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# THE NELSON LEE

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A rollicking incident from this week's super-thrilling, long complete yarn featuring the cheery Chums of St. Frank's.

New Series No. 99

OUT ON WEDNESDAY

December 12th. 1931.



A merry—and mysterious—Christmas for the Chums of St. Frank's.

# The Castle of Terror!

Christmas in a haunted castle.  
Games ; gaiety ; ghosts.  
And over all the shadow of a  
Mandarin's revenge !



By EDWY  
SEARLES BROOKS

***Festive fun and thrills in this dramatic complete yarn.***

**CHAPTER 1.**

**Unexpected Arrivals!**

**B**EGAD! This is most frightfully rummy—it is, really!”

Sir Launcelot Montgomery Tregellis-West, Bart., was staring for the tenth time at the crumpled telegram. Round about him were Nipper and Tommy Watson—his chums of Study C at St. Frank’s—and Reggie Pitt and Jack Grey and Archie Glenthorne, to say nothing of Alf Brent and Fatty Little. Then, too, there were three very charming girls—Mary Summers and Doris Berkeley and Marjorie Temple, of the Moor View School.

They were all standing on the wide,

sweeping terrace in front of Tregellis Castle—Sir Montie’s ancestral home.

“But there’s nothing to be puzzled about, Montie,” said Nipper, smiling. “The telegram is clear enough.”

“Oh, rather,” agreed Sir Montie, adjusting his glasses, and looking at the telegram again. “Begad, yes! But it’s so rummy! The whole frightful crowd coming along for Christmas! I’m bucked like the dickens, of course, but I must admit that it’s a bit of a shock.”

“More of a shock for your aunt, I think,” chuckled Nipper.

Lady Helen Tregellis-West was the mistress of this fair domain. She had only smiled graciously when Montie had given her the startling news. There was plenty





of room at Tregellis—and any amount of guests were welcome. At Christmas-time, especially, it was “open house.”

Sir Montie had brought his boy and girl friends along, and they were anticipating a right merry, jolly time. It wanted a day or two to Christmas yet, but the weather was already seasonable. There was frost in the air—and a hint of snow, too.

Montie had another aunt—Lady Westbrooke. Aunt Diana was a kindly soul, and she had promised to come over for Christmas—she and Lord Westbrooke. They lived at Westbrooke Hall, not many miles distant from the extensive Tregellis estates.

“The queer thing is that Handforth should take a party of chaps and girls to Travis Dene, his own home in Suffolk, for Christmas,” said Reggie Pitt, “and then suddenly, after only a couple of days, he sends a wire saying that he’s coming along to Tregellis—bringing the whole gang with him.”

“If that isn’t just like Handy, what is?” asked Nipper.

“I think it’s awfully jolly,” remarked Mary Summers. “The more the merrier, eh? And you’ve got to admit that Ted Handforth is a ripping sport to have at a Christmas party.”

“He’ll liven us up, begad,” said Sir Montie, with conviction.

“Handy doesn’t say so, but I expect he’s bringing Mr. Potts, too,” said Nipper. “You know Mr. Potts, you chaps—Jimmy’s uncle. I’m wondering if this sudden change of plan is in any way connected with him.”

“Well, it’s no good wondering, old boy,” said Montie placidly. “We shall hear all about it when the gang arrives.”

The “gang” was arriving just then. The one and only Edward Oswald Handforth was leading the way in his Morris Minor—very much like a tug in charge of a liner. For behind came a huge, magnificent limousine, the property of Mr. Benjamin Potts, the millionaire uncle of Sir Jimmy Potts.

As the two cars turned a bend in the country road, they could see Tregellis Castle away to the left, almost on the top of a rising hill.

It was a picturesque sight. There were woods on almost every side of the castle, and it arose from amidst them, its towers and turrets standing out in contrast. The battlements were white with frost, and the walls were mostly hidden behind thick growths of clinging ivy. This was one of England’s most famous mansions. It had been the home of the Tregellis-West family for centuries.

The lodge came within view, and the gates were standing invitingly wide open. The car turned into the stately drive. Tall poplars were in evidence on either side. Soon there came a bend, and the poplar-enclosed drive was left behind. Before the new arrivals stretched the great lawns, white with frost.

In the remote past a wide moat had surrounded the castle, but this had been filled in many years earlier. The massive drawbridge, however, was still intact, and it added a picturesque medieval touch.

“By George!” said Handforth, deeply impressed. “It’s a pretty wonderful place, you know.”

“You’ve been here before,” said Church.

“I know I have—but I’d forgotten,” said Handforth. “Hallo! There are the chaps, look—and the girls, too. Well, thank goodness we’re here—and I’m jolly hungry.”

“Let’s hope we don’t get kicked out,” said McClure. “If you ask me, it’s a bit thick piling on Montie’s people like this—without even giving them a chance to turn us down.”

“But Montie invited us,” protested Handforth.

The others knew this; all the same, it was rather “thick.” They had started out from Travis Dene that morning, and they had merely sent Sir Montie a long wire.

As the two cars drew to a standstill, Sir Montie, Nipper, and the others crowded round. It was as they had expected; the whole of Handforth’s party had come, including the bluff, genial millionaire from China—to say nothing of Yen, his native valet.

“Frightfully glad to have you, dear old boys,” said Tregellis-West cordially. “Welcome to Tregellis! I hope we shall all have a frightfully merry Christmas.”

“You don’t mind our coming, Montie?” asked Handforth. “I mean, your people —”

“They’re bucked—they are, really,” beamed Montie. “Of course, it was a bit sudden——”

“Too sudden, lad—too sudden,” broke in Mr Benjamin Potts uncomfortably. “I assure you, I feel very much like an intruder.”

“Then the sooner you cease feeling like that, sir, the better,” replied Sir Montie promptly. “You’re all most frightfully welcome, and—— But I say, begad! Really, Jimmy, old boy! You’re looking seedy!”

Jimmy Potts, who was usually so hale and hearty, was certainly haggard.

“I think I shall be all right, thanks, Montie,” he said quietly.



"The chappies are right, dash it," said Archie Glenthorne, jamming his monocle into his eye, and surveying Jimmy Potts with concern. "Odds shocks and stunners! You're looking positively washed out, old thing. Not exactly unlike one of last week's socks, hanging on the line!"

They all went indoors, Jimmy Potts the centre of attention. Nobody could understand what had happened to him in so short a space of time. They had left St. Frank's only three or four days ago, and Jimmy had been all right then. His visit to Travis Dene had not, apparently, done him much good.

After Montie had introduced his new guests to Aunt Helen, there were a few words of explanation.

"We shouldn't have piled in on you like this, Lady Helen, in ordinary cires.," said Handforth, floundering a bit. "The fact is, some rummy things have been happening at my place."

"I don't think I quite understand you," said Montie's aunt gently.

"Well, everything was all right until we got to Travis Dene," said Handforth, "but when we arrived there we found that all the electric lights had failed."

"Perhaps ye'll let me explain, lad?" suggested Mr. Potts quietly. "It was more serious than that, Lady Helen. On our first night, my nephew was very badly frightened. He had an extraordinarily vivid nightmare——"

"I hate butting in, Mr. Potts, but it wasn't a nightmare," insisted Handforth. "Jimmy really woke up and found an awful-looking yellow man by his bed."

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie, dropping his monocle.

"It's a fact," said Handforth stubbornly. "I had a rummy adventure, too. I went downstairs, and I heard all sorts of queer whispers, and somebody knocked me on the head. But that was nothing. The next night Jimmy saw a sort of ghost, and—and—— Well, it made him so terribly ill that the doctor insisted that he would have to go away."

"I feel very guilty about it," muttered Jimmy Potts wretchedly. "I'm causing a lot of trouble——"

"No, no, lad," said his uncle. "The doctor insisted, and he suggested that some of your friends should go with you. It was young Handforth's idea that we should come here, having, it seems,

already received an invitation from your nephew, Lady Helen."

"Absolutely on the nail, sir," said Sir Montie briskly. "And you're all here, what? Good egg! Let's say no more about it. The party's larger, and everybody's pleased. We're all going to have a frightfully happy Christmas."

## CHAPTER 2.

### The Figure on the Wall!

A FEW extra boys and girls, in such a great establishment as Tregellis Castle, made very little difference. And Jimmy Potts' millionaire uncle was a welcome addition to the party.

