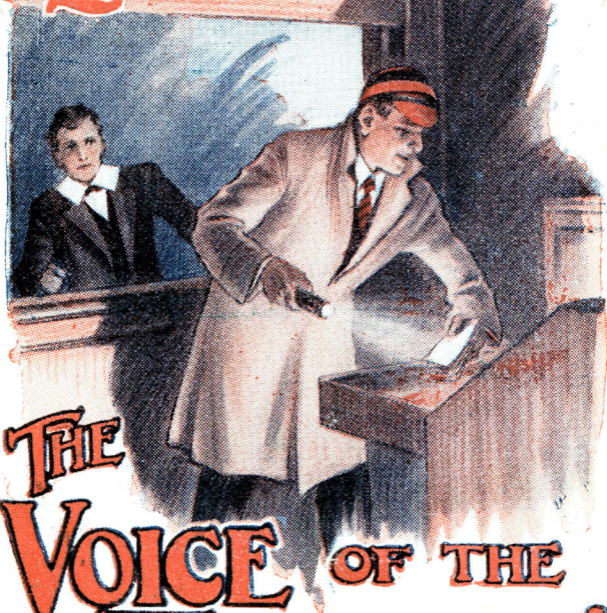


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THE VOICE OF THE TEMPTER!

A dramatic incident from the long school story inside.

New Series No. 92.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

February 4th, 1928.



A sudden silence fell upon the party as Miss Bond came rushing into the room, a look of anxiety and alarm on her face. "I am sorry to interrupt you like this," she said, "but I must ask you boys to leave. The school has been robbed!"

THE TRIUMPH OF VIVIAN TRAVERS!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

Vivian Travers wants to prove his gratitude to Sir Jimmy Potts for saving his life, and so he decides to "take it out" of Harold Grayson, the rascally Fifth-Former, who is the son of the man who ruined Jimmy's father!—Ed.

CHAPTER I.

The Winning Goal!

"O H, well saved, Handy!"
 "Good man!"
 "That's the style, Handy—
 keep 'em out!"

Edward Oswald Handforth, of the St. Frank's Remove, flushed with pleasure and confidence. It was, indeed, his settled policy to "keep 'em out." As goalkeeper of the St. Frank's Junior Eleven, he regarded himself as invincible—and when the opposition managed to score Handforth was always very astonished.

This afternoon, the valiants of the Junior School were playing against Bannington Grammar School, on the latter's ground. The game was nearing its end, and the situation was tense.

For at half-time St. Frank's had been leading by two goals to one, and upon the resumption of play the Grammarians had displayed tremendous energy, and had not only equalised but had got one goal ahead.

Nipper, by forceful tactics, had brought the scores level again, and now the game had developed into a ding-dong struggle, with the Grammarians in the ascendancy. They were playing on their own ground, and therefore had the advantage.

It had seemed that a certain goal was about to be scored, but Handforth, by Herculean efforts, had saved the situation. And now the game was veering off into mid-field once more.

"Keep 'em out, Handy!"

"Let's make it a draw, anyhow!"

"Why not make it a win?" roared Handforth. "What's the matter with the forwards?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The game was tense in the extreme. With the score at three-all, and with only five minutes to go, the spectators kept up one continuous roar of shouting and cheering.

There were a large number of St. Frank's juniors on the spot, to say nothing of a sprinkling of the Moor View girls. Irene & Co. were as keen as any of the boys.

"There he goes again!" cried Winnie Pitt suddenly. "Oh, look at him!"

For a moment the other girls thought she was talking about her brother, Reggie—the famous outside-right of the St. Frank's team. But no; Winnie was staring at another junior, on the other wing.

Winnie was not the only one, either.

The inside-left of the St. Frank's team had claimed attention from them all by his wonderful play. Already he had scored one of the St. Frank's goals, and he had helped in the getting of a second. From the very beginning of the game he had been going all out, and there was something very fascinating in his style of play.

"Go it, Travers!"

"Hurrah!"

"One more, Travers, old man—one more!"

Vivian Travers, the new boy in the Remove, was smiling calmly. He never allowed himself to be flustered.

It was only natural that the spectators should give Travers more attention than any of the other players. He was a new fellow—and therefore he had to be watched. The crowd knew the stirring centre-forward play of Nipper—they knew the wonderful runs of Reggie Pitt, on the wing. They knew the sturdy defence of Handforth, in goal. But Vivian Travers' play was something novel—something different.

His football was polished—his every movement was delightful to watch—and, although the Grammarian half-backs shadowed him relentlessly, he nearly always eluded them.

Two minutes to go!

A wild roar went up from the St. Frank's spectators when it was seen that Reggie Pitt had the leather again. Down the wing he streaked, in one of his celebrated runs. He had the opposing back all at sea, but he centred the ball a trifle too far in advance of his forward line.

Travers was the nearest forward, and, without an instant's hesitation, he ran. The other Grammarian back ran at the same time, and it developed into a race.

"Go it, Travers!"

"Oh, shoot, man—shoot!"

Then the shouts died away. The suspense was almost painful. Well on-side, Travers had a fine chance of scoring—if only he could get to the leather before his opponent. And by a fraction of a second he won that race.

He tipped the ball over so lightly, just as the back reached it. With a movement that was as agile as a monkey's, he dodged

round the Grammarian defender, and ran on, the ball at his feet—and with nobody but the goalie to beat!

Slam!

It was a wonderful shot, and the leather flew diagonally across the goal mouth. The goalie leapt wildly, but he was a shade too late. The ball whizzed into the corner of the net, and there came the sharp blast of the referee's whistle.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Well played, Travers!"

St. Frank's had won—for, within a minute, the game was over, and the name of Vivian Travers was on everybody's lips.



CHAPTER 2.

The Black Sheep!

WELL done, Travers!"

Nipper, the popular junior captain of St. Frank's,

clapped Vivian Travers on the back with some warmth. They were both walking off the field towards the pavilion, and Travers smiled complacently.

"That, of course, is a matter of opinion, dear old fellow," he replied. "After all, we are all on the field to do our best, aren't we? Personally, I am rather against this congratulating stuff. It tends to give a fellow a swelled head. Not that there's any danger of that in my direction," he added whimsically.

"I am sure there isn't," smiled Nipper.

"You see," said Travers, "we're not deserving of praise. We go on the field to play our hardest, and if we're successful—well, it's all to the good. Why pick on me for this shoulder-clapping business? What about Handforth? He kept goal like a champion!"

"So he did!" agreed Nipper. "Handy was great!"

"And then, what about yourself?" went on Travers coolly. "What about your brilliant centre-forward work?"

"Dry up!" growled Nipper. "I rather think you're right, Travers—and we'll cut out the congratulations."

A good many of the others were not of the same opinion. Vivian Travers, indeed, came in for a great deal of praise from his fellow players. As for the spectators, they crowded round the pavilion, eagerly waiting for the players to come off the field.

Irene & Co., of the Moor View School, were there, too—just as keen as any of the boys.

As it happened, Handforth was one of the first fellows there, and he swelled almost visibly with pleasure as he noted that Irene Manners came running up to him. Irene was his own special girl chum, and he listened to her congratulations with unfeigned delight.

"Of course, Ted, your goalkeeping was wonderful," said Irene. "But it was that new boy who really won the game for St. Frank's, wasn't it?"

Handforth frowned.

"Travers, you mean?" he said, in a tone of disapproval.

"Yes, I've heard that his name is Travers—Vivian Travers," said Irene, nodding. "Rather a nice name, isn't it?"

"Vivian?" said Handforth, in astonishment. "Nice? Of all the idiotic names— Eh? I—I mean— Oh, crumbs!"

Irene smiled sweetly.

"Never mind, Ted—we're all entitled to our opinions, aren't we?"

"Yes, but—but I didn't mean— That is—"

"Well, when he comes up, I want you to introduce him to me," said Irene gently.

"Oh, rather!" declared Doris Berkeley, as she came up with Winnie Pitt and Marjorie Temple. "We want to be introduced, too, Ted!"

Handforth said nothing for a moment, and it was only with great difficulty that he succeeded in controlling his emotions. Even as it was, the girls could see, by the very expression on his face, that he was by no means pleased. But they passed one or two winks round amongst themselves, believing that Handforth was suffering from a little spasm of jealousy.

As a matter of fact, Handforth's emotion was due to quite another cause.

In his own magisterial way, he felt that Vivian Travers was not the kind of fellow to introduce to such nice girls as Irene & Co. They did not know, for example, that Travers had been virtually sent to Coventry some days earlier, and that he had been given the cold shoulder of late.

Not that Travers seemed to mind in the least. He had gone about his business in the usual way, had had a cheery word for anybody and everybody, and had shown the utmost indifference to the studied coolness of his Form fellows. But that was Vivian Travers' way. As he had often said, he went his own road, and he didn't care a toss what anybody else thought of him.

Travers' popularity in the Remove had in no way been enhanced—among the decent fellows, at least—when it was found that he had been indulging in gambling parties. He had even gone to the length

of inviting Grayson and Kenmore, and one or two other East House "blades," into his dormitory after lights-out.

Nipper and Handforth and a few other stalwart Removites had kicked the intruders out, and had told Travers, in the plainest of plain terms, that they wouldn't allow anything of that sort again. Indeed, Travers had been very severely bumped for that episode.

Besides, he smoked cigarettes, and he was by no means averse to telling whoppers. And yet, at the same time, he seemed such a decent sort of fellow.

Nobody quite knew how to take him. He could ride a motor-cycle like a Tourist Trophy champion, and there wasn't the slightest doubt that he could play amazingly good football. There were so many points in his favour that the majority of the Removites were inclined to wink at his bad habits.

They did not know that Vivian Travers was a schemer—that he was playing a deep game of his own!



CHAPTER 3.

The Invitation!

VIVIAN TRAVERS was quite enjoying himself.

He knew that most of the fellows were uncertain about him, and this appealed to his whimsical nature. It was just the sort of thing he liked.

Travers wasn't a fellow who talked. He kept his own business to himself. Nobody in St. Frank's knew—or even guessed—that he was on the friendliest possible terms with Jimmy Potts, the boot-boy of the Ancient House.

Still less did anybody guess that Travers and Potts had both been at Beccleston College together, and that Jimmy Potts was really Sir James Potts, Bart.!

Yet this was the simple truth.

The boot-boy baronet was not masquerading in his present position as a joke. He really needed the work—and he was enjoying it, too. Travers had made up his mind, in that quaint way of his, to help Jimmy, and he was going about the thing deliberately—coolly—indeed, cunningly.

If, in the working out of his plan, he was misunderstood and misjudged, it was to him a matter of complete indifference.

Grayson of the Fifth, was Jimmy Potts' enemy, and Grayson was a fellow who

gambled, who smoked, and who did all sorts of blackguardly things.

In order to carry out his scheme, Travers found it necessary to become very friendly with Grayson. What did he care if the other fellows took his actions at their face value, and condemned him accordingly?

He came off the field now, happy in the knowledge that he had played a good game for his school, and feeling at peace with all the world. Travers was very keen on football, and he was grateful to Nipper for having given him such an early chance in the Junior Eleven.

"Here he is!" sang out somebody.

"Good old Travers!"

Vivian Travers smiled.

"It's a strange world, dear old fellow," he remarked, turning to Nipper. "Only yesterday most of these fellows were cutting me dead."

"You've redeemed yourself by your play this afternoon," said Nipper, with a chuckle.

"Virtue has its own reward," said Travers complacently. "I must seriously think about turning over a new leaf. But, for the love of Samson, what is all this?"

Handforth was coming forward, accompanied by Irene, Winnie, and the other girls. And Handforth was not looking at all pleased.

"Just a minute, Travers!" he said gruffly.

"With pleasure, dear old fellow," said Travers. "My time is yours!"

"You played a good game to-day, Travers, but I want you to understand that I don't approve of you!" said Handforth sternly. "In some ways, you seem to be a decent sort of chap—but in other ways you're a rotter! You're a smoky bouncer, and you gamble, and—"

"We all have our good points, and we all have our bad points," interrupted Travers, with a wave of his hand. "Fortunately, we cannot be saints. I should hate to be too good, Handforth. Life would be a dull, dreary business, I'm afraid."

"Rats!" said Handforth bluntly. "For some unearthly reason, these girls want me to introduce you to them. Girls, this is Vivian Travers, of Study A, in the Remove. Travers, this is Irene Manners, and this is Reggie Pitt's sister, Winnie—"

"Delighted!" said Travers coolly.

Handforth completed the introductions, and everybody else stood round, grinning—mainly because Handforth performed his duty in such a grudging spirit.

As for Travers, he got on famously with the girls. His manner was so easy—so winning. Irene & Co. could see nothing wrong with him. He was just an open,

smiling, genial youngster. For the life of them, they couldn't understand Handforth's thinly-veiled hostility.

"We're glad to know you, Travers," said Winnie Pitt, in her frank way. "And now that we *do* know you, perhaps you'd like to come to our party to-morrow evening."

"Parties," said Travers, "are my fatal weakness. Thanks most awfully. I imagine that this is some special occasion?"

"Rather!" put in Doris, with a nod. "It's Winnie's birthday to-morrow, and we're having a good old gathering. Lots of the fellows are coming—Ted Handforth, Nipper, and Reggie, of course, Ralph Fullwood, and Archie Glenthorne, and— Oh, lots of others!"

"Splendid!" said Travers. "Nothing will please me better than to add my humble presence to the throng. It has been said—without reason, I am afraid—that I can sing slightly. If there are any demands for a rich tenor voice, do not hesitate to call upon me."

The girls laughed merrily, and Edward Oswald Handforth gritted his teeth with helpless rage. It made him boil to see the girls gathering round this new fellow, and Handforth was frankly disgusted at the prospect of Travers coming to that exclusive party on the morrow.

But he was helpless in the matter. It was Winnie's party, and she had issued the invitation.



CHAPTER 4

An Old Acquaintance!

"WELL, well!" said Travers, in mild astonishment.

Twenty minutes had elapsed, and Travers had managed to escape from the girls. In fact, he was now in Bannington High Street, having gone off alone. He instinctively felt that the other fellows did not want him with them, and Travers, who preferred to be alone in any case, had made himself scarce.

Now, twenty yards down the High Street, he beheld a flashy-looking gentleman in a big check overcoat and a light-coloured soft hat. Travers had recognised this gentleman at once. Indeed, the recognition was mutual.

"Well, bless me!" ejaculated the gentleman, as he slowed up, and seized Travers by the hand. "This is a surprise, Mr. Travers, sir! Just about the last person I expected to see you here in this one-horse town! Here for the races, eh?"

"Unfortunately, no, dear old fellow," said Travers. "Don't you recognise the cap? I belong to St. Frank's College—the eminent seat of learning situated about two miles due south, as the crow flies."

"Why, I thought you were at Beccleston, sir!" said the flashy gentleman.

"No," replied Travers. "It would be correct to say that I *was* at Beccleston, Lloyd—but times have changed. Without going into painful details, I will mention that Beccleston became too hot for me. And so here I am, at St. Frank's."

"Well, I'm thundering glad to see you, young Mr. Travers!" said the other boisterously. "One of my best customers in the old days, eh? Any chance of some business now?"

"Well, I wouldn't say," replied Travers. "But I fancy not. After the recent happenings at Beccleston, I must be very careful. The Headmaster of St. Frank's might be quite annoyed if he found me hobnobbing with Sam Lloyd, the bookie."

"I'm as honest as the next man!" declared Sam Lloyd promptly.

"I daresay," nodded Travers. "In all probability your honesty, Lloyd, is on a much higher plane than the next man's. I suppose you're down here for the steeplechase racing?"

"That's it, sir," nodded the bookmaker. "Had a pretty rough time of it to-day, too. I haven't made up my accounts yet, but I reckon I'm close upon fifty quid down on the day."

"Well, we must take the rough with the smooth," said Travers. "I daresay you'll catch a few mugs to-morrow, Lloyd."

They strolled along, and Travers was only amused when he observed Fullwood and Jack Grey and Reggie Pitt and one or two other Removites on the other side of the road. They had given him a queer look—for they had no difficulty in recognising his companion as a member of the racing fraternity.

"I am staying up at the Wheatsheaf," said Mr. Lloyd. "Care to come along, sir? We could have a chew over old times——"

"If it's all the same to you, dear old fellow, I'd rather not," said Travers. "You see, there are a good many St. Frank's fellows in the town this afternoon—and I shouldn't be surprised if one or two masters hove in sight, too. And it's rather against the rules for a junior to enter the Wheatsheaf."

"I understand, sir!" grinned Mr. Lloyd. "Well, if there's anything I can do for you——"

"Yes!" said Travers thoughtfully. "That reminds me. There *may* be something that you can do for me, dear old

fellow. In fact, it's more than possible that I shall be able to put a tenner in your way—an easy tenner, too."

"Going to back a loser?" grinned the bookmaker.

"No," said Travers. "I rather think that I shall back a winner—but it will mean ten pounds in your pocket, all the same. To tell you the truth, I can't be sure yet, but if you'll give me your telephone number, I shall be obliged. I might ring you through this evening—or to-morrow."

Mr. Lloyd obliged, and Travers made a note of the number on the outside of a packet of cigarettes.

"What's the idea, young gent?" asked Mr. Lloyd curiously.

"Sorry, dear old fellow, but I can't tell you just now," replied Travers coolly. "It all depends on how events go this evening. But I know where you live—and I know your telephone number. That, for the present, is enough."

And Travers changed the subject. He had known Sam Lloyd in the old days—at Beccleston—and, in a way, he rather liked this genial, bluff bookmaker. Many of the other fellows, perhaps, would have regarded Mr. Lloyd as a rascal.

But, as Travers knew, there were bookmakers and bookmakers, and Travers was by no means ashamed to own Mr. Lloyd as a friend. It didn't matter a twopenny toss what anybody else thought about him.



CHAPTER 5.

A Visit to Grayson!

S Travers crossed the Triangle of St. Frank's in the gathering dusk, he was met by Jimmy Potts, the boot-boy of the Ancient House.

"Tough luck, old man," said Travers, as he paused. "While I have been disporting myself on the greensward, you have been toiling in the basements, juggling with boots, and——"

"As a matter of fact, I've been cleaning silver!" interrupted Jimmy, with a grin. "But you needn't pity me, Travers. Working for a living isn't half so bad as you seem to think. I've heard about the game, and you seem to have been doing wonders. Congrats!"

"Nonsense!" said Travers gruffly. "Hang it, can't a fellow play decently without being praised by all and sundry? What the deuce do you think I was in the team for, anyhow? Do you suppose I was

there just to get into the other fellows' way?"

