

# THE NELSON LEE

LIBRARY OF SCHOOL STORIES

2<sup>d</sup>



## 'HOLD HIM, HANDY!'

A BREATHLESS INCIDENT FROM  
THIS WEEK'S STIRRING SCHOOL YARN



THERE'S HOURS AND HOURS OF ENJOYMENT—

# THE "SPORTS" of ST. FRANK'S!



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*A night-club near St. Frank's. A place to visit after lights-out and have a hectic time. This sounds incredible! Yet it's a fact, as all the "sports" of that school very soon discover!*

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## CHAPTER 1.

### Tom Mix the Second!

"LOOK out!" said Church in alarm.

Edward Oswald Handforth, of the St. Frank's Remove, pressed both his feet down heavily on the brake and clutch pedals of the Austin Seven. The trusty little car came to a stop without a trace of a skid, although the road surface was wet.

The winter afternoon was slightly misty, and Handforth had been driving through Belton High Street rather too rapidly—considering the mist—for the liking of his faithful



## -IN THIS GRAND LONG SCHOOL YARN, CHUMS!

chums of Study D. They were all on their way home from Bannington Grammar School, where the St. Frank's Junior Eleven had won an exciting footer match with the Grammarians.

"What's wrong?" asked Handforth, with a gulp.

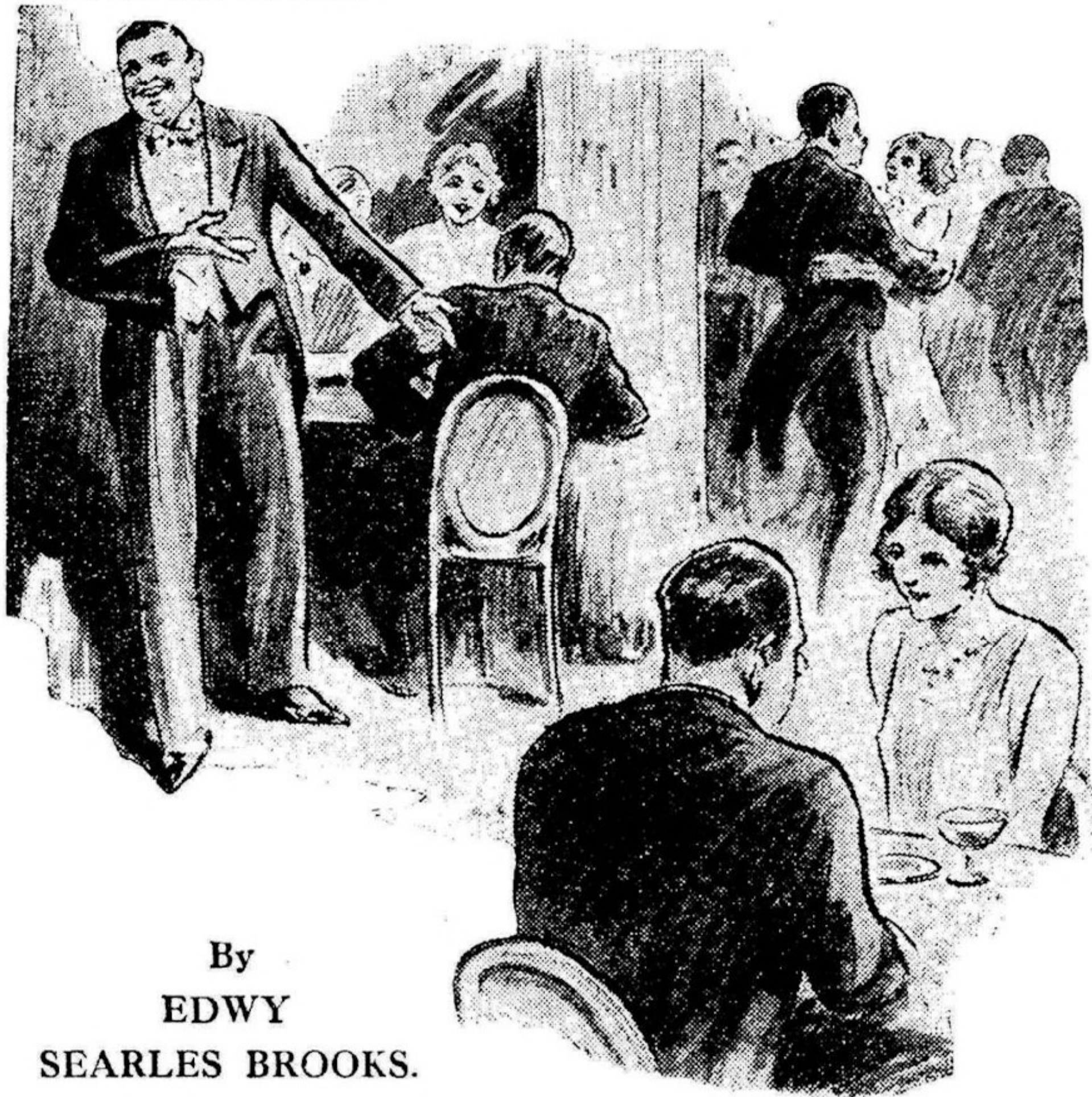
Neither Church nor McClure could answer him. But they had seen two or three figures looning up just ahead, and now they recognised these figures as belonging to Willy Handforth, Chubby Heath and Juicy Lemon, of the Third. They were standing in the centre of the road, and Handforth could see that his minor was bending over the still, silent form of his pet greyhound, Lightning.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Handforth, leaping out of the little car. "Has there been an accident?"

Willy turned, his face tense.

"Ted!" he ejaculated. "Oh, thank goodness! Just the chap I wanted!"

"Yes; but what the dickens——"



By

EDWY

SEARLES BROOKS.

"Chubby!" snapped Willy, whirling on one of his chums. "You dash into the chemist's. Buck up!"

Chubby Heath sped off, and Willy turned back to his major.

"You couldn't have come at a better time, Ted!" he said. "Let's have some money!"

"Money?" ejaculated Edward Oswald.

"Money!" repeated Willy. "Don't argue, you ass! Five bob!"

"But—but——"

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!" groaned Willy, with an eloquent gesture towards the greyhound. "Can't you see——"



"All right—all right!" said Handforth hastily. "Poor old chap! I hope he hasn't been hurt much."

He fumbled in his pocket, produced some silver, and gave two half-crowns to his minor. Willy's whole expression changed, and he grinned coolly.

"Thanks, Ted!" he said. "That was pretty easy."

"Eh?" said Handforth with a start.

"All right, Lightning, old son!" went on Willy, bending down and patting the greyhound. "All clear now!"

The dog looked up, wagged his tail, and then got to his feet. Church and McClure grinned appreciatively, but their leader stood there, staring blankly.

"Hasn't there been an accident?" he asked in amazement.

"An accident?" repeated Willy. "My dear, poor ass! What gave you that idea?"

"But—but—"

"This is one of the new tricks I've taught Lightning!" explained Willy. "I've only got to give him a word, and he flops down and pretends to be dead. He's pretty good at the game, too."

"Why, you—you—"

Chubby Heath appeared, grinning from ear to ear.

"I asked the chemist for some empty boxes, but he hasn't got any!" he said blandly.

"Oh, well, perhaps we can get some from the grocer's," said Willy. "Come along, my sons! Thanks awfully, Ted, for the five bob!"

Handforth gave another start—a more violent one.

"You—you spoofing young fathead!" he panted. "There hasn't been an accident at all!"

"Of course there hasn't!"

"And you got that five bob out of me by a trick!" roared Handforth.

"Well, you can call it a trick if you like," said Willy kindly. "Personally, I think it was rather a good wheeze!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Church and McClure roared with merriment.

"You burglar!" gasped Handforth, reaching out a hand for his minor.

"Rats!" said Willy. "How the dickens do you think we were going to buy grub for tea without any money? You know jolly well that I don't get things on tick."

Handforth took a deep, deep breath.

"You got that five bob out of me by a spoofing trick!" he bellowed. "You bluffed me! You—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you needn't make a song about it, Ted," said Willy coolly. "Before you went over to Bannington I asked you for five bob, and you refused. I explained how hard up I was, but you told me to go and eat coke."

"I know I did," fumed Handforth.

"But I don't like eating coke," explained Willy. "I'd much rather eat doughnuts and

buns and jam tarts. So we're just going along to the school shop to buy the provender for tea. Thanks awfully for the five bob, Ted. I couldn't get it in the ordinary way, so I frightened it out of you."

"I wasn't frightened!" howled Handforth. "I thought your dog was hurt or something."

"I can't help what you think," said Willy, shrugging his shoulders. "If you will jump to these conclusions, Ted, it's your own fault. You can't honestly say that I tricked you. I simply asked you for some money—five bob—and you whacked it out. I didn't tell you any fibs, did I?"

"Not one!" said Church gravely. "You know he didn't, Handy!"

Edward Oswald Handforth was nearly speechless.

"Wait until I get hold of you!" he said at last in a thick voice. "You young sweep! You burgling spoofer! You—"

But Willy & Co., yelling with laughter, vanished into the winter mist, with Lightning trotting contentedly behind them. Handforth stood in the middle of the road, his face flushed, his eyes gleaming wrathfully.

"Ahem! Hadn't we better be getting on?" suggested McClure mildly.

"The nerve of it!" said Handforth breathlessly. "By George! That minor of mine is the trickiest young bounder—"

"Rot!" said Church. "If you ask me, it was a pretty smart dodge."

"I didn't ask you," said Handforth coldly.

"Well, it was a pretty smart dodge, all the same," insisted Church.

"If you're going to take sides with my minor—"

Handforth broke off. A commotion was taking place further up the street. In spite of himself, Handforth paused and turned, but nothing was visible owing to the mist. There could be no doubt, however, that something of a most unforeseen nature was taking place.

"WHAT'S all that noise about?" asked Handforth wonderingly.

"How should we know?" said McClure. "This fog—"

"It isn't a fog!" grunted Handforth. "It's only a sea mist."

The leader of Study D was quite right. It was only a sea mist; but during the last half-hour it had increased in density. The sun had been shining during the earlier part of the afternoon, and the football match in Bannington had been played under excellent conditions. During Handforth & Co.'s drive home, however, they had noticed that the mist had become thicker and thicker.

It was possible to see for fifteen or twenty yards up and down the High Street, but beyond that distance the roadway and the old-fashioned buildings became blurred and so indistinct that they finally merged into the mist.

The strange sounds were coming from the end of the village—the River Stowe end. The juniors could hear shouts—alarmed!



shouts—and there came the stamping of feet, and something that sounded like the thudding of hoofs.

"A horse must have run away!" said Handforth.

"Then you'd better shift your bus!" said McClure quickly. "You've left it nearly in the middle of the road."

"By George!" gasped Handforth. "So I have!"

But before he could reach the Austin Seven something appeared out of the mist. It wasn't a runaway horse, but a big frightened-looking bullock. It had wicked-looking horns, and the brute was evidently scared. It came tearing along the High Street, swerving from side to side of the road.

"Look out!" ejaculated Church.

The bullock suddenly pulled up short, and stood with its forefeet planted firmly on the ground. Its tail was lashing furiously. Obviously the animal had run a m o k. A farmer's boy, perhaps, had been taking the bullock from one field to another, and no doubt the animal had become frightened by something.

At all events, the brute was now looking very dangerous.

One of the shopkeepers appeared at his door and looked up and down. The bullock spotted him, lowered its head and charged forward. The shopkeeper gasped, bolted backwards like a rabbit, and slammed the door. The bullock was unable to pull itself up in time, and there came a splintering crash as its horns struck the glass front of the shop.

Freshly frightened, the animal backed away, reared up, and swung round; it went dashing blindly across to the other side of the road then, swerving, careered along the High Street in the direction of the three St. Frank's juniors.

"My Austin!" said Handforth, with a gulp. Once again he moved towards it, but something else happened to pull him up short.

Another shop door opened, on the other side of the road, and a slim, girlish figure appeared. It was evident that she knew nothing of the danger, for as she came out into the open she was counting some change, and putting it into her purse.

Handforth & Co., who were comparatively near, saw her quite clearly. She was a girl of perhaps sixteen, slim, graceful and dainty. She was dressed in a fashionable, tailored costume, the colour of which was—red! Her appearance was most inopportune. The bullock, swinging round, caught sight of that slim figure, and then gave a mighty bellow. It lowered its head and charged.

"Oh!" said the girl, with a sudden note of alarm.

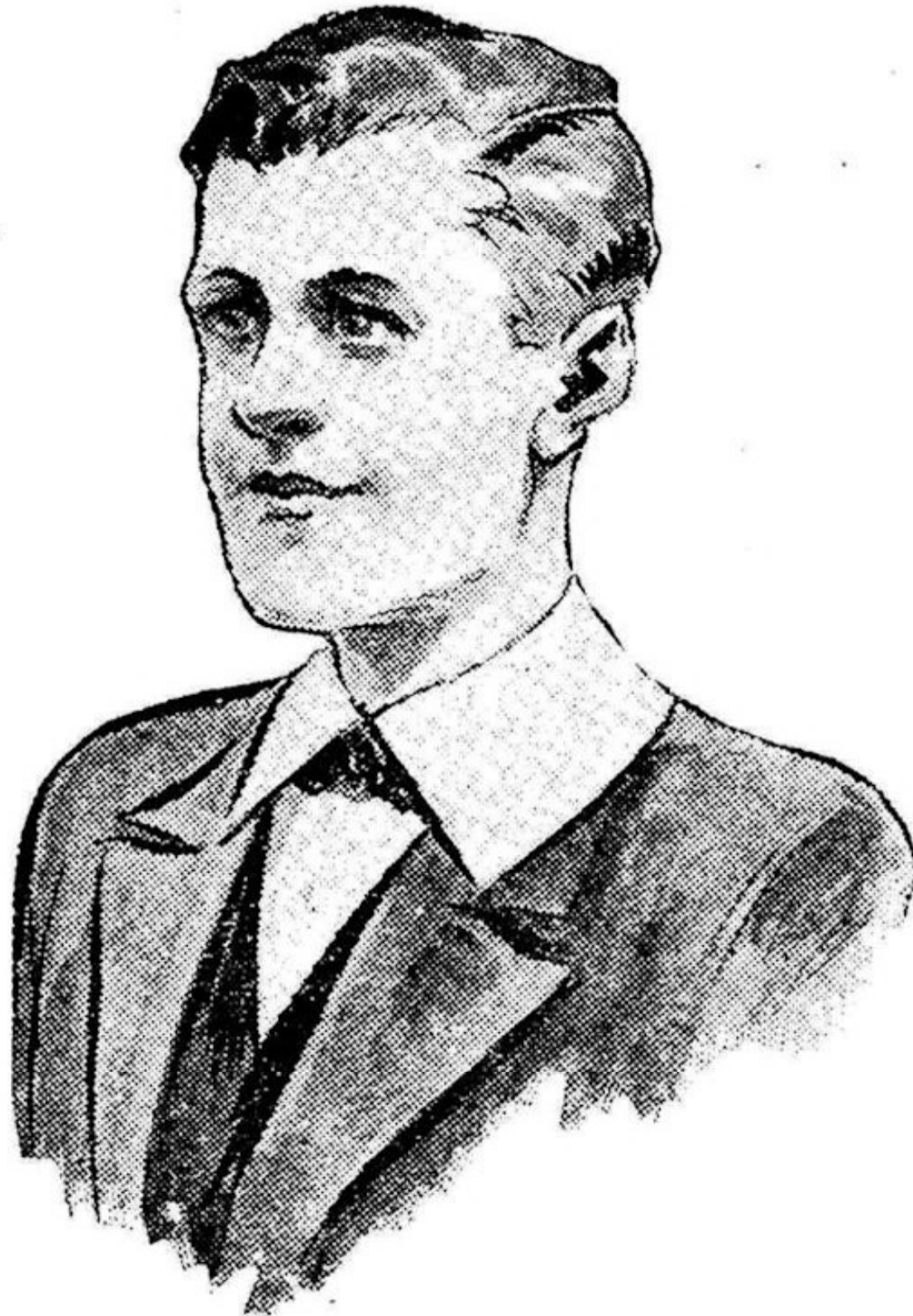
Turning her head, she had seen the bullock, and the sight of it paralysed her with fright.

"Look out, there!" bellowed Handforth.

Even as he spoke, however, he could see that this was a time for action—not words. Edward Oswald was ever a fellow of action. He darted forward at full speed.

"Handy——" began Church. And then he stopped. He realised that words were useless. Handforth was already acting with his

## WHO'S WHO AT ST. FRANK'S.



**HARRY GRESHAM.**

*The son of "Hat-trick" Gresham, the famous England cricketer. A prominent member of the Remove, and deservedly popular. A brilliant cricketer and footballer.*



usual recklessness. This girl was in danger, and Handforth's only thought was to rescue her.

Running diagonally across the road, Handforth succeeded in his object. He reached the bullock a few seconds before the bullock reached the girl. He overtook the frenzied animal, and he pictured to himself the many exciting scenes he had often seen at the cinema. He had seen brawny Westerners battling with steers in the Rodeo scenes, and although Handforth had never attempted to become a cowboy, he hadn't the faintest doubt that he could easily emulate any of the average cowboys' feats.

As he overtook the bullock, he gave a sudden leap sideways. He was taking a big risk, but he did not think of this in that tense moment. And his judgment was accurate, too. He seized one of the bullock's horns, and then he managed to grab the other horn with his other hand. He was dragged along, his feet slithering over the roadway. He clung there, hanging on with all his strength. This caused the bullock to swerve sideways, and the pair of them went thundering past the startled girl, missing her by mere inches. But for Handforth's prompt action, she would undoubtedly have been charged, tossed, and probably gored.

"Oh!" she panted again.

All the colour fled from her cheeks as she realised the narrowness of her escape. She stared fascinatedly as she saw what was happening. Church and McClure ran up, their hearts beating wildly. Handforth was still clinging on to the bullock, and now the animal swung round, bellowing madly, but Handforth retained his grip.

"No, you don't, my beauty!" he said fiercely.

He tried to twist the animal's head sideways—as he had seen the cowboys doing—and the bullock, more surprised than frightened, ceased its mad bellowings.

"Hold him, sir! Hold him, young gent!"

The next moment two or three farm labourers were running round with ropes, and the excitement was over.

## CHAPTER 2.

### An Unexpected Development!

**H**ANDFORTH dusted himself down. "Well, that's that!" he said breathlessly.

He was still rather confused and bewildered. He only knew that a couple of ropes had come hissing through the air, and one of them had been secured round the bullock's neck. Men had grabbed the animal, and he himself had been elbowed aside.

"Handy, old man!" said Church, grabbing him. "Oh, you reckless ass! You might have been killed!"

"Eh?" said Handforth. "Killed? Me? What rot!"

"It's a wonder you weren't gored!" said McClure.

"Rats!" grunted Edward Oswald. "If these men hadn't come along I should have had the giddy thing down in another minute. Haven't you seen the way they do it out in the Wild West?"

"You're a second Tom Mix!" said Church admiringly.

Handforth, rapidly recovering, grinned.

"Well, there was nothing else to do!" he said. "That giddy bullock was charging straight at that girl— By George!" he added, with a start. "By the way, where is she? My only Sunday topper! I'd forgotten —"

Then he broke off as he turned round, for he saw the girl coming towards him through the mist. Handforth, who was generally diffident in the presence of young ladies, felt suddenly self-conscious.

"I want to thank you for saving me!" said the girl quietly, as she looked straight into the burly junior's eyes.

Handforth nearly collapsed.

"It—it was nothing!" he stammered. "I—I mean— No need to thank me, you know!"

Those eyes! He couldn't quite decide whether they were grey or brown. And they were looking straight at him—in a kindly, earnest way. Her whole face was expressive of friendliness; and now that Handforth could see her face clearly he found that she was extraordinarily pretty. Her shingled hair was dark brown, and little waves of it were peeping out from beneath her neat hat.

"Oh, I say!" he panted. "I—I—"

"It was very brave of you," she said quietly. "Thank you ever so much for coming to my rescue like that. I think I should have been badly hurt. I was so startled that I couldn't even move. And then—"

"Oh, I say! I mean— What rot!" ejaculated Handforth confusedly. "No, I don't mean that! I—I mean— Really, it was nothing, miss!"

She smiled.

"I think it was something very splendid!" she replied. "May I know whom I have to thank for this service?"

"Eh? Oh, you mean me?" said Handforth. "I'm Handforth, you know—of the Remove. Up at St. Frank's—Ancient House. These chaps are my chums—Church and McClure."

"I am very pleased to meet you," said the girl. "And I don't know what I can do to repay you for—"

"Oh, I say, why talk about it?" broke in Handforth quickly. "I wish you'd forget it! Besides, you haven't told us who you are."

"My name is Olive Clegg," replied the girl. "And thank you, again, for what you did."

"He deserves a medal, Miss Clegg!" said Church. "I thought he was going to get killed. In fact, it's a wonder he wasn't killed."



"If you talk any more piffle like that, Walter Church, I'll—I'll—I mean, dry up!" said Handforth, checking himself abruptly. "I didn't do anything at all! It's a pity if a chap can't go for a silly bullock when he sees it going head first for a young lady!"

Willy & Co. arrived at that moment, and a number of other people came crowding round. Half the village had turned out, and the story of Handforth's exploit had spread. He was congratulated on all sides, much to his embarrassment. And when, at last, he managed to break free from the admiring crowd, he was alarmed to find that Olive Clegg had vanished. After all, there had been no reason why she should remain; she had thanked her rescuer, and nothing more could be expected of her.

"Which way did she go?" he asked, looking anxiously up and down the misty High Street.

"Goodness knows!" said Church. "What does it matter?"

"It matters everything!" replied Handforth. "She was a stranger."

"A visitor, probably," said McClure. "Anyhow, she wasn't one of the local inhabitants. At least, not as far as I know."

"And she's gone!" said Handforth, in a hollow voice.

Church and McClure exchanged significant glances. They looked at Handforth. He had a dreamy expression on his face—a faraway look. He was not even aware of their concentrated gaze. He just stood quite still, looking into nothingness.

"By George!" he breathed. "What a ripping girl! Pity I didn't notice the exact colour of her eyes—"

"Handy!" roared Church.

Edward Oswald gave a violent start.

"Eh?" he gasped. "What the— You silly ass! What the dickens do you mean by yelling like that?"

"You'd better forget that girl!" said Church gruffly.

"Forget her!" echoed Handforth. "Impossible!"

"You saved her from that bullock, and she thanked you—and that ends the matter!" went on Church. "So don't be such a chump! You can't expect—"

"Olive!" murmured Handforth, relapsing into his dreamy state. "By George! What a topping name, you know! Olive!"

"Reminds me of a salad!" said McClure, grinning.

"Yes, that's it—a salad!" agreed Handforth. "Eh? What the— You rotter!" he said thickly. "Of course her name doesn't remind me of a salad! It's a lovely name! Olive! Yes, that's it! Olive— By George! What did she say her other name was?"

"Clegg," said Church.