Nipper and Montie and the other boys guessed—accurately enough—that Mr. Potts was somehow connected with this unexpected change of plan.

Mr. Potts had arrived at St. Frank's before the school had "broken up," and all the fellows had made a big fuss of him. He had made his millions in China, and this was his first visit home for fifteen years. He was a big, bluff, rough diamond of a man—but none the less likable for that.

On the top of his accepting Handforth's invitation to go to Travis Dene, a rather startling incident had occurred. An attack had been made upon Mr. Potts' life, in Bellton Lane, near the school. Mr. Potts had admitted that, far away in China, he had incurred the enmity of Fu-Li-Sing, the Mandarin of Shan-Si. But never for a moment had Mr. Potts dreamed that his enemies would follow him to England. There had been trouble over a gold concession, granted to Mr. Potts by the Chinese Government. The Mandarin Fu-Li-Sing was plotting, it seemed, to get rid of Mr. Potts whilst the latter was in England—so that no suspicion could attach to the mandarin himself, who would then have a free hand in China.

Jimmy had immediately taken his uncle to see Nelson Lee—and that very night Lee had disappeared! All the evidence went to prove that the famous headmaster-detective of St. Frank's had been attacked in his study and kidnapped. Lee's own car was found at the bottom of the cliffs near Shingle Head, and it was assumed that he had gone to his death over the cliff—plunging into a raging sea.

But Nipper had seen Nelson Lee the next day! Nipper, at least, knew that his beloved guv'nor was alive and well—and, what was more, that he was intent upon following up and capturing his would-be murderers. Nipper had been





pledged to silence, however he had half an idea that Nelson Lee was intent upon keeping a protective eye upon Mr Benjamin Potts.

"After the rummy things which happened at Travis Dene, we thought it best to come straight along here," said Handforth frankly. "Poor old Jimmy was properly scared."

"That's what I can't understand," said Nipper, with a thoughtful frown. "Why, Jimmy?"

"It's my opinion that Mr. Potts' Chinese enemies are trying to get at him through Jimmy," said Handforth darkly. "Yes, and there was a new butler at Travis Dene—an ugly-looking merchant named Rutley. I suspected him from the first, and I still suspect him. I believe he was paid by those Chinese rotters to help them in their dirty work."

"It's possible, of course," admitted Nipper. "But it sounds a bit steep, Handy."

"By the way, have you heard anything about Mr. Lee?" asked Handforth, giving Nipper a searching glance. "You seem cheery enough."

Nipper shook his head.

"No further news has come," he replied guardedly. "But don't worry, Handy, old man. I'm certain—I'm absolutely convinced—that my guv'nor is alive and well. I don't know where he is, or what he's doing—but I'm satisfied that everything is all right."

"Well, as long as you're satisfied, there's no sense in our worrying," said Handforth cheerfully. "By George! It's good to be here, Nipper! We're going to enjoy ourselves—we're going to forget all that's happened at Travis Dene. There's not much likelihood of Mr. Potts' enemies getting at him here, thank goodness!"

The journey, and the change of scene, had brought about an almost complete recovery in Jimmy Potts. The change in him was remarkable, and Travers and Skeets and the other members of Handforth's original party were delighted. The very atmosphere of Tregellis was jolly—Christmassy.

There were more girls here, too—and that made a bit of difference! The party was bigger, noisier, and consequently happier. There was so much good cheer and gaiety that by the evening Jimmy Potts was grinning with the others. Everything indicated that this Christmas party was to be a rip-roaring success.

Tea was a happy meal, and afterwards the boys and girls crowded into the big ball-room, to help with some special decorations. Lord Westbrooke, the soul

of geniality, had carried Mr. Potts off to the library for a quiet smoke and a yarn.

It was while the boys and girls were engaged in putting up the decorations that somebody excitedly announced that snow was falling.

"Snow!"

"Good egg!"

"I say, let's go out and have a look!"

Everybody was excited. Snow was the one requisite now for a real old-fashioned Christmas. The boys and girls ran gaily out on to the wide terrace, and then they shouted with joy. For the terrace was already white; snowflakes were falling in myriads, falling in that insistent way which indicates the beginning of a heavy downfall.

"Hurrah!"

"Tobogganing to-morrow!"

"Begad! A real old-fashioned Christmas, old boys!" beamed Sir Montie.

"I say, look at it!" shouted Handforth, taking a powerful electric-torch out of his pocket, and flashing the beam upwards. "Look at the flakes!"

It was dark outside, and so far the boys and girls had only seen the falling snowflakes in the reflected light from the windows. Now that beam from the torch revealed them in all their beauty. And revealed something else, too—something as dramatic as it was startling.

The beam hovered, and for a moment, quite by chance, it played upon an angle of a grey old tower, some distance along the wall.

"Look!" went up a sudden alarmed shout.

For there, on the face of the wall, ten or twelve feet from the ground, in the act of climbing the face of the tower, was a black, mysterious figure!

### CHAPTER 3.

#### The Man of Mystery!

"GREAT Scott!"

"What—what is it?"

"Begad! Are we to have mysteries here, too?"

Sir Montie's voice was plaintive besides being startled. A mysterious stranger climbing one of the walls of the castle in the darkness! But for that chance swing of Handforth's torch, the figure would never have been revealed—and not one of those boys or girls would have suspected its presence.

Even as they all stood looking, the figure commenced climbing down. There was something hurried and frantic in its movements.



The beam of Handforth's torch showed a black, mysterious figure climbing up the tower of Tregellis Castle.



Oswald lost his grip, and his headlong rush carried him onwards like a human battering-ram.

Crash!

He collided with the figure of mystery just as the latter was about to make off. They both went down, slithering helplessly along the snowy path.

The others, dashing up, sliding and skidding, surrounded them. It was all very confused. Handforth's torch had been flung out of his hand in the collision, and there was no light except for the reflected radiance from the castle windows. The snow was whirling down blindingly, carried in the teeth of the strong wind.

"Go easy, old boys," urged Sir Montic anxiously. "There's no need to be so frightfully excited—there isn't, really! This chappie may be one of the under-gardeners or grooms, fixing a loose shutter or somethin'."

"For the love of Samson," murmured

"Quick—come on!" yelled Handforth excitedly.

He led the way. The boys, and some of the girls, tore helter-skelter after him.

"Grab him, Handy!"

"Hold him!"

"Don't let the beggar get away!"

The figure had now reached the ground, dropping the last few feet in one jump. The boys and girls were still some distance away; the stranger would have succeeded in escaping but for an unexpected factor. Handforth did not run the last twelve feet; he skidded. The paved path was so slippery owing to the snow that Edward



Vivian Travers, "is it possible that we have made a mistake?"

They were on the outskirts of the crowd; the others were swarming round the prisoner.

"I wish I could think so, Travers," said Jimmy Potts, in a curiously strained voice.

Travers looked at him sharply; and even in the gloom he could see that his face was haggard.

"Well, well," murmured Travers. "What's worrying you, dear old fellow?"

"That tower," whispered Jimmy, staring upwards. "I didn't realise it at first—but now I know! That man was climbing up to Uncle Ben's window!"

"Phew!" whistled Travers.

It was a significant point. Of all the hundreds of windows at Tregellis Castle, the stranger had been climbing up to that particular one! A thing like that could not be mere coincidence.

"Come along—lend a hand," Handforth was saying. "Let's drag him into the light, where we can see him! He'll have to give an account of himself."

Not a word had come from the prisoner; he had accepted his capture dumbly, realising, no doubt, that escape was out of the question. He was breathing heavily, wheezily.

Even Handforth, who had been expecting something sensational, was startled by the appearance of the stranger. They marched him through the big double doors which gave out upon the terrace. Inside there was plenty of light. It was the rear hall, with its paved floor and its vaulted roof. Here, the girls who had not joined in the chase were waiting, all of them very excited.

"Oh!" they exclaimed in a chorus, as the boys, snow-smothered, came in with their prisoner.

He was an extraordinary-looking wretch. He was bent misshapen, and his rags and tatters were pitiful. Yet Nipper, at least, saw that the man's shoe-leather was stout and waterproof and serviceable, in spite of its grubby appearance.

