

THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE — ANNOUNCEMENT THIS WEEK!

# The NELSON LEE

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Read This Week's Adventures of the St. Frank's Boy Scouts in:—

## THE 'TIGER' PATROL!



"Great guns!" ejaculated Mr. Trapp, aghast.  
He had thought it bad enough to have one schoolboy to deal with. But now, before his eyes, were five more!



# THE 'TIGER' PATROL!

A TOP-HOLE  
STORY  
OF THE  
ST. FRANK'S  
BOY SCOUTS  
AND THEIR  
CAMPING-  
OUT  
ADVENTURES

By *EDWY SEARLES BROOKS*

## CHAPTER I.

### THE TIGER PATROL AT WORK.

"GRRRAO! Grrao! Grrao!" Edward Oswald Handforth, of the Fourth Form at St. Frank's, made this extraordinary sound. He and five other members of the 1st St. Frank's Boy Scout Troop were proceeding over the downs near Caistowe.

In short, the Tiger Patrol was abroad.

"Grrao!" said Handforth again.

"Anything the matter, old man?" asked Church anxiously. "Got a cold coming on or something?"

"You—you fathead!" snorted Handforth. "I'm giving the call!"

"The what?"

"The purr of the Tigers!" explained Handforth. "When I make that sound you know that I'm about. You've all got to make it, too—we're all Tigers. And if ever we want to call to one another we must purr."

"Oh!" said Church.

Light dawned upon him. He didn't like to tell Handforth that his purring efforts were singularly bad. The sound he uttered

was more like a nasty cough than the purr of a tiger.

But, after all, Edward Oswald had some excuse.

The St. Frank's Scouts were a new formation. They had only been in camp for a day or two, and the various Patrols had not long been formed. The Tigers were quite a new Patrol.

There were six juniors in it, and Handforth was the leader. They were rather proud of their violet colours, and Handforth had determined that his Patrol should lead all the others of the 1st. St. Frank's Troop.

It was a half-holiday to-day, for the Scouts, although in camp, were obliged to do a certain amount of lessons, as though they were at school. For this was no ordinary holiday camp. St. Frank's was undergoing drastic alterations, as a result of the recent explosion disaster, and there was only sufficient room there for the seniors.

So the juniors had been permitted to form Scout Troops, and were in camp comparatively near by. It wasn't so bad, attending lessons in a marquee, and spending the rest of their time camping and

scouting. Upon the whole, life under canvas suited the juniors admirably.

The Scouts were just beginning to shake down.

Pausing and looking back, the Tigers could see the camp nestling in the hollow not far from the cliff edge. It was in a quiet spot, away from all habitation. Strictly speaking, there were three sections of the camp.

There were three distinct Troops of Scouts.

The 1st. Troop consisted of seven Patrols—the Lions, the Hawks, the Tigers, the Bears, the Curlews, the Foxes, and the Eagles. These were the Ancient House Fourth-Formers. Nipper was Patrol-Leader of the Lions, and the celebrated Reggie Pitt watched over the Hawks.

The 2nd. Troop consisted of six Patrols, made up of the Wolves, the Buffaloes, the Beavers, the Rhinos, the Otters, and the Elephants. They were the Modern House section of the Fourth. And John Busterfield Boots was Patrol Leader of the Wolves.

The 3rd. Troop was not considered of any particular account by the others. But the 3rd. Troop had an idea that it was the only formation that really mattered. The one and only Willy Handforth was at the head, for it was a 3rd. Troop in two senses, since it was composed entirely of Third-Formers. There were five Patrols—the Panthers, the Rams, the Badgers, the Owls, and the Ravens.

The St. Frank's Scouts, in fact, had done things thoroughly.

Each camp was distinct in itself, with its own food department, its own cooks, and its own Scoutmaster. While Nelson Lee and Mr. Beverley Stokes were in charge of the Fourth, Mr. Clifford looked after the Third.

And on this particular afternoon, as the weather was brilliant and sunny, most of the Scouts were out practising. For the Troops had been formed in a great hurry, and not many of the fellows were proficient in any of the arts of scoutcraft.

So the more practice they could get in the better.

"Now, don't forget, we're patrolling," said Handforth, looking at his five followers. "We're out in formation, and we're working in open country. If we meet any other Patrols, we've got to regard them as the enemy."

"Why?" asked Church.

"I don't know why—don't ask questions!" retorted Handforth. "But this is a kind of warfare, you know."

"You've got it all wrong," interrupted Owen major. "Scouts aren't at war—they're only a precautionary measure—"

"Are you trying to dictate to me, Charles Owen?" demanded Handforth.

"Of course I'm not—"

"Then hold your giddy tongue, and take my orders!" said Handforth. "We're in formation, and I'm going first. No. 4! What the dickens are you star-gazing for? Attention!"

All the Scouts had their own numbers, and No. 4—Tom Burton—immediately came to attention. There were six Scouts in the Patrol—Handforth, Church, McClure, Burton, Owen major, and Dick Goodwin. They were numbered respectively, and Church was the second. He wore a white stripe on his left shirt pocket, whilst Handforth wore two.

Handforth felt very important. This was just the kind of work he liked. It was all very well to "boss" over Church and McClure, but it was far better to have five under his sway.

And the Tiger Patrol moved on in formation. The fact that the formation was quite contrary to all Scout practice didn't worry Handforth in the least. He had his own ideas.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE UNFORTUNATE JASPER BLNNS.



"**B**UST my tops'!" remarked Tom Burton, after a few moments. "I don't want to interfere, shipmate, but it seems to me we're sailing on a wrong course."

And this flotilla isn't in the right shape." "Talking to me?" asked Handforth, turning.

"Ay, messmate, I was!"

"Scouts ain't supposed to talk when they're at work," said Handforth severely.

"But Mr. Lee was giving us instructions this morning," went on the Bo'sun. "Souise me! It's our duty to obey the skipper, isn't it? I'm No. 4, and I ought to be on your left side. And No. 2 ought to be in front, leading. No. 6 ought to be right close to you, with No. 3 on the right side, and No. 5 astern—"

"Rats!" said Handforth. "That's all piffle!"

"Just as you like, messmate," said Burton. "But this port and starboard arrangement is all wrong—"

"You dry up!" broke in the Patrol-Leader. "Whoever heard of such rot? No. 1 being in the middle! My place is in the front—leading. And you oughtn't to be here at all—so clear off!"

"Oh, let him have his own way!" said Church. "Naturally, he knows a lot more than Baden-Powell. Before long he'll be issuing some new rules, and the Boy Scout Association will have to conform to 'em!"

The Tigers grinned at this sarcasm, but Handforth merely nodded.

"I shouldn't be surprised," he said solemnly. "There are lots of reforms necessary, and I shall soon have a few new ideas in shipshape. For this afternoon we'll content ourselves with doing a little patrolling. Later on we shall have to get down to tracking, and discovering the meaning of signs, and all sorts of other things."

Church and McClure glanced at the other Scouts, and they all grinned. Handforth's own chums were obliged to be in the Patrol, and it was nothing new for them to follow Handforth about wherever he ordered. But the other three were new to this sort of thing, and they regarded it as good sport.

So the Tigers, in formation—wrong formation—proceeded across the downs with Handforth well in advance. All the juniors looked very smart and trim in their neat Scout uniform. They all carried their staves, and Handforth himself was resplendent in his Patrol Leader's trimmings.

"Shush!" he muttered suddenly. "Unno! I mean, Grrao!"

"What's that for?" asked McClure, who was nearest.

"Somebody just ahead," whispered Handforth. "Can't you smell smoke? All Scouts are supposed to have an extra keen sense of smell. I detected this smoke in a tick!"

This wasn't very surprising, since clouds of smoke were coming round a little clump of trees, and the other Scouts had detected it long since. Indeed, their eyes had made the discovery long before their nostrils.

The Tigers, proceeding round the clump of trees, came upon a tiny camp.

There was a kind of lean-to, composed of sacking and patched canvas. In front of it burned a fire in an old riddled tin-can. And pottering about the camp was a bent old man. He was in rags, and his unshaven face was lined, weatherbeaten, and crafty. And there was a bulbous appearance to his nose which hinted at a certain weakness where liquor was concerned.

"Good-afternoon, young gents—good-afternoon!" said the old man.

"Help! He's spotted us!" said Handforth, with a start.

"Marvellous!" said Owen major. "Considering we're in full view, his eyesight must be extraordinary. What is he? A travelling tinker by the look of that ramshackle old grindstone."

There was no doubt that Owen major was right. The old fellow was a travelling tinker, and his decrepit old machine was literally falling to pieces from old age.

"Jasper Binns—that's me, young gents," said the old man. "There's nothing ye want repairing, I suppose? Pocket-knives

sharpening, and sich like. I won't charge ye much—just a few coppers."

"Thanks all the same, we're all supplied," said Church.

"Ay, that's a pity!" said Jasper Binns, shaking his old head. "I was hoping to earn a few pence, so I was. Times is hard, young gents—mortal hard. I ain't the kind to do no beggin', but when work don't come I'm nigh to starving."

"Starving!" said Handforth, touched. "Don't you get enough to eat?"

"He gets enough to drink, by the look of it," murmured McClure.

"Eat?" said the old tinker. "Bless you, young gent, no! I ain't 'ad a square meal all this 'ere week! An old man like me can't earn much—just a few coppers, 'ere and there. It's just as likely I'll go in the workhouse in a day or two. I'm almost beat, young gents. I tries to work hard, but nobody won't give me jobs."

Handforth shook his head sadly.

"Rough luck!" he said. "It must be awful to go without a square meal. I'd do something if I could—"

"There's the missus, too," went on old Binns. "She's in 'ospital, young gent—her poor old legs couldn't stand the 'ard life no more. I'd like to take her something tasty now and again, but it can't be done. I never 'as enough food for meself, let alone her. It's a 'ard, cruel life, young gent!"

Handforth was so touched that he produced a two-shilling-piece.

"Come on, you chaps—let's make a whip round," he said.

"Rats!" growled Church. "I've only got eighteenpence, and I'm not going to give that away! Don't be an ass, Handy—"

"Come on—let's go!" interrupted the others.

They moved off, leaving Handforth alone. He snorted, glared, and gave the florin to Jasper Binns.

"There you are—that's all I can do," he growled. "Those other chaps are too jolly mean! By George, I'll show 'em something!"

Without waiting for the old tinker to thank him, Handforth strode on and overtook the other five scouts.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE DAILY GOOD DEED.



H ANDFORTH gazed at his Patrol grimly.

"Well, you're a mean crowd, ain't you?" he demanded. "Cleared off, and wouldn't give a penny to a poor old chap—"

"Cheese it!" growled Church. "He was only fooling you."

" Fooling me?"

" Of course he was," said McClure. " That two bob you gave him will be in the till of the nearest public-house within a couple of hours! My hat! Couldn't you see the old chap was pulling your leg?"

Handforth laughed scornfully.

" Rot!" he declared. " He's starving!"

" Starving for drink, perhaps," agreed Owen major. " He's one of those old rascals who beg from every silly ass they meet. They're so used to it that they can spot the duffers in two seconds—and then they spin their yarn."

" Are you calling me a duffer?" roared Handforth.

" Not exactly—but you're too jolly soft-hearted," said Owen major. " You chucked that two bob away—he doesn't deserve a penny of it. He's only an old drunkard. Dash it all, his nose was a danger-signal. You can't mistake these giddy old toppers."

" You're right, ship-mate," said the Ro'sun. " Souse me, I'm not mean, but when I see a derelict of that sort, I generally shape my course on another tack."

But Handforth scoffed.

" You're only saying this to excuse your blessed meanness," he said sourly. " It's all right—don't get huffy! We don't want any trouble in the Tiger Patrol—although I'm ready to supply plenty if you insist! Let's get on— By George!"

" Thought of something?" asked McClure.

" Yes, rather!" said Handforth. " What about our daily good turn?"

" You've done yours, haven't you?" asked Church. " It's cost you two bob, anyhow!"

" That's nothing!" said Handforth. " That doesn't count as a good deed at all! We've got to do something bigger than that—don't forget that we're on our honour to do a good turn every day! Not me alone—but all of us! You've done a fat lot, haven't you?"

" But look here—"

" And if you don't do your good turn one day, you've got to do two good turns

the next," went on Handforth. " That's the Scout Law!"

" Supposing a Scout is laid up for a fortnight?" asked Owen major. " Must he go out and do fourteen good deeds all at once?"

" Yes!" replied Handforth firmly. " We've got to do something special to-day—and we can't do better than do a good turn to the old tinker."

My dear chap, your idea of doing a good turn seems pretty expensive!" remarked Dick Goodwin. " By gum! If it's going to cost you more than two shillings a day. You'll need plenty of pocket money! And see here, lad, how can you be thrifty if you throw your brass about like that?"

" Don't you call me lad!" said Handforth severely. " That's not a respectful way to address your Patrol Leader, my son!"

" And I'm not your son, either!" said Dick Goodwin, grinning.

" You're dotty about this good deed business!" broke in Church. " It's only supposed to be a trifle—such as helping an old woman across a busy street, or picking up a piece of banana-skin, or giving a dog a drink, or something. It doesn't mean that we've got to go about the country, spending our money, and—"

" I'm not going to ask you to spend your money!" interrupted Handforth. " We're going to earn some! All Scouts are allowed to earn money if it's for some good purpose."

" Fine!" said McClure. " How are we going to earn it?"

" Why not make some daisy chains and sell 'em?" suggested Owen major sarcastically. " We ought to get a farthing each —"

" Fathead!" roared Handforth. " Look here, you chaps, you're too jolly disrespectful to your Patrol Leader! Think how soundly we shall sleep to-night if we go to bed with the knowledge that we've set this poor old tinker on his feet."

" We shall have a chance of doing that

## PORTRAIT GALLERY AND WHO'S WHO.

### Fourth Series—Sixth Form.

NOTE.—The average age of Sixth Form boys is 18.



NO. 15.—Augustus Parkin.

Simon Kenmore's particular friend—and therefore a most unpleasant fellow. Ugly and coarse, he seems quite out of place among the other Sixth-Formers. Unpopular with everybody—even Kenmore's other friends.

after he's spent that two bob!" said Church thoughtfully.

"Eh?"

"Although, of course, being an old soaker, two bob's worth won't be enough to really get him down," went on Church.

"It's all very well being funny, but I'm serious!" growled Handforth. "We can earn enough money to set the old tinker up for life! We'll give him a good start, and supply him with a new outfit and a tent, and—"

"Hold on!" gasped Owen major. "How much do you think we're going to earn?"

"Oh, not much—about twenty pounds, perhaps," said Handforth lightly. "It all depends upon the work we do."

Church nodded.

"As far as I can see, we shall have to try burglary!" he said tartly.

## CHAPTER IV.

### PREPARING TO EARN MONEY.



**T**HE Tiger Patrol grinned—all except Handforth.

"That's about the only way to raise twenty pounds, certainly," agreed Owen major. "Or perhaps we can pick a few pockets, or commit a highway robbery."

"I said earn the money—not steal it!" hooted Handforth. "You young criminals! Fine Scouts, ain't you—talking about robbery like that!"

"You silly ass, we're only joking!" snorted Church. "But when you get talking about earning twenty quid as though it were tuppence we've got to say something. Let's get on with this patrolling, and forget all about old Binns. We can't earn money."

"Can't we?" retorted Handforth. "I've just thought of something. It's a brain-wave."

"Naturally!" said Church promptly.

"We'll go shrimping."

"What?"

"Shrimping!" said Handforth, his eyes gleaming. "Then we'll take our shrimps into Caistowe, and sell 'em in the market."

"My only hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Shrimping, by jingo!"

The Tigers looked at their leader rather dazedly.

"Swab my scuppers!" ejaculated Burton. "You ain't serious, messmate?"

"Of course I'm serious!"

"You mean that we'll go out on the beach, and catch some shrimps?" asked Church, coming to himself.

"Yes."

"But I don't believe it's the right season—"

"That's nothing interrupted Handforth. "There are plenty of shrimps in the sea,

and as soon as we've caught as many as we can carry, we'll go and sell 'em. Then we'll take all the money to old Binns—"

"We shall need a police escort for that!" said Owen major. "It's dangerous to go about the streets with a whole fortune in cash! You silly ass! We couldn't earn more than a shilling or two at that job! What if we do catch some shrimps? Supposing we can't sell 'em?"

"Then we can get rid of them wholesale to the fish shops!"

"Yes, and get paid about fourpence a bushel!" said McClure. "There's no value in shrimps—and I don't believe we can catch any, anyhow."

"You leave it to me," said Handforth firmly. "We'll go back to camp, get our swimming costumes, and then go down to the beach."

The Tigers brightened up wonderfully.

"I don't know," said Church. "It seems to me a brainy idea. The fact is, we don't give Handy enough credit, you chaps. He's so clever that we overlook it sometimes."

"By gum, you're right!" agreed Dick Goodwin.

"Hear, hear!" said Owen major.

"Splice my jibboom!" ejaculated Burton. "Handy's smart."

The leader of the Tigers beamed and expanded.

"Oh, don't talk rot!" he said modestly. "But I'm glad you appreciate a good idea when you hear it. Well, come on—let's go back to camp."

Fortunately for Handforth's peace of mind, he was unaware that his followers only regarded the swimming part of the scheme as a good idea. At the first mention of bathing-costumes they had changed completely.

It was swelteringly hot, and the thought of a delightful sea bathe bucked them up wonderfully. As for shrimping—if Handforth chose to get these ideas, it was his own doing. And the Tigers looked forward to spending the whole afternoon in a most pleasant way.

"Don't forget—not a word to the others," went on Handforth, as they retraced their steps towards the camp. "I mean to show everybody that the Tiger Patrol is the most go-ahead!"

"Yes, we'll keep it mum," said Church.

"Rather—we don't want to be laughed at!" said McClure thoughtlessly. "I—I mean—"

He was relieved when he saw that Handforth had failed to catch the remark. And presently they trotted into the camp of the 1st St. Frank's Troop, and found everything rather deserted. For practically all the other Patrols were out.

This section of the camp consisted of eight or nine tents grouped round a small marquee. Everything was neat and tidy, and the whole place had an appearance of business-like orderliness.

"Hallo, Ted! Done your good deed to-day?"

Handforth turned, frowning, and found his minor near by. Willy was the Patrol Leader of the Panthers—the leading Patrol of the 3rd Troop. His yellow shoulder-knot proclaimed him a Panther. And his scarf, being of a different colour to his major's, indicated that he was an intruder in the camp.

"You've got no business here," said Handforth severely. "You go over to your own Troop, my lad. As for my good deed—I've done it!"

"Oh, that's all right, then!" said Willy. "I was going to suggest something. I thought it would be a good turn on your part to remain dumb for an hour. That would be a good turn for the rest of your Patrol."

"I'm not going to slob you!" said Handforth sourly. "Scouts aren't supposed to scrap. Besides, you ought to be a Wolf Cub. It's an indignity to us that you should be a fully-fledged Scout!"

"Cheese it!" grinned Willy. "We're going to show you chaps what scouting really is. Before this camp is finished we'll win all the proficiency badges and top the list!"

