you to realise that I am sincere, and that I am in earnest——"

But just then there came the stamp of heavy feet, and a moment later Inspector Jameson descended into the night club, together with two or three of his men.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated the inspector, as he arrived at the bottom of the stairs.

"Pretty, isn't it?" said Mr. Clegg coolly.

"Looks like we're too late, sir," said one of the constables in a stolid voice. "Nobody here to speak of."

"But they have been here," said the inspector, as he sharply sniffed the air. "Mr. Clegg, I shall require an explanation from you. Where are all the people who were recently in this—this club?"

"I don't think I am called upon to answer that question, inspector," replied Mr. Clegg smoothly. "I take it that you broke in for the purpose of seeking evidence. Well, I am not hindering you. You are at liberty to do just as you please. But you cannot expect me to answer any of your questions."

The inspector looked hard at Mr. Clegg.

"Do you admit that you have been running this place as a night club?" he asked sternly.

"I admit nothing," replied Mr. Clegg. "Come, come, inspector! I am not a fool! It is for you to prove your case against me; and I rather think that you will find it very difficult."

"You think so?" snapped the inspector. "I have plenty of evidence that a night club has been run in this neighbourhood; and this is undoubtedly the club itself. I would like you to show me your licence, Mr. Clegg."

"That will be very difficult—since I have no licence," replied the other calmly. "And why should I have a licence, inspector? This house is my private residence. Surely I can do as I please in my own cellars? If it suits me to decorate them it is my own concern. But still, go ahead! I am not hindering your investigations. You are at liberty to search the whole house, if you want to. But I must warn you that if you disturb my worthy sister, she will make things pretty hot for you."

Inspector Jameson grunted. He turned to his men, and spoke to them in a low tone.

To tell the truth, the inspector was baffled. He knew that this raid had been a failure. In some way the clients had all managed to make their escape. And as for evidence, there was none.

Of course, the night club was dead from this minute; Mr. Clegg would never be able to open it again. Even if he had not come to his earlier decision, he would have been compelled to close the doors of the place. But as matters stood it was very doubtful if the police would be able to make a case against him.

And Mr. Clegg didn't care. His own interest in the club had died many hours earlier, and although he regretted the intrusion of the police he was convinced that they would be unable to make any definite charge against him.

"JUST a minute, young fellow!"

Fenton turned as Inspector Jameson caught him by the shoulder. The inspector was not going to be completely done. He had, at least, found one visitor on these premises, and he intended to take full particulars.

"Well?" said Fenton quietly.

"You belong to St. Frank's College, don't you?"

"You know I do," said Fenton.

"I want your name, please," said the inspector, opening his pocket book.

"Fenton—Edgar Fenton," growled the senior. "Ancient House."

Inspector Jameson jotted the name down, and made one or two other notes.

"I would like you to tell me, Mr. Fenton, what you were doing on these premises?" he said, suddenly looking up.

"You saw what I was doing, didn't you?" asked Fenton. "I was talking to Mr. Clegg."

"Exactly!" said Mr. Clegg, nodding. "It's no good, inspector! You've got nothing against this young friend of mine. I'm quite aware of the fact that this raid of yours has been a failure."

"You think so?" snapped the inspector.

"I know so," smiled Mr. Clegg. "Come, we're not going to quarrel, are we? Where's your evidence? Have you discovered the slightest indication that intoxicating liquors are sold here after hours? My dear fellow, you know perfectly well that you haven't got the slightest shred of evidence! Did you discover any gambling going on? You know you didn't! All you found was my young friend, here, chatting with me."

"But there were a lot of people in this club—just before we came in!" said the inspector.

"Were there?" said Mr. Clegg innocently. "Can you prove it, inspector?"

The police officer grunted, and closed his pocket book with a snap.

He knew perfectly well that the raid had miscarried. Mr. Simon Clegg smiled as he saw that action. At the very worst, it could only mean a fine for him—and he very much doubted if the police would be able to make a case of any kind. And as Mr. Clegg had decided to leave Bell-ton, and to finish up with this sort of life, he was quite indifferent.

For Fenton, however, the matter was more serious.

He reflected, bitterly, that it was pretty hard luck that he should be the only St. Frank's fellow to be discovered on the premises. He had come here to warn Mr. Clegg, and to see that his rascally young uncle got free, in addition to all the other St. Frank's fellows. And now it was he—Fenton—who was caught!

"You won't be able to prosecute me, Inspector Jameson," said Mr. Clegg easily. "You know perfectly well that you can't bring a prosecution unless you have some fairly conclusive evidence to lay before the magistrates. And you have none. However, if it will give you any satisfaction, I might as well tell you that I have decided to leave this neighbourhood."

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes," said Mr. Clegg. "Within a very few weeks I shall have departed. And then, of course, there will be no further necessity for these activities on your part."

A sergeant came down the stairs, and he saluted.

"Nobody outside, sir," he reported. "We haven't seen anybody. We've searched the grounds from end to end, but there's nothing doing."

Fenton was glad to hear this piece of news; but his heart was heavy within him. He, at least, had been discovered! And although he said nothing to Mr. Clegg he realised that his downfall was certain. Yet, in a measure, he experienced some satisfaction. His efforts had not been in vain. The night club was over—and there would be no more breaking of bounds after lights-out.

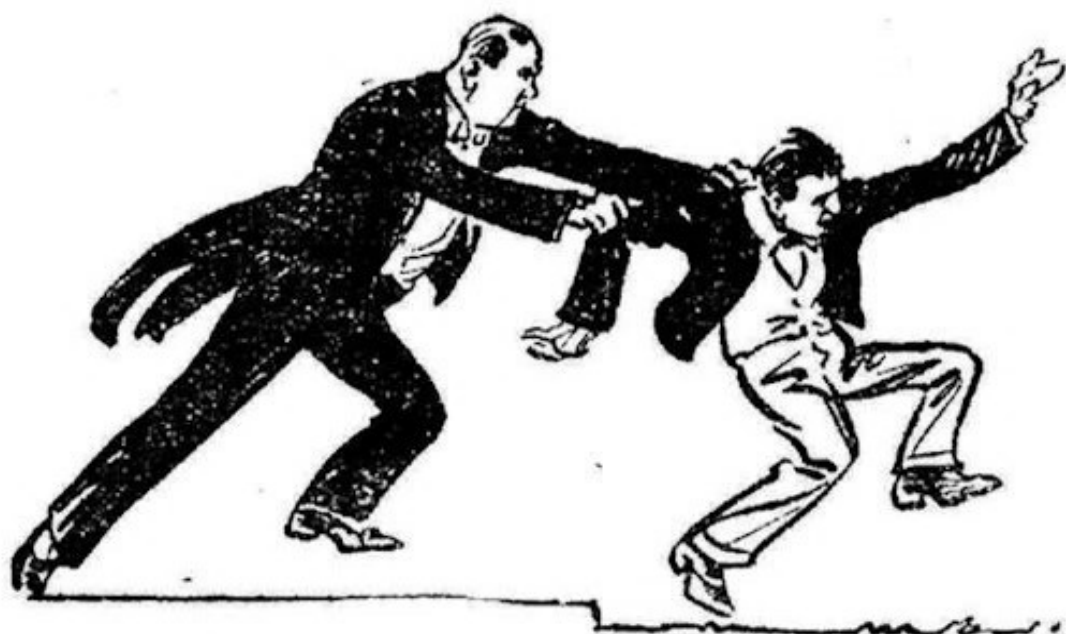
"Well, Mr. Clegg, you'll hear from me again to-morrow," said the inspector tartly. "Good-night to you."

Mr. Clegg smiled and bowed, and a moment later the disappointed inspector made his exit.

Outside he gave some orders to his men, and then he climbed into the waiting motor-car. The worthy man was feeling very irritable.

He had planned this raid so carefully, too! He had pretended to go right past Moat Hollow, and then his men had crept back, and had kept watch on the place. He had been certain that he would make a big haul; and it irritated him beyond measure to realise that he had been a few minutes too late. Somehow or other all Mr. Clegg's patrons had escaped, and the inspector knew that he had absolutely no case. He couldn't even prosecute.

In this disgruntled mood he drove up to St. Frank's, and he made his way in through



the masters' private gate, which, by previous arrangement, had been left unlocked.

Within a few minutes he was knocking at the door of the headmaster's house. Dr. Nicholls had informed him that he would be up until a very late hour—in case there was any report to be made. And sure enough the Head was in his study, fully dressed.

"Well, sir, we've been successful," said the inspector, making the best of a bad job. "We haven't caught Mr. Clegg exactly

napping, but we've found out where the night club is, and I don't think you'll be troubled with it any more."

"Mr. Clegg?" repeated the Head, starting. "You don't mean the gentleman who has recently come to Moat Hollow?"

"Yes, I do, sir," said the inspector. "That's where the night club was held."