It was difficult to determine his age, for his face was so deeply tanned as to be almost mahogany-coloured, with wrinkles and lines. Great bushy eyebrows mingled with the lank, straggly hair which escaped from beneath his rough cap. There was a wisp of untidy beard on his chin, and some ugly, uneven yellow fangs protruded from his twisted mouth. Altogether, a weird, unpleasant-looking specimen.

"My only sainted aunt!" ejaculated Handforth.

"He's not a Chink, anyhow," remarked Church.

"I'm not so jolly sure of that," retorted Handforth darkly. "Anyhow, I don't like the look of him. Ever seen him before, Montie?"

"Begad, no," said Sir Montie, with a slight shiver. "Really, this is most frightfully disturbing, dear old boys."

"Who are you?" demanded Handforth, glaring at the prisoner. "You're not dumb, I suppose? What were you trying to do—climbing up that wall?"

The man turned a pair of piercing eyes upon Edward Oswald, and he started as though he has just awakened from a daze.

"I meant no harm, young gentlemen," he muttered in a thin, tremulous voice. "You're not going to keep me here, are you? I'm hungry—desperate. I ain't tasted food since yesterday morning." He turned and looked round at the others, holding out two gnarled hands. "Let me go, young gentlemen!" he pleaded. "I was only hoping that I might get a crust. It's Christmas-time, and——"

"That's all very well," interrupted Nipper quietly, "but what made you think that you could get a crust by climbing that tower?"

The man's story was palpably thin. And every one of those boys, remembering the mysterious happenings at Travis Dene, was filled with suspicions. No sooner had they arrived at Tregellis Castle than there was another hint of mystery. Until this evening the castle had been free from any trace of such unpleasant trouble.

"Let the poor old man go, Montie," said Doris Berkeley, her dark eyes full of compassion. "After all, he hasn't done any harm."

"Yes, let him go!" chorused the other girls.

"Begad! I'd do it like a shot, only——" Sir Montie hesitated. "Well, I'm not satisfied that the blighter is as harmless as he looks."

"He doesn't look very harmless, either," said Handforth gruffly.

"He was climbing the ivy almost immediately beneath Mr. Potts' window," said Travers.

The stranger spun round on him, alarm in his eyes.

"You don't understand!" he wheezed. "I didn't come here to hurt anybody—to do any harm. Let me go! Please! Let me go before any of the men folk come!"

But even if the boys were prepared to take such a step on their own initiative, it was too late. For just then Lord Westbrooke and Uncle Ben came out of



the library, and, attracted by the voices, they approached.

"Upon my soul!" ejaculated Montie's uncle, with a start. "Who on earth is this? What's going on here?"

They quickly told him; and Uncle Ben, with a smothered exclamation, took a step forward and peered at the stranger.

"I cannot believe it," he said incredulously. "This man was climbing to my window? But—but it is inconceivable!"

"I didn't mean any harm, sir," wailed the queer stranger.

"I am dumbfounded," said Mr. Potts, with deep concern. "If I have brought

any trouble upon this household—— But that is impossible! There can be no connection between this extraordinary man's activities and—— How could any outside person have known of the position of my bed-room?"

"Do not upset yourself, my dear sir," said Lord Westbrooke gruffly.

"This fellow is obviously a tramp, and it was only by chance that he happened to be climbing the

wall at that particular spot. Come, come, my man! You'll have to give an account of yourself."

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### Zacchi, the Fortune-teller!

THE man had been looking sullen, but Lord Westbrooke's tone caused him to turn eagerly. He pulled his rags about him, and even assumed a certain dignity.

"It was not the desire for a crust which brought me here, honoured sir," he confessed. "I came because I could not help coming! Some mystic influence took hold of me. You smile—but you do not realise."

A refined note had crept into his voice; he gave a vague impression that he had, at one time in his life, been something very much better.

"There is evil abroad," he said mysteriously. "Where this evil lies I cannot say; I only know that it is near. It hovers over this great house like a shadow!"

So impressive was his tone that some of those boys felt uneasy. A shadow over Tregellis! What did this queer man mean?

"The poor fellow doesn't know what he's saying," growled Lord Westbrooke.

"Dotty, if you ask me," murmured Church.

"No, my young friend, I am perfectly sane," said the stranger, turning upon

Church and staring at him with fixed intensity.

"Oh, I say!" gasped Church. "I mean—— Sorry! I didn't think——"

He was confused. He had only whispered that comment, but the ragged stranger had heard.

"I came—I climbed the ivy," said the old man. "Why did I climb the ivy? I cannot tell you, gentlemen. I only knew that something called to me. Yes, yes!"

he went on, peering round. "There is danger abroad! I feel the influences more and more strongly."

Lord Westbrooke noticed the half-startled looks of the boys and girls.

"You can't stay here talking such nonsense as this, my man!" he said brusquely. "Who are you? What makes you believe that you are sensitive to these—er—evil influences?"

"I am Zacchi," said the old man simply. "Eh?"

"You have not heard of Zacchi? No?" said the stranger, with incongruous dignity. "Yet the name of Zacchi, the fortune-teller, was at one time honoured and respected." He sighed and shrugged, and his whole frame seemed to shrivel. "To-day, alas, I am a nobody, a wanderer, a vagrant. But when a man falls on evil days he must still live—he must still struggle on. I did not come here to steal,





honoured sir; I came because the mystic force had me in its grip."

He was looking at Lord Westbrooke earnestly, and his lordship felt uncomfortable.

"Nonsense!" he said sharply. "Do you think I believe a word of this fantastic rubbish? So you are a fortune-teller, eh? Perhaps that accounts for it."

Handforth, who was feeling a bit "done," shuffled his feet.

"Perhaps we'd better have a whip round, you chaps?" he suggested. "Let's all contribute something, and put the old chap on his feet."

"Yes, rather," said the others eagerly.

"No, no," said Zacchi, to their surprise. "I am no beggar. A thousand thanks, good young people. But I did not come here for what I might gain. There is danger in this great castle—danger for one!"

"One?" repeated Lord Westbrooke. "Well, that's a comfort, anyhow," he added, not without sarcasm. "Only one of us, it seems, is threatened."

"You sneer at me—but very soon you will learn," said Zacchi tensely. "I am beginning to see through the mists. There is danger for one—Yes, he is young, healthy, happy. Evil men are plotting against him—"

"By golly! The man is a crank!" interrupted Uncle Ben impatiently. "This sort of talk will do no good."

"He means—me," whispered Jimmy, who was standing by his uncle's side.

"Ye're wrong, lad," said the millionaire. "How can he mean you? What does he know? Nothing! All this is sheer fancy."

The strange old man turned to Lord Westbrooke.

"Do not send me away," he urged. "I am harmless—I will efface myself so that none sees me. But let me remain, good gentlemen! For whilst I am here I will afford full protection. No harm will befall whilst I—"

A dramatic interruption came at that moment.

Fenn, the grey-haired old butler, appeared with two footmen. And with them strode a police-sergeant and a constable, the snow glistening on their helmets and capes.

"There is the man," old Fenn was saying as he pointed.

Zacchi stared dully.

"The police!" he muttered. "So! You kept me talking whilst—"

"No!" interrupted Lord Westbrooke. "I did not know that the police had been sent for. Fenn, is this your doing?"

"Yes, my lord," said the butler. "As soon as I knew what had happened, I rang up for the police. I thought your lordship would approve."

"I'm not sure that I do, Fenn—although I quite realise that you acted for the best," said Montie's uncle, frowning. "It is Christmas-time, and— Well, we don't want to be too harsh, do we? I have a mind to let this poor wretch go."

There were murmurs of approval; but the police-sergeant stepped forward with a gruff protest.

"Shouldn't advise you to do that, my lord," he said. "Better let us take this man away to the station. Trying to break into the castle, wasn't he? We can charge him with 'loitering with intent,' and give him some nice, warm lodgings over Christmas."

"Oh, they're going to take him to prison," murmured Irene.

"Don't worry your pretty head, young lady," said the sergeant gruffly. "It won't be a new experience for this old bird. Zacchi, he calls himself, doesn't he?"

"Good gracious! Do you know him, then?" asked Lord Westbrooke.