Jimmy Potts chuckled. "Perhaps you're right!" he said. "Well, I'd better be passing on. I mustn't be seen talking to you—"

"Why not?" interrupted Travers. "I can talk to the boot-boy if I like, can't I? Nobody else can hear us, anyhow."

But, as it happened, several other juniors hove into sight just then, and Jimmy, touching his cap, moved off. In the presence of the others, Jimmy was very respectful, and never for an instant did he forget his position.

Travers was very thoughtful as he went indoors—into the East House. It wasn't his House at all, but he evidently had a call to make.

He was thinking of Jimmy Potts, and his brain was working overtime. For Travers knew all about the misfortune which had overtaken Lady Potts and her fatherless son Lady Potts—now known as plain "Mrs. Potts"—had obtained the position of housekeeper at the Moor View School. It was for this reason, indeed, that Jimmy had jumped at the chance of becoming boot-boy at St. Frank's. He wanted to be near his mother—and he did not mind the menial nature of his present task.

And, thinking of Potts, Vivian Travers naturally thought of Grayson of the Fifth.

For Grayson was the son of the man who had ruined Jimmy's father. Mr. Mortimer Grayson, the stockbroker, was responsible for the crashing of the Potts' fortunes. Indeed, Travers knew well enough that Mr. Grayson was several kinds of a rascal. The law could not touch him, for everything had been cleverly engineered. But, none the less, Jimmy's father had been robbed—and the blow had resulted in a breakdown, and then death. Now, Lady Potts was obliged to work for a living, for she and her son were penniless. And the father of Grayson of the Fifth was—as Travers put it—the villain of the piece.

So it seemed rather surprising that Vivian Travers was on the very best of terms with Grayson.

Of late, Travers had been "thick" with the bully of the Fifth. He had played cards with him, he had gone out on midnight jaunts, after lights-out. As a matter of fact, Grayson owed him the substantial sum of twenty-five pounds. What with playing banker, poker and other games, Grayson was heavily in debt to this junior. Luck had gone with Travers from the very first, and he held several of

Grayson's I.O.U.'s to the value of twenty-five pounds.

Strangely enough, Travers seemed to be highly delighted with this state of affairs. Even now he chuckled as he made his way to Grayson's study.

Arriving, he tapped on the door, and entered. He was pleased to find that Grayson was alone. Shaw, his study mate, was conspicuous by his absence.

"Hallo, Travers!" said Grayson, as he looked up from the easy chair. "Come in. Make yourself at home!"

"Thanks most frightfully—but this is a business call," said Travers. "In fact, Grayson, I've come to dun you for money."

Grayson sat up in his chair abruptly.

"Oh, you have, have you?" he said unpleasantly. "Well, I can tell you straight away that you won't get a cent. Why, you told me only a couple of days ago that I needn't worry about that debt at all. You said that you'd keep my I.O.U.'s, and that I could pay you after I'd had a bit of luck with the horses, or—"

"Circumstances," said Travers, "alter cases. You owe me twenty-five quid, Grayson, and I need the money."

"You'll have to go on needing it," interrupted Grayson curtly.

"But, my dear old fellow, be reasonable!" urged Travers. "Quite by accident, I ran into a bookie this afternoon, in Bannington. A chap I knew at my other school. Well, to cut a long story short, the fellow is dunning me for money. I *must* have some. And as you owe me twenty-five of the best, why not come across, and—"

"You can fish for it!" sneered Grayson. "I can't help your troubles, you cheeky junior! You shouldn't get into a mess-up with a bookmaker. You ought to have more sense! Anyhow, I can't pay you twenty-five quid—or twenty-five pence!"

"But you owe me the money—"

"I don't care about that!" snapped Grayson savagely. "I didn't expect you to come on me like this, did I? I can't pay you, and there's an end of it!"

Vivian Travers sat down on the table.

"I don't think so," he said quietly. "In fact, Grayson, this is *not* the end of it!"



CHAPTER 6.

Just What He Wanted!

HAROLD GRAYSON heaved himself out of his chair, and stood face to face with his visitor.



"Of course, Ted, your goalkeeping was wonderful," said Irene. But it was Vivian Travers who really won the game for St. Frank's. Rather a nice name, isn't it?" she added. Handforth listened in astonishment, not unmingled with disapproval.

"Look here, Travers, I've had enough of your infernal cheek!" he said grimly. "Who the deuce do you think you are—to come here demanding impossible sums of money?"

"Impossible sums?"

"Yes, confound you!" said Grayson. "Do you think I can pick twenty-five quid out of the air? You know I'm broke! In any case, I never had the money in actual cash. You only won it at cards——"

"Great Samson!" said Travers, staring. "You're not going to repudiate a debt of honour, are you?"

Grayson coloured.

"No, of course not!" he growled. "At the same time, it's a bit different to a cash debt. And I want time to pay it—so let's have no more of this nonsense."

"We'd better get this thing clear," said Travers evenly. "I've already told you that I met a bookie in Bannington this afternoon—an old acquaintance of mine. Well, he wants this money. I'm not saying he was nasty, but—— Well, you know what these fellows are when they get such ideas into their heads. There's going to be trouble for me, Grayson, if I can't pay up."

"You have my sympathy," sneered Grayson.

"Unfortunately, I want something rather more substantial," said Travers. "This fellow is named Lloyd—he's not a local man at all, but a bookie from London. He goes about the country, to all the different race meetings, you know."

Grayson listened with a bored air. He wasn't in the least interested in Vivian Travers' troubles. And although Travers was—to put it bluntly—giving a very garbled account of the actual truth, Grayson was not to know this. For Travers had an axe of his own to grind—and a very peculiar axe, too.

"So you see, dear old fellow, something must be done," said the Removite. "Lloyd won't wait, and I happen to be stumped. I must get some money from somewhere. You owe me twenty-five quid——"

"You silly young fool!" interrupted Grayson savagely. "You speak of twenty-five quid as though it were a mere nothing! I tell you I can't do it! Why, I haven't got twenty-five shillings!"

"That's bad!" said Travers, frowning. "Can't you raise the money somehow? You know plenty of chaps in the Senior School, Grayson. Why not go round, borrowing here and there?"

"For you?" said Grayson, with a mocking laugh. "Borrow money from Kenmore,

and the other fellows—just to pay you? Do you think I'm mad?"

"Why discuss your mental condition?" asked Travers. "The facts are perfectly simple. I must have money—and you owe me money. If I don't get it, Grayson, this bookie is going to see the Head."

"Well, that'll be your funeral—not mine!" said Grayson callously.

"Are you going to help me, or not?" demanded Travers, his manner changing. "Look here, Grayson—be serious! You owe me that money, and if you like to put yourself out, you can get hold of it! What's it going to be? Will you pay this debt of honour—or will you see me sacked?"

Grayson shrugged his shoulders.

"If you want to know the truth, Travers, I don't care a hang whether you're sacked or not!" he said contemptuously. "Hang your confounded impudence! You'll get the money when I can pay you—and not before!"

"Yes, but look here—"

"That's about enough!" interrupted Grayson curtly "Get out of this study!"

For a moment Vivian Travers did not speak. He was looking at Grayson with utter scorn—although there was no trace of it in his eyes. He seemed as cool and collected as ever. He had known all along that Harold Grayson was a rotter, but he had hardly suspected the Fifth Former of such despicability as this.

Grayson was willing to see Travers sacked, and he didn't care! And yet the money that Grayson owed him would be sufficient to get him out of this supposed trouble. Travers' determination to keep on with his scheme was greatly strengthened.

"Well, if you won't, you won't," he said, slipping off the end of the table. "But it's a pretty ugly sort of hole for me, Grayson—and unless I can do something pretty quickly I shall go under."

Grayson made no reply, and Travers moved towards the door. Just as he was about to lay his hand on the knob, he turned again.

"There's just one possibility," he said thoughtfully. "Lloyd may be willing to wait for his money if he sees some kind of security. You're a senior, Grayson, and this bookie will have more faith in you than he has in me, perhaps."

"What are you getting at?" asked Grayson suspiciously.

"Oh, you needn't worry," said Travers. "My idea is quite simple. Supposing I give the bookie those I.O.U.'s in lieu of the money?"

Grayson stared.

"Give him my I.O.U.'s?" he repeated.

"That's what I said."

"My dear, idiotic kid!" said Grayson. "Give him the I.O.U.'s by all means—if he'll accept them. He's welcome to them!"

And Grayson laughed heartily. Vivian Travers didn't laugh—although he chuckled inwardly. For he had been leading up to this point ever since he had come into the room—and Grayson had fallen into the trap!



CHAPTER 7.

Trouble Again!

OUTSIDE, Travers indulged himself to the extent of an open grin. But nobody was within sight, so it didn't matter.

"Good!" murmured the scheming Removeite. "So Grayson has given me permission to hand over those I.O.U.'s. I always thought he was brainless—and now I know it!"

He went on his way, well content. He went across to the Ancient House, and made his way to Study A, in the Remove passage. He rather expected to find Gulliver and Bell in possession—but the study was empty. Travers then remembered that Gulliver and Bell had gone to tea with Merrell and Marriott, of the Fourth.

Travers was quite pleased. He didn't care particularly for Gulliver and Bell, although everybody else in the Remove regarded him as their new leader.

Travers didn't bother about any tea. He sat down in an easy chair, poked the fire, and gave himself up to thought. He was thinking mainly of Jimmy Potts.

After about ten minutes Travers got to his feet, looking very contented. He went to the Remove Common Room, and, just as he had expected, the apartment was practically empty. Most of the fellows were still busy with their teas.

Travers went over to the telephone-box, and shut himself in. He gave the number of the Wheatsheaf Hotel in Bannington, and when he had got through he asked for Mr. Lloyd.

Within a minute the bookmaker was at the telephone.

"That you, Mr. Travers, sir?" he asked, in his boisterous voice. "Want something on one of the races to-morrow?"

"Well, hardly," replied Travers. "I'm off that game for a bit, Lloyd. But you can do me a favour, if you like—and can

that tenner to put into your own pocket at the same time."

"I'm always willing to get hold of an easy ten quid, sir," said Mr. Lloyd.

"All right, then—be over here in the morning," replied Travers. "If you can manage it, I should like you to arrive at about half-past eight. Don't come into the school grounds, but wait for me outside, in the lane. I'll be there at half-past eight, looking for you."

"But what's the idea, young gent?" asked Mr. Lloyd curiously.

"I'll tell you in the morning—too risky over the 'phone," replied Travers. "But you can take it from me that it'll be perfectly above board. Is it O.K.? Will you come?"

"I'll be there, Mr. Travers, sir," said the bookmaker. "Rather early for me, but it won't hurt me for once in a while. Half-past eight, outside the school grounds, eh? I'll find you waiting?"

"Yes—about a hundred yards from the school," said Travers. "That's fixed up, then? Good man! Thanks, Lloyd—you're just the right man in the right place. Good-bye!"

Travers hung up the receiver, and opened the door of the sound-proof box. He knew that he could rely upon Mr. Sam Lloyd to be there. Everything was going very smoothly.

A voice came to Travers' ears as he opened the telephone-box, and he grinned to himself. A number of fellows had come into the common room, and Handforth was prominent among them.

"I'm not saying anything against the chap's football," Handforth was remarking. "He's a jolly good forward—one of the best we've got."

"I'm glad you admit it!" said Church tartly.

"At the same time, he's not the kind of fellow to introduce to Irene and the other girls," said Handforth, in a stubborn voice. "And as for him going to that party to-morrow evening—well, it's all wrong! Travers oughtn't to be there!"

"Well, well!" said Vivian Travers indulgently.

Handforth and the other juniors turned round, and stared at him. Until that moment they had not known that he was in the room.

"Don't mind me!" went on Travers, with a wave of his hand. "Carry on, dear old fellows. I'm awfully sorry I'm in your bad books, Handforth, but—"

"Oh, I don't care about you hearing what I said!" interrupted Handforth gruffly. "I'll say it to your face, Travers! I don't think you're the kind of fellow who

ought to be at Winnie's party to-morrow evening."

"What's wrong with me?" asked Travers, looking down at himself. "I would remind you that I shall be wearing a different suit—a new one for the occasion. I shall even go to the length of a brand new shirt, too. I always maintain that linen is an important—"

"You silly ass!" retorted Handforth. "I'm not talking about your appearance—I'm talking about *you*!"

"Yes, Travers, a good many of us agree with Handy!" said De Valerie. "Who was that fellow you were with this afternoon?"

"Which fellow?" asked Travers.

"That chap in the Bannington High Street."

"Oh, him?" said Travers, with a smile.

"Old Sam Lloyd, you mean? Quite a decent fellow, in his own way. A bookmaker, you know."

"A bookmaker!" yelled Handforth.

"Men earn their living in different ways," said Travers. "I'm ready to agree that quite a large number of bookmakers are scamps. But old Sam Lloyd is an exception. He's a sportsman—and always has been. Quite an old friend of mine," he added casually.

"There you are!" said Handforth, turning excitedly to the others. "He even boasts of it! Boasts of his friendship with a bookmaker! And he's been invited to Winnie's party to-morrow evening! What are we going to do about it?"

"Nothing, I'm afraid," said Fullwood, with a chuckle. "After the way Travers played in the game this afternoon, the girls are all in favour of him. Don't be an ass, Handy. I've got a suspicion that Travers is only pulling your leg."

"Pulling my leg?" ejaculated Handforth, with a start. "My leg?"

"One never knows!" said Vivian Travers amiably, as he passed out of the room.



CHAPTER 8.

More Scheming!

At half-past eight was striking on the school clock the following morning, Vivian Travers, with little concern, detached himself from the top of a gate and strode out into the road. He had heard the sound of an approaching motor-car; and, as he had half-expected, the new arrival proved to be Mr. Sam Lloyd.

"Well, here we are, Mr. Travers, sir," said the bookmaker genially. "Right on

the stroke of time, eh? All I hope is that this job of yours is worth coming over for. You got me out at a rare early hour this morning, I can tell you!"

"Early rising," said Travers, "is beneficial to the general health, dear old fellow. You don't mind if I come in and sit beside you, do you? So much more comfortable."

He got into the car, and lounged in the seat next to Lloyd. Then he produced Grayson's I.O.U.'s from his pocket, and handed them to his companion. The bookmaker looked at them in astonishment.

"What are these for, young gent?" he asked.

"For you."

"But why?" said Lloyd. "I don't want them!"

"You see what they are, don't you?"

"Well, I ought to know!" grinned Mr. Lloyd. "I.O.U.'s, that's what they are. And they're all signed by a gent. named 'H. Grayson.'"

Travers nodded.

"You're quite right about the 'H. Grayson,' but you're not right about the gent," he said smoothly. "However, that doesn't matter. Do you notice anything else about them?"

"Well, they total twenty-five quid, altogether," said the bookmaker. "They're quite plain otherwise—no other names on them."

"Exactly!" said Travers. "As a matter of fact, Grayson gave them to me—he owes me twenty-five quid, you understand. But I want you to take charge of them, Lloyd—and act just as though they had been given to you."

"Look here, Mr. Travers—what's the game?" asked Lloyd bluntly.

"A perfectly harmless game, I can assure you," said Travers. "I hope you don't mind, but I've been telling Grayson that you've been dunning me for money. A pure piece of spoof, you must understand, but necessary. I told Grayson that I should give you those I.O.U.'s instead of the cash, and he was highly amused."

"I don't wonder at it!"

"But he won't be amused this morning," went on Travers. "What I want you to do, dear old fellow, is this. Go to Grayson, and tell him that you've accepted these I.O.U.'s from me, and that you want the real money from him. Tell him that if he won't pay up you'll go to the Headmaster. Give him until mid-day tomorrow as a time limit. If he can't pay by then, you've got to threaten to go to the Headmaster and expose him. Lay it on thick, Lloyd. You're a man of brains,

so I needn't tell you anything further. You can make up the rest."

Mr. Lloyd did not seem particularly impressed.

"Just a minute, Mr. Travers, sir—just a minute," he said, scratching his head. "It's all very well for you to ask me to do this—"

"I'm giving you a tenner for the service, don't forget," said Travers.

"And very generous of you, too, sir," agreed Mr. Lloyd heartily. "Very generous, I must say! All the same, I'd like to have it a bit clearer. You're not suggesting that I really *should* go to the Headmaster, are you?"

"For the love of Samson, no!" laughed Travers. "It's all spoof, I tell you! All I want you to do is to put the wind up Grayson. But you've got to make it appear genuine. If he thinks you'll go to the Head, and expose him—well, he'll be desperate. And I want him to be desperate."

"You always were a queer sort of young gent," said Mr. Lloyd, as he put the I.O.U.'s into his pocket. "No good asking you what the game is, I suppose?"

"No good at all," replied Travers.

"I thought not!" said Mr. Lloyd. "Well, I don't think it'll take me long to put a scare into this young gentleman. But I tell you frankly, I don't want to have anything to do with any of the masters."

"That's all right," said Travers. "You may be a bookmaker, Lloyd, but you look a gentleman. A trifle too glaring in your choice of colour and pattern, perhaps, but we mustn't be too critical. Anyhow, you're a stranger at St. Frank's, and there's not one chance in a thousand that anybody will stop you, and ask questions."

"And how do I find this young Grayson?"

"Easily," said Travers. "You walk through the main gateway, and the East House is the first big doorway on your left, as you go up the Triangle. You just pass the gymnasium, and then you come to the East House. Walk right in, and ask the first fellow you see to show you to Grayson's study."

And although Mr. Lloyd didn't actually like the business, he agreed to undertake it.



CHAPTER 9.

A Shock for Grayson!

"GRAYSON?" said Armstrong, of the Fourth.

"That's the name!" nodded Mr. Lloyd. "I shall be

obliged if you'll show me to his study."

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They were standing in the East House lobby, and Armstrong was looking at the visitor with some curiosity. Not that there was anything particularly startling in Mr. Lloyd's appearance.

Except for a slight tendency to overdress—as Travers had pointed out—Mr. Lloyd was very smart and very well attired. There was nothing of the ordinary bookmaker about him. This morning he had discarded that loud check overcoat, and his hat was an ordinary conventional bowler.

"This way, sir," said Armstrong. "I suppose you're a relative of Grayson's?"
 "Well, not exactly," replied Mr. Lloyd guardedly. "Just a friend. As I was in the neighbourhood, I thought I would drop in to see him."

They went into the Fifth Form passage, and, by a lucky chance, Grayson himself came striding down it from the opposite direction. He paused for a moment as he was about to enter his study, wondering who this stranger could be.