## CHAPTER V.

### WILLY TAKES THE TIP.



**W**ILLY HANDFORTH grinned as his major brushed him aside.

"Get back to your own camp, and let's have no more of this cheek!" said Edward Oswald tartly. "The Tigers are just off shrimping. We're going to earn a lot of money and help a poor old tinker who's nearly starving."

"You're going shrimping?" repeated Willy. "My only hat! And how much money do you expect to earn by that?"

"Mind your own business!"

"My dear ass, you won't catch any shrimps—"

"Who told you anything about it?" demanded Handforth. "Eh? By George! I believe I mentioned it myself. You young rotter, you always worm things out of me!" he added hotly. "Look here, don't you breathe a word to anybody else! By the time we've finished our shrimping we shall have earned pots of money, and we shall have done the best good turn of the day."

"You always were an optimist, Ted, old man," said Willy, shaking his head. "But why catch shrimps? What's the matter with mackerel, or something a bit bigger? If I were you, I'd have a look for some

oysters. Shrimps are so jolly small—and they're cheap, too."

"I don't want advice—"

"Now, oysters are a different thing," went on Willy. "There's no telling—you might find a pearl or two. Just a few pearls, and you'd make tons of money. I don't want to criticise, but it seems to me that shrimps are too cheap for a fine Patrol like the Tigers. Still, I dare say you'll catch enough for tea, so it won't matter."

He marched off, whirling his staff like a trick juggler. Willy was already learning all sorts of new stunts, and he regarded scouting as a fine idea.

"Saucy young boulder!" growled Handforth, as his minor passed round a tent. "Oysters, eh? He doesn't know what he's talking about—there aren't any oysters on this coast."

The rest of the Tigers were of the opinion that there weren't any shrimps, either, but this didn't worry them in the least. They were far more interested in the bathe.

Entering the camp of the 3rd Troop, Willy proceeded to give the Patrol call. He put his tongue in the side of his mouth and produced a rather surprising sound.

"Keekook!" came the call. "Keekook!"

As though by magic, five Scouts came running up from all sides. They were the other Panthers, Willy's Patrol consisting of himself, Chubby Heath, Juicy Lemon, Hobbs, Kerrigan, and Conroy minimus.

"Here we are, Chief!" said Hobbs breathlessly.

"Don't call me Chief—it's not usual!" said Willy. "But you're learning splendidly. You might have been a little more prompt, young Conroy, but I'll overlook it. What's that nasty mess on your scarf?"

"Only a little jam," said Conroy minimus.

"And what's that stain on your shorts?"

"That?" said Conroy minimus. "Ink."

"And where's your shoulder-knot?"

"I lost it," said Conroy minimus. "I was having a scrap with one of those giddy Rams, and somehow—"

"That's enough!" interrupted Willy. "You leave the Rams alone! And if you come out again without a shoulder-knot, I'll jolly well biff you! Now look here—I've got something to say."

Willy collected the Panthers round him closely.

"Don't faint, but I'm going to tell you something," he confided. "Ted has had a good idea. I don't know where he pinched it from, but there it is. He's decided to take the Tigers out shrimping."

"Shrimping?"

"Yes."



"Is that what you call a good idea?"

Not exactly; but if you'll let me finish, your limited brain power might understand," said Willy calmly. "Ted's scheme is to earn some money. We're all broke, so we could do with a bit of cash, too. That's where the good idea comes in—earning some money."

"But shrimping's no good—"

"Who said it was?" demanded Willy. "That's just where Ted always goes wrong. He gets good ideas sometimes, but messes them up in working 'em out. Forget the shrimping—that's nothing. The idea is to earn some tin. And if we can't get out a

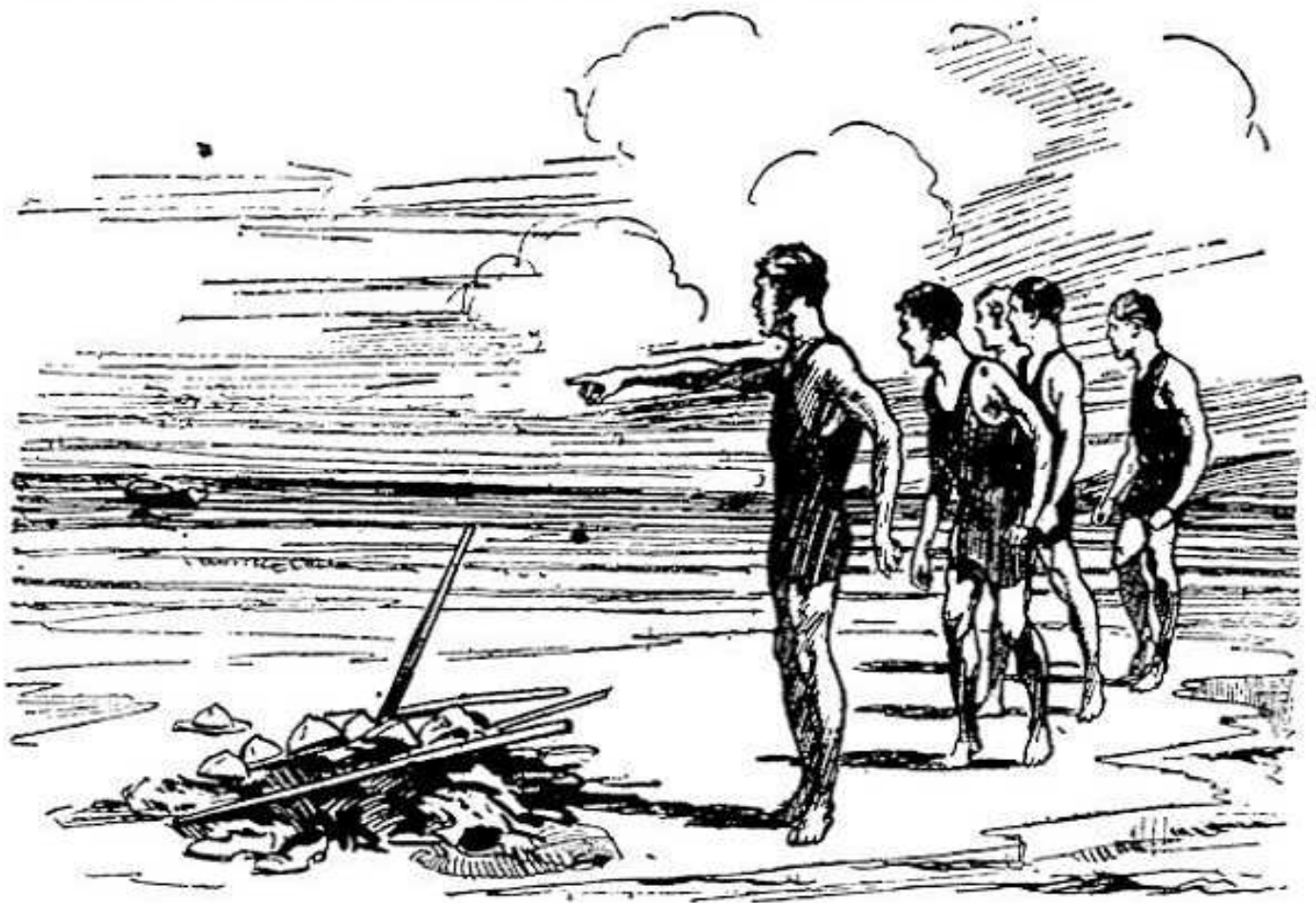
## CHAPTER VI.

## OFF TO EARN SOME MONEY.



THE TIGERS certainly looked businesslike.

They were just leaving the camp. Acting upon Handforth's instructions, each Scout of the Patrol had secured a piece of netting to his staff. It was in the shape of a bag, and Handforth declared that they would obtain shrimps by the pint at each sweep. The other scouts accepted this prophecy with all solemnity.



"There she is!" said Church, catching his breath in. "My only hat! She's drifted half a mile, if she's drifted an inch!"

good method, you can call us the Drones instead of the Panthers."

Chubby Heath grinned.

"I'll tell you what—let's a concert party—"

"Of course, I'd naturally expect a potty suggestion of that kind from you," interrupted Willy with a sniff. "We can get up a concert party in a couple of hours, can't we? This money has got to be earned this afternoon—just to show Ted what the Panthers can do."

And Willy frowned thoughtfully. That keen young brain of his was already beginning to work, and the glimmerings of a scheme came to him.

"We ought to do fine," declared Church. "But there's one thing we've forgotten, old man. We ought to have brought a few sacks."

"Sacks?"

"Or baskets."

"Baskets?"

"My dear chap, we must have something to carry the shrimps away in," said Church. "Not that sacks or baskets will be much good—we shall need a couple of motor-lorries. Still, we can deal with that problem when it arises," he added philosophically.

They were nearing the cliffs now. The camp was pitched some little distance from the cliff edge, and there was no danger for

the Scouts, for the cliffs at this point were in no way perilous. They sloped down from the edge, and it was possible to descend without any danger.

On the one hand lay Shingle Head, with the cruel rocks jutting out in a jagged line. At present they looked harmless enough in the afternoon sunlight, with the sea as still and placid as a mill-pond.

Some way out to sea, perched upon an isolated rock, stood the famous Shingle Head Lighthouse. In murky weather it was almost invisible, but to-day every line of the tall, stately structure could be seen. The sunlight gleamed and reflected on the glass windows at the top. And one of the lighthouse-keepers could even be seen walking round the high platform.

On the other hand, as the Scouts approached the cliff edge, lay a smaller headland—by no means dangerous, since there were no rocks. But in this direction the cliffs became perpendicular, with chalk faces. And at their base many black openings could be seen—the entrances to the deep and mysterious caves for which this part of the coast was famous.

Shingle Bay itself was immediately below. A quiet, peaceful stretch of beach, isolated from all habitation—such was Shingle Bay. Down there, protected by the cliffs, one could feel separated from the entire world. Caistowe, with its holiday-makers, was round the headland, and only a few holiday-makers would ever venture along the beach as far as this.

The Tiger Patrol descended the cliff by one of the many well-worn paths. And they were soon on the beach, where the shingle lay in masses. There was no sand here—only endless pebbles.

Handforth surveyed the scene doubtfully.

"H'm! The tide's right out!" he exclaimed. "And it doesn't look a very promising place for shrimps, either. I'll tell you what—we'd better go out to that sandbank and have a shot there."

He pointed as he spoke, shading his eyes from the sun. There was no sandbank visible, for it was hidden by the jutting-out rocks. But all the juniors knew that a big sandbank did exist over in that direction. It was always uncovered at low water.

"Good idea!" said Church heartily. "We've got the boat here, and it won't take us long to get to the sandbank. And it's jolly fine for bathing—better than this rough shingle."

"Bathing!" said Handforth, frowning. "That's only a detail! We're after shrimps, my lad—bathing is of secondary importance. Well, come on—get the boat out! Hurry up—no slacking!"

It rather pleased Handforth to rap out his orders. He seemed to imagine that he

was an officer in charge of cadets. He never realised that Scouts were on a different footing.

"Heave-ho!" sang out Burton, as the boat was pushed down to the water. "Now then, messmates—all together!"

There were, in fact, several boats lying on the beach, for the Scouts had provided themselves with these craft for bathing purposes, and for enjoying a pleasant row whenever they so desired.

The boat was soon launched, and the Tiger Patrol started off for the sandbank. Passing round the rocks at the end of the bay, they came within sight of the smooth stretch of dry sands. They were deserted. But it was no uncommon thing for the Scouts to bathe from this place. It was private, isolated, and the smooth sands were delightful. Furthermore, at low water the bathing was perfectly safe, since the sands sloped very gradually into the sea. And, in any case, all the Scouts were swimmers.

The boat grounded on the sands, and Handforth looked overside.

"Wait a minute!" he shouted, as Tom Burton was going to jump out. "Hold, there! Don't move until I give the orders! Take off your shoes and stockings—no need to get wet feet!"

"We can't help getting wet feet," said Church. "But it's a good idea to keep our shoes and stockings dry."

There was something in Handforth's idea. The water was so shallow that the boat was still a few yards from the dry sand. So the Tigers removed their shoes and stockings, and then paddled ashore.

"Good!" said Handforth, nodding. "Now then—into your swimming suits, and we'll soon be after the shrimps. Dump all your clothes in a pile here. The sooner we can get to work the better."

"Hear, hear!" said the Tigers.

But they were thinking of swimming—not shrimping.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE DELIGHTS OF SHRIMPING.



**F**IVE minutes later the Tiger Patrol was transformed.

The juniors were no longer Scouts, but ordinary boys in swimming costumes.

There had been a bit of a race, as to who should be undressed first. And four of the Tigers made a simultaneous dash for the water.

"I'll race you to that rock and back!" yelled Church.

"I'm on, shipmate!" grinned Burton.

"I didn't mean you—you can swim like a

giddy fish!" said Church. "Hallo! What's Handy shouting about now?"

Handforth was rushing up, roaring at the top of his voice.

"Halt!" he bellowed. "Come back, you fatheads! Hi! Can't you hear me giving orders? Am I the leader of this Patrol or not?"

"What's up now?" asked Owen major.

"Everything's up!" roared Handforth. "What do you fatheads mean by rushing into the sea in this way? What about your staves? We're here to catch shrimps—not to swim!"

"Yes, but—"

"But nothing!" interrupted Handforth curtly. "Remember Law 7!"

"What's that?"

Handforth regarded his followers piling in.

"And you call yourselves Scouts!" he exclaimed, with withering scorn. "Law 7 distinctly states that a Scout must obey the orders of his parents, Patrol Leader, or Scoutmaster, without question. Don't forget those last two words—without question!"

"But we're not on duty now—" began McClure.

"You're always on duty," interrupted Handforth severely. "A Scout is always serving—even when he's in a bathing costume! And as I'm your Patrol Leader, you've got to obey my orders without question—because it's your duty. That's what Law 7 says."

"And it also says that after we've done our duty, we can ask a few questions about it," declared Church. "You're quite right about carrying out orders at once—that's discipline. Well, we're game."

"It's a good thing you are!" said Handforth. "Come back here, and get your staves. There'll be no swimming this afternoon—understand? We've just got to wade out, and catch shrimps."

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Owen major.

But it was no good. They were Scouts, and had to obey the orders of their Patrol Leader. Their Scoutmaster, Nelson Lee, had already instilled into them a thorough understanding of discipline and when it came to the point, they were ready to obey orders. But, somehow, the Tigers didn't really regard Edward Oswald Handforth in a serious way. It was only when he insisted that they recognised him as Patrol Leader.

Although they were longing to have a swim, they obeyed orders, and seized their specially prepared staves. Then, wading out, they drew the nets through the water.

"This is a fat lot of good!" growled McClure. "We shall get a few pieces of seaweed, I expect."

"A swindle, I call it," said Owen major. "I thought we should be able to have a

good swim, but Handy means to keep us under discipline. If he goes on like this, I shall change my giddy Patrol!"

"Rats!" said Church. "You're a fine Tiger, aren't you? Handy's all right—he'll soon get tired of this game. You can take my word for it, my son, that Handy's the best Patrol Leader we could have."

And Owen major rather believed that Church was right. He had joined the Tigers because there seemed more prospect of getting plenty of fun out of Handforth's Patrol.

"This is queer!" said Handforth, frowning. "There don't seem to be many shrimps in this part. Perhaps we'd better wade a bit further out. Now then, Goodwin—no slacking!"

At the end of twenty minutes, two of the Tigers had succeeded in netting a couple of small fish, and another Tiger had triumphantly brought up a long length of seaweed. But shrimps were conspicuous by their absence.

"Well, it's rummy!" said Handforth. "What about all the shrimps you see in the fishmonger's? They've got piles of 'em in Caistowe."

"Yes, but they've got their own ways of getting 'em," said Church. "We're not in the right place. And we haven't got the right shrimp nets, either. They catch 'em in very shallow water, as a rule, quite near the shore. We're too far out."

Even Handforth was beginning to suspect this now—but he wouldn't admit it. He persisted in his efforts, and he kept his Scouts so busy that nobody thought of looking behind, at the sandbank. Perhaps they wouldn't have noticed anything if they had glanced round. But it was an undoubted fact that the tide was creeping in, and that the sandbank was slowly, but almost imperceptibly, growing smaller.

"My hat! I've got something here!" said Handforth abruptly, as he looked into his net. "Look at these horrible things! I never knew that such beastly insects grew in the sea!"

He gazed with severe displeasure at five or six creatures in his net. Church peered in.

"Why, you ass, they're shrimps!" he exclaimed, with a grin.

"Shrimps!" echoed Handforth. "Don't talk rot! These things are nearly black, and they look like sea beetles! Besides, they can't be shrimps! They're not red, and they haven't got curled tails!"

"They're always grey when they're alive!" chuckled Church. "They only turn pink and curl up after they're boiled. You're a fine sort of chap to go shrimping! If you'd got your net full, you'd have thrown 'em all away!"

Handforth turned his net inside out, and shuddered.

"I never knew it before!" he muttered. "By George! I'll never eat another shrimp as long as I live!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE PANTHERS ON THE JOB.



**W**ILLY HANDFORTH looked round searchingly.

"This is about the best place," he decided. "Couldn't be better, in fact. It may take us an hour or

two, but if we don't collect a lot of money, I shall be jolly surprised."

The Panther Patrol had come to a halt on the beach at Caistowe. They were not far from the Bannington crowd—but practically in the middle of it. Caistowe was a quiet, sleepy fishing village during the winter months—but when summer came along it blossomed out into a thronged seaside resort.

And at present, in the very middle June, the little town was full of visitors.

And on such a brilliant afternoon as this the beach was crowded. People were bathing by the score, and children were paddling by the hundred. The beach was gay with life. Elderly folk napped in deck chairs, ice-cream vendors went about, selling their wares. Lemonade stalls were dotted here and there. And in one place a minstrel troupe was doing its utmost to drown the shouts of the children.

But the Panthers paid no heed to this scene of animation.

They were at the back of the beach, close against the cliff. And just here there were some curious formations of the rock. Masses of it jutted out from the beach, and round the rocks children were wont to play hide-and-seek.

Willy investigated closely.

"It couldn't have been better if we had built it ourselves!" he declared. "There's a big-mass of rock here with a clear space of sand behind—and with the sheer cliff at the back. We've only got to protect the two openings, and we shall be absolutely private."

"Yes, but what's idea?" asked Chubby Heath.

"You'll find out what it is later," said Handforth minor. "Don't be so curious. We've got to earn some money, and—"

He broke off as two other parties of Scouts came into sight. One party wore brown shoulder knots, and the other party displayed mauve and white. They were the Rams and the Badgers, of the 3rd Troop. Dicky Jones was Patrol Leader of the Rams, and Owen minor Patrol Leader of the Badgers.

"Look out—Panthers!" said Dicky Jones. "Cave, you chaps!"

"Fathead!" sang out Willy. "What are you afraid of?"

"We thought you were going to attack us!" said Dicky, as he came up. "Haven't we agreed to act as enemies when we're Scouting? One Patrol against the other? Owen minor and I have called a truce for the time being—"

"All right—I'll call a truce, too," interrupted Willy. "You've just come along at the right time. I want your help. We're going to take possession of this part of the beach, and these rocks have got to be guarded. Are you chaps game to make some money?"