"Olive Clegg!" repeated Handforth, with a nod. "I've heard a few ripping names in my time, but Olive Clegg beats them all!"

CHURCH and McClure again exchanged glances—and this time they were alarmed glances.

"Oh, my hat!" said Church. "He's smitten!"

"Bowled clean over!" agreed McClure. "I never knew such a chap! A girl has only got to smile at him and he crumples up! He's in love again!"

"Up to the giddy eyes!" said Church indignantly. "Well, thank goodness the girl's a stranger. The chances are that we'll never see her again. We shall have awful trouble with the ass, even as it is."

"Let's hope he gets over it quickly, that's all," said McClure.

They were speaking in their normal voices, but Handforth took not the slightest notice. They knew that they were safe. For Edward Oswald, when in this condition, was deaf to everything. He suddenly came to himself, and looked wildly up and down the misty street.

"Which way did she go?" he demanded, grabbing Church's arm. "Which way? We've got to find her!"

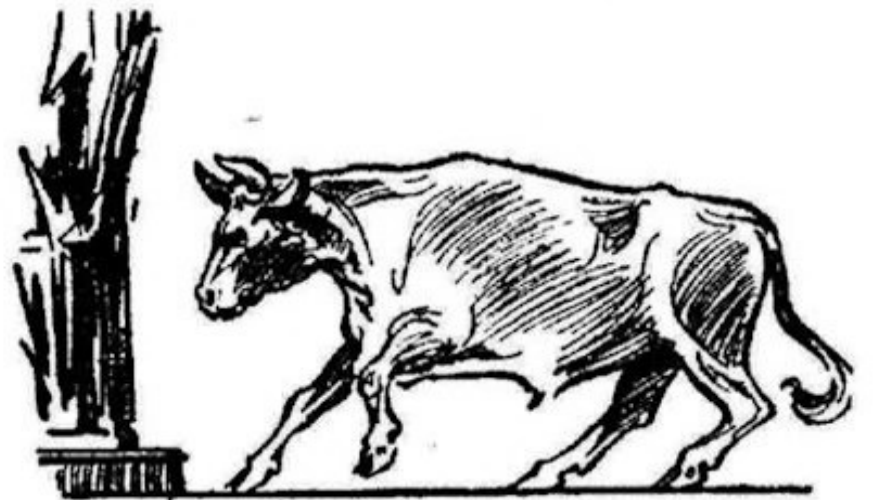
"But what for?" protested Church. "What are you going to do, after we've found her?"

"Do? Oh!" said Handforth. "I—I— Blessed if I know!" he added blankly. "But, at least, we can find out where she lives, can't we?"

"She probably lives hundreds of miles away," said Church hopefully.

"I don't believe it!" said Handforth. "And, anyhow, she can't be far off now. I say, did you chaps notice her eyes?"

"Oh, crumbs!" said Church. "What about her eyes? I expect they were very much



the same as any other eyes, weren't they?"

"The same!" echoed Handforth. "Why, you hopeless ass, they were like—like stars!"

"Help!" breathed Mac.

"Besides, there was something else, too!" went on Handforth, becoming solemn. "I don't know whether you fellows saw it, but I did! Her eyes were sad."

"Rats!" grinned Church. "She was a bit scared, that's all."

"They were sad!" insisted Handforth. "She looked straight at me—and I could see! I tell you, her eyes were sort of—of wistful. You know—sad."

"I believe you mentioned that before," sighed McClure.



"There's something sorrowful in her life!" declared Handforth. "And a girl like that oughtn't to be sorrowful. It's all wrong!"

Strangely enough, Edward Oswald was perfectly correct in his statement. There had been a sad expression in Olive Clegg's eyes. And Handforth, who was a blundering ass in most things, had not failed to read that message.

"I've a good mind to punch you fellows on the nose!" he went on wrathfully. "Why didn't you see which way she went? And what the dickens do you mean by letting her go without getting her address?"

"But we don't want her address!" said Church. "Look here, Handy, you mustn't do it!"

"Eh? Mustn't do what?"

"You mustn't fall in love with that girl!"

"Why, you—you——" Handforth paused, turning red. "Are you suggesting that I'm in love with her?" he bellowed.

"Not yet—but you jolly soon will be if you meet her again!" said Church, backing warily away. "And Mac and I are surprised at you."

"Look here——"

"We're shocked!" said McClure gravely.

"Eh?"

"What do you mean by it, Handy?" said McClure, in an accusing voice.

"But—but——"

"What about Irene?" continued Church. "Have you forgotten Irene?"

Handforth started.

"Of course, Renie is all right," he muttered. "One of the best! Still, I don't see——"

He broke off, hardly knowing what to say. Irene Manners, of the Moor View School, was generally acknowledged to be his own particular girl chum. She was, of course, a ripping sort of girl—fair-haired and blue-eyed, and all that sort of thing. She was a good sport, too. Handforth was rather fond of Irene—and she, extraordinarily enough, was partial to him.

"You've got to think of these things!" said McClure, as he noticed Handforth's confusion. "Supposing you meet this girl again—this Olive? And supposing Irene comes along and sees you? What is she going to think?"

"How the dickens should I know?" asked Handforth. "I don't know what you're talking about! Can't I talk to a girl without Irene misunderstanding?"

"Girls are queer creatures!" said Church, shaking his head. "Besides, you can't go running after this Miss Clegg like this! Just because you saved her from that bullock, it doesn't say that you can chase her about the village——"

"I'm not suggesting that I should chase her about the village!" roared Handforth wrathfully. "You hulking idiot! I'm—I'm interested in her. I believe she's got some serious family trouble, and I want to find her so that I can help."

Church and McClure gave it up. At the best of times, Edward Oswald Handforth was a handful; but when he was smitten like this it was sheerly impossible to argue with him.

"It's no good!" groaned Church. "We'd better trudge all over the village, Mac, asking people where Miss Clegg lives!"

"Now I come to think of it, that name seems a bit familiar," said McClure thoughtfully. "Clegg—Clegg! I know I've heard it before."

Handforth turned upon him eagerly.

"Think!" he commanded, grabbing Mac by the shoulder. "Think, you ass—and think hard! We've got to find out who that girl really is, and where she lives! I know jolly well that she's worried about something, so it's up to me to rally round and offer a helping hand!"

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Handy the Hero!

ARNOLD McCLURE shook his head.

"It's no good," he said at last. "I can't remember. I know I've heard the name mentioned by somebody about here, but I can't recall when or where."

"And you call yourself a chum!" said Handforth witheringly. "By George! If I had a memory like that, I'd boil it!"

At that moment a figure loomed up out of the mist, and it proved to be old Muddford, the local postman. Handforth started, and took a step forward.

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

The postman halted, and looked at Handforth approvingly.

"That was a rare fine thing you did, Master Handforth," he said. "I heard about it from Mr. Sharp. Risked your life with that roarin' bull that had run amok——"

"Rats! It was only a young bullock!" said Handforth, frowning. "For goodness sake don't make a song about it! I didn't do much."

"Ay, but what you did was plenty!" said the postman. "You saved that young lady's life——"

"I was just going to ask you about that young lady!" interrupted Handforth. "I believe her name is Miss Clegg. Do you know where her people live?"

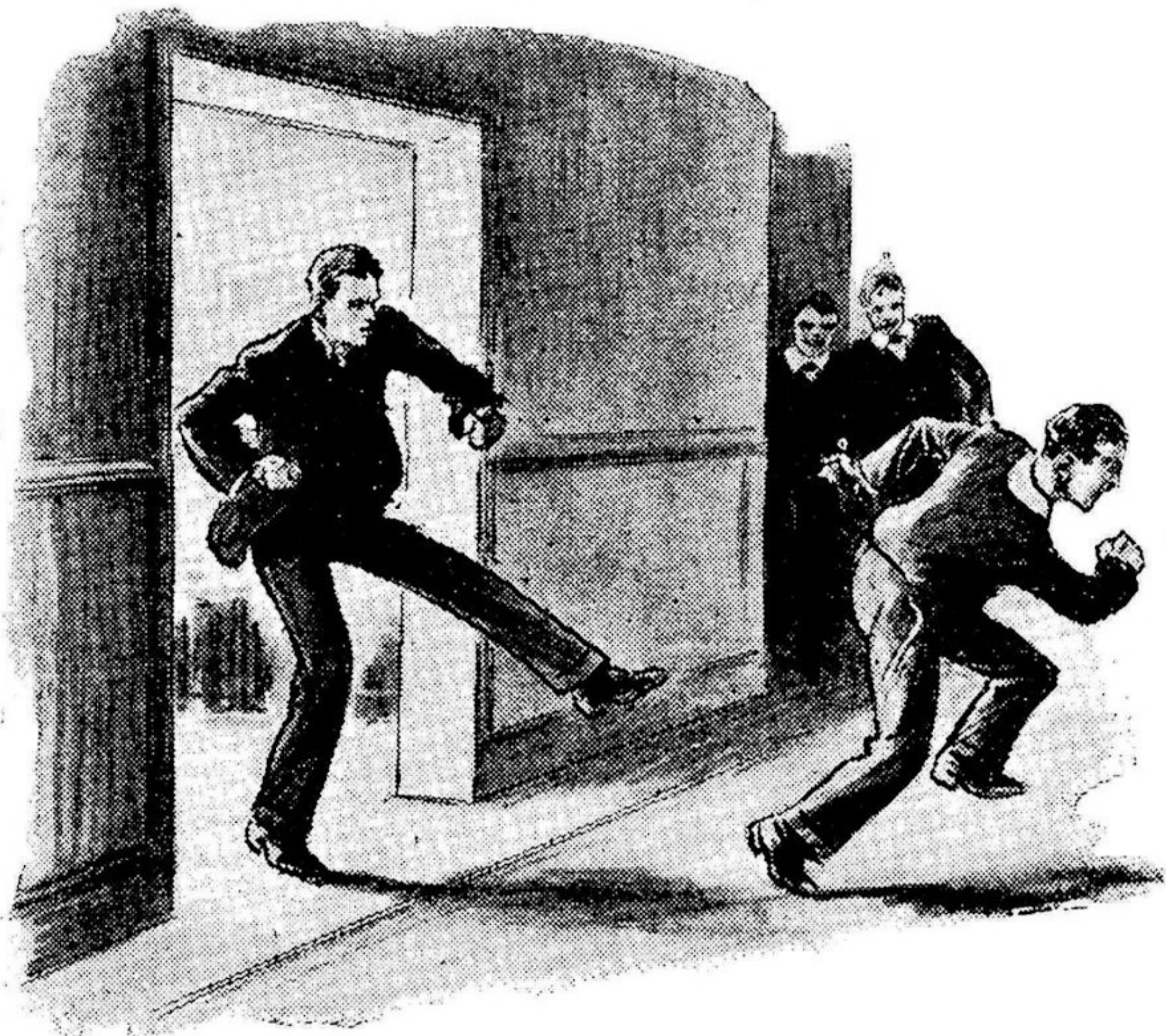
"Why, yes, of course, Master Handforth," said the postman. "The Cleggs live at Moat Hollow."

"Moat Hollow!" echoed Handforth & Co.

The name of that grim old house revived many memories. They had had many adventures within the high, sinister walls of Moat Hollow. And, now that they came to remember it, they had heard rumours that Moat Hollow had been recently occupied by new tenants.

"By George!" said Handforth, after a brief pause. "So Miss Clegg lives at Moat Hollow?"





Fenton applied his boot—and Uncle Robert went flying headlong out of the study to land in the passage with a crash.

"That's right, young gent," said the postman. "Lives there with her father. A rare nice gent he is, too. One of the best."

Mudford spoke with feeling. He had been on his rural rounds for many a year, but Mr. Simon Clegg was the first new resident who had ever tipped him to the extent of a solid pound. In Mudford's opinion, Mr. Simon Clegg was a "real gent."

"Thanks, Muddy!" said Handforth nodding. "I suppose Mr. Clegg and his daughter have come to live in Bellton for good, eh?" he added, with a careless air.

"I believe they have, young gent," agreed the postman.

He continued his walk along the High Street, while Handforth turned triumphantly to his chums.

"There you are!" he ejaculated. "What did I say?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Church. "What did you say?"

"Well, for one thing, I told you that Miss Clegg had a sad look in her eyes," replied Handforth. "And who wouldn't be sad,

living in a mouldy old place like Moat Hollow? Besides, she hasn't got any mother."

"How do you know?"

"Didn't old Muddy say that she lives with her father?"

"That doesn't prove anything," put in McClure. "Her mother may be abroad, or something like that."

"Well, anyhow, her mother isn't here!" argued Handforth. "And she's living in that rotten place, Moat Hollow. By George! It's ripping to know that she lives so near by, though. She's not a visitor, either!"

And Edward Oswald went off once more into a sort of daydream.

Church looked at McClure, and McClure looked at Church. They felt very helpless. Reminding Handforth of Irene Manners had had no effect. And they were alarmed to hear that the charming Olive lived so close to St. Frank's. It was quite possible that there would be awkward complications. For when Handforth was smitten—and such a thing was by no means uncommon in him—his chums invariably had a rough time of it.



"Well, are we going to stand here all the evening?" asked Church at last. "What about tea?"

Handforth appeared to be deaf.

"Tea!" repeated Church, giving his leader a dig in the ribs.

"Ouch!" gasped Handforth. "You ass! What do you think you're doing?"

"Aren't we going to have any tea to-night?"

"Tea!" echoed Handforth witheringly. "Don't talk to me about tea! I couldn't eat a mouthful!"

"You don't eat tea," said Church. "You drink it."

"I'll tell you what!" said Handforth, paying no attention to Church's remarks. "I'll tell you what, my sons! We've got to pass Moat Hollow on the way home, so we'll take a stroll round the place. How's that?"

"Fine!" said McClure. "And I suppose you'll leave your Austin Seven in the middle of the High Street here?"

"Eh? Oh, my hat!" said Handforth. "I'd forgotten the giddy Austin for the minute."

He made a dash towards the little car, and leapt into the driving-seat. He started up, and the car was in motion almost before Church and McClure could climb in.

"Here, steady!" said Church, as Handforth sent his little "bus" purring along. "Don't forget the mist, Handy! You're driving too fast!"

"Rot!" said Handforth tensely. "There's just a chance that we shall overtake her before she gets indoors!"

Church and McClure spent an anxious two or three minutes as their impulsive leader drove the car recklessly to the end of the village, and then over the bridge. Just a little distance on the other side there was a fork road. By going straight ahead St. Frank's could be reached, but by taking the fork one was led straight past Moat Hollow, the strange old house that stood near the river.

Handforth spun round into this side turning, and pulled up with a jerk. The great wall which surrounded the old house loomed up menacingly and forbiddingly in the mist.

**M**OAT HOLLOW was a house with a strange history.

Originally, it had been the River House School—although, before that, it had been used as a private lunatic asylum. The River House School was now a mile or two away, consisting of a fine new range of buildings.

Moat Hollow looked grim, black and mysterious in the mist. For months the place had stood empty. Many of the villagers were ready to believe that the building was haunted, but this, of course, was utter nonsense.

On a bright day, indeed, Moat Hollow looked almost picturesque. If the high wall had been removed, the old house could have been made very presentable and very charm-

ing. This wall, enormously high, ran completely round the grounds, and gave the place the appearance of a prison. The grounds themselves had been allowed to become a wilderness.

"It's a shame!" said Handforth, after a long pause. "That's what it is, you chaps—a shame!"

He had climbed out of his car, and he was staring up at the massive doors which were set in that high wall.

"What's a shame?" asked Church wearily.

"Why, that that ripping girl should be forced to live in a place like this!" said Handforth, with feeling. "Look at it! It's like a fortress! It's no place for Miss Clegg!"

"It's her home—so what more could she want?" asked McClure.

"Well, I don't think it should be allowed!"

"In that case, you'd better see Mr. Clegg and make your complaints to him," said Church.

Before Handforth could make any reply to this sarcastic remark a small door suddenly opened. It was a wicket door, set into one of the big main doors. Handforth's heart gave a leap as he caught sight of a reddish dress, and he was about to spring forward eagerly when he saw another figure, too.

They both came out of the doorway—the girl and a short, stoutish man with a good-humoured face. This was evidently Mr. Simon Clegg, the new tenant of Moat Hollow. He gave Handforth & Co. an inquiring glance.

"Oh, these are the St. Frank's boys I was talking about, father!" said Olive quickly. "And this is Handforth—the one who saved me."

Mr. Clegg nodded, and he thrust out a hand towards the leader of Study D.

"Well done, lad!" he said heartily. "Very many thanks!"

"Oh, really, you know!" protested Handforth. "I—I don't know what you mean, sir."

"I rather think you do, by hokey!" said Mr. Clegg. "You saved my daughter's life, by all that I can hear—"

"Oh, what rot!" put in Handforth. "I—I mean— Nothing of the kind, sir! I don't suppose that bullock would have hurt her much."

"I really think it would have killed me," said Olive gravely. "I was never so frightened in all my life! I simply couldn't move."

"I wish you'd forget all about it!" growled Handforth uncomfortably. "We—we heard that you live here, Miss Clegg, and—and— The fact is, we were just looking— That is to say—"

He broke off, considerably confused. Mr. Clegg's eyes were twinkling, and Olive herself was now smiling—for the first time. Church and McClure, looking at her as closely as politeness would permit, did not fail to detect, however, a certain light of sadness behind that smile.



"I hope I shall see more of you, my boys," said Mr. Clegg heartily. "Drop in any time you wish. I'm generally at home—and so is my daughter."

"Thanks awfully, sir!" said Handforth eagerly. "We—we're going now, you know! I hope you don't think we've been butting in."

"Not at all," said Mr. Clegg, with a chuckle. "I am very pleased to make your acquaintance, and I welcome this opportunity of thanking you for your services to my daughter."

Somewhat, Handforth managed to get back into the Austin Seven, and Church and McClure were only too glad to accompany him. They were pleased, too, when the mist swallowed them up. They proceeded at a sedate pace towards St. Frank's.

"Goodness only knows what they thought!" said Church tartly. "We were caught properly!"

"What do you mean—caught?" asked Handforth.

"Well, weren't we?" said Church. "Standing outside Moat Hollow like that. And all because you've fallen in love with—"

"You howling ass!" snorted Handforth. "If you say that again, I'll dot you on the nose!"

Church didn't say it again.

"I rather like old Clegg," went on Handforth, cooling down. "Reminds me of an actor, or something like that. Free and easy and jolly. I'll bet he'll make a difference to Moat Hollow before he's been here long."

They turned into the gateway of St. Frank's, and the Austin glided across the Triangle. Before it had proceeded far, there came a number of shouts, and Handforth & Co. were startled to find themselves surrounded by a cheering throng.

"Good old Handy!"

"Hail, the conquering hero!"

"Hurrah!"

"What the dickens——" began Handforth.

"Well, well!" said Travers, of Study II in the Ancient House. "So the hero has returned! Congrats, dear old fellow!"

"What the dickens for?" snapped Handforth.

"Haven't you been rescuing damsels in distress?" asked Travers whimsically.

"No, I haven't!" growled Handforth. "And who has been telling you fellows anything about it, anyhow?"

"You can't expect a thing like this to be kept secret, Handy," said Nipper, shaking his head. "The whole of St. Frank's is talking about it. You performed a regular cowboy stunt in Bellton High Street, didn't you? Had a wrestling match with a roaring bull. Good man!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie Glen-thorne, adjusting his eyeglass and inspecting Handforth as though he were some sort of curio. "I mean to say, good gad! I rather expected to see the dear old chappie somewhat gashed and torn, as it were."

"Well, he is a bit marked," said Reggie Pitt, with a worried look. "By jingo! Just look at his face! It's in a shocking state!"

"My face!" ejaculated Handforth, with a start. "What's the matter with it?"

"It's in a terrible state!" said Reggie. "Did the bull tread on you, Handy?"

"No, it didn't, you dummy!" said Handforth. "It didn't touch my face at all!"

Reggie Pitt took a closer look.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he said. "Sorry, Handy! I can see now, of course—it's just your normal face."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you funny lunatic!" howled Handforth wrathfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Removites chuckled unroariously

## CHAPTER 4.

### Uncle Robert!

"NEVER mind, Handy, old man," said Nipper, with a grin. "We're all jolly pleased with you. It was just like you to dash forward and to try conclusions with that bullock. By the way,

## Another MYSTERY!



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## The "POPULAR!"



do you know who the young lady was?" Handforth nodded contentedly.

"Yes, rather!" he said. "Her name is Olive Clegg, and she's the daughter of the man who has come to live at Moat Hollow."

"By gad!" murmured Chester, of Study I.

He seemed to take more interest in the conversation; until that moment, he had been somewhat bored. Robert Chester was a new fellow in the Remove, and, in a way, he was an unique kind of junior. He had the extraordinary distinction of being Edgar Fenton's uncle. And Fenton was in the Sixth; Fenton was the captain of St. Frank's.

Throughout the Junior School, Chester was already known as "Uncle Robert." Nobody ever thought of calling him anything else. At first it had been a standing joke, but now it was commonplace.

Fenton's mother was this junior's eldest sister, and it seemed that there were fourteen Chesters in the family, not counting the mother and father. Fenton had been very startled when Chester had first arrived at St. Frank's. Indeed, he had been startled and dismayed, for it was no joke for the school captain to have an uncle in the Remove. Furthermore, Uncle Robert had revealed one or two traits that did not appeal to Fenton's high code of honour.

"By gad!" repeated the new junior, under his breath. "Old Clegg's daughter, eh?"

"Yes," said Handforth, in an abstracted tone. "She lives at Moat Hollow. And I think something ought to be done about it. It's no place for such a girl."

"No?" said Nipper politely. "Why?"

"Why?" roared Handforth. "You silly ass! Because she's the most ripping girl—I—I mean, she's marvellously pretty. She's—she's the most wonderful girl—"

He broke off, realising, perhaps, that his impulsiveness was rather out of place. A number of the juniors were grinning appreciatively.

"Poor old Handy!" said Harry Gresham. "Smitten again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What will Irene have to say?" asked Pitt wonderingly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotters!" shouted Handforth, glaring round. "Can't I say that a girl is pretty without you hyenas cackling like Cheshire cats?"

And Handforth drove off to the garage in his Austin, leaving the crowd yelling more loudly than ever. Church and McClure had been left behind, and it did not take them long to tell the other fellows how seriously Handforth had been "smitten."

"He'll get over it," said Reggie Pitt. "He always does. Handy makes a habit of falling in love at intervals. He's very susceptible, you know."

"He's a scream!" said Fullwood. "I'm rather keen on seeing Miss Clegg now. I wonder if she really is pretty?"

"She's all right," said Church. "A nice girl, by the look of her. Nothing to rave

about, of course, but there's never any telling with Handy."

Five minutes later Edward Oswald marched into the Ancient House, and he was relieved to find that there were only two or three fellows hanging about; and they had dropped the joke. Fenton, of the Sixth, happened to be passing, and he clapped Handforth on the back.

"What's this I hear, young man?" he asked genially. "Our tame knight-errant, eh? Rescuing maidens from roaring bulls."