"Half a tick, Grayson," said Armstrong. "This gentleman wants to see you."

"See me?" said Grayson, staring.

"Why, Grayson, of course!" said Mr. Lloyd genially, as he strode forward, and clapped Grayson on the back. "Splendid! You don't look a week older, young 'un!"

Mr. Lloyd opened the study door while Grayson was still staring, and they both entered. Lloyd closed the door after him, and the Fifth Former frowned unpleasantly.

"What's the idea of this?" he demanded. "What do you mean by pretending to know me? I've never seen you before in my life!"

"I thought it would be diplomatic, young gent," said Mr. Lloyd, seating himself in the easy chair. "Don't want to let all the other young gents know that we're strangers, eh? I'm here on business. And I thought you might be upset if all the other boys knew that I was a bookmaker."

Grayson stared harder than ever.

"A bookmaker?" he repeated. "What the dickens—"

"Now, Master Grayson, keep cool!" said Mr. Lloyd, holding up a hand. "As it happens, this business of mine isn't any too pleasant, and the sooner we get it over the better. In a nutshell, I want twenty-five pounds from you!"

"But I don't owe you twenty-five pounds!" ejaculated Grayson hotly.

"Perhaps you don't, young gent—but that makes no difference," said the other. "It may make things clear to you if I explain that I have been having a bit of trouble with another young gent belonging to this school. No need to mention names."

Grayson started.

"Do you mean Travers, of the Remove?" he asked.

"Let it pass, sir," said Lloyd, waving a hand. "Anyhow, the unpleasantness with that young gentleman is over. And here I've got one or two little documents—that you signed, sir."

He produced the I.O.U.'s and Grayson watched him in a fascinated kind of way. From the other side of the table he could see those I.O.U.'s distinctly—he could see his own signature upon them. Mr. Lloyd held them so that he could be under no misapprehension regarding their actual reality.

"What's the idea?" demanded Grayson thickly. "You confounded fool! Do you think you can come here and demand money from me like this? I don't owe you a cent! I've never seen you before in my life!"

"Steady, sir!" said Mr. Lloyd calmly. "The whole thing is just a little arrangement. But you can't get away from these signatures, can you? These I.O.U.'s represent twenty-five pounds—and that money is owing by you. It doesn't matter much who holds the I.O.U.'s, does it? They're mine now—and I want the cash."

"Well, you won't get it!" shouted Grayson furiously. "I've never heard of such nonsense in all my life! Get out of here!" he added, pointing to the door.

"It'll pay you much better, young gentleman, if you keep calm!" said the bookmaker, his voice changing its note. "This sort of thing won't do you any good. I'll get out of here when I want—and not before. I came here to be pleasant—not to be nasty. But I can be nasty if you like."

Harold Grayson felt dizzy. Certainly he had given Travers permission to pass those I.O.U.'s on to a bookmaker—but he had never believed, for a moment, that Travers would do such a thing. Even so, of what use were they to a stranger? Evidently, Grayson had not thought the matter out—or he would not have been so complacent during the past twelve hours.

"You can't get any money out of me!" he said hoarsely. "You're a stranger to me—and I don't owe you a penny! Unless you get out of this room within two minutes, confound you, I'll call a crowd of the other fellows, and we'll throw you out!"

Mr. Lloyd rose to his feet.

"Will you?" he said, his face becoming flushed. "I don't allow people to talk to me like that, Mr. Grayson! I wanted to conduct this affair pleasantly, but you won't let me. All right—I'll go to your Headmaster—and see what he has to say about it."

Mr. Lloyd had not intended to use any such threat so early—but he was genuinely annoyed. He had come to the conclusion that Vivian Travers knew what he was doing. This fellow, Grayson, was an utter cad—a young blackguard of the worst type. Mr. Lloyd gauged Grayson's character very accurately.

As for Grayson himself, all the colour fled from his cheeks. He clutched at the table, and stared at Mr. Lloyd in dazed alarm.

"The Head!" he panted. "No, no! You mustn't go to the Head, you fool! You mustn't go—"

"Either you cool down, and talk to me sensibly—or I shall go to your headmaster at once!" snapped Mr. Lloyd. "What's it going to be? Now then, Mr. Grayson—out with it! One or the other!"

Grayson seemed to crumble.

"I'll keep cool!" he muttered huskily.

CHAPTER 10.

The Ultimatum!



FOR nearly two minutes there was silence in the study.

Mr. Lloyd was glad of this respite, for it

allowed him to cool down. As for Grayson, he recovered some of his own composure. A minute's reflection had assured him that there was nothing in this man's threat. He didn't owe him a cent—so what harm could the bookmaker do, even if he did go to the headmaster?

"By gad!" muttered Grayson, clutching at the table and bending over it. "You nearly bluffed me just then!"

"Did I?" said Mr. Lloyd. "It's the first time I knew it! There's no bluff about my words, young gent—"

"Yes, there is!" interrupted Grayson harshly. "It's all bluff! Do you think I care if you go to the Head? You can't do me any harm!"

"That's a matter for your headmaster to decide!" said the other. "Look at these I.O.U.'s sir! See them? There's your name—on every one! No other name—just blank, except for the figures. Oh, I'm not quite so green! I've got these I.O.U.'s into my possession, and I want the money for them!"

"But I gave them to Travers!" shouted Grayson fiercely.

"I don't care who you gave them to—I've got them now!" snapped Mr. Lloyd. "And if I take them to your headmaster, do you think he's going to ask a dozen questions? I shall tell him that these little slips of paper were given to me by you. Do you think he'll believe you when you deny it? Do you think it'll do any good to drag in the name of another boy? Don't you believe it, sir! I've had experience of this sort of thing before—and if I go to your headmaster it'll be marching orders for you!"

Harold Grayson gulped, and all the strength seemed to ooze from his limbs. He stood there, beside the table, limp and dazed. For the truth of Sam Lloyd's words had scared their way into his understanding.

For those words were true—absolutely true!

As Grayson knew well enough, his reputation at St. Frank's was none too good. More than once he had escaped expulsion only by the skin of his teeth. Even now Mr. Goole, his housemaster, suspected him—and kept a close watch over him. The headmaster himself had more than once received bad reports about him.

What, then, would be the result if Sam Lloyd went to the Head with those I.O.U.'s?

Would the Head believe that they had been given to Travers? It was hardly likely! If Grayson told the truth about them, he would be disbelieved. The whole thing was a trap—and Grayson knew it now.

This bookmaker would tell a whole string of lies to the Head, and Grayson's denials would seem thin and weak. There would be only one outcome. Expulsion for Grayson—and Travers, even if he was dragged into it, would probably get off scot-free. For young Travers was a cool beggar, and there was no direct evidence against him, anyhow!

"Well?" came Mr. Lloyd's cold voice.

Grayson started again, and he caught his breath in.

"Don't—don't go to the Head!" he panted. "The whole thing's mad! It's a trick—a plot to ruin me!"

"Don't be silly!" said Mr. Lloyd contemptuously. "I don't want to ruin you, young gent. All I want is my twenty-five pounds. I shan't go to the headmaster if you're reasonable. I'd rather not go—because it may mean that I shall have to wait a long time for my money. But I want some sort of definite answer now."

"But—but I can't pay you!" panted Grayson hoarsely. "I haven't got the money!"

"Can't you borrow it from some of your swell young friends?"

"No!" said Grayson fiercely. "I can't do that! I should be the talk of the whole House if I went round borrowing sums of that sort!"

"Well, I'm not a hard man," said Mr. Lloyd magnanimously. "I'll tell you what I'll do, Mr. Grayson. I'll give you till mid-day to-morrow. I'll be here again at half-past twelve to-morrow, and if you haven't got that money ready then—well, I shall have to go to your headmaster. That's all. But remember—I'm not the kind of man to go back on what I say. You've got until mid-day to-morrow—and not a minute later!"

Without another word Mr. Lloyd flung open the door and walked out. Grayson wanted to say something, but the words wouldn't come. He watched the door close, and he sagged over the table limply; his face was pale.

"To-morrow!" he muttered. "I can't get it by to-morrow! It's impossible! I can't get twenty-five quid by to-morrow!"

After a few moments he seemed to come to himself; his breath was hard and forced as he glanced at his haggard reflection in the mirror over the mantelpiece.

"And I don't owe him anything—I've never seen him before!" he panted. "This is Travers' doing! By gad! I'll make him suffer for this, the infernal young hound!"

Yet, even as Grayson was uttering the threat, he pulled himself up. Hadn't he given Travers permission to pass those I.O.U.'s on to the bookmaker? Besides, nothing could alter the fact that Grayson had written the I.O.U.'s, and they were

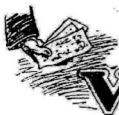
undoubtedly genuine. It would be idle to deny that truth.

So what did it really matter who held them?

The one important thing which filled the whole of Grayson's thoughts was that he had to get that money by mid-day to-morrow!

But how?

It was a problem which Harold Grayson shied at!



CHAPTER 11.

In the Net!

IVIAN TRAVERS placed two five-pound notes into Mr. Lloyd's willing hand.

"They're yours,

Sam—and you've earned them!" said Travers easily.

"Well, anyway, I've put a dose of fear into the young gent!" grinned Mr. Lloyd. "He was as pale as a ghost when I came out. He thinks I meant it, too—he thinks I shall be back in the morning, and that I shall go to the headmaster if that money isn't ready."

"That's the stuff!" said Travers, nodding.

"A cunning bit of work, isn't it?" went on the bookmaker, looking at Travers admiringly. "I suppose you want that twenty-five quid pretty badly, eh? And you thought of this scheme to frighten it out of the young feller?"

"Come, come, Sam!" said Travers reproachfully. "You can do better than that, can't you? I don't seem short of money when I hand over two fivers to you, do I?"

"Well, what's the game, then?"

"If it's all the same to you, dear old fellow, I'd rather keep it to myself," replied Travers coolly. "I'm not in any need of money—and if I want you again I may be able to put another tenner in your pocket. How long will you be staying in Bannington, anyhow?"

"Till the end of the week," replied Mr. Lloyd promptly. "You know my telephone number, Mr. Travers, sir. Any time you like, you know—I'll be ready!"

"That's fine!" said Travers. "All right, Sam—I'll be getting along."

Travers nodded and strode off towards the school gates, while Mr. Lloyd drove away in his car, looking very puzzled. Not that it really mattered to him what Travers' game was. He had earned his money, and, as far as he was concerned, the matter was over.

But with Travers it was only just beginning.

Everything was working well. Travers had deliberately sought Grayson's company, careless of what the other fellows thought of him. He had played cards with Grayson—he had plunged heavily, and everything had gone according to programme. Grayson had lost, and those I.O.U.'s had been the result.

In other words, Grayson, though he did not suspect it, was slowly but surely falling into the trap set by Travers!

The Removite had only got half-way across the Triangle before he saw a burly figure hurrying towards him. Travers smiled inwardly. For that burly figure belonged to Grayson of the Fifth.

"Just a minute, Travers!" said Grayson, in a strained voice.

"Anything wrong, dear old fellow?" asked Travers, in mild surprise.

"Come to my study!" muttered Grayson.

"Why?" said Travers. "There's nobody within earshot. Can't we talk here? It's nothing excessively private, is it?"

"You—you young cub!" snarled Grayson, seizing Travers savagely by the arm. "What do you mean by it?"

"Mean by what?"

"I've just had a visit from that—that confounded bookmaker of yours!" snapped Grayson. "What do you mean by giving him those I.O.U.'s? They were yours! They represented a little debt between you and me. What do you mean by giving them to this—this stranger?"

"He isn't a stranger," said Travers coolly. "I've known him for nearly a couple of years."

"He's a stranger to me!" shouted Grayson, nearly beside himself with rage. "I'll half kill you for this, Travers! I'll make your life a misery!"

"Well, well!" said Travers, standing back and looking at Grayson curiously. "What strange ideas we do get into our heads! You'd better pull yourself together, dear old fellow. You're talking wildly. Surely you remember giving me permission to hand over those I.O.U.'s to our mutual friend?"

"But I didn't think you'd do it!" panted Grayson harshly.

"Well, of course, that's your trouble," said Travers, shrugging his shoulders. "Why should I care? You didn't care when I told you that the bookie had threatened to go to the Head and expose me. Why should I care when you're in the same boat? Lloyd accepted those little slips of paper, and now the trouble is yours. I've done with it."

There was something so utterly cool in Travers' manner that Grayson found it difficult to frame any words. His trouble was accentuated by the fact that he knew Travers was speaking the truth.

"That rogue is going to show my I.O.U.'s to the Head—by mid-day to-morrow—unless I have the money for him!" said Grayson tensely. "Look here, Travers, you've got to help me! You got me into this mess, and—"

"Frightfully sorry, dear old fellow, but I'm in a hurry," said Travers, pushing past. "I'm very much afraid that Lloyd is an impatient sort of fellow. Only until mid-day to-morrow, eh? That's awkward for you! But surely you'll be able to get the money?"

He walked on, leaving Grayson helpless. For not only had two of three prefects



"These I.O.U.'s represent twenty-five pounds!" said the bookmaker, waving the slips of paper in his hand. "That money is owing by you, and I want the cash!" Furiously, Grayson pointed to the door. "Get out of here!" he exclaimed angrily.

appeared on the other side of the Triangle, but Mr. Beverley Stokes, of the West House, was within sight, too. Grayson could do nothing.

And Travers, feeling very happy, went indoors.

CHAPTER 12.

Handy Does His Best!



EDWARD OSWALD
HANDFORTH
grinned with appreci-

ation. "Yes, it's a great idea!" he said genially. "In fact, a marvellous idea!"

"Oh, rather!" said Church, nodding. "One of yours, I suppose?"

"Yes!"

"Then it's bound to be marvellous!" said Church, with a grin.

The famous chums were in Study D, and dinner was over. In fact, it wouldn't be long before the bell clanged out for afternoon lessons.

"There's nothing like modesty, of course," said McClure. "But if you tell us what this

idea is, Handy, we might be able to give you some frank criticism."

Handforth frowned.

"I don't want any criticism!" he retorted. "It's a great idea and I'm going to execute it!"

"All your ideas ought to be executed!" said McClure firmly.

"It's about Travers," went on Handforth, without paying any attention. "Travers isn't a bad chap in his way—he's a good footballer, and he seems to have a frank sort of way with him. But you can't get away from the fact that he tells whoppers, and that he smokes cigarettes and invites cads like Grayson and Kenmore to his study."

"It's not for us to judge him," said Church. "If he's ass enough to indulge in these idiotic amusements, why should we interfere?"

"I'm not going to interfere!" replied Handforth, with a frown. "It's not my business—and I never poke my nose into other people's business!"

"Ahem!" coughed McClure carelessly.

"I'm thinking about this party to-night," continued Handforth, pacing up and down the study. "Winnie's party, you know—at the Moor View School. She's invited lots of us, and that boulder Travers is going, too. At least, he thinks he is!"

Church and McClure looked at their leader in sudden alarm.

"Look here, Handy, you're not going to butt in, are you?" asked Church. "Hang it, it's Winnie's party, and she's at liberty to invite whoever she likes, isn't she? It'll be frightfully bad form if you barge in, and—"

"I'm not going to barge in!" interrupted Handforth coldly. "This idea of mine is a corker. It's a wonder! It's a winner!"

"So you said before," remarked Church, rather wearily. "But what is the idea?"

"I'm going to find Travers—now!" replied Handforth, moving towards the door. "And I'm going to give him an ultimatum. He can either excuse himself from the party—or he can fight me! It's got to be one or the other!"

"Well, he's not likely to excuse himself from the party," said McClure. "He's rather keen on going, I believe."

"Then he'll have to fight me!" declared Edward Oswald.

"But what good will that do?" asked Church. "And where's this great idea of yours?"

"Why, you ass, that is it!" said Handforth indignantly.

"Oh, sorry!" said Church hastily. "I didn't recognise it as an idea! Well, as Travers is bound to refuse to make any excuse, it'll mean that you're going to fight him."

"Of course it will!" said Handforth, rolling up his sleeves in preparation.

"But what good will that do?" asked Church. "You're not going to knock him unconscious, are you?"

"No; but I'm going to make a mess of him!" replied Handforth dreamily. "I'm going to black his eyes, and make his nose about twice the normal size. He won't feel inclined to go to Winnie's party when he's marked like that!"

"Oh, so that's the wheeze?" grinned McClure. "Well, on the whole, it's not so bad. But there's a snag, Handy."

"A snag?" said Handforth. "Where?"

"Well, have you forgotten that Travers is rather good at ju-jitsu?"

"Oh, that!" said Handforth, with a careless wave of his hand. "Who cares? I shan't give him a chance to get a grip on me. Besides, I've been reading about ju-jitsu this week, and if Travers starts any of his funny business with me, he'll get a surprise!" he added triumphantly. "Come on! Let's get it over!"

Handforth strode out of the study, and marched towards the lobby. As luck would have it, Vivian Travers was just coming indoors at the moment, and he paused good-humouredly as Handforth bellowed out his name.

"Well, well!" said Travers. "What is it now, dear old fellow? If there is anything I can do, just say the word—"

"I don't want any rot with you, Travers!" said Handforth grimly. "You're a good footballer, and in lots of ways you're a thoroughly decent chap."

"Thanks awfully for those kind words!"

"But in other ways, you're a silly ass!" roared Handforth.

"At times we are all silly asses," murmured Travers sadly. "It is just one of Nature's tricks to remind us of our own shortcomings."

"And I don't think you're a fit and proper person to go to Winnie Pitt's party this evening!" went on Handforth aggressively.

"What's more, I'm not going to allow it! You've got to make an excuse, Travers! You've got to send a message by Reggie to say that you can't go!"

"And the alternative?" asked Travers, with mild interest.

"You'll fight me—with bare fists!" said Handforth calmly. "Mind you, Travers, I'm not wild with you. I'm not trying to lick you, either. It's just a matter of principle."

"Oh, I see!" nodded Travers. "Well, get on with it!"

"Eh? Get on with what?"

"The fight!" said Travers. "Aren't we going to fight?"

A chuckle went round, for by this time quite a number of juniors had gathered in the lobby, to listen to this interesting conversation.

"Does that mean that you refuse to make an excuse?" asked Handforth darkly.

"Of course," replied Travers; "I've been invited to that party—and I'm going."

"Then put up your hands!" roared Handforth, peeling off his jacket. "Put 'em up, you rotter!"