"I am amazed," said the Head. "Mr. Clegg has a splendid reputation in the village. A charitable man—and on the very best of terms with the vicar. Indeed, the vicar has more than once told me that Mr. Clegg is an extraordinarily generous gentleman."

"Bluff, sir—pure bluff," said the inspector. "Well, anyhow, his game's over now. We raided the place."

"Did you find any St. Frank's boys on the premises?" asked the Head sharply.

"Only one, sir."

"One! Did you get his name?"

"Yes, sir," said the inspector, with gloomy satisfaction. "A young fellow of the name of Fenton."

"Fenton!" ejaculated Dr. Nicholls in amazement.

"Yes, sir. All the others had managed to get away before we broke in. Rather a pity, too—otherwise we should have made a good haul."

"You actually found Fenton there?"

"Right in the club, sir—talking to Mr. Clegg," said the inspector, nodding. "As far as I can see, we shan't be able to prosecute. Not sufficient evidence."

"I am very pleased to hear that," said the Head quietly. "The less publicity there is, inspector, the better. Fenton, eh? Good gracious me! I am surprised—shocked!"

And Dr. Nicholls turned aside, frowning and troubled. But there was a hard glint in his eyes, too.

CHAPTER 9.

The Chopper!

MEANWHILE, Moat Hollow was deserted.

Only Mr. Simon Clegg and Edgar Fenton remained—with the exception, of course, of Mr. Clegg's sister, who had been sleeping soundly throughout the entire excitement.

"Well, they've gone," said Mr. Clegg, with relief. "I'm very sorry, Fenton, that you were found here. The whole thing is wrong. You were not one of the patrons of my club, and I am afraid the inspector has made an error."

"What does it matter?" asked Fenton wearily. "I expect he will report to the Head, and that will be the finish of me."

"You mustn't say that!" replied Mr. Clegg, seizing his arm. "We won't allow you to be sacrificed, young fellow! Certainly not! This matter can be put right—and it *shall* be put right! And now—tell me! What do you know about my stepdaughter?"

Fenton's face hardened.

"Have you any right to ask me that?" he said, looking Mr. Clegg straight in the eye. "You turned her out into the fog that night——"

"Don't!" muttered the other. "You're right, my boy! I was a brute—a hound! Heaven knows that I've suffered enough since!"

He spoke in a broken voice, and Fenton listened in some surprise.

"If it will give you any satisfaction, let me tell you that I came into this room, and I told everybody to leave," continued Mr. Clegg. "I gave them those orders before I knew that the police were contemplating a raid. But I had already made up my mind that the club should end. Your efforts had succeeded. At last, when it was practically too late, I had recovered my senses."

"I—I don't quite understand, sir," said Fenton.

"My boy, you will never be able to understand my remorse," said Mr. Clegg quietly. "I have suffered tortures, agonies untold, since Olive went into the fog that night. From the very first she has been right, and I have been wrong. But I was an obstinate, pig-headed fool. I was selfish, self-centred, cruel! Only after I had lost her did I realise my own wickedness. And I resolved that I would not see her again until the night club was ended for all time."

"I am glad to hear you say that, sir," said Fenton, with satisfaction. "You knew, then, that your stepdaughter was alive?"

"I did not know until to-night!" replied Mr. Clegg huskily. "To-night I learned that Olive was alive. I learned that you had saved her, and that you had returned good for evil."

Fenton was silent.

"I can only express my keen regret," continued Mr. Clegg, in the same husky voice. "I am deeply sorry, Fenton. I shall never be able to repay you for what you have done, but at least you will know that I am repentant, and that this lesson is one that will be everlasting. Henceforward I will treat my stepdaughter with tenderness and kindness. But how is she? Tell me!"

"Your stepdaughter had a very serious attack of pneumonia, sir," said Fenton quietly. "I found her in a little shed, unconscious. She had collapsed from weakness. I took her to a little cottage close by. Mr. and Mrs. White, a kindly old couple, live there. They took Olive in, and cared for her. The doctor came, and he has been every day since. And now Olive is well on the road to recovery. In fact, she is so much better that I was able to see her this evening. And she made me promise to come here, and to tell you that she was safe and getting well."

Mr. Simon Clegg nearly choked.

"So—so she has forgiven me?" he whispered.

"Yes, sir, and she wants to see you," said Fenton. "She knows that you were not yourself that night, and she is ready to forget."

"I will go to see her first thing in the morning," said Mr. Clegg eagerly.

After a little further conversation, giving Mr. Clegg details as to the whereabouts of the cottage, Fenton took his departure. And Fenton was not exceedingly surprised when he found Dr. Nicholls awaiting him in the lobby of the Ancient House.

"Fenton," said the Head in a stern voice, "I require an explanation from you!"

"All I can say, sir, is that the night club is definitely closed," replied Fenton. "It will no longer be a menace to the discipline of the school."

"Come, come!" said the Head sharply.

"That is no explanation, Fenton! You know as well as I do that the night club is closed because the police raided the place! And what is more, I have received a report that you were found there, in company with this—this rascal who has been running the club. Do you admit the truth of this?"

"I was there, sir—yes."

"You confess that you were caught in that club by the police?"

"I don't know about being caught, sir," said Fenton defensively. "I was talking to Mr. Clegg. He explained to the inspector that I was a friend of his—"

"A friend!" broke in the Head, aghast. "You are standing there, Fenton, and admitting to me that this man—this rogue—is your friend?"

"He is my friend, sir," said Fenton quietly.

"You had better go to your room, Fenton," said Dr. Nicholls, his voice harsh and hard. "As far as I can see, you have acted abominably. The evidence is perfectly clear. You were found in this disreputable place, and now you persist that Mr. Clegg is your friend! Go, sir! I will deal with you tomorrow!"

OLIVE CLEGG smiled brightly as she sat up in bed. The improvement in her was extraordinary. Her old colour was returning, and, moreover, her temperature was normal, and all trace of the fever had left her.

At the foot of the bed sat Mr. Simon Clegg. Mrs. White was present also, and she was smiling happily.

"Oh, dad, you don't know how glad I am!" the girl was saying. "So the club is completely ended? There's going to be no more—"

"Not only ended, Olive, but forgotten," said Mr. Clegg gently. "I regret that I was fool enough ever to start the place! You and your friend, Fenton, were right all the time. Olive, child. A wonderful young fellow, that! It was he who saved your life, and I am grateful to him."

Olive was supremely happy. She knew that the shock had brought her stepfather to his senses, and she could tell that the future would be bright for her.

It was morning now, and the wintry sunshine was slanting through the little cottage window. She heard voices below, and then, a moment later, a quick footstep sounded on

the narrow stairs. Somebody was tapping urgently at the door.

"Who is it?" called Mrs. White, in some alarm.

"It's me—Handforth, of St. Frank's!" came a panting voice. "Can I come in?"

"Bless the boy, what does he want?" asked the good lady. "Yes, come in!"

Handforth, looking flushed and excited, entered. He was rather abashed as he caught sight of Olive, and he dragged his cap from his head. He stood there, flushed and confused.

"What is it, young man?" asked Mr. Clegg.

"It's—it's about Fenton, sir!" panted Handforth. "He's—he's going to be expelled!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Olive, in alarm.

"Expelled!" said Mr. Clegg. "Do you mean—sent away from the school?"

"Yes," replied Handforth. "The school has been ordered into Big Hall, but I managed to slip off, and I came racing down here to tell you! Oh, it's not fair! Fenton's the finest chap in the school, and—and—"

"One moment!" interrupted Mr. Clegg. "How has this come about?"

"The Head collared him last night as he came in, and everybody thinks that he was guilty!" said Handforth. "But I know better! I went to him and offered to tell the truth, but he said he'd half skin me if I breathed a word! He won't have Miss Olive's name mentioned, and he's going to sacrifice himself."

"But it is ridiculous!" protested Mr. Clegg, in alarm. "I never imagined that your headmaster would take such prompt action."

"We can't blame him," said Handforth gruffly. "Everything points to the fact that Fenton was at the night club, and that he had been flouting the school discipline. And, don't forget, he won't give any explanation. So what can the Head do?"

"How did you know where to find me?" asked Mr. Clegg.

"Oh, does it matter?" said Handforth impatiently. "Gore-Pearce has been gassing all over the school this morning; he's been telling everybody that Miss Olive is here, and that she was brought here by Fenton. There's a proper scandal about it all. That's why I've come. Wouldn't it be better for the whole truth to come out now?"

"Oh, yes—yes!" cried Olive. "I'm going to get dressed and come to the school!"

"Nonsense!" said her stepfather. "You mustn't think of such a thing, Olive! The doctor will—"

"Never mind the doctor!" said the girl quietly. "I'm better now—heaps better. It won't hurt me to go to St. Frank's if I'm well wrapped up."

IN the meantime, Edgar Fenton was standing on the platform, in the Big Hall at St. Frank's. He had been closely questioned by Dr. Nicholls in the latter's study; but he had maintained his

silence. And the Head was taking the only course that was now open to him.