Dicky Jones looked at a passing team man, and sighed.

"Money?" he repeated. "What is it? I've heard the word before, somewhere. We thought about raiding one of these ice-cream chaps, but perhaps it wouldn't be quite the thing. That's the worst of being Scouts—we've got to stick to so many rules of honour!"

"You'll get plenty of ice-cream—without pinching it!" said Handforth minor. "I expect you'll laugh when I tell you what the game is, but you can take my word for it, there's money in the job. But everything depends upon speed—we've got to get a hustle on before the crowd clears away."

Willy talked seriously to the two rival Patrol Leaders. And although they looked sceptical—even indignant—they finally consented to Willy's proposals.

"It seems a potty idea, but you ought to know best," said Dicky Jones. "I suppose we'll take it in turns? Well, I'll stand on guard, to start with."

"Lazy beggar!" retorted Willy. "You ought to set your Patrol a good example by working."

Within a few minutes, a change had come about. Most of the fags vanished behind the rocks. There were two wide causeways which led to the sandy space behind.

And each of these causeways was now guarded by three Scouts at attention. If any holiday-makers came along and wanted to get past, they were politely but firmly turned back.

"No admittance!" said the sentries, again and again. "This is forbidden ground—Scouts at work!"

And the visitors indulgently went away, never dreaming of disobeying orders. Children collected round, curious to know what was going on, but it was no good. The Scouts preserved their secret well.

The Hawk Patrol, led by Reggie Pitt, even displayed an interest in the doings of the 3rd Troop, but they were just as firmly turned aside. Willy & Co. had something on which had to be kept a secret.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE TIGERS IN PERIL.



**H**ANDFORTH had lost his interest in shrimping.

He said nothing to the other Tigers, but he didn't much care now whether they caught any shrimps or not. He let them continue their efforts. After all, perhaps they would catch some real fish—and that would be even better.

But the Tigers had their own ideas.

"We're simply wasting our time," said McClure at length. "There's nothing to be caught here—we might as well chuck it up. What about going for a swim, Handy? We're not on duty now, are we?"

Handforth thawed.

"Oh, well, perhaps we'd better think of some other scheme for making money!" he remarked. "I'll tell you what. Let's have a swim, and then get dressed and go ashore, and we'll give an entertainment on the beach."

"An entertain-ment?"

"My you know."

"But we can't do that!" objected Owen major. "Scouts aren't allowed to make themselves ridiculous in public. We should need costumes—"

"Well, we'll leave it till later on," said Handforth gruffly. "We've got to make money somehow; we can't let that old tinker starve."

The Tigers didn't worry in the least. They made a dash for the sandbank, and threw their staves down. Free from these, they prepared to go for their swim. But suddenly Dick Goodwin uttered an exclamation.

"By gum!" he exclaimed. "Where's the boat?"

The other Scouts stared round blankly. The sandbank seemed a little smaller. They only noticed this sub-consciously, but

it was undoubtedly dwindling. Their uniforms were in just the same pile, and the sand was dry and firm. But the boat, which had rested in the shallow water, was now completely absent.

"There she is!" said Church, catching his breath in. "My only hat! She's drifted half a mile, if she's drifted an inch!"

All the Scouts kept calm. They said nothing to one another, but they felt uneasy. To suddenly find that their boat had drifted away was alarming enough.

For the currents were peculiar off the coast. Between this sandbank and the shore there was a treacherous undercurrent—unsuspected in a calm sea, but ever present, nevertheless. All the Scouts had been warned against it by Nelson Lee.

"Who had charge of the boat?" demanded Church. "I thought you secured it, Handy?"

"Secured it?" retorted Handforth. "I was last out, I believe, but I thought she'd stay there."

"Souise my decks!" growled Burton. "The tide's coming in, shipmates! That's what's happened, and our craft was lifted by the rising water and carried off. By top-sails! She's well out of reach now!"

"And within half an hour this sandbank will be covered!" said Owen major, showing the first signs of panic. "We're marooned! We shall never be able to swim ashore. It's too far for me, anyhow!"

Handforth realised his responsibility as Patrol Leader, and he took charge of the situation with a firm hand.

"Well, it's no good grumbling—the boat's gone," he said. "There's only one thing to do—swim after it. You chaps wait here and I'll fetch the boat back."

Tom Burton shook his head.

"Better let me go, messmate," he said quietly. "I'm a better swimmer than you are, and this current—"

"Rot!" interrupted Handforth. "It was

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my fault that the boat went, and I'll fetch it back. 'Are you trying to tell me that I can't swim?'"

"No, but—"

"That's enough!" interrupted Handforth. "All you fellows stay here. I'm leader, and I'm giving orders. Don't forget law 7. I'll be back with that boat in less than ten minutes!"

Without another word, he ran into the sea, and set off with powerful strokes. Edward Oswald was a rather clumsy swimmer, but he had plenty of strength and endurance.

Of the other Tigers, Owen major was the only one who was really weak at swimming. The others could all be trusted to put up a good performance, if called upon to do so.

Tom Burton shook his head as he watched Handforth.

"It's no good, shipmates—he'll never do it!" he declared. "The current's tricky just here. Even though the tide's coming in there's a peculiar backwash, and it's harder to swim ashore than it is to swim out. Besides, the boat's too far off now."

But Handforth was swimming on grimly.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE MAROONED SCOUTS.



WHILE the Tigers were watching Handforth's bobbing head something else was happening in the other direction.

While their backs were turned, a schooner had come into view round the neighbouring headland. It was a comparatively small craft, and it progressed at a fair speed, in spite of the fact that there was very little wind. Obviously she was provided with an auxiliary engine.

The schooner appeared to be coming straight towards the sandbank. But it dropped anchor less than a quarter of a mile away, and considerably nearer to the juniors than the shore.

In the meantime Handforth was changing his mind.

He was experiencing great difficulties. Although the sea was as calm as a lake, Handforth found it very hard to make any progress. The current was so strong that he seemed to be getting no nearer his objective. In fact, when he glanced back and saw how little he had progressed, he realised that he would never be able to reach the boat.

And so, very sensibly, he gave it up.

"He's coming back!" said Church suddenly.

"Aye, I thought he would!" said Burton. "The current's too strong!"

"Then what are we going to do?" asked Owen major huskily. "If Handforth can't swim in the current, neither can I! And that means that we can't get ashore. It's over half a mile!"

Burton said nothing. He himself could swim the distance with comparative ease, but he felt sure that several of the other Scouts would never succeed. The situation was grave.

Burton thought about swimming after the boat himself, but although he was confident of reaching it, it would take a long time, for the little craft was drifting even faster now. By the time he returned the sandbank would be covered, and the Scouts in the sea. For now that the tide was nearing the flood, it came in with alarming rapidity.

Furthermore, this place was isolated.

It wasn't visible from the cliff tops near the camp, owing to the screen of rocks. And on the other side lay the ragged cliffs of Shingle Head, where nobody was likely to be. The place was quite isolated.

So the peril of the Tiger Patrol would not be known until, perhaps, it was too late. The Scouts watched Handforth returning with many misgivings.

Even now they were ignorant of the neighbouring schooner, since not one of them had turned his eyes towards the open sea. They had no inkling that the little craft had crept up.

But Handforth knew it, for as he swam back towards the sandbank he had a clear view of the schooner as she lay there at anchor. It was, indeed, the sight of this vessel which had caused him to abandon his original project.

He waded back on to the sandbank, rather breathless. The bank was now less than half its former size, and the tide was surging in in a succession of powerful waves.

"It's no good—current's too strong!" panted Handforth, as he ran up. "Besides, the boat's drifting further and further away all the time."

"But we can't swim ashore!" protested Owen major.

"No fear!" said Handforth. "I'm a jolly good swimmer, and I couldn't do it! There's a kind of undertow, or something. But there's no need to worry—"

"No need to worry!" shouted Owen. "We shall be drowned!"

"Yes, old man, we've got to face it!" said Church. "There's nothing in sight, and there's not a soul—"

"Nothing in sight!" echoed Handforth. "What about that yacht over there?"

"Yacht?" echoed the others, twirling round.

They started, astonished to see the

schooner at such close quarters. All their alarm disappeared. They felt like laughing. They had been worrying about reaching safety, and this vessel was right behind them.

"Souise my 'tweendecks!" said the Bo'sun. "That's no yacht, Handy—it's an old schooner! But it's all right; she's got a boat trailing astern, and one of us can swim there with ease. The current helps us in that direction, too. I'll go—"

"We'll all swim there," said Church eagerly.

"No, you won't!" interrupted Handforth. "It was my fault that the boat drifted away, and I'm going to get you out of this mess. When I'm in the wrong, I always admit it. It only happens once in a blue moon, but I act on the straight!"

"Good old Handy!" chuckled McClure. "But you've had your swim—why not let the Bo'sun go?"

"Because I've made up my mind to go myself!" retorted Handforth. "I'm the leader of this Patrol, and I mean to be obeyed! It would be a silly idea for all of us to swim there. What about our uniforms? They'd be washed off the sandbank by the time we got back. I'll go alone, and I'll borrow that boat."

"It's a good idea," said Goodwin, nodding. "Even if the sandbank is covered before you get back, we shall still be able to stand on the sand—and our uniforms won't get wet because we can carry them. But buck up, lad, or you'll be too late!"

"Leave it to me," said Handforth confidently. "I'll be back in five minutes. We'll borrow that boat, chase our own, and then return the borrowed one later. I'm not going to have you chaps saying that I got you into a hole, and left you there!"

Burton would have preferred to make the swim himself, but he only grinned. And to argue would only mean delay. Besides, Handforth could easily succeed this time, and there was no peril. If the worst came to the worst, they could all make the swim, and sacrifice their uniforms.

Handforth started off, little guessing what he was in for!

## CHAPTER XI.

### ABOARD THE SCHOONER.



**T**HERE was a great difference in swimming now. Handforth found that he could make good progress, and almost before he realised it, he was close to the

schooner's stern. There seemed to be nobody on board.

The vessel lay quiet and placid on the sea and only a slight gurgle sounded as

she rose and fell to the almost imperceptible swell. Handforth wondered if he should take the boat without permission.

Then he remembered that he was a Scout. Under ordinary circumstances he would have had no compunction in seizing the boat. But, as a Scout, it was necessary to obtain permission first.

"Anybody on board there?" he sang out.

He trod water while he waited, and glanced back towards the sandbank. A gleam of yellow told him that the bank was still uncovered, although it was decidedly smaller.

After a brief interval, the sound of stumbling footsteps came to Handforth's ears, and then followed the stride of somebody as he crossed the deck. A man looked overside. He was an unprepossessing-looking character, with an unshaven chin, no collar, and a greasy peaked cap on the side of his head.

"Say, was that you shoutin'?" he demanded.

"Who did you think it was—a shrimp?" demanded Handforth sarcastically. "I want to ask you if I can borrow that boat."

"What boat?"

"The one that's tied astern."

"Borrow it?" said the man. "No, you durned well can't! What's the idea, comin' here and askin' fool things like that? You get away from this craft, my lad, or you'll find yourself in trouble."

Handforth was astonished at the fellow's tone. He not only seemed angry, but half-alarmed. And Handforth had a recollection that he had seen the man before.

As a matter of fact, he was Mr. Trapp—the mate of the schooner. The St. Frank's juniors had had an adventure with him and his companion, Captain Jonas Starkey, some months back. This was why Handforth had the impression that he had seen the man before.

"There's no need to get nasty," said Handforth, swimming nearer to the schooner, and clinging to the ladder which hung overside. "I only want to borrow it for about half an hour—"

"I can't help your troubles—you clear off!"

Mr. Trapp spoke sharply—and his alarm seemed to be increasing. Handforth was in no mood to take denials. But the fellow's tone rendered it impossible for him to seize the boat in defiance. Besides, Mr. Trapp might throw a belaying-pin at him, or something like that.

Handforth decided to make a bold move. He was getting tired of splashing about in the water, and continuing this argument. He climbed up the ladder and leapt over the bulwark.

"Get off this craft!" roared Mr. Trapp angrily.

"What's the matter?" demanded Handforth. "Anybody might think you were scared, or something! Look over at that sandbank!" he added, pointing.

Mr. Trapp looked, and frowned.

"What, them boys?" he asked. "Leastways, they look like boys from here. What's the idea of this—"

"The tide's coming in fast, and those chaps are in danger of being trapped, that's all!" interrupted Handforth. "If you'll lend me that boat, I shall have time to get there and take them off before they're swamped. We've got all our clothes to think of, too."

"It's none o' my business," growled the mate. "You got on that sandbank—you can get off!"

"But our boat drifted away!"

"That's your own funeral!"

"You rotter!" roared Handforth hotly. "It's quite likely there WILL be a funeral if you act like this! I'll jolly well take the boat without your permission—and I shall be justified, too!"

"Ob, will yer!" shouted Mr. Trapp thickly. "You get off this craft, an' you an' your crew can swim ashore! It ain't far. Anyway, you ain't havin' no boat from this ship!"

Handforth was furious. The man's refusal seemed so needless. For the schooner was lying at anchor, and the boat was idle. Handforth didn't know that Mr. Trapp was expecting a signal from the shore in a very short time—and that the boat would then have to be used. And Mr. Trapp, for reasons of his own, kept this piece of information strictly to himself.

"All right!" said Handforth fiercely. "We'll see about this! Those chaps are in danger of being drowned, and you won't let me take that boat! Then I'll jolly well take it without your permission at all! Blow you!"

He turned on his heel, and made a leap at the side, intending to dive overboard. But Mr. Trapp made a grab at the same second. Handforth had been unwise in making known his plan—but that was quite characteristic of him.

"Hi! What the—"

Handforth paused, as a rough, horny grip seized his bare arm. He found himself pulled backwards, and his wet feet slithered on the deck.

"You'll take the boat without permission, will yer?" shouted Mr. Trapp angrily. "We'll see about that, young shaver! I don't like the looks o' you at all—I'm goin' to lock you up!"

"Lock me up!" yelled Handforth, struggling. "But those chaps will get drowned, you rotter—"

"That ain't no consarn o' mine," interrupted Mr. Trapp. "I'll keep you 'ere until

the skipper comes aboard! We'll see what 'e's got to say about the affair! It's my belief you've come 'ere spyin'—it's just one o' your blamed tricks! I know you kids of old!"

Handforth was too excited to pay any heed to what the fellow was saying. He had never dreamed that his mission would lead to such an affair as this. He struggled with all his strength—and Edward Oswald was a big proposition.

But Mr. Trapp was a bigger. His muscles were like whipcord, and he had the strength of a bullock. With one drive he forced Handforth back, and then he suddenly brought his elbow round and winded the unfortunate Patrol Leader at a blow.

After that Handforth hardly knew what happened. He felt himself pushed through a doorway, he stumbled down some dark stairs, and he was a secure prisoner on the schooner!

## CHAPTER XII.

### AN ALARMING SITUATION.



IRENE MANNERS tossed her pretty head.

"Don't be so absurd, Doris!" she protested.

"You know well enough that I'm not interested in Ted Handforth! I'm not going

to the Scouts' camp to see him at all!"

Doris Berkeley chuckled.

"Rats!" she said cheerfully. "You can't kid me like that, Irene! I don't mind admitting that I shall be disappointed if I don't see Reggie Pitt. And I know jolly well that Marjorie is keen on seeing good old Archie."

"Rather!" said Marjorie Temple.

"Oh, well, perhaps I shall be a bit disappointed if Ted's away," admitted Irene. "If it comes to that, we're all interested in these Scouts. I think it's a fine idea for the St. Frank's chaps to go into camp like this."

"We'll show 'em something before long—when we become Girl Guides," said Doris easily. "We shall be going into camp in about a fortnight, shan't we?"

"Something like that," replied Irene.

But, of course, our camp will be miles further along the cliffs than the Scouts'. A good thing, too. We want to be all to ourselves—that's the fun of it."

The three Moor View schoolgirls were walking along the cliff path from Shingle Head. They had decided to pay an afternoon call at Shingle Camp, and reckoned that they would drop in just in time for tea.

"There's one thing—the Scouts are bound to be in camp by the time we get there," said Irene, with a laugh. "You can always trust boys to be on hand when there's a meal-time!"

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"I think we're just about as bad," grinned Doris. "You seem to forget that we're deliberately planning to get there at tea-time!"

All three girls were dressed in summery attire. They looked very attractive against the setting of downs and cliff. And as they walked along, the panorama kept changing.

"What are those figures right out there?" asked Irene, suddenly pausing.

She pointed, and they all stood still. Some distance out to sea they could see a sandbank. It was only small now—apparently a mere narrow strip of sand. And upon it were four or five figures. Even at this distance the girls could see that the figures were in bathing costume. But the sandbank was entirely surrounded by sea, and there was no sign of any boat.

"Oh, some of the fellows, I expect," said Marjorie. "They've been having a bathe—"

"Yes, but they're marooned on that sandbank," interrupted Doris. "Why, hallo! Their boat must have drifted! Look! It's right over there—drifting towards the lighthouse! It must be a mile off!"

The little story was unfolded before them as clearly as though they had been told everything. The isolated figures on the sandbank—the incoming tide—the empty boat drifting on the current.

"But they're not in any danger, are they?" asked Irene quickly. "Surely, they can swim ashore?"

"If they could swim ashore, they'd have started long before this," declared Doris promptly. "But I expect the current's too strong— There you are! Look at that! They're all waving towards that sailing ship! I tell you they're in danger!"

Indeed, it was only too obvious now. For the figures on the ever-narrowing sandbank were waving articles of clothing towards the schooner—with the obvious intention of attracting attention. But there was no answering sign from the schooner.

"I say, we'd better do something quick!" ejaculated Irene. "They seem to be all asleep on that ship, and in another twenty minutes the tide will be completely over that sandbank! Let's run like mad into the camp!"

"Yes, come on!"

The three girls, thoroughly alarmed, lost no time in hurrying off. They were all athletic, and they made excellent speed. Shingle Camp was only half a mile away, and the girls came within sight of it suddenly, as they topped one of the rises.

The camp nestled in the hollow below, looking very picturesque with the tents gleaming in the afternoon's sunshine. There were many figures moving about, and coils of smoke were rising from the camp kitchens.

The girls hurried in, running hard—and, fortunately, they came upon the Lion Patrol just on the outskirts of the camp.



"There's no need to get nasty," said Handforth, swimming nearer to the schooner, and clinging to the ladder which hung overside. "I only want to borrow the boat for about half an hour . . ."

The Lions were coming in after some practice.

Nipper, the Patrol Leader, looked surprised as the girls halted.

"Is anything the matter?" he asked abruptly.

"I don't know!" panted Irene. "But it's a good thing we've met you, Dick! Are some of your Scouts bathing?"

"Not that I know of," replied Nipper.

He and the other Lions had hardly had an opportunity to salute, for the girls had rushed up so precipitately. They always called Nipper by his right name—Dick Hamilton.

"I believe some of the boys are in peril!" exclaimed Irene. "Anyhow, there are four or five out on the sandbank—and they've lost their boat! The tide's coming in swiftly, and—"

"The Tigers, I'll bet!" interrupted Tommy Watson quickly.