Vivian Travers put them up—like lightning. The next second, Handforth seemed to sail through the air, right over Travers' shoulder, and he thudded to the floor with a dull, jarring crash!



CHAPTER 13.

The Ways of Chance!

RIGHTFULLY sorry!" said Travers calmly. "Hope I didn't hurt you, dear old fellow?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth sat up, looking dazed.

"Who—who did that?" he gasped.

"Travers did, of course!" grinned Church. "We warned you, Handy—so you can't pretend that you didn't know. Travers is hot stuff at ju-jitsu."

"But—but I've been reading it all up!" ejaculated Handforth, in a startled voice. "And I've learned how to overcome all the different ju-jitsu grips!"

"You need a few more lessons, old man!" said McClure, shaking his head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth leapt to his feet, and his face was flushed.

"Look here, Travers, you rotter!" he panted. "No more of this idiotic ju-jitsu!"

"I'm going to fight you—and I'm going to turn your face into a pulp!"

"I hate to deny you this pleasure, but I need my face for other purposes, dear old fellow," said Travers calmly. "It has always been one of my lifelong principles to avoid fighting. I'm a friendly chap, and I do hate having my face battered. It gives me such a shock when I look into the mirror!"

"I expect it always gives you a shock!" retorted Handforth fiercely.

"Always!" agreed Travers, nodding. "But by the exercise of stoical fortitude, I am growing accustomed to it."

He walked out of the lobby, and everybody chuckled. It really was impossible to fight Vivian Travers in the ordinary way. He never allowed a chap to get angry with him. He was always so cool—so collected. There was scarcely a fellow in the junior school with such a charming manner.

It was just as well, perhaps, that somebody yelled "cave" at that moment; the crowd vanished from the lobby, Church and McClure dragging Handforth out into the Triangle. A master had appeared, and so the crisis passed.

Travers, in the Remove passage, smiled complacently to himself. He was just going to turn into Study A when he caught sight of a figure further down the corridor. He waved genially.

"Just a minute, Potts!" he said. "I want a word with you."

"Yes, sir!" said the boot-boy.

He came up, and they both went into the study. Gulliver and Bell were not there, and Travers closed the door.

"Why this sombre display?" he asked, indicating Jimmy Potts' overcoat and scarf. "Why are you hiding the dazzling buttons and the cheery blue?"

"I'm going into Bannington," replied Potts. "As a matter of fact, I was just coming along to you, Travers, to ask if you wanted anything in the town."

"Very kind of you, dear old fellow—very thoughtful!" said Travers. "But I don't think there's anything I want this afternoon. I suppose it's your half-day off?"

"Well, not exactly," replied the boot-boy baronet. "My mother sent a message, and I've got special leave. You see, she's going to Bannington this afternoon, and she wanted me to go with her. We're going on the 'bus, from Bellton."

And Jimmy grinned, as though at some hidden joke.

"Is there something funny about the 'bus'?" asked Travers politely.

"No, of course not," replied Jimmy, with a chuckle. "I wasn't thinking about the 'bus at all, but, you see, my mother has got the wind up a bit. She has to go to the bank in Bannington, and she's going to bring about thirty-five pounds back with her—in currency notes. So she wants me to go with her as a sort of bodyguard."

Vivian Travers looked at the boot-boy with a queer light in his eyes.

"Thirty-five pounds—in cash!" he said softly. "That's very interesting!"

"The under-mistress goes as a rule," said Jimmy. "But I understand that she is ill this week, and so the housekeeper—my mother—is going instead. And she doesn't quite like the job."

"What is the reason for all this wealth?" asked Travers.

"Oh, it's for the girls," explained Jimmy. "Their week-end pocket-money, you know. Miss Bond—the headmistress of the Moor View School—always gets out the cash like this."

"And, no doubt, she keeps it in her desk until the appointed hour for the share-out?" suggested Travers thoughtfully.

"As a matter of fact, Miss Bond is out to-day—some big conference somewhere," said Jimmy. "I believe that's why mother is a little bit nervous. She's been told to get the money, and then put it straight into Miss Bond's desk when she gets back."

Travers made no comment. He was looking into the fire, and there was a keen expression in his eyes now.

To tell the truth, Travers was struck by the strange nature of this situation. The ways of chance were queer! Here, providentially, had come a solution to the one problem that Travers had been faced with. The way in which the thing fitted in was almost uncanny!

CHAPTER 14.

A Word of Advice!



URING those few moments that Vivian Travers stared into the fire, an idea had come into his head.

By the time he looked up, it was all cut and dried; but there was one very important point to be dealt with.

"Of course, your mother is unnecessarily nervous," he said, looking at Jimmy. "There aren't any hold-up men in this district. Besides, who is to know that she's carrying thirty-five quid in her bag?"

"That's just what I was thinking," chuckled Jimmy Potts. "But mother has always been like that about money. Even when—when we were rich, she never liked to carry any cash about with her. One of her fads, I suppose."

Travers nodded.

"Yet, at the same time, it's just as well to be careful with money," he said. "And currency notes are particularly easy to get rid of, if they're stolen. If I were you, Jimmy, I should advise your mother to jot down the numbers of those notes."

"Take the numbers of them?" said Jimmy, staring.

"Yes."

"But what on earth for?" asked the boot-boy. "They're not fivers! Nobody takes down the numbers of currency notes!"

"That's where they're unwise," said Travers. "Anyhow, I want you to promise me that you'll see that all the numbers of those thirty-five notes are jotted down. You can do it yourself, dear old fellow. And afterwards, be sure that your mother gives the paper, with the numbers on it, to Miss Bond."

Jimmy looked at his companion rather directly.

"What's this, Travers?" he asked. "Another of your schemes?"

"For the love of Samson, don't make a mystery out of nothing," said Travers carelessly. "Merely a matter of precaution, dear old fellow. I am thinking about your mother. It will probably make her much easier in mind if she knows that the numbers are taken, and that the money is safeguarded."

"Oh, all right," said Jimmy. "Perhaps it's a good idea, Travers. But I never know with you. You're such a deep sort of fellow."

"Perhaps I am," agreed Travers.

"And that reminds me," went on Jimmy.

"What have you done to Grayson?"

"Done to him?"

"Yes," said Jimmy. "Grayson hasn't been persecuting me during these last few days. You told me that you were going to help, Travers, and I noticed that you've been rather thick with Grayson. You're not really friendly with him, are you?"

Vivian Travers chuckled.

"If you had seen us out in the Triangle this morning, you wouldn't ask that," he replied. "Grayson wanted to fight me on the spot. No, Jimmy, we're not friendly. I might even go as far as to say that we are deadly enemies; we are at daggers drawn."

"But you were friendly until to-day," said Jimmy. "And I believe you did it on purpose—so that you could help me."

"I shouldn't be at all surprised," replied Travers lightly. "Jimmy, dear old fellow, don't ask any questions. Just keep calm. In fact, all you've got to do is sit tight. Before very long something will happen."

"What do you mean—something will happen?"

"Something big," said Travers dreamily. "Of course, there may be a hitch or two—but in the long run I shall win. So take my advice, Jimmy, and sit tight."

Travers refused to say any more, and soon afterwards Jimmy was compelled to go. He went in a thoughtful mood. For, by now, he was convinced that his former school-fellow of Beceleston was engaged in some cunning scheme of his own. Grayson was involved in it—yes, and Jimmy, too.

After Potts had gone, Travers flung himself into the easy chair, and stretched his legs.

"Amazing!" he murmured. "Thirty-five pounds—in cash! And it will be in Miss Bond's desk this evening. Could anything be sweeter?"

Travers seemed to attach great importance to that comparatively small sum of money. He lounged back in his chair, and closed his eyes.

"Yes, thirty-five quid!" he murmured. "It's bound to be there this evening, and —"

"Talking to yourself?"

Travers opened his eyes with a start. He hadn't heard the door open, but now, looking in that direction, he saw that Hubbard, of Study B, was standing on the threshold. And Hubbard had an expression of astonishment on his face.

"Merely ruminating, dear old fellow," explained Travers, without a trace of annoyance, although his eyes were cold. "But—pardon me—is it usual to come into a fellow's room like a ghost?"

"Sorry!" said Hubbard, colouring. "As a matter of fact, I was looking for Teddy Long."

"And do you usually look for him in this way?"

"I believe the cadging rotter is going round the studios, bagging tuck from the cupboards," said Hubbard. "I thought I'd creep on him unawares, and catch him red-handed. You haven't seen him about, I suppose?"

"My interest in Teddy Long," said Travers, "is nil. And my interest in you, Hubbard, is precisely the same. Kindly remove your obnoxious person."

"Fathead!" said Hubbard, glaring. He went out, wondering vaguely what Vivian Travers could have been talking about. But he didn't give the matter much thought. Travers was a queer sort of fellow at the best—and Hubbard's mind was centred upon the missing Teddy Long.

CHAPTER 15.

Sowing the Seed!



TRAVERS!

Mr. Crowell, the master of the Remove, spoke the name sharply, and everybody in the Remove Form-room looked up from work. Afternoon lessons were more than half-way through, and the Form was beginning to feel cheery in consequence.

"Sir!" said Travers, in a weary voice. "Is anything the matter with you, Travers?" asked Mr. Crowell keenly.

"I don't think so sir—nothing much," replied Travers, passing a hand over his eyes. "I feel a bit sick, perhaps, and I've got a frightful headache. That's all, sir."

Mr. Crowell frowned. "For the last half-hour, Travers, you have been holding your head," said the Form-master. "I have noticed, too, that you have frequently passed a hand in front of your eyes."

"Yes, sir," said Travers. "Everything goes bluffed now and again. I can't quite make out what's the matter. I suppose I'm not particularly well."

"I think you had better go outside for half an hour, Travers," said Mr. Crowell. "A little fresh air might put you to rights. As soon as you feel better, come back again."

"Thank you, sir," said Travers, rising to his feet. "I'm awfully grateful sir."

He passed a hand over his eyes, and walked rather unsteadily to the door. He was still looking slightly ill after he had fetched his overcoat from the Ancient House, and after he had passed out beyond the school gateway into the lane.

But as he strolled up the road in the direction of the Moor View School, a change came over him. A faint smile overspread his features, and the droop came out of his shoulders.

"Easy!" he murmured contentedly. "And I didn't even have to ask!"

For about twenty minutes Travers strolled leisurely up and down, just round the bend, so that the school gates were out of view. Very shortly afterwards, a figure came swinging down the lane, and Travers smiled to himself once more.

"I thought I should just about hit it," he murmured complacently.

Jimmy Potts came up, and he gave Travers a curious look.

"Have you been waiting for me?" he asked, in a cautious voice.

"Well, yes, to be perfectly candid," replied Travers. "Don't worry, Jimmy, we're quite alone here—nobody can overhear us. For once you can be Sir James, and—"

"Oh, do dry up!" urged Jimmy Potts. "You're such a reckless chap, Travers! I thought you were doing lessons at this hour of the afternoon."

"I ought to be, strictly speaking," nodded Travers. "But I faked a headache, and Mr. Crowell let me out. I wanted to meet you—to hear how everything went."

"But why the dickens should you be interested?" asked the boot-boy baronet, in astonishment.

"Well, I am, that's all," said Travers. "Did you get that money all right?"

"You mean, did my mother get it?" said Potts. "Of course she did. By this time it's in Miss Bond's desk, and I expect it'll stop there until to-morrow."

"You don't think she'll put the money in the safe?"

"As far as I know, they haven't got a safe," replied Jimmy. "My mother didn't say anything about it, anyhow."

"And you took all the numbers?"

"Yes, and my mother has promised to give the paper to Miss Bond later on," replied Jimmy. "But what on earth does it mean, Travers? Why are you so interested? Why did you want those numbers taken?"

"Patience, little one—patience!" said Travers. "Whatever happens, Jimmy, I want

you to keep quiet. I want you to remain as mum as an oyster."

"What do you mean—whatever happens?"

"At the moment, I can't be more explicit," said Travers coolly. "But later on, you might understand. Anyhow, don't be surprised at anything, dear old fellow. And promise me that you will hold your tongue."

"Well, of course I'll promise," said Jimmy Potts. "But I can't for the life of me see why you're making such a mystery Travers. I can't fathom your game at all."

"All the better," said Travers. "And now I think I'd better be getting back, otherwise Mr. Crowell will be making a few inquiries. Surprising! enough, my headache has completely gone, and my vision is no longer blurred. Everything has become crystal-clear."

"It may be crystal-clear to you—but it's just about as clear as mud to me," said Jimmy. "I wish you'd tell me what you're up to, Travers. I don't quite like it, you know. I feel that you're doing something for my sake, and I don't want you to do it."

Vivian Travers merely laughed, and shrugged his shoulder. He did not think it necessary to explain that he was grateful to Jimmy Potts. He did not forget how Jimmy had saved his life, a few days earlier—when Travers had been doing a daring stunt on his motor bicycle. In his own peculiar way, Travers was fond of Jimmy Potts, and he had made up his mind to help this novel boot-boy.

So they parted, without Travers giving any word of explanation, and about an hour later, Grayson of the Fifth ran into Travers in the East House lobby. Lessons were over now, and Grayson was looking haggard and worn.

"I was coming out to find you, Travers!" said Grayson, in a low voice. "Look here, you've got to help me! You've got to do something! I've tried one or two fellows, but they won't lend me a penny! And if I don't have that money by to-morrow—"

"Need we discuss these things in such a public place?" interrupted Travers. "Come outside, dear old fellow. Let us stroll up and down the Triangle, and have a quiet chat. You won't improve the position by getting excited."

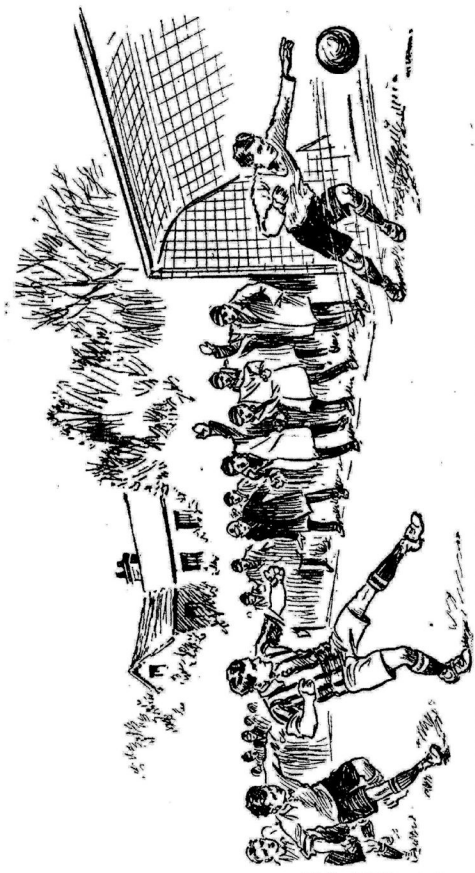
They went out, and Grayson was in a fever of impatience.

"You young cub!" he snapped, his voice harsh with anxiety and hatred. "You got me into this mess! It was you who gave those I.O.U.'s to that bookmaker! If it hadn't been for you, I shouldn't—"

"Must we go all over that again?" interrupted Travers. "You told me I could use those I.O.U.'s as I pleased, Grayson, and I did so—so what are you grumbling at? I'd help you if I could—but I can't."

"Haven't you got any money?"

"Nothing to speak of," replied Travers regretfully. "It's a rummy thing, Grayson, but whenever I'm broke, I always hear about lots of money. Exasperating, isn't it?"



Boomp! That shot of Travers' was a wonderful one. The leather flew dismally across the goal mouth, and although the goalkeeper made a great effort, he was a shade too late. The ball whizzed into the corner of the net and round the touchline the juniors cheered wildly. Travers had scored the winning goal for St. Frank's!

"Who's got lots of money?" asked Grayson, clutching at the straw.

"Oh, nobody that you can touch, I'm afraid," replied Travers. "Miss Bond, at the Moor View School, in fact, I was having a few words with Jimmy Potts this afternoon. It seems that he and his mother went over to Bannington this afternoon, and drew thirty-five quid out of the bank."

"Thirty-five quid!" said Grayson huskily.

"Yes. Potts' mother is housekeeper at the Moor View School," said Travers casually. "She got quite windy about having all that money in her possession. Jimmy says that she was quite relieved when she put it into Miss Bond's desk."

"In Miss Bond's desk!" repeated Grayson, a strange note creeping into his voice. "And—and Miss Bond's study is on the ground floor! Thirty-five pounds!"

"Yes—in currency notes," said Travers. "Exasperating, isn't it? Well, I'll have to be getting along, Grayson. I'd like to help you, but I'm afraid it's impossible. I simply haven't got the money, and there's an end of it. I'm afraid you'll have to deal with this trouble yourself."

And Vivian Travers walked off—fully aware of the gleam that had just entered Harold Grayson's eye!

Travers had thought it all out. The bully of the Fifth was now in a state of indecision—worried, harassed, uncertain. It might even be necessary to provide a prod in order to force Grayson to take the fatal step; Travers was ready with that necessary prod. For soon after tea he rang up Mr. Sam Lloyd, and had a brief talk with that gentleman.

"That'll be all right, Mr. Travers, sir," said the bookmaker. "At seven o'clock, eh?"

"Yes—precisely at seven o'clock," said Travers. "You won't forget, Lloyd, will you? You won't forget, Sam, dear old fellow?"

"I won't forget, sir!" said Lloyd.

Travers rang off, and it was characteristic of him to put the entire matter out of his mind for the time being.

He went upstairs, and changed. He made himself so smart and spruce that even Archie Glenthorpe was almost eclipsed.

CHAPTER 16.

Ready for the Party!

INDOORS, Travers considered the position.

"Well, it's up to Grayson now," he told himself. "I've sown the seed, and it won't be long before we know if there's any fruit. I rather think there will be. If Grayson is made of the stuff I suspect, he'll have a shot at that Moor View money. But I didn't egg him on; I didn't put any suggestion in his mind. If he's honest, he'll forget it. If he's crooked, he'll act!"

Travers thus satisfied himself that he had not done anything that would afterwards affect his conscience. In a way, he was right in this conclusion. He had merely mentioned that Moor View School money to Grayson in a conversational way, and if Grayson were dishonest enough to take advantage of the information, the guilt would be entirely his.

Travers was particularly pleased with the way things were going—for he himself would be at the Moor View School that evening. It would be easy enough for him to keep his eyes open—and his ears, too. There wasn't the slightest chance that Grayson would do anything desperate until the evening was fairly advanced.



Boomp! That shot of Travers' was a wonderful one. The least effort, he was a shade too late. The ball whizzed into the corner the wire.