The Head was looking very pained and sad. He disliked this task immensely. The school stood facing him, silent and awed.

"Fenton!" said the Head, in a quiet voice. "I wish to give you one last chance to explain your movements. Several nights ago you were found by Mr. Pagett, entering the school premises. You were breaking bounds in the small hours of the morning, and you gave no explanation. Last night the police found you with Mr. Clegg in the latter's disreputable night club. Is this all true?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, Fenton, you must tell me why you were there," said the Head. "Come, my dear fellow! I have always trusted you—I have always regarded you as the soul of integrity and honour. Even now I cannot believe that you have been guilty of anything disgraceful. But it is for you to give me an explanation. What were you doing in that club?"

"I'm very sorry, sir—but I cannot say anything more than I have already said."

"But, good gracious, you have said nothing!" protested the Head.

"I have told you that I am not guilty of any dishonourable conduct," replied Fenton.

"And I repeat that, sir. But I cannot give you any explanation."

"Which means that I must take your bare word against all this evidence?" asked Dr. Nicholls angrily. "No, Fenton, I can't do that. Your very refusal to explain indicates that you are guilty. And my only course is to announce your expulsion."

A murmur went round the school—a murmur of mingled protest and approval.

"I cannot let you remain in this school after what has happened," continued the Head. "You have flouted all discipline; you have set the rules and regulations at defiance. And you are the very one who should have set the others a good example."

"And he has done so, sir!" came a voice from the end of the hall. "Fenton has striven, from the very first, to restore the discipline of this school—and if he won't speak up and tell you the truth, then somebody else will!"

There was an immediate sensation. Everybody turned and stared. Then commotion burst out.

For, at the end of the hall, stood Mr. Simon Clegg, and with him were Dr. Brett and Miss Olive.

"**W**HAT does this mean?" demanded Dr. Morrison Nicholls, with anger and dignity.

"It means, sir, that you are doing this young fellow an injustice," replied Mr. Clegg, as he strode forward. "Have I your permission to bring my daughter on this platform?"

"Your daughter may come, sir—but I should prefer you to leave these premises!" said the Head coldly. "You are not welcome here."

"Not even when my one object is to clear this young fellow of the charge that you have brought against him?" retorted Mr. Clegg. "Come, sir! Whatever your personal prejudices may be against me, do me the justice, at least, of believing that my present motives are good."

"You may come upon the platform, Mr. Clegg," said the Head quietly.

Fenton took a step forward.

"Please!" he said earnestly. "Is—is it necessary to make this—this scene?"

"There will be no scene, young fellow," replied Mr. Clegg, as he turned to the Head. "Dr. Nicholls, I tender you my very sincere and earnest apologies."

"Really, sir, I do not quite comprehend—"

"I have been guilty of very discreditable conduct," said Mr. Clegg. "Yes, I admit it in front of your entire school. I have done my best to induce your boys to visit my night club, and I realise—now—that my conduct was inexcusable. I would like to add, however, that my club was never vicious; it was quite harmless, organised purely for the amusement of young people. My mistake was to entice your boys to break bounds, and to set the school rules at defiance. I am exceedingly sorry that I was so foolish."

The Head changed his expression.

"I am glad to hear you saying this, Mr. Clegg," he said with some warmth. "I can only trust that you are sincere."

"I had decided to close down the club even before I knew of the police raid," continued Mr. Clegg. "But enough of this! I want to assure you that Fenton is the one person in your school who should receive your praise and approbation. From first to last he has been fighting me—he has been urging me to close the night club, and to put an end to all the irregularities. His motive was excellent; he wanted to have everything done quietly, so that there would be no scandal."

"Why did he not explain this to me, then?" said the Head.

"Because I acted like a brute towards my stepdaughter," said Mr. Clegg. "On that foggy night, when Fenton was discovered by one of your masters, he had been down to see me. He had pleaded with me even earlier, asking me to close the club. He has never visited the place for his own pleasure, for, all along, he has been opposed to it. His one idea has been to restore the school's discipline. And then, that night, I was in a great rage, and I had a quarrel with my daughter. She fled into the fog, and collapsed."

"Please, Mr. Clegg!" muttered Fenton.

"Fenton came along, and he heard what had happened," continued Mr. Clegg. "He went out into the fog, found my daughter, and took her to shelter."

"Fenton has been splendid—and you mustn't punish him unjustly!" cried Olive, turning to the Head. "He saved my life. But how could he explain anything when he

met one of the masters? For if he had explained he would have broken a promise."

"What promise?" asked the Head kindly.

"When he first came to the night club, he came from a sense of duty," continued the girl. "He took the names and addresses of all the boys who were there, and it was his intention to bring the lists to you, so that you could take action. But I begged him not to; I was afraid of the scandal. He was generous enough to keep silent, but he meant, all along, to have the club closed. His one idea was to argue with my father, and to make him see reason."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Fenton!"

The school broke out into a storm of cheering, and it would not be denied for quite a long time. The cads, of course, were shaking in their shoes. They were half afraid that their names would be brought out, and that they would be called to answer for their conduct.

"I am very glad to hear this, Fenton," said the Head warmly. "I understand now that you were in a very difficult position. So it really amounts to this: You have, at last, succeeded in your efforts. You have been acting for the school's good name all along?"

"That was my object, sir," replied Fenton steadily.

"I am grateful to this young lady, and to her stepfather, for coming forward," continued the headmaster. "I have heard some very harsh things said about you, Mr. Clegg, but I am beginning to believe that you were only guilty of a blunder—and not of roguery."

At this moment Uncle Robert came on to the platform, and he was looking rather pale.

"Since everybody is confessing, I think I'd better say something," he exclaimed. "It was I who started most of the trouble; I was friendly with Mr. Clegg, and I acted as his agent. It was I who induced the fellows to go down to the club."

"No, no!" said Mr. Clegg quickly. "The boy is not to blame. I influenced him—I treated him as an equal, and I paid him money for what he did. I take every atom of the blame, sir."

"Last night, too, I believe that Fenton came down to Moat Hollow partly to save me from the police raid," continued Uncle Robert. "There's nothing against him—nothing, sir! I've been a fool all along. Fenton is one of the best!"

"Hear, hear!" yelled Handforth excitedly.

"I say," he added, turning to the cheering juniors around him, "let's chair old Fenton!"

The suggestion was received with fresh cheers. Handforth, Nipper, Travers, Fullwood and a crowd of others went surging forward, pushing their way through the other Removites.

"Stop! Boys, you must repress this—er exuberance—" began Dr. Nicholls, but for once he was disobeyed.

With Edward Oswald leading the way, the excited juniors crowded on to the platform

and rushed towards Fenton. The latter backed away in alarm, but there was no escaping them. Masters and prefects sought to bar the way and restore order. They were merely pushed out of the way.

"Good old Fenton!" said Handforth, seizing the Sixth-Former by the legs and almost upsetting him. "Come on, you chaps! Up with him!"

The chaps rallied round with a will. Fenton had many anxious moments while he was jostled about, but finally he found himself perched, very precariously, on the shoulders of Handforth and Nipper.

"Hurrah!"

The school was cheering itself hoarse now. Fenton himself was happy and flushed; and his joy reached its zenith when he saw Olive Clegg, smiling radiantly, walking across the platform towards him. She held out her hand.

"Oh, Edgar, I am so happy that everything has turned out like this," she said, with sparkling eyes. "I'm so glad your name has been cleared. And thank you for everything you did for me. I'm so proud of you, Edgar!"

Fenton, as he took the girl's hand and squeezed it, flushed. He became incoherent.

"Thank you," he stuttered. "You've nothing to thank me for. I—I—" He broke off there, unable to find words as he saw Olive's admiring eyes fixed upon him.

Fortunately, at that moment, Handforth, becoming impatient, moved forward, and Fenton forgot his embarrassment in a mighty effort to prevent himself falling. A second later he had lost sight of Olive in the seething crowd of juniors who surged round him.

Down into Big Hall he was carried in triumph by Handforth and Nipper. Seniors came forward and shook Fenton by the hand. Juniors thumped him on the back. When eventually he was able to escape into his study, after the school had been dismissed, he was feeling sore all over; but happy, supremely happy.

No longer was he an outcast; now he was the hero of St. Frank's—the fellow who had won.

Fenton was re-established as school captain without delay, and Uncle Robert quietly disappeared. After his confession it was impossible for him to remain in the school. He was not publicly expelled; he just left St. Frank's.

As for Olive Clegg, she was serenely happy—and she was convinced that her stepfather would, in future, treat her with kindness and loving care.

(Look out for a new and amazing series of yarns featuring the boys of St. Frank's next week—the first in our new programme of stories that are "different"; full-of-action tales that thrill! "Rogues of the Green Triangle!" is the title of the opening story which re-introduces Professor Cyrus Zingrave, an old favourite with readers. Order your next week's copy of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY now!)

