

"SCHOOLBOYS IN ARMOUR!"

Double-Length St. Frank's
Yarn Inside.

NELSON LEE

2^d



**OLD
IRON
'ANDY!**

One bold knight comes a cropper! An amusing incident from this week's enthralling,
book-length yarn featuring the cheery Chums of St. Frank's in Northestria.

New Series No. 70.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

May 23rd, 1931.

The Chums of St. Frank's in Battle!

SCHOOLBOYS IN



CHAPTER 1.

The Eve of Battle!

THE little town of Lidgate, usually so sleepy, was teeming with feverish activity. The inhabitants were bewildered by the constant coming and going of endless streams of soldiers.

There was only one inn in the place, and this was the quaint building which faced the little market-

square. In one of the low-ceilinged rooms stood Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore, the massive beams almost touching their heads.

The famous schoolmaster-detective was dressed in nondescript attire, his own white flannel shirt showing beneath a Gothlander tunic. Dorrie was comfortable in flannel

trousers and tennis-shirt. With them were three others—three magnificent-looking men in gleaming chainmail. The tallest and most elderly was

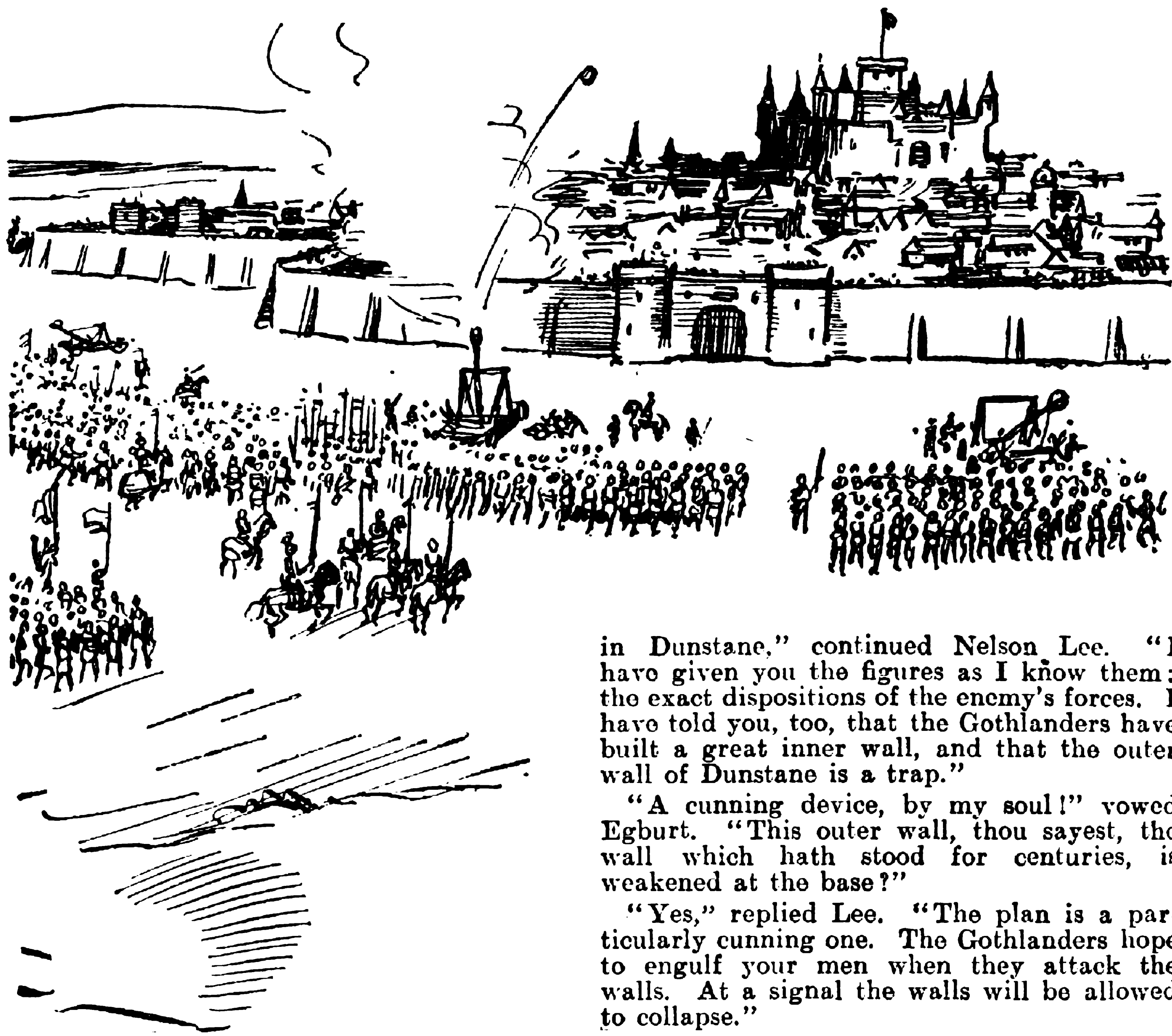
CAPTURE OF KING CEDRIC!

Decisive point in great Battle of Dunstane won by heroic schoolboys!

Thrills and Excitement for the Schoolboy Adventurers!

ARMOUR!

By **EDWY SEARLES
BROOKS**



none other than Athelstane the Great, the Commander-in-Chief of the Northestrian forces. The others were Egburt the Fair and Wynwed the Jovial.

A meal was prepared, but none of those men touched it. The conference was altogether too vital.

"An immediate attack upon every side of the city is essential," Nelson Lee was saying. "There must be no delay, Athelstane. For the Gothlanders are warned, and your only chance is to fall upon them before they can change their plans."

"The order will be given for an immediate advance, my lord Lee," said Athelstane gravely. "Our men are ready; they are eager. I'faith, they have but to hear a whisper and they will charge valiantly to the attack of these brutal oppressors."

"Ay, true!" said Wynwed, nodding.

"You have heard of my recent discoveries

in Dunstane," continued Nelson Lee. "I have given you the figures as I know them: the exact dispositions of the enemy's forces. I have told you, too, that the Gothlanders have built a great inner wall, and that the outer wall of Dunstane is a trap."

"A cunning device, by my soul!" vowed Egburt. "This outer wall, thou sayest, the wall which hath stood for centuries, is weakened at the base?"

"Yes," replied Lee. "The plan is a particularly cunning one. The Gothlanders hope to engulf your men when they attack the walls. At a signal the walls will be allowed to collapse."

"Ay, but thus warned we shall not be fools enough to let ourselves be buried under the ruins," said Athelstane. "If the Gothlanders can be cunning, so can the Northestrians. I regret, my lord Lee, that ye cannot be by my side when I go into battle."

"I would come willingly enough—eagerly," replied Nelson Lee quietly. "But we do not want to give the Gothlanders the chance of saying that this battle has been won by outside help. You Northestrians must take Dunstane entirely yourselves; it is the only way of securing a permanent peace."

"Truly spoken, my lord," said Athelstane, bowing. "We go, then."

"The best of luck," said Lord Dorrimore cheerfully.

"Nay, my lord Dorrimore, t'will not be luck if this battle is won," replied the Northestrian Commander-in-Chief. "We go to fight for the salvation of our fair country—

and if we win, we shall win because of our determination and courage."

There was only a little further talk, Nelson Lee giving one or two final reminders. Then Athelstane and his officers took their departure, leaving Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore alone.

"Well, Lee, old man, perhaps we can eat now?" said Dorrie, as he sat down at the table. "By gad, what a game! I'm sorry we can't join in the picnic out there."

"We're better here, Dorrie," replied Lee. "It's their fight, and we should do more harm than good by joining in. If the storming of the city is successful, we can enter then—and perhaps do our bit. But the first onslaught must be made entirely by the Northestrians themselves. May success reward them!"

THE town of Lidgate was only two or three miles away from the great walled city of Dunstane, the capital of Northestria. Out in the open country were thousands upon thousands of Northestrian volunteers—peace-loving fellows at heart, but now worked up to a frenzy of warlike determination. Not many of them were trained soldiers, but all of them were ready to die for their country. At all costs the Gothlanders had to be driven out!

It was a curious situation, this—particularly for Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore to be in. There were others with them; Mr. Alington Wilkes, the Housemaster of the Ancient House at St. Frank's, Sir Hobart Manners, the officers and crew of the super-submarine Pioneer—and last, but by no means least, a fairly big crowd of St. Frank's boys and Moor View girls.

These latter had been left behind in the town of Ixwell, well behind the fighting lines. In Ixwell the Princess Mercia held her court, with Ethelbert and Red as her regent. Nelson Lee had given very strict orders that none of the boys was to take part in the fighting.

The adventurous party had had a thrilling time in this remote oasis of the frozen North. Northestria was only a part of the oasis; the rest comprised the great central lake and the little country of Gothland beyond. Gothland was the home of the savage, brutal oppressors who had obtained such a grip on their peace-loving neighbours.

The oasis itself was several hundred of miles across—nearly half as big as England—and it was entirely surrounded by impassable mountain peaks, which raised their lofty, snowcapped summits into the everlasting mists which surrounded the twin countries.

Entry by air was virtually impossible, owing to the height of the mountains and the eternal blizzards which raged in the upper air—these blizzards being due to the extraordinary changes in atmospheric conditions. Outside the oasis the temperature was below zero; but Northestria was a semi-tropical country. The heat was derived from the volcanoes which formed part of the mountain ranges, and also from the many hot geysers

which boiled and bubbled in the foothills.

Lord Dorrimore's party had come by submarine, and this wonderful vessel had voyaged beneath the Arctic ice, finally entering the oasis by means of a great tunnel. It was Dorrie's dreams to open up this quaint medieval country as a modern winter resort.

But the conditions were hardly ripe for anything like that, for the Gothlanders had invaded Northestria, and the coming of the "Strangers from Beyond the Great Ice" had put a spirit of amazing courage into the oppressed people. Ever since the submarine's arrival, in fact, a great rising had been in progress, and now it was culminating in the attack upon Dunstane.

Nelson Lee himself had only just got back from the capital; he had penetrated into King Cedric's castle, disguised as Guntha the Crafty, and he had made many important discoveries regarding the enemy's forces and plans. Only by the skin of his teeth had he escaped.

His plan, in fact, had gone wrong, since he had intended getting out without the Gothlanders knowing of his real identity. But owing to an incautious word uttered by Handforth of the Remove, the Gothlanders had got to know. Lee had been compelled to leave in a hurry.

The real Guntha was a prisoner aboard the Pioneer, which lay placidly off the lake shore two miles beyond Ixwell. He was the Gothlander Commander-in-Chief, but he was not likely to do much commanding in this particular battle. His capture had really been the turning point in the campaign, for without him the Gothlanders had been at sixes and sevens.

"OH, well, I suppose it's all for the best," said Lord Dorrimore regretfully. "Still, it's a pity we can't use our tanks and aeroplanes."

Nelson Lee smiled.

"I admire your valiant spirit, old man, but the use of modern weapons of war would make a pretty bad hash of things."

"They would make a pretty bad hash of Dunstane," grunted Dorrie, as he lit a cigarette.

"That's just what I mean," said Lee. "With those super-whippet tanks and bomb-carrying aeroplanes, Dunstane could be reduced to surrender within an hour."

"And we're not even using 'em," growled Dorrie. "By the Lord Harry! I thought I was pretty clever when I had those tanks and 'planes tucked away aboard the Pioneer. And now, when it comes to the point, they're of no earthly use."

"But they have been of use, Dorrie," Lee reminded him. "The tanks have been very handy indeed, and if it hadn't been for the aeroplanes, some of the girls might never have been rescued from Cedric's clutches."

Lord Dorrimore grunted.

"Oh, yes, they've been useful," he admitted. "But why not bring them out now? Just think of the thrill of dashing into Dun-

stane in one of those tanks! Smashing through the city gates, charging into the enemy with machine-guns blazing! Gad! We could make mincemeat of 'em!"

"You bloodthirsty old beggar!" said Lee, with a grin. "I believe you'd enjoy it."

"I'd enjoy anything against those tyrannous Gothlanders," admitted Dorrie. "Why should we show them any mercy? They've been grinding these harmless people under their heel; beheading them, burning them at the stake, and performing every imaginable kind of torture. And that brute Cedric is the worst of them all!"

"But you really mustn't get yourself worked up like this, old man," said Lee gently. "After all, we didn't come here to take sides in this war."

"I did!" said Dorrie promptly.

"Well, of course, you're different," admitted Lee. "You have a nose for trouble, and you're never really content unless you're hunting big game or doing something equally hazardous."

"There's nothing hazardous in hunting big game nowadays," said Dorrie, with a sniff. "There's hardly a corner of the world that isn't civilised. You can go amongst a cannibal tribe and find 'em eating condensed milk and canned beef! The world's so civilised that there aren't many thrills left. And when we do find a really red-hot scrap going on, we've got to sit here and twiddle our thumbs!"

Nelson Lee chuckled.

"For the simple reason, Dorrie, that if we took part in it the Gothlanders would give us all the credit," he replied. "We could reduce Dunstane to surrender, yes. But the Northestrians would have their battles to fight again after we have gone. If they take Dunstane without our help, without any modern appliances, they will gain an overwhelming victory. Cedric will be compelled to withdraw his entire forces back to Gothland. It will mean freedom for Northestria—and a lasting freedom too. That's why we must sit here and twiddle our thumbs."

He rose to his feet.

"But we're not going to," he added. "There's no reason why we shouldn't go out upon the heights and have a look at the battle. It ought to prove a most-interesting spectacle. Come along, Dorrie! A medieval attack upon a walled city. Don't forget that the spectator sees most of the game!"

CHAPTER 2.

Handforth Lays Down the Law!

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH, with his hands thrust deeply into his trousers pockets, lounged disconsolately on the great drawbridge of Ixwell Castle.

"Disgusting!" he said indignantly. "That's what it is, you chaps—absolutely disgusting!"

"What are we supposed to do—aplaud?" asked Church, with sarcasm. "My hat! That's about the fiftieth time you've made that remark in the last hour!"

"And we're sick of it!" added McClure pointedly.

Handforth's chums were fed up with their leader. They couldn't see the point of his constant growling and grumbling. Of course, he was a born grumbler, but just now he was rather overdoing it.

The three chums of Study D were not alone; on the other side of the drawbridge, looking dejectedly into the moat, were Nipper, Tommy Watson, Tregellis-West, Travers, Pitt, and others. They all appeared to be infected by the same virus. Gloom enveloped them all.

"You're a fine chap to talk, Handy!" went on Church, with some heat. "Owing to your rotten carelessness, Mr. Lee nearly got done in."

Handforth winced.

"I know it," he growled. "No need to remind me of it, blow you! Thank goodness he escaped. And when I re-captured those rotten spies I thought that everything was all right."

Handforth had been incautious in talking about Lee's visit to Dunstane disguised as Guntha the Crafty; but he had done his best to repair the damage. He had chased the spies, and he had re-captured them. But he had not known that they had passed their information on to another spy.

However, much to the boy's relief, they had learned that Lee was safely back in the Northestrian lines, and that he was now with Lord Dorrimore in the town of Lidgate.

"Even Mr. Lee and Dorrie aren't fighting in the battle," said McClure. "None of the men is, if it comes to that."

"Why not?" demanded Handforth heatedly. "And why shouldn't we be fighting? My only sainted aunt! Here's the most glorious scrap you ever heard of, and we aren't allowed to be in it! And do you think I believe that Mr. Lee and Dorrie aren't going to be in the battle? Rats!"

"Well, if they do fight they'll only fight in the same way as the Northestrians," said Nipper, coming across and joining the chums of Study D.

"That's what I mean," argued Handforth. "Why can't we fight the same way as the Northestrians? I'm not suggesting that we should go in the tanks or in the aeroplanes. But it's sickening that we should be kept back here, miles behind the lines—skulking in safety. What does Mr. Lee think we're made of?"

"Yes, it is a bit thick," admitted Nipper, with a frown.

Handforth stared.

"Oh, you agree, do you?" he asked.

"I should be a silly ass if I disagreed," retorted Nipper. "Mr. Lee may be my guv'nor—and I think he's the best man in the world—but for once he's made a bloomer. It's the only grouch we've got

against him. He thinks we're made of gingerbread, or sugar-icing, or something! We've got to be kept back here—safe! Blow it! I feel like jibbing!"

"What-ho and absolutely hear, hear!" said Archie Glenthorne, with emphasis. "I mean to say, there's a dashed limit, what? I'm not much of a chappie for dashing hither and thither, and going into battle and all that sort of thing; but at a time like this it's rather a case of all hands to the pumps."

"Exactly!" said Handforth eagerly. "What about it? Shall we make a break for it?"

"There's no need to make a break—nobody will attempt to stop us," growled Nipper. "That's not the point. I'm game enough to go into this battle—but I doubt if we should be allowed to join."

"Who's to stop us, dear old fellow?" asked Travers.

"Well, we're rather conspicuous," replied Nipper. "There's no possibility of Mr. Lee mistaking any of us for the North-eastrian soldiers. He's up near the fighting line, and so is Dorrie. As soon as we showed ourselves we'd be stopped and sent back."

"Couldn't we disguise ourselves somehow?" suggested Reggie Pitt.

"It's an idea," said Nipper, with a grin. "We shall have to think about it."

IN Dunstane Castle, Cedric the Cruel was frantic with fury—a fury which only partially concealed his fear.

His nobles and attendants were in fear and trembling. For the King, in a mood like this, was a dangerous man. He was liable to send his most faithful servants to the executioner.

"Fools—dunderheads!" he raved, whilst Attawulf the Terrible, his constant adviser, stood by. "Lee the Lionheart was here—in this castle—and yet my fools of soldiers allowed him to get away! By my bones! There shall be a grim reckoning!"

"Methinks thou art unduly harsh, sire!" said Attawulf. "'Twas not the fault of the soldiers—but rather the magic of Lee the Lionheart. Was he not here, in the castle—even upon the battlements? He was even within reach of thine own sword."

"By St. Attalus! Are ye blaming me?" roared Cedric.

"Nay, sire, I am not suggesting——"

"Thy words, I vow, are strange, then," interrupted the King harshly. "Lee the Lionheart leapt from the battlements, and he dropped into the moat. 'Twas I who made the discovery that he was not Guntha the Crafty, as he pretended. And with all my soldiers in the courtyard he seizes a horse and escapes! A murrain upon the guard!"

And so he raved, blaming all and sundry—yet knowing, in his heart, that Nelson Lee had escaped solely because of his own wit.

It was not merely Lee's escape which had so upset King Cedric. It was the fact that

Lee had got away with the vital information concerning the defences of Dunstane.

There was another point, too. The discovery that Lee had played such a trick meant that Guntha the Crafty was still a prisoner aboard the Pioneer. Cedric had been relying upon Guntha's aid in the coming battle. And now Guntha would not be by his side.

There was yet another aspect—the most serious of all.

The Gothlander soldiers had rejoiced at the return of Guntha; the very knowledge that their commander-in-chief was in Dunstane gave them heart. In just the same way the knowledge that Guntha was still a prisoner cast them into depression. It had been impossible to keep the facts from the soldiers. Like wildfire, the rumour had spread.

The supposed Guntha was Lee the Lionheart—and Lee the Lionheart had taken all the secrets of the city's defences to the North-eastrians!

The defenders of Dunstane were dumbfounded—even frightened. Their will to fight was lamentably weakened now. A spirit of gloom, of impending disaster, was spreading throughout the Gothlander forces.

And such a spirit was ill on the eve of battle.

The castle was in comparative quiet, for only a few soldiers were left on guard now. Every man was needed at the walls. The flower of Cedric's armies was in Dunstane, ready to defend the city against the North-eastrian loyalists.

"What now, my lord Attawulf?" demanded the King, when he saw that his adviser was hesitating.

"News hath come, sire, that the attack is developing at the outer defences," said Attawulf. "And I fear 'tis ill news, for the enemy hath broken through in several places. Our forces are in retreat."

"By my marrow and by my bones!" raved the King. "What are my soldiers made of, then? Have they no spirit left in them at all?"

Attawulf came nearer, his face pale and haggard.

"Sire, I would suggest that we hasten to the royal galley, which awaits on the lake shore fully manned. There is yet time for us to escape to Gothland——"

"Nay, say no more, thou weakling!" thundered the King. "Art suggesting Attawulf, that Dunstane might fall?"

"The North-eastrians are in far greater number than us, sire, and they are maddened by a wondrous ardour for battle," said Attawulf. "Should Dunstane fall, and the enemy penetrate into the city, then we are lost indeed. For then there will be no escape."

"Make not such speeches to me, Attawulf!" shouted the King furiously. "By the bones of Senlac! Dunstane will not fall! Our defences are impregnable, and the enemy will never penetrate!"



With battering rams and ballistas the North-estrians attacked their foes. The great Battle of Dunstane had begun.

There was an eager light in Attawulf's eyes now.

"If thou truly thinkest that, sire, there may still be hope," he said. "But our men are sorely dispirited. Methinks 'twould be a wise move for you to don armour and to sally forth. Thy very presence would have a magic effect."

"Think ye so?" asked the King, with a quick look.

"Ay, sire, 'tis certain!"

"Perchance thou are right, my lord Attawulf," said Cedric, plucking at his beard. "See to it that my armour is prepared; give orders that my charger is made ready. I will go forth to the city's defences and take personal command!"

Cedric was a monarch who could be very bold and confident in victory; but when things were not going so well he behaved like most bullies. He was beset with doubts and furies. His soldiers knew it, and their confidence in him was weakening. His decision was wise. Now that the hour of battle had come, it was well that he should sally forth and show himself to his men.