"I'll guarantee he's been spinning his usual yarn, my lord," went on the sergeant. "Said he was impelled to come here, eh? Like as not he told you that there was danger for somebody—one of the young ladies, no doubt. Let him stay, and everything would be all right."

"Bless my soul!" said Lord Westbrooke. "The wretched fellow said something about a boy—"

"Same old yarn," nodded the sergeant. "Best let us take him away, my lord. He's a regular hand at this game. Generally he fools most people, and before you knew where you were he'd be off with some of your finest plate!"

Uncle Ben was looking very relieved.

"So he is only a common housebreaker—known to the police," he murmured, gripping Jimmy's arm. "Ye see, lad? It's only a coincidence. Nothing to worry about."

Click—snap!

Deftly, the sergeant had placed the handcuffs over Zacchi's wrists. The old man stared at them with mocking contempt.

"Fools—fools!" he wheezed. "Do you think you can hold me? Am I not Zacchi, the mystic? Am I not a worker of magic? Bah!"

With one contemptuous twist of his lean wrists he performed a sort of conjuring trick; the handcuffs clattered to the floor. The sergeant gazed open-eyed, his jaw dropping.





With a contemptuous twist of his lean wrists, Zacchi freed himself from the handcuffs. Then, tripping up the sergeant, he bounded through the doors into the night.

"Here, what the——" he began in alarm.

A quick hook of the foot, and Zacchi tripped up the unfortunate sergeant. The officer went sprawling to the hard floor. Then, with a single bound, Zacchi reached the double doors, and he flung them open and plunged out into the night.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Vanished!

"GREAT Scott!"

"He's gone!"

Every one of Handforth's dark suspicions had returned; and Nipper, too, was full of misgiving now. In that last second Zacchi had proved himself to be, not a feeble old man, but a remarkably active person in his prime!

"After him!" yelled Handforth. "He's a crook! He tried to trick us—and we were nearly fooled!"

"Begad!"

The boys went streaming out into the snow. The burly sergeant and the constable were left well behind.

"There he goes!"

Nipper was pointing. Dimly he had caught sight of a shadowy figure streaking down the wide terrace. The boys, just

out of the brightly-lighted hall, were momentarily blinded by the darkness and the whirling snow. But the snow helped them. For on the terrace were the clear footprints of the fugitive. It was easy enough to trail him.

Nipper and Handforth were in the lead. The footprints swerved off the terrace, and they could be seen in an unbroken line across one of the white-blanketed lawns.

"Come on—we'll get him!" exclaimed Handforth fiercely.

Nipper had his doubts. For Zacchi's speed had been remarkable—even for a man in the full tide of robust health. Already he had completely vanished, leaving only that tell-tale trail of footprints to guide his pursuers.

The snow was descending more thickly than ever, and the wind was rising. Many of the boys were half-blinded by the smother. But they carried on, thrilling with the excitement of the chase.

Their eyes had grown accustomed to the gloom. Bushes and hedges stood out in sharp contrast against the vast background of white. In the rear, hazy through the myriads of snowflakes, the many lights of Tregellis Castle glowed and shimmered. Over to the left, as the boys ran, they could see other glowing



lights—from some of the castle outbuildings.

Nipper suddenly checked as he was running, and a peculiar gasp of amazement sounded in his throat.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "Wait!"

He fairly dragged at Handforth, and pulled him to a standstill. Church, McClure, Travers, and others, who were just behind, halted abruptly.

"What's the matter?"

"What are we stopping for?"

"Buck up, you idiots, or we'll lose him!"

"We've already lost him," said Nipper grimly.

There was incredulity in his voice, too, and at first the others did not understand. They had halted practically in the middle of one of the lower lawns which was now a miniature sea of whiteness. There were some trees over on the left, and directly ahead—but twenty or thirty yards away—was a low hedge, with some bulky objects which looked like haystacks looming dimly against the dark skyline. In the immediate vicinity of the boys, however, there was nothing but open ground.

"Look!" said Nipper significantly.

He was pointing ahead at the snow-covered lawn. The others peered curiously, disappointed and even irritated by this delay.

"Well?" said Handforth. "I can't see anything!"

"Neither can I," agreed Nipper.

"Eh?"

"That's just the point," said Nipper. "There isn't anything to see—except snow."

"What the dickens——"

"Begad!" interrupted Sir Montie, in almost a yell. "Don't you see what he means, old boys? Look at the footprints!"

They looked. For about seven feet ahead the footprints of the fugitive were visible—but beyond that point there were no footprints at all!

"It's impossible," muttered Nipper. "It's—it's uncanny! There's no way in which the man could have—— Rats! He was human enough! He couldn't have vanished into thin air. Then how did that man escape from this spot without leaving any footprints?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Jimmy Potts, with a sudden catch in his voice.

They were all silent—and they were aware of a curious tingling up and down their spines. The snow whirled into their faces, and smothered their clothing, but



they hardly noticed it. This mystery was bewildering.

"Hullo! They're coming with lanterns," remarked

Handforth, breaking the silence.

"Perhaps the light will help us to solve the mystery," said Nipper.

The burly sergeant came puffing up through the snow, to say nothing of the constable and two or three of the castle manservants. All were carrying powerful vapour-incandescent lamps. The gloom was completely dispelled.

"What's this?" puffed the sergeant. "What's this? You haven't got him, have you?"

"No," said Nipper. "But look here, sergeant!"

He pointed to the single trail of footprints ahead—and they were now rapidly being obliterated by the falling snow. The sergeant moved forward, holding the lantern in front of him. The rest followed.

"Hullo! Hullo! This is funny," said the sergeant, staring. "Where in the name of mystery could he have got to? These footprints end here—the snow ahead is unbroken. So it is on either side."

"And there's something else," said Nipper. "These last two prints are just exactly the same as all the others."

"Why shouldn't they be?"

"I mean, the man didn't make a sudden jump," explained Nipper. "If he had done so these two prints would have been more deeply impressed—because of the greater exertion. Don't you see? But they're not more deeply impressed, and that makes the whole affair ten times more mysterious."

The ruddy-faced sergeant took a deep breath, and he slowly scratched a spot behind his left ear.

"Funny," he muttered. "Blamed funny! Gosh! I wonder!"

"You wonder what?" asked Jimmy Potts.

"I ain't a superstitious man, young gents, but this here thing has sort of got me," confessed the sergeant. "There was some talk, not many weeks ago, that old Zacchi was dead!"

"Dead!"

"Some said as he had committed suicide," went on the sergeant, transferring his scratching operations to his chin. "Anyways, the old feller sort of vanished an' I thought he was dead until Fenn, the butler, rang me up. Now I'm beginnin' to wonder ag'in!"

And those boys, who knew exactly what the sergeant was wondering, shivered.



## CHAPTER 6.

## The Story of the Cavalier!

"I SAY, look here!" burst out Handforth. "You're not suggesting, are you, that that old man was a ghost? It's ridiculous!"

"I ain't suggestin' nothing, young gent," replied the sergeant. "All I know is that he got out o' them handcuffs! Lor' bless you, I've never seen anything like it in my life! And the way he ran, too!"

"Yes, it was a bit uncanny," said Church breathlessly.

"The trouble is, I don't know much about old Zacchi," went on the police-officer. "Heard a good deal about him—and saw him once, too. They do say that he jumped into the Monk's Pond and drowned himself. But his lordship wouldn't have the pond dragged, so nothin' came of it."

He pointed vaguely towards a belt of trees.

"Over there—that's where the Monk's Pond is," he went on. "Still, we needn't waste time by standin' 'ere talking. We'd better make a search round. Maybe there's a simple explanation, after all."

But there wasn't.

The men with the lanterns, each accompanied by a number of boys, spread out in all directions. Every inch of the lawn was searched—and the pathways beyond, and the hedges, and the paddocks. But not another footprint was found in that freshly-fallen snow; not a trace to indicate how the mysterious Zacchi had vanished. At last, cold and puzzled, the searchers returned to the castle.

Mr. Benjamin Potts, who was his old breezy self, made light of the affair.

"I dare say you'll solve the riddle in the morning—when daylight comes," he said boisterously. "At any rate, we knew that the rascal wasn't after me, eh? That's all finished with. At Tregellis I am secure as though I were at Scotland Yard. And, by golly, I'm going to enjoy a happy Christmas—and I want you boys to do the same. Let's forget all this queer business, and have some good, hearty laughter."