"Good gad!" said Archie Glenthorpe. "You don't really think, dear old girls, that—"

"Quick—oh, quick!" interrupted Doris. "Come and look for yourselves!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE TIGERS SWIM FOR IT.



"CAN'T make it out!" said Church anxiously. "Why on earth doesn't the fathead come back? Even Handy wouldn't be such an ass as to deliberately stay all this time!"

"He's ass enough for anything," said Owen major.

The sandbank was now so narrow that the Tigers would be paddling within a few minutes. They had already gathered up their uniforms, to save them from the sudden flow of water when it finally swept over the bank. The strip of sand was now no longer than twenty feet, and no broader than ten. The tide was coming in at the flood.

And all the Scouts of the Tiger Patrol were puzzled.

They had distinctly seen Handforth mount the ladder of the schooner, and then they had lost sight of him. They knew he was on board. And at first they had felt that everything was all right. Momentarily, they had expected to see him drop into the dinghy which floated placidly at the stern of the schooner. But Handforth had done nothing of the kind. Since climbing on board, he had completely vanished. And, what was more, no other human being had appeared in sight.

And the tide was leaping in meanwhile.

"We can't stand this!" said Church, at length. "He can't possibly reach us in time now—even if he starts at once. I think we'd better swim for it. It's the only thing."

"I shall never be able to do it!" muttered Owen major.

The distance to the schooner seemed appalling to him. Most of the others were confident, but they would much rather have had the boat take them off. Handforth's mysterious disappearance was disturbing.

"Don't you worry, mes-mates," said Tom Burton, patting Owen major on the shoulder. "You hang on to me—I'll steer you on a straight course."

"Thanks," growled Owen. "But it doesn't seem right that I should have to get one of you chaps to help me—"

"Souse me!" interrupted the Bo'sun. "That's nothing! We can't all be good swimmers. There's nothing to worry about—but we'll make Handforth give a good explanation, or we'll sink him!"

"But what about our uniforms?" asked Dick Goodwin. "They'll be ruined!"

"No they won't," said the Bo'sun. "We've all got string, haven't we? Well, shipmates, bundle your uniforms as small as you can, and splice 'em on to your heads.

As long as we keep our heads above water, we shall keep our uniforms dry."

It was a practical idea, and although it would probably prove partially unsuccessful, the uniforms wouldn't get entirely soaked. And to swim for it was certainly the only possible method.

And there was no sign of help coming from the shore, and the schooner looked as deserted as ever. By this time, too, the last strip of sand had been covered. The juniors were already standing in the midst of swirling foam.

From a distance the spectacle looked curious—if any had been able to see. It seemed as though the juniors were standing in deep water. Only the white foam betrayed the fact that solid sand lay just beneath the surface.

And the sea was strong, in spite of its calmness. The succession of waves which swept over the bank had such strength that the Scouts found it even difficult to keep their feet.

And the swim to the schooner was no mean feat. It would need all their endurance to perform it—particularly as they would be hampered by the uniforms. Tom Burton added Handforth's uniform to his own bundle.

Somehow, they managed to secure the bundles to their heads. And then, Burton leading the way, they plunged off into the deep water. A last look at the schooner had assured them that assistance was as far off as ever.

"Stick close to me, shipmates," sang out Burton, as he began to swim. "If any of you find it too much for you, chuck your uniform away. We can't take any risks."

To the Bo'sun, who had spent his childhood on the sea, a swim such as this was a mere trifle. And it was not much of an effort to Dick Goodwin. But it would tax all Church and McClure's endurance, and Owen major was frankly incapable of it.

But he struggled manfully. The distance seemed appalling to him after five minutes had elapsed. He knew that deep water lay beneath him, and the schooner seemed as far off as ever. He strove hard to keep himself from panic, but it was useless.

"I shall never do it—never!" he spluttered, after he had swallowed two or three mouthfuls of salt water. "I'm—I'm done!"

His own uniform was soaked, for he had gone under more than once. But Tom Burton was near by, and he assisted his fellow Tiger. And now the Bo'sun's task was as difficult as the others'—for with the handicap of the nearly exhausted Owen major, he had to struggle every inch of the way.

The swim to safety, indeed, was almost touch and go.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE ALARM.



**L**OOK!" exclaimed Doris Berkeley, pointing.

There was a catch in her voice, and her pretty face had gone rather pale. And there was every reason for her alarm. She and her companions had just reached a spot along the cliffs where they could gaze out to the sandbank. This had been invisible hitherto owing to the intervening masses of rock.

It had been necessary, in fact, to come quite a distance, and many precious minutes had sped by.

The Lion Patrol had been joined by the Hawke, and the Wolves—for Reggie Pitt and Buster Boots had brought their scouts into the affair. They all felt that the girls were in earnest, and that this was no wild goose chase.

Moreover, they had learned from one of the Curlews—Nick Trotwood's Patrol—that the Tigers had set off for the beach with the intention of shrimping. Fatty Little—who was a Curlew—had seen them go, and he had heard Handforth talking about shrimps. Fatty Little could always be trusted to hear discussion concerning food.

Thus it had been definitely established before leaving the camp, that the figures on the sandbank were the figures of the Tiger Patrol. And all the other Scouts were filled with a keen anxiety. They knew what a careless ass Handforth was, and it had not surprised them in the least that the boat had been allowed to drift away.

"Look!" exclaimed Doris, as they all came to a halt.

"Well, I'm blessed!"

"Gadslife!"

"There's—there's no sandbank there!"

This was the literal truth. The sandbank had vanished—and now, in its place, lay a clear expanse of ruffled water. There was no indication of human life of any description.

"Oh!" muttered Irene. "They've been drowned!"

"But that's unthinkable!" exclaimed Nipper quickly. "They must have swam ashore——"

"But in that case we should see them!" interrupted Doris. "They haven't had time to swim all that distance—and there's nothing in the sea at all! Look—there's their boat—nearly against the lighthouse! It's drifted the best part of a mile."

The Scouts stood there, looking on with their hearts beating rapidly. Had they come too late? Were they on the spot, only to witness the aftermath of a tragedy?

"You're quite sure Handforth & Co. were on the sandbank?" asked Buster Boots. "You didn't make any mistake——"

"Of course we didn't!" interrupted Marjorie. "We saw them clearly—and they were all waving, too. Oh, this is dreadful! If they were on the schooner—we should see them."

"Not necessarily," said Nipper. "It's just possible they reached that ship, and are on board now. Anyhow, it's about the only chance they had. They could never have got ashore against the current. And there's no other direction in which they could have swam. It's a nasty business."

"But can't we DO something?" asked Doris urgently.

"We'll rush down to the beach, get a boat out, and row to the schooner," replied Nipper crisply. "First of all we'll go over that sandbank, though, and see if there are any signs of—of drifting clothes. I can't possibly believe that those six chaps have met with disaster."

At the same time, Nipper was inwardly alarmed.

The total absence of any excitement on the schooner was significant. True, the vessel was so far off that it was almost impossible to see anything on her decks. But the dinghy astern was drifting idly in the current. And surely this would have been used by the Scouts to get ashore if they had really sought refuge in the schooner?

"There's no need for all of us to go," went on Nipper, as they made a move towards the nearest cliff path. "You Hawks and Wolves had better stay behind with the girls. We'll go out and get back as soon as we find out anything for certain."

The Hawks and the Wolves were not exactly satisfied, but there was nothing else for it. After all, there was no earthly need for eighteen Scouts to row out to the schooner. One Patrol was sufficient.

And as soon as they got down on to the beach a boat was launched, and the Lions set off on the investigation. The other Scouts stood waiting—more anxious than ever. The uncertainty of the whole affair was beginning to tell upon them.

But, as Nipper had pointed out, it was impossible to leave the girls by themselves—it wouldn't have been cricket. The Hawks and the Wolves stood on the shingle, staring out to sea. From this low level the schooner seemed farther away than ever.

While they were waiting, they kept their eyes open in other directions. But it was becoming more and more obvious that the Tigers' only possibility of escape had been in the schooner's direction. Were they safely on board—or had they been caught by the strong current, and dragged under? The thought of such a tragedy was disturbing in the extreme.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE LOTUS.



"T H A N K goodness!" gasped McClure desperately.

He was nearly done. The last twenty fathoms had seemed worse than all the rest of the swim.

And McClure was not the only Tiger who was nearly exhausted.

Church was practically overcome, and Dick Goodwin was feeling the effects of the swim. The current had altered its character since Handforth had undertaken the journey. The ever-changing sea had grown more difficult, and while Handforth had had a comparatively easy task, the other members of his patrol had fought for their very lives.

Owen major, at least, would have perished but for Tom Burton's aid. And the Bo'sun himself was on his last lap—for he had been burdened with Owen major for over half the swim.

Strangely enough, no sound had come from the schooner—no sign had come that Handforth was on board—or, for that matter, that anybody else was on board.

And the Tigers themselves had given no indication of their approach. They were so exhausted that even ordinary conversation was impossible. Their one emotion was thankfulness—untold relief that they had succeeded in reaching their objective in safety.

They would never have believed that the sea could change in such a short space of time. With the flood tide, the calmness had completely vanished, a breeze had sprung up, and the surface was now choppy, and the current strong and treacherous. Handforth's swim had been a pleasure compared to this.

One after the other, they clung to the ladder and climbed up. And one after the other they landed on the deck and sank down. They had not suffered seriously—a brief rest, and they would be themselves.

And now the deck was gratefully warm from the effect of the sun. The sun itself, too, was beating down with as much heat as ever. The five Tigers soon began to show signs of recovery.

"My goodness!" breathed Church, sitting up. "That's better! I thought we were never going to get here!"

"So did I!" muttered McClure, struggling with his uniform. "This giddy thing nearly strangled me twice! They're all soaked through, too—we'd better spread 'em out in the sun."

"Good idea, shipmate," said Tom Burton.

As soon as they were all able, they unfastened their uniforms and spread them out to dry—for in every case the choppy sea had soaked the clothes through and through. But it was one thing to have salvaged the uniforms.

"But where's Handy?" asked McClure, getting to his feet.

They were all feeling uneasy. There was something strange about this ship—something almost uncanny. They had got on board without anybody being the wiser, it seemed. The vessel appeared to have no crew.

As a matter of fact, there were three men on board—Mr. Trapp, the mate, and the crew. The crew consisted of two men, for the vessel was only a small one, and both these were sound asleep in the fo'c'sle.

Mr. Trapp, having securely locked Handforth away, had returned to the captain's cabin to support himself with two or three tots of rum. For Handforth had caused the mate to exert himself unduly, and he always resorted to rum for restoration.

Feeling much better, Mr. Trapp came on deck. It was about the time he was expecting a signal from the shore, and it wouldn't do for him to remain below. He came on deck, and halted in the doorway.

"Great guns!" he ejaculated, aghast.

He had thought it bad enough to have one schoolboy to deal with. But now, before his eyes, were five more! And he hadn't known a thing about their presence until he had come suddenly upon them.

"Oh, here's somebody!" exclaimed Church, hurrying forward. "I say, do you know anything about one of our chaps?"

Mr. Trapp gave a gulp.

"How did you young shavers get aboard?" he demanded.

"We swam here—from that sandbank," replied Church. "Where's Handforth? We saw him climb up the ladder—we know he's on board! He came here to fetch that boat! Where is he?"

Mr. Trapp looked at the juniors with a leer.

He made no reply for a few seconds—he was thinking. And as it wasn't usual for Mr. Trapp to think very deeply, the effort was a severe one. The reference to the sandbank brought back Handforth's story to his mind. Handforth had come here to borrow that boat. And these other boys, according to Handforth, had been in great peril. But it didn't strike Mr. Trapp as though the Scouts were in any peril at all—or ever had been. He was more convinced than ever that it was a deliberate trick to get on board for the purpose of spying.

Apparently, Mr. Trapp had reasons of his own for fearing any intrusion.

"Your pal?" he said slowly. "Where is he?"

"Yes, where is he?" demanded the Tigers.

"Why, below, o' course," replied Mr. Trapp. "Pore young feller! Met with a accident, he did. Not much—not very serious. But a nasty swipe on the shin, all the same. Took me ten minutes to stitch it up!"

"Stitch it up!" shouted McClure.

"It was his own fault," growled the mate. "Swam against a piece of wreckage, and tore his leg open—a regular nasty gash,

I'm tellin' yer. I put the pore young feller in my bunk."

The juniors had no reason to doubt Mr. Trapp's alarming story. It provided a complete explanation for Handforth's non-return. Perhaps he was hurt even more than the mate indicated.

Mr. Trapp was evidently a cunning gentleman—he had certainly gone the right way to work to entice all the juniors below.

"Poor old Handy!" exclaimed Church. "I say, can we go down and see him?"

"Why, certainly," said Mr. Trapp promptly. "Follow me, young gents—and I'll take you straight down. I was fair worried for a time, I can give you my word."

He descended the companion-ladder, and the five Scouts followed him. It was semi-dark down there, and after the bright sunlight it seemed almost pitchy.

"Straight in!" said Mr. Trapp briskly.

He threw a door open, and the Scouts hurried through. The last two received a violent push which sent them hurtling against the others. Two of them sprawled over; and then the door was slammed with a crash!

## CHAPTER XVI.

### LIONS TO THE RESCUE.



**E**DWARD OSWALD HANDFOETH was startled.

Undoubtedly, he had good reason to be. He had heard the voices of his patrol, and it had afforded

him great relief. For his recent anxiety concerning their safety was allayed. But it was certainly alarming to find the Tigers diving headlong into his presence like so many skittles.

"What the dickens——" he began.

The door crashed to, and the key was turned in the lock. The five Scouts, all in swimming costume, picked themselves up, and gazed at one another blankly. The only light in the cabin came from the skylight above, but this was almost obscured by a canvas awning. The awning was necessary, too, for even as it was, the cabin was stifling.

"Aren't you hurt?" demanded Church, in a startled voice.

"Hurt?" replied Handforth. "Yes, I am! That rotter winded me, and chucked me downstairs."

"But he told us you gashed your shin, and that he stitched it up!" ejaculated Owen major. "He said——"

"He's a liar!" roared Handforth. "The rotter refused to let me take that boat, and then he went for me and locked me up in here! I'm blessed if I know the meaning of it! We only wanted to borrow his rotten boat!"

The Tigers soon realised the full position. "It's jolly queer," said Church at length. "You might think the man was afraid of something. If he couldn't lend you a boat when it was to save five lives, it's a pity! And why the dickens has he locked us all up? He can't keep us here, that's certain!"

The Tiger Patrol was completely puzzled. And, if it comes to that, so was Mr. Trapp. He had only imprisoned the juniors on the spur of the moment—since he felt it safer to have them under lock and key than to let them practically take possession of the schooner.

Mr. Trapp had had sense enough to realise that his only chance of locking up the invaders was to trick them at the outset. And he had done this very successfully.

And now the mate was pacing up and down on deck, worried, troubled, and furious. Never before had he so desired the presence of his captain. And it was high time that Starkey showed up.

In the meantime, other activities were afoot.

The Lion patrol had reached the vicinity of the sandbank, but although they searched closely, they could see no sign of their missing companions. There was not even a hat to be seen. And by now the sea had completely covered the sandbank, and all was smooth and undisturbed.

"It's a mystery!" said Nipper, frowning. "We'd better go straight to the schooner, and make inquiries. They're bound to know something—it's comparatively near by."

"What's that over there?" asked Alf Brent suddenly.

"Begad!" muttered Tregellis-West. "A staff!"

Without question, the object which Alf had seen was one of the staves of the missing Tiger patrol. It was floating on the surface, and provided a silent indication of the disaster. The Tigers, of course, had naturally abandoned their staves. And it was the first certain clue which the Lions had received that Irene & Co. were right.

"Then it's true enough!" exclaimed Nipper. "The girls didn't make any blunder—they saw Handforth and his patrol all right!"

"But where are they?" asked Watson desperately.

"Good gad!" said Archie Glenthorne. "You—you don't think—— I mean to say, what a perfectly frightful thought, you know. My dear old tulips, it's absolutely too torn to even consider!"

"They must know something on the schooner!" declared Nipper grimly. "Those six chaps can't have drowned. It's too awful!"

The fellows at the oars wielded them desperately, and the heavy boat fairly plunged through the water on its way to the schooner. The sight of that Scout staff had filled the Lions with apprehension. Until now, they had half doubted the whole story.

And it was significant, too, that no sign came from the schooner.

The vessel was lying there, apparently derelict. The one fact that she was safely anchored proved that this was not the case. But there was no sign of life on board. There was no human figure to be seen.

And surely, if Handforth & Co. had sought safety on the Lotus—as the vessel was called—they would be on the look out for any approaching boat?

The Lions drew nearer, with their alarm increasing.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### GETTING RATHER TOO THICK.

**M**R. TRAPP turned sharply as he heard footsteps.

"Oh, it's you! About time you woke up, ain't it? Where's Jim—still asleep?"

"Yes," said the man, who had just appeared. "What's all that noise below? Sounded like a bunch o' kids to me; but that can't be—"

"Oh, can't it!" growled the mate.

"Well, it is!"

"Kids?"

"Six of 'em!"

"Aboard this schooner?"

"Yes, aboard this schooner!" growled Mr. Trapp. "You'd best swill a bucket o' water over your head, Soapy—you ain't awake yet. Boy Scouts they are, accordin' to them 'ere clothes. An' it's my belief they came aboard to spy!"

"Crikey!" ejaculated Soapy, startled.

"There 'ere Boy Scouts are a durned nuisance!" swore Mr. Trapp. "Allus interferin' with what they shouldn't. I wish the skipper would come—he'll know what to do with 'em! I'm blamed if I do!"

"You've got the young 'uns locked up?"

"Yes, but I can't keep 'em there for long!" growled Mr. Trapp. "It fair beats me why Starkey don't turn up. Said he was goin' to signal long before this. The old man allus was late!" he added.

Soapy considered the problem. He was a

lean, disreputable-looking character, and his chief position on board was that of cook.

"I don't know as you did right, Simon!" he growled. "Wouldn't it 'ave bin better to kick the kids overboard an' done with it? There might be a fuss about this 'ere—keepin' 'em prisoners, I mean?"

"What else was I to do?" demanded Mr. Trapp. "First one o' the kids came up alone, an' wanted to borrow a boat. I shoved 'im below, thinkin' the old man

would be back any minute, and then I'm durned if five more o' the young varmints didn't turn up!"

"Well, it beats me!" said Soapy, scratching his towsted head.

He leaned his arms on the side of the ship and looked out towards the shore. Then he suddenly started. Some distance away, hidden from the two men hitherto by the vessel's stern, a boat was approaching.

"Look 'ere, Simon—there's more of 'em!" ejaculated Soapy.

"More of 'em!" roared the mate, with a shout. "Durn my hide! A boat-load this time! This 'ere's gettin' too thick, Soapy—that's what it is! The best thing we can do is to keep 'em off. An' we'll say nothin' about these other kids, either. There'll be trouble i we ain't careful!"

"Seems to me there'll be trouble anyways!" declared

Soapy.