GOSSIP ABOUT ST. FRANK'S

Things Heard and Seen By
EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

GUY E. BUCK, of Riccarton, New Zealand, asks me if the St. Frank's boys have been to Alaska, Borneo, Russia, Siberia, Japan, or a Foreign Legion outpost. As far as I know, they haven't been to any of these places. But there's no telling. With a man like Lord Dorrimore knocking about, it's possible that the St. Frank's chaps will go off to any odd corner of the world.

MRS. G. CRAIG, of Addington, New Zealand, tells me that she will "try, try again" to interest me in her letters, but I would like to assure her that her first letter was so successful that I am giving her a reply in this week's Gossip. Not only did Mrs. Craig give me some most interesting details regarding the recent disastrous earthquakes in New Zealand, but she tells me that she intends her baby boy to become a reader of the Old Paper when he grows old enough. Now, what could be nicer than this? Mother and son both reading the St. Frank's yarns. And doesn't it prove what I've always said—that the Old Paper appeals to youngsters and adults of either sex alike? Many thanks, Mrs. Craig, for your most encouraging and entertaining letter. But, please, don't run away with the idea that because your first letter was a success I don't want you to "try, try again." The more letters I get from readers the more I am encouraged in my work.

THIS seems to be a good opportunity for asking which kind of villains are "liked" most. Schoolboy villains or genuine full-grown, whole-hog crooks? Schoolboy rascals like Fenton's youthful uncle and Bernard Forrest and Claude Gore-Pearce—or grim-faced terrors like Professor Zingrave or Yen Sing, the sinister agent of the Fu Chang Tong?

CONSTANCE WHITE, of Bristol, in a very interesting letter, has asked me, amongst other things, who my favourite authors are. I'm not sure that this is of general interest, but I'll chance it. Rafael Sabatini takes first place, followed,

at a respectable distance, by R. Austin Freeman, P. G. Wodehouse, and Hulbert Footner. In the latter case, this applies only to his extraordinary fine stories of the Canadian North West. I have rather a partiality, too, for the yarns of Ridgwell Cullum and Rex Beach.

THERE seems to be some confusion about the name of Willy Handforth's pet snake. W. J. B. and F. E. B. of Clapham Junction, tell me that they have never heard of Septimus the Squirrel, but that they have seen Septimus mentioned as a Snake. Well, he isn't a snake. And in order to make this matter quite clear I'll give a full list of Willy's pets here, and this list can be taken as absolutely authentic, as I now have in front of me a scrap of ink-smudged exercise-book paper, further adorned with one or two grubby finger-prints, which Willy himself gave me. Septimus the Squirrel, Sebastian the Snake, Lightning the Greyhound, Priscilla the Parrot, Ferdinand the Ferret, Rupert the Rat, Marmaduke the Monkey, and Willy's latest addition to his Menagerie—Henry the Hedgehog.

OUR READERS' PORTRAIT GALLERY



Leslie A. Bowden

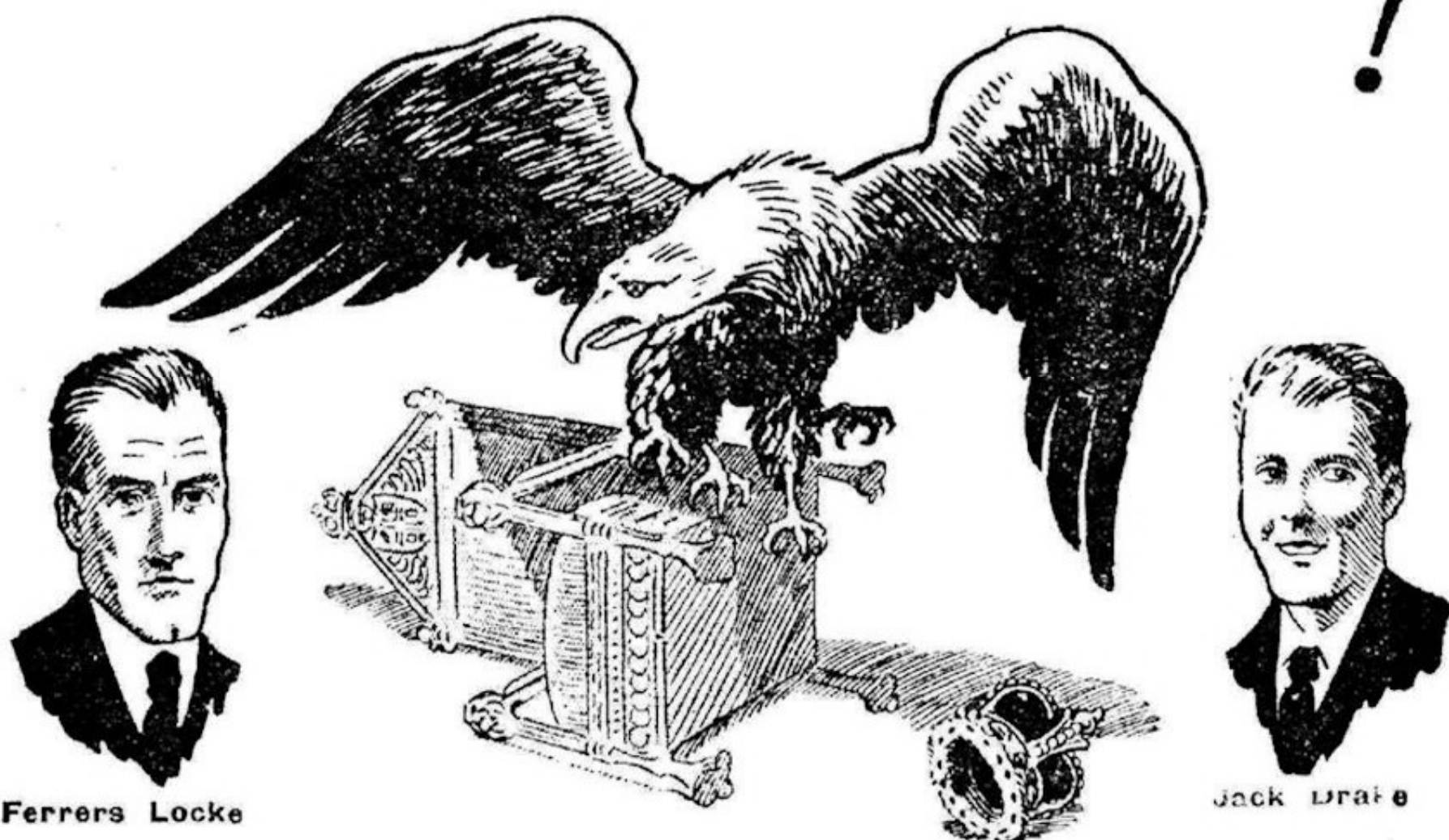
RALPH MESSINGER, of 183, Northcliffe Boulevard, Toronto, Canada, is anxious to find a kind reader who will send him the last story of the Ezra Quirke series, which he missed—and which, of course, is very important, since it contains the explanation of all the mystery. The story is called "The Broken Spell," and is No. 549, Old Series, dated December 12th, 1925. If any sportsman has this issue by him, and is willing to part with it, either temporarily or

for keeps, please send it to our Canadian chum. Perhaps it would be as well to drop him a line first, in case he gets more copies of this issue than he wants.

IAM glad to know that Leslie A. W. Bowden, of Ide, near Exeter, whose photograph graces our page this week, means to continue reading the Old Paper, in spite of the fact that he has now attained the ripe old age of 17.

New Readers can Start this Thrilling Serial Now—Turn to Page 38.

The FOUR-LEGGED EAGLE!



Pursued!

FERRERS LOCKE and Jack Drake crept back to the boathouse, and Jack watched the detective as he walked silently up to the door, which had been left ajar. Locke crouched to the ground and peeped in. The major was sitting there almost motionless. The smoke from his cigarette went up into the air in a straight line of blue haze.

Then Jack whistled softly, and Locke saw the major stiffen and gaze about him, wondering. Jack drew the dead branch he held across the window. The twigs scraped and rattled eerily. Major Patens turned and stared at the window. He went across to investigate, and that was the chance Locke had been waiting for. He knew the major to be a fighter, and an unscrupulous one at that. If Locke had boldly walked into the boathouse, the major would not have thought twice about pulling out a revolver and shooting to kill.

Locke entered the boathouse like a bullet from a gun. The major heard him and spun round. His hand flew to his hip-pocket, and as it came up the flickering light of the candle gleamed dully on the barrel of a revolver. Locke was too quick, however. He knocked the major's hand aside as the weapon spat fire, and the bullet sang past

the detective's ear. Next moment he had brought his left round in a smashing, swinging blow that crashed on the major's ear and toppled him sideways.