"Begad, you're right, sir," said Sir Montie, beaming. "Dashed good advice, dear old boys."

"Yes, I think it is," said Jimmy Potts. "We had enough gloom and mystery at Travis Dene."

The police went away, disappointed. But the sergeant, at least, had left an ugly impression behind—by

his reference to Monk's Pond and the mysterious Zacchi. Zacchi was rumoured to be dead—yet he had figured in the recent extraordinary events!

However, there was so much jollity and good cheer in this historic castle that nobody could be unhappy for long. The party really got going during the evening, and laughter rang and echoed. Zacchi, and the uncanny manner of his disappearance, faded as a mere memory.

More satisfactory still, the night passed peacefully—uneventfully. Jimmy Potts, who had spent so many disturbed nights of late, felt that Tregellis Castle was, indeed, a haven of peace.

When morning came, and the boys and girls trooped down eagerly, the sun was shining gloriously from a pale blue sky. It was Christmas Eve—and the snow was lying thick over the terrace and the lawns and the whole countryside.

"By George!" shouted Handforth exultantly. "Look at this! Seven or eight inches of it!"

"Hurrah!"

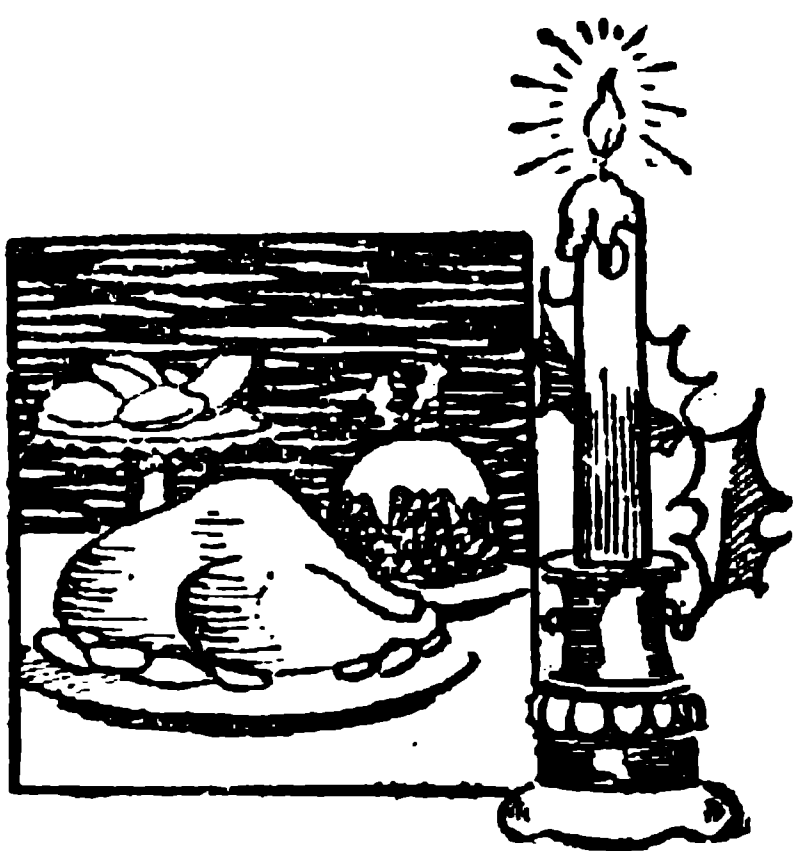
"Begad! We'll have rare sprees, dear old boys," promised Sir Montie. "There are some frightfully good places in the park, you know, where we can toboggan."

That day was one of the happiest the St. Frank's boys and the Moor View girls had ever spent. It was one long round of quick-action enjoyment. There was tobogganing in the morning, to say nothing of sundry exciting snowball fights.

The funniest incident came when a number of the boys grabbed hold of Fatty Little and, after rolling him in the snow, sent him hurtling down an incline. By the time he reached the bottom he was like a huge snowball. Everybody laughed with glee—everybody except Fatty. Fatty didn't appreciate being turned into a human snowball. He promptly vanished indoors, and there soothed his ruffled feeling by indulging in numerous mince-pies and other delicacies.

In the afternoon there was another round of winter sports. This time Fatty Little did not put in an appearance. Having sampled the wonderful food which Tregellis offered, he had come to the conclusion that outdoor sports didn't matter. His own favourite indoor sport was good enough for him!

Tired and stiff, but thoroughly happy, the young people revelled in the great log-fire after an excellent dinner. Somebody suggested squatting round in a great semi-circle—in the real old-fashioned Christmas style.





The idea was hailed with uproarious cheers.

Sitting there, the boys and girls watched the great flickering flames as they leapt upwards into the vast old chimney; there was something fascinating in the ruddy glow of the embers, and the occasional bursts of sparks as the logs shifted.

It was a good opportunity for yarning, and soon the yarns were being told, one on top of the other. Lord Westbrooke himself was there, and he was a brilliant and witty tale-teller. He kept his young guests in roars of laughter. Then Uncle Ben was called upon, and he soon proved that he was every bit as good as the host. His stories, perhaps, were not so boisterous, but they were enthralling. He told yarns of China—of the hidden recesses of little-known provinces. His know-

ledge of the country, his mine of anecdotes, gripped everybody.

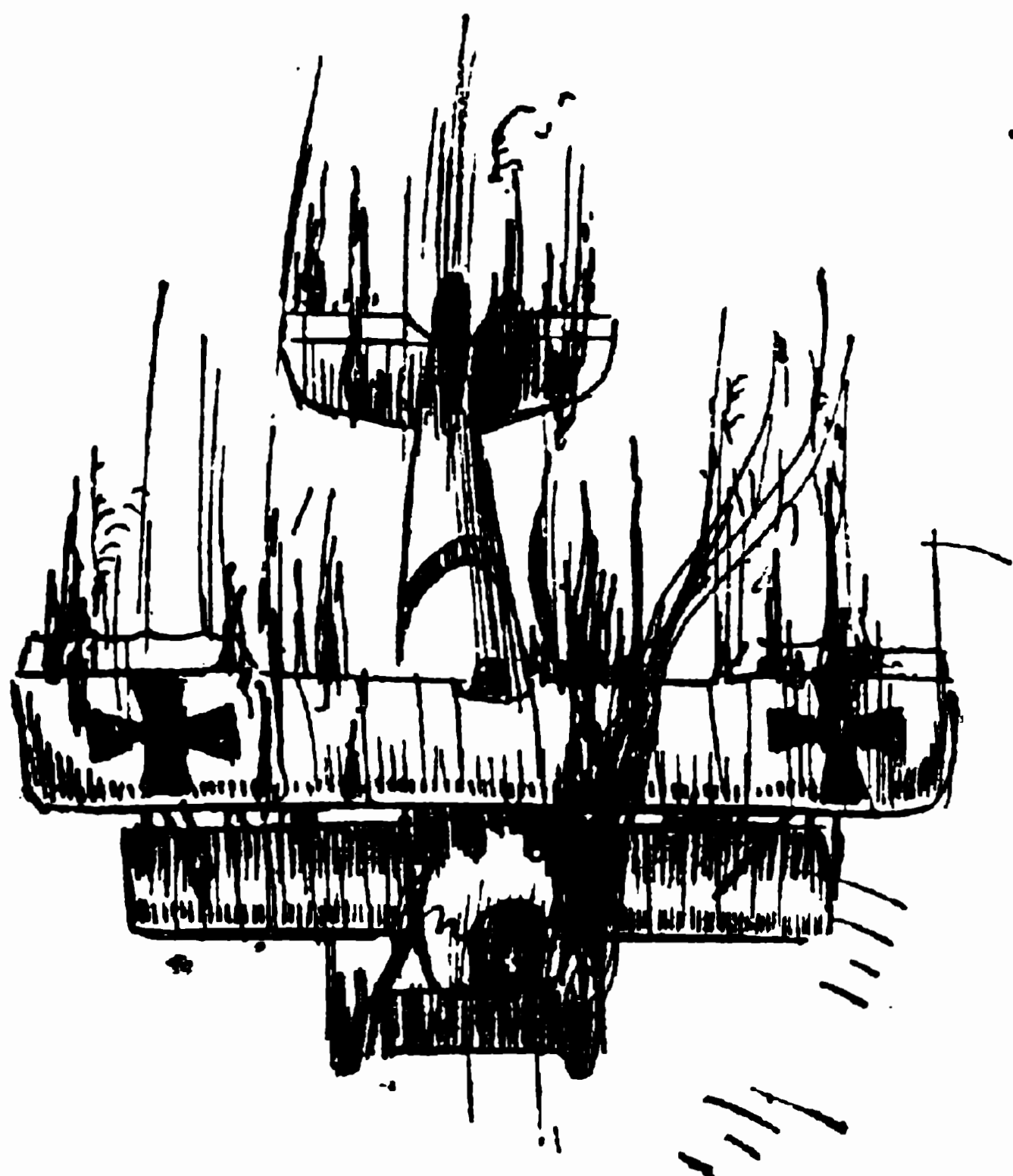
Then the subject of ghosts cropped up—which, of course, on Christmas Eve, was almost inevitable. It was the right time and the right place for the telling of ghost stories.