"Oh, chuck it!" protested Handforth. "I'm getting fed-up, Fenton! Everybody's congratulating me and calling me a hero. It's all piffle! I shall get wild soon."

"There's nothing like true modesty," said the School Captain, with approval. "But it's no good, Handforth; if you do something praiseworthy you can't expect to hide your light under a bushel."

"What do you think I am, a ~~gandle~~?" asked Handforth tartly.

"You'll do!" chuckled Fenton.

He noticed that his Uncle Robert had just come into view from the Remove passage; and the prefect's face changed on the instant. His smile vanished, and a frown flitted across his open, handsome face. Abruptly, he turned on his heel and went off in the other direction.

Uncle Robert strolled up, a smile on his sharp-featured countenance.

"My dear nephew appears anxious to avoid me," he remarked coolly. "That's very bad manners. A nephew shouldn't turn his back on his beloved uncle!"

Handforth glared.

"Go and eat coke!" he said coldly.

He brushed past the new boy, and went into the Remove passage. Nearly all the other fellows went off, too, leaving Uncle Robert alone. It was rather significant. During his first day or two, Uncle Robert had been exceedingly popular in the Remove. He had been at St. Frank's for a week now—and during that week the Remove had learned a thing or two!

**U**NCLE ROBERT, in fact, had had time to come out in his true colours.

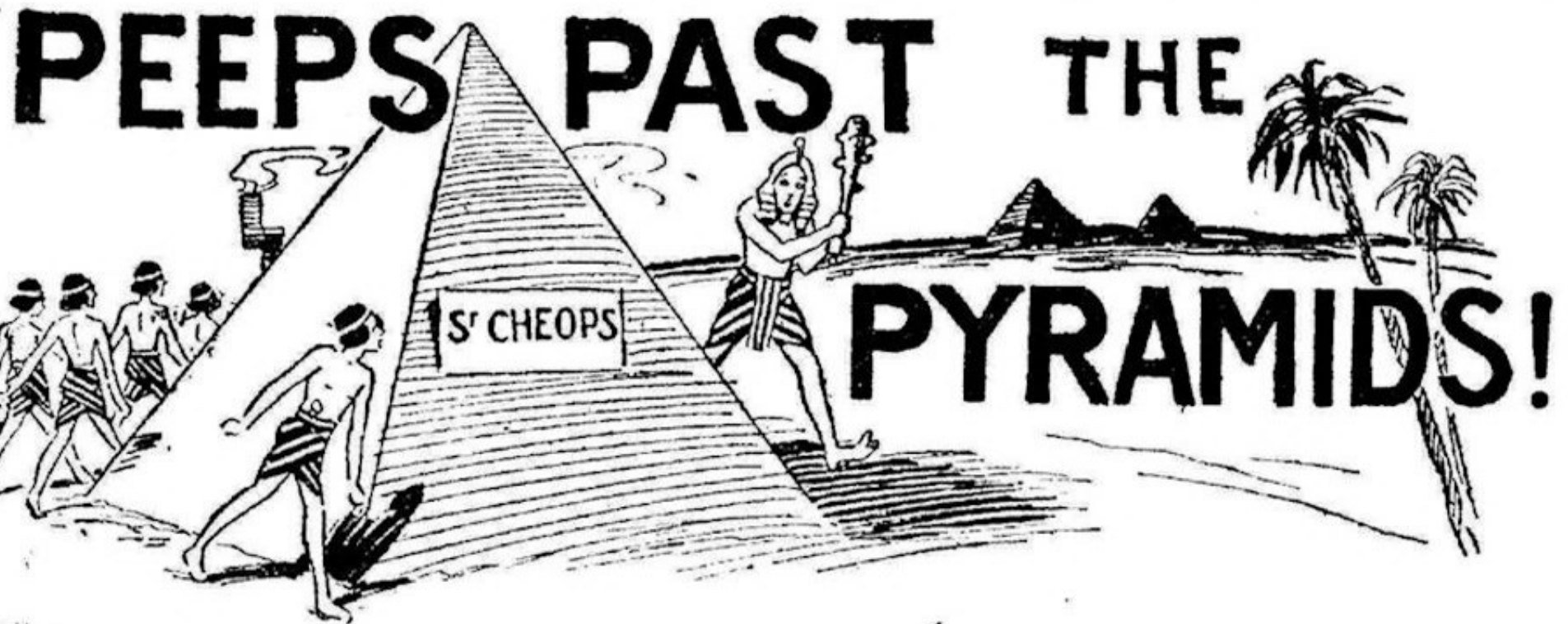
On his first day at the old school he had worked an excellent jape on his unsuspecting nephew; he had come to St. Frank's in disguise, pretending to be an elderly gentleman. For, curiously enough, Fenton had never seen this uncle of his—and he was already beginning to wish that he had not seen him now.

The Remove had been very kindly disposed towards Uncle Robert at the beginning; but Uncle Robert was now only on friendly terms with a few undesirables. He had already proved himself to be a colossal liar. He was mean, too, and if there was one thing the Remove could not stand, it was meanness.

Not ordinary meanness, either. Uncle Robert was grasping, greedy. He took tea in Hall, because he refused to whack out his share of the exes for the study spreads. He

(Continued on page 14.)





**A**ND the head of Dr. Potiphar, the master of the Fourth Form of St. Cheops, appeared through the floor of the class-room, his body following closely behind. The class-room was shaped like a pyramid which is standing on its apex, the entrance being even through a trap-door in the floor.

And the boys sat around in all directions, tier upon tier sat they around. Then did Dr. Potiphar scan the class and jump mightily, for there was even a vacant place.

But at the moment of his jump the trap-door opened, and in peeped Ptolemy minor. And Ptolemy minor's countenance was worried, for he was late.

The master turned and frowned blackly at the newcomer, and spake unto him with sinister voice.

"O Ptolemy minor, thou art late for school."

"Queen Anne's dead," replied Ptolemy minor, taking care that his remark was inaudible.

"And wherefore art thou late?"

"I have been fishing," said Ptolemy minor.

"Fishing," the master repeated, showing interest, for he was even of a piscatorial disposition himself. "Fishing. And what caughtest thou?"

"Crocks, O master," answered the boy. Whereupon Dr. Potiphar rent his beard—but not too hard.

"O boy," he admonished, aghast. "knowest thou not that to catch the sacred crocodile is a grievous fault?"

"Crocodile, O master?" said Ptolemy minor, raising up his eyebrows as much as he dared. "Crocodile?"

"Yea! Crocodile, fool of a boy! For that thou must receive punishment." And he rolled up the sleeve of his robe, grasping a bunch of canes with some gusto.

"But m-master," stammered Ptolemy

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

**VIVIAN TRAVERS**

*of the St. Frank's Remove.*

minor with affright. "surely thou wouldst not punish me for catching naught?"

"Boy," thundered Dr. Potiphar sternly, "do not add phibbs to thy previous crime. Thou saidst thou hadst caught crocs, and now

thou denyest it."

"Crocks, said I, O master; not crocs."

"Verily, I perceive no difference in what thou sayest thou hast caught and what I say thou hast caught."

"The difference, O master, is that all I have caught is a can made of tin, a broken pitcher and a kettle minus the bottom, or, as I have said unto thee, I have caught crocks—not crocs." Thus explained Ptolemy minor guilelessly to his master, Dr. Potiphar.

And the blood suffused the face of the master; for he did not know of a certainty if the boy was a fool or if he was even tugging at the leg of his master. Then said he:

"Go to thy place, Ptolemy minor. Thou art either knave or an ass, and I am not of a true mind which. Therefore art thou lucky. Vamoosh from my sight whilst the going is good, lest I repent my leniency toward thee."

And Ptolemy minor vamooshed rapidly. Yea! He hopped it with alacrity to the back of the class and snuggled well down in his seat, that the eye of the master might catch no undue sight of him that day.

**T**HEN did Dr. Potiphar say to the

Form:

"Form, the next subject on the curriculum is geometry. Lend me your eyes awhile." (This being merely a figure of speech.) And they lent him their eyes.

And he drew upon the floor, so that all might see, a four-sided figure, and said:

"Form—this is a rhomboidal triangle."

At his saying this, the boys wondered amongst themselves, and spoke one to the other on the quiet.

"He is bharmy," said one.

(Continued on page 44.)



## THE "SPORTS" OF ST. FRANK'S!

(Continued from page 12.)

had sold somebody a fountain-pen for half-a-crown, and then the victim had discovered that the pen was cracked and useless. Uncle Robert had sworn that the pen had been perfect when he sold it, but nobody believed him.

His reputation was already unsavoury.

Many other similar incidents had happened, and gradually the decent fellows in the Remove had drifted away from Fenton's youthful uncle. He wasn't barred, or anything like that; but the majority of the juniors simply ignored his existence. For Fenton's sake, perhaps, they refrained from giving Uncle Robert many a deserved bumping; for Fenton's sake they tolerated him.

Edgar Fenton was popular. His position as school captain was a difficult one. Most school captains make a number of enemies, but, somehow, Fenton was on good terms with nearly everybody. He was a keen footballer, and a masterly cricketer. He was, in fact, a good fellow in every sort of way. Everybody liked Fenton; Senior School and Junior School alike, they all regarded Fenton as a straight, honourable sportsman. So it was rather a shock for the school to discover that the school captain's uncle was such an outsider, and it was certainly unfortunate for Fenton.

Uncle Robert went to the doorway of the Ancient House, and stood looking out into the evening mist.

"A week to-day!" he murmured complacently. "Well, I haven't done so badly. And to-night— Well, to-night is going to be a special occasion."

He seemed to be very pleased at the prospect of the night. Then, suddenly, his expression changed, and he frowned with displeasure.

"Confound Handforth!" he muttered. "Why the deuce does he want to interfere? The less he has to do with Clegg the better! And if the silly fool has fallen in love with Olive, there's going to be trouble. Handforth is the last fellow in the world to have prowling round Moat Hollow!"

Uncle Robert had already discovered that Handforth fancied himself as a detective; he had discovered, too, that Handforth was a first-class blunderer. Indeed, the new boy felt even a pang of alarm when he thought of the possibilities. What if Handforth went to Moat Hollow often? There was every chance that he would discover something that had better be kept secret. And if he was on friendly terms with that girl—

Uncle Robert drew his breath in sharply.

"This is going to be infernally awkward!" he said, under his breath. "Olive is against the whole business—she doesn't approve of it—and if she gets pally with that idiot, Handforth, there's no telling what she will say. She might give the whole game away! And Handforth's tongue is like a fish-wife's! Yes,

by gad, I shall have to have a word with Clegg about it."

Uncle Robert was in a very thoughtful mood as he strolled back towards the Remove passage. The news about Edward Oswald Handforth and Olive Clegg had given him a decided jolt. Apparently, Uncle Robert knew quite a lot about the Cleggs; and it was equally obvious that he had no desire for Handforth to make any discoveries. He wondered if he should run down to Moat Hollow before locking-up, and have a few words with the new tenant. Perhaps it would be just as well.

He retraced his steps, and, having made up his mind, he went into the cloak-room and was preparing to don his overcoat and cap when he heard a hail: "Just a minute, Chester!" He turned and found Edgar Fenton in the doorway.

"Hallo!" said the junior. "My charming nephew! What can I do for you, old man?"

Fenton was looking grave.

"You will come along to my study, if you don't mind," he said briefly.

"Thanks all the same, but I do mind," said Uncle Robert. "I'm just going out."

Fenton bit his lip.

"When a prefect asks a junior to come to his study, it is tantamount to an order," he said curtly. "And you know it, Chester. At St. Frank's you are just the same as any other junior, don't forget. You may be my uncle in ordinary life, but here we are just prefect and junior. Are you coming?"

"My dear chap, it's impossible!" said Uncle Robert. "Awfully sorry, but I really must go out."

Fenton's eyes became very grim.

"You'll either come quietly, or I'll take you by the scruff of the neck!" he said. "Now then—which is it going to be?"

Uncle Robert hesitated, and then he shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, well, we don't want to make a fuss," he said resignedly. "I'll come quietly!"

### CHAPTER 5.

#### A Heart-to-Heart Talk!

FENTON closed the door of his study after he and his youthful uncle had entered. Then he pointed to a chair.

Uncle Robert sat down, sprawling out comfortably. Fenton sat down in another chair, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees. He inspected the junior thoughtfully and gravely.

"Now, young 'un, I want to have a little quiet chat with you," he said.

"Go ahead! I'm listening."

"We'll forget that you're my uncle," continued Fenton. "That's an unfortunate accident that I've got to accept, but at St. Frank's, happily, our relationship doesn't count."

"No?" murmured the junior. "How is it, then, that everybody calls me 'Uncle Robert'?"



"Where you and I are concerned, it doesn't count at all!" insisted Fenton. "I am the head prefect of this House, and you are a junior. It's my duty to keep an eye on new fellows, and the fact that you are my uncle gives you no added privileges."

"What's this—a lecture?"

"No, it isn't," replied Fenton. "I've been watching you since you arrived—"

"A sort of guardian angel, eh?" sneered Uncle Robert. "I didn't think that sort of thing was done nowadays, Fenton."

"If I see that a man is getting on nicely I don't butt in," continued the school captain quietly. "I just let him go on his own way, and generally it's the best method. You've been at St. Frank's a week, haven't you?"

"A week to-day," nodded Uncle Robert.

"And you've made some friends?"

"Quite a few."

"Well, of course, it's up to you to choose your own friends," said Fenton, "but I must say, Chester, that you have chosen some rare beauties!"

"I've never noticed their ornamentations."

"Don't deliberately misunderstand me!" frowned Fenton. "In the Remove, I think, you are on very friendly terms with Gore-Pearce, Gulliver and Bell, of Study A?"

"That's right."

"Yesterday you transferred from the study that was allotted to you, and went into Study A with those other three juniors?"

"Exactly!"

"You did a foolish thing," said Fenton quietly. "Fullwood and Russell are two of the best—and it is a pity you did not stay with them."

"They got on my nerves," said Uncle Robert, frowning.

"Yes, so I understand," nodded Fenton dryly. "They kicked you out into the passage once or twice, didn't they? I dare say that sort of thing would get on your nerves. But I expect it was entirely your own fault."

"Need we discuss this?"

"No; we'll get on to other matters," said Fenton. "More than once this week I have seen you strolling about in the Triangle arm-in-arm with Grayson and Shaw, of the East House Fifth. Are you very friendly with Grayson and Shaw?"

"As thick as thieves," nodded Uncle Robert calmly. "They're two of my best pals now."

"I've also seen you with Merrell and Marriott, of the East House Fourth," continued Fenton. "Is this precious pair now numbered amongst your pals?"

"Yes."

"Well, Chester, you've started badly," said Fenton frankly. "Gore-Pearce and Gulliver and Bell are three of the rankest young outsiders in the Junior School. Why on earth did you transfer into their study?"

"Because I like them."

"Grayson and Shaw of the Fifth are fellows of exactly the same type," continued Fenton,

his face becoming flushed. "In fact, all your friends are—well, undesirables."

"That's a matter of opinion," said Uncle Robert.

"Well, I'm giving you my opinion now," retorted Fenton. "I'm in a position to know, and it's my duty to give you a word of warning."

"You don't say so!" yawned Uncle Robert.

"You've only been here a week, and you hardly know the ropes yet," continued his nephew. "But I know these fellows through and through. If you like to take them as your friends, all well and good. I shan't interfere. But I've got to warn you that if you get up to any tricks I shall come down on you heavily."

"If you find me out, eh?" grinned the junior.

"You needn't think that our relationship will save you," continued Fenton, keeping his temper with difficulty. "I've an idea, Chester, that you think you can do very much as you please, and that your relationship to me will save you from any possible scrape. If that's so, you can put the idea out of your head this very instant."

"But you are my nephew!" said Uncle Robert sweetly. "Disgrace for me would reflect pretty badly on you."

Fenton rose to his feet.

"There you are!" he ejaculated. "I said so! You're counting on our relationship to let you out! Well, Chester, take this from me—and bear it well in mind. Our relationship means nothing—absolutely nothing! I have impressed this on every prefect in the school. Some of them, for my sake, might



be inclined to wink at any possible misdeeds on your part, but after what I have said they won't do any winking. You'll be treated exactly the same as any other junior."

"I'm not grumbling," said Uncle Robert gruffly.

"If you break bounds, or if you transgress any of the other school regulations, you'll be punished," continued Fenton. "And if it comes to a matter of a public flogging, or even expulsion, you'll get what you deserve. That's all I've got to say."

"Thanks!" drawled Uncle Robert.



And then, quite suddenly, his attitude changed.

"Oh, that's all you've got to say, is it?" he snapped angrily. "Well, just you listen to what I've got to say, Mr. High-and-Mighty Fenton. I'm not going to be beaten by you, and you needn't think it. You've got a good name in this school now, but by the time I've finished——"

"Shut up, you idiot!" cut in Fenton curtly. "I've had about enough of you, and now you're going out on your neck!"

The skipper seized his uncle by the scruff of the neck, whirled him over to the door, opened it, and then, applying his toe to a certain portion of his victim's anatomy, gave a heave.

Uncle Robert went flying out into the corridor, crashed against the opposite wall, and then sagged to the floor. He had received his just deserts!

"CONFOUND him!" muttered Uncle Robert, frowning.

He was out in the Triangle, in the mist and the dusk. He was walking towards the gates, and his footsteps were slow and hesitant.

"Oh, well, I suppose I'd better run down to Moat Hollow," he went on gruffly. "It'll be just as well to have a word with Clegg this evening, anyway."

He went out into the rawness of the lane, and set off towards the village, his thoughts going back to that recent and somewhat painful interview in Fenton's study.

"The infernal trouble is, I believe he means it!" muttered Uncle Robert. "It seems that I shan't be very safe, after all!"

He had fondly imagined that he would be able to take full advantage of his relationship to the school captain. Fenton was respected; he was the most important fellow at St. Frank's. Therefore, Uncle Robert felt that he would be able to do very much as he liked, and if he transgressed any of the school rules he would get off lightly. Wasn't he the school skipper's uncle? And didn't this give him a "pull"? Apparently, it did not.

"It doesn't make much difference, anyhow," he murmured. "I shall have to be a little more careful, that's all. Plenty of other fellows break bounds at night and they don't get collared, and I can do the same. It's only a matter of being careful; it's only a question of braininess. It's only the fools who get themselves caught."

And in this reflection, perhaps, Uncle Robert was right. Sneaking out of school after lights-out is not really a difficult or dangerous task. Providing a fellow has sufficient nerve, and providing he goes to work in the right way, he can generally break bounds with impunity. Fortunately, at St. Frank's there were not many seniors or juniors who cared for that particular kind of folly.

It was quite true that Uncle Robert was now thoroughly "in" with the most vicious set at St. Frank's.

During his one week at the school he had lost favour with such fellows as Nipper and Reggie Pitt and Handforth and all the other level-headed ones. He had become very thick with Claude Gore-Pearce and Gulliver and Bell. He was in their study now, and Fullwood and Russell, at least, were feeling very relieved. They had not liked their new study-mate, and they had said "Good riddance to bad rubbish" when Uncle Robert had cleared out.

There was something really extraordinary in the manner in which Uncle Robert had singled out the conspicuous rotters. Not content with being friendly with the cads of his own House, he had investigated further. Now he was quite friendly with Grayson and Shaw, of the Fifth—and even with Sinclair, of the Sixth.

It really seemed that Uncle Robert had gone out of his way to pick out just those fellows who thought it very clever to go off on a spree.

Uncle Robert had his eye on one or two others, too. There were at least three probables in the Modern House, and another two in the West House. But Uncle Robert was going warily; his game was a deep one, and he could not afford to take any risks. There was plenty of time.

Just before he reached the village, he paused, for he could hear footsteps approaching. It would be as well to let this wayfarer go past before he approached Moat Hollow. But as it happened, the wayfarer was Mr. Simon Clegg himself.

"Why, hallo, Bob!" said Mr. Clegg, as the junior ran up to him. "I didn't expect to see you here this evening."

"No; but I've come," said Uncle Robert.

"You shouldn't have done it!" frowned Mr. Clegg. "By hokey, young 'un, didn't I warn you to keep away from Moat Hollow? It isn't advisable for you to know me openly. For your own sake, as well as mine, you had better be very careful."

"Oh, I'm careful enough!" said Uncle Robert. "Besides, there's no danger this evening. In this mist——"

"There's more danger in a mist than at any other time!" broke in Mr. Clegg. "Somebody unseen might be listening to us even now. Come: we'd better get away from here!"

They went to the big doors in the Moat Hollow wall, and they both passed through the little wicket. On the other side, Mr. Clegg faced his young companion.

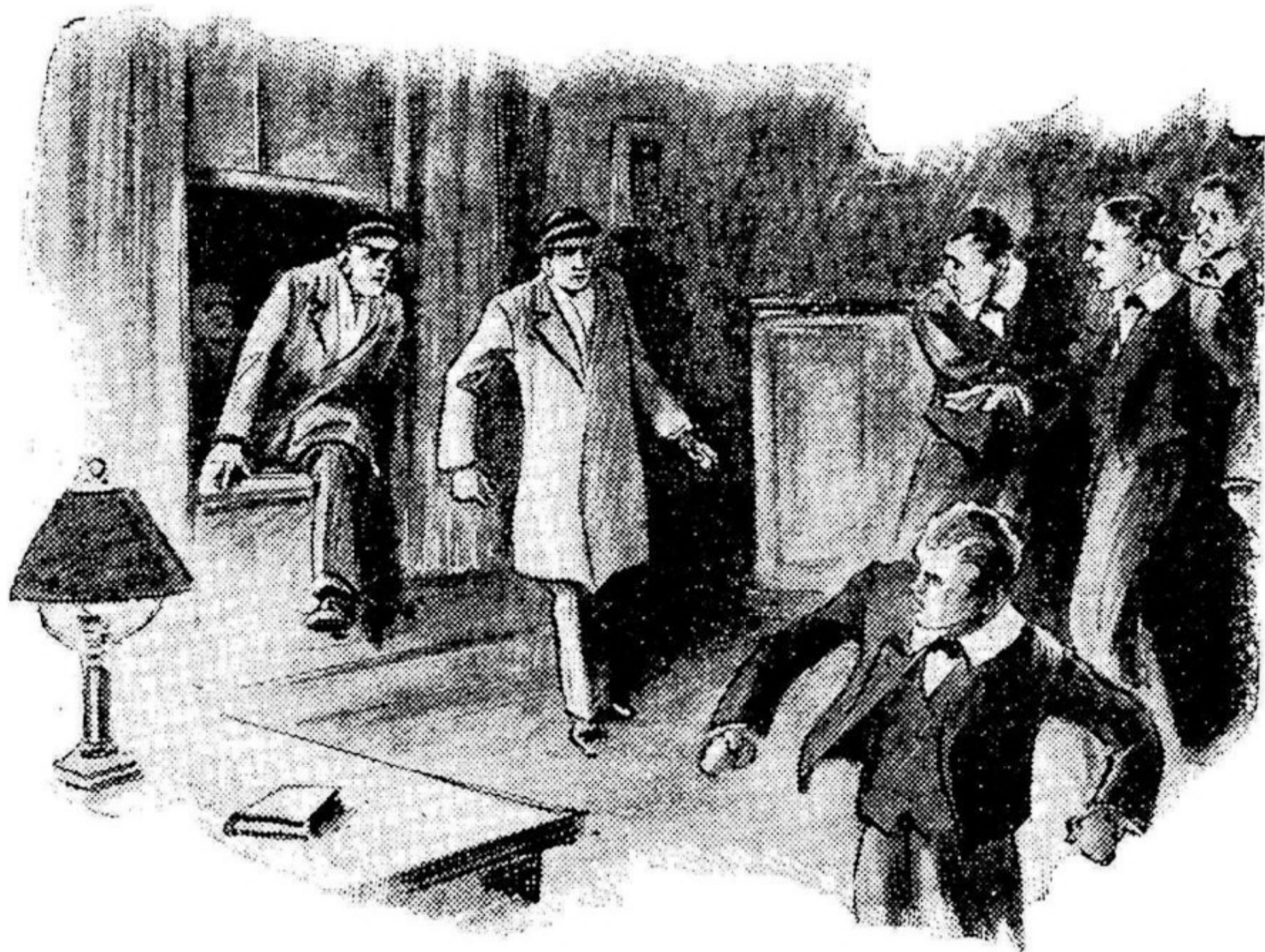
"Now, Bob, what's the idea?" he asked.