Quite a number of fellows were going to Winnie Pitt's party.

Naturally, Nipper and Tregellis-West and Watson were among the most prominent guests—and so were Handforth & Co. Reggie Pitt was taking several members of his own House—Jack Grey, Singleton and Tom Burton and a few others. Fullwood and Russell were going—and so were Harry Gresham and Alan Castleton.

When Travers came down, he found most of the juniors collecting in the Ancient House lobby, and even Handforth was amazingly well groomed. His linen was spotless, and although he looked uncomfort-

able, he also looked happy. At least, he looked happy until he saw Travers.

"Well, well," said the leader of Study A. "How smart we are this evening!"

"Oh! So you're coming, then?" said Handforth, frowning. "I thought you'd think better of it, Travers. I suppose you know that you're not wanted?"

"I was expressly invited by Miss Pitt, so I rather think I am wanted," replied Travers. "All the same, if you fellows decide against me, I'm quite willing to abide by the vote."

"Oh, don't let's have any unpleasantness," said Nipper. "You didn't mean that,

"Don't be an ass!" said Fullwood promptly. "I don't believe your sister could get ratty, Reggie!"

Everybody chuckled—except Ralph Leslie Fullwood, and he flushed. For everybody knew that Winnie was his own special chum.



CHAPTER 17.

The Thief!

ANY happy returns, Winnie, old girl!"

"Absolutely, what-ho, and yoicks!"

"Hear, hear!"

"A toast for Winnie!"

"A toast—a toast!"

The party was now a merry one. It had been in progress for well over an hour now, and tea was practically at an end.

Winnie Pitt, looking very flushed and happy, had already been toasted several times by the enthusiastic guests. Tea was the beverage that was used for this purpose, but the guests were all of the opinion that it could not be bettered.

For this very special occasion the Moor View lecture hall was being used, and it was looking gay with decorations, bright with lights, and it rang with laughter and chatter.

There were well over a dozen of the girls there, including all the damsels who were on such friendly terms with the St. Frank's fellows—Irene Manners, Ethel Church, Violet Watson, Marjorie Temple, Doris Berkeley, and the others.

"Well, as soon as you fellows are ready, we'll clear away," said Irene smilingly. "We're going to have music and dancing. Yes, and some games, too!"

"Good old games!" said Vivian Travers cheerfully.

"You're not sneering, are you?" asked Doris.

"For the love of Samson, why should you think that?" asked Travers.

"Well, some fellows are rather shy of party games," replied Doris. "They think they're too big for it—they think it's beneath their dignity, you know."

Travers grinned.

"Don't include me among those spoilsports, please," he said. "There's nothing I like better than a good old-fashioned game. My favourite, by the way, is kiss-in-the-ring!"

"You'll do!" said Doris, with a chuckle.

Travers meant every word he said. He was not one of those superior fellows,



across the goal mouth, and although the goalkeeper made a great deal of the touchline the juniors cheered wildly. Travers had scored an's!

Handy, did you? You don't want to get up a vote against Travers?"

Put to the test, Handforth crumpled up. "Oh, well, no!" he admitted. "I've got nothing against the fellow, really. He's several kinds of an ass, and he was cheeky enough to floor me this morning. But it's not my way to be nasty. He's invited, so I expect we'd better let him come with us."

"You fellows ready!" sang out Reggie Pitt, appearing at the open doorway.

"Yes, rather!"

"Then come along!" said Reggie. "You know what my sister is, if we're late—she gets as ratty as the dickens!"

although, judging by his manner, he was very sophisticated. But he entered heart and soul into the game that followed.

Just at about this time—as the clock was striking seven—Harold Grayson, in the East House at St. Frank's, was informed by somebody that he was wanted on the telephone.

Grayson was looking more haggard than ever. He had been going through torture. No matter how he tried to thrust the thought of that money out of his mind, it returned.

Thirty-five pounds—in Miss Bond's desk! Again and again he told himself that he must forget it. It would be too risky—altogether too mad. He might be seen! Somebody might come in, and then— But Grayson had refused to picture the possible consequences.

He went to the telephone, vaguely hopeful. Earlier in the evening he had rung up some of his shady acquaintances in Bannington, and he had asked them to lend him money. They had all refused—they had all made excuses. Perhaps one of them had changed his mind.

But when Grayson answered the phone, the voice of Sam Lloyd came to him.

"What—what do you want?" asked Grayson harshly.

"Just a reminder, young gent—that's all," said Lloyd. "I don't want you to forget about to-morrow."

"Look here, I can't do it!" panted Grayson fiercely. "Do you hear? I can't let you have it by mid-day to-morrow! It's impossible! I'm glad you rang up, because I want to tell you—"

"Sorry, young gent, but I can't listen," said Lloyd. "I'm leaving the town to-morrow, and I must have that money before I go."

"Yes, but—"

"I shall be up at the school at about half-past twelve in the morning," went on Lloyd relentlessly. "If you have that money for me—all well and good. But if you don't have it, I shall take those slips of paper to your headmaster. That's final!"

"But you mustn't!" panted Grayson. "I shall be sacked!"

"Well, get the money!" said Lloyd. "I don't want you to get into trouble, young gent, but I'm not going to be fooled about. If I tell your headmaster, he'll write to your father, and I shall get the money from him. I don't care how I get it; I mean to have it! It'll be a lot simpler if you rake it up from somewhere, and have it ready for me in the morning. That's all. Good-night, young gent!"

While Grayson was attempting to formulate some words, the line became dead. He stag-

gered out of the telephone-box like a fellow in a dream.

And, exactly as Travers had anticipated, this "prod" had the desired effect. For after Grayson had gone out into the Triangle, his face was set, his eyes were gleaming with a burning light.

"I've got to do it!" he muttered. "It's the only possible way. Nobody will know, nobody will ever suspect me! And those beastly juniors are over at the Moor View School, too! If there's any fuss, they'll probably be suspected. By gad, it's a chance!"

Three minutes later, after having got his overcoat and cap, he turned to the main gateway and slunk out into the road.

Truth to tell, Harold Grayson was in a condition of mortal fear. It wasn't that he feared Sam Lloyd so much, but if Lloyd went to the headmaster there would be an inquiry. Many of Grayson's shady habits would come to light, and, in all probability, many witnesses would be called. Unquestionably, he would be sacked in disgrace.

And that disaster must be avoided at any cost!

As he neared the Moor View School his heart was beating rapidly. His eyes were still burning, but a great calmness had come over him. The suspense had passed. The period of uncertainty was over.

Grayson knew what he was going to do now, and so he was calmed. And in his desperation he did not realise the heinous nature of the offence he was about to commit!



CHAPTER 16.

The Watcher at the Window I

IVIAN TRAVERS glanced at his watch.

"Twelve minutes past seven!" he murmured. "Just about

the critical time. I shall have to make tracks!"

It was easy enough for him to excuse himself. He casually mentioned to one or two of the fellows that he wanted to go outside to the main lobby to get something from his overcoat pocket. Nobody took much notice, for the party was noisy and everybody was talking at once.

Travers slipped out almost unobserved, but he did not go to his overcoat in the lobby. Instead, he passed out through a side door, and found himself under the wintry stars. It was very dark out there, and a wind was blowing.

Travers glanced up and down, and he was satisfied to see that everything was quiet. Nobody seemed to be about. Lights were gleaming from many windows, but there was one wing which was dark.

Travers knew, from many inquiries that he had made, that this wing contained the

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headmistress' study. Moving like a shadow, Travers crept closer and closer.

Suddenly he stiffened. He became absolutely rigid. Out of a corner of his eye he had seen a dim figure moving some little distance away. Travers remained like a statue, watching. He felt his pulse quickening.

At the same time he was aware of a sense of exhilaration. How amazingly well his plans had worked out!

Here was Grayson, almost to the minute! Travers had expected him to come, and he was not disappointed. For that dim figure among the laurels, just a little distance away, belonged to Grayson of the Fifth.

Travers watched, remaining quite motionless. He watched the figure of the Fifth-Former as he came nearer and nearer to the window of Miss Bond's study. The window was dark, and Grayson was feeling wildly excited. This was better than he had hoped for!

There would be no waiting, no hanging about. If Travers were right, that money was in the desk. And Grayson would have it, and would be away, well within five minutes.

Everything was astoundingly in favour of the thief.

For when Grayson crept close up to the window he found that it was unlatched. Yet this was not surprising, for Miss Bond believed in fresh air, and she had never had any reason to suppose that there was any chance of intruders breaking in.

As a matter of fact, Miss Bond was taking a class of senior girls who were preparing for an examination, and she was due back in her study at almost any minute. Grayson did not know this, but he realised the necessity for swift action.

In a moment he had the window open, and in another moment he was inside. He paused and listened, but everything was quiet, except for the sighing of the wind in the trees outside. Grayson did not notice the slight movement from just outside the window. But Travers had moved up, and now he was peering in.

He saw Grayson pull an electric torch from his pocket and switch it on. A tiny gleam of light spread across the room, shattering the darkness. The beam wavered to and fro, and at last came to rest on the central desk.

Even in the reflected light from the torch, Travers could see that Grayson's face was pale and drawn. But now that the actual moment had come Grayson was not so nervous. He was beginning to realise that this task of his was an easy one.

If anybody approached, he would hear the footsteps—and it would be the work of a second for him to dive through the window, and dash away. In the darkness, he could easily escape, and although there might be a hue and cry, he would be safe. Who would suspect him—a senior scholar of St. Franks?

He tried the drawers of the desk, and although most of them opened easily, the

top drawer was locked. This fact, in itself, was significant.

Grayson tugged at it, and Travers, at the window, watched with satisfaction.

He saw Grayson give a desperate heave; with a sudden splintering, the fragile lock gave way, and the drawer came shooting out. With a gasp, Grayson stood rigid, listening. But the sound of that smashing lock, seemingly so noisy to him, had not penetrated beyond the closed door of the study.

Feverishly Grayson searched in the drawer, and Travers heard him give a little gasp of satisfaction. The notes were there—thirty-five of them, with a small elastic band round them!

Ten—fifteen—twenty—twenty-five!

Grayson counted them out with quivering fingers, and he did not trouble to ascertain how many were left. He only wanted the twenty-five. Rascal though he was, he could not bring himself to take any more than that exact figure. He only needed the twenty-five, so that he could avert the threatened disaster.

Stumbling against a chair, half tripping over the carpet, he came towards the window. He dived out, landed on the path, and blundered away. He had got the money—and he had taken no trouble to hide any of the traces. What did it matter? The loss was bound to be discovered sooner or later.

Once Grayson was well away, it would only take him five minutes to get back to the school. Then he would be safe—safe! No matter how many inquiries were made—even if the police were called in—he would be secure. For he was a senior of St. Franks', and this theft would be put down to a passing tramp, or some such vagabond.

And all the money was in notes—ordinary, soiled currency notes.

Little did Harold Grayson realise that the numbers of those notes had been taken, and were in Miss Bond's possession!



CHAPTER 19.

The Alarm!

"ALLO!" said Handforth, giving Travers a curious glance.

"H a l l o!" said Travers amiably.

"Fathead!" frowned Handforth. "Where the dickens have you been to? What have you been doing for the last ten minutes?"

"I went out to get something from my overcoat," replied Travers easily. "And when I got there, dear old fellow, I found that I'd forgotten it. How are the games going?"

"Come on!" sang out somebody. "Musical chairs! Take your places, all of you!"

There was something rather refreshing in this boy and girl party, with everybody enjoying the healthy, old-fashioned parlour

games. Many supercilious fellows would have turned up their noses at such pleasure—but Nipper & Co., and all the other juniors were far too sensible to act like that. They were enjoying themselves immensely.

After the musical chairs came an impromptu dance, a gramophone being used to supply the necessary fox-trot and waltz music.

Eight o'clock was just striking, and it was getting near the time for the guests to depart, when the door suddenly opened and Miss Bond came striding in. Her face was flushed, and her whole expression was one of anxiety and alarm. The girls were particularly surprised, for it was seldom, indeed, that they saw their headmistress so flustered.

"I am very sorry to interrupt like this, but I am afraid you boys will have to go back to your own school," said Miss Bond. "In ordinary circumstances, I should like you to enjoy yourselves, and I do not object to these parties, but to-night I am worried

—and I must have quietness. The school has been robbed!"

"Robbed!" went up an amazed echo. "Oh, Miss Bond, whatever do you mean?" cried Irene, running forward towards the headmistress.

"Are we to blame?" asked Winnie anxiously. "It's my party, and—"

"No, child, no!" said Miss Bond. "I am not blaming you in the least—although I dare say the robber took advantage of the noise that was going on in this part of the school. He realised that he would have an easy task."

"But what has been taken?" asked Winnie. "Oh, Miss Bond, please tell us! How did this happen?"

"Yes, rather!" said Handforth, pushing forward. "Perhaps we can do something, Miss Bond! By George, we'll investigate, and it won't take us long to get on the track of the thief!"

"I have already rung up the police, and an inspector from Bannington is coming over

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OUT ON FRIDAY!

PRICE FOURPENCE EACH!

at once," said Miss Bond. "So I hardly think, boys, that I shall need your assistance. The robbery is not very grave; my study was broken into this evening—at some period during the last hour—and twenty-five pounds, in notes, have been taken from my desk!"

"Good gad!" said Archie. "I mean, not a frightfully large amount, what?"

"It is very mysterious," said Miss Bond, frowning. "There were thirty-five pounds in one bundle in the top drawer of my desk. And yet only twenty-five pounds has been taken. The other ten notes are still there, and I cannot possibly understand why the robber rejected them."

"Well, if we can be of any help, Miss Bond, you've only got to say the word," said Nipper.

But the good lady declared that it would be far better if all the juniors got back to their own school before the police arrived. It would only complicate matters if they were dodging all over the place. The girls were ordered to their own quarters, and there were many hasty good-nights.

Outside, as the fellows were buttoning their overcoats, Handforth was suddenly struck by a rather startling idea.

"I say!" he said in a low voice, drawing Nipper aside. "What do you make of this?"

"I don't make anything of it," replied Nipper. "It's very rummy, though. The man who took those notes must have known they were there—"

"Man?" repeated Handforth. "How do you know it was a man?"

"Well, that's the natural assumption, isn't it?"

"I don't want to say anything to any of the others, but I'm not any too sure of Travers," said Handforth.

"Travers!" echoed Nipper, aghast. "You're not suggesting—"

"I'm blessed if I know what to think!" growled Handforth. "But Travers made some silly excuse to go out at about a quarter-past seven, and he was away for over a quarter of an hour. He said he went to fetch something out of his overcoat, but that was all spoof. Where was he during that quarter of an hour?"

"Talking about me?" asked Travers calmly.

"Eh?" gasped Handforth. "I—I— Yes, blow you, I was!" he added, seeing that any further concealment was impossible. "Where were you when you went out, Travers?"

"Well, I wasn't in Miss Bond's study, pinching money!" replied Travers coolly.

Handforth's loud voice had given him away again, and it was no longer possible to keep this thing secret. In less than a minute all the juniors were discussing the matter, and Travers was listening with amused toleration.

"Hang it, you're not suspecting me of being a thief, I hope?" he said. "Go ahead, if you want to—"

"Cheese it, Travers!" said Nipper uncomfortably. "We're not considering such a

ridiculous idea for a moment. All the same, you might tell us where you went to. We shouldn't ask ordinarily, but it might be necessary for you to have an alibi. You know what silly ideas the police get into their heads sometimes."

"But they won't be silly enough to accuse me!" said Travers lightly. "I happen to be one of the richest fellows in the Junior School—and I'm not boasting about it. I've got three or four fivers on me at the present moment, and I can get as much money as I like from my pater. So why on earth should I want to rob Miss Bond's desk?"

But some of the juniors were looking at him very suspiciously. He had evaded any answer to that question—he had not explained where he had gone to during his mysterious absence. There was something very mysterious about it all!



CHAPTER 20.

The Footprint!

HANDFORTH frowned as he found Church and McClure tugging at his arms.

"Léggo!" he said gruffly. "What's the idea, you asses?"

"Come on, Handy—don't hang about here!" said Church. "We can't do anything—"

"Can't we?" interrupted Handforth. "I'm going to make an investigation!"

"Chuck it, you fathead!" said McClure in alarm.

"Yes, by George—an investigation!" repeated Handforth, uttering the word as though he enjoyed the sound of it. "There's nothing like striking while the iron's hot. We can have a look at the scene of the crime before the police get here. All the best detectives do that!"

"But you're not a private detective!" howled Church.

"I'm an amateur detective—and I'm private!" said Handforth stubbornly. "My idea is for us to go round to the window of Miss Bond's study, and make a thorough investigation. We might be able to pick up a few clues."

"Do you expect to find them lying about—like pebbles?" asked McClure sarcastically.

"Hold on!" put in Nipper, as he heard the drift of these remarks. "It might be a good idea for us to just take one look, you fellows. But we mustn't stop. Miss Bond has asked us to go, and it wouldn't be good form for us to hang about. Still, we'll take one peep. I've got a good electric torch here."

"Yes, I—I forgot mine," said Handforth hastily.

Travers was comparatively near by, and he had heard everything. But he was in no way perturbed. He knew that he had been

standing under that window, and he knew that there would probably be some footprints. Certainly it was a matter that he had overlooked. So he really welcomed this brief investigation. For Handforth and the other juniors would trample on that bed, too, and would make many other footprints. It would be all to the good.

While most of the fellows made their way out into the roadway, Handforth and Nipper and Reggie Pitt and one or two others went round the side of the school buildings to the window of Miss Bond's study. There was a light gleaming there now, and they realised that it would be unwise for them to remain long.

They crept up cautiously, and Nipper flashed the light of his torch on the ground as he went. There were no impressions here, for the gravel path was hard, and there had been no rain recently.

But under the window, clearly defined, were some footprints. Most of them were Grayson's, but one or two had been caused by Vivian Travers. Travers himself now pressed forward, and he took care to stand on the bed.

"There you are!" said Handforth triumphantly. "Look at this! Footprints, by George! They weren't made by a tramp, either!"

"Just about my size, eh?" asked Travers amusedly.

Handforth turned and stared at him.

"Yes," he said. "Now that you come to mention it, Travers, they are! Look at this one, here!"

Nipper was examining it closely, and his expression was grave.

"It's a very funny thing, Travers—but this is just about your size," he said slowly.

"Look here, why can't you be frank? Do you know anything about this affair? Did you see anything suspicious, and come round here at the time of the robbery?"

"Well, well!" said Travers. "What ideas we do get!"