Locke was after him, even as he staggered against the wall. But the major was a military man and a born fighter. To give him his due he was as hard as nails, and fearless. He dodged the blow that Locke aimed at his jaw, and then attempted to bring his revolver into action again. Before he could pull the trigger, Locke had seized his wrist.

Instantly they were grappling, knee to knee, in a death struggle. At least, the major would not be satisfied unless he killed Locke, even if Locke did not intend to kill his opponent.

They swayed about on the narrow platform, and kept crashing against the wall. Locke was strong and a clever fighter, but the major was a bigger

man and maybe a shade stronger.

It was Locke's skill in defensive fighting that saved him, rather than his muscular strength. The major tried to break his back by wrestling his head backwards, for he had one hand under Locke's chin and was exerting all his strength. The detective managed to get both his hands free. One clenched fist thudded over the major's heart and made him wince; another crashed home, missing the solar plexus by a fraction. The

KING FERDINAND RECAPTURED BY CONSPIRATORS!

:: :: ::

Ferrers Locke Beaten after Exciting Aerial Chase.

force of it evoked a grunt from the major, and his pressure on Locke's head suddenly weakened.

Locke got in a vicious, furious uppercut to the point. He put all his strength behind that blow, and his assailant went staggering backward, his knees sagged beneath him and he crashed to the ground. But he was not out. He would have come to his feet, dazed and groggy but game to the last, only Jack arrived on the scene at that moment and sat on his chest. Locke had no difficulty in getting rope from the cockpit of the motor-boat, and they trussed him up and then gagged him. These operations completed, Jack then went and released the king, who all this time had been an anxious if silent witness of the proceedings.

Ferdinand of Abronia was not averse to being released, but his patience had been worn to a frazzle, and he was irritable. The truth of the matter was, he was now a sick man, worn out by the numerous ordeals of his captivity.

"It's about time someone rescued me from these rebels!" he snapped, chafing his numb limbs. "You're that detective fellow, aren't you?"

Locke merely smiled at the ungracious treatment he was receiving. He knew just how much the king had been through, and he made allowances.

"There is no time to lose, your Majesty," he said. "We must hasten to the car."

"And then where do we go?"

"To Abronia, I hope," said Locke.

"And the queen?" asked the king, his voice softening a trifle.

"I am glad to say, sir, that I persuaded her to return to Abronia, where she is now."

"Good work!" commented the king, less irritable now.

With Locke on one side of King Ferdinand, and Jack on the other, they all three left the boathouse and walked across the lawns, past the house, and then along the drive on to the road.

"But we could have escaped in their motor-boat," said the king. "Why trudge all this way?"

"A boat, sir," pointed out Locke, "will not take us over land to an aerodrome."

They walked on up the road to the spot

where Locke had concealed his car. Locke set the pace, and the king, after his long period of captivity, was soon showing signs of strain; yet he did not complain. By now he had lapsed into moody silence.

Locke brought the car from out of the bushes and helped the king into the tonneau, instructing Jack to sit beside him. His Majesty leant forward in his seat just as Locke was about to close the door.

"Mr. Locke!" he called.

"Your Majesty?"

"You must forgive my—my rudeness. Please forget—"

"I have forgotten that already," the detective assured the other. "And I shall only remember your courage, sir, that has enabled you to defy your enemies so long."

"Thank you," said the king simply.

Locke took his seat at the wheel, and the car moved away; gathering speed, it headed eastwards through the night.

Jack had expected the king to talk, questioning him about their adventures, and he had made up his mind to let the king realise just how much the detective had done since he started the case. But Ferdinand of Abronia had not a word to say. He leaned back in the car, closed his eyes and slept the sleep of utter exhaustion.

He did not awake until Locke drove up to the Croydon Aerodrome. Much valuable time was necessarily wasted here over the details of passports and the chartering of a machine in which to fly to Abronia.

All those things proved as difficult as the actual rescue of the king. People who race up to an aerodrome and want to leave the country in a hurry are under suspicion immediately. But Locke's name was one to conjure with, and he was able to get into touch with people in Whitehall who smoothed matters out. He obtained passports; an aeroplane was got ready for him. And then another snag cropped up. It was discovered that there was not a pilot available to fly the machine.

Locke would not wait. He held a pilot's certificate himself, and he decided he would take up the 'plane himself. The machine they had chartered was by no means a new one, but it would have to serve. They clambered in, all three. A mechanic swung

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 Seigner, 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, and the detective rescues the queen. King Ferdinand, however, is still a prisoner in the hands of Carlos. Locke and Jack go to Thames Ditton, where they discover that the king is a captive in a boat-house, guarded only by one man—a Major Patens. The Baker Street pair decide to attempt to rescue King Ferdinand.

(Now read on.)

the propeller, the engine burst into life, and they were off, taxiing over the turf.

As the black line of distant trees came racing towards them, Jack felt impelled to look back. What he saw made him whistle with dismay. A car was racing into the aerodrome. The headlights swept round the ground and settled on the speeding plane. By now the machine had left the ground and was circling in the air. Locke straightened out and headed south—knowing that Prince Carlos and his confederates were not far behind.

Jack talked to the detective through the telephone fitted to the helmets.

"Did you see that car, guv'nor?"

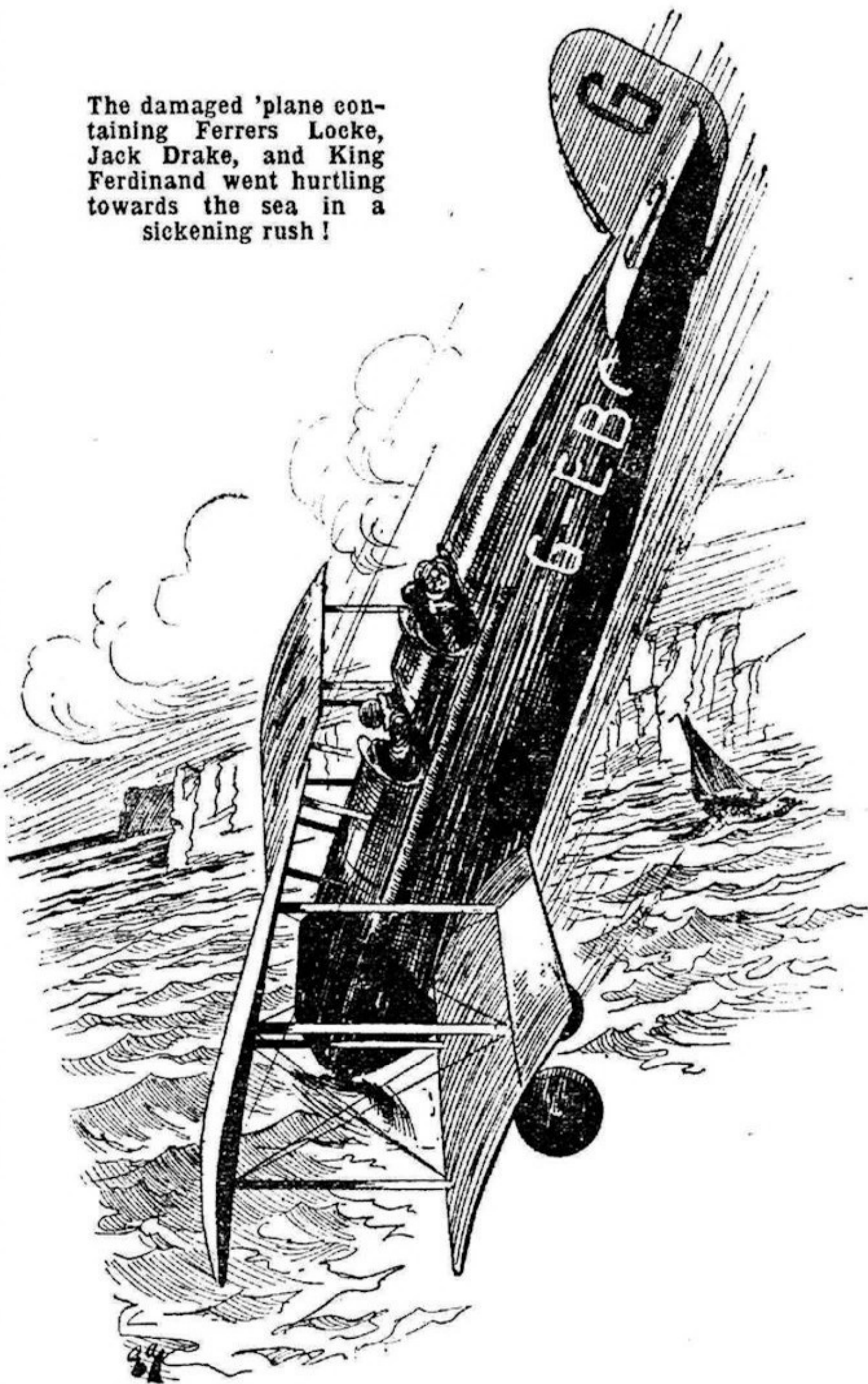
"I did. It might not have been them, but I dare say it was. They were in a hurry."