"They tell me that there's a family ghost at Tregellis," remarked Uncle Ben, with a smile. "Stop me, Lord Westbrooke, if I am mentioning a forbidden subject——"

"Not at all," laughed Lord Westbrooke. "We are rather proud of our cloaked cavalier at Tregellis."

"Cloaked cavalier, eh?" interrupted Handforth. "That sounds pretty good! I seem to remember something about him, sir. Is he a very spooky ghost?"

"As ghosts go, I should say he is rather disappointing," replied his lordship dryly.



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"Ghosts, to be thoroughly convincing, should always drag chains after them, and their bones should rattle. A ghost who appears fully dressed as a gay cavalier is something of a swindle."

There were many chuckles.

"Is there a yarn about him, sir?" asked two or three eager voices.

"Well, yes," said the Earl of Westbrooke slowly. "But I don't think it matters——"

"Oh, let's have it, sir!"

"Please!"

"I remember now," burst out Handforth excitedly. "This cavalier johnnie is supposed to be dangerous, isn't he? Sometimes, when he appears, he opens his giddy cloak and enfolds a victim in it."

"My dear boy——" began the earl.

"And then they both disappear," said Handforth triumphantly. "I remember Montie telling us about him. Besides, we came here for Christmas once before—and the cavalier appeared. Only he turned out to be a spoof, so it was a bit of a fraud."

Lord Westbrooke was not disposed to continue the subject; and perhaps he was sensible. He had no desire to scare his young guests.

Nevertheless, when bed-time came and the boys and girls retired to their various bed-rooms, memory of the traditional ghost of Tregellis Castle made many of them feel creepy.

## CHAPTER 7.

### The Apparition!

"**A**LL right, lad?" asked Uncle Ben kindly.

Jimmy Potts started.

"Yes, thanks, uncle," he replied, with an awkward little laugh. "Why do you ask?"

"I thought ye were looking just a wee bit serious," said the big man, laying a hand on Jimmy's shoulder. "Come, come! That won't do, Jimmy, lad! Put all such thoughts out of your mind. We're here to be happy."

"Oh, rather," said Jimmy.

They were in their bed-room. It was by Uncle Ben's special request that they had a sleeping apartment to themselves. He thought it better that Jimmy—after his unfortunate experiences at Travis Dene—should be well protected. And Uncle Ben had ideas of his own in that respect.

"If the lad sleeps with the other boys he might just as well sleep alone," Uncle Ben had said to Lord Westbrooke. "Ye know what boys are—they sleep like logs

after a tiring day. But I'm an old stager—I sleep with one eye open."

"Yes, yes, to be sure," his lordship had agreed.

"And after Jimmy has gone to sleep, I shall remain awake—reading," continued Mr. Potts. "That will comfort him. I may as well tell ye, too, that my valet, Yen—and a more faithful servant never lived—will be on duty outside the door. I'm not aiming to alarm ye, sir, but I want to be on the safe side."

The bed-room was particularly bright. A cheerful fire glowed in the grate, and the lights were so efficient that there were no dark shadows in the room.

"I've been thinking about that queer man we nearly caught the other night," said Jimmy, as he undressed. "Do you think, uncle, that he really came here after you?"

"By the names of my ancestors!" ejaculated the millionaire. "Didn't the police say that he was something of a local character? I'll admit I thought the same thing myself at first——"

"Don't forget how strangely he disappeared, uncle."

"I'm forgetting him, and I'm forgetting all else—except Christmas," said Uncle Ben stoutly. "By golly, this is the first Christmas I've spent in England for fifteen years, and I'm going to make the most of it. Yes, lad! I'm revelling in it. To blazes with the Mandarin Fu-Li-Sing and all his emissaries!"

His confident tone restored Jimmy completely, and when he jumped into bed he soon dropped off into a sound slumber. The last thing he recollected was Uncle Ben propped up amongst his own pillows, smoking and reading—all the lights save the one over the bed switched off.

Jimmy dreamed. He dreamed of sliding down an enormously long mountain slope which was covered with snow. He was going so fast that it was impossible for him to check his progress. Then, somehow, a gaily-clad cavalier stood in his path, and although he yelled at the top of his voice, no sound came. There was a violent collision.

Clank—clank!

Jimmy found himself suddenly awake. It was some moments before he realised that he must have been dreaming. He was relieved—as most people are when they awaken to find themselves comfortably in bed.

Uncle Ben was snoring gently. He was evidently under a misapprehension if he believed that he slept "with one eye open." Yen, the valet, might be expert in that sort of thing, but Uncle Ben, by



all appearances, slept the sleep of the just.

He had switched off the light, and the room was in darkness except for the dull, ruddy glow from the fire—which, by now, had nearly died out. Jimmy judged that the time must be fairly late.

He had a curious impression that he had heard a clanking sound as he awakened; but he now came to the conclusion that it must have been a part of his dream.

From somewhere in the depths of the castle came the faint, vague booming of a clock. One—two—three— There were twelve strokes altogether, and Jimmy snuggled down against his pillow with a little thrill.

Midnight! The mystic hour—when ghosts walked—

Clank—clank!

There it was again—and Sir Jimmy Potts knew that he had not dreamed before. There *had* been a curiously-metallic sound. And it was coming from the further side of the great, old-fashioned bed-room!

He sat up, his heart thudding. His common sense told him that a loose window was probably the reason for the sound. Or perhaps the wind was blowing down the chimney and disturbing an old iron ring, or—

And then Jimmy's heart seemed to leap into his mouth.

For he could see a figure standing in the deep recess between the fireplace and the outer wall. It was all the more extraordinary because Jimmy knew that the figure had not been there a couple of seconds earlier. There was no door in that recess—no cupboard. The figure had apparently grown out of nothing—out of the darkness itself.

Jimmy rubbed his eyes, and he shook himself. He stared again. A hoarse cry escaped him, for that figure was even clearer. It was the figure of a man in picturesque costume, with a flowing cloak, top-boots, and a wide hat with a great feather in it.

The cloaked cavalier of Tregellis!

## CHAPTER 8.

### A Merry Christmas!

WITH a sudden jingling of spurs, the ghostly cavalier took a step forward, and as he did so he withdrew his long sword from its scabbard. He advanced grimly, sword ready, towards Jimmy Potts' bed. The very movement restored life to Jimmy's paralysed limbs.

"Uncle!" he yelled. "Help—help!"

Mr Potts, with a heave, turned over in bed and sat up.

"What the—— Good heavens, boy, what in the world——"

He was confused, dazed with sleep.

"Look, uncle!" gasped Sir Jimmy.

With a swish and a clank the figure moved back into the deepest shadows of the room, causing it to lose its shape and character.

"By golly! There's some trickery here, I'll swear!" rapped out Uncle Ben, now wide awake. "Stay there, Jimmy, lad—I'll deal with this!"

He leapt heavily across the room. Jimmy jumped out of bed, too. He knew that the door had suddenly opened; then, staring fascinatedly into the dark, he was dimly conscious of the fact that Uncle Ben was struggling desperately with some unknown assailant.

"Lights—lights!" came a gasp from the millionaire.

As Jimmy was dashing towards the switch he half-checked, for a new shock came to him. He was passing one of the quaint, old-fashioned, leaded windows. And outside, on the ledge, vaguely outlined against the glass, was a Shape.