"Nothing much," said the junior. "Is everything ready for to-night?"

"Of course it is!" replied Mr. Clegg. "Surely you didn't come down to ask me that? Didn't I definitely tell you——"

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted Uncle Robert. "All right, Mr. Clegg—you can





Gore-Pearce and his companions drew back apprehensively as some figures came cautiously through the window. Then they gave sighs of relief. The newcomers were only Sinclair and Grayson and Shaw—all birds of a feather. "Gad!" gasped Bell. "I thought we'd been spotted that time, you chaps!"

count on me. I shall bring quite a little crowd."

"That's good. Are they all to be trusted?"

"Every one of them," said Uncle Robert, grinning. "But now there's something else I wanted to ask you. In fact, I'm rather worried about it. I suppose you know that one of our fellows made a sort of pretence of saving Olive from a bullock in the village?"

Mr. Simon Clegg frowned.

"There was no pretence about it, Bob," he said. "That boy saved Olive's life."

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"I have not only Olive's word, but several eye-witnesses have told me of the incident," continued Mr. Clegg. "And, look here, Bob, I don't like your tone. I am very grateful to that boy. I don't think he's one of our sort—"

"By gad, no!" interrupted Uncle Robert. "I couldn't induce him to break bounds, not even if I used a sledge-hammer. He's the most obstinate beggar in the Remove."

"He's plucky enough, though."

"What's more, he's sort of fallen in love with your stepdaughter," said Uncle Robert. "Everybody in the Junior School is cackling about it."

"Fallen in love with— By hokey!" grinned Mr. Clegg. "That's good, Bob! That's rich! Olive will be tickled to death when I tell her!"

UNCLE ROBERT shook his head. "You'd better not tell her, Mr. Clegg," he said. "It wouldn't do any good."

"Eh? Why not? Confound it, boy, I'm not a criminal! I know there's a good deal of secrecy about our present project, but—"

"It's not that, Mr. Clegg," broke in Uncle Robert. "But this chap—Handforth—isn't one of our sort, as you know. And Olive doesn't approve of the game, either, does she?"

Mr. Clegg caught his underlip between his teeth, and chewed it for a moment or two.

"I'm having a bit of trouble with Olive," he confessed. "No, she doesn't like it, Bob. But then, I dare say she will grow into it."

"If Handforth gets talking with her, it's possible that she will give the game away," said Uncle Robert keenly. "Don't you understand? And if Handforth gets to know anything, he'll blurt it over the whole school. He can't keep a secret two minutes. That's what I've come down here to warn you



against. Whatever you do, don't let Handforth get friendly with your stepdaughter."

Mr. Clegg chewed his lip again.

"Well, there's something in it, I dare say," he admitted, at length. "Perhaps you're right, Bob. With Olive in her present state of mind, it wouldn't be advisable for this boy to get very friendly with her. But you don't think he'll come down here, do you?"

"There's no telling what he will do," grunted Uncle Robert. "Handforth is a queer sort of chap—full of impulses, and as reckless as the dickens. We can't be too careful, Mr. Clegg."

With this view Mr. Clegg agreed. A few minutes later the pair parted, Mr. Clegg going indoors and Uncle Robert returning to St. Frank's.

They had known one another for a long time, these two. Robert Chester had become acquainted with Mr. Simon Clegg at his old school, and now there was some kind of working arrangement between them. Moat Hollow was not all that it seemed to be.

In the village, Mr. Clegg was known as a generous gentleman who had retired and who had come down to this quiet retreat to spend his days in peace and comfort. To all outward appearances, he was very respectable. His stepdaughter was certainly very ladylike and very gentle. And his sister, who kept house for him, was a very pleasant woman, although the village had not seen much of her. It was understood that Mrs. Clegg was abroad; but, actually, Mrs. Clegg was an actress, and she was on tour.

When Uncle Robert arrived back at St. Frank's he didn't go immediately into the Ancient House. Instead, he entered the East House, and went to the Fourth Form passage. He found Merrell and Marriott in Study No. 15.

"Shan't keep you a minute, you fellows," said the Removite. "How about a little party in my study to-night?"

Merrell and Marriott grinned.

"You're a bit of a speed merchant, aren't you, Uncle Robert?" asked Merrell. "What sort of a party—and when?"

"As soon after lights-out as you like," replied Uncle Robert. "I can promise you something special—but I'm not going to give any details now."

"Won't it be too risky?" asked Marriott dubiously.

"Risky?"

"Well, we shall have to sneak out of doors—"

"This place isn't a prison!" interrupted Uncle Robert. "You've only got to pop downstairs and nip out of your study window. It's as misty as the deuce to-night, and you can be across and into the West Square in two ticks."

Merrell and Marriott finally agreed, and then Uncle Robert went along to Grayson's study, in the Fifth Form passage. Much to his satisfaction, he found Grayson and Shaw at home—and there was a visitor. Guy Sinclair, of the Sixth, was also there.

"You silly young ass!" said Sinclair, frowning. "We thought you were somebody else!"

"Sorry!" chuckled Uncle Robert, as the seniors produced cards from their pockets. "I came to invite you to a little party in my study in the Ancient House, after lights-out."

"Can't come!" said Grayson. "We're not in the habit of visiting junior studies. Besides, you've got a nerve for a new fellow, haven't you?"

Uncle Robert was quite cool.

"All right, you needn't come," he replied. "But this is something very special. If you do decide to come I can promise you the surprise of your lives."

Sinclair laid his cards down.

"That's not good enough," he said. "Let's have it more plainly, kid. What's this surprise you talk about?"

"Sorry, but I can't give any details now," replied the junior. "But if you don't come to my study after lights-out to-night, you'll miss a big treat. I want to let you into a secret—the finest secret that you ever heard. And if you consider, after you've been admitted into the secret, that it's a swindle, you can bump me until I'm black and blue."

Without another word Uncle Robert nodded, and vanished. The seniors looked at each other.

"Queer kid!" said Grayson, frowning. "I wonder what he was getting at?"

"Spoof, I suppose," said Shaw.

"Somehow, I don't believe it!" exclaimed Sinclair. "That new kid is deep. And don't forget that he's Fenton's precious uncle! Gad! It would be rather a good idea if we turned up at his party. I'm keen on secrets."

In the meantime, Uncle Robert had entered Study A in the Ancient House. He found Gore-Pearce and Gulliver and Bell at their prep.

"Did you fix that up for me?" he asked, as he sat down.

"Fix what up?" said Gore-Pearce.

"With the matron?"

"Oh, yes," said the millionaire's son. "I had a word with her, and to-night you'll sleep in our dormitory."

"Good!" said Uncle Robert, rubbing his hands together. "That's just what I wanted. I'm fed-up with being in the same bed-room as Fullwood and Russell."

And Uncle Robert sat down to his own prep., feeling singularly contented.

## CHAPTER 6.

### The Secret!

"IT'S a regular fog!" said Gulliver, with a shiver.

He was looking out of the dormitory window, and Gore-Pearce and Bell and Uncle Robert were undressing. Outside, the West Square could hardly be seen owing to the pall of mist which enveloped the school.

"What do we care?" asked Uncle Robert genially. "The more fog, the better."



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"How do you make that out?" asked Gulliver.

"You'll learn later on," said the new boy. "Oh, by the way, I shouldn't advise you fellows to get completely undressed."

"Why not?" asked Claude Gore-Pearce, pausing in his operations.

"I'm giving a little party to-night—after lights-out," explained Uncle Robert coolly. "Down in Study A, you know."

"Oh, you are, are you?" said Gore-Pearce, with a touch of anger. "It's like your confounded nerve!"

"Nerve?" repeated Uncle Robert. "Sorry, old man, but I don't understand."

"Oh, yes, you do!" said Gore-Pearce. "You're a new fellow. You've only been at St. Frank's a week—and you've only been in our study for a couple of days. Our study, remember. It's not yours!"

"It's as much mine as yours now, isn't it?"

"No!" said Gore-Pearce. "It's our study, and we admitted you into it because—well, because you seem to be a bit of a sport."

"Thanks."

"But I'm dashed if I can see why you should give parties without our permission," added Gore-Pearce.

"Hear, hear!" murmured Gulliver and Bell.

"Keep your hair on!" chuckled Uncle Robert. "If you decided to give a party in Study A I shouldn't growl at you, Gore-Pearce. So why growl at me? It's going to be a very special party, too, and you ought to be grateful to me. Morrell and Marriott will be there—and three East House seniors, too."

"Are you paying the exes?" asked Bell with a sneer.

The cads of Study A had discovered that meanness was one of Uncle Robert's traits. But Uncle Robert merely smiled.

"No need to talk about exes," he replied. "Wait until you hear what this party is, and then you'll understand."

"Why can't you tell us now?" asked Gulliver.



"Because I've got to explain to the others, and I don't see why I should go over the same ground twice," said Uncle Robert, and although the others threatened not to leave their beds after lights-out, he refused to say any more. He had whetted their curiosity, and it was sufficient.

Half an hour after the prefect had been round on his tour of inspection, and St. Frank's was settling down for the night, Uncle Robert crept quietly out of bed.

"You fellows awake?" he murmured.

"Yes!" came a grunt from Gore-Pearce's bed. "What's the game, my son?"

"I'll tell you when we get downstairs."

"You'll tell us now or we won't go downstairs."

"All right," said Uncle Robert. "You can stay here."

Gore-Pearce got out of bed, grunting.

"I'm hanged if I'm going to let you give a party in our study like this!" he said unpleasantly. "At least, I'm going to be there to see what goes on."

"And we'll be there, too!" said Gulliver.

Bell agreed, and all three of them commenced dressing. Uncle Robert smiled to himself in the gloom.

"You'd better get properly dressed," he suggested. "Make yourselves as smart as you can. You're going to meet some young ladies."

"What!" gasped Gore-Pearce.

"Fact!"

"Don't be an idiot!" said Gulliver. "Great Scott! You're not telling us, Chester, that you've invited some girls—"

"Well, hardly," chuckled Uncle Robert. "At the same time, you're going to meet some ladies, so you had better smarten yourselves up."

They were very, very mystified, and they quite believed that Uncle Robert was lying. At the same time, it was better to be prepared. Thus, when the cads of Study A crept out, they were attired in their best.

By now it was fairly late, and St. Frank's had settled down for the night. The four juniors had no difficulty in stealing downstairs, and when they arrived at Study A Uncle Robert switched on a little shaded electric torch and set it on the table. It cast a circle of light on the table itself, but the rest of the room remained in shadow.

"That'll be safe enough," he murmured. "Not that there would be any risk in switching on the ordinary lights—"

Tap-tap!

"There's somebody at the window!" ejaculated Gore-Pearce, spinning round.

"I hope they haven't been waiting long in the fog," said Uncle Robert with a chuckle.

He went to the window and opened it. Merrell and Marriott came tumbling in.

"You rotters!" said Marriott, shivering. "We've been out there for nearly a quarter of an hour. In fact, we were just on the point of going back!"

"Sorry!" said Uncle Robert. "I didn't think you would be quite so early. Any sign of the others?"

"What others?"

"I invited a few more," said Uncle Robert. "Perhaps they'll turn up later—"

"Cave!" gasped Gulliver nervously. "There's somebody out there! We're spotted, you chaps! Bunk!"

There was a minor stampede for the door, but Uncle Robert reached the door first, and he put his back against it.

"Don't get the wind up," he said. "It's only those East House seniors."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Bell. "I didn't think—"

He broke off as Sinclair climbed into the room, closely followed by Grayson and Shaw.

"I rather thought you would come," said Uncle Robert dryly.

"We've come to give you a good hiding, my lad!" said Sinclair. "We're going to teach you that you can't play these fool tricks on seniors. Now, where's this party?"

"Can't you see it?" said Grayson. "A lot of silly juniors! And a bare room! By gad! We'll tan this kid until—"

"The party isn't here at all!" broke in Uncle Robert. "Don't be so confoundedly impatient! I can tell you the position in a nutshell. We're all going to a night club!"

There was a moment's tense silence.

"A night club?" repeated Grayson, at last.

"Yes," said Uncle Robert. "How will that suit you? I wasn't idiot enough to bring you here on a fool's errand. This is only a meeting-place—a rendezvous. If you're all ready we'll set off at once, and we shall arrive in time for the opening ceremony!"

**S**INCLAIR seized Uncle Robert by the shoulder, and swung him round.

"Now, look here, my fine young spark, explain yourself!" he said darkly. "You

know thundering well that there's no night club anywhere nearer than London!"

"That's just your little mistake," said Uncle Robert. "There's one within a mile."

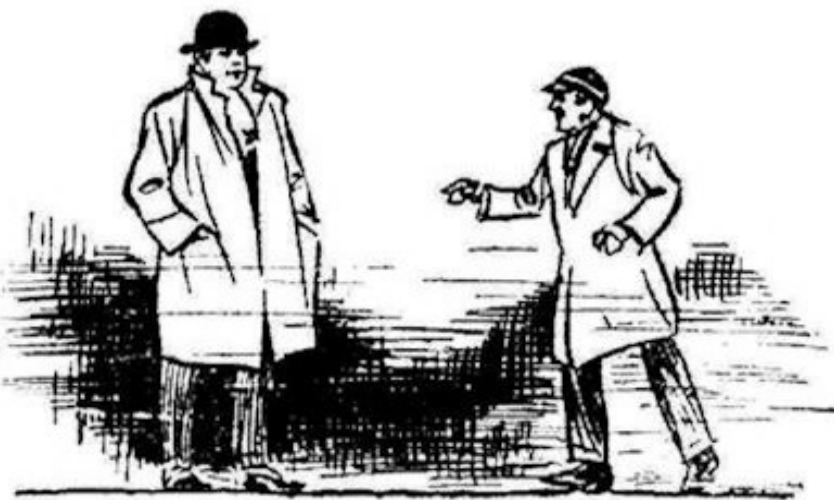
"How do you know?"

"I belong to it."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Grayson. "You belong to a night club?"

"I not only belong to it, but I'm connected with it—I'm an agent for its proprietor."

"You're mad!" said Gore-Pearce. "There's no night club about here."





# THE ST. FRANK'S QUESTIONNAIRE!

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

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which is the first House of St. Frank's you come to on the right as you enter the main gates?</li> <li>2. Who is the occupant of Study No. 4 in the Modern House?</li> <li>3. Who is the Modern House Junior leader?</li> <li>4. What is the title of No. 1 (New Series) of the Old Paper?</li> <li>5. When is Nipper's birthday?</li> <li>6. Who was it who tried to turn St. Frank's into a semi-military training academy?</li> <li>7. How many juniors are members of the St. Frank's Golf Club?</li> <li>8. Has St. Frank's any tennis courts?</li> <li>9. Who is Andrew Sylvanus Noggs?</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Who is the smallest boy in the Fourth?</li> <li>11. What is the telephone number of the Moor View School?</li> <li>12. Which St. Frank's Junior has the biggest feet?</li> </ol> <p><b>ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUESTIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>The Modern House and the East House.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Harry Gresham, Alec Duncan and Ulysses Spencer Adams.</i></li> <li>3. <i>September 24th.</i></li> <li>4. <i>William Napoleon Browne's study is shared by Horace Stevens.</i></li> <li>5. <i>The "New Houses at St. Frank's."</i></li> <li>6. <i>Reggie Pitt.</i></li> <li>7. <i>Lionel Corcoran.</i></li> <li>8. <i>The Fifth and Sixth Form studies are neither numbered nor lettered.</i></li> <li>9. <i>Ten.</i></li> <li>10. <i>Willy Handforth.</i></li> <li>11. <i>Molly Stapleton has fair, wavy hair and blue eyes.</i></li> <li>12. <i>Clarence Fellowe.</i></li> </ol> |
|--|---|

Uncle Robert's guests were becoming exasperated; and it only added to their exasperation when they saw that the new fellow was cool and calm. He had said something which sorely taxed their credulity. It seemed fantastic to suggest that there could be a night club anywhere in this quiet country district. Obviously, it was a joke. This new fellow was enjoying himself at their expense.

Uncle Robert himself felt on very safe ground. He knew that all these juniors and seniors were capable of being trusted. A night club would appeal to them; and, even if they did not risk a visit at once, they would keep the secret to themselves.

It was safe to tell them, too, that he was an official agent of the club. The thing would be obvious, in any case. So it was just as well to be perfectly frank with them at the outset. Besides, they were likely to treat him with much greater deference after they were fully satisfied that he was really one of the "heads."

"Now, look here, I'm not trying to fool you," he said earnestly. "If you don't like to come to this night club, you needn't come. But it is a genuine thing, and I can promise you some first-class entertainment. There'll be dancing and singing, and any old thing you like. A cabaret show, card playing, refreshments—"

"Wait a minute!" said Sinclair. "How do you mean—dancing? To gramophone records, I suppose?"

"What's the good of dancing without girls?" put in Grayson sourly.

"There'll be girls—and there'll be a properly-equipped dance band," said Uncle Robert. "I won't guarantee how many girls

will turn up to-night, because it's only the opening ceremony. But later on, after the night club has got thoroughly going, it will be a place of life and gaiety and merriment."

"And where is this wonderful establishment?" asked Grayson.

"That's just the point!" said Uncle Robert. "Before I let you into the secret I want to have your separate promises that you'll keep it dark. I've got to swear you to secrecy."

"Be hanged to you!" said Shaw.

"All right—just as you like!" said Uncle Robert. "But all those who won't swear themselves to secrecy had better go back to bed. Don't I keep telling you that I'm not fooling you? There's a regular night club opening in this district to-night at exactly twelve o'clock. It's a first-class place, with a fine dance floor and band. The price of admission is ten shillings each—"

"What!" ejaculated Gulliver. "Ten bob! Rot!"

"Ten shillings!" repeated Uncle Robert. "And after you're inside you'll say that it's worth it. But I'm not going to press you. I'm willing to take you to this place if you'll risk it."

Still they couldn't believe him, but their curiosity was thoroughly aroused. Then and there, they each and all swore themselves to secrecy.

"Good!" said Uncle Robert. "Well, this night club is situated in the big cellar of Moat Hollow."

"I knew it was a swindle!" said Sinclair disgustedly. "How on earth can there be a night club at Moat Hollow?"

"You'll see when you get there," replied the new boy. "Mr. Simon Clegg is the pro-





Edward Oswald Handforth hurled himself at De Valerie, and that unfortunate junior went over backwards with a wild howl. Next moment Handy had twirled round, and Hubbard was receiving similar treatment.



prietor. He's an old showman—he has produced all sorts of revues for the stage, and he knows exactly what he's doing. And although you may grumble at ten bob admission, you'll find that you get full value."

"Clegg!" said Grayson, with a whistle. "But I thought he was a retired merchant, or something."

"That's only a blind," said Uncle Robert. "Mr. Clegg is really here to run this night club, and he's doing it thoroughly. Naturally, you won't be the only patrons. There'll probably be some fellows from the River House School; and some people from Bannington, and from round the neighbourhood, too. Mr. Clegg has been very busy, dropping a word here and there to people who are likely to be interested."

Grayson shook his head.

"It's too jolly risky!" he declared. "If strangers are going to be there—and I don't believe a quarter of this yarn, either—we might get reported, and that would mean the sack."

"Just what I was thinking!" said Gore-Pearce. "I wouldn't take such a chance, anyhow."

Uncle Robert smiled.

"There's no risk at all—no chance in it," he said. "The people who go to this night club will all be sworn to secrecy in just the same way as you fellows; and they won't like people to know that they have visited the place. You'll be in their hands, but they'll be in yours. It's fifty-fifty."

"That's true enough," admitted Sinclair, flushing. "By gad! I've a dashed good mind to go, you fellows! It sounds pretty good to me."

"Besides," went on Uncle Robert, "where does the danger come in—even if somebody does talk? We can all deny that we were ever in the place, and there won't be the slightest scrap of evidence. The only possible danger is in the chance of a raid. And that's only a possibility in a million."

There was further talk, and Gulliver and Bell decided that they wouldn't go. As a matter of fact, they hadn't the admission money. Merrell and Marriott also came to the conclusion that it would be better for them to go back to bed.

So the party, when finally it set out for Moat Hollow, consisted of Uncle Robert, Grayson, Sinclair, Shaw and Gore-Pearce. And as they all stole out into the misty night air, they wondered exactly what they were letting themselves in for.

But Uncle Robert was perfectly sanguine about the result; he knew that Mr. Simon Clegg would be able to deliver the goods.