They watched the approaching boat with glowering gaze. And Mr. Trapp was determined that these newcomers should be sent off. He keenly regretted now that he had ever locked the Tigers below. But it was too late to release them.

The Lions, in the approaching boat, were gratified to see some signs of life on the schooner. But their anxiety was in no way allayed, for the two men who were leaning over the ship's side seemed quite alone—and even disinterested.

## PORTRAIT GALLERY AND WHO'S WHO.

### Fourth Series—Sixth Form.

NOTE.—The average age of Sixth Form boys is 18.



NO. 15.—David Biggleswade.

The comedian of the Sixth, and the butt of everybody's pleasantries. Being excessively good-natured, he never minds. Is particularly popular in the Third, as he always tips his fags well, and has never been known to grumble.

"Ahoy, there!" shouted Nipper, as soon as they were within hailing distance. "Do you know anything about six of our chaps?"

Mr. Trapp snorted.

"There you are!" he muttered. "What did I tell yer? Fust of all five of 'em come asking for the fust one, an' now there's six more of 'em! Why the blazes don't the skipper turn up?"

The boat came nearer.

"Are you asleep on there?" shouted Nipper. "Have you seen ei. of our chaps?"

Nipper's suspicions. He edged the boat nearer to the ladder.

"Clear away from there!" roared Mr. Trapp. "You ain't comin' aboard this craft! As for your pals, we don't know anything about 'em. What do you think this ship is—a private yacht?"

"I don't know about that," replied Nipper. "But there were six Scouts on that sandbank, and it's a certainty that when they swam for safety they came here. Do you mean to say you haven't seen anything of them at all?"

"Not a thing!" replied Mr. Trapp promptly.



**Handforth hardly knew what happened. He felt himself pushed through a doorway, he stumbled down some dark stairs, and he was a secure prisoner on the schooner!**

"We ain't seen anybody," shouted Simon Trapp.

The Lions received the force of a blow.

"You haven't seen anybody," shouted Watson. "But there were six Scouts on that sandbank when the time came up—their boat drifted away, and they were stranded. Didn't they come on your ship?"

"Nobody's come on this ship since we dropped anchor!" lied Mr. Trapp doggedly. "An' the best thing you can do, my lads, is to clear off. We don't want you 'angin' about 'ere!"

The man's aggressive used

"I say, this is awful!" muttered Watson. "They must all be drowned!"

"Good gad!" breathed Archie. "Drowned, what? I mean to say, Handy wasn't the kind of chappie to go under without letting a few people know. It's dashed queer—dashed if it isn't!"

"Don't worry, you chaps!" whispered Nipper, leaning forward. "This man's lying."

"Lying?"

"Yes."

"You—you mean that the Tigers are on board here?" asked Brent quickly.

"Yes, I do."

And there was something in Nipper's tone which brought an untold relief to his five companions.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE VIOLET CLUE.



**Y**OU can clear off as soon as you like!" said Mr. Trapp, uneasy at the muttered consultation which was going on in the boat. "Them boys 'aven't bin 'ere, so you needn't stay. An' if you try to get on board this craft you'll be sorry for it!"

The Lions took no notice. All of them except Nipper were very excited, and Nipper was looking grim.

"But how do you know the Tigers are on board?" asked Watson tensely.

"Have a look on the ladder!" replied Nipper.

All the Scouts turned their attention to the ladder which hung overside. At first they noticed nothing strange. But then, just at the top, they caught sight of something violet in colour.

"Begad! A shoulder knot!" ejaculated Sir Montie. "Violet, too—the colour of the Tigers!"

"Yes, and it proves one thing," said Nipper. "Handforth and his Patrol are on board this ship, and that shoulder-knot must have caught in a splinter or something as they were going up the ladder."

The colours of the Lions were yellow and red, but they knew the colours of all the other Patrols. And Nipper's keen eyes had detected that clue almost at once.

"What's the idea?" demanded Nipper, edging the boat away. "What are you telling lies for? Those six fellows are on board your ship, and you won't do yourselves any good by denying it."

Mr. Trapp swore fiercely.

"What do you mean by callin' me a liar?" he demanded.

"If those six Scouts haven't been to this ship, what's the meaning of that shoulder-knot on the ladder?" asked Nipper. "It's violet, the colour of the Tigers. It couldn't have got washed there by the sea; it's caught by a splinter."

The mate stared over the ladder, and caught his breath in.

"That's nothin'!" he retorted. "A bit of a violet necktie, my lad! You can't fool me like that—"

"And you can't fool us, either!" interrupted Nipper. "We want to come on board. I don't know why you're acting in this extraordinary way; but it doesn't look any too healthy—"

"You ain't comin' up that ladder!" roared Mr. Trapp, as the boat touched the schooner's side. "Keep clear, you young brats! The fust one who tries to get on board'll know something! 'Ere, Soapy, fetch two o' them belayin'-pins—an' look sharp!"

A moment later Mr. Trapp was standing at the top of the ladder, a menacing figure. He had the advantage of the situation. The juniors could only get on board one at a time, and to pass this infuriated mate was impossible. He was looking dangerous.

"Clear off, an' be quick about it, or I'll chuck this thing in your boat an' bust a hole through it!" roared Mr. Trapp. "Clear off while you're safe! Your pals ain't 'ere!"

"We'll soon see about that!" snorted Nipper angrily. "Now then, you chaps—let's all shout at once. Or, better still, we'll give the call of the Lions. If Handforth & Co. are on board they'll answer."

"My hat! That's a good idea!" said Brent.

And with one accord the Lions raised their voices, and gave their Patrol call.

"Eu-ugh! Eu-ugh!"

Mr. Trapp and Soapy were thoroughly startled. The repeated cry sounded so strange in their ears that they wondered what on earth the Scouts were doing. But the call of the Lions was penetrating—far more penetrating than any ordinary shout.

And the sound reached the imprisoned Tigers in the cabin, almost at the other end of the ship. Handforth and his Scouts gazed at one another with startled expressions.

"By George!" roared Handforth. "The Hawks!"

"You ass!" gasped Church. "That was the call of the Lions!"

"Nipper and his lot!" shouted Handforth. "Hurrah!"

"Wait a minute—don't get excited!" said Handforth. "There it goes again! We'll give our own call in reply—that's what they waiting for! Now then—all together!"

And the Tigers gave their own Patrol call with tremendous vigour.

"Grrao! Grrao!"

It wasn't exactly a purr, as it ought to have been, but a perfect yell. And the Tigers were so excited that they distorted their call out of all recognition. But it answered its purpose. The sound was conveyed outside to the other Patrol in the boat.

"Hear that?" shouted Nipper. "They're below somewhere—that was their call! Now, then, up there, what about it? Do you still deny that those chaps are on your ship?"

Mr. Trapp cursed violently.

"I don't deny anything!" he roared. "But if you try to get aboard this craft, I won't



be answerable for what 'appens! I've 'ad enough o' you kids, an' I ain't standin' any more!"

But if the mate of the Lotus thought that the Lion Patrol would tamely go away in face of what had occurred, he was making a very big mistake.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE FIGHT ON THE SCHOONER.



**N**IPPER gave his Scouts a meaning look.

"Well, all right—if you won't let us come aboard, there's an end of it!" he said angrily. "But if there's any inquiry over

this affair, you'll have to answer for keepin' those chaps imprisoned."

Mr. Trapp grunted. He was greatly relieved to see the boat pulling away. The lions knew that Nipper had some plan in mind, but weren't quite sure as to how it would act.

"What's the idea, old son?" whispered Watson.

"I don't know yet," replied Nipper. "But we couldn't risk storming that ladder with that rotter at the top," replied Nipper. "Perhaps we can dodge round the other side and scramble on board by some of the ropes."

"Not much hope of that," said Brent, shaking his head. "They're watching us too closely."

"Yes, I believe they are," agreed Nipper. "The only way is to make a dash for it. But it's just as well we drew out a bit—I've got an idea. One or two of you fellows have got catapults, haven't you?"

"I've got one," replied Watson.

"So have I," said Singleton, who was also a Lion.

"Good!" said Nipper. "Here's a chunk of paper," he added, pulling an old envelope out of his pocket. "Soak it, and make some pellets. We don't want to do any particular damage, although these rotters deserve it. It'll be quite enough if we can gain the advantage for about twenty seconds."

All Boy Scouts are supposed to be resourceful, and Nipper was proving that he was a good Scout. If only the Lions could force Mr. Trapp to retreat for a brief spell, they would be able to gain a footing on deck.

The pellets were quickly made, and Watson and Singleton held their catapults ready.

"Don't show them," said Nipper softly. "But when I say the word 'Go,' let fly, and see that your aim's true. And put plenty of sting into 'em."

"Go ahead!" said Tommy tensely.

The boat was sent towards the ladder again.

"Comin' back, are ye?" snapped the mate, taking up his original position. "Well, I've warned yer—I can't do no more! If any o' you try to get on board I'll do some damage!"

"Look here, we're coming on board, and we mean to get those chaps out!" declared Nipper. "Will you let us come peacefully, or do you want to fight?"

"Go to blazes!" roared the mate.

"All right—let her go!" muttered Nipper. Simultaneously the two catapults were released. Both were aimed at Mr. Trapp's face. It is doubtful if the two pellets found their mark, but one certainly did.

The mate gave a yell of agony, staggered back, and dropped the belaying-pin. He clapped a hand to his face where the pellet had struck.

"Quick!" gasped Nipper. "Now's our chance!"

He fairly leapt at the ladder, ran up, and at the same moment the mate regained possession of his weapon—after ascertaining that he wasn't hurt. But the sudden sting of intense agony had caused him to believe that his face was gashed open.

"By hokey!" he roared. "Try to trick me, would yer?"

He was a shade too late. For Nipper, standing on the top of the bulwark, leapt at Mr. Trapp as the man was about to strike. Nipper fairly landed in the mate's face, and the pair rolled over and over on the deck. Soapy, thoroughly startled, stood by without taking any part in the fight.

"Grab him!" gasped Mr. Trapp. "Don't stand there, you fool! Stop them other brats gettin' aboard—"

But the others were already over the side, and Soapy found himself fighting in spite of his disinclination. And then the other member of the crew, aroused by all the noise, came along from the fo'c'sle to see what it was all about. He had arrived just in time to receive an attack from Archie Glenthorpe and Alf Brent.

"What-ho!" roared Archie. "Fighting, and all that! I mean, take a few biffs, dash you! Tally-ho, and so forth!"

Archie threw himself into the fight with tremendous vigour. He hated anything that disturbed his customary tranquility, but once it was disturbed he entered wholeheartedly into anything that was toward.

The fight was not over so quickly as Nipper had anticipated. This was largely due to the fact that the third man had appeared. For he gave courage to Soapy, and Mr. Trapp yelled to his crew to use all their efforts.

There were six boys against three men.

And the Scouts were handicapped by the fact that the three men were in no way

particular. Fair fighting was unknown to them. They kicked, they punched foully, and once Mr. Trapp even tried to bite.

Nipper and Watson were paying all their attention to Mr. Trapp, and he needed it. But the Scouts' determination was as grim as ever, and they kept up the battle with a fixity of purpose which could only end in one way. Sooner or later they would gain the mastery.

But the fight was not allowed to end naturally.

There was a sudden shout from the side of the ship, and all the combatants ceased their struggles and punchings.

Captain Jonas Starkey had come aboard!

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE SKIPPER GIVES HIS ORDERS.



**C**APTAIN JONAS STARKEY stood there glaring.

And for a few tense moments there was complete silence, except for the hard breathing of the recent

fighters. The skipper of the Lotus was a tough-looking old rascal, with grizzled hair, and a short, stumpy figure. He was apparently a sea-dog of the old-fashioned type.

Captain Starkey, in fact, was a brother of the Jake Starkey whom the St. Frank's juniors had once come across when Jake had been associated with a rascal named Simon Grell. Both these hard-bitten gentlemen were now serving terms of penal servitude. Captain Starkey seemed an even tougher specimen than the redoubtable Jake.

"By sharks!" he ejaculated at last. "What's all this 'ere?"

Nipper sprang to his feet.

"I think we've met before, Captain Starkey!" he exclaimed tensely. "I'd like you to ask your mate what he's doing with six of our fellows. They're locked below and imprisoned."

"Great cyclones!" said the skipper, striding forward. "What's this, Mr. Trapp? What's the kid sayin'? Is it true that you've got six boys aboard my craft?"

The mate was startled. He had not expected the skipper to make such a dramatic appearance. He had been expecting a signal from the shore, and had not reckoned upon Captain Starkey rowing out alone in a small boat.

"I'm glad you've come, cap'n!" panted Mr. Trapp. "Durn me if I ain't 'ad some trouble! What with these 'ere kids botherin' me all the arfternoon, an' one thing an' another, I'm fair off my 'ead!"

The skipper nodded.

"Looks like somebody was mad!" he agreed. "But what's this about kids below?"

"I done the best I could—" began Mr. Trapp.

"Bust my eyes!" roared Captain Starkey. "Are them kids there or not?"

"Well, yes—"

"Then what in thunder for?" bellowed the skipper. "What do you think this ship is—a monkey-house? What's the idea of takin' these schoolboys aboard an' lockin' them up? You've been drinkin, Mr. Trapp—that's what's the matter with you! By hurricanes, I'll find out the truth o' this affair afore I've done!"

"It won't take you long to find out," exclaimed Nipper. "There's nothing in it—it all started in a very simple way. We all belong to the Scouts camp on the cliffs—"

"Ay, I know'd you was there!" said the skipper, nodding.

"Well, one of our Patrols—six fellows—got stranded on the sandbank," went on Nipper. "They lost their boat. By what I can understand, they swam here as a last resort—probably to borrow your dinghy—and for some unearthly reason Mr. Trapp locked them all up, and denied that they were on board."

"Ho!" said the captain grimly. "This true, Mr. Trapp?"

"Them blamed kids was cheeky—"

"Have you got them six boys below?"

"Why, yes, I—"

"Then get below, an' let 'em out!" thundered Captain Starkey. "Swirlin' whirlpools! You're tryin' to get me locked up, Mr. Trapp—that's what you're tryin' to do. A fine thing, lockin' six o' these young gents up for nothin'! Get below, an' let 'em out!"

Mr. Trapp, startled and scared by the expression in Starkey's eyes, hurried off below. The skipper turned to Soapy and the other man and bestowed a fearsome glare upon them.

"Bust my eyes!" he roared. "What's this 'ere? What are you swabs doin' aft? Get for'ard! By sharks! Am I skipper 'ere or not?"

The two men scuttled off, more frightened than Mr. Trapp.

"Askin' yer pardon, young gents, for any bad language!" said the skipper, turning to the scouts. "Seems to me my mate's bin drinkin' this arfternoon—not as he ain't allus drinkin', the swab! Howling gales! It's up to me to offer your young friends a handsome apology."

"That's all right, captain," said Nipper gruffly.

He and the other Lions were rather surprised by the skipper's tone. He completely disarmed them by his attitude. And when, a moment later, the released Tigers

came rushing on deck, there was a general burst of excitement.

Handforth and his Patrol were still in their bathing-costumes, and they were bursting with anger and indignation.

"Somebody's going to pay for this!" roared Handforth. "Hallo, you chaps! We heard your call, you know. Thanks for coming—"

"We thought you were all drowned!" said Watson.

"And it's a wonder we weren't!" snorted Handforth. "These rotters wouldn't let

goin's on?" asked Captain Starkey, in surprise. "Blow my topsails! Any young gents is allus welcome aboard my craft! You've been treated ough by that blamed mate o' mine. I can't do nothin' else but apologise. Fair's fair—an' you've bin sufferin', by wot I can 'ear of it. You can leave it to me to give my mate a blamed talkin' to!"

Captain Starkey was so genial that all the angry looks vanished. The affair had ended satisfactorily, it seemed, and no harm had been done.

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me have the boat, and the other chaps only succeeded in swimming here by the skin of their giddy teeth! And then we were all locked up—"

"Askin' yer pardon, young gent!" interrupted Captain Starkey. "It's my mate wot caused all the trouble. Ragin' tornadoes! The swab's goin' to 'ave some o' my lip as soon as you've gone, I can tell ye! Drunk—that's 'ot 'e was! I'm sorry you've 'ad such an experience aboard my craft. My regrets, young gents!"

Handforth and the other Tigers stared.

"Oh, well, of course—" began Handforth.

"Ye don't think I'd give orders for such

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MR. TRAPP GOES THROUGH IT.



**H**ANDFORTH looked round searchingly.

"We've got our clothes somewhere," he exclaimed. "We can't go ashore in these swimming suits—"

"By swordfish! Of course you can't!" agreed the skipper. "You'll 'ave your clothes, young gents. I'll see to that! An' wot's more, you can take the dinghy, an' welcome. Don't trouble to bring her back—just heave 'er 'igh an' dry on the beach. We'll bring 'er along some other time."

"Thanks," said Handforth. "It's a pity

you weren't here before, Captain. These chaps were in fearful danger, and your mate thought I'd come here to spy or something."

"Mr. Trapp's drunk—that's wot's the matter with him!" growled Captain Starkey. "Ahoy there, Mr. Trapp! Where the thunder are ye? Wot about these young gents' clothes?"

Mr. Trapp appeared from the deckhouse, bearing the uniforms of the Tiger Patrol. He dumped them on the deck with a scowl.

"Get below, you soused dog!" roared Captain Starkey. "That's no way to treat the property of gentlemen! I'll come an' 'ave a word with ye in a minute! Tearin' blizzards! Mutiny aboard my own craft, by sharks! Now then, young gents—make yerselves at 'ome, an' do just as you like!"

The skipper went below, leaving the juniors in possession of the deck. In his own cabin, he found Mr. Trapp. And as Captain Starkey closed the door, his whole expression changed. He gazed at the mate with a dangerous glint in his deep-set eyes.

"You blamed fool!" snarled the skipper. "What donkey trick is this?"

"I did the best I could!" panted Mr. Trapp.

"The best ye could?" rasped the skipper. "Fillin' my craft with schoolboys! An' with our holds full right up! It's a durned good thing I kept my 'ead, an' made peace! I don't think they suspect anythin' now—but that ain't your fault!"

"It was orkard!" growled Mr. Trapp. "Ore kid came aboard fast, an' I thought 'e was spyin'. So I shoved 'im below to 'ear wot you 'ad to say. Then five more of 'em come along—"

"Bust my eyes!" interrupted the skipper. "An' you 'ad to shove them below, too? I allus thought you vos a fool, Mr. Trapp—an' now I know it!"

"Them boys vos spyin'—"

Captain Starkey swore violently.

"The fast boy came 'ere for that dinghy, an' nothin' else!" he snarled. "If you 'ad a ounce o' sense, you'd 'ave know'd it! Just becos we've got the stuff aboard you suspect everybody an' everythin'! By cyclones! It's the very thing to make them kids suspicious! But I think I've squared 'em all right."

"I did the best I could!" muttered Mr. Trapp for the second time. "I couldn't do no more. I vos actin' in your interests. There wasn't no need for you to call me drunk afore them kids—"

"Don't be a fool!" interrupted the skipper. "I said that just to square things—to send 'em off in a sweet temper. D'you think I want the kids givin' me a bad name round 'ere? It don't matter wot they say about you—but it matters a blamed lot wot they say about me!"