It clung there, like some monstrous bat, the arms outstretched menacingly. Jimmy gave a loud gulp. It seemed to him that this shape bore an absurd, fantastic resemblance to the tattered figure of the mysterious Zacchi.

Then voices sounded, and there were quick footsteps. The beam of an electric torch split the darkness.

"What's happening here?" asked an excited voice. "What's wrong? Why, great Scott, look at——"

Somebody else switched on the electric lights, and Jimmy, turning, saw Nipper, Handforth, Travers, Tregellis-West, and others, all of them in their pyjamas. They were crowding in and about the open doorway.

But Jimmy only saw them out of the corner of his eye; he was looking at his Uncle Ben, who, in that recess, was sprawling on the floor, fighting gamely.

"Help me, boys!" he panted. "I've got the infernal rascal! I've held him, and—— By golly! What's this?" he added in a stifled voice of amazement. "Yen!"

"Master, I try to explain, but you hold my mouth," faltered Yen.

Mr. Potts struggled to his feet as the boys ran further into the room. Yen was on his feet now—Yen, the Chinese valet, dressed quietly in his ordinary clothes, but collarless, and wearing a dressing-gown and slippers.





Bang! went the cracker. Fatty Little gave a startled jump, and the Christmas pudding rolled off the dish on to Handforth's head.

"What's it all about, Mr. Potts?" asked Nipper quickly.

"I don't know," said Uncle Ben dazedly. "Jimmy woke me up—he said he could see something. I thought I could, too, and I sprang out of bed, and——"

"Master, it was I you saw," said Yen reproachfully. "I, too, heard the wild shout from the young Excellency. In obedience to your orders, I was sleeping outside. I at once came in, but I saw nothing, master. Then, in the darkness, you attacked me——"

"So you saw me, and I saw you," grunted Mr. Potts, in disgust. "Golly! I thought I'd made a capture, too."

He turned to the crowd.

"Sorry to make all this commotion, lads," he went on. "It seems to be much ado about nothing, eh? I was half-asleep, you see, and I had forgotten Yen, and——" He broke off, and turned to Jimmy. "But what was it that made you cry out in such horror, lad?" he added kindly. "Not another of your unfortunate nightmares, eh?"

Jimmy, pale and shaky, passed a hand over his eyes.

"I—I don't know, uncle," he muttered. "I did have a nightmare, and I awoke suddenly."

"Well, that's not unusual—with nightmares. What did you dream of?"

"It isn't what I dreamt, uncle—it's what happened afterwards," said Jimmy. "I heard a sort of clank, and then I saw a figure over in that recess—where you and Yen were fighting just now in the dark. A—a cavalier."

"What!" went up a general shout.

"I'll swear to it," said Jimmy desperately. "A figure all dressed in picturesque clothes, with top-boots and a feathered hat, and a sword, and—and everything! He came towards me, pulling out his sword as he did so."

There was a silence. Uncle Ben, with his hand on Jimmy's shoulder, gave the boys a warning glance.

"Come, come, lad," he said softly. "Ye've got a bit mixed, I fancy. Ye must have dreamed——"

"But I didn't," interrupted Jimmy.

"I was out of bed a second after you shouted," said Mr. Potts. "Yen came into the room at the same moment, too. I vaguely saw him, and grabbed—but that was only a misunderstanding. Neither of us saw any cloaked cavalier. Poor lad! It's your nerves again."

"Perhaps you're right," admitted Jimmy, with a shiver. "I saw something else, too——"



He broke off, and stared fascinatedly at the window.

"Something else?" interrupted Travers. "What else did you see?"

"It—it was just before the lights were put on," whispered Jimmy. "There was a horrible figure outside the window—crouching on the sill, like a great bat with arms outstretched! And it seemed to me that it might have been that fellow Zacchi."

Nipper strode across to the window and flung it open. Outside the air was cold and clear; the night was calm.

"I think you must have been mistaken, Jimmy," said Nipper quietly. "Look here. It's a long way to the ground, and there's very little ivy on this particular wall—and there's not a tree handy, either. No human being could have climbed——"

"Perhaps Zacchi isn't human," muttered Jimmy Potts, with a shudder. "Don't forget how he vanished the other night!"

Mr Potts and the boys could be forgiven for discrediting Jimmy's story. None of them had seen the slightest trace of the mysterious cloaked cavalier. Jimmy admitted that he had had a nightmare. What further proof was needed that he had imagined the whole thing?

The additional story of a "bat" clinging to the sill outside the window was fantastic indeed. Mr. Potts whispered a few words to Travers and Skeets Bellton—who were Jimmy's dormitory mates at St. Frank's.

As a result the rest of the boys went back to their own bed-rooms, and Travers and Skeets remained. They slept with Jimmy for the rest of the night, and Mr. Potts himself made a point of keeping awake until all three were sound asleep. He had a quiet word with Yen, and Yen once again took up his position outside the door in the corridor.

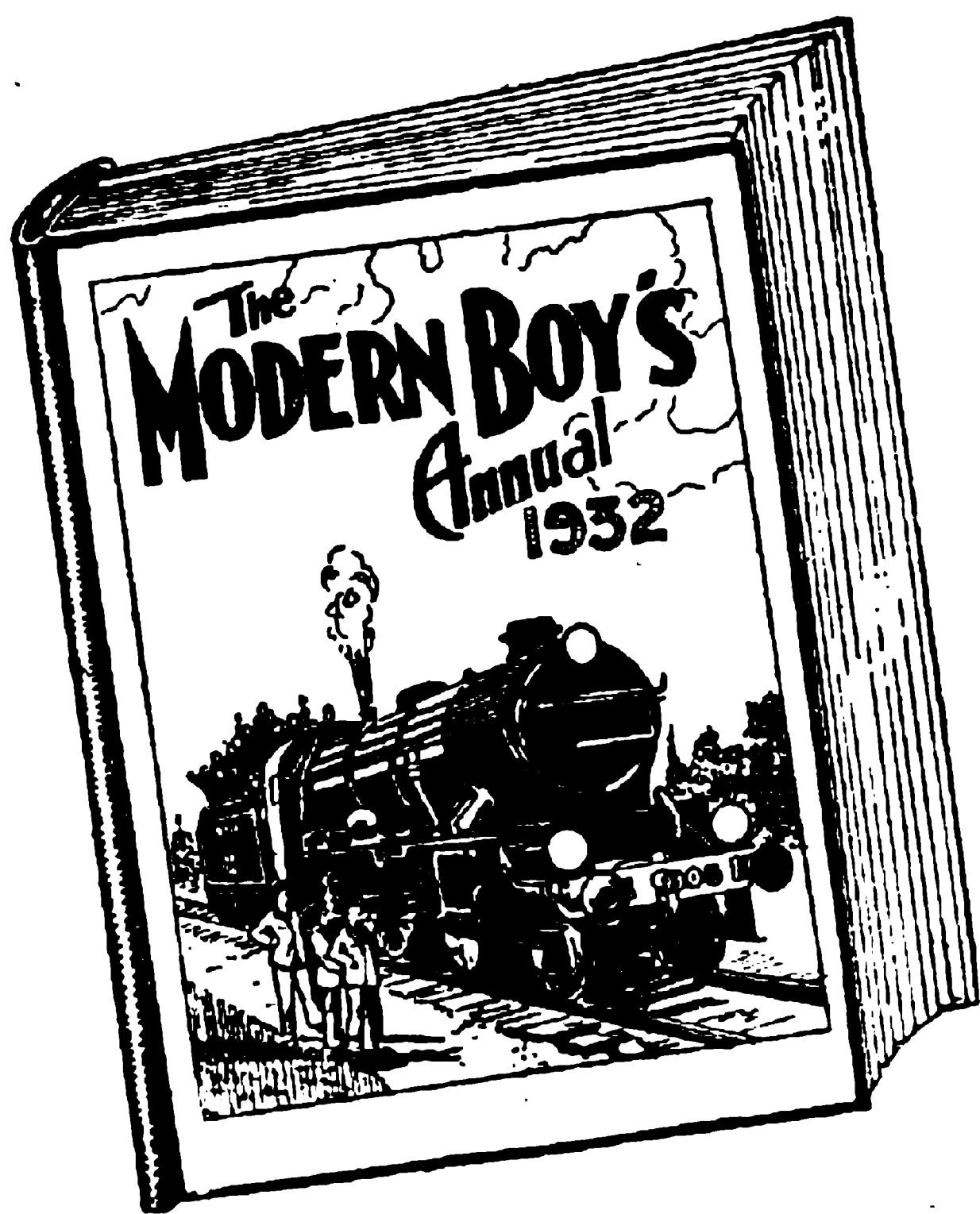
The night passed peacefully.