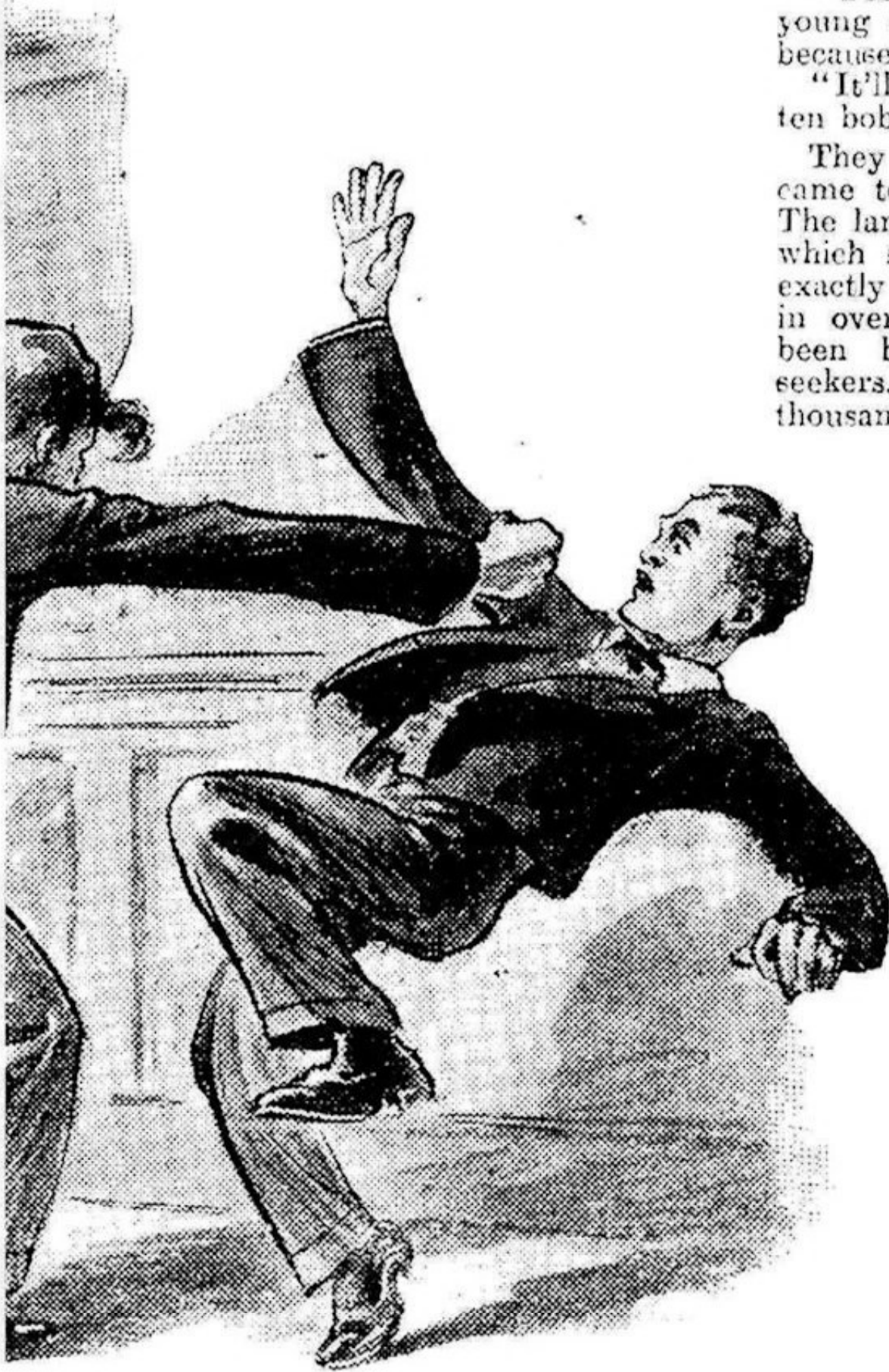
## CHAPTER 7.

### The Night Club!

**I**NCREDULITY was the chief emotion amongst the young rascals as they walked down the lane towards Moat Hollow.

Very little was said now; the party had decided that they would wait until they had made an investigation. Then, if Uncle Robert had been telling them a lot of lies, they would know what to do. The seniors were very dubious; they believed that this new junior had been exaggerating. They would probably find a crude imitation of a night club, and, after a whispered consulta-





and Oswald Handforth hurled himself at Deane, and that unfortunate junior went overboard with a wild howl. Next moment Handy twirled round, and Hubbard was receiving similar treatment.

tion they had decided that they would get their money back by force if the thing proved to be a swindle. As for Uncle Robert, they would give him such a hiding that he would be sore for a fortnight. After that, perhaps, he would not play any more of these tricks. And it was in this spirit that the party approached Moat Hollow.

"Where do we pay our money?" asked Sinclair.

"You pay after you get inside," replied Uncle Robert.

"And if we don't like the place when we get inside we needn't pay—is that it?" asked Grayson.

"Yes, that's it!" said Fenton's rascally young uncle. "And I'm safe in saying that because I know you will like it."

"It'll have to be pretty good to be worth ten bob!" said Shaw.

They trudged on, and before long they came to a spot where Uncle Robert paused. The lane was nearly hidden by the thick mist which swirled eerily about them. It wasn't exactly a fog, but a sea mist which had swept in over the coast. Things could not have been better for these midnight pleasure-seekers. There wasn't a chance in a thousand that they would be spotted in this mist by anybody connected with St. Frank's.

"This way!" said Uncle Robert.

"But I thought you said we were going to Moat Hollow?" asked Gore-Pearce suspiciously.

"So we are."

"We haven't got to the end of the lane yet," put in Grayson. "Look here, young Chester, if you're playing any tricks on us —"

"I'm tired of this!" snapped Uncle Robert tartly. "If you don't want to come, you needn't! But I'm hanged if I'm going to listen to your growls and grumbles any longer!"

He plunged into the wood, and the others, after a moment's hesitation, followed him. The walk through the wood was of very brief duration, and soon they came to a little door set in the high wall which surrounded the Moat Hollow grounds—at the extreme rear.

"Oh, so this is the game?" said Sinclair. "Why didn't you tell us?"

Uncle Robert made no reply, but he bent down and pressed a little hidden bell-push. There was a brief pause, and then a small flap opened in the middle of the door.

"It's Bob!" said Uncle Robert, in a low voice. "O.K.! I've brought some friends with me."

Uncle Robert's companions listened in astonishment, and they were further surprised when the door opened invitingly. All this was quite mysterious. They entered and found themselves in a small stone-paved passage, where a tiny light gleamed at the far end.

"This way!" said Uncle Robert briskly.

"You seem to know your way about all right!" remarked Sinclair.

"Of course," said Uncle Robert. "I'm in the know."

He opened a door, and his companions were freshly astounded. For now they heard the strains of a jazz band. Until that moment the sounds had been completely concealed, for the door itself was very solid and very cunningly made. Indeed, none of the



fellows had seen any door at all. They only knew that an opening had suddenly appeared.

And there was plenty of light coming up from the mysterious depths—light and warmth, the strains of music, the chatter of voices, laughter.

"Well I'm hanged!" said Grayson, staring at the other seniors.

They beheld carpeted stairs leading downwards. Uncle Robert was already descending them, cool and calm.

It really seemed that this strange new fellow had actually been telling the truth for once!

At the bottom of the stairs Uncle Robert and his companions halted. Uncle Robert was smiling and cheerful; the others were blankly startled. Their expressions were causing Uncle Robert a great deal of amusement.

"Well?" he asked gently. "Does it come up to standard?"

Grayson blinked, as though he couldn't believe the evidence of his eyes. Sinclair straightened his tie, and brushed his hair back with his hand. Shaw and Gore-Pearce breathed hard with sudden excitement, but they were well-nigh speechless.

And there was every reason for their stupefaction.

In spite of what Uncle Robert had told them, they had never believed it possible that such a place as this could exist down in the old cellar of Moat Hollow. By a miracle, it seemed, they had been transported from the foggy night into a whirl of music and gaiety.

They had heard about night clubs, but they had never ventured to visit one. Sinclair, during the holidays, had been taken to a so-called night club by some friends of his, but it had been a very dingy sort of place. This establishment of Mr. Simon Clegg's was the very embodiment of light and life. The softly-shaded lights were gleaming everywhere, filling the great apartment with a soft glowing radiance.

The St. Frank's fellows found themselves standing on a parquet floor, as smooth as silk and delightful to dance on. The band was playing, and several couples were dancing. The band itself occupied a special enclosure, farther down the big room, and the musicians were entering into the spirit of their work with a zest and a gusto that was good to see.

On the opposite side of the dance floor stood a refreshment bar, with a neat girl in

attendance. She was wearing a white jacket, and one of two men were leaning against the bar, drinking. There was a dazzling array of bottles and boxes of chocolates and packets of cigarettes.

Near the band enclosure there was a curtained alcove, and the floor in here was on a higher level than the rest. The curtains were closed at the moment, and all was darkness behind.

Round the dance floor, against every wall, were little tables and chairs, and a few people were sitting at these. Nobody seemed to take any particular interest in the newcomers.

"We're a bit late," said Uncle Robert. "The official opening was at midnight, but owing to you fellows being so confoundedly disbelieving—"

"I say, young Chester, I'm awfully sorry!" interrupted Sinclair. "Gad! This place is miles better than you said! It's marvellous!"

"I can hardly believe it!" said Grayson.

As this night club was so secretive, they had expected to find a very tawdry place, and it was a delight to see all this splendour. They could not even believe that they were really standing in a cellar, for all the walls were hung with gaily-coloured draperies.

"Hallo! Look who's here!"

They turned as they heard the drawling voice, and beheld the Hon. Audrey de Vere Wellborne, of the River House School. Coats and Carstairs were with him, too, and they were looking very pleased with themselves. They came up, and exchanged greetings with the St. Frank's crowd.

In the meantime, Mr. Simon Clegg strolled up, smiling and debonair in spotless evening clothes.

"Well, young gentlemen, let me bid you welcome," he said genially. "I hope this will be the first of many visits. I can assure you that we shall always do our best to give you a full measure of entertainment."

"We'll be here often," declared Gore-Pearce promptly.

"That's the style!" smiled Mr. Clegg. "I needn't remind you that everything depends upon the discretion of my patrons."

"You can rely upon us to keep it dark, Mr. Clegg!" put in Sinclair dryly. "It wouldn't do us much good if the school authorities heard that we had broken bounds after lights-out. Not that we take much notice of those silly regulations. I believe in seeing a bit of life now and again."

"I don't blame you," said Mr. Clegg heartily. "Come here as often as you like."

"You fellows had better pay up, you know," murmured Uncle Robert. "Ten bob each, don't forget."

"It's worth it!" said Sinclair.

They all whacked out their admission money, and Mr. Clegg took it with a smile. After that they were escorted to an adjoin-

(Continued on page 26.)

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

"INTERESTED" starts his letter as follows: "Now, don't think I want to borrow 5/-, because I don't." You'd have been unlucky in any case, let me tell you. Yes, we have an inventor in the Remove, and the guilty person is Dick Goodwin.

**K. J. C. GARRET** hopes my "mussels" are getting stronger. Sounds fishy to me! He then asks me to make mincemeat of Gore-Pearce, Gulliver, Bell, Marriott, Merrell and a few more. As my chum's letter was very complimentary towards me, I've a good mind to ask him over to St. Frank's and give him the treat of watching me carry out his request.

**K. B. (Leiston, Suffolk)** asks me who is the biggest idiot at St. Frank's, next to myself. When you visit St. Frank's, K. B., I'll tell you.

**F. G. C. (Sydenham)** wants to know if Waldo is a better goalkeeper than myself. Of course he's not, and I'll biff anybody on the boko who says he is.

"**A BOY FRIEND**" (Perth, West Australia). I'm not your friend and I don't want to be your friend—at least, not until you apologise for saying that I ought to borrow some brains from somewhere or buy some by the ton. And what about yourself? You write a four-page letter and only make one sensible suggestion—that the Trackett Grim yarns should be revived in the Old Paper. Convince the fatheaded Editor of that and I'll be your friend for life. Aren't I generous?

"**CHARLIE**" (Walthamstow) is very perturbed about how we St. Frank's fellows get our hair cut. We just go to the local barber, you know.

**IDA G. LOCKE (Liss, Hants).** Pleased to hear from you, Ida. I'd a (Ho, ho!) hunch when I started reading your letter that you were a girl. Do I hold Irene's

hand when I go to the cinema? Come, come, Ida, you're making me blush. Because your best boy does that when he takes you to the cinema it isn't to say I do the same thing.

**C. MERHAM (Pembury)** asks me how many corners does it take to make a good brick? That's the first time I knew you made bricks with corners, you chump!

**M. N. ALLPORT (Brierley Hill, Staffs).** This reader's name ought to be "Allguff." He writes: "My dear and lovely Handforth, I am writing this to let you know I appreciate your wonderful beauty . . . your curly and wavy hair makes your face appear twice as beautiful. . . ." Bah! You won't get five bob out of me, and I've a good mind to light the fire with your letter.

"**RAYMOND**" (King's Lynn). You'd punch me on the nose, would you? And you'll make me a present of a few homemade rock cakes, will you? In answer to the first, what a hope; and I hope you won't be my answer to the second.

**J. STEWART (Sydney, Australia)** wants a good recipe for making mudpies. By George! I'm not in the infants. Write to my minor, Willy. He's the right chap to help you with a piffing thing like this.

"**SCOTTY**" (Arbroath) suggests that McClure should be boss of Study D. What rot! Mac's all right, of course, but he was never cut out to be a leader. A fellow for this position must possess tact, and that's a quality Mac hasn't got. It's because of this tact fact, in fact, that the present leader is such a success. "Scotty" then proceeds to make a few impersonal remarks about myself, and ends by saying, "Please don't tell me to go and eat coke." I won't, old man. Go and fry your face!



## THE "SPORTS" OF ST. FRANK'S!

(Continued from page 24.)

ing cellar, which had been converted into a cloak-room, and they hung up their overcoats and caps. Then they went into the club itself again, and sat down round one of the tables.

"The gay life, what?" murmured Gore-Pearce, grinning. "Gad, you fellows, this is something like!"

"Yes, rather!" said Grayson. "But what are we going to do?"

"Do anything you like," said Uncle Robert. "You can dance, or you can play cards——"

"I don't know about dancing," put in Sinclair. "There aren't enough girls to go round."

He was quite right in this statement. There were some girls present, it was true, and they were all looking flushed and happy. Some of them had been brought by their brothers, others by their friends. They were all very modern-looking girls—very self-possessed and entirely at their ease. They were the sort of girls who generally make a practice of frequenting dance halls—quite decent girls, but frivolous.

"Of course, things will be a lot better after we've been going for a week or two," said Uncle Robert, as though he was really part of the concern. "We shall be better known then, and more girls will turn up, so there'll be no trouble about getting partners. But don't forget that if you tell anybody else about the night club it's got to be whispered. The more secretive it can be kept, the better."

"You can trust us!" said Sinclair. "We don't want this ripping place to be closed down."

And the others heartily agreed.

### CHAPTER 8.

#### The Gay Life!

**T**HERE was really nothing wicked about Mr. Clegg's Night Club.

Mr. Clegg was unscrupulous, to an extent, in inducing these St. Frank's boys to break bounds and to visit his precious club. He was to be condemned for his readiness to make money out of the folly of these young people. But there was nothing particularly vicious about it. In truth, Mr. Clegg was very strict, and he was in personal attendance all the time to see that drawing-room manners were maintained.

In no circumstances could this club be called shady. The young "bloods" of the district could bring their sisters here with perfect safety. If this was their idea of a good time, then they could have it, and come to no harm.

Mr. Clegg was rather disappointed to see only five St. Frank's fellows on the spot; but he remembered that this was the first night, and that Uncle Robert had only

been at St. Frank's for a week. It wasn't wise to judge too hastily. St. Frank's was a big school, and there were heaps of fellows there with pots of money; sooner or later they would begin to roll in.

In the meantime, there were other patrons to rely upon. There were plenty of well-to-do families round about Bellton and Edgemoor, and the young people of these families would probably welcome a night outing now and again.

Before long, Sinclair and Grayson had secured partners, and they were dancing. Shaw and Gore-Pearce were sitting at their table, gazing on at the scene with enjoyment. There was a general air of jollity and lightheartedness about the place; everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves thoroughly.

"How many here, Mr. Clegg?" asked Uncle Robert, as he approached the proprietor.

"About thirty, roughly," said Mr. Clegg. "Not at all bad for the first night, Bob. Of course, there's room for double that number."

"But sixty people couldn't dance on this floor!" protested the junior.

Mr. Clegg chuckled.

"Ever been in a West End night club?" he asked amusedly. "Sardines, by hokey! They're not too particular in such places as this, fortunately. They don't mind being crowded."

Mr. Clegg was sitting at a small table near the curtained alcove. There was nobody else near at hand, and Uncle Robert sat down, too.

"I wanted to bring more chaps, but four of them got cold feet," he explained. "They'll come next time, though."

"With others, I hope," said Mr. Clegg.

"Rather! I'll bet there'll be a big crowd next time," nodded the schoolboy. "By the way, how often are you going to open the club?"

"Three times a week to begin with," said Mr. Clegg. "Then, if it catches on all right, we'll give a show every night."

"Show?" said Uncle Robert. "I suppose you mean there'll be dancing?"

"There's a cabaret attached to this night club, young 'un," said Mr. Clegg. "At one o'clock the dance floor will be cleared, and the performance will begin. I'm afraid it won't be much to start with, but we can easily progress."

He glanced at his watch as the band struck up a fox-trot.

"That reminds me," he added "The time's getting short. I shall have to leave you, Bob."

"How about settling up?" asked Fenton's uncle.

Mr. Clegg frowned.

"Time enough for that to-morrow," he said. "It wouldn't be a bad idea if you went amongst your school-fellows and suggested that they should buy drinks and chocolates and other things. The more money



we can take, the better the profits. Don't forget these details, Bob."

"All right," said Uncle Robert. "I'll attend to it."

With the strains of the music in his ears, Mr. Clegg pushed the curtains of the alcove aside and passed through. He now found himself upon a miniature stage. It was dark, and he slipped through the wings and then found a door. Opening the door, he was at the foot of a flight of wooden stairs. These led upwards to another part of the house, and this staircase was purely a private one.

Before Mr. Clegg could ascend, he heard footsteps, and a moment later he was joined by Olive.

**O**LIVE CLEGG looked a vision.

She was dressed rather like a revue chorus girl, in gaily-coloured silks, with a short, fluffy skirt, her slim legs encased in sheeny silk, her shoes aglitter with imitation diamonds. In her hand she carried an ornamental head-dress.

"By hokey!" said Mr. Clegg. "That's the style, Olive, my girl! You look wonderful!"

The girl looked at him steadily for a moment, and then she took a step nearer to him.

"I'm not going to appear, father!" she said tensely. "Oh, I won't—I won't!"

"Hallo! What's this?" asked Mr. Clegg, in surprise. "Come, girlie! You mustn't talk like that."

"Oh, it isn't fair!" she panted. "You're not going to make me dance and sing before everybody in—in this!" she added, looking down at her costume.

"What's the matter with it?" asked Mr. Clegg. "I paid a lot of money for that dress. It was designed and made by one of the most famous men in the West End, a man who supplies the biggest London revues. Nothing but the best is good enough for you, Olive."

"But I don't like it, dad," she said earnestly. "I don't like anything here! It's—it's so sordid!"

"Sordid be hanged!" said Mr. Clegg, frowning. "Don't talk nonsense, Olive! I pride myself that this night club is smart—ultra smart, by hokey! So no more of this nonsense! Put that head-dress on, and let me see how you look."

He glanced round to assure himself that the curtains were closed, and then he turned on a light. Olive was donning the head-dress, and she cast a frightened glance towards the closed curtains.

"They'll see me!" she whispered.

"What of it?" said her stepfather. "But you needn't worry—the curtains are closed. They'll see you later on."

"No, no! I can't go on with it, dad!"

He laughed at her, and stood back. Then he set his head on one side, and gave her a critical inspection.

"Marvellous!" he said at length. "Why, girlie, you're a riot! The singing won't

matter—or the dancing, either. It's worth a pound just to look at you!"

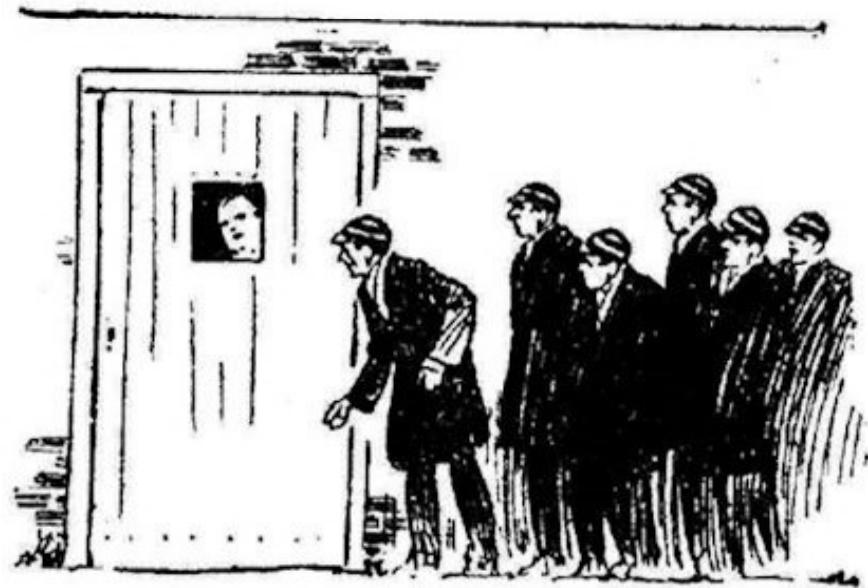
There was a good deal of justification for Mr. Simon Clegg's enthusiastic remark. Olive was a very pretty girl at any time, but just now her sweet, wistful type of beauty was extraordinarily enhanced.

Yet Olive was decidedly the wrong sort of girl for the part Mr. Clegg intended her to play. He had told her that she must appear in the night club in this costume; that she must sing and dance. She was not cut out for that sort of thing. She was too gentle and retiring.

For years she had been in a boarding school, while her mother had carried on her stage profession. Then, to the girl's surprise and dismay, she had heard that her mother had married again. And now, almost immediately after leaving the boarding school, she was living with her stepfather in this quiet village. She had believed that she was to lead a simple life; instead she had been pitchforked into this night-club existence. It went right against the grain. Her mother was an actress, but she had no desire for the boards.

Yet she undoubtedly inherited her mother's talent. At school she had been the finest dancer, and her voice had been trained. Mr. Clegg saw no reason why he should not take full advantage of his stepdaughter's talents. Unfortunately, he was incapable of putting himself in Olive's place. He regarded this night-club life as mere nothing; for her to appear in the so-called cabaret was a mere matter of course. He failed to understand her aversion of the whole thing.

"You're wonderful, Olive!" declared Mr.



Clegg. "Why, they'll go mad about you! And you're talking about not appearing! Impossible! You know the songs, don't you? Well, you'll have to be ready within a few minutes—"

"Please, please!" she pleaded, running forward and catching his arm. "Don't make me do it, dad!"

"But this is sheer rubbish!" snapped her stepfather, becoming grim. "Pull yourself together, girlie! I'm not going to pander to your silly whims and fancies!"

"If—if you really want me to, I'll sing—I'll appear!" she said. "Oh, but please let me put on that other dress of mine. The one



I wore at school. And let me sing some of my own songs, dad. I don't like these syn-copated tunes. The words are so silly."

"Never mind the words—it's the tune that counts!" said Mr. Clegg. "And I know you can sing them splendidly, because I heard you practising."

He suddenly burst into a laugh before she could make any comment.

"And that other costume of yours," he went on. "Ye gods and little fishes! That costume you wore at school, eh? The one you had for that tame concert? By hokey, girlie, you must be off your head!"

"It's lovely!" she insisted. "All chiffon and white silk——"

"Antediluvian!" said her stepfather curtly. "Absolutely impossible—completely out of place in a night club. You'd be laughed off the stage. Certainly not! You'll appear in the costume you're now wearing, and you ought to be pleased to do so. Ninety-nine girls out of a hundred would leap at the chance."