Captain Starkey felt relieved when he went on deck again. No real harm had been done, he concluded. He didn't know that Nipper was very suspicious indeed. For Nipper had already come to the conclusion that the whole afternoon's adventure could mean but one thing. These men were mortally afraid of a stranger coming aboard the schooner. Which indicated clearly enough that the schooner contained something which wouldn't bear the light of day.

Handforth & Co. were dressed now.

Their uniforms were somewhat damp, but they were not likely to come to any harm, as sea-water dampness rarely causes ill-effects.

"Allus pleased to see ye again, young gents," said Captain Starkey, genially. "Mebbe you'll keep quiet about this little affair? I've done the best I could, an' Mr. Trapp wasn't rightly responsible for wot he did. Supposin' we call it square, hey?"

"Right you are, captain," said Handforth promptly.

He was always ready to forgive, and the skipper's conciliatory attitude had disarmed him completely. And soon afterwards the two patrols left the schooner. The Lions decided to go back to Shingle Bay, so that they could set at rest any uneasiness in the camp. Besides, the Hawks and the Wolves were waiting with Irene & Co. to hear the result of the search.

But the Tiger Patrol had other plans—at least, their leader had.

"Do you mind if we take your dinghy into Caistowe?" asked Handforth.

"Sink me, take it where ye like!" replied Captain Starkey. "Leave 'er on the beach at Caistowe, young gent—that'll suit me."

"Thanks," said Edward Oswald. "Well, you chaps, you don't mind going back alone, do you? I don't feel like returning to camp just yet."

"Irene's waiting on the beach, you know," said Church carelessly.

Handforth almost succumbed.

"Yes, I know—but I expect the girls will still be there later," he replied firmly. "Anyhow, we're looking a bit untidy, and I hate being fussed over. We'll go into Caistowe."

The Tigers couldn't understand their Leader, but it was useless to protest. Orders were orders.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### STILL AT IT!



**F**IVE minutes later the two boats set off from the Lotus—Nipper & Co. returning as they had come, and Handforth & Co. making for Caistowe. The Tigers were

so pleased at regaining their liberty that

they didn't much mind where they went. All the same, they were curious.

"What's the idea, Handy?" asked Church, after a while.

Handforth started.

"Eh? Oh, I've been thinking," he said slowly. "Don't forget we were shrimping when that affair happened. We were making money for poor old Binns. We've got to get the cash in some other way now."

The Tigers nearly collapsed.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Owen major. "Are you still keen on that plan—after all that's happened?"

"Of course I am!"

"I thought you'd forgotten all about it," said Dick Goodwin.

"Souise me! So did I!" remarked the Bo'sun.

"You don't know Handy yet!" sighed Church, with a sad shake of his head. "Once he gets an idea, he sticks to it like glue—wouldn't drop it, even if it became red-hot!"

Handforth nodded.

"That's me!" he agreed. "Determined! Once I make up my mind, I let nothing interfere with my plans—nothing! I go right on until I succeed! Determined is the keynote of success!"

The Tigers groaned inwardly. Handforth's ideas were all right—but, as Willy had said, his execution left much to be desired. In theory, Edward Oswald was a regular giant. But in practice he nearly always fizzied out. Exactly what his new scheme was, nobody could guess—but the scouts were fairly certain that it would be something even more hare-brained than the last.

"Well, I'm jolly peckish, if you want to know!" said McClure. "It's past tea-time, and I think we ought to have returned to camp—"

"It doesn't matter what you think—you've got orders to go to Caistowe," interrupted Handforth. "We've got to get some money together for that old tinker! There'll be crowds of people on the beach yet—and I'm going to think of some scheme to make a whip round."

"Begging's not allowed," said Church.

But Handforth refused to listen to any arguments. And before long the dinghy was gliding into Caistowe Bay, and soon reached the beach. The scouts scrambled ashore, and dragged the boat well up.

Then they set off up the sands, picking their way through the crowds of holiday makers.

Although such a lot had happened, not a great deal of time had elapsed. The sun was still shining brilliantly, and very few of the visitors had thought about leaving the beach. The crowds were thick.

"Some of our chaps over there," re-



"By hokey!" he roared. "Try to trick me, would yer?"

Mr. Trapp was a shade too late. For Nipper, standing on top of the bulwark, leapt at him as the man was about to strike.

marked Church, pausing. "They're Scouts, anyway—Panthers, I believe."

"My minor's Patrol!" growled Handforth. "What are they doing here? Like their nerve to mix with all these crowds!"

"Shocking!" said McClure. "How dare they be human?"

"I don't want any sarcasm!" said Handforth severely. "Hi, No. 4! Where are you off to? Stick to the formation!"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned No. 4. "I thought we were free-and-easy now."

"Then you thought wrong!" retorted Edward Oswald. "We're going to look into this! I want to find out what my minor's up to. Mischief, I'll bet!"

The other Tigers didn't think it necessary to point out that the affair was none of their business. Willy not only belonged to another Patrol, but to another Troop. He wasn't even answerable to the same Scoutmaster.

Approaching nearer, the Tigers beheld two members of the 3rd Troop at attention between some rocks. They were Hobbs and Kerrigan, of the Panthers. Some little distance further on, Gates and Button, of the Rams, were also on sentry duty.

Handforth tried to pass, but the two Panthers crossed their staves, and barred the way.

"No admittance!" Gates, rather nervously.

"No admittance?" snorted Handforth. "Why, you cheeky fag, I'll where I like. Get out of the way!"

Gates was an extremely simple youth—and was, indeed, known in the Third by the somewhat disparaging nickname of "Soppy." As for Button, he was even less deserving of consideration.

Neither of them had any power to stop Handforth. He brushed their staves aside, and passed into the strictly guarded area behind the rocks. The other Tigers followed in his wake.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### WILLY'S LITTLE SCHEME.

"GREAT pip!" Handforth came to a halt, and stared in amazement. He had expected that something fishy was going on behind these rocks, but he was certainly not prepared for the sight which met his gaze.

His minor, and a crowd of other fags, was just putting the finishing touches to the most elaborate sand-castle Handforth had ever set eyes on. The fags were working at extreme pressure, for unless they hurried now they would not be able to catch the crowds before they went home. Their labours had taken them longer than they had anticipated.

But the result was unique.

A superb sand-castle had arisen. It was really a most wonderful edifice—big, stately, with turrets, towers, and even windows. As a work of art, it was worthy of an architect.

"Great Scott!" said Church, staring.

"Souise my scuppers!" ejaculated the Bo'sun. "This is something to look at, messmates! Wonderful! And all made of sand, too! These fags are clever!"

"By gum, Goodwin, agreed Dick

"Clever?" snapped Handforth. "Do you call it clever to mess about like infants, making sand-castles? My only hat. And they call themselves Scouts! They wear the same uniform as we do! And all they can do is to disgrace the entire Scout organisation by making sand-castles! It's a wonder they don't paddle with wooden spades and tin pails!"

Willy looked up, and frowned.

"Where are those sentries?" he demanded. "Who let these animals in?"

"Animals?" said Handforth. "Where?"

"Tigers!" said Willy shortly.

"You young rotter, are you calling me an animal?" demanded his major.

"Oh, let it drop!" said Willy. "I haven't got time to argue! You're jealous, I suppose? Don't you think it looks fine?"

"You giddy baby!" retorted Handforth tartly.

He stared at the sand-castle with sheer disdain. Its architectural beauties were entirely lost upon him. Handforth was capable of looking at the most wonderful scenery in the world and seeing nothing. He had no eye for scenic or other beauties. His was a practical mind.

"And is this the way you spend your time?" he asked disdainfully. "Building sand-castles? It's not so bad—but you're Scouts, not Kindergarten infants."

Willy sighed again.

"I say, some of you Rams and Badgers! You might do me a favour. Take this untamed Tiger, carry him off the scene, and chuck him in the first puddle. Don't be too hard on him—he can't help it. He's the weak one of the family."

"Are you talking about me?" demanded Handforth, starting.

"All I want is peace!" said Willy. "You come butting in here, and if there's any more of it, there'll be trouble. I rely upon

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you other Tigers to act like true Scouts, and leave our patrols alone."

"He's right, old man," whispered Church. "This is their affair—not ours. It's not the thing for one patrol to butt in on another—"

"Do you call these kids Scouts?" roared Handforth.

The Third-Formers settled everything with their usual dispatch. Eight of them descended upon Handforth in one fell swoop. He was seized, swiftly carried away, and dumped in the sand.

"Now you can buzz off!" said Willy, who had led the assault. "In case you want to know—you're a curious-minded chap—we built that sand-castle to make money with. We're going to collect now. If you care to stand by, you can see us start."

But Handforth was only too eager to get out of the scene. Several people had seen him roughly handled, and he knew that he was no match for Willy & Co. His own Patrol wouldn't help him. And he couldn't order them to attack the members of another Troop. So, on the whole, it was far better to discreetly retire.

"I'll make that minor of mine sit up for that!" declared Handforth, as he reached the promenade. "Sand-castles, eh? Making money out of that kiddish business. You wait until later! I'll make him look as small as a midge!"

"In the meantime, Willy & Co. were proceeding to "collect."

They set about it briskly. A huge board was suddenly produced, and placed at the entrance of the rocks. This board had been prepared well in advance, and was plainly painted.

**"THE MOST WONDERFUL SAND-CASTLE EVER BUILT!"**

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**ADMISSION FREE!**

**But You Can Subscribe Anything You Like To The Scout Fund!"**

This notice attracted general attention, and before another five minutes had elapsed there were queues waiting to pass into the "enclosure." And while half the scouts controlled the queue at the entrance, the others were lined up at the exit, busily accepting subscriptions into their hats.

And Willy's business acumen was proved.

As he had pointed out to many of his chums before the sand-castle had been half-built, everything depended upon the castle itself. The better it was, the more money they'd get. For the public was asked to subscribe solely on results. If they thought it was worth nothing, they were asked to subscribe nothing.

But the public thought quite differently—

and coppers were few and far between. Practically everything that rattled into the hats was silver—and many of the coins were much bigger than a sixpence.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE END OF A PERFECT DAY.



WILLY was cool and self-possessed.

He had been expecting this all along. Many of the other Panthers and Rams and Badgers had declared that their work would be for nothing. But the sand-castle attracted so much attention, and everybody was so delighted with it, that not one sight-seer in six passed out of the enclosure without adding to the prize.

Business was brisk in the extreme.

And in the meantime Handforth had brought his Tigers to a halt on the esplanade while he thought of some scheme for making money. It was just as well, perhaps, that Edward Oswald did not witness his minor's triumph. In some extraordinary way Willy always seemed to score over him. At all events, it was extraordinary to Handforth. It was perfectly logical to everybody else.

"We've got to do something—that's certain!" said Handforth, in desperation. "The shrimping fizzled out, and we wasted a lot of time on that giddy schooner, and—"

"Hallo! Look over there!" interposed Church suddenly. "I think this ought to settle the question—once and for all!"

Handforth stared across the road. The doors of a third-rate beerhouse had just opened, and the barman was propelling an unsteady customer across the pavement. The customer was deposited in the gutter, where he sank down in a heap.

"You'd best clear off, mate!" advised the barman. "You'll get run in if you den't—you've 'ad more than you can 'old to-day!"

The customer thus ejected made a few uncomplimentary remarks, and rose unsteadily to his feet. Then he lurched off in a series of alarming zig-zags, clutching at any support as he progressed. And Handforth watched with a dazed expression in his eyes.

"My goodness!" he breathed. "Old Binns!"

"The poor, starving Tinker!" grinned McClure.

"With a wife in the hospital!" chuckled Church.

Handforth was too full for words. His chums were not unkind enough to inform him that they had warned him of this all along. But Edward Oswald had received an object-lesson which hit him hard. The man he had been planning to befriend all day long was thrown out of a public-house, drunk, before his very eyes! Words

seemed unnecessary. But Handforth found some at last.

"Well, I'm finished!" he said bitterly. "All my faith in human nature is dead! I'll never believe anybody else as long as I live!"

"That means until next time!" grinned Church. "If somebody comes up to you to-morrow, and says that he's starving, you'll sell your giddy boots! And now, please, can we go back to camp?"

"We're nearly starving," added Owen major desperately.

Handforth sighed.

"Oh, all right—let's go!" he growled. "What's the good of trying to do anybody any good? There's one thing—my minor won't be able to crow over me! If he thinks he's going to collect any money out of that fatheaded sand-castle, he's more dotty than I thought he was."

And so, at last, the Tiger Patrol returned to camp.

To their delight, they found that Irene & Co. were still there, and Handforth was rather disappointed because very little mention was made of the schooner incident. It had apparently been forgotten.

Later on, after darkness had fallen, most of the scouts were yarning round their own respective camp-fires. This was one of the most pleasant hours of the day, when everything was peaceful and at rest.

A figure appeared round the Tigers' camp-fire, and paused as it was passing. Hand-

forth looked up, and recognised his minor. Willy was cheerful and gay—even more so than usual.

"Oh, by the way, what about those shrimps?" he asked casually. "I forgot to ask how you got on. How many cartloads did you catch?"

"You clear off to your own giddy camp!" said his major severely. "If it comes to that, how much money did you collect for your silly sand-castle? About twopence-halfpenny, I suppose?"

"We did a little better than that," replied Willy. "In fact, the public was rather generous. Altogether, we collected three pounds fifteen and sevenpence—to say nothing of two brace-buttons and a collar-stud."

Handforth gulped.

"How much?" he gasped blankly.

"You heard me the first time—I'm not going to pander to your whims!" replied Willy. "Not so bad, eh? We needed the money, too—it'll all be gone by to-morrow."

"What did you want it for?" asked Church interestedly.

"A portable gramophone for our camp," replied Willy. "We've done so well that we shall be able to buy a dozen records in addition. Good-night, you chaps! Happy dreams!"

And Willy strolled off to his own camp, leaving his major in a dazed condition, and the other Tigers highly amused.

"Over three quid!" murmured Handforth dreamily. "Well, I'm blowed!"

THE END.

*NEXT WEEK'S STORY OF THIS GRAND  
BOY SCOUT SERIES:—*

# THE SPECTRE OF THE SEAS;

or, The Ghost of Pirate Cove!

*DON'T FORGET TO JOIN  
THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE  
NEXT WEEK!*

*SEE ANNOUNCEMENT ON NEXT PAGE!*



# THE ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE

My Dear Readers,

Of course, you are all impatient to hear more details about the ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE, aren't you? Well, I want you to take my advice, and read what follows very carefully. If the League is to become a useful and creditable organisation, it must be built up on a solid foundation, with sincerity as the keynote. And I cannot think of a surer way to PROVE sincerity than for every would-be member to perform a little service in the interests of Our Paper. For the NELSON LEE LIBRARY is the solid rock upon which the ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE will be built. And the firmer we can get that rock the better.

## HOW TO JOIN THE LEAGUE.

To join the League, therefore, every applicant must win his or her spurs by introducing Our Paper to somebody—boy or girl, man or woman—who is not at present a regular reader. You can do it by lending your copy to the prospective new reader, or by buying a spare copy and handing it to him. When you have secured your new reader, and have fully satisfied yourself that this new reader intends to be a permanent reader, you will be required to fill in a coupon, which will appear in our next and subsequent issues. This coupon will be divided into two sections—Section A and Section B—with a space at the bottom for your name and address. You will fill in Section A, crossing out Section B by running your pen diagonally through it. Next write in clearly your full name and address in the space at the bottom of the coupon. It will then be necessary for you to get another of these coupons from another copy of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY. This will be for your new reader to fill in, and this he will do in the space provided in Section B, crossing out Section A, and giving his name and address at the foot of the coupon in the same place where you signed on the other coupon. Both coupons are cut out, pinned together, and posted to me with a 1½d. stamp enclosed. You will then be sent by return a Certificate of Membership, with the member's number assigned to you, and your name will be duly entered against your number in our Roll of Members.

## MEDALS FOR MEMBERS.

I am offering a handsome solid bronze medallion with the League monogram "S.F.L." in relief to members who obtain six more regular readers of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY. Later on, I am offering solid silver and nine carat gold medallions; but there is plenty of time for these, and I must first see how the League progresses

before I order these expensive medals to be struck.

## FROM BRONZE MEDALLISTS TO "O.O."

If you have missed the opportunity of joining the original band of local Organising Officers, you can become one immediately you have received your bronze badge. The receipt of that badge is a necessary qualification. Remember, you will even then have an equal chance in the race for honours with the Organising Officers who have already been appointed—the pioneers, whose enthusiasm led them to volunteer their services before they even knew what the League was going to be. It will be possible, by extra diligence, for any later Organising Officer to beat the pioneers. The main initial duties of local Organising Officers will consist of securing new members. But as the League grows, they will fall into their rightful positions as heads of the League activities in general in their respective localities. Thus, by working gradually and surely, the best workers and organisers will reach the top, and the really sincere Organising Officers will be recognised as reliable local Chiefs. At the end of the year Illuminated Scrolls—of three grades—will be presented to Organising Officers, each being inscribed with numbers of League members secured by the holder. There will also be a handsome First Prize, and a number of other prizes. And don't forget that YOU can enter for these prizes immediately you have obtained your bronze badge.

## AN IMMENSE POWER FOR GOOD!

Built up in this way, the ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE will consist entirely of earnest and serious units, who will weld together into an immense power for social and moral good, while the DIGNITY of the organisation will be constantly preserved.

## A LIST OF ORGANISING OFFICERS.

Next week I propose to publish full details, and to commence the regular publication of the Membership Application Form, and the numbered and dated coupons. On the following week I am aiming to print a list of Organising Officers appointed to date, with a second list to follow in the August 1st. issue. There will be a third, and final, list of pioneer Organising Officers published in the September 5th number. This last-named list will embrace the Overseas League Officers.

## INSTRUCTIONS to O.Os.

Perhaps I ought to add that the Organising Officers will receive special instructions through the post from headquarters as to their duties.

Yours sincerely,

THE EDITOR.

(C.O. of the ST. FRANK'S LEAGUE.)



# Between Ourselves

Mr EDWY SEARLES  
BROOKS CHATS  
To HIS READERS

(NOTE.—If any readers write to me, I shall be pleased to comment upon such remarks as are likely to interest the majority. If you have any suggestions—send them along. If you have any grumbles—make them to me. All letters should be addressed to EDWY SEARLES BROOKS, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Remember, my aim is to please as many of you as I possibly can. So it's up to you to let me know your likes and dislikes.—E. S. B.)

Letters received: Cissie G. (London, E.1), L. F. Reilly (Brighton), James E. Wood (Douglas, Isle of Man), Nick and Niffin (Sutton), Francis Norman (Plumstead), B. W. Messem (Forest Gate), L. Sharp (Luton), A. Redgate (Nottingham).

The above eight letters were acknowledged last week, with a number of others, but unfortunately my comments upon them were held over for want of space. The Editor used it on an announcement concerning the St. Frank's League, or something. Anyhow, it was more important than these replies, or the Editor wouldn't have pushed my chatter aside for a week.