The king had very little to say for himself. He settled himself in his seat and closed his eyes, but whether he was actually asleep or not Jack could not say. The monarch looked absolutely worn out with worry and anxiety, to say nothing of the physical ordeals through which he had passed.

Locke headed for Paris. The moon went down behind a bank of clouds and the wind freshened considerably, buffeting the machine and adding to the discomfort of the sudden flight. It began to rain, and the drizzle swept into their faces, stinging like hail.

The black mass of the land, studded with lights, like diamonds on black velvet, slid away astern, and the Channel surged beneath them. A liner passed below in a blaze of light that illumined her from stem to stern, without actually shining out on to the black mass of the heaving waters. Far away on the horizon one dull red spot of light showed where a tramp steamer was ploughing her way up Channel.

The damaged plane containing Ferrers Locke, Jack Drake, and King Ferdinand went hurtling towards the sea in a sickening rush!



The grey dawn began to show in the east. The coast of France spread out before them like a contour map, grey and bleak. Yet to the king it must have been a welcome sight. He came out of his dozing and stared at it eagerly. It was like a milestone on his way home. He was that much nearer his native country.

Jack suddenly turned his head, and a startled exclamation escaped him. He spoke to Locke through the telephone.

"We're being chased! Another plane behind us! Speed her up, guv'nor!"

Locke eyed the pursuing machine, and he pursed his lips. He was piloting an old

bus. That other 'plane looked brand new, with gleaming struts and shining wings. Yet he did what he could. He coaxed all the speed possible out of the old aeroplane, but the pursuers came on, overhauling the fugitives hand over fist.

Then out of the dawn came the crackle of a machine-gun. The bullets hummed and sang amongst the wires and struts like mosquitoes. Locke sent the machine on a zig-zag course in an attempt to baffle his pursuers, but it was not his lucky day. Again that machine-gun crackled, again the bullets came hissing around Locke's 'plane, and suddenly it shot upwards, then dropped. There was a rending of wood and a snapping of wires, and the machine hurtled towards the foaming sea in a sickening rush.

Disaster!

FERRERS LOCKE struggled vainly with the joy stick; King Ferdinand of Abronia was game to the last, while Jack Drake gripped the edge of the cockpit and gazed in horrified silence at the white-crested waves that appeared to be rushing up to engulf him. The wind sung in his ears and smote him with such force as to make breathing difficult.

Then the stricken aeroplane struck the water. The impact completed what the machine-gun had started. The old 'plane practically fell to pieces, and the occupants were tossed out into the seething waves amongst the debris.

Already the sea was dotted with boats hastening to the rescue from the tiny harbour that nestled beneath the lowering cliffs. Jack Drake had unbuckled the straps that secured him to a fragment of the 'plane and was swimming about, conducting personal investigations. He found the king clinging to one of the wings, and not in the least panicky.

"All right, sir?" asked Jack.

"I'm all right," said the king, "but I cannot see Mr. Locke."

Jack was worried. He swam about in circles amongst the wreckage, then Locke broke the surface beside him. He shook the water from his hair and gulped in the fresh air.

"So you're safe?" said Jack superfluously, grinning with relief.

"Safe as houses!" grinned Locke. "But that engine nearly sucked me down with it."

"Plenty of boats coming to pick us up, guv'nor!"

"I'm not sure that I want to be picked up and taken ashore," said the detective.

"But, hang it all, guv'nor!" cried Jack. "We can't swim about here for ever."

"We've got to be picked up, and we've got to be taken ashore, admitted," said Locke. "But you will notice, Jack, that that other 'plane has landed on the top of the cliff. And why do you think we were fired upon and brought down in the sea?"

Jack did not reply, for the answer was obvious. Of course, it was Prince Carlos

who had shot them down, and now he was waiting to see where Locke and his companions were taken. And then he would make an attempt to recapture King Ferdinand.

"We must take things as they come," said the king grimly. "But I shall be glad, gentlemen, if you will preserve my incognito."

"Quite so," agreed Locke; and Jack nodded.

At that moment the first of the boats arrived, so laden with jabbering fishermen that there did not seem to be any room for the pilot and passengers of the wrecked 'plane. Yet, somehow, all three were hauled aboard, and they were rowed to the little harbour under the cliffs.

"Your luck has deserted you, mon ami," said one fisherman in French.

"You are right," admitted Locke in the same language.

He spoke glumly, but he did not quite know what the fisherman meant. He felt certain that it was Prince Carlos who had shot him down, or ordered his 'plane to be wrecked, and he had no idea what sort of story the prince had pitched to the authorities ashore. It behoved the detective to be wary and secretive, because King Ferdinand of Abronia did not want his true identity to be revealed, even in this crisis.

That fact handicapped Locke considerably. If he could have told the French police who his august passenger was, he could have relied upon them to help him. But then the news would have leaked out, and the people of Abronia would know that their king was not lying ill in his palace, as they believed, but had been kidnapped. A civil war might easily begin, and the end of that no man could foretell.

Taking everything into consideration, Locke was not amazed to find the quays of the harbour thronged with curious people. And when he stepped ashore he was not surprised to find himself and his party surrounded by pompous gendarmes.

"You are under arrest, m'sieur!" he was told.

"Why?" asked the detective mildly.

"What have we done?"

"Who knows?" queried the officer in charge, shrugging his shoulders. "We have our orders. Dangerous criminals are trying to escape from the police of Angleterre. It is sufficient. You are shot down and we apprehend you."

"Someone has fooled you," said Locke, his eyes glinting.

"Who can tell?" said the officer. "Tomorrow you will be taken before the Agent de Sûreté at Boulogne. You can tell him everything, m'sieur. For myself, I have my duty to do. The three of you are my prisoners!"

They were arrested, and it was useless to argue, for no one can be more obstinate than a French gendarme.

"We must take things as they come," said

King Ferdinand to Ferrers Locke. "But, please, m'sieur, do not reveal who I am."

The Baker Street detective nodded grimly. He understood, perhaps clearer than the others, just how far Prince Carlos had beaten them. He realised their peculiar difficulties. Not until they got to Boulogne would he be able to do anything to get out of the jam, and then it might be too late.

They saw nothing of Prince Carlos and his confederates, neither did they go anywhere near the other aeroplane on the top of the cliffs. They were marched to the local gaol, as if they were common felons, and locked in a cell.

"Ah, well," sighed Jack. "We're out of England, anyway."

"That may be a bad thing for us," said Locke, smiling in that inscrutable way of his. "Prince Carlos may have a better chance of corrupting officials on the Continent than he had in England."

"Are you quite sure that he is responsible for all this trouble?" queried King Ferdinand. "You heard the gendarme, m'sieur? He said dangerous criminals were escaping from England, and we were shot down. Does not that suggest that the authorities here were warned by wireless or telephone, and they sent a war machine to bring us down?"

"It may be so, but I doubt it," said Locke. "If we had met that other 'plane I would have agreed with you, sir, but it was following us, not intercepting us."

Jack scowled at the locked door of the cell.

"I wish they'd buck up and come!" he snapped. "I hate waiting about for things to happen!"

But, apart from food being brought to them, nothing did happen all that long, weary, uncomfortable night. In the morning they had their breakfast, then were hustled out into the brilliant sunshine and ordered to get into two waiting cars.

Locke was worried, for the gendarmes split up the little party. Locke and Jack were ordered into one car and King Ferdinand was hustled into another. Locke and Jack were handcuffed, but the king was not. In addition to the driver, there were only two gendarmes in the car to guard both Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, whereas with King Ferdinand there were three gendarmes in addition to the chauffeur.

Locke studied those three gendarmes, and he had his suspicions. One was big and tall, with the appearance of a military man. Another was small and insignificant. The third lacked the air of obedience that usually characterises a gendarme. He appeared to be someone in authority and accustomed to authority, yet he was dressed as an ordinary gendarme. He was not even a sergeant.

Locke was unable to study the driver, for he could only see the man's back. The detective had his suspicions. He knew that money can work wonders anywhere, but

more especially on the Continent. He hungered for a close look at the gendarmes in the car with King Ferdinand, but they kept out of his way. The cars left the village en route for Boulogne, the vehicle containing the Baker Street pair leading the way.

It was not easy to keep a good look-out for treachery. Locke and Jack were wedged between too fat gendarmes. They hardly had room enough for a deep breath, and turning the head was utterly impossible. Jack tried to wriggle to a position from which he could squint occasionally into the driving mirror that stuck out on the side of the driver's windscreen, but he never managed to get a view of the car that travelled behind him. All he ever saw was the bewhiskered face of the fat gendarme who sat beside him.

Ferrers Locke was only able to listen to the low hum of the engine of the following car. That was not easy, because the continuous popping and crackling of the exhaust of their own vehicle practically drowned any other noise.