"Then I must be the hundredth girl, dad!" said Olive quietly. "I don't like it—and I don't think it's fair of you to make me——"

"That's enough!" he broke in harshly. "Confound you, girl! When I say a thing, I meant it! Understand?"

His whole tone had changed; his good-natured manner had vanished. He was angry—in a sharp, brutal kind of way. Normally, Mr. Clegg was an easy man to get on with, but he was subject to these sudden fits of violence.

She shrank away from him, her face turning a shade paler.

"Oh, dad!" she whispered. "Please don't! You frighten me!"

"I mean to frighten you!" he rapped out. "Don't forget, you've got to be ready within five minutes!"

He strode to the curtains and pushed his way past them, leaving Olive trembling.

## CHAPTER 9.

### Worth the Money!

"LADIES and gentlemen——"

Mr. Clegg paused in order to give the ladies and gentlemen time to attend to him. One o'clock had just struck, and the curtains in the alcove had been drawn aside, revealing a brilliantly-illuminated little stage. Everybody was sitting down at the tables, watching with interest. The band was ready, too.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity of reminding you that this club has only just opened," said Mr. Clegg. "I can assure you that I shall always do my utmost to entertain you, and to encourage your patronage. So far as arrangements go at present, the club will be open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays."

There were a few handclaps, and some murmurs of approval.

"Why not every night?" asked Wellborne, of the River House School.

"We shall probably open every night a bit later on," replied Mr. Clegg. "It is my intention to provide a little cabaret show as a regular feature. To-night I can only provide you with three turns, and I must crave your indulgence. I am engaging some first-class artists, including a small but expert troupe of dancers. In the meantime, let me introduce Mr. Al Simson, the Man with the Lightning Feet. Later on you will see Martini, the Conjuror, and Miss Olive, in Songs and Dances."

The band immediately struck up, and an agile little gentleman fairly leapt upon the stage. He came in sideways, with one energetic jump. The next second he was dancing like a box of springs.

Mr. Clegg had thought better of his former arrangement. He was giving his step-daughter time to calm herself, and so she would be appearing last.

In the meantime, Mr. Al Simson provided excellent entertainment. He was undoubtedly a very expert dancer, and his legs appeared to be made of indiarubber. Both he and "Martini" were members of the orchestra, but not many people noticed that the orchestra was now two musicians short. The others were making enough noise, in any case.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Grayson, as he watched. "This is jolly good, you know! As good as going to a London music-hall!"

"Anyhow, we're getting our money's worth," said Sinclair complacently. "I shall come to this place three times a week."

"Rather!" agreed Shaw. "Something to liven up this rotten term."

"Yes, it's always dull during the month or two after Christmas," said Gore-Pearce.

Mr. Simpson having finished, his place on the stage was occupied by the illusionist. He was quite a clever sleight-of-hand conjurer, although there was nothing very remarkable in his performance. However, the audience was in a tolerant mood, and the most ordinary tricks were applauded heartily. Nobody had expected to get any cabaret, anyhow, so all this was to the good.

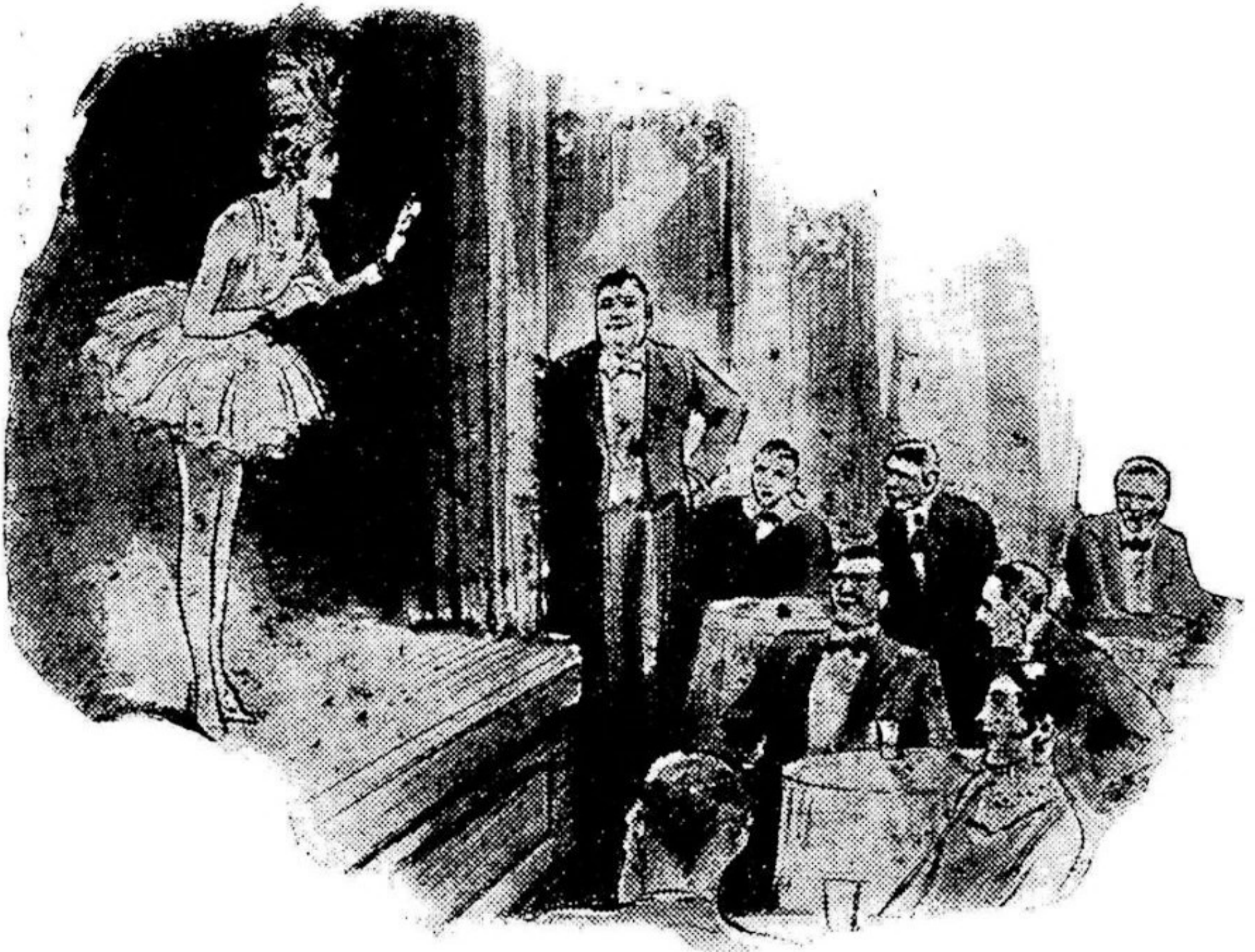
And then came "Miss Olive," in songs and dances.

Nobody could have believed that she was so nervous that she felt positively giddy; nobody could have suspected that she hated and loathed this kind of performance. For, as the music struck up a lively tune, she came tripping on to the little stage, all smiles, and apparently as confident as any West End revue star. It was in her blood; in spite of her reluctance, her natural talent made it impossible for her to give a poor performance.

In fact, she was astoundingly good.

Her dancing was graceful and clever, and when she sang her sweet voice stilled every murmur from the tables. There was something magnetic in her personality. During her first moment on the stage she had completely "captured" her audience.





There was something magnetic about Olive's personality as she danced and sang. Mr. Clegg, watching from the side of the stage, beamed with satisfaction. Olive would be a great "draw" in his night club.

Mr. Clegg was overjoyed. He had known all along that she would be good; but now his relief was enormous. He had had his way. She had appeared, in spite of her reluctance. And now that she was so excellent, he made up his mind that she would be a permanent feature of this little cabaret. After this, indeed, he could not possibly do without her—for the patrons would constantly be clamouring for her.

Indeed they clamoured now—when she had finished her turn.

"Oh, bravo!"

"Encore—encore!"

The clapping was insistent, but "Miss Olive" only appeared and bowed. And then the curtains were drawn, and the orchestra struck up a lively fox-trot. It was an indication that the show was over, and that dancing could be resumed.

When Mr. Clegg went behind the curtains he found his stepdaughter within the little doorway at the side, near the foot of the private stairs. She was leaning against the wall, her eyes troubled, her face unhealthily flushed.

"Well?" demanded Mr. Clegg boisterously. "By hokey, girlie, didn't I tell you that you'd be a riot?"

"Please don't make me do it again, dad!" she said pleadingly.

"What!" he ejaculated. "After all that applause? You'll not only have to do it again, but you'll have to give encores. I spared you to-night, but in future you'll have to give another song—and probably two more. Why, Olive, you were marvellous!"

"I don't like it, dad!" she insisted. "Oh, but what's the good of talking? You're heartless! You don't care a snap for my feelings! All you want to do is to make your money—and I'm not even to be considered!"

She turned, and ran up the stairs. Mr. Clegg shrugged his shoulders, lit a cigar, and grinned.

"She'll get over it!" he assured himself. "Fancies! That's all—just fancies! It's an infernal pity she's so set against this sort of thing, but I daresay she'll outgrow it."

Towards two o'clock the dancing became less energetic, and in twos and threes the night club habitués prepared to leave. The contingent from St. Frank's did not go until about two-thirty, when the interest was beginning to peter out. And when they went they were all of the opinion that their money had been well spent, and that this rural night club was the idea of the century.



**C**LANG—clang!

Gulliver and Bell sat up in their beds as the rising-bell sounded, and they blinked sleepily.

"Hallo!" muttered Gulliver. "Those fat-heads got back all right, then."

Bell glanced at the other beds. Uncle Robert and Claude Gore-Pearce were sleeping soundly. They had taken no notice of the rising-bell, although its clanging was insistent enough.

"That's the second bell, too," went on Gulliver. "Rats! We've got to turn out, I suppose."

They rapidly commenced dressing, and when they had progressed to the point of having their trousers on, they felt a trifle better. Getting up on a winter's morning is quite all right after the first minute or two.

"Wake up, you slackers!" said Gulliver, giving Gore-Pearce a thump in the ribs. "Hi! We want to hear how you got on last night."

Gore-Pearce grunted, turned over, and mumbled something incoherent.

"Wake up!" roared Gulliver. "Do you want to get swished by a prefect?"

Gore-Pearce rolled over again, and opened his eyes. They were heavy, listless and dull.

"Go away!" he mumbled. "You silly fool—"

"But it's the second bell!" said Gulliver.

"Eh? Oh, yes!" muttered Gore-Pearce. "Gad! I feel rotten!"

"What time did you get in last night?"

"Last night!" echoed Claude, with a prodigious yawn. "You mean this morning! We didn't get back until about three o'clock."

"Phew!" whistled Bell. "No wonder you feel wonky now! You've only had four or five hours sleep."

Uncle Robert was sitting up, and he looked equally washed-out. But he was not so irritable as Gore-Pearce.

"Never mind," he said wearily, as he got out of bed. "We can prepare for it next time—by having a good long nap in the evening."

Gore-Pearce was in a vile temper. But, in reply to Gulliver's and Bell's insistent questions, he admitted that the night club was a marvellous place, and that he and his companions had had a splendid time. After that Gore-Pearce refused to say any more. At least, he only gave grunts and ill-tempered insults. He was not much better when he went downstairs—only just in time to dash in for breakfast.

He didn't want any breakfast; he had no appetite. His tongue felt twice its normal size, owing to an excess of smoking. His head ached, and he still felt atrociously heavy and sleepy.

In fact, he looked so bad that quite a number of the other juniors noticed him. And Uncle Robert was in almost precisely the same condition. They were paying the price for their overnight pleasure. After all, it is impossible to burn the candle at both ends.

"What's the matter with you chaps?" demanded Handforth, coming upon Gore-Pearce & Co. in the Ancient House lobby.

"You, Gore-Pearce! And you, Chester! What have you been doing to yourselves?"

"We've been minding our own business," replied Uncle Robert pointedly.

"If you're asking for a thick ear, my lad, I'll jolly soon supply you with one!" roared Handforth. "What have you been doing? You look awful! You're like a couple of washed-out rags!"

"That's funny!" said Bob Christine, of the Modern House, as he came in. "Talking about washed-out rags, we've got some specimens on the other side of the Triangle."

"Oh!" said Handforth. "Who are they?"

**COMING NEXT WEEK!**



Bob Christine inspected Gore-Pearce and Uncle Robert.

"Yes, they look just the same as these chaps," he said. "There's Sinclair and Grayson and Shaw. If you ask me, they were out on the ran-dan last night. Having a merry old razzle, or something. Still, if they enjoyed themselves then, it's pretty certain they're not enjoying themselves now."

"Serves 'em right!" said Church. "But why should we worry ourselves about them?"

"They can go and eat coke!" said Handforth witheringly.

Gore-Pearce & Co. went out into the Triangle, and Gulliver and Bell were grinning. Uncle Robert was not exactly amiable, but he was certainly not so ill-tempered as Gore-Pearce



"The interfering rotters!" snapped the leader of Study A. "What's it got to do with them? Oh, my hat! I feel rotten! My head's throbbing like a gas-engine!"

"Well, you're paying the penalty for going out to a night club with Uncle Robert, and dancing with old Clegg's daughter!" said Gulliver, with relish. "If you do those sort of things——"

"Shut up, you fool!" said Uncle Robert sharply.

"Eh? What the——"

"Didn't I pledge you to secrecy?" went on the new junior, as he led them towards

## "HIS HONOUR AT STAKE!"

A thorough sportsman; one of the very best. That's how St. Frank's has regarded Edgar Fenton—until the arrival of Robert Chester. Now—well, that opinion is slowly changing. Chester is Fenton's uncle, he is a rotter of the worst type; and, not unnaturally, his misdeeds are reflecting upon Fenton.

In other words, Fenton's honour is at stake. How he sets out to clear his name; how he endeavours to bring about the exposure of Mr. Clegg's night club which has recently opened and which is threatening to bring St. Frank's into disgrace, is told in next week's grand long school yarn.

## "THE FOUR-LEGGED EAGLE!"

Look out for another enthralling instalment of this magnificent detective yarn, featuring Ferrers Loeke and his boy assistant, Jack Drake, next Wednesday, chums.

## ORDER IN ADVANCE!

the centre of the Triangle. "Where is your sense? We were quite near that wall—and near some windows."

"But the windows are closed!" protested Gulliver. "Hang it! There's no need for us to whisper——"

"All the same, we can't be too careful!" said Uncle Robert. "Not that it would really matter, even if the story got about. Nobody would believe it—and there's no proof. Still, it's just as well to be careful."

Gore-Pearce glanced round, and grunted. "You needn't get windy," he said. "There's nobody about."

But in this he was quite wrong. Gulliver had made that incautious remark as he and the others had been strolling past the front of the Ancient House. None of

the windows overlooking the Triangle belonged to the junior studies—or, in fact, to any boys' studies. Two of the windows were those of the Ancient House Library.

And one window wasn't quite closed. Hubbard, of the Remove, was standing near the window, looking up some references in a mighty volume. But he put the volume down as he looked out into the Triangle.

"Well I'm blessed!" he muttered. "So that's it!" He tried to recall the words he had heard—words that had been uttered by Gulliver. "Paying the price for going to a night club," muttered Hubbard. "That's what he said. Going to a night club with Uncle Robert. My hat! So that's why those fatheads looks so wonky this morning! What else did he say?"

He puckered his brow, trying to remember. "Yes, that's it!" he said. "Dancing with somebody. Somebody's daughter, I believe—yes, Clegg's daughter! That must be old Clegg, the chap who has got Moat Hollow. Well, I'm blessed if I'd risk my skin by going out on the razzle like that!"

And Hubbard shrugged his shoulders, and went on with his job, dismissing Gore-Pearce & Co. completely from his mind.

## CHAPTER 10.

### Rumours!

CECIL DE VALERIE, of Study G, shook his head.

"They're not ill, Archie," he said, smiling. "They're just washed out."

"Oh, rather!" said Archie Glenthorne. "Absolutely! I see what you mean, laddie. Washed out, what? I rather thought the blighters looked like a couple of 'flu victims."

"Then don't waste any more sympathy on them," said De Valerie. "You know what a bounder Chester is, and Gore-Pearce is worse. They must have been sitting up until the small hours of the morning playing cards."

"I say, how frightfully ridic.!" protested Archie. "Good gad! I mean, wasting so many hours of the good old dreamless!"

"There must have been a pretty big party, by all that I can hear," went on De Valerie, with a grin. "I dare say it was held over in the East House—in Sinclair's study, or Grayson's study."

Hubbard came along, and he paused. "Then you're wrong," he said, grinning.

"Eh?" said Val. "Wrong about what?"

"About that party," replied Hubbard.

"Those fatheads went out to a night club."

"Odds folly and rot!" said Archie Glenthorne. "Kindly talk sense, Hubbard, dear old cheese! I mean, you know dashed well there's not one of those dashed places in this dashed neighbourhood. And a dashed good thing, too!"

"Well, I heard Gulliver saying that Gore-Pearce had been to a night club," insisted Hubbard.

"If it's all the same to you, old article, I'd rather not indulge in this idle gossip,"



observed Archie frigidly. "I mean, tittle-tattle, what? Absolutely!"

He walked off, and De Valerie chuckled.

"You can't blame him, Hubbard," he said. "That yarn of yours is a bit steep, you know."

"Well, it's true!" grunted Hubbard. "I tell you I heard Gulliver saying it. Those chumps went to a night club last night with Uncle Robert."

"With Uncle Robert, eh?" whistled De Valerie. "Phew! I'm not surprised to hear about him."

"And they went dancing with Clegg's daughter—"

"What's that?"

It wasn't merely an inquiry, but a bellow, and it came from Edward Oswald Handforth, who appeared at that moment from the Remove passage with Church and McClure in attendance—as usual.

"What's that you said, Hubbard?" repeated Handforth, as he strode up.

De Valerie grinned more than ever.

"Of course, you're rather soft about Mr. Clegg's daughter, aren't you?" he murmured. "Poor old Handy! She's not such a saint as you imagined!"

"No?" said Handforth ominously. "What is she, then?"

"Didn't you hear what Hubbard just said?"

"No, I didn't—not all of it, anyhow."

"Here, dry up!" said Hubbard hastily. "We don't want to start any talking—"

"Might as well tell Handy," said De Valerie, with a wink. "The fact is, Handy, old man, Gore-Pearce and some East House seniors went with Uncle Robert to a night club last night, and they danced with Miss Clegg, and— Here, what the— Steady! You silly idiot! What do you think—"

De Valerie couldn't get any further. Handforth simply hurled himself at him, and the next second De Valerie went over backwards with a wild howl.

Handforth twirled round like lightning.

Crash!

Hubbard went reeling back, too. Church and McClure dashed forward and grabbed their leader.

"Let me go!" roared Handforth. "I'm going to smash these fatheads until—"

"Until what?" asked Wilson, of the Sixth.

"Eh?" gasped Handforth, looking round. "Now, look here, Wilson. Don't you interfere! It's a pity if you can't have a blind eye for once!"

The prefect shook his head.

"There are some things I can be blind to, but not this!" he said grimly. "You can't fight here, my son."

"They insulted Olive Clegg!" said Handforth thickly.

"Olive Clegg?" said Wilson. "Who on earth is Olive Clegg? Oh, I see!" he added suddenly. "That girl you saved yesterday? I remember now. And how did these chaps insult her?"

"He's mad!" said De Valerie furiously, as he got to his feet. "We only said that some of our chaps danced with her!"

"That's not insulting," remarked Wilson judicially.

"Yes, it is!" snorted Handforth. "They said that they were dancing with her in a night club. And no nice girl goes to a night club!"

"It all depends upon the night club," said Wilson soothingly. "And I don't see that we need enter into any argument about it, because there aren't any night clubs in this district."

"Don't you be so sure about it!" said Hubbard. "That's where those chaps went last night—Sinclair and Grayson and Fenton's precious uncle and the others!"

"Eh?" said Wilson, with a start. "By Jove! I've noticed that Sinclair looks a bit seedy."

"They went to a night club, according to what I can hear," said Hubbard, "and they went with that new chap, Chester. They danced with Olive Clegg— Hi! Keep away from me, Handy!" he added wildly.

"Handforth!" shouted Wilson, reaching out a strong arm.

He was just in time to drag Handforth back, and the leader of Study D quivered with excitement and indignation.

"Let me get at him!" he grunted. "The rotter! Didn't you hear him then? Didn't you hear him say that Olive Clegg was in a night club with—"

"Let him babble on!" said Wilson grimly. "Surely you don't take any notice of this idiotic yarn, Handforth? Where's your sense?"

"Eh? You—you don't think—"

"It's only a silly yarn!" said Wilson curtly. "It's all rot! You know there's no night club about here—so how could they go to one?"

"By George! I hadn't thought of that," said Handforth, simmering down.

"Well, it's time you did think of it—and don't let me catch you fighting in the lobby again," said Wilson. "You'll write me fifty lines, my lad."

"Here, I say, cheese it!"

"Fifty lines!" insisted Wilson. "And I shall expect them some time this evening. And the less you say about this dotty story, the better!"

UNCLE ROBERT wasn't any too delighted when he heard the rumours that were going about. Somehow or other the story had leaked out. All sorts of people were talking about a night club, and about Mr. Clegg's daughter.

"Confound it!" muttered Fenton's youthful uncle. "I'll bet Gulliver is responsible for this! The fool! It's a pity he can't keep his tongue still!"

The one satisfactory feature about the persistent rumour was that nobody could tell where the night club was situated. The



majority of the fellows, indeed, refused to believe in the existence of any night club. They took it for granted that Uncle Robert and the others—who had obviously been out "on the razale" overnight—had merely gone to an extra hectic party.

Moat Hollow was not even mentioned, or thought of. And even though Olive Clegg's name had been spoken, there was nothing in this, for she could easily have been a member of the party. Quite a number of the juniors believed that the gathering had been held in Bannington.

**B**IGGLESWADE, of the Sixth, shook his head rather dubiously.

"It's pretty rotten," he said.

"That's what it is—pretty rotten."

"Especially for Fenton," said Conroy major.

They were in the Senior Day Room, in the Ancient House, gathered round the blazing fire. Wilson was there, too, and Morrow had looked in from the West House.

"Of course, it's only a rumour," he said cautiously. "It wouldn't do to take any actual notice of it."

"All the same, it's bad for Fenton," said Wilson. "This young blighter, Chester, is Fenton's uncle, don't forget. His uncle, if you please! I've never heard of such nonsense!"

The other prefects heartily agreed.

"It would be bad enough for a man to have a decent sort of uncle in the Junior School," said Biggleswade, "but when he's a kid like Chester—well, it's too awful for words. He's an arrant young sweep! Tells lies as fluently as any ordinary chap tells the truth."

"It's a pity he ever came to St. Frank's," said Conroy major. "Fenton's a good fellow—we all like him. He's respected, too. The juniors, in particular, look up to him. And now his prestige is suffering."