You can be assured, Cissie G., that your sketch of Irene is already in my album. I want everybody to know that I never destroy letters or amateur drawings or photographs, or indeed any efforts of any kind which my readers send me. Your sketch is quite good, Cissie G., but it isn't so perfect as the one drawn by "An Artist Admirer," which still holds first place. By the way, if The St. Frank's League becomes a big success—and I know it will—the new form of The St. Frank's Magazine, promised for the Autumn, will become more or less the Journal of the League. And one feature which I shall urge the Editor to include will be a page or two of amateur efforts sent in by readers—who, however, must be League members. That's one of the privileges the League will give you. All such amateur attempts which are published will, of course, be paid for. It is quite possible that The St. Frank's League will give a start in life to more than one determined, industrious beginner. I might mention that I have several sketches in my

album, and one or two amateur stories in my desk, which will probably see the light one day—providing, of course, that their authors are then members of the League. But look here! For goodness' sake don't start piling in stuff now! Neither the Editor nor I are ready for it, so you'll have to wait until you are duly enrolled in the League.

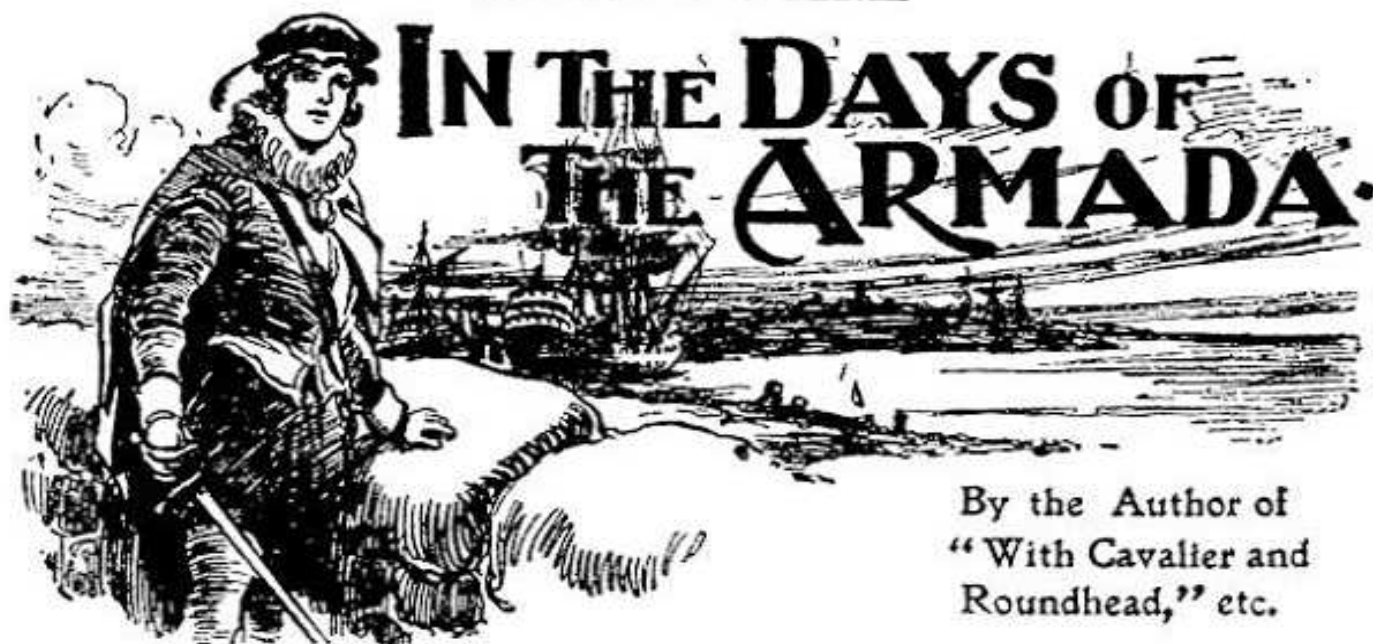
I am not surprised to hear your lament, L. F. Reilly, about the "downfall" of Nipper. Lots of other readers seem to have the same bee in their bonnets. Of course, it's all rubbish. Nipper hasn't fallen an inch. The mere fact that he was superseded by Reggie Pitt in the captaincy of the Fourth last term is a mere trifle. When the school re-assembles after the summer holiday series concludes, St. Frank's will be greatly changed. There will be five houses instead of two, and you can be quite sure that Nipper will be skipper of one of them. And you needn't be afraid that the changes will be drastic. Everything will go on in just the same old way, Handforth & Co. in Study D, Nipper & Co. in Study C, and so forth.

I am glad you like the idea of Fullwood being reformed. James E. Wood. I expect Albert Hughes will be feeling pleased—for he was the first one to put this suggestion into concrete form, and I've had an enormous number of letters urging me to write a series with Fullwood's reformation as the central theme. In fact, out of all the lot, I've only had one objector—and his complaint is that if I reform Fullwood, Gulliver and Bell won't have a leader. A little thing like that doesn't worry me. If I do write this series—and I am tempted to do so for next winter—it won't take me long to give Gulliver and Bell a fresh leader. In fact, I've got the germ of an idea in my mind already.

The first story in our paper, "Nick & Niffin," was called "THE MYSTERY OF LIMEHOUSE REACH," and it was a pure detective story, featuring Nelson Lee and Nipper. The first St. Frank's yarn didn't appear until No. 112.

(A few more replies have been unavoidably held over until next week.—The Ed.)

A STIRRING TALE OF A BRITISH BOY'S EXPLOITS WHEN SIR FRANCIS DRAKE  
SAILED THE HIGH SEAS.



By the Author of  
"With Cavalier and  
Roundhead," etc.

**FOR NEW READERS.**—The story begins in 1587, when Giles Montford, the sixteen-year-old master of Templeton, decides to take up arms under Drake against the Spaniards, in defiance of his uncle, Don Ferdinand Gonzales, who has invited him to go over to Spain. Giles is sent to London on an important mission, and returns with a dispatch from the queen to Admiral Drake. He has barely arrived back at Templeton when the house is rushed by five Spanish soldiers, and Giles is overpowered and carried off to Spain as a prisoner of his uncle, Don Gonzales. While on his way to Seville with the Don, the captive is rescued by his trusty servitor, Simon Trent, and a young English lad, Master Rookwood, both disguised as Spaniards. After a hot chase, they all safely reach the English ship, *Dame Mary*. Here they meet the great Admiral Drake, and serve under his flag. During a battle, Giles boards a Spanish vessel, and is in the thick of a fight when this instalment begins.

(Now read on.)

**T**HE Spaniard was armed with a heavy sword, but did not seem skilled in the use of it. He struck wildly and clumsily, and thus made so open an exposure of his guard that the lad's blade quickly slipped between his ribs. His face paled, and he went down in a quivering heap, evidently run through the heart.

The rapier must have been faulty, for when Giles tried hastily to withdraw it the thin blade snapped in two. It was a bad time to be defenceless, for the other two Spaniards were close at hand.

But Giles luckily bethought himself of his

pistols, and pulling one from his belt, he snapped the trigger at his foremost antagonist. A dull click was the only result, and dropping the useless weapon, he hauled out the other.

A delay of a second must have been fatal, so close was his enemy. But Giles fired instantly, and with the loud report the Spaniard reeled back. The pike fell from his nerveless hands, and after a brief struggle to keep his footing he toppled against his comrade and both rolled to the deck together.

The third Spaniard quickly sprang up, snatched his wounded comrade's pike, and ran at Giles with a cry of fury. The lad was now unarmed, and in trying to jump out of the way he tripped over the broken rapier and fell heavily on his back. As he glanced up he saw the Spaniard nearly upon him, with pike lifted for a fatal blow. He closed his eyes with a shudder, realising that he was lost.

But just then there was a hurried rush of feet and a hoarse yell, and as Giles opened his eyes in surprise he saw Trent dash in front of him with a drawn sword. A brief struggle followed, during which the lad rolled to one side and scrambled to his feet.

By this time the sturdy Englishman had won a victory, and the Spaniard lay dead on the deck beside his two companions.

"Never saw I such a rattle-brained youngster!" cried Trent, turning to the lad. "Nor one so brave and doughty," he added. "An old hand could not have slain those two Spaniards so cleverly. And now let us have a try for our lives, Master Giles. Mayhap we shall save them yet, for down in the hold I hear that knave of a master-gunner still beating at a powder-barrel."

## CHAPTER XVII.

## IN WHICH GILES MAKES A PLUCKY STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

**D**OUTBLESS Trent was right. The dull pounding underfoot continued incessantly, and it clearly indicated that the frenzied master-gunner had not yet succeeded in sticking his torch into the powder.

"We may be able to prevent his mad purpose," exclaimed Giles, "if we hasten quickly below and seize him. What say you?"

Trent gave a little shiver.

"Nay, Master Giles, the risk is too great!" he cried. "So surely as we ventured below deck we should never see daylight again. As it is, we are in sore peril. Quick! Bear a hand with Master Rookwood, since you are bound to stick by him."

They lifted Sydney's limp form between them, and started with it towards the bulwarks. But they had made less than half a dozen steps when an outcry behind them caused them to glance sharply round.

The three surviving Spaniards had left the mast, and were creeping warily forward, each armed with a heavy pike.

"A pest on the knaves!" cried Giles. "They are determined to have vengeance for their comrades, and now we must stop to fight again."

"We can't stop now," replied Trent, in a tone of alarm. "Hark! The pounding has entirely ceased below. I fear we are lost. Never mind the Spaniards. On, on for life. If we can but jump into the sea there is a chance."

With fast-beating hearts they floundered madly over the deck, slipping and stumbling amid the dead bodies, and paying no heed to the three foemen in the rear. Closer and closer they drew to the bulwarks. It was three yards away—two—now only one.

But just as the wall of timber was fairly within reach, Giles slipped and fell back, with Sydney's head and shoulders resting on his breast. He heard a sharp cry from Trent, and by a desperate effort he extricated himself and scrambled to his feet.

Just then a tremendous explosion, like the roar of ten thousand pieces of cannon, seemed to rend Heaven and earth. The quivering galley was tossed upward like an eggshell, and the thunderous report of the powder was followed by the rending of great timbers, the crashing of masts and spars, and the gurgle and thump of agitated waves.

The sunlight was blotted out by clouds of stifling smoke, and showers of debris, large and small, that pattered down like hailstones from the black gloom overhead.

After the first shock and roar of the

explosion Giles remembered nothing, for he was dashed off his feet with stunning force. A spatter of cold water revived him, and he found that he was lying on his face across the unconscious body of Sydney Rookwood.

He rose dizzily to his knees, scarcely able to credit that he was really alive. He was still more surprised to discover that he had sustained no serious injury, so far as he could tell. Blood was trickling from a cut over one eye, and he felt a good-sized lump on the back of his head.

He was still a little dazed, but his full senses returned when he looked around him at the scene of destruction. He tried to stand on his feet, but the violent tossing of the vessel at once threw him over.

It was evident that the magazine could not have contained more than one or two barrels of powder, else the devastation must have been far worse. As it was, the galley was a mere shattered hull. Two-thirds of the deck had gone, and there remained only the narrow strip that had sheltered Giles.

The black chasm that yawned over the hold was partly choked with masts, spars, and splintered beams, and curls of yellow smoke were drifting upward from the debris. One of the Spaniards lay under a heavy beam, his legs dangling over the jagged edge of the deck. Of Trent and the two other Spaniards nothing could be seen.

Giles noticed all these things at a hasty glance, and then he was roused to sudden terror by a steady gurgling noise, and by a peculiar quivering motion of the deck. He knew instantly what it meant. The water was pouring into the shattered hold of the galley, and it would go to the bottom in a few seconds more.

Life was sweet to the lad, and he determined not to perish without a struggle. He could stand without difficulty now, and taking hold of Sydney under the arms, he dragged him toward the bulwark. Over the top of the timber-works he could see the Hercules tossing about on the turbulent water at a distance of several hundred yards. A little nearer two boats were bobbing up and down on the great waves, and the men at the oars were shouting and making signals.

Giles shouted back as he staggered against the bulwark with his burden. He was about to clamber over the top, when a sudden recollection chilled him to the very bone. With trembling hands, he tore off Sydney's breastplate and back-piece, and then his own. It would have been useless to try to swim with such encumbrances.

But the hesitation nearly proved fatal. As Giles threw the pieces of armour away, the galley rolled suddenly to one side, causing the bulwark to rise high in the

air. The brave lad narrowly escaped sliding back into the gaping hold. He saved himself by grabbing the top of the timbers with one hand, while he fastened the other hand tightly in the folds of Sydney's collar.

The next step was the most difficult. In some manner—he never knew quite how—Giles dragged himself and his helpless burden over the bulwark, and dropped headfirst into the blue waves.

He went far under before he was able to reverse his position. Then, still holding tight to Sydney, he struggled upward with

up he shot, still struggling hard, and holding his breath, in spite of the agony that threatened to burst his brain.

Ah, the black water was growing green! He was nearly safe. With his free hand he swam desperately, and just when he could hold his breath no longer, his head came to the surface.

He saw a boat close by and heard his name called. He kept himself on top a moment longer, and as he was about to sink, the splashing oars came alongside. Eager hands reached out, and both lads were hauled safely into the boat.



Giles dragged himself and his helpless burden over the bulwark, and dropped headfirst into the blue waves.

his legs and one hand. At last his head shot to the top, but before he could do more than draw a long breath, a terrific suction drew him swiftly under the waves again.

For an instant he gave himself up for lost, knowing that he was caught in the vortex of the sinking galley. But none the less, he kept his legs and arm going vigorously as he sank deeper and deeper into the black waters. He held fast to Sydney, though he might have saved himself by letting go.

At last he felt that he was rising. Up,

As soon as Giles could get his breath, he looked around for the galley, and saw only a swirling mass of foam to mark where it had disappeared. Then he turned to the seat behind him, and it may be imagined with what joy and surprise he beheld Stephen Trent sitting there. He was dripping wet, and there was an ugly cut across his cheek.

"Thank God!" cried Giles, as he grasped the trusty fellow's hand. "I thought you were at the bottom of the harbour. How did you escape?"

"By a sheer accident, Master Giles—"

the reply. "Do you mind when your foot slipped, and you landed on the deck with Master Rookwood atop of you? Well, I was standing back up to the bulwark then, and when the explosion came, the lurch of the galley pitched me clear over into the water. I grabbed a big spar that fell near by, and a bit later I was picked up by that boat."

"It is almost a miracle that you and I are alive," said Giles. "I fear poor Master Rookwood is past help. He must have swallowed a lot of water when we were under."

He looked sadly down at the lad's pallid cheeks and closed eyes.

"Cheer up," exclaimed Trent. "I've seen many a live man look more like dead. I'll wager that a stiff rubbing and a hot drink brings the lad round all right."

By this time the boat was alongside the *Hercules*, and Giles and Trent climbed up to the deck with as much ease as the rest of the seamen. Sydney was brought up slung in a bit of sail-cloth, and was immediately taken down to the cabin, where blankets and hot drinks were in readiness.

Meanwhile, Trent, with his usual hardihood, volunteered to give Sir Francis a highly-coloured account of the rescue of Master Rookwood. The result was that Drake called Giles aside, and spoke a few words of praise that made the lad's cheeks burn with pleasure.

"Now get below," he added. "Take a hot draught and go to bed."

"With your permission, sir, I would rather do service for the rest of the day," Giles replied. "I am none the worse for my adventure, save these wet garments and a couple of scratches."

Sir Francis smiled approvingly, and then nodded assent. Giles at once hurried below to the seamen's quarters, where he found dry clothes to fit him and plaster for the cut over his eye. While he was thus engaged Trent entered for the same purpose.

"Good news, Master Giles!" he exclaimed. "I have but come by the cabin, and they tell me Master Rookwood is breathing and hath opened his eyes. One of the officer's servants, who is skilled in wounds, is working with him."

"I shall fight the better to-day for knowing this," replied Giles, "if there be need of fighting. Think you I could see Master Rookwood?"

Trent shook his head.

"Not until to-morrow," he answered. "He must lie quiet for some hours. I dare say he will be as spry as ever by morning, and ready to thank you for his life."

"It was no more than he did for me," said Giles, "and I want no thanks. Come, Stephen, we are needed above. Methinks I hear the rattle of pistols and arquebuses at no great distance."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH A STRANGE VESSEL APPEARS BY NIGHT.

WHEN Giles and Trent reached the deck they found that resistance was over, and that the harbour was completely at the mercy of the invaders. The galleys had fled out to sea to escape the fate of the man-of-war, and the English fleet had surrounded the store-ships. The garrison and people of the town were watching in sullen and helpless silence from ramparts and walls.

Drake had previously given instructions as to what should be done, and now these orders were swiftly carried out by the various officers of the fleet. The store-ships were boarded, and the rich cargoes of corn, wine, and other provisions were transferred to the English vessels. Everything else of value that could be conveniently moved was also taken.

The *Hercules* did her share of the plundering, and in the occasional fighting that took place Giles and Trent displayed much bravery and skill. For the most part, however, the crews of the store-ships either yielded without resistance or escaped to the shore in small boats or by swimming. A large number were captured.

Toward the close of the afternoon the pillaging was complete, and the vast and rich stores destined for the Armada were on board the English fleet. The Spanish vessels were now set on fire and their cables were cut. They drifted helplessly together, and the wind blew the flaming mass to shore. By sunset nothing remained but a number of charred hulks grounded here and there on the shallows.

Drake sent a messenger ashore, with an offer to exchange the prisoners for such English seamen as might be held captive in Spain. But the proposal was rejected, and a council of the officers of the fleet resulted in a decision to sell the prisoners into slavery to the Moors.

As there was nothing to be gained by staying longer in the harbour, or by laying siege to the town, the English fleet sailed away to the west that same night. They had lost but one vessel, and very few men had been killed or wounded.

While the harbour of Cadiz was falling rapidly behind the starry night, Giles stood on the poop-deck of the *Hercules*, looking down over the rail at the rippling, black waters. He felt a little excited, and was not in a humour for sleep, though most of the crew had turned in after the wearisome events of the day.

Approaching footsteps caused the lad to turn round, and he saw Trent behind him.

"An old soldier like you ought to be abed, Stephen," he said, in a bantering tone. "There is reason for my wakefulness,

for my brain is still filled with what I have seen and done this day. It was my first taste of real war, and I would not willingly have missed it."

"Ay, Master Giles, it was a neat and daring victory," replied Trent, "and we have badly crippled the Armada by taking the store-ships. But there is more thrilling work ahead for us shortly, unless I mistake the keen look in Sir Francis Drake's eyes."

"What do you mean?" asked Giles. "Where is the fleet bound now?"

"I have heard it whispered that we shall bring up at Cape St. Vincent," Trent answered, "but more than that I cannot say. One thing is certain, lad—Drake has no intention of sailing straight back to England."

"I am well pleased to hear it," said Giles, "yet I would wish to get word of my safety to Sir Richard Edgecumbe and to Master Tomewell, since I fear they are much distressed on my account."

"You are like to have a chance before long," replied Trent, "for Sir Francis will be sending dispatches home. Zounds! Master Giles," he added, "I quite forgot what brought me in search of you. Master Rookwood begs to see you, and his attendants have given permission."