Still nothing happened as they sped along the tree-bordered road, although all the time Locke suspected treachery, expected treachery. In a way, he wished something would happen, if only to set his mind at rest, one way or the other.

The spires of Boulogne became visible ahead of them. The car gathered speed, and they travelled faster than they had done ever since they left the fishing village. Boulogne came nearer and nearer. And suddenly Jack let out of a howl of dismay. The car in which King Ferdinand was travelling could be seen abreast of them!

The intention was obvious. A road branched off here towards the south. Locke's car still headed for Boulogne, but King Ferdinand was being whisked away in another direction. And the driver, although he was dressed as a gendarme, was the Grand Seigneur of Perilla. The big gendarme was Major Patens!

Ferrers Locke was furious at being thus balked. He cried out and tried to start to his feet, but the fat gendarme was almost lying on top of him. Jack brought up his manacled hands, and his two clenched fists struck the other gendarme full in the face. The man yelped and slid from his seat to the floor of the tonneau.

Again the boy raised his manacled hands to mete out similar punishment on the driver, but, before he could land the blow, hands clutched at his knees, and he fell on top of the fat gendarme he had already felled.

Locke was battling grimly with the other gendarme, but, owing to his handcuffed fists, he was at a disadvantage. The chauffeur looked back, and his eyes bulged to see the prisoners fighting madly behind him. He stepped on the accelerator, and drove at a furious speed into Boulogne, shrieking madly for help. Gendarmes came running

up, and at sight of them Locke simply sank back on to the seat, resigned to the fact that he could do nothing more at the moment.

Jack, enjoying himself, refused to release the fat gendarme he had on the floor of the car, and other gendarmes had to lug him out of the car when it came to a standstill.

Not too gently they were hustled into the headquarters of the gendarmerie, and then a grim smile came to Locke's face, for the inspector was staring at him in amazement.

"So!" exclaimed the inspector. "The dangerous criminal turns out to be M'sieur Locke!"

"Can I talk with you privately?" asked Locke.

"This way, m'sieur. Your explanations of this situation must be interesting and amusing."

"More interesting than amusing to me," said Locke, going into an ante-room with the official.

Jack would very much liked to have been present at that interview, but he had to be content with staying behind with the fat gendarme he had manhandled on the floor of the car, who was standing close beside him and eyeing him balefully.

In due course, Ferrers Locke came out of the ante-room with his hands free. Jack's handcuffs were also taken off him. The detective's conversation with the inspector had been highly successful. He and Jack had been released with profuse apologies.

"It's something to have the gift of the gab, guv'nor," said Jack. "Where now?"

"Paris!" said Locke.

The fat gendarme scowled at being robbed of his victim. Jack grinned back at him as he left the building with Locke. A quarter of an hour later, he and Locke were in a high-powered car racing towards Paris.

Locke had decided upon his future course of action. The next step was undoubtedly to get on the trail of Prince Carlos again, and how could that be done better than by having all the roads leading out of France watched? For, obviously, Prince Carlos would not remain in France any longer than he could help, knowing that Locke was also in that country.

But where would he go? Locke could only guess that, and his guess was that the prince would take the king back towards Abronia, if only to scare Ferdinand with the threat of civil war and danger to Queen Zita.

So Locke raced to Paris to put the matter before the most astute detectives of the Sûreté, hoping they would help him to find out which way Prince Carlos was escaping with his royal captive!

(Another corking instalment of this enthralling serial will appear next Wednesday. Have you seen the announcement on page seven about next week's extra special issue of the Old Paper, chums? Make sure you order your copy in advance!)

"PEEPS PAST THE PYRAMIDS!"

(Continued from page 13.)

"Thou hast not heard of it yet, O master!" reminded Gho Bang, the son of Buset, who was centurion of the Form.

"Enough! Thy faces give thee away! But speak, that I may know how to deal with thee!" And Dr. Potiphar pointed to Ptah, the son of Noth Ankhs, who sat in the forefront of the class.

"O master," said Ptah, "we have been guilty of no offence."

"No offence," the master said in a tone bristling with sarcasm. "Thy redd looks, then; thy blushes—why these?"

"The boys of St. Obelisk's did raid us, and did even rub into our faces ink of great redness, O master!" Whereat Dr. Potiphar was much wroth.

"Well!" he quoth angrily. "Dash my blith-erring sandal straps! Are ye worms, that ye let a rival school raid ye and get away with it? Pooh! And puff!"

And Ptah, the son of Noth Ankhs, spake up hardily:

"O master!" said Ptah. "They did not get away with it, not much. For Twist-Ur there, the son of the sorcerer, did exercise his magic upon them, and caused all their faces to turn green, so that when they saw one another they had fitts."

"Ho, ho, ho!" chortled the master. "Not

so bad! Thou lookest weird enough with redd faces; what they looked like with green dials, I know not."

"And theirs won't rub off until Twist-Ur breaks the spell," added Ptah eagerly. "Ours will clean off—in time."

"And that's not all we did to them, O master!" chimed in Khoo-Khoo, the fool of the Form.

"Oh, verily!" exclaimed Dr. Potiphar. "What else, then?"

"Twist-Ur did even cause great rocks to pursue the boys of St. Obelisk's, and smote them out of the gates. Haw, haw, haw!"

But the rest of the boys laughed not, for they were not anxious that the master should know of this.

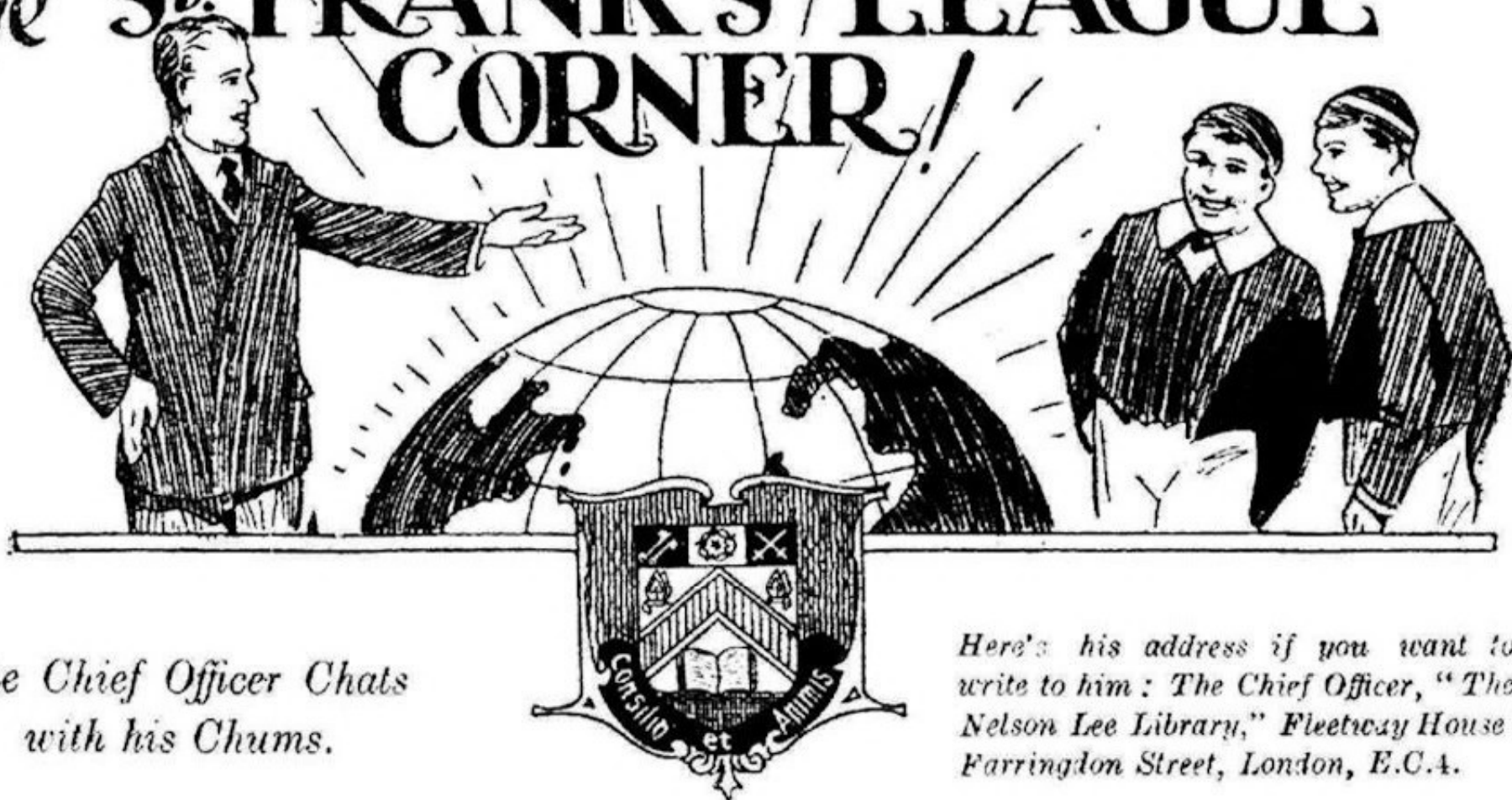
"Great rocks, thou sayest, O Khoo-Khoo? And where, then, the great rocks came they from?" asked the Doctor, with dawning suspicion.