"I wouldn't say that," put in Morrow thoughtfully.

"But it is!" declared Conroy. "Why, the juniors are beginning to laugh at him already. They've been laughing for a week, in fact. Fenton, the school captain, with an uncle in the Remove! And a tricky young rotter of an uncle at that!"

"Well, we can't do any good by talking about it," said Biggy diplomatically. "Let's confine ourselves to this rumour. You heard it from Handforth first, didn't you, Wilson?"

"Yes."

"Something about a night club?"

"Oh, some such rot!" grunted Wilson.

"Of course, everybody knows there isn't a night club in this neighbourhood—not even in Bannington."

"You can't be too sure," said Morrow. "Anyhow, it's a pretty rummy thing that this should have happened so soon after Chester's arrival. It looks to me as if he introduced these chaps into the club. The kid's a positive danger."

"Go easy!" murmured Biggy.

Edgar Fenton had just come in, looking thoughtful and troubled. And the prefects round the fire fell into a complete silence.

"Don't mind me," said Fenton, smiling. "Talking about my lovely uncle, weren't you?"

"Sorry, Fenton, old man!" said Morrow. "I'm afraid we're not the only ones who are talking about him. I dare say you've heard the rumours?"

"Yes," said Fenton, joining the others. "I don't quite know what to do. As a general principle, I don't believe in investigating rumours. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they prove to be just yarns. Give me something definite, and I'll act."

"But this rumour is very persistent," said Conroy major. "Everybody is saying that your uncle introduced a lot of fellows into a night club. And it's an absolute fact that Sinclair and Grayson and a few others are looking very seedy to-day."

"I've noticed it," said Fenton grimly. "I think perhaps it would be a good idea if I had a little talk with that uncle of mine. Confound him! He's a problem."

"It's hard lines on you, Fenton," said Morrow sympathetically.

The school captain shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I'm not breaking down under the strain," he said dryly. "Young Chester can't do me any harm. The trouble is, he thinks he can take advantage of our relationship—and I believe that this is the first step. He thinks he's safe. He's fooling himself that I daren't take any action because if he gets into disgrace the stigma will reflect itself upon me."

"Well, there's something in it, isn't there?" asked Biggleswade.

"Nothing!" replied Fenton. "If people are down on me because of the misdeeds of my uncle, then it's a queer notion of justice. If I can prove that Chester has been up to mischief, I'll take him to the headmaster with my own hands and recommend him for a flogging. I'll show him whether he can take advantage of our relationship!"

And Fenton strode out of the Senior Day Room, looking quite dangerous.

"I believe he's going to act at once," said Wilson.

"The sooner the better!" replied Morrow. "Personally, I'd like to see that confounded uncle of his sacked from the school. He's no good here. He's already exerting a bad influence in the Remove."

In the meantime, Edgar Fenton reached the end of the Sixth Form passage.

"Fag!" he said sharply.

A couple of small forms appeared from the alcove at the end of the passage. Chubby Heath came into sight, after a little scuffle with another fag.

"Yes, Fenton?" he said breathlessly.

"Run along and find Chester, of the Remove," said Fenton. "Tell him that I want him in my study—at once."



"Yes, Fenton," said Chubby. "Supposing he won't come? He's a cheeky beggar, you know."

"Just tell him that I want him, and that it's urgent," replied Fenton. "If he doesn't come, I shall know what to do. But, in any case, you trot back here and report yourself as soon as you have found him."

And Chubby Heath cut off.

## CHAPTER 11.

### On the Carpet!

"JUST a minute, Chester!"

Uncle Robert looked round as he heard the hail. He was on the point of entering Study A, in the Remove passage. Chubby Heath came along, breathless.

"Fenton wants you, Chester," he said.

"Oh, does he?" said Uncle Robert. "Then he can wait."

"He says it's urgent," added the fag.

"I don't care what he says!" retorted Uncle Robert. "It's a nice state of affairs when a nephew sends for his uncle and calmly tells him that he wants him!"

"Rats!" said Chubby Heath boldly. "You can't fool me with that uncle and nephew stuff! This is a case of a prefect ordering a junior to go to his study. And if you don't go you'll get into hot water. Anyhow, you can't say that I haven't told you. And don't forget that Fenton is waiting."

Uncle Robert, who was carrying a book, suddenly swung his arm round and heaved the book at Chubby's head.

"Rotten aim!" grinned the fag.

This sort of thing was second nature to him; he was always dodging books and similar missiles. He ran off, and duly reported himself to Fenton.

In the meantime, Uncle Robert retrieved his book, and instead of going into Study A he remained in the passage, frowning thoughtfully.

"I expect he's heard something," he muttered. "What's going to happen if I don't go? The chances are he'll come here and drag me off, and that wouldn't be very dignified. H'm! I suppose I'd better go."

Two or three minutes later he presented himself in the Sixth Form passage and walked into the captain's study.

"Oh, here you are, Chester!" said Fenton, looking up. "I was expecting you. Sit down, young 'un."

"That's not the way to talk to your uncle," said the junior, grinning.

"But it's the way I'm talking to you—a junior in my House," said Fenton. "Now, I'm not going to beat about the bush. What's all this talk about a night club?"

"I don't know," said Uncle Robert, without turning a hair.

"The fellows are saying that you took a party to a pretty disreputable night club after

lights-out last night," said Fenton. "I want you to tell me—"

"Hold on!" interrupted Uncle Robert. "You say that 'the fellows are saying' this? Which fellows?"

"That doesn't matter—"

"Yes it does!" said the junior. "You can't make an accusation like that, Fenton, unless you have some sort of evidence. You're not going to tell me that you—the school captain—are taking any notice of rumours?"

Fenton looked very steadily at his young uncle.

"I think we understand one another, Chester," he said quietly. "Officially I can't very well make any inquiries, but this little chat of ours is quite unofficial."

"That's better," said Uncle Robert, slipping down into a chair and making himself comfortable.

Fenton felt that he could pick his uncle up, shake him like a rat, and pitch him out. There was something overwhelmingly exasperating about this junior's insolence. It was so exasperating because it couldn't be called insolence. Oh, at least, it couldn't be treated as such.

"You've heard these stories about the night club, of course?" asked Fenton.

"Yes."

"Now, look here," went on Fenton. "Do you know anything about this place?"

"Of course I don't," said Uncle Robert coolly. "I don't believe that any such night club exists. As for my taking a crowd of fellows there, I'm surprised at you for crediting such a story. Why, I'm only a new kid! And they're saying that I took Sinclair of the Sixth! On the face of it, the story is potty!"

"Did you break bounds last night?" asked Fenton abruptly.

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"You weren't looking any too fresh this morning, Chester," said Fenton grimly. "In fact, your eyes looked a bit puffy, and it was obvious that you had not had a full night's sleep."

"That's true enough," said Uncle Robert. "I only had about four hours' sleep, as a matter of fact."

"You admit that?"

"Of course I do," said Uncle Robert. "I didn't go to sleep until nearly four o'clock in the morning."

"Where were you until that hour?"

"In my dormitory, of course."

"Is that true?"

"Naturally it's true," said Uncle Robert glibly. "Where else do you think I should be? I was in bed."

"And you didn't sleep until nearly four o'clock?"

"Couldn't get a wink."

"Why not?"

"Toothache," said Uncle Robert promptly. "Here you are—this is the one!" he added,



opening his mouth, and thrusting his face forward for Fenton's inspection.

"I don't want to see it!" said the school captain gruffly. "So you're telling me, Chester, that you didn't sleep last night because you had the toothache?"

"That's it."

"And what about Gore-Pearce?" asked Fenton ominously. "Did he, by some remarkable coincidence, have the toothache, too?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that Gore-Pearce sleeps in the same bed-room as you," snapped Fenton. "And Gore-Pearce was looking just as washed-out as you this morning, too! How is it that he didn't get to sleep until about four o'clock in the morning?"

Uncle Robert smiled.

"As a matter of fact, he sat up with me," he said promptly. "I thought it was rather decent of him, Fenton."

Edgar Fenton sat back in his chair.

"And you're my uncle!" he said disgustedly. "Upon my word, Chester, I've heard a few liars in my time, but I don't think I've ever heard one who can lie quite so smoothly as you!"

**U**NCLE ROBERT was quite a good actor, and the amount of indignation he managed to work up was excellently done.

"It's a bit thick for you to sit here and call me a liar like this!" he said furiously. "In fact, I've a good mind to complain to the Housemaster! You've no right to do it, Fenton!"

"That's about enough!" said Fenton coldly. "I've already told you that this interview is unofficial."

"That doesn't make any difference! I'm not going to be called a liar!"

"We won't argue the point," said Fenton. "If I liked to take the trouble, I could trip you up on that toothache story quite easily. And as for Gore-Pearce sitting up with you until four o'clock in the morning, I'm astounded that you should trot out such a ridiculous suggestion. I know Gore-Pearce better than that!"

"Well, I was a bit surprised, myself," said Uncle Robert. "I didn't think he would be so sympathetic."

"I don't want to hear anything more about that toothache!" frowned Fenton. "You and Gore-Pearce were out somewhere last night, and you needn't deny it."

"But I do deny it."

"And there wouldn't be all this talk about a night club unless there was some grain of truth behind it," continued Fenton. "Now, look here, Chester, I want you to tell me where you went to last night. You needn't mention any other names—and, if you like, we'll conveniently forget Gore-Pearce. I don't encourage sneaking. But if there's a questionable resort in this neighbourhood—"

"I don't know anything about questionable resorts," broke in Uncle Robert. "I've already told you that I was in bed last night,

and I shall keep on telling you the same thing until I'm blue in the face."

And with that he took his departure. Fenton drew a deep breath.

"Lies—lies!" he muttered. "The young beggar was telling lies the whole time! Of course he was out—and so was Gore-Pearce! And, what's more, I believe there is a night club in this neighbourhood!"

Fenton thought about having Gore-Pearce in the study and questioning him, too. Then he changed his mind. What was the use? Gore-Pearce would only lie, too, and that wouldn't help matters.

Fenton paced up and down his study, his brow black.

He knew that his rascally young uncle was very unpopular in the Junior School; he knew that Uncle Robert was injuring his—Fenton's—prestige. For it was an indisputable fact that quite a number of fellows at St. Frank's were ready enough to sneer at Fenton because of his uncle's misdeeds. It was the way of the world. The sins of the one were visited upon the other.

"I'm not going to stand it!" declared Fenton fiercely. "No, by Jove! I'm not going to have this young scamp running loose about the school, harming my good name! Something will have to be done."

And, then and there, he decided what that something should be.

Much as he disliked the prospect, he knew that he would have to make some personal investigations. It would be an unsavoury task, but Fenton, as Captain of the school, was in a responsible position. The fact that young Chester was his uncle made no difference. His duty was clear.

"I can't question any more of these fellows while there's only an unfounded rumour to go upon," he told himself. "I must get something definite—something concrete. And the only way to do that is to keep my eyes open, and to remain strictly on the watch. And, sooner or later, I'll catch them red-handed!"

It was a very wise decision of Fenton's.

It was far better to let this little bit of excitement blow over, so that the young rascals would gain fresh confidence. They would assume that Fenton had dropped the entire inquiry, and they would believe themselves to be safe.

Edgar Fenton felt better after coming to this decision. There was something in prospect—something definite to do.

Little did he realise, however, into what startling channels those private investigations were to lead him!

THE END.

*(Edgar Fenton finds himself confronted with many snags and pitfalls when he embarks upon his investigations, as readers of the Old Paper will see for themselves when they read the next yarn in this amazing series, which is entitled: "His Honour at Stake!" Look out for this corking story next Wednesday, chums!)*



# GOSSIP ABOUT ST. FRANK'S

Things Heard and Seen By  
EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

**T**HELMA MITCHELL, of Linwood, New Zealand, says that she would like to write to some of the readers who want correspondents. Would it be all right? Of course it would! She can write to boys or girls or grown-ups, and in this way she may obtain quite a few pen-friends. Readers can generally "twig" which correspondents they want to keep. If they don't fancy any particular letters they don't reply to them, or reply in such a way that there's no further correspondence.

\* \* \*

**H**ERE'S an Indian reader—an Anglo-Indian, to be exact—Dennis Phillips, of Trichinopoly—who casts serious doubts upon the genuineness of the replies in this Gossip. I failed to reply to a previous letter of his, thus accounting for the milk in the coconut. Well, I have always said in these columns that I can't possibly reply to everyone. I have turned up Dennis' previous letter, and I find that there was nothing in it which I considered of interest to the majority. His present letter is of interest, however, since it casts a doubt upon the authenticity of these pages. He has been wondering if his nationality has barred him from a reply, and I urge him to wonder no longer. To live and breathe and to be able to write are the only qualifications necessary. I have replied to English, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, Canadian, Australian, South African, Indian, American, Japanese, Chinese, Negro, and, in fact, I have replied to readers of every nationality and every colour while this feature has been in the Old Paper. I welcome letters from everybody, and if they "touch the spot," they get replied to, either by post or through this Gossip, irrespective altogether of the readers' age, sex, nationality, colour, or social standing.

**D**OROTHY RACE, of Malta, tells me that she is very anxious to "get a friend to take the N.L.L. regularly" so that she may enrol as a member of the St. Frank's League. I wonder how many other readers have made this same mistake? There's no need for Dorothy, or any other reader, to worry about enrolling. It is *not* necessary to make anybody promise

to become a regular reader. All you have to do is to buy two copies of any issue in which the Application Form appears, and give one of these copies away. You can give it to anybody—a friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger. All you require in return is for the friend or acquaintance or stranger to sign his or her name on the Application Form, which you will bag out of the copy you give away. Then send this to the Chief Officer of the League with the form out of your own copy. This automatically enrolls you, and you get your Certificate of Membership.

\* \* \*

**T**HERE'S no doubt that the Old Paper appeals to people of all ages. Here's an inquiry from Phillip Quine, of Sydney, Australia, and he tells me that his age is 9½. He wants to know how old Nipper is, and who are the occupants of Study G, in the Ancient House. Cecil de Valerie and the Duke of Somerton share Study G. Nipper is in the Remove, of course, and the average age of Removites is 15.

## OUR READERS' PORTRAIT GALLERY



Phyllis Parratt

**O**UR photograph this week is of Miss Phyllis Parratt, of Dorking, Surrey, and I'm sure that all readers will agree that this feature is improved by its inclusion.

**I**MAGINE that Nipper must be the bravest and most daring junior at St. Frank's. William James Newsholme, of Ilkeston, Derbyshire, has brought up this subject, and I think it is of interest. Many readers may

not think that Nipper is deserving of this distinction, but this is my opinion. Nipper is really a modest sort of chap, and he hates to talk about his capabilities. And because he is so capable he has many criticsers. Lots of readers say that he is too perfect—that he does more than any schoolboy could do. Well, the fact is that Nipper is not really an ordinary schoolboy. It mustn't be forgotten that he is really Nelson Lee's detective assistant, and it stands to reason that he should be keener and more capable and more quick-witted than the average schoolboy. Training counts, you know, and Nipper's training has been very thorough.



This Exciting 'Tec Yarn Featuring Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake will Thrill You!

# THE FOUR-LEGGED EAGLE!



"'Tee I Down him boys!"

## The Threat!

IT was a case of Locke's brain against that of Prince Carlos. What worried the detective was the fact that Queen Zita might recognise him and unwittingly reveal his identity to her persecutors. But, as it happened, the queen was too enraged with Carlos to pay any especial attention to Locke and Jack.

Carlos talked fiercely, angrily. The king took no notice, while the queen retorted imperiously, furiously.

Now and again, Major Patens said a word or two. The Grand Seigneur of Perilla shifted impatiently, snapping out a sentence as if advising Carlos to make short work of it all. The Duke of Silene, cunning, obsequious, merely rubbed his hands together and grinned.

And then Carlos lapsed into English. Locke knew then that the time for action was fast approaching. The use of English was for his and Jack's benefit.

"I have come to the end of my patience. Your Majesty must be obstinate no longer," he said. "If you still persist in your attitude the queen will pass out of this room and you will see her no more."

Ferdinand was suddenly very much interested. He glared up at Carlos.

"So it has come to that, has it, you scoundrel?" he snapped. "You would threaten to lay hands on your queen?"

"You heard me perfectly," said Carlos sneeringly. "It is obvious to you, no doubt, that you are in my power completely, and I cannot waste any more time in haggling with you. I want that document signed."

"I refuse," snapped the king. "I shall always refuse!"

"I don't think so," said Carlos. "Remember—I give you five minutes—and if you still refuse—"

"What then?" asked Ferdinand.

"I told you—the queen will pass out of this room—to her death!"

Ferdinand groaned, conscious of his utter helplessness. But Queen Zita left her chair at the table, and strode regally up to Carlos.

"Sir," she said, "death has no terrors for me. Kill me now!"

Carlos scowled at her, and tried to brush her aside, but she resisted him.

"Coward!" she taunted him. "You covet the crown of Abronia, but without our private fortune the crown would be but a

*"Slowly King Ferdinand took up the pen to sign a document which would lose him his crown and his fortune—it seemed that Ferrers Locke, his protector, had failed!"*



bauble. So you plot to get both our money and our throne. Yet you have not the pluck nor the spirit to fight us in war, you must needs resort to bribing low hooligans to do your traitor's work for you. You—a Prince of Abronia—descend to threaten women, to threaten me—Zita, your queen!"

Carlos was pale with anger.

"Madam," he said, "what I want I get, and you cannot turn me from the path I have chosen."

"Do not be too sure of that," she told him. "There is one working for me who may defeat you yet."

Carlos laughed sneeringly.

"You refer to that detective—what is his name?—Ferrers Locke? But twice have I outwitted him, and I will do it again. But you fail to realise, madam, that by enlisting that man's services you have forced this scene upon me. I am compelled to finish this farce without delay."

He stepped past the queen and approached the table.

"Will you sign?" he asked, handing the pen to the king.

"No!" snapped Ferdinand.

Carlos spun round on his heel and waved his hand towards the queen. He spoke to Locke.

"Seize that woman!" he ordered.

Jack bit his lip. He hated the very idea. He wanted to leap on Carlos and throttle him, but Locke was still acting his part and Jack had to support him. Together they advanced on the queen. She faced them boldly, although she was white to the lips. Locke grabbed her by one arm, and Jack seized her by the other. She resisted them, but they dragged her forcibly towards the door.

It was too much for King Ferdinand. He came to his feet, frantic, and cried out hoarsely:

"Stop! I can't hold out! Anything but that! I'll sign!"

"Sign, then!" said Carlos triumphantly.

He placed the pen in the king's hand. Ferdinand stooped to sign, but suddenly, with a bound, Ferrers Locke left the queen. He came to the table, reached across and snatched up the document. With a quick, deft movement he tore the document in two and threw the pieces in the face of Prince Carlos.

"Peste!" snarled Major Patens, whipping out a dagger.

But Queen Zita gave a cry of gladness.

"Ferrers Locke! I knew he would not fail me!"

### Locke's Strategy!

**J**ACK saw Major Patens leap at Locke's back, a gleaming dagger in his up-raised hand, and all that Jack did was to put out his foot quickly, and the major tripped and fell with a crash.

A moment before Prince Carlos had been so triumphant, so sure that he held the whip-hand, but now Ferrers Locke had turned the

tables. The carefully-worded will he had wanted King Ferdinand to sign was in fragments on the floor. However, Carlos and his fellow-conspirators were a long way from beaten.

Prince Carlos, white-lipped in his fury, was grappling with Locke, while the Grand Seigneur of Perilla, with a snarl of rage, hurled himself at Jack, a stiletto gleaming in one of his hands. Jack dodged, grabbed Perilla's right wrist, and forced his weapon up in the air. Then he locked one leg round his assailant's leg and forced him back. What had to be done had to be done quickly. Locke and Jack were outnumbered, and the odds had to be evened up as soon as possible. Jack wrenched at Perilla and shot him back against the wall, releasing him.

Perilla sneered. He had an idea that Jack was getting the worst of the combat. He came away from the wall like a bouncing ball, straight at Jack, that stiletto flashing out like the fang of a serpent. But Jack knew what he was doing. He wanted Perilla to lunge at him like that. He had gambled on that chance, and now he neatly side-stepped the murderous blow. His right fist flashed in a vicious swing; his bunched knuckles cracked on Perilla's jaw, and the assassin went down with a grunt, out to the wide!

Jack spun round on his heel. He saw Locke fling Prince Carlos away from him, then immediately engage the herculean Major Patens. The Duke of Silene apparently was not a fighting man. He was trying to hold King Ferdinand, and was not being over successful about it. His Majesty of Abronia was fighting well; Jack saw him beat down the duke's defence and seize the traitor by the throat. The king could look after himself for a time, thought the boy.

But Locke had all his work cut out to escape the dagger of Major Patens. They were struggling fiercely, and while Locke was strong and a good fighter, the major, big and muscular, was proving himself a worthy opponent.

Then Jack saw Prince Carlos pull a revolver from his hip-pocket and point it in the direction of Ferrers Locke. Immediately Jack hurled himself forward. His right fist crashed into Carlos' body, right over the solar plexus. Prince Carlos drew in his breath sharply; his face turned a sickly colour, his knees sagged beneath him, and he dropped in a heap, groaning.

Jack seized the prince's revolver that had dropped from his nerveless fingers, and then started forward with the intention of assisting his "gub'nor." He had only taken two steps when the door of the room was flung open violently, and the corpulent Isaac Mossman stood on the threshold, his fat cheeks pale with rage. Behind him was the burly manservant Jack had seen once before—at Thames Ditton.



Mossman shouted something in the Abronian language, and waddled quickly across the room to where King Ferdinand was subduing the Duke of Silene. Jack had no time to intervene. He hurled the revolver at Mossman, and missed him by inches, then the big manservant jumped at Jack. The two met in the middle of the room, and tackled one another grimly. There were no rules in that fight. It was a case of hit it possible, kick and claw and scratch at other times, and ask no mercy and give none. Jack was game; he fought well, but the manservant outreached him, towered over him. They went down together with a crash, the manservant on top of the boy.

Locke was still struggling fiercely with Major Paten. He managed to get his left hand free, and sent in a terrific upper-cut to his assailant's jaw. The major's head went back with a jerk as the blow connected. He staggered backwards, crashed against the wall with a jar that must have shaken every bone in his big body, and fell to the floor with a thud.

And then Ferrers Locke did a strange thing. His brain had worked at lightning speed. The enemy had been reinforced; more reinforcements might be at hand. In the circumstances, he could see only one way of saving the situation, and, much as he disliked doing it, the detective decided to take this course of action. He ignored King Ferdinand, who was now having a rough time between Isaac Mossman and the Duke of Silene; he took no notice of Jack, who was obviously fighting a losing battle with the manservant.

He went across to where Queen Zita stood cowering in a corner of the room, watching the scene with awed eyes, and seized her by the arm.

"Come!" he panted. "Quickly!"

"I cannot leave Ferdinand!" she said.