He refused to believe that Dunstane would fall because he knew that such a defeat would be the end of his rule. As King of Gothland he had been but a poor monarch; but as King of Gothland and Northestria his power had increased amazingly. He had become wealthy; he had grown accustomed to gaiety and display. His tournaments had been the wonder of the country.

Were he to lose his Northestrian throne he would be cast back to Gothland, and the Northestrian people would turn on their oppressors and make them suffer to the full limit.

Cedric could scuttle away now, but he would go to a poverty-stricken land. So he cast all thoughts of defeat from his mind. Defeat was impossible! These accursed rebels would fail. They *must* fail!

Dunstane was an impregnable city. In the past it had stood the brunt of many sieges, and had never fallen. So how could it fall now, with Cedric's concentrated forces gathered round the great walls in their thousands and their tens of thousands? The town was a veritable garrison, and all the odds of battle were on the side of the defenders.

"Come, Attawulf, let us sally forth!" shouted the King enthusiastically. "We will show the soldiers that we are confident. Plague take the Northestrian rebels! They will suffer such a defeat to-day that never again will they venture to rise against my rule! I am the King of this land," he added boastfully, "and I am invincible!"



CHAPTER 3.

The Battle!

ACROSS miles of countryside, in the form of a rough semi-circle, the Northestrian forces were closing in upon the City of Dunstane. The Gothlander watchers were impressed and even startled by the strength of the rebel forces. They seemed to be unending.

The entire manhood of Northestria had answered the call of their young Princess; they were filled with a grim and intense determination to drive the invaders from their fair land. For many days now they had been sweeping through the country, driving the Gothlander garrisons out of the fortresses. And now, at last, the attack was developing upon the capital itself.

Cedric's outer defences were taken by surprise.

It had been expected that these soldiers, the picked men of the Gothlander Guard, would do much to check the rebels' advance. But so fierce were the onslaughts of the Northestrians that the Gothlanders were compelled to give way at the first onrush.

A swift and fierce battle was fought some miles from Dunstane, and it was a battle which could have only one ending. The Gothlanders, after a desperate encounter, were driven back. They retreated in order at first, but this retreat soon became a rout.

Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore, from the top of a high hill, could obtain an excellent view of the wide, sweeping battle front. They could see Dunstane in the distance, with its grim walls rising sheer. And, closing in upon it, were the great armies of Northestria.

"An amazing sight, Dorrie," said Lee. "These field-glasses are almost unnecessary. In this clear atmosphere the tiniest detail is visible to the naked eye."

"Gad, yes!" said Lord Dorrimore, his face flushed, his eyes burning. "What a spectacle! A real medieval battle developing before our very eyes! You were quite right, old man, when you said that the spectator sees most of the game. If we had been in this scrap we should have had the thrill of the action, but we should have missed the thrill of the spectacle."

It was all so different from a modern battle.

There was no intensive barrage of big artillery, no high explosive shells screaming in a continuous succession, making the day hideous. No bombing aeroplanes flying overhead, no gas attacks, no "going over the top" and advancing in open formation.

Nelson Lee and Dorrie on this hill-top were comparatively close to the actual city walls. They could look down upon the Northestrian armies sweeping across the wide, grassy valley. Open formation was unnecessary, since there were no machine-guns here, no high explosive shells or similar modern measures for dealing swift and horrible death.

That first clash between the Gothlanders and the Northestrians had been in the open—a battle royal, man to man. The sword and the lance had counted. Now the Northestrians were advancing upon the city in a sweeping half-circle.

Great columns of men leading back into the fair countryside of Northestria, looking like gently-waving ribbons in the distance, represented the reinforcements. Men were pouring up in a continuous stream—for the rebel generals were prepared for a grim, titanic struggle in which thousands of lives must inevitably be lost.

"Do you really think there'll be an awful amount of slaughter, Lee?" asked Lord Dorrimore suddenly.

"It all depends," replied Lee. "Thousands would have been killed by those falling walls if they had not been warned. Think of the cunning of it! The Northestrians sweeping upon the walls in the approved medieval fashion. Then, at a signal, the collapsing of the walls. Half the attacking army would have been buried in the crumbling masonry."

"A pretty clever dodge, you know."

"Brilliant!" agreed Lee. "Particularly as the Gothlanders have built another inner wall almost as impregnable as the first. But we have warned Athelstane and the others, and there is no likelihood of the men falling into the trap now. All the same, storming a walled city of this kind is a grim enough business, Dorrie. There's really no telling how it will go. The odds are certainly all in favour of the defenders."

Other interested spectators were arriving now—Mr. Alington Wilkes, Sir Hobart Man-

ners, Captain Williams of the Pioneer, and quite a number of the submarine's officers and men. For many days they had been working like slaves, organising the Northestrian armies. But now their job was done.

"Rather a pity we can't be in the circus, sir," remarked Captain Williams, as he glanced at Dorrie.

"Don't talk about it," growled his lordship. "I say, Lee, what about the boys?"

"They're in Ixwell."

"I know," replied Dorrie. "Is it quite fair? At least, they could come out here to view the battle, the same as we're doing. The poor beggars must be fuming and fretting."

"I dare say they are," agreed Lee dryly. "But it is best, on the whole, that they should remain well clear of any fighting. In Ixwell they're safe; if they came here they might easily dodge off and get into trouble. We've come through unscathed so far, and now that we're on the last lap, so to speak, I don't think it would be advisable to take any chances."

"Perhaps you're right," admitted Dorrie. "For two pins I'd grab a horse and dash into the battle."

THE thing which impressed the on-lookers most was the calm deliberateness of the attack. The Northestrian forces were approaching in their thousands. Dorrie could now see powerful groups of men going in advance of the main army. They were trundling great, awkward-looking engines of war, and placing them in position. These things were fitted with wooden wheels, and they were made principally of great baulks of timber. Each one required a hundred men, some pushing, some pulling on ropes.

"The artillery is about to get into action," said Dorrie, with a grin.

"This particular weapon of war is extraordinarily ancient," said Lee, with a nod. "That thing, Dorrie, is a ballista. Our own trench mortars are designed on very much the same principle. But these clumsy devices cannot do a great deal of damage. It is a kind of catapult arrangement."

There were dozens of these ballistas, and they were being placed in position all round the walls of the city. Some of them were getting to work.

Men toiled at the winding-handles. Each ballista was provided with a kind of drum. This was wound up, pulling back a great arm—really a small tree-trunk—until the tension was at its greatest. At the end of this arm a chunk of rock was placed, weighing anything from a hundredweight onwards. Then, at the word, the catch was released, all the men standing well clear.

"Gad!" ejaculated Lord Dorrimore.

Even at that distance they could hear the noise as the drum, with its spring de-

vice, was released. Like a flash, the great arm swung upwards and forward; the boulder went hurtling through the air, catapulting upwards and outwards with terrific force.

Crash!

The first boulder struck the city wall, splintering into a mass of powdery fragments, and falling harmlessly to the ground.

"They haven't got the range yet," observed Sir Hobart, smiling.

"These particular ballistas are different from any I have seen or read of," said Nelson Lee. "Invented by some dead-and-gone Northestrian general, perhaps. At all events, they seem to be quite effective—far more effective than I had supposed."

Many of the great contraptions were now getting to work. Rocky boulders were being hurled at the city walls, and now that the attackers had got the range fairly accurately, the rocks soared over the walls, to fall with destructive effect amongst the defending Gothlanders.

"Hallo!" said Captain Williams suddenly. "What's happening now? Look! They're rushing forward with great ladders!"

A signal had evidently been given. All along the line, all round the walls, hordes of Northestrians were making a determined charge. These men were picked troops, wearing helmets and armour to protect them from the arrows of the defenders. They carried great storming-ladders, and there was something impressive in the way in which the whole attack was carried out.

"But, hang it, they're doing the very thing they were warned against!" exclaimed Lord Dorrimore. "Those walls will crash on them!"

"I think it must be a trick, Dorrie," said Lee, frowning.

It was.

The essence of it was the fiercely ferocious nature of the onrush. Uttering tumultuous shouts of enthusiasm, the Northestrians dashed at the walls—hundreds of them—thousands.

The whole object of the manœuvre was to startle the Gothlanders into premature action. So determined was the attack that the Gothlander officers fell into the blunder of precipitancy. They believed that the moment had come for the massacre. Now was the time to send the walls crushing down upon the enemy! But the attackers had been warned, and they were ready for the slightest sign; their officers had given them precise instructions.

"Look!" ejaculated Dorrie, pointing.

One of the walls was beginning to crumble; a great section, a hundred yards in length, was falling outwards, threatening to bury the attackers. But the Northestrians were not caught napping! In the nick of time they retreated. It was not a panic-stricken flight, but a skilfully executed manœuvre.

For the Northestrians, knowing precisely what was coming, were prepared. But for

Nelson Lee's warning, however, they would have been stupefied by the collapsing of the walls, and most of them would have been buried in the *debris*.

It was a magnificent, impressive sight.

As the first section of wall crashed with a roar like the rolling of thunder, so other sections commenced to fall outwards. Nelson Lee and Dorrie, watching from the distance, were reminded of a row of skittles. Once one skittle has fallen the others follow.

So with the outer walls of Dunstane. The Gothlanders at the other sections blindly followed the lead; and the towering walls, almost as far as the eye could see, were crumbling to wreckage and dust.

Boom-oom-oom !

It was like the roaring of big guns, and the sound echoed and re-echoed alarmingly. The ground shook with the force of the collapsing tons of stonework.

"By the Lord Harry!" said Dorrie, staring. "What a sight!"

The attackers were blotted out by the dense clouds of dust which had arisen. The dust hung over the ground, spreading, rising, hiding the entire city.

"Well, there'll be no turning back now, Dorrie," said Nelson Lee. "Dunstane is besieged, and the enemy has wasted its most powerful weapon of destruction."

And as the dust began to clear it was evident that Nelson Lee's assertion was right. The loyalists were massing in full strength for the real attack upon the inner walls. The monumental work which Cedric's unhappy slaves had put into that cunning plan had all gone for nothing.

"Our friends have all the advantage here, Dorrie," said Lee, with satisfaction. "Had the original plan succeeded, of course, the death-roll would have been terrible. As it is, the Northeistriians have the advantage."

"How?"

"Those collapsed walls are lying in great massed heaps of *debris*, almost at the foot of the inner walls," replied Nelson Lee. "Don't you see? The task of storming the city is made easier, since the Northeistriians will be able to use the broken walls as stepping stones to the ultimate storming of the defences."

"If only they can break through—even in one place—Cedric's soldiers will be on the run," said Dorrie eagerly. "Gad, why can't we be in this, Lee? It seems an infernal waste of time for us to stand here looking on."

"Our turn will come presently," replied Lee. "We'll let the Northeistriians make the breach—so that the victory will be entirely theirs. Then, when matters are at their hottest, and when there is really something to do, we'll have a look in."

"I see," said Lord Dorrimore, with a nod. "We come on in the second act, eh? Good enough!"

CHAPTER 4.

The Cunning of Guntha!

GUNTHA THE CRAFTY, ill-kempt and ill-tempered, took his captivity with a bad grace.

His prison was a small private suite aboard the super-submarine, Pioneer. He had the full use of a comfortable state-room and an adjoining bath-room. The one outer door, which led into the corridor, was kept constantly locked.

Guntha, as befitting his station, was treated with every consideration and with every courtesy. His meals were of the best, and if he had so desired he could have had the services of a personal attendant. But Guntha was sullen, sulky, and he preferred to spend his time in solitude.

He could easily have smashed down the door of his prison, for he was of fine physique and immense strength; but he had sense enough to know that any such activity on his part would only lead to recapture. He would never be able to get clear of the submarine.

At first he had been arrogant, aggressive, boastful of the terrible things which King Cedric would do to these rash people who had taken him prisoner.

But of late Guntha's arrogance had gone.

He became a changed man; a shadow of his former self. From the stewards who served him his meals, and from the talk he occasionally heard through the port-holes, he knew how things were going.

He had been aware of the fact that Nelson Lee had ventured into Dunstane disguised as himself—Guntha. Lee had spent hours over that masterpiece of impersonation, taking no notice of Guntha's threats. Sick at heart, the Gothlander commander-in-chief had seen, through his port-hole, Lee being taken ashore.

Later, Guntha had heard of Lee's great success; and now he knew that the vital battle of Dunstane was beginning.

But this captivity had destroyed Guntha's bold spirit; he heard the news almost indifferently. During the past few days he had even abandoned his former habit of asking his stewards for news. He didn't care.

On this particular day the stewards came with his meals, and Guntha sat in his chair, silent and brooding. He had no appetite, and he left half his food.

The peace and serenity of his surroundings seemed to have a depressing effect upon him. Only a very few people were left aboard the Pioneer; many of the officers and men had gone ashore, if not to join in the battle, to watch. And all the St. Frank's fellows, the Moor View girls, and the rest of Lord Dorrimore's party were conspicuous by their absence.

The great vessel, in fact, lay placid and quiet on the lake. One or two men were on duty, but they had no fear of any attack. The Gothlanders were far too busy in and around Dunstane,



With crashing blows Guntha attacked his captors, in a desperate bid for freedom.

So Guntha the Crafty brooded, his thoughts, possibly, dwelling on that great battle which he was not allowed to direct. When his next meal came he did not even look up at the stewards. Two always came—merely as a matter of precaution. But they had long since abandoned the thought that Guntha would attempt to attack them.

Guntha sat sullen and indifferent as the men laid the table and prepared the food. Not until the stewards were on the point of departing did Guntha show any sign of activity.

And then he showed it with dramatic suddenness.

His spring was carefully calculated and judged to an inch; he had rehearsed it again and again. With one swift movement, amazingly lithe in one so big, Guntha reached the steward. His mighty fist crashed against the side of the man's head, and he fell sprawling to the floor, stunned by that one blow.

The other steward, swinging round, amazed and alarmed, opened his mouth to shout. But he was a fraction of a second too late.

Crash!

Guntha's other fist, swinging round, did its work. The second steward went to the floor like a pole-axed bull, to join his companion.

In a flash Guntha reached the door and closed it. He stood there, breathing hard, his eyes gleaming with cunning.

NOT for nothing had this man been called Guntha the Crafty!

For days he had been planning and preparing this attack upon the two stewards; for days he had led them to believe that his spirit was broken, that he did not care what happened to him. And thus, by his clever acting, he had lulled the men into carelessness.

"By my bones," he muttered tensely, "'tis a success—thus far!"

He fell upon the first man, and he quickly bound him with strips of a tablecloth which he had prepared in readiness. He gagged him, too, so that he could make no outcry when he awoke. The other man was treated in similar fashion.

Divesting himself of most of his clothing, so that his movements would be free, Guntha opened the door again, and listened. All was quiet and peaceful.

Guntha crept along the corridor, ready to attack any man who confronted him. And thus he reached a small stairway, mounted it, and found himself in the open, only a few feet away from the vessel's side.

Swiftly, leaving everything to chance, he ran across that open space, reached the rail, and lowered himself silently into the lake.

As luck would have it, there was no man on this starboard side of the vessel to see his movements. Having got into the water, Guntha dived, and swam with powerful strokes beneath the surface.

He was a remarkably good swimmer, and before he was obliged to come to the surface for air he had covered quite a good distance. And when he did come up he only allowed his mouth and nostrils to appear above the water.

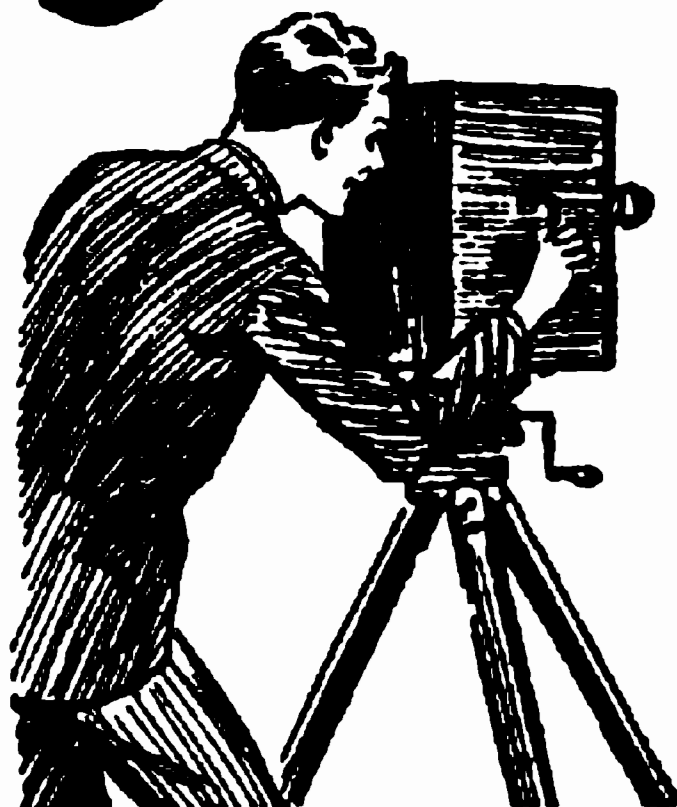
There was no sign of pursuit—no indication of an alarm. Guntha the Crafty took a deep breath and dived again. He could hardly believe that he had actually escaped. He gave himself all the credit, without admitting that luck had played a large part in this exploit. If he had appeared upon the deck a minute earlier, or a minute later, he would inevitably have run into an officer, and he would never have reached the shore.

As it was, he repeated his former manœuvre, swimming under the surface for some distance, coming up for air, and then swimming again. Finally he reached the beach some distance down the lake, and, taking advantage of a little promontory of land, he sought cover.

Still there was no hue and cry from the Pioneer.

Without pausing a moment, Guntha ran into some trees which grew near the lake shore. From these he dodged to another clump, and thus he got well inland.

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Three hours later Guntha the Crafty was many miles away—wary and footsore, but inwardly triumphant.

His escape had been discovered aboard the Pioneer, and men had been sent ashore to search; but the crafty prisoner had succeeded in getting clear away.

Guntha was well inland now, miles from the lake. He was getting nearer and nearer to the scene of the great battle. With cunning and daring he had advanced, keeping well in cover, avoiding villages and hamlets.

He was not far now from a small castle which stood out in picturesque relief upon a neighbouring hillside. He was watching it closely, knowing it to be the home of a lesser Northestrian overlord. But this noble, with all his personal soldiers, had long since left for the battle, and the castle itself was deserted—save, perhaps, for the womenfolk.

Guntha was turning over in his mind the possibility of obtaining a horse. And luck favoured him for the second time during this exploit. For as he was watching, a solitary horseman came into view, riding towards the narrow road which Guntha himself had been keeping in view.

The Gothlander's eyes gleamed when he saw that the solitary rider was a powerful man—a Northestrian officer in chainmail. His horse was a sturdy mount, well equipped.

"By my soul!" muttered Guntha, into his beard. "Methinks the fates are with me this day! I wonder if I can get a horse, and behold, one cometh!"

He had already armed himself with a stout length of wood—a sapling, with a nobbly, knotted end. It was an excellent club. Lurking in the bushes which bordered the narrow road, Guntha waited.

The horseman grew nearer, trotting briskly now. He was probably a courier, or a man who had been prevented by other business from going to the scene of battle.

Suddenly Guntha sprang out, his club whirled, and with a sickening thud it struck the back of the unfortunate Northestrian officer. The man, startled and hurt, fell headlong out of the saddle. The horse would have bolted had not Guntha leapt swiftly, grabbing at the bridle, and bringing the animal to a halt. The fallen rider was struggling to rise, and again the club swung round.

Thud!

This time the man was so badly stunned that he lay motionless, and the chances were that he would not recover consciousness for many hours.

And now Guntha acted swiftly.

He dragged his victim into the thicket, tethering the horse to a handy tree. With deft fingers Guntha divested the man of his chainmail, his boots, his sword, his gleaming, close-fitting headgear.

Twenty minutes later a horseman rode forth in full glory—a man who was, to all intents and purposes, a Northestrian officer riding into battle.

But he was Guntha the Crafty—riding into battle, it is true, but riding with the grim object of taking command of his own hard-pressed forces.

CHAPTER 5.

Handy Trips Up!

"IT'S no good!" said Church disconsolately. "We can't possibly get out of Ixwell."

"It makes me boil—it makes me all hot!" said Handforth, in an explosive voice. "The battle's been going on for hours, and here we are—stuck in this town—miles from the fighting line!"

Most of the other fellows were feeling similarly exasperated. They had just come from a meal at the castle, and now they were standing near the moat, looking into the quiet, sleepy town.

They had discovered that the guards, at all the gates of Ixwell, had received orders to turn the boys back should they attempt to pass out.

"I thought Nipper was going to do something!" went on Handforth fiercely. "But he's as helpless as the rest of us! There are plenty of horses that we can use, but what's the good of horses. We're so jolly well known that——"

"I think some of the other chaps are beckoning to us," interrupted Church.

They went over to where Nipper and Travers and Reggie Pitt and Fullwood and the rest were standing.

"Nipper's got something weighty to say, and he doesn't want to say it twice," explained Travers. "So gather round, dear old fellows, and listen attentively."

"I hope it's something worth listening to," grunted Handforth.

"It just amounts to this," said Nipper briskly. "We shall have a free hand if only we can get past the guards at the gates. There are heaps of horses in the stables here, and we can take all we need. I've already squared the fellows who are in charge."