"You'd better put your foot into this impression, and we'll see if it fits!" said Handforth. "Come on, Travers! We'll soon know the truth."

Vivian Travers' very coolness was impressive. Without hesitation he moved forward and stood in that footprint. It fitted exactly—but he only laughed.

"Funny, isn't it?" he said. "But, then, I dare say I could step into one of your footprints, Handy, and it would fit just the same. Let's try, and see."

He pushed Handforth aside, and, sure enough, his foot fitted very neatly into the print that Handforth had left on the flower-bed.

"So you might be the robber!" said Travers, with a grin.

"Yes, Handy, it's no good doing this sort of thing," said Nipper, as Handforth was about to make an outburst. "Footprints are very deceptive things—except in cheap

detective stories. Unless plaster casts are taken, and every atom of it accurately measured, it is impossible to be certain. Besides, I don't like this affair at all. You're not actually accusing Travers, are you?"

"Of course I'm not," said Handforth gruffly. "I'm only suggesting that he knows something about it. I believe he was out here—I believe he saw the chap who did take the money. Only he won't say—he won't give the rotter away!"

Travers was beginning to feel easier. He didn't mind being suspected—he didn't care in the least. He had always gone his own road, and it didn't matter to him what anybody else thought. All the same, it was comforting to realise that there was no actual proof that he had been outside this window during the evening.

By now, in any case, there could be no possible evidence. For Travers took care to trample all over that bed, and the other fellows were not particularly gentle, either. By the time they left, there was such a confusion of footprints that the police would be able to make nothing of them.

Not that the police would make much of an investigation. The robbery was only a small one, and they would probably regard it as a mere trifle. There would certainly be no hue and cry—no widespread alarm. A few tramps might be stopped and interrogated in the district, but very little else would be done.

So when Vivian Travers went back to St. Frank's with those other Remove fellows, he was feeling contented. Everything had gone exactly as he had planned. And by this time, no doubt, Harold Grayson had taken that stolen money to Sam Lloyd, the bookmaker.

There was more work for Vivian Travers to-night!



CHAPTER 21.

Bluff!

"BURGLARY?" asked Buster Boots of the Fourth. "At the Moor View School?"

"Yes!" said Fullwood. "It happened this evening, while we were there—at Winnie Pitt's party."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Boots.

There was quite a lot of talk. Most of the guests had arrived back at St. Frank's, and it had not taken long for the news to get round. Groups of juniors were standing in the various lobbies, discussing the situation. It did not affect them directly, but they were naturally interested.

"Miss Bond came and told us all about it," said Patty Little indignantly. "It was a dirty trick, breaking up the party like that—because we were going to have some more



Handforth didn't want Travers to go to Winnie Pitt's party, but Travers wasn't going to be put off. "I've been invited—and I'm going," he said, smiling coolly. "Then put up your hands!" roared Handy fiercely, peeling off his jacket. "Put 'em up, you rotter!"

refreshments later on. There were lots of cakes and things left, and—"

"Oh, dry up, you greedy ass!" said Fullwood, with a grin. "Never mind about the grub. Miss Bond told us that she had had thirty-five quid in her desk, you chaps," he went on, turning to the others. "But the rummy thing is that only twenty-five quid was taken."

"I say!" panted Teddy Long, pushing forward. "Some of the chaps are saying that Travers took the money!"

"Dry up, you little idiot!" snapped Fullwood. "Just because Travers went out for a quarter of an hour, that's no reason why he should be suspected! It's disgraceful! If I hear you talking like that again, Long, I'll make you smart!"

"I'm only repeating what some of the other chaps are saying!" protested Teddy, backing away.

"I say, though, this is a bit rummy!" exclaimed Hubbard, with a startled expression on his face.

"What's rummy?"

"Why, only this evening I happened to go into Travers' study," said Hubbard. "I was looking for Long, as a matter of fact. I went in noiselessly, and there was Travers dozing in the chair with his eyes closed. And

he was muttering something about thirty-five quid, and I asked him if he was talking to himself."

There was a silence for a moment or two. "Is this true, Hubbard?" asked Fullwood, at last.

"Of course it's true!" said Hubbard. "You don't think I'd spin a yarn, do you? And isn't it rummy that Travers should be talking about thirty-five quid? It's a bit of a coincidence, isn't it, that that was the exact amount in Miss Bond's desk? And you say that Travers was missing for about a quarter of an hour, while you were there?"

"Jolly suspicious!" said Boots gravely. "Hang it, I don't like to say anything about the new fellow, but it's too much of a coincidence, isn't it?"

"The best thing you chaps can do is to forget it!" said Fullwood gruffly. "Personally, I don't believe Travers would do such a thing. He's not the kind—besides, he's got plenty of money of his own. There's no direct evidence—no proof. So the sooner these rumours are killed, the better."

Most of the other sensible fellows shared this opinion. At the same time, the rumour persisted—and Vivian Travers found himself vaguely suspected that evening.

But at the moment he knew nothing about

this—for he was outside, in the lane. He had deliberately lagged behind, and it was more by chance than anything else that he ran into Grayson just near the school gates. Grayson had come up on his bicycle, and he was fagged and hot after a hard ride.

"You're the very fellow I want to see, Travers!" said the Fifth Former, as he stood beside his machine. "I've just come from Bannington."

"Exercise?" asked Travers, noting the relieved expression on Grayson's face.

"No, you young ass!" said the Fifth Former. "I went over to see that confounded bookie of yours."

"He's not my bookie."

"Don't quibble!" snapped Grayson. "You nearly got me into a mess, confound you, and I'm lucky to get out of it. I wired to a friend of mine this afternoon, and he turned up trumps."

"Splendid!" said Travers.

"Yes, he sent me the money by telegram," explained Grayson glibly. "So I went straight over to Bannington, and saw that bookie and paid him. Everything's all right now. So the sooner we forget the whole infernal business, the better."

"Congrats, dear old fellow," said Travers smoothly. "That friend of yours was a handy sort of fellow."

"Yes, rather," agreed Grayson. "Well, thank goodness I've settled with Lloyd! He won't be here to-morrow, and I can forget the whole beastly business."

He walked on, and Travers shook his head in the darkness. In the circumstances, Grayson's bluff had been very ineffective. For Travers knew that he had been lying from start to finish. He had got that money from Miss Bond's desk, and then he had ridden straight over to Bannington, so that he could pay it over. Grayson fondly believed that he was safe.

He might have thought differently if he had followed Travers into the Ancient House, a few minutes later. For Travers went straight to the telephone, and he rang up the Wheatsheaf, in Bannington. In less than two minutes, he was speaking to Sam Lloyd.

"I understand that you've seen Grayson?" asked Travers. "He's given you twenty-five pounds in notes, hasn't he?"

"That's right, Mr. Travers, sir," said Lloyd. "Fair took me by surprise, too. I gave him the I.O.U.'s, and he burnt them up."

"You've still got those notes, haven't you?" asked Travers quickly. "You haven't changed any of them?"

"No, of course not," said Lloyd. "They're not mine. It's just a trick of yours, isn't it, to get the money into your own hands? What shall I do with it?"

"Bring it over to me here—now!" said Travers. "I'll meet you outside. It'll be after locking-up, but I'll get out somehow. And you must bring the actual notes, Lloyd

—the very ones that Grayson gave you. When you get here, I'll give you a fiver for your trouble."

"I'll be there within half an hour!" said the bookmaker promptly.

CHAPTER 22.

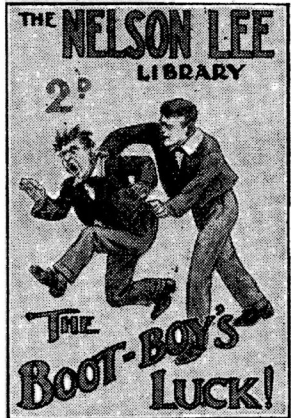
The Evidence!



AM LLOYD was as good as his word, too.

Barely twenty-nine minutes had elapsed before his car came humming up the

NEXT WEDNESDAY!



lane from the direction of Bellton village. As it drew near to the school a shadowy form came out from the hedge, and stood in the middle of the road. Travers had been watching and waiting.

"That you, Lloyd?" he asked, as he shielded his eyes from the glare of the headlamps.

The car came to a standstill.

"It's me, right enough, Mr. Travers, sir," replied the bookmaker, leaning out. "I'm not late, am I?"

"You've done well!" said Travers. "But for goodness' sake turn those headlamps off. I'm not supposed to be out here at all, and

I shall get into trouble if I am seen. Here, I'd better get into the car with you."

He jumped inside, and sat next to Lloyd. The latter was taking a bundle of notes from his pocket, and he handed them over with a grin.

"You're a deep 'un, young gent," he said admiringly. "You can't fool me, either. That other young fellow owed you the money, and you wanted it."

"Don't you believe it!" said Travers lightly. "Why, it's cost me fifteen quid, hasn't it? I gave you a tenner before—and here's another fiver."

Lloyd scratched his head.

"Well, hang me if I can understand what you're up to!" he said candidly.

"THE BOOT-BOY'S LUCK!"

At last Jimmy Potts, the Ancient House boot-boy, is able to reveal to St. Frank's that he is really Sir James Potts, Bart.!

But before this astonishing revelation occurs—astounding to the school, that is—many startling and dramatic things happen.

Of course, Vivian Travers is at the bottom of the whole affair. Travers has got Grayson of the Fifth just where he wants him, and now he sets about completing his amazing scheme.

Next week's fine story—the concluding yarn in this series—contains many surprises and dramatic incidents. Make sure you don't miss it.

"SONS OF SPEED!"

Look out for another stunning long instalment of this thrilling motor-racing serial.

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

"It isn't in the least necessary why you should understand," replied Travers. "I want this money—and, later on, I may want you to give some evidence."

"Evidence!" ejaculated the bookmaker, startled.

"Oh, you needn't worry," replied Travers. "It will be private evidence—just between you and another gentleman and myself, perhaps. I'll let you know later on. But if I do want you, I shall be willing to pay for your services."

"I'll be ready," said the bookmaker. "You're a liberal young gent, an' no mistake! Why, I'm making more money out of

you than I make out of the horses! And if you're satisfied, I am!"

"Then we're all serene," said Travers smoothly. "That's all, Lloyd. That's all, Sam, dear old fellow. You'd better be going—and I must get indoors. When I want you again, I'll ring you up. If you're not in the Wheatsheaf at the moment, I'll leave a message for you. Is that clear?"

"Clear enough for me," said Mr. Lloyd.

"There's just one other thing," said Travers, as he prepared to get out of the car. "You're sure that these notes are the actual ones that Grayson gave to you?"

"Of course they are," said the bookmaker. "But what does it matter? One note is just as good as another, isn't it?"

"Ordinarily—but not this time," said Travers. "But I don't want to make too much of a mystery of it, Sam. I'll just tell you one thing. Those notes were stolen."

"Here, I say!" ejaculated Mr. Lloyd in alarm. "What are you talking about, sir? I don't want to be dragged into—"

"You'll be dragged into nothing," interrupted Travers. "But I'm just telling you at once that those notes were stolen—by Grayson, and you might have to give evidence against him. Not to the police, of course—and you can take my word for it that everything will be strictly private. There's nothing for you to worry about, Sam. Those notes were paid to you in the ordinary way, and you kept the whole transaction to yourself, didn't you?"

"You bet I did!" said Mr. Lloyd.

"Then there's nothing to worry about," continued Travers, getting out of the car. "Just hold yourself in readiness to come when I want you, and the whole thing will be over and done with."

Mr. Lloyd went, feeling very uncertain—and not a little uneasy.

But Vivian Travers was not uneasy in the least. He got indoors without being spotted, and the first thing he did was to go to his study, and lock himself in.

He made sure that the blind was drawn, and then he went over to his own desk—rather an elaborate affair, which filled one corner of the little room. He unlocked the top and slid it back. Then he placed the twenty-five currency notes into one of the pigeon-holes, after which he locked the desk again, and grinned appreciatively.

"The evidence!" he murmured. "Yes, by Samson, I've got all the evidence! The numbers of these notes are in Miss Bond's possession, and the notes themselves are in mine. When it comes to a 'show-down,' Grayson will be caught like a rat in a trap!"

This thought seemed to give Travers a great deal of satisfaction. Indeed, he openly gloated. His scheming had borne fruit. His cunning plan—whatever it was—was working out just as he had desired. Then a softer look came into his face.

(Continued on page 44.)

Extracts from the St. Frank's Magazine.

THE LEAP-FROG CHAMPIONSHIP

Who Will Be The Winner?

By REGGIE PITT

THE Annual Leap-Frog Tournament, promoted by the fags of St. Frank's, will take place in a few days; and the school is swept by a wave of excitement.

Will Willy Handforth, last year's champion, retain his title? That is the burning question! Willy is a leap-frogger—or should it be leap-froggist?—of great renown, and his sensational victory last year was an epoch in the annals of St. Frank's sport.

Let us now survey the chances of the various candidates who will take part in the titanic struggle.

JUICY LEMON.—A leap frogger who has shown vast improvement of late. He used to be rather reckless, but now he always looks before he leaps. He is nimble on his pins, has a nice "take-off," and it is said that he could leap-frog over a lamp-post. But this is probably an exaggeration. However, Juicy Lemon is bound to show up well in the great tournament, for he is determined to give Willy, his study-mate and leader, a good run for his money.

WILLY HANDFORTH.—Here we have a genuine candidate, who will move Heaven and earth to retain his title. I have watched Willy leap-frogging in the Triangle, and have been impressed by his form. I have, in fact, made a back for him on several occasions, and he has cleared me without the slightest difficulty. Once, instead of touching my toes, I stood practically bolt upright, with my head lowered a little; and Willy came sailing over me in great style. Believe me, he will take a deal of beating in the tournament.

A. BUTTON.—Another leap-frogger who has "come on" by leaps and bounds! He takes a leisurely run, and clears his object with consummate ease. His one failing is that he takes matters a trifle too easy; and this is a dangerous policy against opponents of the calibre of Willy Handforth and Juicy Lemon. I fancy Button will fail.

BILLY HOOK.—This is the "dark horse" of the tournament, and he may create a surprise. Little is known about his leap-frogging abilities; but I saw him take a flying leap over his Form-master's desk the other day. He cleared it in great style, but made a bad landing, alighting on his cranium. If he does

this sort of thing in the tournament, he will probably "retire hurt" before it is half-way through; and for this reason I do not think he will win.

S. KERRIGAN.—A leap-frogger of great ability. He is very modest about his abilities, but he is reported to have won leap-frog championships before. Is very agile, and is said to be able to clear a height of eight feet; but this must be taken with a grain of salt. Will go "all out" to win the tournament, and has a fairly rosy chance.

There are several other competitors, but I haven't the space to deal with their claims and chances.

We shall see a great afternoon's sport; and my opinion is that the Leap-Frog Championship will again be won by Willy Handforth, whose most dangerous opponents will probably be Juicy Lemon and Kerrigan.

Fenton of the Sixth has kindly consented to act as judge, and any competitor who quarrels with Fenton's decisions will get it where the chicken got the chopper!

A magnificent cup will be awarded to the winner of the tournament. Some say it will be a china tea-cup, others declare it will be merely an egg-cup. Anyway, it isn't the prize that counts, it's the sport. Every competitor will be as keen as mustard; and may the best man win!

HEROES OF THE PAST

By EDGAR FENTON

(Captain of the Sixth)

IT is only to be expected that St. Frank's should have a long roll of heroes. I do not refer to the Old Boys who fell in the Great War, but to the boys who performed deeds of valour whilst still at the school.

Whilst a cricket match was in progress during the summer of 1866, a mad bull, which had escaped from a neighbouring field, came charging on to the playing-pitch, scattering the fieldsmen, batsmen and umpires, who fled helter-skelter to the pavilion. The infuriated bull, after sending the wickets flying, went charging towards the pavilion. Lots of fellows darted inside, but a great number could not gain admittance, and were at the mercy of the oncoming bull. It was at this juncture that Daunt of the Sixth made an heroic effort to capture the bull. He lassoed the frenzied animal with a stout rope, but not until he had been twice knocked down, and rather badly hurt. The bull was tethered to the railings of the cricket ground, where it remained until a number of farm hands arrived with bull-

sticks to take it away. Daunt's prompt and plucky action probably saved several lives.

In 1873, the Headmaster of St. Frank's—it was not Dr. Stafford in those days—had an alarming experience. He was returning from Bellton in the dusk of a winter evening, when he was attacked by footpads, robbed of his money and watch, and securely tied to a tree in an adjoining wood. Four members of the Remove Form—Pryor, Jackson, Welsh and Williams—came on the scene just as the footpads had completed their fell work. They promptly hurled themselves at the two burly men, and after a fierce struggle succeeded in overpowering them. The Head was released from his unhappy predicament, and his belongings were restored to him. The footpads appeared before the magistrates in due course, and received their just deserts. The four Removites had to give evidence, and they were warmly commended by the Bench for their plucky action.

The River Stowe has been the scene of many thrilling rescues. It has a very swift and treacherous current, and inexperienced boaters and bathers have frequently found themselves in difficulties. Perhaps the most

heroic rescue on record was that effected by Maxwell, who was captain of St. Frank's in 1895. Four foolhardy fags had been bathing at a dangerous spot, in defiance of the warning notice on the bank; and they were not sufficiently strong swimmers to combat the current. Maxwell saw their plight, and he plunged in again and again, bringing the fags one by one to safety. He was well-nigh exhausted on going in for the last time, and, strong swimmer though he was, he was unable to get to the bank with the last of the four fags. But he held the boy up in the water until help arrived, the rescued fags having obtained a coil of rope from the boat-house. Maxwell's gallant rescue work was brought to the notice of the Royal Life-Saving Society.

Many heroic deeds have been performed by the St. Frank's fellows of to-day. Nipper has a large number to his credit. So also have Edward Oswald Handforth and Reggie Pitt and Tom Burton, who is one of the strongest swimmers in the whole school. But they are very modest concerning their achievements, and do not wish me to describe them in this article. I will duly observe their wishes.

THE "ST. FRANK'S MAGAZINE" SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

— interviews —

MR. HENRY SELBY, the Master of the Third Form at ST. JIM'S.

I FELT very bucked with myself when, the other day, the editor of the "St. Frank's Mag." called me into the editorial sanctum—ahem!—and told me that he wanted me to interview somebody.

"I want you to go over to St. Jim's," said the editor, "and interview Mr. Henry Selby. He's one of the Form-masters there. Here's ten bob to cover your travelling expenses. Let me have your article by this evening without fail."