"But, madam," argued Locke, "it is better for his majesty that you should not be in the power of Prince Carlos. It is impossible for me to rescue you both now. We are outnumbered—to stay here would be fatal for us all. For his sake, madam—come quickly."

She saw the sense of his argument, and allowed Locke to lead her out of the room.

They were only just in time, too. Even as the queen passed through the door and the detective made to follow, he saw Major Paten stagger up from the floor and come forward in an effort to stop them; saw Mossman also rushing across the room. Locke smiled grimly as he slammed the door a second before they could reach him. Swiftly he turned the key in the lock, drew it out of the keyhole, and, opening the nearby window on the landing, deliberately threw the key out into the back garden.

On the surface, of course, it would seem that Locke was guilty of cowardice in leaving Jack and King Ferdinand behind in the hands of the enemy. The detective himself hated doing it; but he realised that this was the safest way of foiling Prince Carlos. The odds had been too great for Locke to remain. There was a great possibility of his being captured, and that would have meant the end of everything. Once he and Queen Zita were in the power of Prince Carlos there was nothing to prevent the latter from triumphing. Far better to get the queen into safety, thereby preventing Carlos from using her as a means to forcing King Ferdinand to do his bidding.

With Ferrers Locke at large and Queen Zita out of the clutches of Prince Carlos, the King of Abronia would continue to defy his captors, and there was still a chance of defeating the conspirators.

And Locke reckoned that Jack would be safe enough. Locke was a student of human nature. He reckoned that Prince Carlos would not kill Jack, but would retain him, either as a hostage or as a lure, in the hope that he could get Ferrers Locke when the detective came back to rescue his assistant.

Taking all things, thus, into consideration, Ferrers Locke had no scruples in leaving that dingy house. He hastened downstairs with Queen Zita and out into the street. There was no one about to interfere with them. In the labyrinth of mean streets through which they hurried, the people gazed at them curiously. Locke was dressed as a riverside loafer, and Queen Zita looked so regal and imperious—an ill-assorted couple—but no one interfered.

#### HOW THE STORY STARTED.

*FERRERS LOCKE*, the world-famous London detective, and his boy assistant, *JACK DRAKE*, are travelling on the Underground when they witness the murder of a foreigner. Following investigations, they discover that the deed was committed by the Grand Seigneur, or Count, of Perilla, working on the instructions of *PRINCE CARLOS OF ABRONIA*. Carlos' ambition is to become king of Abronia, and already he has kidnapped the reigning monarch, King Ferdinand, and brought him over to England. The murdered man was an emissary of Queen Zita of Abronia, who has followed to rescue her husband; hence the man's removal. The queen asks Locke to help her restore King Ferdinand to his country. Later, the queen herself is kidnapped by Carlos, and taken to a house in the East End of London. Locke and Drake disguise themselves as toughs, and are employed by the prince. They go to the house where Queen Zita is a prisoner, and they find that King Ferdinand is also a prisoner here. Locke realises that the position is delicate. He and Jack are hopelessly outnumbered; the chances of rescuing the King and Queen of Abronia seem very slim.

(Now read on.)



They came to the main road, where the traffic was thick, and the trams rumbled increasingly. Locke hailed a taxi. At first the driver hesitated, but Locke whispered his name in the man's ear, and all hostility was at an end. They were driven to the hotel where the aged General Morina was waiting hopefully, and guarding the false queen. He was overjoyed to see them.

Locke explained the situation in detail.

"We are eternally indebted to you, m'sieur," said the general sincerely, when the detective had finished.

"And now," said Locke, "I suggest that you should take her Majesty back to Abronia without delay—where Prince Carlos cannot get at her. It is dangerous for her to remain here."

"M'sieur," said the general, "I agree with you. But what of Madame Mossman?"

"The impostor?" said Locke. "Leave her to me. Leave her here. I will arrange for the hotel detective to keep her here, and not to release her until ten o'clock to-night. By that time, if you are wise, you will be beyond Paris, en route for Abronia."

"I will see to it," said the general.

And after that Locke was a busy man. He had to go to Baker Street and change his disreputable clothes for a decent suit. He had to go to Whitehall and arrange passports for her majesty and her suite. It could not be done any other way. As it was, he was compelled to talk confidentially with certain Cabinet Ministers in order to save Queen Zita a lot of awkward questions. But he succeeded.

Then he booked their seats on the next outward-bound air liner from Croydon. He took out his big Bentley car from the garage and went round to the hotel, and, finding them all ready, he settled things with the hotel detective, then motored the party to the aerodrome at Croydon. Not until he saw them enter the giant machine, and watched the graceful craft sail up into the sky and disappear to the southward, did he feel at all safe and confident in himself. The presence of the Queen of Abronia in England, where the treacherous Prince Carlos could always strike at her, was a real danger, and made his task of rescuing the king much more difficult. Now that trouble was removed. One big obstacle was swept out of his way.

The next move was to rescue Jack and King Ferdinand. The detective motored back to Baker Street, changed into his disguise as a riverside loafer, and ventured back into the slums of the East End. Cautiously he approached the street in which that dingy house was situated.

But as he came towards the "thieves kitchen" run by Fireman Pete, his plans were suddenly altered. He saw two muffled figures come walking swiftly along the street and dive into the dark doorway of Pete's place. The detective recognised them imme-

diately. They were Major Patens and the Grand Seigneur of Perilla!

Mindful of his promise to Fireman Pete—to protect him should the Abronian traitors arrive to wreak vengeance—Ferrers Locke followed the two men. Locke's word was as good as his bond, even with such men as Fireman Pete!

### The Council of War!

**A**FTER Ferrers Locke, accompanied by Queen Zita, had left the dingy house where Jack and the King of Abronia were fighting against odds, the ultimate issue of that unequal combat was beyond doubt. Isaac Mossman and the Duke of Silene soon succeeded in overwhelming King Ferdinand; and, as for Jack, the manservant gave him no chance. And when the boy saw that Major Patens had fully recovered, he reckoned it was time to give in.

Now that Locke had gone—Jack had been mystified at first about this, but now he saw that Queen Zita was also missing he could guess the reason for the detective's sudden departure—there was no sense in prolonging the combat.

So Jack went limp. Patens came across, glowering at him.

"Your so wonderful detective has fled!" he sneered.

"All right, don't rub it in!" growled Jack, giving the impression that he was disgusted with Locke for running away. "I know when I'm beaten. I give in!"

The manservant allowed him to scramble to his feet, whereat Patens seized him and thrust him into the far corner of the room beside the king. He picked up Prince Carlos' revolver, and, making sure it was loaded, gave the weapon to Mossman's servant and told him to guard the prisoners.

"If they try get away," he said harshly, "shoot—and shoot to kill! You understand?"

The man nodded, and Patens moved away to help his friends. They were nursing their bruises and hurts. The craven Duke of Silene looked sadly the worse for wear; the Grand Seigneur of Perilla came out of one corner, a murderous gleam in his eyes. He was stroking his jaw where Jack had handed him the hush-a-bye dose.

Major Patens' face was scarred and bruised; his lips were puffy and bleeding where Locke had hit him. Prince Carlos was stirring on the floor. The Duke of Silene fetched water and roused the Prince, and when Carlos eventually came round and was able to take an intelligible interest in things, he missed both Locke and Queen Zita.

"What happened?" he asked.

Patens said something in the Abronian tongue. Apparently he told Prince Carlos that Locke had escaped with the queen, for then the prince talked angrily and quickly in his native tongue. From the scared look on his colleagues' faces he was giving them



a thorough "ticking-off." After that he strode to the door and grabbed the handle. It creaked, but the door refused to open. They were locked in.

They all gathered round the door, trying first to pick the lock and then to batter down the woodwork. Jack watched them, a faint, grim smile on his face. He reckoned his gov'nor would be well away by now. Idly he wondered what Locke's plans were; what the detective was doing. And how long would it be before he returned in an attempt to rescue King Ferdinand and himself? His thoughts were interrupted at that moment by the king, who leaned forward and spoke to him.

"Who are you?" he asked in English.

"Jack Drake is my name. Assistant to Ferrers Locke."

The king nodded his head gloomily.

"Ah, yes, I remember! Locke—the detective who was to do so much, and has failed."

Instantly Jack bristled. King or no king, he felt that Ferdinand had no right to speak in that way of Locke after all the detective had endured for the sake of the ruling house of Abronia.

"The case isn't finished yet," said Jack curtly. "Mr. Locke has never failed yet, and he never gives up a case before it's finished."

"Yet he deserted me in my hour of need!" said the king bitterly.

"Locke never deserted anybody!" retorted Jack.

"He's left you here."

"I'm nobody," grinned Jack, although he knew that he was somebody in Locke's estimation.

"A cowardly desertion!" the king complained.

Jack began to get impatient.

"You're not being very fair to the gov'nor, sir," he said coldly. "If you just glance around this room, sir, you'll see that in addition to Mr. Locke, the queen has also gone."

King Ferdinand stared at Jack. For a few seconds he said nothing, then slowly the light of understanding came into his eyes.

"You mean?" he asked.

"I mean that the gov'nor knows what he's about," said Jack. "Suppose Carlos and his lot had collared the gov'nor as well as me? Just think of it! They'd do us in as soon as look at us, and then where would you be, sir?"

The king still looked slightly puzzled.

"Of course, it is all to the good," he said, "that her majesty has been rescued."

"They were using her—her majesty," said Jack, "to force you to sign that paper. They can't work that trick on you now. Locke has stopped that little game. You see, sir, we had a chance of winning until those other two came in, and then we were outnumbered."

"I know," said the king. "You must forgive me if I seem ungrateful, but I am afraid I lose heart at times."

"Then you mustn't, sir," said Jack. "Not while the gov'nor's hanging around. He won't leave us here very long. Not likely! While there's life there's hope—that my motto, sir."

"I understand," said the king. "Mr. Locke acted for the best. You think he will come back?"

"I'm sure of it," said Jack.

The king did not say any more. He was staring coldly at the Duke of Silene, who had come up to them. The duke was grinning at Jack.

"How you say?" he queried. "He come back? Zat is ze idea, eh?"

Jack brought up his clenched fist, and the duke shot back as if a snake had threatened him with poison fangs. The manservant spun round and jabbed the revolver into Jack's ribs.

"Quiet!" he warned.

Then Major Paten saw the revolver, and had an idea. He snatched the weapon from the man's hand and took it to the door. He placed the muzzle against the keyhole and pulled the trigger. There was a roar, an acrid stench of gunpowder, and the door swung open.

Prince Carlos and Perilla raced off downstairs, but they soon returned. Obviously, with the start they had, Locke and the queen were miles away. Carlos held a council of war.

There was no question as to the king's safety. Until he had signed the will Carlos wanted him to sign, he was worth more to them alive than dead. But with Jack it was different. Perilla indicated him with a wave of his hand.

"Kill!" he cried viciously. "I kill!"

He drew that wicked-looking stiletto of his, but the Duke of Silene stopped him.

"Wait," he cautioned. "Keep him alive. Then that other man come back for heem, and we have them both, is it not?"

Major Patens nodded grimly. They talked it over in Abronian. Jack could not understand a word, but the king did.

"What are they saying?" the boy asked.

"Briefly, they intend to use you as a lure to bring Mr. Locke back here," explained the king.

Jack felt a thrill of apprehension. Carlos was as brainy as he was cunning, and unscrupulous. Jack would have given much to hear a few more details, but Patens realised that the king was translating their talk.

"Better separate them," he said tersely.

Perilla went downstairs and came back with a coil of rope. Both the king and Jack were trussed up, their wrists secured behind their backs, and their ankles tied together. The Duke of Silene and the Grand Seigneur of Perilla carried the king out of the room and took him downstairs. Major Patens and



the servant of Isaac Mossman lifted Jack, carted him upstairs to the attic, and tossed him in as if he were a sack of rubbish. The boy thudded on the floor with enough force to knock the wind out of him. He heard the key rasping in the lock of the door, and then came silence.

### Vengeance!

**FERRERS LOCKE** followed Major Patens and the Grand Siegneur of Perilla into Fireman Pete's den with the full knowledge that he was running a big risk.

As a detective, it was dangerous for him to go in there at the best of times. The place was infested with criminals of all kinds, who would naturally resent the presence of a detective, especially one with the record Locke had for bringing malefactors to justice.

Add to that ordinary risk the cunning and ferocity of both Patens and Perilla and the earnest request of Queen Zita to keep the police out of the affair at all costs, and the situation in which Locke found himself was by no means enviable. Yet he had promised to help Fireman Pete, and he refused to draw back.

As usual, the den was murky. The air was heavy with tobacco-smoke and reeked of stale spirits. Men sat at the tables—furtive, villainous-looking men. Locke shuffled to a table near the bar and sat down heavily, his ragged cap pulled low over his eyes.

Major Patens and the Grand Seigneur of Perilla, both well muffled up, stood leaning on the bar. As yet, Fireman Pete had not put in an appearance.

Locke had obtained a good position. From where he sat he could have reached out and touched the back of Major Patens. He saw the barman, looking rather nervous, come from that door behind the bar. He went up to Patens, leaned over the bar, and spoke to him hoarsely.

"He won't be long," he said.

A few minutes later Pete himself appeared. He was pale with fear. His eyes roved around the place as if seeking some means of escape, or someone to whom he could appeal for help. Patens motioned to him impatiently, and Pete shuffled forward, taking good care to keep the bar between himself and his visitors.

"You sent two men," said Patens grimly.

"Sure," said Pete, trying to bluff the situation. "I sent two good men, gents."

"You knew who they were?" hissed Perilla.

Pete made out he couldn't understand.

"What d'you mean?" he asked. "They were all right—ready for anything and no questions asked."

"You knew who they were!" Patens accused him.

Pete fingered a glass nervously.

"Tough boys," he said, but there was a

guilty look in his eyes. Right from the moment Ferrers Locke and Jack had set out for that dingy house, Pete had been fearing the consequences of the adventure. Now, it seemed, the trouble was about to start.

Perilla glared at him ferociously.

"Detectives!" he said grimly. "Zey were ze agents of ze police, is it not?"

His English was surprisingly good in some parts, and very bad in others, but he made his meaning clear to Fireman Pete.

"Traitor!" hissed Patens.

"No, no!" cried Pete, his eyes bulging and his fat cheeks trembling. "Them boys was all right. If they let you down it wasn't my fault. I thought they were all right."

Patens' long arm suddenly shot out over the bar and grabbed Pete by the shirt-collar.

"There is but one way of dealing wiz traitors!" he snarled.

"But listen!" pleaded Pete. "I tell you

"We waste ze time," said Perilla

"Only one way wiz traitors!" said Major Patens.

He pulled at Pete's shirt-collar, and the fat proprietor lurched forward, half-choked, against the bar. Patens held him, drew him closer, so that his head and neck were over the bar. The Grand Seigneur of Perilla whipped out his long stiletto. It was obvious they dared not risk the startling publicity of a revolver-shot. Their vengeance was to be swift and silent.

Pete opened his mouth to scream, but the grip of Major Patens on his shirt-collar was throttling him. Perilla raised his hand, and at that moment Ferrers Locke leapt up from his chair. The table went over with a crash as he darted forward.

Fiercely he hit out with both fists. He caught Major Patens on the ear and sent him reeling across the den. His right came round in a vicious half-arm jab and smashed into Perilla's face. The assassin went down like a log, the stiletto flying from his hand over the bar.

Fireman Pete slumped down against the bar, loosening the collar-band of his shirt and wiping the perspiration of fear from his forehead.

"Mister Locke!" he gasped. "I knew—"

But what he was about to say was never heard. The den was full of criminals, and the sight of Locke, the sound of his name uttered by Pete, the sudden assault on the Abronians, aroused their unreasoning ire. They did not know what the row was all about, and they did not stop to inquire. They knew that Mr. Locke was a detective, and that was enough.

"Tec!" shouted someone hoarsely. "Down him, boys!"

*(Ferrers Locke seems to have aroused a hornet's nest, so to speak. How will he fare? You'll know when you read next week's exciting instalment of this fine serial, chums!)*



# The ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE CORNER!



The Chief Officer Chats  
with his Chums.

Here's his address if you want to  
write to him: The Chief Officer "The  
Nelson Lee Library," Fleetway House,  
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.A.

## Leyton Hustle!

**A** FEW weeks back I announced on this page that S. J. Humphrey, of Leyton, was forming a correspondence club.

This week comes a letter from my chum informing me that the response from readers has been highly satisfactory; that the club is now firmly established and well on the high road to success. This is excellent news. Quick work, too. Mr. Humphrey has obviously been "hustling some," as the Americans say. And that is not all, for he has also found time to start a club magazine.

To those of you who are interested, this may be had upon application to his address, which is No. 132, Farmer Road, Leyton, London, E.10.

Mr. Humphrey is evidently a go-ahead fellow, for he is already keen to extend his club by uniting with another club overseas. He has asked me to announce that he would like to hear from secretaries of overseas correspondence clubs who would be willing to amalgamate with his own organisation.

Meanwhile, Mr. Humphrey will welcome any readers who wish to join his club.

## Singapore Is Satisfied!

**T**HANK you very much for the bronze medal which I have just received. It is acting as a kind of magnet among my friends, and all of them have admired it."

Thus writes Tok Beng Ho, a very satisfied reader of the Old Paper living in Singapore, and he adds that he is now going all out to get the silver medal.

## Write To This Reader!

**L.** F. HUBBARD, of 30, Chatham Place, Brighton, writes to tell me that he will be pleased to hear from Scouts overseas with a view to exchanging badges, etc.

## THIS WEEK'S WINNING LETTER

DEAR CHIEF,—I have been a reader of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY for many years and think I am justified in calling myself an old-established member of the St. Frank's League. The following incident will, I think, interest you and other readers of the Old Paper.

I attend school, and the other day my master informed the class that as we had an odd quarter of an hour to spare we could read anything we liked, as long as it was "sane literature." Without hesitation I pulled out the current issue of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY, while the other chaps brought out copies of their favourite papers. I can proudly state that I was the only boy in the Form allowed to carry on with my reading; the others were told to put away what they were reading and devote their attention to something else.

Afterwards I lent my copy of the Old Paper to several of my Form-mates, and many of them have since taken to reading it regularly.

Your faithful League-ite,  
(Signed) G. Jimmy McDougall, S.F.L. No. 7,998.

(For this interesting letter G. Jimmy McDougall, of Sydenham, London, has been awarded a useful pocket wallet.)

## Thanks!

**M**Y thanks to Bernard Jowett, of Nottingham, for sending me an excellent suggestion with regard to the St. Frank's League. I cannot make use of it at the moment, Bernard, but I will certainly bear it in mind. Once again, many thanks.

## Do You Want a Prize?

**H**AVE you read this week's prize-winning letter, chums?

Exceptionally interesting, isn't it? I felt very bucked when I read it, for such a compliment on the merits of the Old Paper is extremely satisfying. The sender of this letter, you will notice, receives a pocket wallet. Every League-ite has a chance of winning either a wallet or a penknife if he or she sends me a letter which I consider to be of sufficient interest to publish on this page. An easy way of gaining a prize, you will agree.

THE CHIEF OFFICER.



## CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

Arthur Martin, 8, Adderbury Crescent, Adderbury Grove, Beverley Road, **Hull**, wants correspondents overseas.

F. W. Boyce, 43, Church Road, Redfield, **Bristol**, offers back numbers of the N.L.L.

J. Cooper, 52, Goodmayes Avenue, **Goodmayes**, Essex, wants N.L.L., new series, No. 1-30.

Geo. Buist, 26, Ponderlaw Street, **Arbroath**, Scotland, offers 150 back numbers of the N.L.L., all in good condition.

T. F. Shaw, 21, Whymark Avenue, Wood Green, **London, N.22**, wants correspondents in the British Empire.

M. A. Millner, P.O. Box 116, Johannesburg, **South Africa**, wants correspondents in Belgium, France, Ireland, and Canada; interested in sport and photography.

Miss Sadie Dauker, 65, Ockerse Street, Krugersdorp, Transvaal, **South Africa**, desires correspondents overseas.

A. Frumkin, P.O. Box 60, South Porcupine, Ontario, **Canada**, wants correspondents, especially stamp collectors.

Henry Mallinson, Glen Mohr, Clement Street, Crosland Moor, **Huddersfield**, wishes to correspond with readers in America, North and South, India and Africa.

Henry John Stribley, c/o 4, Salisbury Terrace, **Dorchester**, Dorset, wants correspondents.

R. L. Stevenson, Green Hills, Droghda, Co. Louth, **Ireland**, wants to hear from stamp collectors overseas.

Benny Duffy, 31, Clovelly Road, **Southampton**, desires numbers for his correspondence club; also wishes to hear from readers in South Shields and America.

Ronald Samuel, 15, Holroyd Road, Golders Green, **London, N.W.11**, wants to hear from readers interested in cigarette cards.

Miss D. Beasley, 12, Monmouth Street, Arch Hill, Auckland, **New Zealand**, wants girl correspondents.

A. C. Cleeve-Sculthorpe, Parksville, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, **Canada**, is starting a local newspaper, and wants live-wire correspondents, 18-20 years old, in Australia and all parts of the Empire. Glad to have papers from all parts.

## Peeps Past the Pyramids!

(Continued from page 13.)

"He suffers delusions," said another, "and if he setteth us mad questions, verily, whatsoever we answer, we shall be wrong."

"Euclid never spake of a four-sided triangle, I jolly well know," a third remarked.

And the master heard him. And he said to the boy:

"Boy, thou speakest out of thy head covering, for Euclid is not yet born, and, moreover, will not be born for a thousand years hence. How canst thou then say that Euclid never spake of a four-sided triangle?"

For the master hoped to confound the boy with an unanswerable question. But the boy was too wide-o, and answered:

"If Euclid be not yet born, O master, neither then could he have spoken of a four-sided triangle."

And the boy sat down triumphantly and arose again at once crying with a loud voice, "Ow!"

And Dr. Potiphar glared at him with both eyes.

"What the—who the?" he asked.

The boy then drew a bent pin from his nether garments and held it up.

"Some kadd hath even bent a pin to the shape of an isosceles triangle and hath set it in the place wherein I am seated."

"Well," sneered the master, gazing at the pin, "perhaps thou now believest in some form of triangle with four sides? For this pin is skilfully shaped to make a triangular base, but the fourth side hath, unfortunately for thee, been turned upward, and is the point."

And he laughed raucously, cleaned out his own drawing on the floor and then dismissed the Form.

## A MAN'S CHANCE FOR A BOY IN CANADA.

**BOYS (ages 14 to 19) WANTED for farm work.** Training, outfit, and assisted passages may be obtained through The Salvation Army. Work guaranteed. Overseas Officers keep in touch with boys after arrival until satisfactorily settled. Boys also wanted for AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND. Write or call—The Branch Manager: 7, Upper Thames Street, LONDON, E.C.4; 12, Pembroke Place, LIVERPOOL; 203, Hope Street, GLASGOW; 5, Garfield Chambers, 44 Royal Avenue, BELFAST. DOMESTICATED WOMEN wanted. WORK GUARANTEED.

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## BE TALLER!

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