"Make a dash for it, you mean?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"No, that wouldn't be any good," replied Nipper. "Mr. Lee or Dorrie or old Wilkey would be bound to know, sooner or later, and steps would be taken to prevent us from entering the scrap. Our only real chance is to get out of Ixwell without the guards knowing."

"Short of making ourselves invisible, laddie, I fail to see how the dashed thing can be accomplished," said Archie Glen-thorne, shaking his head. "I'm all for this dashing into battle stuff. What-ho! Tally-ho and yoicks! On with the show, and all that sort of stuff! But how is it going to be done?"

"Come with me—and don't look too excited or eager," said Nipper casually.

He led the way into the castle, and the others followed, puzzled. But they took his advice, and the majority of them walked

slowly, and their expressions were eloquent of boredom.

The Princess Mercia was in her private chambers, and most of the Moor View girls were with her. Ethelbert the Red, of course, was at the scene of the battle. Only a few Court officials were to be seen.

Nipper led the way down some of the great stone-flagged corridors, and presently he turned through some big half-open doors. The boys were in the castle armoury. Ranged all about, in dozens and scores, were gleaming suits of armour.

"By George!" ejaculated Handforth, with a catch in his breath. "You—you mean——"

"Shut that door!" said Nipper briskly. "Well, why not? If we can only get into this armour, and then reach our horses, we shall be all serene. I don't suppose the guards will even challenge us as we go out. They'll think we're a special body of the princess's personal guard!"

"Good gad! Really, old boy——"

"Dry up, Archie—it's a brilliant wheeze!" said Travers enthusiastically.

"Oh, rather!" agreed Archie. "But, dash it, we're not absolutely supposed to encase ourselves in these overgrown sardine tins, are we? They'll be most frightfully uncomfortable under the armpits, dash it!"

"We mustn't mind a little discomfort, Archie," said Nipper cheerfully. "The main thing is to get into this big scrap!"

"Oh, rather! Absolutely!"

"And with these suits of armour, we can do it," went on Nipper. "I'm blessed if I can see why we should mess about in Ixwell, twiddling our thumbs, while there's all this excitement going on. Come on, you chaps! Let's see how the giddy things fit!"

"Good egg!"

"I'll have this one!"

"This'll do for me!"

The boys enthusiastically seized the suits of armour, and they were soon engaged in the intricate task of donning the various sections.

Handforth wrestling with a breastplate, hampered with great leg-guards, was a sight worth seeing.

"I always thought cricketing-pads were beastly uncomfortable things, but they're soft as silk compared with these!" he grumbled. "By George, I've a good mind to discard the rotten things altogether!"

"If you do, you'll never get out of Ixwell," said Church, who was manfully struggling with his own armour.

"Oh, well, perhaps I'd better stick it," panted Handforth. "Here, lend a hand with this dustbin lid, Churchy! Whoa! I shall never be able to get into this helmet!"

But Handforth, like the others, succeeded in the end. It was a strenuous, breathless task, but at last all the boys were encased in the suits of gleaming armour—even to the helmets, with their closed visors.

"Well, we've done it!" came Nipper's muffled voice. "And if we're going into this battle, you chaps, we've got to keep these things on until we're right amongst the

Gothlanders. Don't forget that it's going to be a hot business, and before we've finished we may have to fight for our very lives. Anybody who would prefer to be safe and sound in Ixwell had better decide now."

"Ass!" came a chorus. "We're all going!"

Not many of the fellows, in fact, had given a thought to the possible dangers. They regarded this as an exciting adventure. They had all caught Handforth's spirit of recklessness; they wanted to be "up and doing." Lounging about Ixwell had got on their nerves. And the very knowledge that a great battle was in progress only a few short miles away filled them with burning impatience. All they wanted to do was to get on the scene of the fighting.

"Dashed awkward, laddies, there being no mirror!" came a protest from one of the suits of armour. "I haven't the faintest idea how I look, and I have a frightful suspicion that my backplate is sagging at the south-west corner."

"A pity you didn't bring Phipps, Archie," grinned Fullwood, through his visor.

"Don't talk of Phipps to me, dash him!" said Archie, in a frigid voice. "The blighter has absolutely deserted the young master to-day! He's dashed off into battle and left me flat! When I see him I'll tick him off in no uncertain terms. That lad is in for a fruity five minutes!"

All the fellows were moving up and down, trying to get used to their armour. But they weren't making much of a job of it. They felt horribly encumbered—as, indeed, they actually were.

"We'll be all right when we get on our faithful chargers," said Nipper. "Now listen, you chaps. By taking a short cut we can get into the rear courtyard and be at the stables in a couple of jiffies. Follow me, and make as little noise as possible. Handy, old man, try not to fall headlong down the steps as you go out."

"You look after yourself!" retorted Handforth, with a sniff. "When I feel like falling, I'll tell you."

They all left the armoury, and, owing to the deserted condition of the castle just now, they were not challenged as they made their way to the rear courtyard. Practically all the normal soldiers of the court were in the fighting line. Several of the castle servants saw the boys, but it was not their business to make inquiries or to hinder them.

They reached the outer door in safety, and Handforth tripped over a banana skin on the top step and blundered headlong down the rest. Bananas were unknown in Northestria, and obviously the skin had been carelessly thrown there by one of the St. Frank's fellows earlier on.

Handy sounded exactly like a cartload of empty cans being tipped up. He fetched up at the bottom, dazed and bruised, and Church and McClure dragged him to his feet.

"Who pushed me?" gasped Handforth faintly.

"I thought you were going to tell us when you felt like falling?" said Nipper tartly. "You clumsy ass, Handy! Everybody in the castle must have heard you!"

"Somebody's heard, anyhow," said Travers. "By Samson! Look up at that balcony!"

Irene Manners, Mary Summers, Doris Berkeley and two or three of the other girls were standing there, looking down with startled expressions on their pretty faces.

"Oh! It's the boys!" came Irene's alarmed voice.

"All right, girls—don't worry!" said Nipper promptly. "Only a bit of fun. We wanted to see how it felt to be knights in armour."

"You can't kid us!" called Doris. "You're doing this so that you can sneak out of the town gates, aren't you? You're off to the scrap, you lucky beggars!"

"Any more armour that we can get into?" asked Mary eagerly.

Nipper did not exactly like the turn of events.

"Come on, you chaps!" he said. "We can trust the girls—they won't let on. But somebody else might spot us and try to stop us. The sooner we're off, the better!"

"Rather!"

They clattered across the rear courtyard, arrived at the castle stables, and very soon they were endeavouring to mount their horses. Nobody was in the least surprised when Handforth came a cropper. He overlooked the fact that he was top-heavy, owing to his armour. He made a really splendid effort, and rose majestically upon his horse's back—only to lose his balance, slither off the other side, and land in a sprawling heap on his back.

"That's the second fall within three minutes!" said Church tartly. "You'll be a fat lot of good in battle, Handy! We'd better leave you behind!"

"The horse must have moved!" said Handforth feebly.

The next time he was more careful, and he managed to obtain a firm seat, with his armoured feet firmly in the stirrups. The others were having a little trouble, but they soon grew accustomed to the novel conditions.

And so, some minutes later, a brave and glittering cavalcade of knights rode out into the well. They carried their lances well, and they looked like true knights to the life.

What was more to the point, they put on speed when approaching the outer gates, and at a gallop they sped clean through. The guards challenged them, but they took no notice, and if the guards thought anything at all, they took it that these valiants in armour were a select party of the Princess Mercia's personal bodyguard.

And on rode the schoolboys in armour—on, into battle!

CHAPTER 6.

The Victorious Rebels!

THE siege of Dunstane was developing speedily.

All round the walls of the city the loyalists were attacking fiercely. The onslaughts were particularly heavy at the various gates of the city. Here the clumsy but effective ballistas were working overtime, and the archers were fighting with splendid valour, too.

Whilst the ballistas kept up a constant hail of boulders, and while the archers were sending their arrows hissing towards the top of the great inner wall, hundreds of other attackers were ready with great battering-rams. Everything was organised on a carefully well-thought-out plan.

These battering-rams were immense tree-trunks, cunningly fitted with great staves which had been driven into them, thus providing hand-hold for the soldiers. Each stave projected at right angles from the trunk, and two men were required to each stave. The ram was rushed forward with shattering and devastating effect. The soldiers engaged in this work were provided with breastplates and helmets; yet many of them fell, struck by the arrows from the defenders, or hit by the stones and rocks which were hurled down upon them. But other men quickly took their places, and the attack never flagged.

Again and again the battering-rams were sent thudding against the massive gates of the city, and gradually they were being weakened. In spite of the frantic efforts of the Gothlanders, the enemy was succeeding.

At the south gate the fighting was particularly heavy.

Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore and the other members of their party, standing on the hilltop, had a clear view of the south gate and the walls flanking it.

The spectacle was a magnificent one. A medieval battle at the height of its strength.

There were no less than four battering-rams being used against the south gate, one coming into action as another retreated for a new charge.

Thus a continuous onslaught was maintained despite losses, and the massive gates were perceptibly growing weaker in spite of the barricades which were being flung up from the inner side by the Gothlanders.

Yet it was impossible for the defenders to concentrate their forces upon the various gates, for the loyalist rebels were pressing the attack all along the walls. Great scaling ladders were being thrust into position, and men were climbing up them. In many places the Northestrians had reached the top of the wall, and hand-to-hand fighting was in progress. Men were crashing from the wall-tops and hurtling down to death.

But the casualties, on the whole, were slight. For in this battle there were no machine-guns, no high explosive shells, no poison-gas or liquid-fire. It was death by

the sword, or death by the arrow, or death from the hurtling rocks. And in the majority of cases the injuries were trivial.

The battle resolved itself into a test of endurance. The Northestrians, fired by their fierce determination to hurl these invaders out of their land, were keeping up an unflagging attack. They were fighting magnificently, with a dash and an abandon which amounted to recklessness.

WITHIN the city the Gothlanders were growing desperate.

At first they had laughed at the storming of Dunstane; they had declared that the city could never be taken. With their defences, with their valiant soldiers, these ill-equipped rebels could be quickly beaten off and put to rout.

But the ill-equipped rebels were proving themselves to be men of iron determination and courage. And in such a battle as this it was courage which counted far more than equipment. The will to win was in every Northestrian heart.

Gradually the Gothlanders began to appreciate that their task was heavier than they had expected. They were suffering many losses; at the gates their barricades were proving inefficient. Bodies of men were rushed up by the commanders, carrying all manner of heavy objects which would serve to strengthen the defences. But in spite of all this the battering-rams kept up their attacks.

In desperation the Gothlanders sent hundreds of archers upon the wall, with orders to shoot down every Northestrian within sight. But the rebels had their archers, too, and no sooner did the enemy expose themselves upon the wall-top than they were subjected to a devastating fusillade of arrows. Scores of men fall back killed or wounded.

There were four ballistas at the south gate, too, keeping up a continuous hail of boulders, creating havoc and confusion.

Crash! Thud! Crash! Thud!

Unceasingly the battering-rams continued their task. The men who handled them were streaming with perspiration. Many were injured, and blood was flowing from their wounds. But they did not care. They fought on with undiminished vigour.

Exactly the same sort of thing was going on at the other gates of the city, but the loyalists were not meeting with quite the same success. It was at the south gate where the Gothlanders saw unmistakable signs of a breach being made.

Cedric himself, warned of what was taking place, took personal command along this southern wall. His mighty voice roared out about the din; he gave fierce orders, many of which conflicted with the orders of the lesser officers. These men, not daring to question the King's commands, stood by helplessly. They knew well enough that Cedric was in a state of panic—he was mad with rage and fear—and his interference was jeopardising the whole city.

Only once did Redwold the Ruthless—who was ostensibly in full command—utter a protest to the King. Cedric turned upon him with such venomous fury that Redwold gave it up. This was no time for a personal quarrel with the King, and Redwold, in fact, felt that his head was none too secure upon his shoulders. So he confined himself to the task of strengthening the defences. It was a double task, since he found it necessary to clear up a great deal of the chaos which King Cedric was creating.

Meanwhile, the Northestrians continued their unflagging assault.

The noises of the battle were deafening; the shouts of the men, the twanging of the archers' bows, the hissing of the arrows, the crashing of the boulders, the thunderous thudding of the battering-rams. It all combined to make an awe-inspiring commotion. The sounds rolled up from every side, and in the heart of the city it was almost like the continuous rolling of thunder.

In the heart of Dunstane itself a situation was arising which the Gothlanders had not even considered. Hundreds of the down-trodden Northestrian citizens—indeed, thousands—were collecting in the great central square, and in all the roads leading out of it. A large proportion of them had been used as slaves for the creating of the city's defences; but their work was now done. The Gothlander soldiers were at the walls. And these Northestrians were idle, mere spectators. They mingled with the Dunstane citizens, elderly and infirm.

But the same spirit dominated them all. Hearing the increasing tumult of the attack, they took heart. They knew, too, that the Gothlanders were alarmed, and that frantic efforts were being made in the neighbourhood of the south gate.

Not that these efforts were successful. The deadly battering-rams were at last succeeding in their work. The great gates, apparently so impregnable, were being smashed down. As dripping water will wear away stone, so the unceasing battering of those great gates was having its effect.

When the first signs of splintering came, the Northestrians were fired with a new enthusiasm. The attacks were pressed with redoubled energy. And now, with a sudden splintering and crashing of woodwork, the gates broke away. They fell in shattered masses of debris. It was the first breach; but beyond there were the piles of timber and other materials which had been used for the making of the barricades.

Like wildfire the cry went round, passing from section to section of the attacking army.

"The south gate is down! The south gate is down!"

The effect was electrical.

Valiant as the Northestrians had been up till now, they proceeded to fight like maniacs. The breach widened. The Gothlanders, rushing up fresh forces, succeeded for a time in holding back the attack.



Laughing excitedly, the St. Frank's boys donned armour and prepared to sally forth into battle.

Then something else happened—something dramatically unexpected.

The Dunstane citizens, fired with enthusiasm by the victory of their soldiers, and armed with nothing but wooden staves, pickaxes, shovels and so forth, fell upon the Gothlanders from the rear.

The attack in itself was not alarming, for there was no organisation amongst these fevered people. But it served to distract the Gothlanders, and it added to the general confusion.

While Cedric's men were turning to deal with this surprise onslaught the North-eastrian armies were pouring through. It was the opportunity they required. In their hundreds they threw themselves at the barricades, clearing a way and breaking open the gateway wide. Then in poured the reserves, their swords flashing, their battle-axes upraised.

A great many of those valiant citizens died, but they died gloriously. For it was

their effort which had made this breach possible. Here, in this southern part of the city, the loyalists were sweeping all before them in a devastating flood, and hand-to-hand fighting became general. All along the other walls the Gothlanders caught the panic. The enemy was in! Cedric's soldiers, formerly so confident, were reduced to panic. Their fighting became erratic, and round the full extent of the walls the North-eastrians were gaining greater and greater success.

Athelstane the Great, who commanded the loyalists, was among the first to penetrate the city. And Athelstane, being a fine soldier, knew how the wind was blowing. He could see victory ahead! The Gothlanders were weakening, crumbling. The battle was all but won!

Shouting encouragement to his men, taking a valiant lead in the fighting, Athelstane pressed on. His generals and his other officers were no less valiant; and the soldiers themselves, delirious with this success.

fell upon the Gothlanders with such ferocity that the enemy ranks broke in disorder.

And on swept the Northeistriars, deeper and deeper into Dunstane.

CHAPTER 7.

The Fatal Blunder!

WHILE the battle of Dunstane was thus rapidly developing, three other interested parties were active.

In one place, on a neighbouring hilltop, Nelson Lee, Dorrie, Mr. Wilkes and others were cheerfully donning chainmail, ready to enter the "scrap" now that the Northeistriars had opened a breach. Lee's policy was, of course, a wise one. He did not want to give the Gothlanders any excuse for saying that the Northeistriars had been assisted in their fighting. Unaided by any modern devices of warfare, Princess Mercia's subjects had broken down the Gothlander defences.

In another part of the countryside—in a valley this time—a body of armoured knights was riding swiftly to the scene of the conflict.

At least, they looked like knights, and all whom they passed gazed with awe and respect. None guessed that those suits of armour concealed the schoolboys of St. Frank's.

In yet another part, a mile or two to the west, a solitary horseman stood motionless on a rising hillock of meadowland. From this point of vantage the horseman could see how the battle was going.

And Guntha the Crafty was by no means pleased.

He had ridden hard, and all who had seen him had believed that he was a Northeistrian overlord, as his gleaming chainmail and close-fitting helmet proclaimed. The very colours on his horse, a noble charger, told of his high rank.

"By my soul!" growled the fugitive commander-in-chief. "So the battle goes ill with my men! A murrain upon these Northeistrian vermin! Their spirit seemeth unquenchable!"

From his elevated position Guntha could see the rebels pouring in through the south gate. Clearly, a breach had been made here. The situation was desperate.

And Guntha, for all his brutality—perhaps because of it—was first and last a soldier. His blood seethed at this spectacle. With a fierce grunt of eagerness he urged on his charger, and soon he was galloping over the quiet countryside, heading straight for the battle.

It was not only his fighting instinct which sent him so ferociously into the conflict; he was filled with acute alarm over his own personal position. Should the Northeistriars prevail, Guntha himself would be ruined. His possessions in Northeistria were extensive, and all these would be stripped from him if Dunstane fell. So he was thinking more of

his own fate than anything else as he galloped towards the city.

He cursed the blunderers who had made the breach possible. Had he been in command the Northeistriars would never have broken through. Even now it might not yet be too late. If only he could get into the city, instil his soldiers with a valiant spirit, and take command himself, all might yet be well. There was only this one breach; the other gates withstood the attacks.

It was not mere egotism which caused Guntha to think in this way. He knew that his presence would put heart into the Gothlanders. It was a fact, too. His return, particularly at such a vital moment as this, might well turn the tide. For the hard-pressed soldiers would gain heart, and they would fight with new energy. Guntha the Crafty, in fact, could not have arrived at a more fateful moment.

At full gallop he rode on, and when at length he was in the midst of the loyalists none attempted to hinder him. He was still being mistaken for a Northeistrian noble. Guntha's craftiness again came to the fore here. For as he rode he shouted encouragement to the loyalists.

"On, men—on!" he thundered. "Down with these dogs of Gothlanders!"

"Ay, my lord, we conquer!" went up the shout.

In this way Guntha succeeded in getting right to the gates. He was compelled to pause here, for the hundreds of men who crowded the gateway were clearing the debris. They were making an open breach for the horsemen. And it was curious that Guntha the Crafty, the commander-in-chief of the defenders, should be the first horseman to ride through.

His sword was flashing now, and he was urging the loyalists onwards. Soon, he told himself, his own turn would come. Then the tables would be reversed.

Gallop clear of the struggling mob within the gates and escaping death by the very determination of his charge, he won clear of the foot soldiers.

The Northeistriars who watched him thought he was mad. Alone he was riding straight into the thick of the Gothlander forces. It seemed inevitable that he would be done to death within a few moments. Single-handed, he could not hope to fight the defenders.

But Guntha, chancing all in this one rush, was now tearing off his close-fitting helmet, revealing his own familiar features.

"Behold!" he thundered. "I am Guntha! I have returned, men!"

The Gothlanders, many of whom had been about to attack, fell back, startled. They all knew Guntha.

"Ay, 'tis my lord Guntha!"

"He cometh to save us!"

"Hurrah!"

Shouts and cheers arose in a mighty tumult. Guntha was pleased by the reception, although it was no greater than he had expected.

"Who is in command here?" he roared, as he swung his horse round. "Who are the fools who have permitted the rebel dogs to break through? It seemeth I am come all but too late!"

An officer ran up, blood streaming from his face.

"There is naught we can do, my lord Guntha!" he panted. "The rebels pour into the city in a flood. We are beaten!"

Guntha's sword flashed round, and the unfortunate officer was killed in that one blow.

"Dog!" snarled Guntha. "Thou speakest of defeat—and thus die! By my bones, Dunstano shall not fall!"

Then up went a new cry. An excited soldier, pushing his way through a crowd of others, pointed at Guntha.

"He killeth the good Captain Rufus!" he shouted. "He is not my lord Guntha!"

"Be thou silent, madman!" began one of the other soldiers.

"Nay, listen!" shouted the man excitedly. "Have ye lost your wits, men? Did ye not hear how Lee the Lionheart penetrated into Dunstane, so altered in appearance that he looked like my lord Guntha? This man is he! 'Tis Lee the Lionheart!"

"Ay, by my soul!" shouted another man.

"'Tis Lee the Lionheart!"

"Kill him—kill him!"

Guntha, startled, swung round upon the men who had made a perfectly natural mis-

take. Until now Guntha had not considered this possibility.

"Silence, fools!" he thundered. "I am your commander-in-chief! I am Guntha!"

"And thou killest Captain Rufus!" snarled one of the Gothlanders soldiers. "Thou art Lee the Lionheart!"

He sprang forward, his battle-axe swinging round. It was a rash move, for Guntha, whirling round his horse, brought his great sword into play. The soldier met his death swiftly.

"Now listen, scum!" shouted Guntha. "Heed not these fools who say that I am Leo the Lionheart!"

"Kill him—kill him!" went up the wild cry.

Guntha now became seriously alarmed. The soldiers, convinced, pressed round madly. They had all heard the story of Nelson Lee's daring exploit. And here, in their midst, was this man who looked like Guntha the Crafty; he had killed two of their comrades.

They fell upon him ferociously, and against such numbers he had little or no chance. Whilst he defended himself from the mob on one hand, others attacked him at the rear. He was pulled from his horse. No notice was taken of his bellowing shouts.