"You are a pretty fellow to be entrusted with a message!" cried Giles, half in anger and half in jest.

He hurried off at once, and on reaching the cabin he found Sydney sitting up in his bunk with a blanket around him. A bandage was tied across his forehead, and his face looked thin and pale. The ship's cook was just taking a trencher of dishes away, and the only other occupant of the cabin was the officer's servant who had charge of the patient.

"Trent brought me word to come," said Giles. "I am glad to see you sitting up, but if talking is like to make you more ill—"

"It will make me better," interrupted Sydney with a smile. "I am not so ill as I look, for I have just eaten a hearty supper. I still feel a little weak, but I am sure I shall be quite recovered by to-morrow. I sent for you because I could not wait any longer to thank you for what you did."

"It was no more than you did for me," replied Giles, "and I don't want to be thanked."

"All heroes talk like that!" said Sydney. "Nay, don't interrupt me. If ever there was a hero you are one. I have heard the whole story from Master Trent. He told me how you fought the Spanish seamen, how you dragged me over the deck when the galley was about to blow up, and how you kept tight hold of me in the water

at the risk of your own life. Why, I owe you more than I can ever repay. That little affair in Cadiz this morning was naught compared with what you did."

"Nay, it was every bit as great a service," protested Giles.

He was about to say more, when he caught a warning look from the servant, and that checked him.

"You are too modest, Master Montford," Sydney went on, "and I wish not to confuse you. So now a truce to graceful words, if you wish it. But I will say this. As long as I live I will remember how you saved my life, and if ever a time comes when I can repay you I will do so. We will be friends for ever, won't we?"

"Yes, we will be friends for ever," said Giles, taking Sydney's outstretched hand and clasping it warmly.

And thus a bond of comradeship was sealed that was destined to hold fast through stranger tests and adventures than either of the lads could foresee.

They parted after a few more words, and Giles went to his berth in the officers' quarters. He quickly fell asleep, and did not awaken until noon of the next day. When he went on deck the fleet was gliding along under full sail, and the coast of Spain was dimly visible some miles to the north.

By evening Sydney was up and about, looking little the worse for his hard usage. During the next couple of days he and Giles were constantly together, and each conceived a deep and sincere liking for the other. Trent and Sydney had already become fast friends, and the three comrades whiled away many an hour in telling of their past lives and in hopeful and eager conversation of the future.

Sir Francis Drake had evidently planned his movements on the strength of valuable and secret information, but the thrilling events that followed the sacking of Cadiz Harbour may be passed over briefly, since an unexpected event was to usher our young heroes upon a far different stage of hostilities.

During the brief cruise to the north-west, several convoys of Spanish store-ships, bound for the mouth of the Tagus, were overhauled, plundered, and burned. Then the British fleet arrived at Cape St. Vincent, where Drake announced his intention of waiting for a part of the Armada that was expected to arrive from the Mediterranean.

As a harbour was necessary, the English seamen landed at Faro, and stormed and captured the Spanish fort there. In this action Giles and Sydney distinguished themselves, and Trent received a wound that laid him on his back for a week.

But the expected warships did not appear, and after a tedious wait the fleet set sail again and cruised up the coast to the mouth of the River Tagus. Here they lay at anchor for a few days, preparing to sail up the

river to Lisbon, where the vast Armada was collected under its admiral, Santa Croce.

The fleet stationed there was large and formidable, and the proposed attack looked very much like madness. But the English sailors were eager and willing, and Drake counted upon their oft-proved valour to win him a victory.

So the preparations went quickly and steadily on, and two hours before dawn of the chosen day—when the night was darkest—found the fleet in readiness to lift anchor and sail up the Tagus to Lisbon. Drake hoped to take the enemy by surprise and throw them into confusion.

The deck of every vessel was full of resolute men, armed with pistols, arquebuses, and freshly-sharpened pikes and swords. The cannon had all been cleaned and polished, and plenty of powder and ball was at hand for the skilled bombardiers. The master-gunners were at their posts, and the sailing-masters were on the watch for the signal.

Giles and Sydney had been up since midnight with the rest of the officers and men, and had taken a busy part in the final preparations. It was close to the time fixed for starting when they went below to gird on their pieces of armour. They knew Sir Francis was on deck, and they expected to hear the rattle of the cables at any instant.

Therefore, when a confused noise of voices and footsteps broke out overhead, the lads believed that the fleet was about to start. They clapped on their head-pieces and hastened up to the deck, surprised to find that the Hercules was still resting quietly on the water.

They were more surprised when the dim glow of the lanterns showed men and officers crowding eagerly against the rail, and talking in low, excited voices. The lads pushed their way forward and at once discovered the cause of the commotion. A strange vessel was approaching the Hercules from the direction of the open sea. She was already very close, and under her flashing lights figures could be seen grouped on the deck.

"It can hardly be a Spanish vessel," muttered Giles.

"I don't see what else it can be," replied Sydney. "Perhaps it mistakes the fleet for part of the Armada."

"Nay, lads, it hath the cut of an English craft," broke in Trent, who had been standing close by unperceived, "and such I'll wager it proves to be. Her purpose, which methinks I can suspect, we shall know shortly. Ay, look at her now. It is just as I thought."

As Trent spoke there was a sudden dropping of canvas, followed by the rattle of cables, and then the strange vessel lay anchored at a distance of several hundred yards. A moment later a boat was lowered, and the dipping oars brought it swiftly towards the Hercules.

## CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH GILES AND HIS COMPANIONS ARE TRANSFERRED TO THE ADVENTURE.

THE approach of this messenger from the strange vessel was watched in uneasy silence, as though it portended some calamity or misfortune. Nearer and nearer hove the little boat through the dusky night, until it swung alongside the Hercules and the seamen rested on their oars.

"Is this the flagship of Sir Francis Drake's fleet?" a sharp, commanding voice called up.

"Ay, ay, sir," one of the sailors answered. Officers and men fell back a little, and Drake himself came forward to the bulwarks. His face was gloomy and sullen, and his voice had a savage ring as he ordered the ladder to be dropped.

An instant later, a richly-dressed officer, with a handsome, bearded face, mounted to the deck of the Hercules. He saluted Drake in a very courtly manner, and then produced a sealed packet.

"I am Captain Aubrey Vane, of yonder ship Adventure," he said, by the way of introduction. "My greetings to you, Sir Francis, and I have the honour to bring you this in the name of her Majesty of England."

"Would that you had brought it a day later, sir," the blunt old navigator growled audibly, as he took the packet. "Perdition seize you and the Adventure—nay, I mean not that. You are but the instrument of a Government that never knows its own mind for a day at a time."

With a surly nod and a gesture that was far from civil, he beckoned to the Queen's messenger to follow him. They crossed the deck and vanished below, observed by many a gloomy and disappointed face.

The outbreak of growls and complaints that followed showed plainly the temper of the men and officers of the Hercules. They gathered in little groups, discussing the situation in a manner that proved how clearly they understood it. Opinions were freely expressed, in spite of the waiting sailors from the Adventure.

"Orders to return to England, else I may never fire another shot at the Spanish craft," cried the master-gunner. "It's enough to spoil the temper of a saint."

"And just when we were about to start," growled another. "I doubt not but we should have sent half of old Santa Croce's ships to the bottom of the Tagus."

"If I were in the place of Sir Francis," declared a young and hot-spirited officer. "I would attack the Armada first, and open her Majesty's dispatch last. Odds fish, this puts my promotion back!"

"A little more of such treasonable talk, if it comes to the right ears, may promote you to a place in the Tower," warned an elderly officer; and this had the effect of moderating the conversation.

"It will be a great pity if the attack be



abandoned," said Sydney. "Drake never undertakes a thing unless he is sure of success."

"Abandoned it certainly will be," replied Giles. "I read as much in Sir Francis' face. What think, you Stephen?"

"The same as you, Master Giles," Trent answered. "It is perfectly clear that her Majesty, having taken us for granted that the message which was sent to Drake by you and me did never reach him, hath now sent this Captain Vane to summon him back to England."

"I would that he had arrived two hours later," muttered Sydney, in a gloomy tone. "By that time—"

He stopped abruptly and with a start, as a hand was laid on his shoulder. Wheeling round, he saw one of the commander's servitors.

"I have word from Sir Francis," said the man. "He wishes to see Masters Montford and Rookwood at once."

With feelings of mingled surprise and alarm, the lads hurried below, leaving Trent gazing after them in a state of stupefaction. They entered the cabin with flushed faces, and found Sir Francis and Captain Vane seated at opposite sides of a small table. The Queen's dispatch lay on the table, crumpled and open.

For a moment or two Sir Francis paid no attention to Giles and Sydney.

"I shall obey this command, sir," he shouted at Captain Vane, "but I shall do no more than that. I am instructed not to enter the mouth of the Tagus. Very well; my fleet shall lie right here at anchor. But, by the Lord High Admiral, sir, I will sink every Spanish craft that tries to pass in or out of the river! I will challenge that ruffianly old Spaniard, Santa Croce, to come out of harbour and fight; and if he dares come, sir, I will blow his boasted Armada to pieces."

"You will answer to her Majesty for your future operations," replied Captain Vane, on whose countenance lurked both amusement and admiration; "it is no concern of mine. With the safe delivery of this dispatch my responsibility ended. But as to the other matter—"

"Ay, I forgot," interrupted Sir Francis, turning to his waiting visitors. "Here are my trusty young volunteers now. I sent for you, Masters Montford and Rookwood, because I would do you a good turn for the faithful and brave service you have given me. You both wish for a chance to share in more fighting and to further distinguish your lives?"

The lads eagerly answered in the affirmative, wondering what was to come next.

"Well, young gentlemen, it is doubtful if you have such an opportunity with me for the present," Sir Francis went on. "Her Majesty fears that I may do some harm to the poor Spaniards, and I am forbidden to enter the Tagus. However, this is not to the point. Captain Vane was dispatched

here with the letter because his ship, the Adventurer, is a fleet sailer. It is ordered back at once to resume its old trade of dispatch-bearing between England and Holland, and Captain Vane has the Queen's permission to take with him from my fleet such men as are likely to be of service to him in his perilous calling. I have chosen you, subject to the captain's approval."

Giles and Sydney were at a loss to know what to say to this. They flushed with pleasure, realising that it was a mark of high honour to be thus singled out, and that the opportunity was one that many an old soldier would have coveted.

"I have heard good reports of you, young gentlemen," said Captain Vane, and I shall be glad to have you under my command on board the Adventurer."

"Ay, and another thing," exclaimed Sir Francis. "It is understood that I am parting with you only for a time, my lads. When I return to England with the fleet you will rejoin the Hercules at the first opportunity."

This was the very thing that Giles and Sydney most desired, since they regarded the perilous cruising between England and Holland as a field of experience that would ripen them for the great and inevitable struggle with Spain.

They gratefully thanked Sir Francis and Captain Vane, and Giles asked permission for Trent to accompany him. As the relations between the two were those of master and servant the request was readily granted, though Sir Francis looked as though he would have liked to deny it.

The lads were now excused, with instructions to be ready to leave in a few moments. Being armed and equipped they had no preparations to make and no baggage to pack. They hurried on deck to acquaint Trent with his altered destiny, and the trusty fellow was no less delighted than the lads.

The news spread throughout the vessel, and officers and men exchanged farewells with their three fortunate comrades, to whom they had become sincerely attached during the past few weeks.

In the midst of the leave-taking Captain Vane appeared to claim his volunteers. They accompanied him in his boat to the Adventurer, and anchor was at once lifted. When dawn broke the long journey to England had been fairly begun, and the fleet was but faintly visible to the southward.

The Adventure was a low, sharp vessel, and well adapted for speed. It carried six guns on each side of the deck, and under its lofty poop there was plenty of cabin-room. The voyage was somewhat retarded by storms and adverse winds, but no Spanish ships were met with. The kindness of Captain Vane, and of the officers and men, greatly relieved the monotony of the long passage for Trent and the lads.

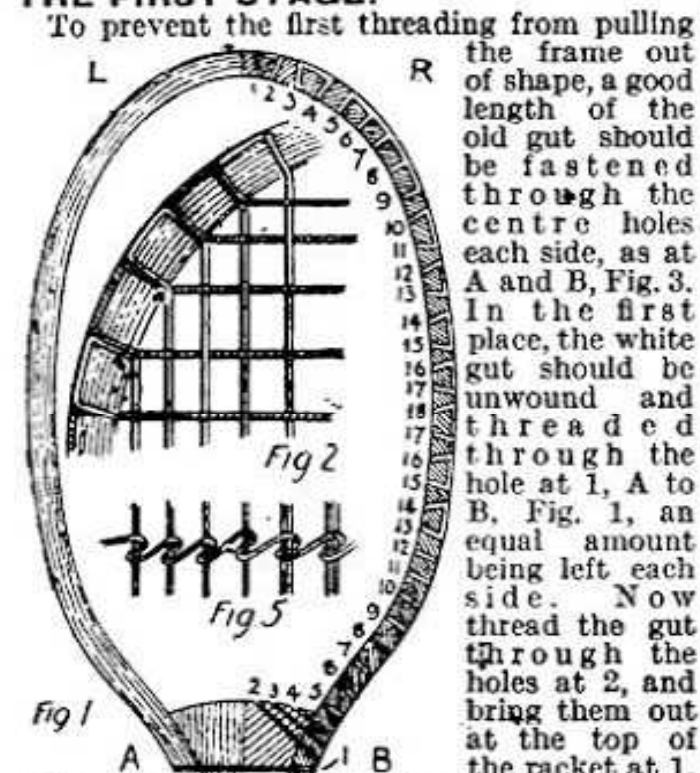
(Another long instalment of this stirring Serial next week.)

## RE-STRINGING A TENNIS RACKET

By DICK GOODWIN.

**T**HE materials required for re-stringing a racket are a 21 ft. coil of white gut, a 16 ft. coil of red, and about 6 ft. of purple trebling gut. These can be obtained from a sports outfitter. First of all carefully measure the inside dimensions of the racket, and then cut away all the old gut. Wipe over the frame with a rag soaked in petrol, and then secure the handle in a vice or to a table with a G clamp. To make the method of stringing quite clear, a section of one side is shown at Fig. 1, the holes being numbered from the top and bottom to the centre. Some of the holes, as shown in the enlarged detail at Fig. 2, have to carry two lengths of gut: but in the first stage, shown at Fig. 3, the white lengths from top to handle are threaded first.

### THE FIRST STAGE.



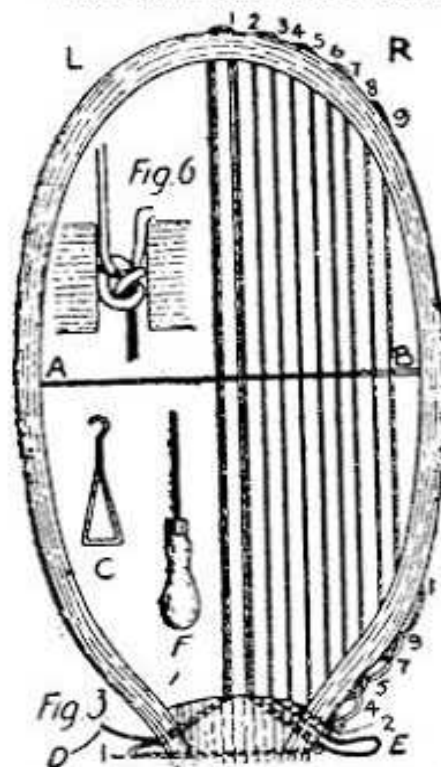
cross them over, bring them down through the same holes so that a double length of gut comes in the centre as at Fig. 3.

### WEAR A LEATHER PAD OR GLOVE.

A button-hook, as at C, will help in pulling the gut tight, but a leather pad or glove should be worn on the hand when pulling, so as not to cut into the skin. A wooden peg should be driven in alongside the spare end at D, Fig. 3, and then one side can be filled in with parallel lengths. Commence on the right as at R, thread the gut through the hole at 3, taking care to ease the loop at E, and bring it out on top at 2. Carry across to 3, down to 4, and pull tight. At this stage measure the inside length to make sure it is not being altered in size. Continue through 5 to 4 and so on, until the necessary number of parallel lengths have been threaded. The spare end, coming through the hole at 11, should be threaded under the loops between 9 and 7, 5 and 4, 3 and 2, but to do this it will be necessary to make an opening through the tightly-drawn gut with an awl. This, as shown at F, can be a length of knitting needle fastened in a handle.

### THREADING THE RED GUT.

When both sides have been filled in, the red

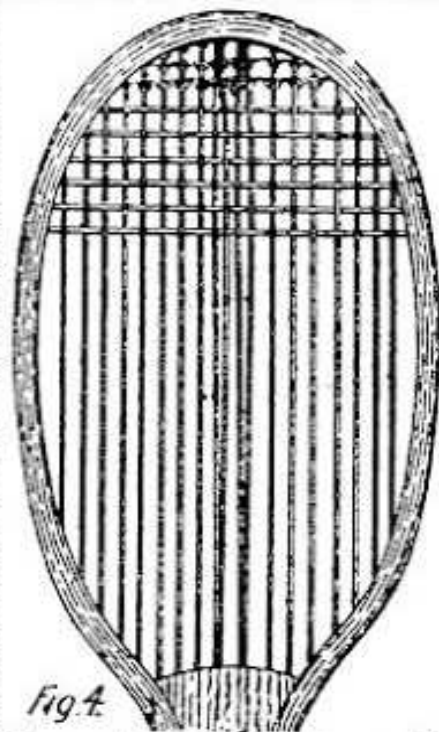


gut is threaded from side to side, each length being threaded over and under alternately, as at Fig. 4. Commence at 7, near the top and knot the end. Pull it through, over and under the strands, including the two double strands, and thread through the opposite side. The awl will be required to enlarge the space so that the gut can be threaded through easily. Pull tight, place a peg in the hole

alongside the gut, and then carry through the next holes, and so on to the 8 hole at the handle; peg each new cross length, removing the peg from the one above afterwards.

### THREE LINES OF TREBLING.

The end of the red gut should be finished off securely, and then the fine, purple gut should be threaded through top and bottom and wrapped round each strand, as at Fig. 5. Keep the gut well stretched all the time, and when the two centre strands are reached, pull tight enough to bring them close together. Finish off the ends under convenient loops, after going backwards and forwards three times. To complete the work and protect the new gut, the whole of the stringing should be coated with spirit varnish or thin shellac varnish, and when this has had time to set, the racket will be ready for use.



It will be advisable to place the racket in a press and leave it for a day or two to allow the straining to settle without pulling the frame. New lengths can often be fitted in a racket without entirely re-stringing, and a suitable knot for a new length is shown at Fig. 6. It is not an easy matter to insert new lengths without overdue strain, but with care it can be satisfactorily done with little expense.

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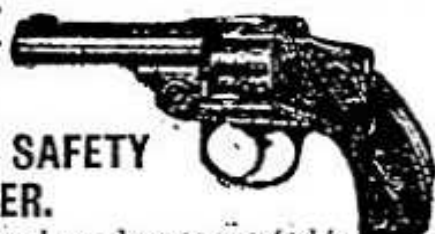
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