Now, I had heard all about this merchant Selby. He's a beast, and he's not a just beast, either. He's just a beast.

I didn't relish the prospect of fagging over to St. Jim's to interview a pig like Selby, and I determined to wriggle out of the job, if possible.

As I was crossing the Triangle I bumped into Teddy Long, the sneak of the Remove.

"Wherefore that worried brow?" he inquired.

Now, although I do not like Long—far from it, indeed!—I was not averse to him taking on this job if he cared to do so. Anything to get out of it, as far as I was concerned!

"I've got to go and interview old Selby, of St. Jim's, for the 'Mag.'" I said. "And I'm not at all keen on it. Would you like to take the job off my hands?"

"Yes—for a consideration," said Long, who always has an eye to business.

"Here's ten bob," I said. "It's intended for travelling expenses, but you can save the whole of it by going over to St. Jim's on your bike. And be sure you do the job properly."

Long nodded.

"Trust me!" he said.

And without more ado he dragged his antiquated

gridiron out of the cycle-shed, and set off for St. Jim's.

That was about two o'clock in the afternoon. I expected to see Long back by five, but at that hour there was no sign of him.

Another hour passed—and another. And still Long failed to put in an appearance.

"Wonder where the silly ass has got to?" I muttered for the tenth time.

It was not until locking-up time that Long returned. And the manner of his return was pathetic. He came limping in at the school gates, dragging his prehistoric bicycle after him. "Ow-ow-ow-ow!" he groaned dismally.

"Long!" I exclaimed, going forward to support him. "What's happened?"

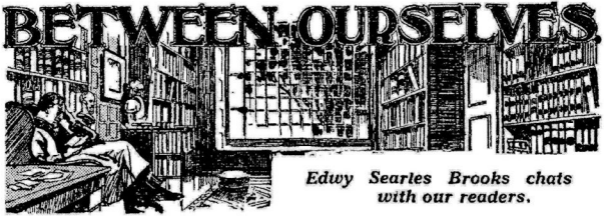
And then Long trotted out his tale of woe. He had been to St. Jim's, he said, and he found that Selby was out playing golf; so he had to tramp all the way to the links in order to interview him. And when he got there, Selby compelled him to act as caddie for the whole of the afternoon!

"I was absolutely fagged out by the time I'd finished," groaned Long. "And then I had to start back to St. Frank's, and I've walked nearly all the way!"

"You—you've walked?" I echoed.

"Yes. You see, I had no lamps on my bike, thinking I should get back in daylight, and so I couldn't ride, except on a few stretches of lonely road, for fear of the bobbies. Groo! I'm half dead!"

Long looked it, too! He was weary and worn and sad, and several other things besides. I thanked my lucky stars that I had been able to prevail upon him to take over my job!



**Edwy Searles Brooks chats
with our readers.**

NOTE.—If any reader writes to me, I shall be pleased to comment upon such remarks as are likely to interest the majority. All letters should be addressed: EDWY SEARLES BROOKS, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, LONDON, E.C.A. Every letter will have my personal attention. Letters of very special merit will be distinguished by a star (*) against the sender's name. My photo exchange offer is still open; my autographed photo for yours—but yours first, please.—E. S. B.

You'd like the Old Paper enlarged, and priced at 3d.—Leaguer Richard Ferrell (Gateshead-on-Tyne)—so that more League items can be included. And you'd like me to put it to the vote. Nothing doing, old son. That's purely a matter for the Editor. And, if you put the matter fully before him, I've no doubt he'll deal with it in his weekly "Pow-Wow." I don't like rebuffing anybody. So I hope all the rest of you will take the hint, and address your remarks on Editorial and League matters to the Editor and Chief Officer direct.

Nipper's special girl, chum—Elaine Walters (Warragul, Vic., Aus.)—is Mary Summers, and Marjorie Temple is Archie's. Of course girls can join the St. Frank's League—the more the merrier. There are no age or sex limitations. While primarily for the youngsters, it's a League for everybody, and I've an idea the C.O. won't be really and truly satisfied until every reader has become a member. All your other questions have been recently answered in these columns.

In the next paragraph, I'm going to reprint six readers' names. You six have all sent me your photographs, with a request for an autographed copy of mine, but you've omitted to give me any address to which I can forward the latter. So, if you haven't already done so, please hurry up and repair the omission.

William R. Allsopp (late of Dudley), "Blot" (Sheffield), Maurice Cavill (postmark, North Finchley, N.12), "Appreciative" (Brixton), Kitty Allen (Hackney, N.1), Leslie Garrett (Leeds).

I've asked for all these addresses before, and, as this isn't a matter of general interest, I hope I shan't have to do so again. In fact, as these pages are only supposed to contain items likely to interest a majority of you, I'm afraid any of you six just

named will have to go without my photograph unless I do now receive your addresses without further reminder.

The St. Frank's House Captains—Matthew H. Clanachan (Glasgow)—are as follows: ANCIENT HOUSE: Captain of the School, Head Boy, and Senior House Captain—Edgar Fenton; Captain of the Junior School, Remove Captain, and Junior House Captain—Richard Hamilton (Nipper). Captain of the Third—Willy Handforth. WEST HOUSE: Head Boy, and Senior House Captain—Arthur Morrow. Junior House Captain—Reginald Pitt. MODERN HOUSE: Head Boy, and Senior House Captain—Walter Reynolds. Fourth Form Captain, and Junior House Captain—John Busterfield Boots. EAST HOUSE: Head Boy, and Senior House Captain—Simon Kenmore. Junior House Captain—Timothy Armstrong.

With regard to Dr. Brett—"M.C." (Cobh)—he'll be cropping up now and again in the St. Frank's tales, as occasion requires. It doesn't do to just drag in a particular character merely for the sake of seeing him, or her, there. He—or she—must be properly linked up with the plot of the particular story which is being related, or where's the interest? That's why so many characters have, of necessity, to remain in the background—often for long periods. But they're there when they're wanted, all the same.

You deserve a star—Wilfred Thomas* (Hereford)—for this sentence in your letter: "I give my copies away to my acquaintances, and so help the good Old Paper on." Thank you, Wilfred. I hope many others of you loyalists will prove your loyalty in the same way. If you're pleased, tell others; if not, tell me!

Miss V. S. Day (Lowestoft), Roy Ashton* (Cwmfillery), Winifred Prunty (Woolwich),

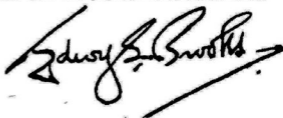
Jack E. Oekenden* (Pyrford), Alice Banfield (London, E. 2), George R. Pearce (Nottingham), Sidney W. Le Roux* (Kingwilliamstown, C.P., S.A.); G. T. G. Wilson (Bedford), "J. G. N." (Blackburn), Charles Knight (Thrapston), Arthur R. Winkle (Longton), Terence Sullivan* (Malta), Norman Milson (Hull), John Harold Richmond* (Manchester), D. Cramp (Leicester), Jessie Prudence Green (London, N.22).

Augustus Hart is still at St. Frank's—L. Eddison (Bradford)—sharing Study P, in the West House, with Justin B. Farman and Owen major. The other two Reinovites you mention—Jerry Dodd and the Hon. Douglas Singleton—will be heard more of in due course.

That cheery youngster, Stanley Kerrigan, is still breezing along in the Third—"Horatius"* (Manor Park, E. 12)—as staunch as ever to his captain—young Willy Handforth. I am afraid there is no list in print of the titles in the old Old Series of Our Paper. And as there were five hundred and sixty-eight of these they would fill some space. Still, if there should be a general desire among you to have them appear in the Old Paper, it wouldn't be impossible, I sup-

pose, to print them, a few at a time, in numerical order—say, a dozen or so every week. But, at that rate, it would take the best part of a year to get through them, and long before the last dozen titles appeared, you'd all be thoroughly fed-up with seeing the blessed things, I expect.

I don't think you "nosey" at all—J. Kerry (Nottingham)—and your question is quite a legitimate one. All the St. Frank's stories which have appeared in the Old Paper, prior to No. 485, Old Series, and which were ostensibly related by Nipper, were, of course, actually written by me. But, since No. 484 (the last of the old style), I have written all the yarns in the third person instead of the first. And, as very few of you have objected, I have been bound to conclude that the present-day method of spinning the yarns wins the popular vote, hands down.



THE SENSATION OF THE WEEK!

"THE BLACK SACK GANG!"

A
GRAND
WESTERN TALE

FEATURING THE
MOST AMAZING
CHARACTER EVER
CREATED:

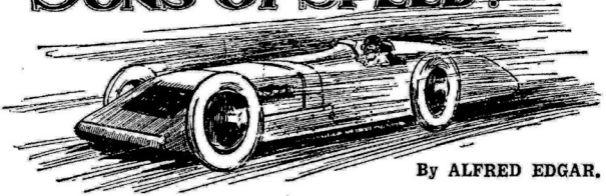


HUNDREDS
OF
THRILLS!

The RIO KID. YOU'LL FIND HIM IN
The POPULAR Now on Sale

OUT TO SMASH THE RECORD! Mark Lynch has set up a new world's land speed record, but that doesn't mean he'll keep it, for Dick Barry, his closest rival, is hot on his track with the Kent Flyer. Things move with a hum in the gripping instalment below!

SONS OF SPEED!



By ALFRED EDGAR.

HOW THE STORY STARTED—

DICK BARRY is a cheery, iron-nerved boy, who acts as racing mechanic to his brother—

BIG BILL BARRY, and assists him in the building of a record-breaking machine known as the Kent Flyer. This wonderful racing car has been designed by

“**PROFESSOR**” **KENT**, in opposition to a speed machine known as the Giant Ince Eight, built by a rival firm and driven by

MARK LYNCH, a dare-devil speedman, who has always borne a grudge against Bill. Dick gets a chance to drive a car in a

great Continental race, and manages to beat Lynch. The rival driver, anxious for his revenge, takes the Giant Ince to Seacombe Sands with the idea of smashing the world's record for the fastest land speed. On the morning that the mighty Kent Flyer is ready to run, Bill—who has broken a rib in an accident a few days before—gets a telegram telling him that Lynch has shattered the record with a speed of 205 miles an hour. It is up to Dick and Bill to do better than this, and they immediately take the Flyer up to Seacombe Sands!

(Now read on.)

The Flyer in Peril!

THE Kent mechanics were already busy on the tarpaulin covering the Flyer, and some of them were hauling the ramps out, down which the car would be slid off the lorry to the sands. The crowd came swarming round, with police and officials trying to keep them back.

Dick saw Lynch stroll up. The man was no longer grinning. In his face there was something like fear, and Dick could see that he was scared that they might break the new record he had set up.

When the Giant had been put through her first trials she had been almost unmanageable. Perhaps during this record-breaking run she had not been much better, and Lynch might be afraid of driving the car again, as he would have to do if Bill beat him now. Dick caught the arm of a man near him.

“Did you see the Giant do it?” he asked. “How did she run?”

“All over the blessed course!” the man answered. “Never seen anything like it! Can't make out how it was that Lynch didn't smash himself up! She knocked down the flags for about half a mile—but she didn't half shift!”

Dick had no chance to talk further. From the light lorry a mechanic pitched out a bundle of overalls. Dick grabbed his own, tossed Bill's over, and then struggled into them. After that he gave a hand with the ramps.

These were just long, very heavy planks of wood with little guards at the side. They were secured to the back of the lorry by a steel arm fitting into a slot, and held there by a thick metal pin. The ramps formed a gentle slope, down which the car could be pushed.

Everything was made ready with a swiftness which was the outcome of the eagerness of the Kent mechanics to see the Flyer fulfil their hopes. In no time at all ropes were secured to the front of the car, while

Bill clambered to the lorry to direct operations.

Lynch stood close at hand, watching the machine as it was eased out, tail-first. Dick was at the professor's side, ready to steady the tail of the machine if it became necessary.

Slowly the Flyer came out, and Dick was surprised when he saw Lynch suddenly stride forward and flick off the ramp a length of rope which, for a moment, was checking one rear wheel. It wasn't like the rival speedman to do anything to aid Bill!

Lynch remained where he stood by the top of the ramp, one hand easing the car down until the rear wheels had travelled a third of the distance to the sand. Then, abruptly, Dick saw the plank on his side start to drop.

The edge of it caught for the fraction of a second, and in that moment Dick saw Lynch's hand jerking out the metal pin which held it into place. He wasn't there generously helping them get the car out; he was pulling out the pin so that the plank would drop and let the machine fall!

And if it fell, the Flyer would certainly smash its rear wheel and strain the back axle. That would stop it going for the record until she had been repaired—and repairs might take days!

Dick flung himself forward in the instant that the top edge of the plank slipped. He slithered over the sand on one knee, thrusting his shoulder under the wheel-hub and straining to hold the Flyer as it slipped.

He shouted as the ramp thudded to the sand, and he took the whole weight of the car. He glimpsed Lynch leaping away, and then the Flyer was bearing Dick down. He gritted his teeth as he tensed the strength of every muscle, bracing himself against the weight.

If the car dropped, they were done!

Ready for the Speed Duel!

ONLY for split seconds did Dick's slim figure take the weight of the machine, then the professor came rushing forward, while Bill fairly flung himself to help.

Mechanics and spectators came leaping to his aid; a score of hands were thrust under the tail and the side of the Flyer to hold it and stop the machine falling.

"The ramp—lift it!" Bill gasped, and his veins stood out on his set face as he did what he could to help, sweat starting on his forehead from the jarring pain of

his broken rib; he'd forgotten it when he rushed.

Men heaved the ramp up as the rear wheel of the Flyer was lifted. In a moment or two it was in place again, and the pin was driven firmly home. Gasping, Dick stepped back.

"How'd that—happen?" Bill demanded hoarsely.

Dick hesitated. It was on the tip of his tongue to say that he had seen Lynch pull the pin out under cover of pretending to help them. But Dick knew what would happen if he said that. Probably there'd be a row, and that would look bad before the crowd. So he said nothing, and Bill went on:

"Lucky you moved quickly, young 'un! Hurt yourself?" And when Dick shook his head, Bill added: "The pin must have slipped, or something! All right, boys, lower away—let her come gently. That's the style!"

Slowly, the Flyer rolled down the ramp and was hauled clear of the lorry to where boards had been laid out on to the sand to prevent her wheels sinking.

They spent ten minutes looking around the machine, with Dick carefully checking the tyre pressures. The engine was started up, and the crowd was cleared back as Bill walked across to the officials.

"I'll run down to the far end of the course," he said. "By that time she ought to be warmed up. Then I'll do one run each way and come in to get my speeds from you. If they're good enough, I'll go for the record straight away."

"Two trials, then the record runs, is that it?" an official asked. "You'll have just about time to do it, Barry. Good luck!"

Bill nodded, then turned as he heard the professor calling to him and beckoning him towards the touring car, the hood of which had been pulled up. Dick wondered what was going to happen as he saw Bill duck inside.

Half a minute later and he saw that Bill had slipped off overalls and the clothes beneath, and the professor was buckling round his body a stout, broad strip of canvas. That was to lend support to his damaged fib during the run.

Bill came out of the car, buttoning up his overalls, then he moved to the Kent Flyer. Down the course the light lorry was roaring, mechanics aboard it, loaded with planks on which the Flyer could stand if it came to rest at the far end.

It is a strange thing that sand, which is so yielding, is really magnificent for high speed. At Seacombe the sea flattened it out with every tide, leaving a great

smooth stretch. Although the car was all right so long as it kept moving, the moment that it stopped the wheels would begin to sink; that was why planks had to be placed for the machine to stand on.

In a way, it was rather like thin ice, which will support a skater if he traverses it at speed, but will break and let him through if he goes slowly or stops.

Dick helped Bill into the car, buckling his brother's crash helmet tightly under the chin and securing the straps in special elastic bands which would hold the ends securely. He patted Bill's goggles down over his eyes, then polished the lenses with a silk handkerchief.

"Right!" Bill yelled above the thunder of the Flyer's engine, and stuck his right hand over the side of the narrow, warm cockpit.

"Best o' luck!" Dick said huskily, as he gripped Bill's fist, then stood aside while the professor came up and shook hands. He didn't say anything.

Half a dozen men grouped at the tail of the machine, ready to give it a push off the planks and help the back wheels to take up the drive. Bill remained with one hand upraised, then suddenly lowered it as he speeded up the engine.

The car shot forward with a roar. Two or three planks were sent flying from the spinning rear wheels, a mighty fount of sand sprayed up, and the car shot away. It slid between the flags on to the course, then went surging along to the sands for the starting point—a long, low, roaring streak of red.

As it went, Dick glanced at the officials grouped about the table bearing the timing instruments. All were watching the Flyer.

In front of the long line of parked cars by the sand-dunes, spectators were massed, every eye on the speeding machine.

Standing apart, near the huge, deserted bulk of the Giant Ince, was Mark Lynch. One hand was at his mouth as he nervously gnawed his finger-nails while he watched his rival.

Something Wrong!

DICK climbed on to the big lorry the better to watch. He saw the Flyer reach the end of the flag-marked course—just a speck against the yellow sands—and turn in a wide sweep.

The Flyer had been built with the idea of doing two hundred and fifty miles an hour. That was the goal of the wonderful machine; it was also the goal of the gargantuan Giant Ince, now standing not far from Dick.

Whether Bill would touch that speed or not, Dick didn't know. It was hardly likely, considering that they had been unable to spend any time in testing the machine. Still, the Flyer was good enough to do better than Lynch, providing nothing went wrong.

That was the awful risk of high-speed records. There was always the chance that something might happen; something that would turn the long, red car from a marvellous machine roaring in triumph to a broken, shattered, smoking wreck, with Bill crumpled in the heart of it.

Dick's hands were gripping tightly on the side of the lorry as he saw the red Flyer turn for its first speed-burst. Nose-on, the machine became a mere blur on the sand, and it was hard to tell that it was moving—save for the growing plume which rose from her tail.

On she came, sand rising behind her. From a dot she grew to a red, sliding blob, then, in no time at all, became a car which approached with a smashing, deafening roar. The tearing slam of its crashing exhaust stunned on Dick's ear-drums as the car rocked level in breath-taking speed—and then was past!

She slashed beyond them and was hidden by the sand that rose behind as she sped straight as an arrow for the far end of the course.

Dick heard the voice of the crowd booming through the sound of the car as, in no time at all, it reached the other end of the flags, then came round in a broad sweep.

"He's coming back now," Dick thought. "Wonder what speed he did? Gosh, it was terrific! He'll just about—Hallo, what's up?"