Swords flashed, and the dread deed was quickly done. Guntha the Crafty lay sprawling on the dusty ground, his body pierced in a dozen different places. His death had been swift, indeed.



£20,000 at stake! Grundy's uncle is being swindled out of this vast sum of money! And the only two fellows who can save him are locked in a deserted windmill!

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"Hold! What taketh place here?" demanded a harsh voice.

The Gothlander soldiers swung round to find Attawulf the Terrible approaching. King Cedric's chief adviser was looking haggard. He had been going his round, ascertaining the full extent of the disaster. His ears were filled with the terrific noise of the conflict—soldiers were fighting desperately within a hundred yards of him.

"Get back to the defences!" thundered Attawulf. "What are ye doing here, wasting time? Every man is needed——"

"My lord," panted one of the soldiers, "this man is Lee the Lionheart! And we have slain him!"

"Lee the Lionheart!" ejaculated Attawulf, with a start. "By St. Attalus! Make way!" He strode to the body, and he caught his breath in sharply as he looked down upon it. "I'faith, 'tis the same," he muttered, "but I vow he hath an even more uncanny resemblance to my lord Guntha!"

Suddenly he bent down, and he looked closely into the face of the dead man. He pulled at the great beard, and when he stood up his own face was grey and his eyes were ablaze.

"Fools! Vermin! Scum!" he grated tragically. "Ye have killed Guntha himself!"

The soldiers fell back, aghast.

"This man is not Lee the Lionheart!" went on Attawulf. "See! He is, in all truth, my lord Guntha! 'Tis disaster! Fools—fools! Ye shall die for this!"

It was an appalling discovery. The soldiers, so mightily pleased with themselves a moment before, were overwhelmed. They had made the most colossal blunder of the battle! For they had killed their own commander-in-chief, whose presence in Dunstane at this moment might well have turned the whole tide!

CHAPTER 8.

Riding to Battle!

"LOOK!" exclaimed Nipper breathlessly. He had pulled up his horse, and the other schoolboys in armour followed his example. They had just galloped out of a little valley, and were now on rising ground, only half a mile from the walls of Dunstane.

The city, with the thousands of soldiers surrounding it, and with the din of battle filling the air, seemed only a stone's throw away.

"Great Scott!" said Handforth, pushing up the visor of his helmet.

The boys presented an imposing spectacle as they clustered there on the little hilltop, their armour gleaming, their horses erect.

"Looks pretty exciting to me," remarked Vivian Travers.

"By my shoulder-blades! Why this delay?" roared Handforth. "On, knaves! Into the gory battle!"

"Wait a minute, you impatient ass!" said Nipper. "It's no good riding straight ahead; the fighting is at its thickest there."

"Just the place for us, then!" said Handforth promptly.

"But they haven't broken through, you chump!" said Nipper. "Look over this way—to the south gate. By Jove, the gate's fallen, and the Northestrians are pouring into the city!"

"Good gad!"

"Nipper's right, you chaps!"

"That's our route," went on Nipper, pointing. "The south gate, you fellows! We can get right into the city—and there'll be a bigger chance for us to do something worth while!"

None of the fellows had lost their keenness; they were as eager as ever to get into the battle and to "do their bit." It was the glamour of it all which had seized their imaginations. Shouting excitedly, they spurred on their horses and were soon riding hard for the south gate.

IN Dunstane, near the stately castle, King Cedric sat on his horse, sullen and silent.

He tugged nervously at his beard, and his eyes were full of fear.

He had just heard of Guntha's death—as everybody else in Dunstane had heard of it—and he was well-nigh stricken. For that news had affected the soldiers just as it was affecting the King. The Gothlanders regarded the death of Guntha the Crafty as a sign of defeat. And there could be no mistaking the triumphant tumult which echoed from the south side of the city. There the rebels had gained entry, and they were forcing their way in thousands towards the castle.

Desperately the soldiers of Cedric the Cruel were resisting; they were putting up a grim and stubborn fight. But they were harassed by the civilians—the citizens of Dunstane—who, from every available window, hurled down missiles upon the Gothlanders. There were no men to be spared who could go into these houses and annihilate the civilians. On all sides the defenders were being harassed.

Near the castle, however, everything was comparatively quiet; and Cedric, knowing exactly how things were going, had retreated to this backwater, his heart heavy.

"Defeat!" he muttered brokenly. "A plague on Northestria!"

Attawulf, who had brought him the news concerning Guntha, moved nearer.

"There is yet time to escape, sire," he said softly. "All is in readiness——"

"Be thou silent!" interrupted the King harshly. "I await Redwold's return. He will know how the battle fareth."

Attawulf and a group of nobles, who were within hearing, exchanged glances. They knew well enough how the battle fared. Dunstane was as good as lost already. The

(Continued on page 24.)

LINE UP HERE FOR A GOOD LAUGH, LADS!



HANDFORTH'S Weekly

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EDITORIAL STAFF.

Editor-in-Chief E. O. Handforth
Editor E. O. Handforth
Chief Sub-Editor E. O. Handforth
Literary Editor E. O. Handforth
Art Editor E. O. Handforth
Rest of Staff E. O. Handforth

MAY 23rd, 1931.

THE EDITOR'S CHIN-WAG

SPECIAL FEATURE INQUISITIVE INTERVIEWS

No. 4.

Ulysses Spencer Adams.

H ALLO, everybody!

"Friends, Romans and country-men," as Brutus said to Macbeth, "here we are again!"

I'll say we are, too. And I'm full of bright ideas and wheezes as usual. Can't you hear them bubbling out of me like a young Niagara Falls? The brain-box has been working on all cylinders, and you'll see the results in next week's bumperer issue of the WEEKLY.

No; that's not a mistake. I meant bumperer. You see, this number is a bumper one; but next week's is even better. Hence bumperer. Jolly good, isn't it? But then, you can't check genius. I shall have to patent that word at the Foreign Office.

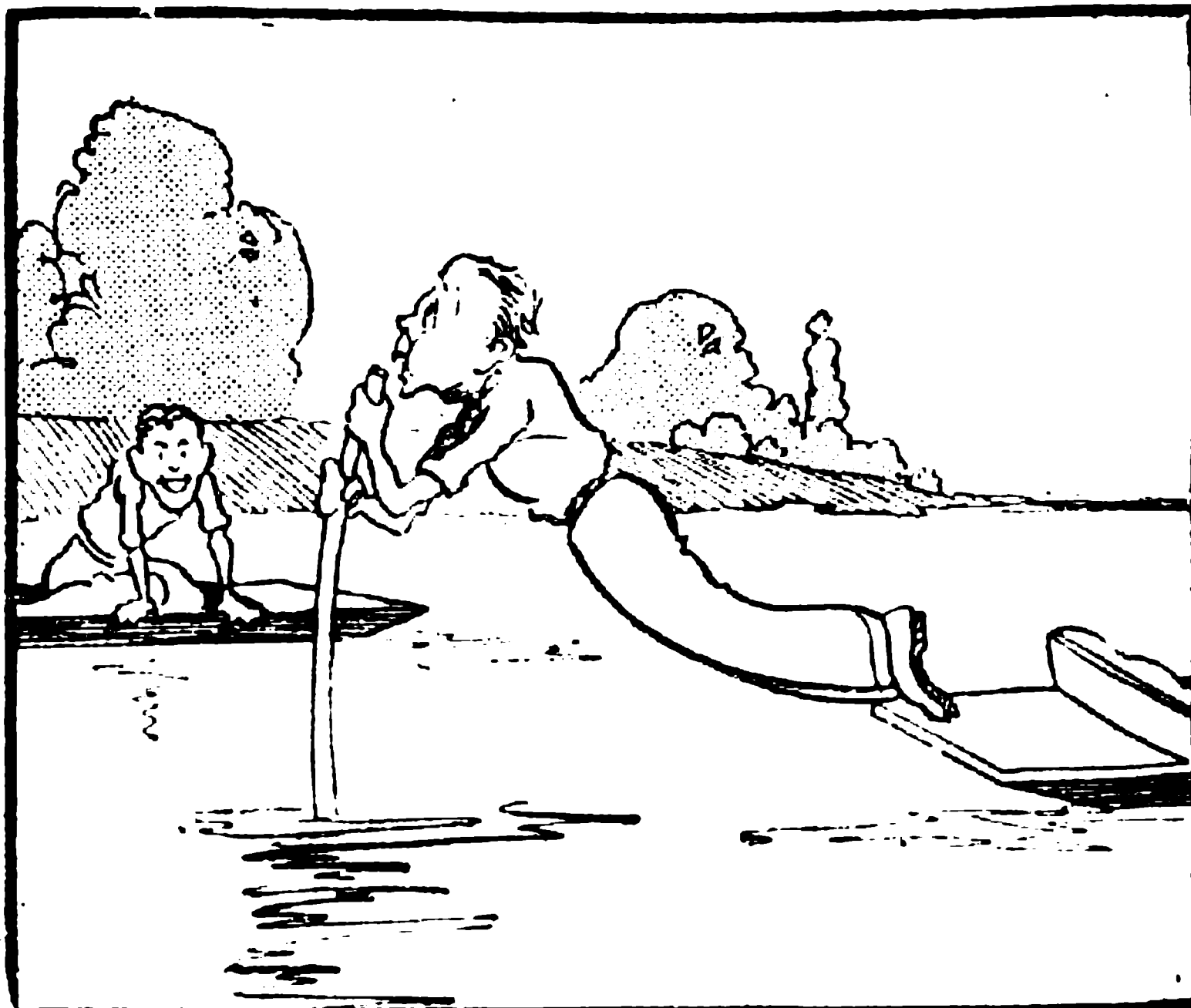
Anyway, lads and lassies, look out for some ripping surprise new features in the next number of my WEEKLY.

Yours cheerily, E. O. HANDFORTH.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Bill (Dorking) asks what is the difference between an elephant and a greyhound? Huh! You can't catch me, Bill. There's no difference—they're both animals.

"Reader" (Clacton). Thanks for your glowing tributes about the WEEKLY—but I can't lend you a bob. Try again later. I shall recognise your writing (?) and act accordingly.



"Everything comes to him who waits."
Harry Gresham didn't have to wait very long

PICTURED PROVERBS.

What do you think of England?

Say, I guess li'l ol' England is a grand place. But America—

And what do you think of St. Frank's?

St. Frank's is sure a dandy dump. But in America—

Is your pater very rich?

I'll say pop is rich. Why, he'd write his letters on hundred-dollar bills if there was room. An' how! In America—

Then why don't you have a car?

Say, buddy, that Morris perambulator of yours may be all right for you, but England is too goldarned slow for any American roadster my pop 'ud buy this guy.

Why don't you speak English, you jig sap?

Sez you! I guess you English galcs don't know your own language when you hear it.

What do you think of the WEEKLY?

It sure tickles me pink. But, say, why not let me write an article on how America—

Do you like sport?

In good old U.S.A.—yep. In England — nope. Say, you bono-heads ought to take up a man's game like baseball. This hyar cricket leaves me stone cold. Now go to America—

But I got in first, and told Adams to go to Jericho!

HANDY'S HINTS—No. 5

How to Become a Carpenter

A CARPENTER is a fellow who makes things out of wood. With a few deft strokes of various tools he transforms an ordinary chunk of wood into a yacht. Sounds hard, perhaps, but you've only got to know how to do it, and it's dead easy.

Think of being able to make your own cricket bats, lads. Of course, in this instance, special wood is necessary—willow, which comes from Japan, the land of the weeping-willow. Why the wood should want to weep, I don't know—but I suppose it is rather depressing to realise that its one job in life is to knock a leather ball about a field.

As already stated, the expert carpenter uses a few tools. Others are content to perform with a penknife, but the results are not so successful, and it's hard lines on the penknife. A penknife is all right for cutting a pencil, but not quite suitable for making a mahogany table.

A plane, saw, chisel and hammer are some of the tools

required by carpenters. A plane is not a 'plane, if you get what I mean. The carpenter's plane doesn't fly through the air, but flies over the wood and makes the wood fly, too. From which statements you will gather that a plane is for making the wood smooth and for reducing its thickness. This is done by means of a sharp blade stuck in its middle. Don't try to find the blade with your fingers, or you won't eat any more cream-buns.

The same applies to the saw and chisel—especially the chisel, which will chip chunks out of your hand, instead of the wood, if you're not careful. The hammer, of course, has many uses, not the least of which is when some busybody comes up and tells you how to do a certain thing. Just dot him one on the boko with the hammer.

That's about all I can tell you on the subject of carpentry. I've told you everything I know, at any rate—and even an expert can't tell you more than that.

EXCHANGE AND MART

SECURE A WORLD FAMOUS CHEF.—Fatty Little offers his services as a private cook. No monetary remuneration, but insists upon a 25 per cent share of his clients' eatables.

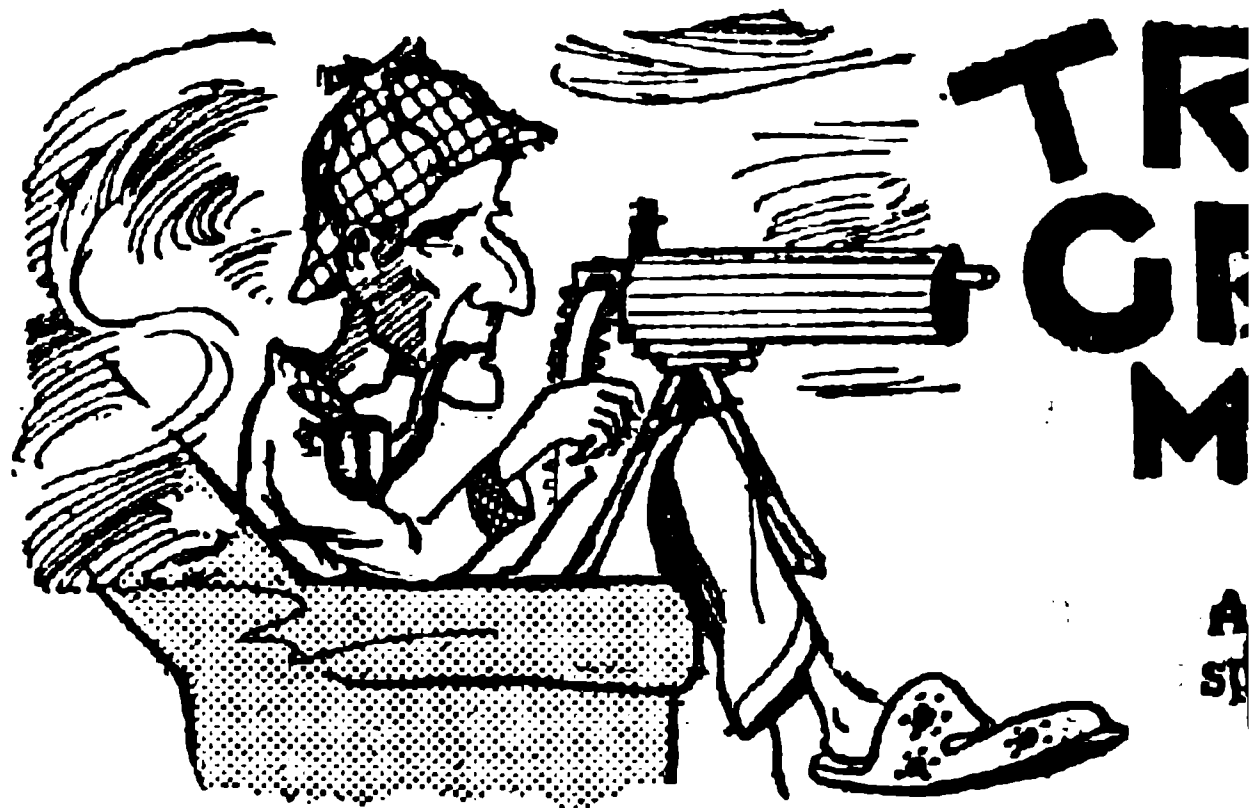
AN ANNOUNCEMENT.—Nipper asks for volunteers for a raid on the East House Fourth to-morrow night. Greatest secrecy must be observed. (Nipper has let me into the secret, but I'm not telling. Won't the Fourth be surprised when they know that this announcement is only a dodge, and that we're really going to jape them to-night?—E. O. H.)

FOR SALE.—An imposing oak-table, with three legs with knobs on. Can't spare the fourth leg, because it's propping up the book-shelf. What offers?—Ralph Leslie Fullwood, Remove Form.

FOR SALE.—A number of home-made scribbling-pads. Formerly they were rejection slips which accompanied articles and stories returned as "no good" by E. O. Handforth. Call on Solomon Levi. (Yes, my lad, and you'll get thousands more rejection slips if you continue to send me your drivelling rot.—E. O. H.)

JU-JITSU taught expertly by Vivian Travers. He will not be responsible for any damages incurred; pupils should pad themselves. Such blots on the earth as Long, Forrest, Gulliver, Marriott, etc., taught free—providing they wear no padding.

FREE. A brand new bright purple suit. Cost ten guineas. Never been worn by present owner by order of his valet. All inquiries to Phipps, Domestic Quarters.



How the Story Began.

TRACKETT GRIM, the famous detective, is captured by Knock-kneed Nesbitt, king of the underworld, in his Limehouse lair. Grim is being tortured when Splinter, his faithful assistant, arrives down the chimney, together with the police.

A Drop of Triumph!

THE hundreds of crooks in Knock-kneed Nesbitt's den in Limehouse were rooted to the spot with amazement by the dramatic appearance of Splinter and the police, and they proved easy meat. Splinter had been counting on this; hence his unusual method of entry. Anyway, after one or two short scraps the whole bunch of Nesbitt's gang were handcuffed into helplessness—all, that is, except one. Knock-kneed Nesbitt himself had done a bunk!

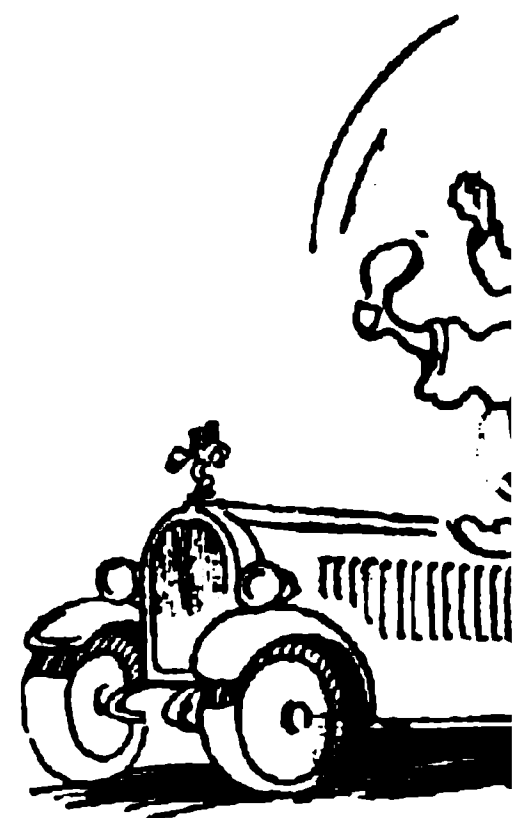
Trackett Grim, still manacled to the chair, foamed and gibbered and champed at the bit in impotent fury as he saw the master-criminal stuff the valuable jewels into his pocket, and then vanish through a secret panel in the wall.

"Hi, Splinter, you prize idiot, come and release me!" yelled Trackett Grim.

Splinter, looking like a sweep, was handing out black eyes literally with his sooty fists. At Grim's hail, he delivered one of his famous rights that knocked his opponent into the midst of a group of about fifty crooks, and sent them all toppling over like ninepins.

"Splinter, you chump, stop playing skittles and come here immediately, or I'll dock 9½d. off your wages!" bellowed Trackett Grim.

At this threat, Splinter buzzed over pronto.



Trackett Grim in his aeroplane intort

TRACKETT GRIM — MASTER CRIMINAL!

super-super detective-thriller story,
specially written by the world-famous
author, E. O. HANDFORTH.

The task of releasing Trackett Grim from the chair was easier said than done. Knock-kneed Nesbitt had thoughtlessly gone off with the keys of the detective's fetters, and everybody was in a fine old stew. Trackett Grim started to give chase, complete with chair, but as the legs were bound to his ankles he came a nasty cropper. He collected a few broken bones in the process—and gave a howl of joy when he found that in the fall the chair had been broken, thus freeing him.

Yelling to Splinter to follow him, the celebrated sleuth went dashing through the crooks, who were being escorted by the police into a fleet of charabancs which were lined up outside.



Half an hour later a special helicopter-plane rose from Trackett Grim's back garden and went soaring westwards. At the controls sat Trackett Grim himself, and behind, in the observer's seat, was Splinter.

"Where are we going, guv'nor?" Splinter wanted to know.

"Southampton!"

ropped from the
he crook's car.

came the reply. "Nesbitt's got his yacht there—that's

where he'll be heading for, I reckon." Splinter marvelled at his famous master's sagacity. The detective's deductions were hot dog.

On whizzed the 'plane at two hundred and three miles an hour. Within a few minutes their quarry was in sight. Some miles ahead on the long, winding road below was a super racing-car, roaring along at breakneck speed. Grim, with his uncanny eyesight, recognised the driver as Nesbitt.

"Splinter, take the controls," ordered Grim. "I've got an appointment. I'm going to drop in on somebody by the name of Nesbitt." He laughed uproariously at his joke; and then, as the detective produced a coil

(Continued at foot of next column.)