"From thy rock garden, O master!" blurted out Khoo-Khoo, forgetting in his haste that the rock garden was the pride of the master's heart.

"My what?" shouted Dr. Potiphar, grasping his rodds threateningly. "My rock garden? By Jupiter's satellites! Thou art miserable asses, all of ye! Spoil my garden for a lot of louts, eh! Away! Out of my sight! Go! Wash thy motley muggs in the Nile—and may crocodiles bite thee!"

And he chivvied the boys through the trap-door, until not one remained.

The ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE CORNER!



*The Chief Officer Chats
with his Chums.*

*Here's his address if you want to
write to him: The Chief Officer, "The
Nelson Lee Library," Fleetway House
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

Don't Get Alarmed!

BY now I expect most of my fellow League-ites have seen the announcement on page seven to the effect that the NELSON LEE LIBRARY is embarking upon a change of programme from next week onwards, when many of the present features will give way to new ones.

To those of you who haven't seen it—don't get alarmed. The St. Frank's League will still carry on as of old; for never has it been more flourishing than at the moment. And I shall still continue to chat to my chums in our own little corner, although on and after next Wednesday it will be known as the "St. Frank's League Gossip."

The "Correspondents Wanted" feature will also remain in the *new* NELSON LEE LIBRARY. This feature is only a comparatively small part of the Old Paper, but there is no doubting that it is one of the most popular with readers.

Good News!

LILLIE E. HAYES, of Southampton, is a newcomer into the League ranks, and I have received a very charming letter from her thanking me for the badge and certificate, which she thinks are excellent. Just by showing the badge to some of her girl friends, she had already received promises from seven of them that they will also become readers of the Old Paper.

I shall have much pleasure in sending you a bronze medal when you let me have the

necessary forms, Lillie, and when you show some of your other friends this—why, I can see you winning the *silver medal* before you're very much older. Carry on with the good work.

Join This Club!

THE WORLD'S CORRESPONDENCE CLUB—an ambitious name, that!—requires more members from any part of the world. Stamp collectors, coin collectors, cricketers, footballers are especially asked to join, but that does not bar readers who are interested in other hobbies; every-

body, in fact, is welcome. Prospective members should apply to Edwin F. Ebborn, Mount Leyshon, Charters Towers, Queensland, Australia.

For Stamp Collectors!

HERE'S news that concerns stamp collectors. Stanley Rowe, a loyal League-ite of 219, Trinity Road, Aston, Birmingham—himself an enthusiastic philatelist—is keen to

start a club for readers who care for this hobby. All readers who are interested should apply to Stanley at the above-mentioned address.

Write to this Reader!

Charles R. Watson, of 61, Clarence Road, London, E.16, writes me a cheery letter all about the doings of his club, which is going great guns, and which runs a free magazine. He would be pleased to hear from readers and members of other correspondence clubs.

THE CHIEF OFFICER

THIS WEEK'S WINNING LETTER

DEAR CHIEF.—I have been a member of the St. Frank's League for some time, but must confess that I haven't been an extra energetic one so far. I've decided to alter that state of affairs now by going all out to get the bronze and silver medals.

To get the necessary number of new readers I have devised a little scheme of my own. I have formed a little circulating library consisting of back numbers of the Old Paper. These copies are lent out, and it is my hope that the borrowers, after they have seen what a splendid paper the N.L.L. is, will decide to buy it regularly themselves, and at the same time join the League.

Wishing the League the best of luck,

(Signed) C. ALLMARK, S.F.L. No. 9,562.

(For this interesting letter C. Allmark, of Bearwood, Smethwick, has been awarded a leather pocket wallet.)

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

W. Rigg, 19, Edith Street, **Nelson, Lancs.**, would like to hear from all who are interested in his International Correspondence Club.

Dennis Bland, 81, Ives, Tattershall Drive, The Park, **Nottingham**, offers back numbers of the N.L.L., from No. 103, old series.

Eric Miller, Coachbuilders, John Street, **Ashton-under-Lyne**, offers back numbers of the N.L.L.

R. K. Arthur Skill, 19, South Street, **Chichester**, wants to hear from stamp collectors.

Miss Flo Anderson, 9, Rudyard Street, **North Shields**, wants a girl correspondent—preferably a Ranger aged about 20, who is interested in swimming and cycling.

J. W. Boucher, 18, Harman Street, Grosvenor Street, **Camberwell, London, S.E.5**, requires N.L.L., old series, any number before 190.

Alex. Henderson, 35, Broadlands Road, Hampton Park, **Southampton**, wants to hear from all interested in his Wide World Wireless and Correspondence Club.

Ernest C. Pedder, 234, Finchley Road, Child's Hill, **London, N.W.2**, wants correspondents in his district, also in France, India, and Egypt.

Alf. Taylor, 1, Scrvin Grove, Meanwood Road, **Leeds**, wants correspondents all over the world.

Edward McNulty, 10, Ralfour Street, Holderness Road, **Hull**, would like to hear from stamp collectors anywhere.

Stan Dalziel, Omahack P.O., N.S.W., **Australia**, wants correspondents in England and France. Has back numbers of the N.L.L. for sale.

George Norman Barber, 19, Clifton Street, Old Trafford, **Manchester**, offers N.L.L., new series, 1d. per copy, post free.

Howard J. Panter, 24, Elmfield Road, Balham, **London, S.W.12**, wants N.L.L., Nos. 1, 4, and 51, new series. Will exchange a copy of No. 1, new series, which has a torn cover, and 1s. for a clean copy of same issue.

A. E. Angus, 51, Harrington Place, Lowfields, **Sheffield**, wants the issues of the N.L.L. containing the "Boothby Baronet" series.

H. Ranger, c/o W. H. Brewer, 605, George Street, Sydney, N.S.W., **Australia**, wants correspondents anywhere.

A. Jarvis, 103, Leathwaite Road, Battersa **London, S.W.11**, would like correspondents, ages 15-16, in Africa and India.

Roy Sherwin, 28, Buninyong Street, Yarraville, W.13, Melbourne, **Australia**, wants correspondents.

Frank R. Dayman, 10, Ehesmere Avenue, Miramar, Wellington, **New Zealand**, wants to hear from the secretary of a league club, as he wishes to start a club himself. He would also like correspondents in Ireland and Sweden interested in films and sport. Age 16.

T. Cooper, 216, Harnall Lane East, **Coventry**, wants correspondents, ages 17-21.

Miss Margaret Giles, National Provincial Bank House, Union Street, **Stratford-on-Avon**, wants girl correspondents interested in riding, the talkies, movies, and animals.

Patrick Dockery, Shannon View, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, **Ireland**, desires corre-

spondents in England, South Africa, and Australia, interested in sports. Ages 15-16.

M. H. Kellos, 208, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, wants correspondents in America, China, and Fiji.

Jack Ritchie, 5, Lynedoch Avenue, East St. Kilda, S.2, Victoria, **Australia**, age 14, wants to hear from stamp collectors in South Africa, South America, India, and Canada.

Leslie D. Rouch, 10, Maitland Park Villas, Hampstead, **London, N.W.3**, wants correspondents in France and Belgium; he would write in French.

W. G. Povah, 28, Waverree Road, Streatham Hill, **London, S.W.2**, wants correspondents interested in films and journalism, also wishes to hear from S. Jacobs, of Holloway.

Samuel McDowell, c/o J. B. Jenkins, 20, Waring Street, **Belfast**, wants correspondents.

Fred E. Ryman, 10, St. Mark's Street, **Peterborough**, would like to hear from anybody who is interested in his Peterborough Stamp Club.

C. Cohen, 29, Seaton Street, Hampstead Road, **London, N.W.1**, wants to hear from stamp collectors.

F. A. Clarke, 25, Elm Park Road, Leyton, **London, E.10**, wants members for his British and Foreign Correspondence Club.

James Cohen, 15, Lancaster Street, Lancaster Gate, **London, W.1**, has back numbers of the N.L.L. for sale.

Miss Mildred Green, 488, Dudley Road, **Wolverhampton**, wants to hear from Girl Guides throughout the Empire, also in Hungary.

Arthur Dawson, 163, Church Street, Bradford, **Manchester**, wants correspondents anywhere.

F. Ford, 88, Hillingdon Street, Walworth, **London, S.E.17**, wishes to hear from readers in the British Empire, China, and Japan.

Miss Florence Cant, 191, Northwood Road, Clapton, **London, E.5**, would like to hear from girl readers overseas.

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