The Flyer was straight again and coming back, but she was moving slowly. Some men at that end were running towards the car as though something had gone wrong, but the machine did not wait for them. It came on, rolling down the middle of the course.

Dick watched it, his heart thumping. What was the matter? Wasn't Bill satisfied with the machine? Did he want something done to it before he tried it again?

There was no time for delay. Already the incoming tide was creeping over the sand. In a matter of minutes, now, it would be on the course.

Dick slipped down from the lorry. He got a glimpse of Lynch craning his head to look, a sudden grin on his thin lips as he realised that something had gone wrong.

The car came up the course, and Dick started to run to meet it. Officials and mechanics came with him, and to one of

the men from the timing instruments, Dick gasped:

"What did he do on that run?"

"Just over two hundred an' one miles an hour," the official answered. "Good going, that!"

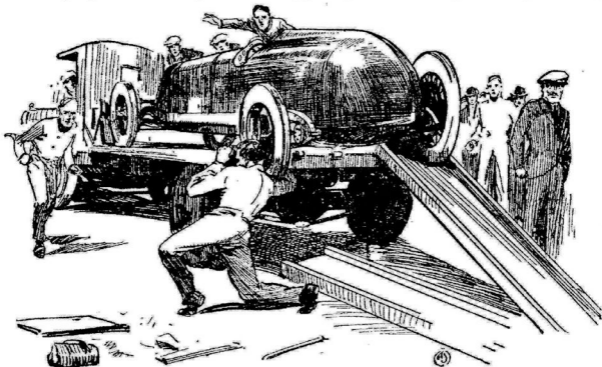
They ran on, Dick lending a hand to the mechanic who was struggling with a couple of planks over his shoulder. The group stopped as the machine came nearer. The planks were set on the sand, then they beckoned for Bill to drive up on to them. The red Flyer came on; planks bucked under her front wheels as the men grouped around the machine and pushed it forward, then Dick jumped to the cockpit.

his injury He'd come in because he knew that he couldn't drive for the record in that state

Dick tried to lift his brother. Over the other side of the cockpit showed the suddenly-pallid face of the professor. Between them they eased Bill up, then mechanics came to help them get him out and lay him on coats hastily spread on the sand.

Somebody tried to force brandy between his gritted teeth, then a doctor came running up, to unbuckle the canvas strip about Bill's body and feel gently at his chest.

"Get a stretcher," the doctor said quickly, as he straightened up. "Carry



As Dick saw the plank move, he flung himself forward and prepared to take the weight of the Kent Flyer on his shoulder. He knew that if he did not the wonderful racing car would topple down and be wrecked!

He saw that Bill's face was deathly white, and he was slumped back in his seat, one hand to his side.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Dick, as he wrenched at his brother's helmet and snatched away his goggles.

"My side!" Bill gasped. "Rib's gone again—or—something! Can't stand the—bumping. It's knocked me—sick! I'm—I'm—"

His voice died away as his eyes closed, and he crumpled sideways in the narrow cockpit!

Dick to the Rescue!

DICK stared aghast. Bill had swooned from the pain. The jolting and thudding of the hurtling machine had been too much for him and

him to the inn. He's got a fractured rib, but I don't think it's more serious than that. He can't drive again to-day, and it's the pain that's knocked him out."

His words struck the group to silence, then one of the timing officials said to the professor:

"That means it's all off, I suppose?"

"I'm afraid so," said the professor quietly. "I'm sorry."

"Nobody else can drive, I take it?" asked the man

"No, there isn't——" began the professor, but he broke off as Dick caught his arm.

The boy looked from Bill's white-faced form to the machine

"What about me?" he asked. "I'll take her, professor! I drove in the Targa Florio for you, and I'm not scared. Bill'll

be mad when he comes round, if he thinks we've let him down and Lynch has licked us. Let me drive."

"You'll have to decide pretty quickly," the official said. "There's just about time for a single run each way before the sea comes on to the course."

"That settles it!" Dick answered. "I'll take her."

"Good heavens, boy, you can't—" began the professor, but Dick swung round on him.

"I'll be all right—I'll do it!" he gasped. "Bill touched over two hundred miles an hour with her, and he was going easy with the car. I'll put my foot down. I'll do it—or bust her, sir. Let me have a shot at it. It's no good if we don't do it to-day, and it'll be weeks before Bill's fit enough to drive the Flyer!"

Dick was right, and the professor knew it. He wasn't afraid that Dick couldn't handle the machine; he was scared of what might happen if there was a smash. Dick would be carrying his life in his hands, and he hadn't Bill's experience in an emergency at speed.

The professor shook his head—but Dick didn't see it. He was already jumping to where Bill's crash helmet lay on the sand. As he grabbed it, he saw that Bill's eyes were opened, and he was staring at Dick.

"Bill, I'm going to drive her," Dick exclaimed. "I'm going to have a cut at it!"

"Good for you, young 'un!" Bill tried to raise himself, but he sank back as his broken rib set up a sudden spasm of pain. He stared at Dick for a moment or so, then nodded his head, as though he approved of what Dick was doing, while into his eyes there came a gleam at his pluck.

"Steering's hard," he told the boy jerkily. "You have—to oversteer to—keep her straight, if she runs off a bit. She bumps like the deuce. Wedge yourself in. Don't use that helmet; get one that'll fit you properly."

He lifted his hand and Dick gripped it, then turned to the car, the engine of which was still roaring.

He climbed into the cockpit and lowered himself to the low seat. He found that he lay almost flat, and as he settled down the official, who had spoken to the professor, leaned over the side.

"Don't waste a minute!" he yelled in Dick's ear. "The wind's changing, and it's helping the tide—look!"

He pointed out to sea. The wave-tops there were being crested by wind-urged foam, and sight of it told Dick several things. The tide was now coming in more swiftly than had been expected; also, there

would be a cross-wind during the run, which would make the Flyer more difficult to hold. In addition, if the wind remained in the same quarter, it would ruffle up the sand on the morrow, so that it would not be smooth enough to go for the record—and the wind might remain in the same direction for days.

It all meant that it was a case of now or never, with not a moment to waste. It might take five minutes or so for him to get a crash helmet, even if he drove over for it, and, anyway, no helmet would save him if he did smash the car up.

Dick turned to the man.

"I'll drive straight down and go for the record just as I am. Give me Bill's goggles!"

Somebody passed them up to him, and he glanced round. Mechanics were ready to push the car forward when he gave the signal.

"Get the course cleared!" he shouted to the official, then raised his left hand. "Right!" he yelled, and eased in the clutch.

The car surged forward, the rear of his narrow seat thudding against his back. The Flyer went swooping down the course as, from the crowd at the side, four men came running with a stretcher to pick Bill up.

An instant later and it was all left behind as Dick sent the Flyer on over the sand, making for the end of the flags and the starting-point of the run.

"It's neck or nothing now," he thought, as the mighty car roared on. "Gosh, I'm driving the Flyer! Never thought it'd ever be my luck. Anyway, I won't let old Bill down. I'll be doing two hundred miles an hour shortly—wonder what it'll feel like?"

Ready for the Record!

THAT thought slid through Dick's brain as he sent the Kent Flyer roaring towards the end of the course. He saw the mechanics laying planks for him to rest the car on, and near them was a uniformed man attached to the officials, who were timing the record runs.

The Flyer shot across a black timing-strip which, Dick knew, marked the beginning of the measured mile, but his actual run would start nearly three miles before he reached that.

"Steering's hard!" He remembered Bill's gasping words to him before he got into the car. "You have to oversteer to keep her straight, if she runs off. She bumps like the deuce!" He repeated the

words as he drove, the car seeming to swoop towards the distant group of little figures.

Dick knew exactly what he had to do. He had to make two runs, one in each direction, and the average speed over the two runs would count for the record. When Lynch had travelled at 205 miles an hour his speed for one run had been about 200 m.p.h., and for the other run 210—that gave him an average speed of 205 miles an hour, which stood for the record.

The reason for making two runs was that the car might be aided by the wind in one direction, which would be unfair assistance. But when it came back for its second run, it would have the wind against it. This evened things up, if the average of the two runs was taken.

Dick slowed the car a little as he roared down on the mechanics, then, still slowing, he pulled it out in a broad sweep, and, with the engine throttled right down, he turned and ran on to the planks the men had laid.

One of them was wizened little Joey Hurst, and he gasped when he saw Dick behind the wheel.

"You drivin'?" he asked in astonishment. "What's the matter with Bill?"

"He's hurt his busted rib again," Dick answered. "He can't drive." He tried to make his voice steady, but he felt that it shook a little. He saw the uniformed man running across to him.

"Hold on a bit!" he yelled. "Haven't got the 'all clear' signal yet." He came up to the car, then went on: "There's a motor-cyclist at the other end, by the last timing-strip. When you finish your first run he'll drive up to you and tell you your time—then you'll know how to drive for the second burst. It's a—" He broke off.

Far over the sands a man was waving a big green flag, showing that the course was clear.

"You're all right," the official yelled. "The course is ready!" and he stepped away from the car.

"Good luck!" Hurst grabbed at Dick's hand. "Good luck, Dick!"

Dick twisted his dry lips to a grin and glanced over his shoulder. The mechanics were crowding at the tail of the car, ready to push him off. He lifted his left arm to signal them, and held it poised for a moment.

The long, low, red machine glimmered in the sunshine, a glaringly-coloured, purposeful shape against the yellow of the sand. On Dick's right, the tide was coming swiftly in, with the changed wind cresting the waves.

Far, far ahead he could make out the crowds of spectators and he could almost imagine Mark Lynch grinning sardonically when he heard that Dick was at the wheel.

In front of him stretched the double line of flags, wide apart, and running dead straight into the distance, black and white posts jutting up among them and marking the timing-strips for the various sections of the measured course.

The first of these strips was nearly three miles away. Before he reached it, he would have to be doing top speed, so that he would be travelling at the maximum between that strip and the one which marked the end of the mile.

He gritted his teeth and nudged himself down in his narrow seat. There was nothing else to wait for; victory, failure or smoking disaster lay ahead of him.

It wouldn't be failure, whatever else it might be, he was resolved on that.

He revved up his engine, eased into gear, suddenly lowered his arm—and the Flyer shot away like a blazing red arrow from an invisible bow.

Whoo-eeo—oom—rah-ah-ah-ah! Dick changed up, and the smashing, thundering note of the exhaust altered to a

(Continued on page 44.)

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HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE

ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM No. 91.

SECTION

A

READER'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

I desire to become enrolled as a Member of THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE, and to qualify for all such benefits and privileges as are offered to Members of the League. I hereby declare that I have introduced "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" and THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE to one new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. Will you, therefore, kindly forward me Certificate of Enrolment with the Membership Number assigned to me, and Membership Badge.

SECTION

B

MEMBER'S APPLICATION FOR MEDAL AWARDS.

I, Member No..... give Membership No.), hereby declare that I have introduced one more new reader, whose signature to certify this appears on second form attached hereto. This makes me..... (state number of introductions up to date) introductions to my credit.

SECTION

C

NEW READER'S DECLARATION.

I hereby declare that I have been introduced by (give name of introducer)..... to this issue of "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY."

(FULL NAME).....

(ADDRESS).....

INSTRUCTIONS.

INSTRUCTIONS.—Reader Applying for Membership. Cut out TWO complete Application Forms from two copies of this week's issue of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY. On one of the forms leave in Section A, crossing out Sections B and C. Then write clearly your full name and address at bottom of form. The second form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and writes his name and address at bottom of form. Both forms are then pinned together, and sent to the Chief Officer, The St. Frank's League, c/o THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4. **Member Applying for Bronze Medal:** It will be necessary for you to obtain six new readers for this award. For each new reader TWO complete forms, bearing the same number, are needed. On one of the forms fill in Section B, crossing out Sections A and C, and write your name and address at bottom of form. The other form is for your new reader, who fills in Section C, crosses out Sections A and B, and

writes his name and address at the bottom of the form. Now pin both forms together and send them to the Chief Officer, as above. One new reader will then be registered against your name, and when six new readers have been registered, you will be sent the St. Frank's League bronze medal. There is nothing to prevent you from sending in forms for two or more new readers at once, provided that each pair of forms bears the same date and number.

Bronze medallists wishing to qualify for the silver medals can apply in the same way as for the bronze medal, filling in Section B. Every introduction they make will be credited to them, so that when they have secured the requisite number of readers they can exchange their bronze medal for a silver one.

These Application Forms can be posted for *id.*, providing the envelope is not sealed and no letter is enclosed.

A FEW OF THE ADVANTAGES OF JOINING THE LEAGUE.

You can write to fellow members living at home or in the most distant outposts of the Empire.

You are offered free advice on choosing a trade or calling, and on emigration to the colonies and dependencies.

If you want to form a sports or social club, you can do so amongst local members of the League.

You are offered free hints on holidays, whether walking, biking or camping.

You can qualify for the various awards by promoting the growth of the League.

If you want help or information on any subject, you will find the Chief Officer ever ready to assist you.



Our Weekly Pow-Wow!

By
The Editor.

A New Paper—The "Modern Boy"!

ALL my chums of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY will be interested in the live wire boys' paper which will appear on Monday, February 6th. The "Modern Boy" is a paper which strikes out in a new line. It has a programme of splendid fiction, and its picture pages illustrating the events and achievements of the day will be second to none. In addition, the "Modern Boy" will give articles of special interest to every intelligent boy. The new paper can fairly claim to be in every sense of the word a pioneer and the most up-to-date weekly in the world.

No. 1 will contain the first chapters of a thrilling South Seas serial entitled "The King of the Island!" and which has been written by Sir Alan Cobham, the world-famous aviator, and Charles Hamilton; while Gunby Hadath, the ever-popular boys' writer, contributes a magnificent yarn concerned with the adventures of an ambitious schoolboy. Other important features will be "Chums of the Shops!" by Alfred Edgar; "The Engine that Husted the Speed Men!" which deals with Britain's mightiest locomotive, the King George V, and a splendid array of illustrated articles on wireless, motoring, etc.

Given away with No. 1 will be a splendid, coloured, metal model of the new Great Western Railway engine mentioned above. This is not a toy, but a beautiful model of the great engine which flummoxed the railway experts across the Atlantic, and is, without a doubt, the finest model ever presented to readers. Don't forget to make sure of a copy of the "Modern Boy."

Davy Jones' Locker.

An Australian chum sends a query concerning this gentleman of the name of Jones, front name Davy. Where did he hail from, and why has he a locker? It is a quaint old legend of the sea. To sailors for ages past Davy Jones was the master fiend of the deep, with roomy quarters on the floor of the sea, and a burglar-proof locker where he kept his finest gems—with a small "g." There is not really very much known about

the personage in question, possibly because he was not exactly nice to know. Of his ancestry there is nothing at all. But some say he was originally a pirate king with a bad reputation, a well-garnished belt and a peaked hat worn cocked over his left ear.

"Oppy" Does It!

Len Naughton, 11, Noel Street, East Brunswick, Melbourne, sends me an interesting bit of news of a cycling trial in his part of the world. He says the biggest cycle race in the Empire was run last November in Victoria, Australia. The distance covered was 690½ miles over rough and uneven country roads. The winner was Hubert Opperman, a Victorian, and familiarly known as "Oppy," or the "Wizard of the Track." Nearly all the competitors finished in this wonderful race, which was a real test of stamina and pluck. Another Australian correspondent thinks that Opperman has put Jean Brunier in the shade.

The Cuckoo that Stayed.

A correspondent in the South of England asks whether it is a fact that all the cuckoos quit this country at the end of summer. There are a few exceptions, but these merely serve to prove the rule. I remember one cuckoo that remained behind when all his relatives had winged it for the South. He was a young bird, and for some reason or another—no passport or something—he was found hanging round a farmhouse at the latter end of September. He made the kitchen his headquarters for the winter, and had a very comfortable time of it till the spring. But he did not make a hobby of wintering in this country, and one can't blame him. He vanished before the wind-up of the next summer.

A Note of Warning.

Members of the St. Frank's League are warned against having any dealings with any persons calling themselves "high officials" or "representatives" of the League.

The St. Frank's League is run entirely from this office by correspondence, and the Chief Officer can take no responsibility for the bona fides of any person who may approach members personally with the object of organising camps, excursions, etc., under the auspices of the League.

SONS OF SPEED!



(Continued from page 41.)

spanging roar that crashed back across the sands.

The car seemed to leap with its surging power, like some quiescent monster abruptly unleashed. The squab pressed hard against Dick's back, and into his ears came the tearing screech of a rising gale.

Any fear that he might have had was forgotten now. He peered ahead through the tiny, sloping, wire-meshed windscreen, while the wind flattened his hair with icy hand.

As the speed increased, the car began to leap and bump, crashing him in his seat. He could feel the faint twitching of the front wheels, and his fingers wrapped about the cord-bound rim of the steering-wheel, clutching grimly.

The first timing-strip seemed to fly back to meet him as he steered dead between the two lines of flags. Suddenly he felt the car veering over under the pressure of the wind from the sea; he hauled on the wheel, but the machine did not respond. He twisted further over, felt the car answer suddenly—and then the tail began to slide round in a heart-shaking skid.

He pulled to straighten it, got the car pointing forward again, and an instant after he was streaking into the measured mile!

(How will Dick fare in his attempt to beat Lynch's newly-made record of 205 miles per hour? Next week's thrilling instalment will tell you.)



(Continued from page 31.)

"Good old Jimmy!" he murmured. "I don't forget that Jimmy Potts saved my life. He's one of the best, too—and Grayson is a young blackguard. I'm doing this for Jimmy's sake—and what does it matter to me if the other fellows misunderstand?"

When Travers went to bed that night he was aware of a certain restraint amongst the other juniors. He was not actually suspected of that theft, but everybody knew that the circumstances were peculiar. All the decent fellows gave Travers the benefit of the doubt. But there were others who were not quite so charitable.

Not that Travers cared.

As he had always said, he went his own way, without troubling about the opinions of others. That night he slept soundly—knowing full well that his schemes would soon come to their final fruition.

What was this deep game that Travers was playing? How could his plot against Harold Grayson affect Jimmy Potts, the boot-boy baronet?

As a matter of fact, Vivian Travers' scheme was a startling one—colossal in its breathless audacity!

THE END.

(A startling scheme—colossal in its breathless audacity! Sounds interesting, doesn't it, boys? And it is interesting, too, as you will find out for yourselves when you read next week's stunning long yarn, entitled, "THE BOOT-BOY'S LUCK!" Don't miss it on any account!)

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