CLASS-ROOM CLIPPINGS

THE results of the latest school examinations have just come to hand. Surprisingly enough, I do not top the Remove list. Any fool will tell you that I'm cleverer than Nipper—I'm telling you so myself—and yet he's got the most marks. Obviously a mistake has been made, but I don't think I'll point this out to the Head. I might get more marks than Nipper if I did—but not the right sort of marks.

Old Churchy has got a frightful cold. He's been sneezing about fifty million germs per hour per day. He's like a bear with a sore head—and nose. Yet he can thank his lucky stars for that cold, for it saved him from getting a swishing or lines the other afternoon. The silly ass was trying to draw a caricature of old Crowsfeet on a piece of paper, and he didn't see the master approaching. Just as Mr. Crowell was about to squint at his efforts, Churchy sneezed violently. By George! It was a sneeze,

too. The room shook, the desk moved, and everybody jumped in their seats. Churchy's inkwell jumped, too—shooting its contents all over the piece of paper on which he had been drawing, completely obliterating the caricature. So old Crowell was done in the eye—and Church, the lucky bargee, got the rest of the afternoon off.

Young Willy tells me that Mr. Suncliffe, the Third Form-master, is more than ever enthusiastic about cricket this season. The other day he stopped in the middle of mathematics and informed the Third that a certain cricketer would secure many more wickets if he made the ball swerve when bowling. My minor cheekily supplied old Sunny with a tennis ball, and he proceeded to demonstrate. An abrupt conclusion was brought about by one smashing delivery hurtling through the classroom window. By George! I shouldn't mind having old Sunny for our Form-master—he might let me give him a few tips during lessons!

of rope, Splinter cottoned on.

"Guv'nor, you don't mean —" he gasped in horror.

"Take full marks. But you mind your own business. Your job is to look after the bus."

Splinter obeyed. He stepped on it, while Grim stepped off it. He had clambered on to one of the wings and tied the rope to the struts. He flung himself into space, and was now dangling at the end of the rope in mid-air.

The 'plane dropped lower under Splinter's expert piloting, and was soon roaring only a few yards above the racing car. Judging the distance perfectly, Trackett Grim dropped. He landed in the seat beside Nesbitt.

His right flashed out and socked the crook on the jaw. And then commenced a titanic struggle in a racing-car hurtling along at eighty miles an hour!

Nesbitt was soon pulverised into insensibility by the pounding of his antagonist's

fists. Triumphantly, Trackett Grim brought the car to a standstill.

"I hand it to you, Grim," said Nesbitt slowly. "You're the world's greatest detective and you've got me beat. Here, take these sparklers—they've brought me enough trouble already."

The detective laughed as he took the "sparklers."

"You've been dished, diddled and done all the way along the line," he told the crook. "These aren't the real Bilton jewels—but paste imitations. The real ones are hidden in my secret safe. Now come along to the police station like a good boy."

Trackett Grim reversed the car, and was soon roaring back to London in a cloud of dust.

Thus was Nesbitt delivered to justice—and once again Trackett Grim had proved himself the most marvellous detective in the world.

THE END.

SCHOOLBOYS IN ARMOUR!

(Continued from page 20.)

defenders were putting up a stout fight, but at any second the other gates might give way, and the Northestrians would pour in in fresh floods. And that would be the beginning of the end.

Attawulf and the nobles, in fact, were afraid of being trapped—surrounded by the Northestrians. If that happened, there would probably be no quarter; they would be butchered by the mob. For the Northestrians had every cause to hate these Gothlander overlords who had brought such misery upon their fair land. Cedric himself was responsible for some hundreds of ruthless executions.

It seemed madness to remain here whilst there was yet a chance of escape. A galley, fully manned, lay on the lake shore; and in that direction there were no Northestrians. The attack was being flung at all the inland walls of the city.

Very soon Redwold the Ruthless came riding up, his face set in grim lines.

"What tidings, my lord?" asked the King bluntly.

"I' faith, sire, I have naught but ill tidings," replied Redwold tragically. "Our forces to the south of the city are weakened, and the men are like to surrender!"

"By my soul!" muttered Cedric.

"They lack reinforcements, sire, since all our other men are required at the walls," continued Redwold. "And now cometh the news that the west gate has fallen, and the enemy is swarming in!"

"Are my soldiers children, that they should let these accursed Northestrians overwhelm them?" shouted the King furiously. "A plague on ye, Redwold! 'Twas thy boast that Dunstane could never be taken!"

"It seemeth that these people are filled with devils, sire," replied Redwold sullenly. "Hark ye to the tumult! It cometh nearer. Ere long it will be too late for us to depart. If we go now, sire, there is a chance that we may win clear!"

"Ay, let us be moving, then," growled the King sourly.

It was characteristic of these Gothlanders that they should desert their own men in the greatest hour of trial. They had a chance to save their own skins—by reaching that galley and fleeing across the lake to Gothland. It was not in their natures to stand by until the bitter end—to fight shoulder to shoulder with their men.

AT this crucial period a brave cavalcade of Northestrian knights in gleaming armour galloped into the thick of the fray. At least, they were mistaken for Northestrian knights.

The St. Frank's fellows were at last on the spot.

They found the south gate comparatively clear, for most of the fighting had retreated farther back into the city. With Nipper in

the lead, the schoolboys in armour went thundering through the wrecked gateway, and the Northestrian soldiers readily made way for them.

Seeing an opening to the left, Nipper charged down it, the others following. They found themselves galloping along a narrow, cobbled street. They turned, entering another street.

"Hi, hold on!" came Handforth's shout. "Where the dickens are we? Where's the fighting?"

They pulled up in a small square; only a few people were visible—mostly women and children, at the windows of some of the houses. The air was filled with the sounds of battle, which came from the distance.

"It's a funny thing," panted Nipper, "but we seem to have missed the scrap somehow."

"Yet we're in Dunstane!" panted Reggie Pitt. "How did we go wrong?"

"I fancy we ought to have kept straight on after passing through the gate—instead of turning down that narrow side street," replied Nipper. "Well, it doesn't matter. We can easily work our way round, and we'll soon be in the fighting-line. By Jove, the battle seems to be going well, you chaps!"

"A fat lot we're seeing of it!" growled Handforth.

"I mean, the Northestrians have broken the defences—they're in the city!" said Nipper. "Come on! Buck up, St. Frank's!"

"Hurrah!"

"On, the Remove!"

"Rather!"

They galloped onwards again, taking any street at random, and presently they found themselves in the central square. Again they pulled up. Immediately in front of them, on the other side of the square, standing on rising ground, was the majestic pile of Dunstane Castle. Some magnificently attired nobles on horseback were grouped near the drawbridge. But the boys hardly gave them a glance.

To their right, in all the streets which entered the square on the south side, the fighting was fierce. The boys could see the confused mobs of men, attackers and defenders mixed up in a desperate hand-to-hand encounter. Foot by foot, yard by yard, the Gothlanders were being forced back.

"Come on!" yelled Handforth. "This is the place for us! I'm jiggered if we haven't come round to the rear somehow! We can fall on the enemy from the flank——"

"Never mind that!" interrupted Nipper. "Look! There's something more important to do!"

The others, who were ready enough to dash into the battle, were struck by the urgent tone in Nipper's voice. They drew their horses nearer, and they followed the direction of Nipper's gaze.

"What's the idea?" asked Handforth impatiently.

"There's our meat," replied Nipper, nodding.

"What, those men in chainmail, on horse-back?" asked Reggie Pitt. "But there aren't many of them, and there won't be a great deal of excitement in a scrap like that!"

"No excitement at all!" said Handforth, with a snort. "We want to go into the real battle!"

"But wait a minute, dear old fellows," said Travers. "I rather think that Nipper is right. Haven't you recognised those beauties? Unless my eyesight is defective, one of them is King Cedric himself!"

"What!"

"Exactly," said Nipper. "The others are Redwold and Attawulf, accompanied by an assortment of nobles."

Handforth stared.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he said. "But I thought these kings and overlords led their own soldiers into battle—just as they used to in medieval days?"

"That's the general rule, Handy, but Cedric evidently realises that the game is up," said Nipper. "Can't you understand? These rotters are trying to clear out while they've got the chance!"

"My only sainted aunt!"

"And it's our opportunity," went on Nipper keenly. "We couldn't have arrived at a better moment. By Jove! What a triumph for us if we can only collar Cedric himself!"

Even Handforth was awed by the possibility. He even forgot to pine for the more hectic fighting-line.

"The cowards!" he said furiously. "Scuttling out as soon as they see that the ship is sinking!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, the least they could do would be to stand by their soldiers, what?"

"They're too cunning for that," said Nipper gruffly. "They know that defeat is coming, and they're trying to save their own skins. They're hoping to get away in the confusion. If they did the right thing and surrendered the city, they would be compelled to hand themselves over to the victorious Northeistrians."

"And that would mean the chopper for them, eh?" said Pitt. "That's why they're bolting. I say! Look! They're on the move now!"

There were more mounted men with the King; a number of his own personal guard. At a sudden order the whole company moved off at a trot in the direction of the east gate.

This particular gate was only defended by a nominal force of men, for none of the Northeistriean troops was attacking on this side of the city. It was the one free spot, and it had been purposely left severely alone because of the steep slope which descended from the very gate.

This slope made the east gate well-nigh impregnable; it was impossible for an attacking force to charge with any success. A comparatively small defence force would easily hold it.

For King Cedric's purpose this gate was ideal.

Word had already been sent in advance that the gate was to be opened as soon as the king and his nobles appeared in sight. They were to gallop through, and the gates were to be closed behind them. The soldiers had been told that the King was bent upon an urgent mission in connection with reinforcements. Whether the men believed this tale or not was questionable, but they dared not disobey orders.

At the foot of that deep slope was a stretch of meadowland, and, beyond, the open lake. Once clear of the city, the King and his satellites would quickly be aboard the waiting galley; and, with any luck, they would get well out upon the lake before the city finally fell.

Thus there was a chance that they would reach Gothland before any pursuit developed.

It seemed any odds that the plan would succeed—but there were the St. Frank's fellows on the job now!

CHAPTER 9.

The Fall of Cedric!

NIPPER had the faculty of keeping cool in almost any circumstances. He realised that the battle itself did not matter; the Northeistrians were doing their job thoroughly, and they could be left to it. The little help that these schoolboys could provide would be as a drop in the ocean.

But if King Cedric could be captured the schoolboys would have brought off a great triumph.

"This is our chance to do our bit!" sang out Nipper. "All together, you chaps! It's now or never! There they go—the whole boiling of them!"

"We're about two to one," said Travers contentedly.

"Yes—and we ought to make a pretty easy capture of it," went on Nipper. "Come on—on the ball, St. Frank's!"

"Hurrah!"

"Down with Cedric!"

They galloped across the square as the King and his nobles were disappearing. As a matter of fact, Redwold the Ruthless had been eyeing the knights in armour with uneasiness; he had been puzzled as to their identity. He could not understand why they were in the city, and what their object was. There was certainly no sense in making inquiries; the best thing to do, in Redwold's opinion, was to clear out.

And so, as the King's party galloped noisily down the cobbled streets towards the east gate, the "knights" in armour thundered in their rear. Within a minute Redwold knew what was happening; a hastily turned head told him the worst.

"Sire, they pursue us!" he ejaculated, in alarm.

"On—on!" fumed the King, now fearful.

Like his companions, he believed that the pursuers were a body of Northestrian guardsmen. They were evidently picked men, too—a special force of volunteer nobles, perhaps.

"A thousand curses!" muttered Attawulf savagely. "Had the King made up his mind earlier, we should have been on the lake by now!"

"They gain upon us, the dogs!" said Redwold. "I vow we are too late!"

The King himself was beset with fear now. In his pride and arrogance he had believed that none could prevent his flight. Galloping hard down the almost-deserted street, the King's party came within sight of the east gate. From the rear the pursuers were closing in.

"By my marrow and bones!" snarled Cedric. "The gates are not yet opened! A curse upon these dolts!"

"Open—open!" thundered Redwold, spurring his horse on so that he rode in advance.

The guards at the gate sprang into activity.

They had purposely left the opening of the gate until the last moment. They knew that matters were precarious in other parts of the city; but everything was so peaceful here that not even the soldiers fully realised that Dunstane was almost lost.

The ponderous gates were opened, and Redwold galloped through, King Cedric and his nobles following. But in those few moments—moments during which the fugitives had been compelled to slacken speed—the St. Frank's fellows had gained. They were practically upon the heels of their quarry.

"Close the gates!" shouted Attawulf, as he galloped past.

The soldiers naturally misunderstood. To all intents and purposes, these knights in armour were a part of the King's party. So the boys were allowed to gallop through—the gates not being closed until the last of them had got clear.

"Whoa! Easy!" warned Nipper. "Mind this dip!"

The boys were fairly good riders, but more than one was almost unseated during the next minute. They had been unprepared for that steep hill. Moreover, they were hampered by their clumsy armour.

Things were not going at all as they had anticipated. What it really amounted to was that they had galloped in through the south gate, and now they had just galloped out through the east gate. They had seen some of the fighting from afar, but that was all.

"Quick, you fellows!" panted Nipper, as he swung round in the saddle. "Half of you go to the left, and the other half to the right. We've got to surround the beggars!"

"But—but——" began Handforth.

"Can't you see?" went on Nipper. "There's a galley down there by the lake shore, and there are a couple of dozen Gothlanders in it. We've got to surround our men before they get near the lake! If we don't they'll be too many for us!"

"He's right, you fellows!" shouted Handforth. "Come on—this way!"

The boys divided up, galloping their hardest. Swinging round in two determined half-circles, they descended upon the flanks of the King's party.

Handforth was not going to be done out of his scrap. Riding low in the saddle, spurring his horse on, he dashed full tilt at the enemy. His lance was ready, and when he came within striking range he gave a deliberate swerve and lunged.

Crash!

There was a clattering and splintering as Handforth's lance struck Redwold the Ruthless full in the breastplate. The lance shattered to fragments, and Redwold was sent hurtling backwards off his horse. He thundered to the ground, where he lay stunned, with most of the wind knocked out of him, too.

"Surrender!" shouted Nipper, in a gruff voice. "Hold, my lord Cedric!"

"Insolent dog!" snarled Cedric. "I am the King!"

"Nay, thou art a king no longer—neither in Northestria nor in Gothland!" retorted Nipper promptly. "Thou art a prisoner, Cedric—or, if thou wouldst prefer it, a dead man!"

"Ay!" chorused the other boys, their identity hidden beneath their armour. "Surrender—or die!"

Handforth was half-hoping that Cedric and his nobles would elect to fight. It would be a much more satisfactory conclusion to the adventure. But these knights looked so grim and determined, with their lances pointing menacingly, that King Cedric had all the heart taken out of him. Redwold was down, in any case.

"Ye are in greater number," growled the King sullenly.

"Then you surrender?" asked Nipper.

"Ay, may a plague seize ye!"

"Thy sword, my lord!"

Cedric gave up his sword with a bad grace, and Attawulf and the other nobles immediately followed his example.

"Good egg!" said Handforth eagerly. "Now we can——"

"Dry up, ass!" muttered Nipper. "We want to make certain of them yet!"

The boys were thoroughly excited and overjoyed; but Nipper was the only one, perhaps, who realised that they would never have made this capture if the King and his party had known the true identity of these "knights." Even now it was touch and go. The prisoners were mounted.

"Methinks 'twould be better, my lord Cedric, for thee to dismount," said Nipper, still speaking in a gruff voice. "Thy nobles will dismount also."



"I am Guntha!" shouted the Gothlander overlord. But his soldiers, thinking he was an impostor, surged round him menacingly with swords upraised.

"By my bones, no!" snarled Cedric. "I ride or I go not at all!"

"Perchance thou wouldst prefer to be unseated—thus!" asked Nipper harshly.

He levelled his lance at the King and advanced. Taking their cue, the other boys acted in the same way towards the King's nobles.

These latter, at least, were taking no chances. They dismounted hurriedly, and the King, finding that his arrogance served him no longer, snarled with fury and dismounted also.

In a moment Nipper had sent the riderless horses galloping away, and the schoolboys surrounded their prisoners, hemming them in so that no escape was possible.

"All serene now!" sang out Nipper cheerily.

He flung up his visor, and the other boys did the same. They could see the men in

the galley pulling frantically at the great sweeps, rowing out upon the lake. It was rather an instructive sidelight upon the loyalty of King Cedric's subjects. Seeing what had happened to his Majesty, the men in the galley had made off—with the intention, no doubt, of escaping to Gothland on their own account. The thing that mattered to the boys, however, was that they had gone.

"Well, we've made rather a neat job of it, eh, you chaps?" asked Handforth, grinning. "There wasn't enough scrapping for my liking, but we've made an important capture."

"Good gad, absolutely!" said Archie. "I mean to say, the King and all his nobles, what?"

"Only just in the nick of time, too," said Travers. "But for us, they would have been off—skulking back to Gothland! For the love of Samson! What a fine collection

—I don't think! Deserting the besieged city just when they were most needed!"

King Cedric and Attawulf the Terrible and the others were staring dazedly. Redwold the Ruthless had risen by now, and he, too, was looking bewildered.

"Sire!" shouted Attawulf thickly. "These are no soldiers! They are but youths—boys!"

"Ay, the stranger boys from beyond the great ice!" snarled Redwold.

"By the soul of Sarus!" swore the King. "We have been tricked!" He turned upon the boys furiously. "Ye young fools!" he shouted. "Think ye that this folly will serve ye? Boys! By my faith! We can destroy them with our bare hands!"

"Try it on!" retorted Handforth. "You'll stay where you are—all of you—or we'll tickle you up with these lances!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Keep 'em where they are, you chaps!"

"Rather!"

"Insolent puppies!" snarled Cedric. "Have ye no respect for my kingly majesty?"

"We've about as much respect for you, King Cedric, as we have for a gorilla," replied Nipper coolly. "It's no good talking to us about your kingly majesty. You're a tyrant, and now you've proved yourself to be a skulking coward and a traitor to your own men!"

"Thou speakest thus to me?" gasped Cedric. "Thou—a boy?"

"Well, it is a bit of a waste of time," agreed Nipper. "I don't see why we should speak to you. Form into double line—all of you! We're going to march you back into Dunstane, and if any one of you attempts to escape it'll be the worse for him!"

"It would be a lot safer to bind them up," said Handforth gruffly. "They're as tricky as a pack of monkeys, and as treacherous as foxes!"

"Yes, you're right," agreed Nipper, nodding. "We might as well do the job thoroughly, so we'll bind them up, and march them back into Dunstane with all the humiliation they deserve!"

CHAPTER 10.

The Schoolboy Heroes!

IT was an easy matter to secure the prisoners.

While over half the boys remained mounted, with their lances pointed menacingly at the prisoners, the others set about the task of binding their hands securely behind their backs. Even King Cedric was not excluded from this indignity.

The King, nearly foaming at the mouth with fury, attempted to make a break for it—only to be prodded by Handforth's lance. He was quickly brought to his senses, and Redwold and Attawulf, who had also been thinking of such a move, changed their

minds. They were finding that these boys were not to be denied.

The St. Frank's fellows had provided themselves with ropes—just in case of emergency—and these ropes were proving useful now. The prisoners were bound, and then they were tied in a long line, one to the other. It was thus impossible for any one man to make a sudden break for liberty, for if he attempted any such thing he would drag the others with him, and only confusion would result.

"Now, Mr. Cedric, we'll get on the move," said Nipper briskly, as he remounted. "We're going to form into a double line, and you will march between us. We're going back to Dunstane."

Cedric made no reply, but his eyes glittered evilly.

"I think I can read what's in your mind," said Nipper. "You're hoping that when we reach the gate, you will get your soldiers to fall upon us. But it won't work, my friend. There aren't any of your soldiers left."

"By my bones!" gasped Cedric, staring at the distant gates.

He now saw what Nipper had seen some minutes earlier. The gates were standing wide open, and crowds of men were swarming about them. They were not soldiers, but civilians armed with spades and shovels and similar weapons. The citizens of Dunstane, continuing their good work, had seized this particular gate on their own account. The Gothlanders, no doubt, had been put to flight.

"Come on, you chaps!" sang out Nipper. "The sooner we can get our prisoners into the castle, the better!"

"The castle?" asked Handforth, staring.

"Why not?" said Nipper coolly. "We've started well, so let's finish well. I vote we seize the castle and make a thorough job of it."

"Good egg!"

"Come on, you fellows!"

"St. Frank's for ever!"

Exhilarated by their success, the boys replaced their visors in position, and the journey back to Dunstane commenced. Nipper's only fear was that he and the other boys would not be allowed to take their prisoners into the castle. It was more than likely that the enraged Northestrians would fall upon Cedric and exact a summary vengeance.

It was as well, therefore, that the boys should conceal their identity. Better for the people to think that they were responsible Northestrian nobles. And so the procession reached the gates—a double line of mounted knights, with the prisoners marching between in single file.

As it turned out, there were not many men round the gate when the boys arrived. Having cleared off the Gothlander soldiers, the mob had sought fresh fields. But the few who remained recognised King Cedric at once, and many were the amazed shouts which went up.

"See, 'tis the King!"

"Ay, and Redwold and Attawulf!"

"They are prisoners—in the hands of our good nobles!"

"Ay, friend, Cedric is a prisoner, and we take him to the castle!" shouted Nipper impressively. "Make way!"

The people made way readily enough, and crowds of them followed in the rear, excited and enthusiastic. Others were collected on the way, until the procession reached a considerable size. The excitement grew, and soon a body of Northestrian men-at-arms joined in.

At length the big square was reached, and King Cedric had the mortification of crossing the drawbridge on foot, a prisoner. A Northestrian officer, stoutly built, galloped up to the new arrivals from the courtyard.

"Hold!" he called. "What is this? I'faith, do I dream, or is this the Gothlander king?"

"My only hat!" came a yell from Handforth. "It's old Wynwed!"

The boys raised their visors, for they had recognised the officer as Wynwed the Jovial, quite an old friend of theirs.

Wynwed stared from the prisoners to the boys, and his face was a picture of bewilderment.

"By the bald scalp of Joseph!" he ejaculated. "But I thought ye were left in Ixwell, young lords!"

"So we were, but it wasn't good enough," replied Nipper. "We thought we'd come along and join in the scrap. It was just our luck to run into King Cedric and these other rotters. We rounded them up and took them prisoners. So here they are."

"By my soul, have I not always said that ye are wondrous fighters?" shouted Wynwed. "A magnificent capture, in very sooth! To the dungeons they go!"

"Ye shall suffer for this base work!" snarled King Cedric. "These indignities shall be accounted for!"

"He makes me tired," said Handforth impatiently. "Look here, Cedric, you rotter! You ought to think yourself jolly lucky to be alive! If the people had got hold of you, you would have been torn limb from limb!"

"Ay, by my faith, 'tis true!" declared Wynwed. "Not that the dog will live long, methinks! His head resteth none too securely upon his shoulders."

A number of Wynwed's guardsmen took the prisoners off, and within five minutes they were locked away in some of the deepest of the castle dungeons.

Meanwhile, the boys helped Wynwed the Jovial with the good work. Dunstane Castle, in fact, was being seized.

It was a comparatively easy task, for there were only a few Gothlander soldiers left here, and they surrendered quickly enough when they found that they were outnumbered. All the servants of the castle, of course, were Northestrians—slaves.

"Well, we haven't done so bad," said Handforth. "We've grabbed Cedric, we've shoved him in a dungeon, and we've collared the castle. But what about the fighting?"

What's going on? I thought, when we started, that we were going to join in the battle! And we've hardly seen anything of it!"

"Methinks, Handforth the Bold, that the battle is all but over," said Wynwed contentedly. "I vow I have had a stomachful of fighting this day!"

"You're lucky—we haven't had any!" growled Handforth.

"I'faith, thou wert ever a one for the fight!" said Wynwed. "Our soldiers are all-conquering; they advance and defeat the enemy at every gate. These dogs of Gothlanders are surrendering in their hundreds and in their thousands."

"Let's get our horses again and see if we can do something," suggested Travers.

"Nay, good youth, methinks ye have done sufficient," said Wynwed. "Do ye stay here in the castle. Ye have seized it in the name of Princess Mercia, so do ye hold it until my lord Lee the Lionheart cometh."

"That's a pretty good wheeze," said Nipper, nodding. "Come on, you chaps! What about going up to the battlements? The castle's ours, and from the battlements we can get a view of the whole city, and see exactly how things are going."

"Hear, hear!"

Even Handforth was lured by this prospect. It was all the better, too, that the boys should "give it best." They had braved the dangers of the siege, and they had come through scatheless. It would be tragic if they entered the tail end of the fighting, only to suffer losses for no real purpose.

THE boys ran up to the battlements and gazed eagerly about them. The great battle was in its final stage.

To the south of the city, the Northestrian soldiers were in full command. They were swarming in every street, and in every open space. In other parts fighting was still going on, but even as the boys looked they could see whole crowds of Gothlanders—hordes of them—surrendering. Outside the city the victorious loyalists were crowding round in endless columns.

"Well, it's all over bar shouting, and the people are shouting all right," said Nipper, as he stood watching. "Look over there! There's still some fighting, but the Northestrians are pressing on relentlessly. It's the end of the war, you chaps. The Gothlanders are whacked!"

"By George, have you looked out at the lake?" asked Handforth. "Look at those galleys! Dozens of them—scores! All packed to suffocation!"

It was a fact. The Gothlanders, fleeing before the victorious Northestrians, were on the run everywhere.

Thousands had escaped from Dunstane—rather than stay and fight it out. Many were running at random across country, and later, no doubt, they would be rounded up and taken prisoners. Others had reached the lake, and were escaping to Gothland in the overcrowded galleys.

It was an overwhelming victory for the Northestrian loyalists.

Dunstane had fallen, and even while the boys were watching from the battlements of the castle, they heard bugles from many quarters sounding the final surrender.

It meant the freedom of Northestria. King Cedric's power was crushed for all time, and this fair land was once again in the possession of its own people.

CHAPTER 11.

Victory!

AMONG the most valiant of the fighters during that last stage of the battle were Nelson Lee, Lord Dorrimore, Mr. Alington Wilkes and Sir Hobart Manners. They had grown tired of being spectators, and they had entered the thick of the fighting.

Nelson Lee came across Dorrie in one of the principal streets, and his lordship was dusty, dishevelled, and blood was streaming from one of his arms. But he was looking supremely happy.

Leo himself had not come off entirely unscathed, for he had a bandage round his head, and another round his right arm.

"The scars of battle, eh, Dorrie?" asked Lee rather wearily. "Upon my word, it's

been hot during the past hour or two! Still, I think we can congratulate ourselves."

"I've had a perfectly glorious time!" said Lord Dorrimore. "I gathered about fifty stout fellows round me, and we bored our way through hordes of these Gothlanders and put them to rout."

"They had very little spirit left for fighting," said Lee. "The death of Guntha took the heart out of them; and Cedric, by all that I can hear, was no leader."

"Hail, Lee the Lionheart!"

Nelson Lee was being recognised everywhere he went, and he was being acclaimed by the madly-cheering throngs. Lord Dorrimore, too, came in for a great deal of hero worship. It was only with difficulty that they moved on towards the castle.

"Seen anything of Wilkes or Manners?" asked Dorrie.

"They're safe, I think," replied Lee. "The last I saw of Wilkes, he was dashing into the thick of the fray, coatless, collarless, and as eager as a boy."

"Talking about boys, I expect we shall hear something from Nipper and Handforth and the rest of the crowd when we get back to Ixwell," said Dorrie. "Poor kids! It was a bit rough on them, leaving them behind!"

"But it was safer, old man," replied Lee. "We couldn't take the risk of having some



Jokes from readers wanted for this feature! If you know a good rib-tickler, send it along now. A handsome watch will be awarded each week to the sender of the best joke; pocket wallets, penknives, and bumper books are also offered as prizes. Address your jokes to "Smilers," Nelson Lee Library, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

WELL PLACED.

Grandfather : "Well, my young man, how are you getting on at school?"

Dick : "Fine! I'm centre-forward in the football team."

Grandfather : "And your lessons?"

Dick : "Oh, I'm right back in lessons."

(G. Napper, 17, Chester Avenue, East Worthing, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

MORE IMPORTANT.

Small boy (to gent who has been hit on the head with a cricket ball): "Please, mister, did the ball bounce before it hit yer? You're the boundary, an' we wants to know whether it's a four or a six."

(Irene Russell, 66, Upland, Stoke Heath, Coventry, has been awarded a book.)

BETTER STILL.

Father (to son) : "Jimmy, I am glad to hear that you were the only boy at the party who didn't have two helpings of pudding."

Jimmy : "Yes, pa; I had three."

(J. Timmins, The Ranch, Letcombe Regis, Wantage, has been awarded a penknife.)

THE DIFFERENCE.

1st foreman : "What's the hurry? Rome wasn't built in a day."

2nd foreman : "No; but I wasn't the foreman on that job."

(D. Hooper, 14, Cromwell Road, Lambrook, Taunton, has been awarded a book.)

THE CRIBBER COPPED!

Teacher : "John, that is the third time I have seen you look at Tommy's work."

John : "Well, you see, miss, he doesn't write very plainly."

(A. J. Smith, 1, Stubbington Avenue, North End, Portsmouth, has been awarded a penknife.)

POOR FISH.

Cheeky little boy (to fishmonger) : "Have you got any dry fish, mister?"

Fishmonger : "Yes, my boy."

Cheeky boy (preparing to run) : "Then give them a drink."

(J. Dickel, 35, Kingshurst Avenue, King's Park, Glasgow, has been awarded a penknife.)

of those boys-killed. They're far better in Ixwell—where there's no fighting at all."

"I agree; but they'll have something to say, all the same," remarked Dorrie dryly. "Well, I can do with a good wash and brush up after this. We're making for the castle, aren't we? I understand that it's completely in our hands."

"Yes, Wynwed is in charge there," replied Lee. "Athelstane is a great soldier, and he has distributed his troops cleverly. The whole of Dunstane is ours, and the Gothlanders are completely routed."

"There don't seem to be many prisoners."

"For a very excellent reason," replied Lee. "Athelstane is not anxious to take prisoners. He has been satisfied to see the Gothlanders bolting. Most of them will find their way back into Gothland somehow, and this country is well rid of them. There aren't many of the enemy left in Dunstane now; they are being cleared out all the time."

"What of Cedric and Attawulf and Redwold and the others?"

"I'm afraid they've escaped with the rest," replied Lee, a note of regret in his voice. "That's the one bad spot, Dorrie. I was hoping that Cedric, at least, would be taken prisoner. I hear that he made a bolt while the battle was at its height. The cur didn't even wait to see the finish."

"Well, it's just like him," said Lord Dorri-

more, with a grunt. "And good riddance to bad rubbish!"

They had reached the drawbridge now, and they were delighted to meet Mr. Wilkes and Sir Hobart here. They were both looking rather the worse for wear, but they were sound on the whole.

"It's been a great day," said Mr. Wilkes happily. "I'm infernally glad that the Northestrians have won. We can leave this strange oasis without any qualms now. The Princess Mercia and her people have found peace."

"Just as they found it once before," nodded Nelson Lee. "But the Gothlanders rose again, with the results we know. But this time, I fancy, they will be kept over on their own side of the lake for good. The Northestrians have learned a lesson that they are not likely to forget in a hurry."

"I was hoping that we should grab Cedric," said Sir Hobart. "I had a very special plan in mind for him. I wanted to take him across to Gothland, and to imprison him in that awful valley where those prehistoric monsters are to be found."

"It wouldn't be a bad idea to banish him to that spot," said Lord Dorrimore, nodding. "You haven't forgotten, Manners, have you, that Cedric sent your own daughter there? Oh, well, it's all over now. Personally, I shall be rather glad to get back to the Pioneer—

WANTED TO SOAK IT UP.

Mother: "Tommy, you are a naughty boy for smacking baby. Why did you do it?"

Tommy (crying): "Well, he's gone and drunk all the ink, and now he won't eat a piece of blotting-paper."

(*H. Lewis, 58, Nordley Hill, Wednesfield, Staffs., has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

NOISES OFF.

A professional singer was also a keen motorist. One day when driving his car through town he was held up in a traffic block. To while away the minutes he began practising scales. A taxi-driver, who had drawn abreast, listened intently for a time, then leaned forward and shouted to the singer:

"Lumme, mister, there ain't 'arf something wrong with your exhaust."

(*W. J. Lea, 124, Gantshill Crescent, Ilford, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

A TRIFLE STALE.

Officer (having heard complaint about the issue of bread): "But, my man, if Napoleon had had that bread when crossing the Alps he would have eaten it with delight."

Private: "No doubt he would, sir—it was new then."

(*H. Barker, 71, Woodfield Crescent, Kidderminster, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)



HARDLY LIKELY.

Old lady (with basket of grocery, holding up steam-roller): "Driver, have you seen half a pound of margarine in the road? I think I must have dropped it."

Driver (scratching his head): "Sure, mum, now I come to think of it I did feel a bump a little way back."

(*A. Clay, 330, Great Howard Street, Liverpool, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

A GOOD GAME.

"Will you come and play at a zoo, auntie?" asked little Willie.

"Certainly, my dear," replied auntie; "but how do you play?"

"Oh, I'll be the elephant, and you will be the kind lady that feeds him with sweets and buns."

(*A. Frumkin, P.O. Box 69, South Porcupine, Canada, has been awarded a book.*)

THAT CAUSED IT.

The very thin man and the very fat one had been having an argument, and had descended to personalities.

"From the look of you," said the fat one, "there might have been a famine."

"Yes," came the retort; "and one look at you, my friend, would convince anyone that you had caused it."

(*L. Copeland, 26, Hurst Street, Herne Hill, S.E.24, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

back to our own civilisation. A little of this medieval stuff goes a long way."

"Well, Dorrie, one thing is certain," replied Nelson Lee. "You can make whatever terms you like with Princess Mercia. Your dreams of converting this country into a new winter resort may very possibly come true."

"Just a moment, Lee, old man," interrupted Dorrie, with a curious note in his voice. "Didn't you tell me that the boys are in Ixwell?"

"Yes."

"You're sure they're in Ixwell?"

"We left them there with strict instructions not to leave, at all events."

"Well, take a look at this," said Dorrie, with a grin. "I may be seeing things, of course, but I don't really think so."

Lee, turning, beheld Nipper and Handforth and a crowd of the other boys lounging on the great steps of the castle.

They were all in white flannels—rather crumpled flannels—but otherwise they looked well enough. As everything was now "all serene," the fellows had discarded their armour, and were glad enough to do so. They were able to move freely once again, and to breathe naturally.

"Hallo, guv'nor!" sang out Nipper, as he cheerily waved a hand.

"How in the name of wonder did you boys get here?" demanded Lee, striding up. "What is the meaning of it? Did you disobey orders——"

"Yes, we did, guv'nor," interrupted Nipper gruffly.

"Oh!"

"We're all in it, sir," put in Handforth. "You didn't think that we'd stick in Ixwell, did you? We've been here for hours. We grabbed the castle, and we've been holding it."

"Hours!" echoed Lee sharply. "Do you mean to say that you entered the city while the battle was at its height?"

"Something like that, sir," replied Nipper. "There was an awful lot of fighting going on, anyhow."

"But how did you escape? I suppose you did all escape?" asked Lee quickly. "Nobody is hurt?"

"Not one of us, sir," replied Nipper. "You see, we grabbed a lot of armour from Ixwell Castle——"

"Well done!" chuckled Lord Dorrimore.

"It's a mercy half of them weren't killed," said Lee half-angrily. "You reckless young idiots. So you donned armour, did you? And you had the nerve to come right into this battle in spite of my definite instructions. You haven't forgotten, I suppose, that I am still a schoolmaster, and that——"

"Cheese it, sir!" broke in Travers coolly. "We're not at St. Frank's now."

"But you will be before long," retorted Nelson Lee. "Our sojourn in Northestria is practically at an end, and we shall soon be going back to England."

"Well, I'm not sorry to hear that, by George!" said Handforth eagerly. "Oh, what wouldn't I give for a run in my Morris Minor at this minute! Northestria's all very well, but it's too far behind the times for my liking."

"By the way, sir," said Nipper carelessly, "what are you going to do with Cedric?"

"Do with him?" repeated Lee. "I shall do nothing with him. The Northestrians will probably send a strong force over to Gothland——"

"That won't be necessary, sir," put in Nipper. "Cedric's here!"

"Here!"

"Rather, sir—down in the dungeons."

"How do you know that?"

"Well, we ought to know!" grinned Handforth. "We collared old Cedric ourselves!"

"Ye gods and little fishes!" yelled Lord Dorrimore. "Did you hear that, Lee?"

"I did, and I'm not sure that I believe it," replied Lee. "What do you mean, boys—you captured Cedric yourselves?"

"Why, we spotted Cedric and Attawulf and Redwold and a lot of other blighters making a bolt for the lake," explained Nipper. "As we wanted to do our bit, we chased them, rounded them up, forced them to surrender, and roped them all in a line, and marched them into the castle."

"Well, I'm hanged!" said Nelson Lee. "Cedric and Redwold and all the others, eh? Well, I'm not going to say another word about you boys leaving Ixwell; you have certainly justified your disobedience of orders."

THE rest of that day was filled to the brim with excitement.

Nelson Lee did not disbelieve the boys, but he made a point of going down into the dungeons to see that the de-throned king was really secure. While he was about it, he had a look at Attawulf and Redwold and the others.

Lee had said very little to the boys by way of praise, but he was delighted with them. They had certainly achieved a triumph in capturing those valuable prisoners.

Later, Nelson Lee called all the members of the party round him—Dorrie, Mr. Wilkes, the boys, and everybody else, including many of the officers from the Pioneer.

"Athelstane is in full command of Dunstane," said Lee. "There is an immense amount of work to be done here, and it is better that the Northestrians themselves should do it. Our presence, I think, would be a hindrance rather than a help. So I suggest that we should return at once to Ixwell, inform the princess of what has happened, and then return to the Pioneer."

"Jolly good idea, sir!"

"Rather! We can do with about twenty-four hours' sleep, right off!"

"Gad, yes!"

"Within a day or two the capital will be more shipshape, and we can, perhaps,



Triumphantly the schoolboy knights returned to Dunstane with their prisoners of battle.

accompany the Princess Mercia when she formally takes possession," went on Nelson Lee. "For the rest, we can now take our ease."

So, securing horses, they journeyed back to Ixwell.

Now that all the excitement was over, they were finding that they were utterly weary and sleepy. Most of them had gone for over twenty-four hours without a wink. The reaction had set in, and the boys, at least, scarcely cared what happened.

The news had already reached Ixwell before they arrived, and there was great rejoicing in that little town. The princess was almost dumb with joy, and when she tried to find words to thank Nelson Lee and the others she was unable to do so. Her heart was too full of gratitude.

CHAPTER 12.

By Royal Decree!

CLANG-CLANG!

Handforth, stirring in bed, lazily opened his eyes and yawned.

"Oh, blow the rising-bell!" he muttered.

"Time to get up, Handy," came Church's voice.

"Rats! Was that the first bell or the second?"

"Only the first, but you'd better get up, all the same," said Church.

"Not likely! I'm staying in bed!" murmured Handforth, stretching himself luxuriously. "By George! I've been having a terrific dream, you chaps! All about battles and dashing about in armour——"

Clang-clang!

The sound was right against Handforth's ear, and when he started up he found Mr. Alington Wilkes by his bedside, and Mr. Wilkes had a small gong in his hand.

"Oh, I say, sorry, sir!" gasped Handforth. "I—I didn't know you were in the bed-room, sir! I'll be out in a jiffy. Somebody told me that it was only the first bell——"

He broke off, blinking. For now that sleep had been completely driven from his mind, he saw that he was not in the dormitory at St. Frank's as he had supposed, but in one of the comfortable cabins of the Pioneer. Mr. Wilkes was grinning broadly.

"Sorry if I gave you a scare, young 'un," he said. "And that wasn't a dream you had—it was actual fact."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" ejaculated Handforth breathlessly. "Of course! We're in

Northestria, aren't we? I say, sir, I'm all muddled!"

"I don't wonder at it, considering the time you've slept," nodded Mr. Wilkes. "I took twenty-four hours straight off myself, and I thought that was pretty extravagant. But you young beggars have slept like logs for thirty-six hours."

"A day and a half, sir?" asked Handforth, in amazement.

"A day and a half," said Mr. Wilkes. "You ought to be thoroughly refreshed by now, I should think. Glenthorne is the only one who's still sleeping—and I'm just going to dig him out."

"I don't seem to remember anything," said Handforth, in bewilderment. "Thirty-six hours! Well, I'm blowed!"

"You'd better take a good bath, all of you, and then dress yourselves in your best bibs and tuckers," said Mr. Wilkes. "We're all invited to a very special banquet in Dunstane Castle—as quests of the Princess Mercia. It'll be a sort of farewell feast, too, because Mr. Lee says that we're leaving for home almost immediately afterwards."

The boys were excited afresh. They bathed, dressed, and then found that they were starving with hunger. So they sallied into the saloon and partook of an enormous breakfast. The banquet, in any case, was not until later in the day, and by then they would get fresh appetites.

They found, upon going on deck, that the Pioneer was lying off Dunstane, and that the walls of the city were gay with endless flags.

An extraordinary change had come about whilst the boys had been sleeping.

All traces of the battle had been cleared away—or nearly all traces. They learned that there were practically no Gothlanders in the land now; those who had not escaped had been rounded up, and fleets of galleys had been used to transport them back to their own country.

From end to end of Northestria the people were rejoicing; every town and village was in gala mood. The Gothlanders had been thrown out! The land was free! And all honour was due to the "Strangers from Beyond the Great Ice," for it was they who had made this marvellous thing possible.

The Moor View girls were aboard the submarine now, too—in fact, the whole party was complete. Furthermore, the whippet tanks and the aeroplanes had been taken to bits and shipped—packed once more down in the holds. They would never be wanted again in this land.

"A terrific lot seems to have happened while we were asleep," said Nipper, as he stood on the deck with Mary Summers and Irene Manners and some of the other girls. "I never quite realised how much we needed that sleep."

"You went through an awful lot," said Mary, looking at Nipper with admiring eyes. "I say, you really did more in that battle than anybody else. You've just got to tell us how you captured King Cedric and all

his nobles! It's one of the most marvellous feats——"

"Cheese it, old girl!" protested Nipper. "There was nothing in it at all. Luck was with us from the start, and what we did amounted to precious little."

"That's only the way you put it," smiled Mary. "Anyway, you collared Cedric, and he's being tried to-day."

"What are they going to do with him?" asked Handforth. "After all he's done to Northestria, they ought to chop his giddy head off!"

"Chopping people's heads off is the Gothlander's idea of justice," said Irene Manners.

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



"The Northestrians are different—they're more humane. And Cedric, after all, is one of Gothland's greatest nobles. I don't think they'll put him to death."

The boys heard all about Princess Mercia's triumphal return into Dunstane. They had missed this, being asleep at the time. The princess' progress from Ixwell to Dunstane had been a veritable march of victory.

The roads over every inch of the route had been lined with thousands upon thousands of loyal Northestrians, all cheering and clamouring to get a sight of the princess. Stately soldiers in chainmail, mounted on fine chargers, lined the roads, too.

And now, from every corner of the country, people were streaming into the

capital—all desirous of paying homage to the young princess. In the whole history of Northestria there had never been such joy as now.

For the country was freed from the iron heel of the tyrant.

NELSON LEE and Lord Dorrimore went ashore alone that morning.

They attended a grim ceremony which took place in the throne-room of Dunstane Castle—that same throne-room which Cedric the Cruel had so recently occupied.

But Cedric now stood in it a prisoner,

“HIGH JINKS AT ST. FRANK’S!”

By E. S. Brooks.

Nipper & Co. back at St. Frank’s—under a new headmaster, Dr. Inigo Seattlebury!

And what a headmaster. Imagine a dignified Head balancing on a globe of the world; or paddling in a pond. No wonder the boys call him “Seatty” Seattlebury!

There are lively times due at St. Frank’s. Look out for the opening story of this unique new series next week.

“THE PHANTOM FOE!”

By John Brearley.

The Night Hawk at grips with the Phantom Foe. Another exciting instalment of this enthralling serial.

“Handforth’s Weekly!”

“BETWEEN OURSELVES!”

ORDER IN ADVANCE

hemmed in by armed soldiers. With him were Redwold the Ruthless, Attawulf the Terrible, Rodolf the Mighty, and others.

They were being tried—and not one of them expected to leave Dunstane Castle alive. At the very best, they anticipated the chopping-block; at the worst, burning at the stake, or torture.

It was not a trial in the real sense of the word.

For the case against these men was proven to the hilt, without any evidence being called. They had used treachery, cunning and cruelty against the Northestrians for many months; they were responsible for the heartless deaths of many men—and even of women.

Athelstane the Great, the commander-in-chief of the Northestrian forces, was in at-

tendance, but he said little. It was Ethelbert the Red, the Regent, who delivered the sentence.

“By her Majesty’s gracious mercy ye are to be allowed to live,” said Ethelbert quietly. “’Tis not our fair princess’ way to be harsh. There have been sufficient deaths already.”

“Am I to be kept for the rest of my days in a dark and dismal dungeon?” asked Cedric fiercely. “I’faith, ’twere better to die now!”

“Nay, Cedric, the rest of your days will not be spent in a dungeon,” said Ethelbert gravely. “’Tis her Majesty’s will that ye shall be treated even as she was treated. Henceforth ye will live in utter exile in a remote fortress. Thy overlords shall be exiled in just the same way—each in a different fortress, each in solitude.”

“Am I never to see my own country again?” asked Cedric, his voice hoarse.

“Never,” replied the Regent. “Thou hast forfeited all rights. Exile in a distant fortress is to be thy lot. And during the remainder of thy days, Cedric, thou wilt be allowed to ponder over thy many misdeeds. Her Majesty is merciful, or burning at the stake would have been thy fate.”

Cedric had no more to say; he was crushed. This sentence, although it was far lighter than he had expected, subdued him. Lifelong exile in a lonely fortress! His power was at an end, his cruel rule was a thing of the past.

Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore were impressed by the simplicity of the ceremony. How vastly different all this was from the pomp and arrogance of the Gothlanders!

“Well, those beggars are lucky!” said Dorrie, with a grunt. “I’m not a blood-thirsty sort of chap, but I shouldn’t have taken any chances with them.”

“Lifelong exile, Dorrie, may be even worse than death,” replied Lee quietly. “And there is no possibility of Cedric ever escaping and regaining power. When he goes into that fortress he will virtually pass from the face of the earth—just as if he had died. Personally, I think it is a fitting punishment—a punishment which, to a man of Cedric’s mentality, will be harder to endure than death itself.”

CHAPTER 13.

Good-bye to Northestria!

THE scene was magnificent and colourful.

The great banqueting hall of Dunstane Castle—a lofty, imposing apartment—was filled with the noblest of all Northestria.

The fair Princess Mercia herself presided, and on her right hand sat Nelson Lee, and on her left Lord Dorrimore. Ethelbert the Red and Athelstane the Great presided at other tables.

From end to end of that great hall the scene was a glittering array of courtly

uniforms and beautiful dresses. It was a banquet in honour of the Britons who were in the midst of these Northeistrians. Right across one end of the hall the Union Jack was proudly displayed.

"We owe our gratitude and our lifelong thanks to these brave people from far-off Britain," the princess was saying. "Until they came to us we were a down-trodden people; my lord Ethelbert and Prince Oswy and I were imprisoned in a Gothlander fortress, and Northeistria itself was under the heel of the tyrant."

"Ay, ay!"

"All praise to our deliverers!"

"Alas, they must now leave us," continued the princess sadly. "They but tarried so that they should see our country freed, for it was their plan to remain in Northeistria but a short week or two. 'Tis beyond my small powers to express in mere words the gratitude that is in my heart. Yet methinks they will understand—and that they will know what I have left unsaid—"

In spite of herself, the princess broke down and sobbed.

"Nay, good princess, this is a time for rejoicing!" remonstrated Nelson Lee gently.

"I desire speech of thee, Lee the Lion-heart," said the princess when she had partially recovered. "Thou hast said that it is thy wish that my country should be under the protection of Britain."

"That is my desire—my hope," replied Nelson Lee, rising. "There is little danger of the Gothlanders ever menacing you again. But while the Gothlanders live there is always the possibility that they may once again become aggressive. And so, good people of Northeistria, I urge you to place yourselves under the protection of Great Britain—which is, to all intents and purposes, your own Mother Country. I regard you as Britons. That flag which you can all see is your protection. Let it fly from the roof of this castle."

"Ay, and so shall it!" murmured Ethelbert.

"Our good friend, Dorrimore the Brave," continued Nelson Lee, "is returning to Northeistria within a month or two. And he will bring the materials for erecting a great wireless station. Wireless, to you, is a mystery—but you have clever men in this country, and they will quickly grasp the intricacies of this new marvel. And it is a marvel, since it will enable you to communicate with the great outer world, and to be in constant touch with every other country. No longer will you be cut off as you are now."

A murmur of excitement and wonder went round the tables.

"And thus you will be safe—from the Gothlanders, and from any other possible danger," concluded Lee.

Dorrie made a speech after that—a breezy, characteristic speech which delighted everybody.

"It was my dream," he said, after a while, "to make this Northeistria of yours into a wonderful new winter resort for the benefit of the world at large."

"I had visions of a great submarine service, with vessels constantly coming and going, bringing fresh tourists. I had dreams of enormous hotels springing up on the shores of your lake."

"But that, of course, would mean an almost complete transformation of your little country. Electricity would come—railways, perhaps—aeroplanes—steamships. And it has since occurred to me that you would prefer to be left in peace and quietness, living the life that you are so accustomed to."

"I am gratified, Dorrimore the Brave, that thou hast come to that way of thinking," said the princess. "We of Northeistria are simple folk, and it is our wish, our fervent hope, that we shall be left in peace."

AND so it came about that eventually the Pioneer took her departure.

As the submarine glided slowly down the lake shore, thousands upon thousands of Northeistrians lined the banks, cheering, shouting and waving. The party was being given a magnificent send-off.

Into the great gorge at the lower end of the lake she went, and then commenced her journey through the black and seemingly endless tunnel. Once again her great flame-throwers were brought into action—those wonderful instruments which had thawed the ice and allowed the Pioneer to enter.

She got out safely enough, and then, under the everlasting ice of the Arctic, she journeyed back to the open waters.

"Well, you chaps," said Nipper, some days later, "here we are, with the sea all round us, and with the temperature somewhere about zero. But we're getting south all the time, and it won't be long before we're cruising up the Thames—back to London and home, back to St. Frank's!"

"By George," said Handforth, his eyes gleaming, "Northeistria seems like a giddy dream already! I say, it'll be the summer term at St. Frank's, you chaps! Cricket, you know!"

And the boys and the girls eagerly and excitedly discussed the many things they would do when they got back.

They had had a glorious adventure, and Northeistria was all right; but, after all, there was nothing quite like Good Old England—and St. Frank's!

THE END.

(Nipper & Co. back at St. Frank's—a rollicking new series of school-life yarns starting next week, in which you will meet Dr. Inigo Scattlebury, the cranky new Head! "High Jinks at St. Frank's!" is the title—order your copy now, chums.)



BETWEEN OURSELVES

Edwy Searles Brooks, popular author
of the St. Frank's stories, chats with
readers of the "Nelson Lee."

THIS week's acknowledgments: Geo. S. Hunnabale (Mistley), Francis H. Burrow (Footting), Ernest Catherall (Chester), E. H. Parkinson (S.E.7), John Wright (S. Shields), Raymond Dawson (Leicester), Arthur Smith (Wigan), Alec Sadler (Long Eaton), J. W. Richardson* (Summertown), M. Hamilton (Portsmouth), Harry Hirst (Huddersfield), John Brooks (Verdun, Quebec), Arthur Moss (St. Helens), Bill Felton* (Wallasey), Arthur E. Angus* (Sheffield), James Fletcher (Leeds), Marcus Lynch (Howth), Julius Herman* (Tarkastad, S.A.), G. Warren Briggs (Brighton), Harry A. Marshall (Isleworth), Eric S. Ainley (Filey), Gino Bertolini (Glasgow), Jack Hayes (N.W.5), Reginald Pegg (Atherstone), A. Milton (E.16), Robert J. Wareing* (Birmingham), F. H. Martin (Bristol), Alan Sparks (Dorking), "Illustration" (Weston-super-Mare), B. G. E. Donner (Chingford), Mrs. Sarita S. Crauford** (Rosyth), T. W. Moss (Rainham), Percy Young (Liverpool), Monica Adolph (Hove), W. M. Meekison (Arbroath), Wm. Rowe (Brisbane), P. A. Tunbridge (Maldon), Ernest S. Holman* (E.10), Ronald Frost (S.W.14), Albert Davey (Barnham), Rosemary Thornley* (Preston), E. W. Rabey (St. Dennis), Bernard Harris (N.W.), Gertrude Ward (Hyde), Peter Richards (Shoreham), Jas. W. Cook (W.C.1), H. G. Looker (Devizes), Doris Young (Leyton), "Enthusiastic" (S.W.18).

In order to reach Bannington Moor, Francis H. Burrow, it is necessary to go right past St. Frank's along Bellton Lane, leaving the Moor View School on the left. The Moor itself stretches away ahead and to the left from this point. A road, bearing to the right, leads through Edgemoor Village, and so on to Bannington.

Study No. 12 in the East House, Ernest Catherall, is occupied by Lionel Corcoran, Timothy Armstrong and Louis Griffith.

The Sixth Form studies, E. H. Parkinson, are neither numbered nor lettered. These seniors know their own studies easily enough, and the authorities think it is more in keeping with the dignity of the Sixth that their sanctums should be unlabelled. Some of the prefects, however, have their cards fixed in a little frame on their doors.

Of course there's a school magazine at St. Frank's, Raymond Dawson. It is a dry sort of publication—very different from "Handforth's Weekly"—and is really only of interest to the inmates of the School—particularly the seniors.

St. Frank's is a very ancient place, and although a good deal of rebuilding has been done, most of the original stones were used and it thus remains practically the same. The Chinese boy in the Remove is named Yung Ching, and he shares Study V in the West House with Harold Doyle and Larry Scott. His English was very imperfect when he first came, but he has vastly improved.

No, De Valerie is certainly not a rotter, J. W. Richardson, although he is a bit unreliable and may sometimes backslide. There are four boarding-houses at St. Frank's. The School House consists entirely of class-rooms, lecture halls, laboratories, and so forth. The River House School lies in the direction of Bannington—about a mile and a half by road, but less than half this distance across the meadows. The Moor View School is in the other direction. No, Nelson Lee does not carry an automatic on him at the school; he only arms himself when he is setting out on a mission which he knows to be perilous. He doesn't carry a gun once in a month.

Waldo's special girl chum, M. Hamilton, is Betty Barlowe. He shares Study I in the Ancient House with Fullwood and Russell.

Fifteen questions, Peter Richards! Help! I'm afraid I shall only be able to answer three—and I hope all other readers will confine their questions, in any one letter, to this number. There is no Second Form at St. Frank's; the head prefect of the East House is Simon Kenmore; and the lettering of the Ancient House studies goes to "N," and that of the West House studies to "Z."

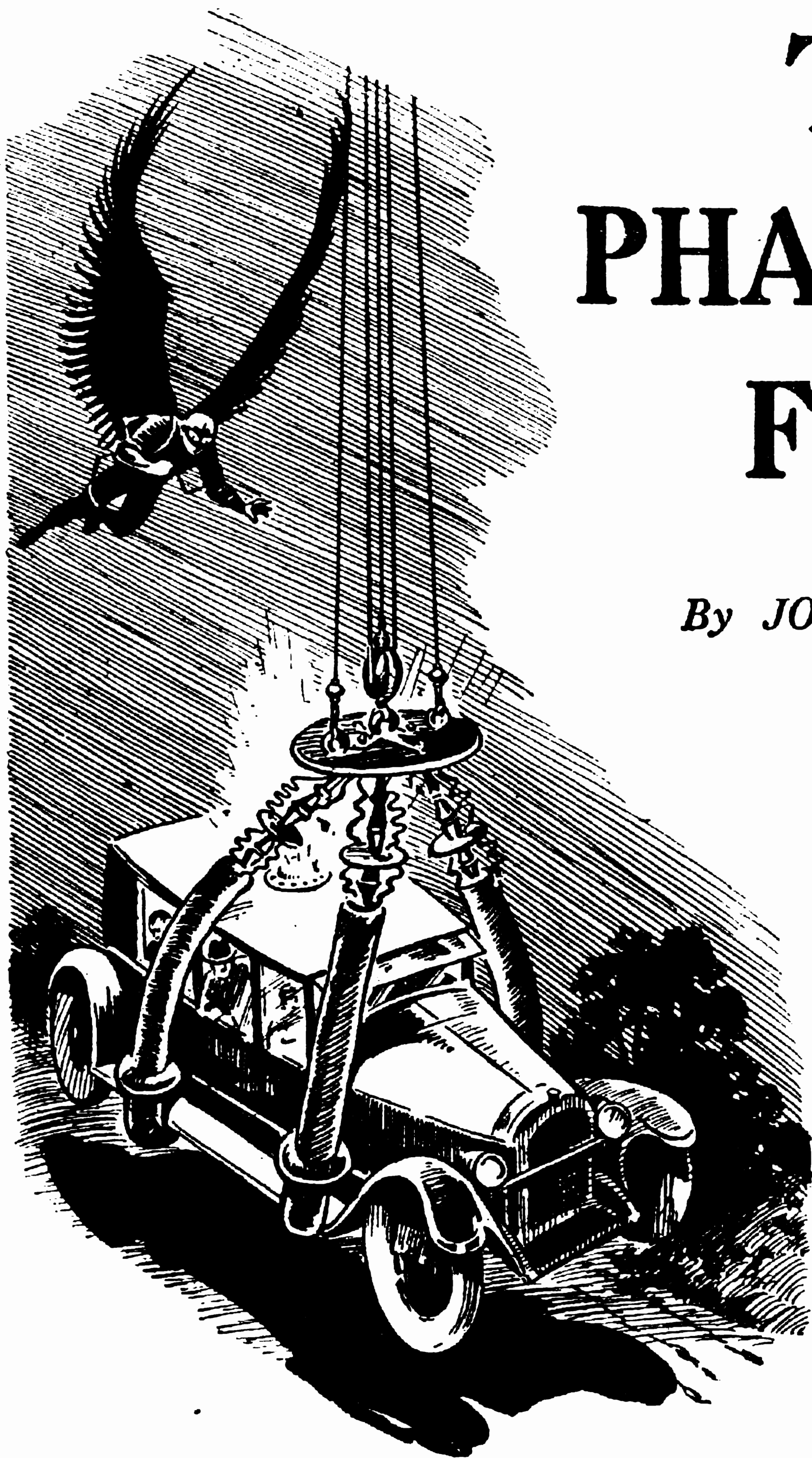
Edwy Searles Brooks

(Edwy Searles Brooks will be pleased to hear from "N.L." readers. Send him a letter now—here is his address: c/o NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.)

The Mysterious Phantom Foe Strikes Again—Watched by the Night Hawk!

The PHANTOM FOE!

By JOHN BREARLEY



Scotland Yard is Puzzled!

CHIEF DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR LENNARD of Scotland Yard, sternly surveying the deserted dining-room at Longhurst Towers, set his teeth grimly.

Midnight had just struck, and the inspector and his assistant, having motored down to Sussex at racing speed, had just finished their examination. The results made Lennard shake his bulldog head.

The Phantom had struck a mighty blow. Nearly thirty people, some of the wealthiest and most famous in Britain, had disappeared—just that. A servant had been killed. And last of all, the Duke of Meldon's safe, containing his priceless collection of Chinese jade and the famous Meldon rubies, had been opened and robbed.

Lennard could see a world-shaking sensation ahead. Not only was the Duke of Meldon gone, but the Rt. Hon. Sinclair Richards, the Cabinet Minister, Monsieur Puret, the famous French millionaire, and at least a dozen others whose names made Lennard groan. The trail of the kidnapped guests was easy to follow—up to

a point, for a fragment of silk torn from a lady's evening gown had been found on the ledge of the skylight, and the same queer marks in the dust as had been discovered on the Blackheath house. It was plain that the Duke of Meldon and his guests had gone the same way as Professor Lawrence. They had been carried to the top of the mansion. And then they had vanished.

Deep in thought, the Yard official strode back to the Duke of Meldon's study where

he found his assistant still regarding the open safe.

"Found any prints?" he jerked.

"Plenty, sir!" was the dry retort. "So many, in fact, I reckon it's a bluff. Only a bungler would have left his signature like this. And believe me, no bungler opened this safe!"

"No?"

"No, sir. I'm willing to bet only one man did it, and that's that little rat Edwardes, who disappeared from Dartmoor a fortnight ago. But what he's doing in a gang-job like this licks me. And those fingerprints aren't Edwardes', I'll swear."

And so it proved. When Lennard got back to the Yard his first task was to tally the fingerprints from the safe, and he met a blank wall. The Records Department had no trace of them, though they searched for hours. Not only that, but experts pronounced them the most curious and distorted prints ever filed at the Yard. Yet that safe-breaking shrieked aloud of Edwardes, the escaped convict!

Every way they turned the C.I.D. found themselves beaten. A new menace was threatening England, an amazing gang whose methods were novel, uncanny and bewildering. Scotland Yard braced itself for a great fight.

One other man, too, was becoming deeply interested in the Phantom Foe—very interested indeed. That man was Thurston Kyle, whose world-wide reputation as a scientist covered his grimmer identity as the Night Hawk, fast-flying, ruthless enemy of crime. He, too, saw a fight ahead, and one that hardened his dark handsome face.

Meanwhile, the Phantom Foe, with a crowd of famous and valuable prisoners safe in his clutches, was preparing his next thunderbolt.

The Phantom Collects his Pay!

SIR HUGH FLETCHER Chief Commissioner at Scotland Yard, stared at the missive before him, tugging irritably at his grey moustache the while. It was a letter, written in bold block characters on ordinary notepaper, and it had been found in a small leather bag, which a policeman had picked up on the Embankment pavement less than an hour before.

The bag, bearing a label addressed to Sir Hugh himself, had been turned in straight away. And its contents were startling.

"I hold as prisoners the Duke of Meldon, Sinclair Richards, the Cabinet Minister, Monsieur Puret, the French millionaire, and Richard Lewis, editor of the 'Tribune.' These people I took from Longhurst Towers last night, together with twenty-three others, whose names are as follows:"

A full list of minor celebrities was included in the calm letter, which carried on with an amazing demand.

"For the first four, the most important, my ransom terms are one hundred thousand pounds. You can have the rest for an extra fifty thousand.

"This sum is to be placed—in currency notes and gold—in the leather bag I send you, and deposited on the bridge above the millstream on Blake Common, Essex, by six p.m. to-morrow, which will give you time to negotiate and obtain the money.

"I have no objection to you and your men being present when I come to collect the ransom, although I warn you—the consequences may be disastrous. But, in any case, see that the money is there! Otherwise my demand will be doubled. Also, my prisoners may regret your disobedience.

"I will return them the instant the money is in my hands.

"THE PHANTOM FOE."

"The—the Phantom Foe! This is terrible—serious! Or is it just a ghastly practical joke?"

Sir Hugh glared across his desk at the two men who sat opposite. One was Chief Detective-inspector Lennard, the other a tall man with pleasant, bronzed features and shrewd, steel-grey eyes that never wavered from the Commissioner's face.

His name was Captain Frank Arthurs, and he had recently joined Scotland Yard after a brilliant career in the Canadian Secret Service. Although still somewhat a man of mystery at the Yard, the manner in which he had cleaned up the tough underworlds of Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto made him a valued addition to the British C.I.D.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

THE NIGHT HAWK, known to the world as Thurston Kyle, scientist, watches with interest the activities of a ruthless criminal,

THE PHANTOM FOE, who has commenced a reign of terror, killing, kidnapping, looting. Always he attacks amid a cloud of yellow gas, which stupefies his victims; then disappears completely—literally into air, for he directs operations from an invisible airship! Nobody knows this, however; hence the world is baffled. The Phantom Foe kidnaps twelve dangerous convicts, who join his gang; also a famous American surgeon, Professor Lawrence. Later he swoops down upon Longhurst Towers, the home of the Duke of Meldon, where many celebrated people are gathered for a house-party.

(Now read on.)

"I reckon it's serious all right, Sir Hugh," he drawled slowly. "Gee, there was nothin' funny about that Longhurst Towers stunt last night, was there, Lennard? Those folks just plumb disappeared, the same as Professor Lawrence did. An' look at that 'Queen' business, too. No, I reckon the Phantom Foe, or whatever he calls himself, certainly is no joker."

Chief Detective-inspector Lennard nodded agreement. The Phantom's method of overpowering his victims by means of the uncanny yellow gas, some strong anæsthetic, apparently, was plain enough.

But how did he get his captives away? All the clues Lennard had found at Longhurst Towers last night were fingerprints round an expertly-opened safe, which told him nothing; and a few footprints and a strange square mark in the dust of the roof, which told him less. Sir Hugh, after a last glare at the arrogant letter, lit a cigar and grunted.

"Well, in view of this, I'm afraid our duty is plain. We must communicate with the relatives of these people at once regarding the ransom. I would like to disregard it and take a chance on tracking down this scoundrel quickly. But we have nothing to work on—nothing. And, meanwhile, if we risk the lives of such men as the Duke of Meldon and the Right Honourable Richards, I fear there will be a storm in Parliament that will raise Cain. Also, we shall hear from the French Government pretty seriously regarding Monsieur Puret. What do you both think?"

It was a confession of defeat that cost the sturdy Commissioner a lot to make, and his colleagues realised it. Lennard spoke reluctantly.

"I don't see that we can do anything else, sir. We're licked—for the moment, anyway!" he added harshly. "But we'll get this Phantom soon; he can't keep going for ever. And then——"

The council broke up grimly. It would go hard for the Phantom Foe when the police did catch him!

Later that day Sir Hugh addressed a meeting of the representatives of the missing celebrities, anxious relatives and indignant solicitors chiefly, and he had to listen to some scathing criticisms of the Yard before he could make them see his point. At last, after a long and furious argument, he won. It was agreed to meet the Phantom's cool demand, lest worse befall. Sir Hugh's voice was cold with determination and anger when he spoke again in private to Lennard and Captain Arthurs.

"This Phantom is a menace; he must be caught. When that money is collected to-morrow, you and a strong force will be present, regardless of his threats. The details I leave to you. But"—he thumped the desk—"get him, that's all!"

His subordinates looked at each other in expressive silence. But they went swiftly to work.

Blake Common, a wide expanse of gorse-strewn heath, looked quiet and peaceful in the evening sunlight next day when a man marched on to the little mill-bridge there and desposited a bulky leather bag containing a fortune in notes and gold. Without a look to right or left, he laid his burden on the stone parapet and strode back to the mill, where twenty picked men, well-armed and wearing the latest gas-masks, lay under cover.

Another force crouched in hiding out on the common. And still another, with binoculars and high-powered rifles, were posted at a safe distance on a big hill half a mile away. All traffic, the little there was, had been diverted; tramps, picnic parties, and others warned off. Captain Arthurs had taken the chief hand in setting the trap for the Phantom Foe, and he had done his work ruthlessly.

Thirty seconds after the bag was left on the bridge, those stalwart men behind the mill and on the common lay quiet and still, stupefied by a blanket of Yellow Gas that suddenly belched down from the serene sky and pierced their gas-masks like so much muslin!

The evil cloud came down exactly on the stroke of six—a long, pale shaft of stifling fumes that struck with the speed of a search-light. Lennard, in charge of the party behind the mill, was the first to see it, and, uttering a shout of warning, he closed his mask and prepared for a rush. Next instant he found himself blundering helplessly through a thick fog that gripped his throat and tightened his lungs to the point of agony. The ground seemed to rise up and hit him; he heard vague choking cries, and something limp and heavy fell across his back, nailing him down. Then everything went black.

Up on the hill Captain Arthurs saw the gas and rallied his men fiercely.

"Everyone alert! Aim for the bridge—get any guy who appears!"

Eyes fixed on the parapet and the black bag lying there, the riflemen glared through their telescopic sights, waiting to sling a hail of lead across the intervening common. For a moment a tense silence of suspense reigned. It was broken by one of the men, who half-rose to his knees, stabbing the air with frantic forefinger.

"Look! The bag—look!"

Angry oaths were drowned then in a vicious, crackling volley of shots. But there was nothing to aim at—nothing save a thin steel rope with a hook attached, like the tentacle of a crane, that had writhed suddenly from the sky!

The shooting stopped. With awe in their eyes, the riflemen watched that sinuous hook hover for a second, fall with accuracy, and neatly pick up the bag. They followed it until it became a mere speck, and at last disappeared entirely. But above it—or what was lifting it—they saw nothing!

Nothing whatever. Save for a few light clouds, the summer sky was clear.

Captain Arthurs was the first to recover his wits. Face flushed with rage, he leapt up, snarling to his men to follow. The half-mile to the mill was covered at the double. But when the breathless men saw their comrades lying in heaps where they had fallen, the rush came to an abrupt halt.

"Gosh, this is fierce!" panted Arthurs. "I—I—oh, blazes, look what's coming!"

His bleak eyes had switched automatically to the sky. What he saw, followed by his curse of astonishment, made his bewildered men look up, too. And stand paralysed.

The Phantom Foe was returning his prisoners.

Down from the skies, under parachutes that leapt suddenly into view as they opened, swayed a crowd of people. The sky seemed to be covered with the gleaming yellow parachutes above them. There were men and women, too; and as binoculars were levelled, the astounded watchers on the ground saw that each parachutist was blindfolded and all were in evening dress. A child could have guessed who they were.

"It's the Longhurst house-party!" muttered Captain Arthurs in a dazed, mechanical voice. "The Phantom's kept his word!"

One by one the returned captives reached earth, landing softly and tumbling forward as their parachutes collapsed around them in billowing folds. Arthurs and his men, dropping their rifles, were beside the first to land in a flash, and as the others followed rapidly, they were soon busy unstrapping them, freeing their eyes and trying to calm their fears. They appeared to be dizzy but unharmed, although the ladies of the party were almost hysterical and the men overwrought.

Last to earth was the Duke of Meldon, a portly man whose florid checks were haggard and covered with a two-days bristle. He lay gasping in Arthurs' arms like a new-landed fish, and many minutes passed before, revived by a stiff jolt of brandy, he was able to jerk out a few disjointed sentences.

"I don't know—I don't know what's happened!" he panted in answer to eager inquiries. "All I remember is we were drugged at my house. When I—awoke I was in a bunk. I could feel we were moving. Then a syringe pierced my arm and—and I was drugged again. Twice that happened. We were brought round about half an hour ago, but I could see nothing but a white light that hurt my eyes. Then we were blindfolded. This thing was strapped to my shoulders. I heard a muffled voice giving us instructions about pulling the cord. Then someone laughed—I was pushed—and—and that's all. My eyes—my eyes!"

Peering down, Arthurs and his men saw that the Duke of Meldon's eyes were red-rimmed and inflamed. Arthurs saw something else, too—the corner of an envelope stuck in the opening of his lordship's evening waistcoat. He jerked it open, snatched at the letter inside.

Scrawled across the paper in block capitals was the one impudent word:

"THANKS!"

But there was a postscript that made the men who read it clench their fists.

"I may be in the vicinity of Belhampton to-morrow night. A nice, wealthy little town. Kind regards.—THE PHANTOM FOE."

Captain Arthurs laughed bitterly.

"He's skinned us. Downed thirty men and got away with the cash from under the rifles of ten more. An' now— Gee, what a tale for the papers!"

The Belhampton Raid!

THURSTON KYLE, the Night Hawk, a grim figure in his tight-fitting suit of leather covered with flourescined silk, hovered silently in the sky under the great wings he had invented—the only successful ornithopter invention that had been achieved so far, and that in close-guarded secrecy.

Beneath him twinkled the lights of Belhampton, the small but prosperous Midland town. Like everyone else in Britain, the Night Hawk had read of the fantastic threat of the Phantom Foe—a threat that was vague, but all the more alarming because of that. Indeed, large numbers of Belhampton's population had not waited for the threat to mature, but had taken the first trains out of town, and intended waiting until the danger was over. Unlike them, however, the Night Hawk had flown from his old house in Hampstead especially to be on the spot when the Phantom struck. The sensational crimes of this new gang interested him greatly.

Belhampton, with the dark shadow hanging over it, was strongly defended. The Phantom's exploit on Blake Common the previous day had shown quite plainly that masks were useless against his Yellow Gas; but for all that, the police had to make a show, and Chief Detective-inspector Lennard and Captain Arthurs were taking desperate steps accordingly.

From end to end of the town the streets were patrolled by their men, and a detachment of soldiers from the nearest regiment had been posted in houses all along the chief routes. A curfew had been proclaimed, ordering all the inhabitants to be indoors at dusk; strong barriers blocked every road in and out of town. Belhampton was in a state of siege.

Nor were the precautions confined to the ground. It was obvious that the Yellow Gas was sprayed down from some species of high-flying aircraft, although what, no one could say, for none had been seen or heard yet. A squadron of fighting 'planes snarled their protective course above the town, while from a dozen points blazed hastily-installed searchlights, whose rays merged together in a sea of light that flooded the sky.

The Night Hawk smiled tight-lipped. Occasionally, keeping away from the cruising 'planes, he made a swift trip across the town, but for the most part he hovered at a safe distance on the outskirts. His

nerves were of steel, but he was no fool; and he respected the Phantom's Yellow Gas with a scientist's appreciation. He was there to try and find out something when the crisis came; not to be caught and overcome by the gas which would send him crashing to earth from a height that spelt immediate death. He had his guns and grenade-belt. Meanwhile, he kept watch on the town through his night-glasses.

Yet, for all his vigilance, so swiftly, so silently did the Phantom Foe strike that he was almost caught. The Yellow Gas, shot from its invisible source, flashed down so quickly that some of it was upon him before he had scarce glimpsed its oval hue against the darkness!

With a gasp of mingled anger and astonishment, he swerved away like a swallow, head almost bursting from the single lungful he had taken. Safe beyond its reach in a second, he whirled again, guns ready, fierce eyes searching the sky. In the yellow light he saw an awful spectacle—the squadron of fighting 'planes, hopelessly beyond control, nose-diving to earth and destruction like rockets; saw the Yellow Gas sinking on the town, dimming the street lights, swamping policemen, soldiers, everyone beneath it, cutting them down where they stood or crouched.

It was terrible, yet it was epic; a glimpse of war in the future.

Gradually, as the silence of desolation descended on Belhampton, the yellow glare died away. Nothing moved there, although the Night Hawk, sweeping through the now clean air once more, raked the littered streets with his glasses. Nor, though he swung aloft and quartered the sky at his full terrific speed, did he find anything there.

Baffled, he swerved back again to the stricken town. And this time something was moving. His handsome face darkened ominously.

Out of a side turning and into the central business square of Belhampton glided a fast car, in whose steel-lined saloon five resolute gunmen crouched. That car had been parked in a Belhampton garage by a stranger two days before, and its crew had drifted quietly into the town in readiness. As the Night Hawk swooped lower, it threaded its way across the square, and drew to a halt before the strong doors of Belhampton's biggest bank.

The men, still wearing gas-masks of strange design, darted out, paying no heed to the unconscious figures lying near on the pavement. A few moments with torch, file and slender saw and the cleverest, most notorious expert in Europe had the door open. The party melted inside with the speed and silence of wolves.

Down from above, knife-edged wings slicing the air, dived the Night Hawk, with savage fury in his heart. He had only one way of dealing with big criminal gangs—and it was drastic. Then, even as he prepared to attack, he checked sharply, swung up again—to wait.

A better plan had occurred to him now that his first gust of rage was over. An attack in this open square, whether successful or not, meant shooting and bursting grenades. And there were too many unconscious men lying around, who might easily become helpless targets for stray bullets or splinters.

He would wait. Follow the car and trail it to its stopping place, wherever it went. His cold smile returned as he hovered forty yards above the unsuspecting driver of the car, ready for when the bank-robbers came out.

They did not keep him long. Edwardes, the ex-Princetown convict, saw to that, making clean, short work of the bank's vault. Scarcely fifteen minutes had ticked by when the bandits emerged, no longer swift and light of foot, but staggering beneath the booty they carried.

The boxes were stowed in the car; a second journey was made and completed. Cool in the knowledge that they were perfectly safe, the men piled in, leaving the bank door insolently open. The driver let in his clutch, gears meshed smoothly, and at a steady speed, the car with its valuable cargo slid away—through the silent streets of looted Belhampton.

Soft as a shadow, a ruthless enemy, the Night Hawk followed.

Through the suburbs and out of the town sped the car, shooting ahead at speed as the roads cleared. The bandits came eventually to a barrier, whose unconscious guardians lay quiet beside it, and, crowding on full pace, the driver slammed his car through poles and trestles, belting triumphantly through to the crash of splintering wood as fender and bonnet cleared the way.

Another stretch of road, and a second obstacle was treated in the same manner. But in the next lap, with open country stretching ahead, the bandits met their first check; for, flashing towards them, headlights blazing, raced a car-load of police from the next town, warned by the glare of the Yellow Gas and the sight of crashing 'planes.

The gangsters' reply was swift and shattering. Hardly had the police-car sighted them, stopped and swung athwart the road, than the wicked muzzles of two American "Tommy" guns leapt from the windows of the bandit-racer, and, to the sound of snapping belts and vicious reports, came a storm of death that blasted a way to freedom.

Hopelessly trapped by those stammering guns, the sturdy constables went down. Twirling his wheel recklessly, the driver of the car swerved aside, rocketed through a hedgerow into the field beyond, came round and out again. With a last derisive burst from the guns, the gang fairly streaked out into the country, tearing along at a blinding eighty an hour.

Above them the Night Hawk waited no longer. Through his change of plans gallant men had been shot down mercilessly, and his fierce nature seethed. The car below him had merged to a mere dark blur of

speed, but suddenly, from a protected bulb set in its roof, a bright blue light stabbed upwards into the darkness. Puzzled for a second, the Night Hawk paused again in his swoop.

To his increased amazement, the racer began to pull up, not to a halt but slowing down almost to walking-pace. He sank lower still, intrigued by this strange manoeuvre, with his guns ready for instant shooting the moment it became necessary.

Then something, swaying heavily on a long steel cable, shot past his head from above at a speed that nearly brained him!

In his adventurous career the Night Hawk had seen weird spectacles and strange incidents in plenty. But none compared now to this one, on the lonely road beyond Belhampton.

The object which had nearly hit him, he saw, was a gigantic hoist, with four steel arms that ended in enormous suckers of thick rubber. In the centre of the hoist, where the strong arms joined, was a metal disc, from which wires ran down to other discs on the suckers. The strange apparatus, appearing so suddenly from above, looked like some obscene monster in the gloom, greedily reaching for its prey.

The car drew to a complete halt; the blue light on its roof blinked thrice in rapid succession. Almost at once the disc in the centre of the great suspended claw, descended upon the bulb with uncanny precision; the flexible steel arms clinked slowly into position. There was a flash of electricity, a piercing hiss of compressed air. And softly, but with terrific power, the huge suckers splodged in, enfolding the car in a vice-like grip.

Almost breathless with the thrill, the Night Hawk watched, completely at a loss for the first time in his life. The reason for that twinkling blue light was plain; it was a signal. Somewhere above him—and not very far at that—the Phantom Foe was hovering!

With the skill of a genius, he was covering the tracks of his retreating gangsters—in a manner that no sleuth on earth could have unravelled. Before the Night Hawk's blazing eyes, car, men, booty and all, were being picked out of the empty road, and hoisted into the darkness of the night.

(The Night Hawk in action against the Phantom Foe next week. Look out for another full-of-thrills instalment of this magnificent serial.)

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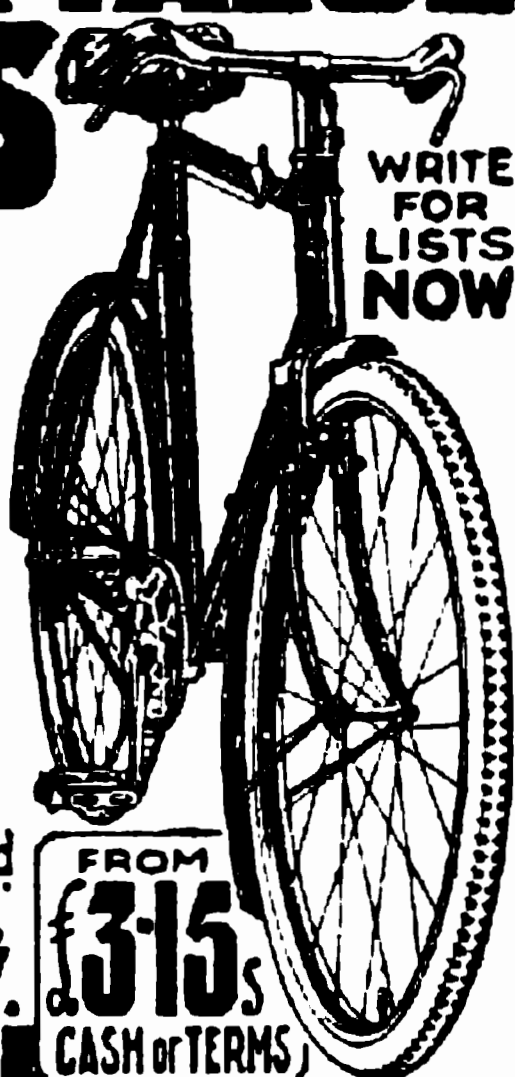
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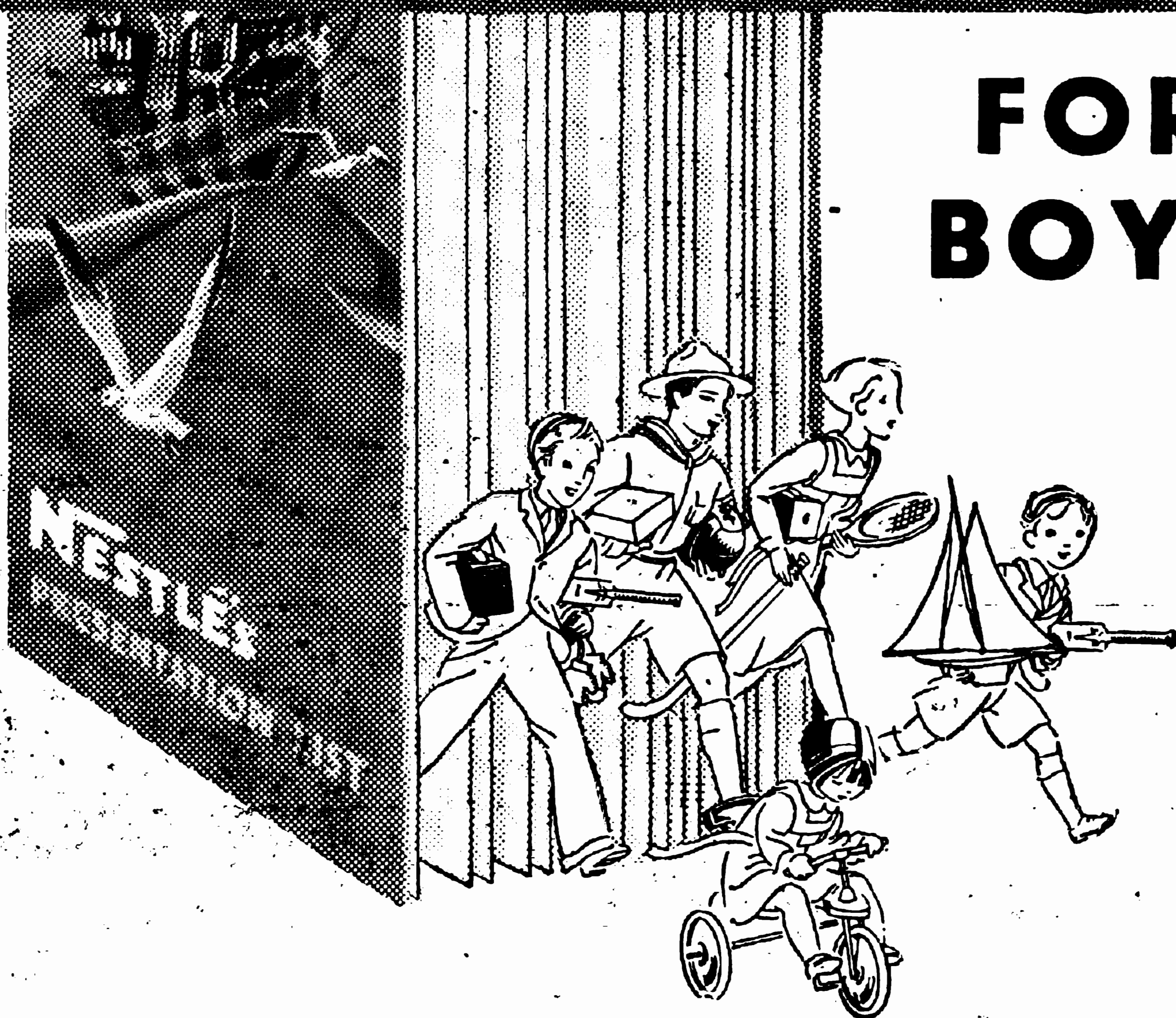
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