**C**HRISTMAS DAY proved to be perfect. A sharp frost, thick snow lying everywhere, a clear sky, and brilliant sunshine. What more could be desired to gladden the hearts of healthy boys and girls?

There were more exhilarating winter sports during the morning, and the young guests came in for luncheon with enormous appetites. Even Jimmy Potts was beginning to enjoy himself again.

In the early part of the morning he had clearly shown the effects of his disturbed night. The boy was in an agony of doubt.

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At times he thought that his brain was turning. Why was it that he, and he alone, saw the apparitions?

He knew—he was absolutely certain in his own mind—that he had suffered from something more than a nightmare. He had been awake when the cloaked cavalier had appeared—he had seen that weird visitant. In that case, how had it vanished? Why had none of the others seen it? And there was that shape he had seen on the window-sill— But what was the good of thinking in this way? He only added to the turmoil in his mind.

He had nipped upstairs after breakfast and, in solitude, he had examined the bed-room—having a vague idea that there might be a secret panel, or something of that sort, in which a trickster could have hidden. But he found nothing of that nature. The walls were solid. There were no secret passages here. The mystery remained as baffling as ever.

There could be no denying that Sir James Potts, Bart., was not the same boy who had left St. Frank's only a few days ago. The succession of shocks had left their mark. He recovered from them quickly enough—outwardly. But, deeply within him, he was becoming nervous, highly-strung, jumpy.

Yet the healthy exercise and sport in the open air cleared many of the cobwebs from his brain. And, after all, it was Christmas Day—and everybody around him was merry and happy. By the evening he was thoroughly and honestly reveling in all the fun.

Tregellis Castle was wonderful on this most wonderful of all days.

The decorations were elaborate; there were myriads of fairy lights everywhere. Gay laughter rang out continuously. Great log fires burned in the hall, in the fine old dining-room, in the drawing-room, and in the ball-room. No matter where the young guests went, there was life and warmth and happiness. It was a Christmas party to dream about.

The very thought of ghosts was laughable. To-night, after dinner, there was to be a grand masquerade dance, with heaps and heaps of fun; parlour games on a big scale, and all the other exciting pleasures of Christmas night.

Then, of course, there was the crowning joy of all—Christmas dinner—and a marvellous Christmas dinner such as only Tregellis Castle could provide.

Fatty Little, a connoisseur on such matters, went into raptures. He ate and ate and ate until everybody thought he was going to burst. But Fatty was a law unto himself when it came to disposing of grub, and he now proceeded to break all records.

A special Christmas pudding had been provided for him—one all to himself. Beaming with pleasure, Fatty rose and staggered, rather than walked, to collect it from the butler who had brought it in. And then came the catastrophe. Fatty was triumphantly returning to his place



when two of the guests unexpectedly pulled a cracker. Fatty was so startled by the loud bang that he gave a jump—and the precious pudding rolled off the plate right on to Handforth's head.

Handforth liked Christmas pudding, but he didn't like it being served in this fashion. A rumpus followed, in which Fatty was more concerned by the loss of the pudding than by Handy's misfortune. However, while the indignant Edward Oswald Handforth went off to make himself presentable, another pudding was forthcoming for the disconsolate Fatty, and peace was restored once more.

## CHAPTER 9.

### The Shadow!

THE last course had just been served when Uncle Ben remembered something. Some of the boys and girls were larking about, even leaving their places at the table. Lady Helen Tregellis-West did not mind; neither did Lord and Lady Westbrooke, who were both at Tregellis for Christmas, to say nothing of many other grown-up members of the family.

"Let the youngsters enjoy themselves," Lord Westbrooke had said, his eyes twinkling. "Christmas only comes once a year, eh? We can't afford to be dignified at such a time! Let 'em make all the noise they want, and good luck to 'em!"

And the young people, knowing that there was nothing stiff or starchy about this party, were taking full advantage of their freedom.

"By golly!" murmured Mr. Potts, a twinkle suddenly entering his eyes.

Jimmy, who was sitting next to him, glanced round.

"Disgraceful, isn't it, uncle?" he grinned, with mock disapproval. "Did you ever see such a noisy bunch?"

"The noisier the better," said Uncle Ben cheerfully. "I've just remembered something, Jimmy. A little present I bought for you."



"Oh, I say! That's awfully good of you, uncle——"

"Wait until you've seen it," chuckled the millionaire. "Of course, officially, presents should not be given until Boxing Day. Still, this isn't really your Christmas-box—it's an extra little gift. I meant to put it on the table, but—— Well, it doesn't matter. We'll leave it. I believe I left it in one of the door-pockets of the car."

"Can I fetch it, uncle?" asked Jimmy eagerly. "Lots of the other chaps are larking about, and it won't take me five ticks to dodge to the garage and back."

"Don't forget that curiosity killed the cat," warned Uncle Ben. "You'll have to wait until after dinner."

"Oh, but uncle——"

"Yes, by golly!" went on Mr. Potts, a sudden grave note creeping into his voice. "What's more, if you go to the garage, I'll go with you. I don't think it would be wise for you to venture out into the dark by yourself, Jimmy."

Jimmy, whose courage had never been questioned, flushed.

"I'm not afraid, uncle!" he protested.

"Of course you're not," said Uncle Ben soothingly. "I wasn't even suggesting it, lad. But you're a bit jumpy these days, and it'll be far better—and safer—for you to remain indoors, where everything is bright and cheerful."

But Jimmy Potts felt—quite without justification—that his courage had been questioned.

"No, uncle," he said stubbornly. "I'll go now."

And before Mr. Potts could stop him, he had slipped out of his chair and was away.

"Wilful young scamp!" muttered Mr. Potts, frowning.

Then he shrugged his shoulders. What nonsense it was to get worried over such a trifle!

All the same, scarcely two minutes had elapsed before Uncle Ben rose from the table with an apology. He had noticed that Handforth and Nipper and two or three others had dashed out into the hall for something, and he butted into them just as they were on their way back.

"Hold on, boys," said the big man softly. "Just a word with ye. Young Jimmy has gone out to the garage—and I don't like it. He went in a spirit of defiance—thought I had doubted his pluck, or some such nonsense. Maybe we'd better just pop out and make sure that everything's all right."

"I saw him hurrying through," said Nipper, nodding. "Yes, we'll have a look, Mr. Potts—although I don't suppose for a

moment that any harm can come to him at this hour of the evening. Come on—I know the way."

Meanwhile, Jimmy himself had reached the dark courtyard. He had been sensible enough to don his overcoat and cap, for it was bitterly cold outside. Ragged clouds were scudding swiftly across the moon; the wind was high. Every now and again there would be a sudden flood of silvery light, and then it would be blotted out again.

Jimmy was not in the least nervous; neither was he imaginative. But there was something about this grim, historic old castle which got into his bones. Indoors everything was friendly—but out here the turrets and the towers, outlined against the sky, seemed sinister. Perhaps it was his mood; perhaps he was affected by his recent experience. He shook himself half-angrily.

"Idiot!" he muttered. "Nothing could happen to you here."

The garage wasn't far; just across this courtyard, and then round—— Jimmy suddenly halted, and his heart was beating painfully against his ribs. Was he really going out of his mind, or had he heard a mysterious whisper? It seemed to come from the very air above him. A whisper! And at Travis Dene, Handforth's home, he had heard whispers——

"Rash youth! Think you that you can defy me thus?"

Sir Jimmy started back, a hoarse cry escaping him. There was no imagination about that! He had heard the voice, he had heard the words. He looked up, his eyes wild. He saw the moon for a moment, and there was a dark cloud just on the point of—— What was that? He almost screamed. Hovering far above him, 'twixt earth and clouds, was a great Shape—a menacing Shadow. It floated in the air, its arms outstretched, as though on the point of swooping down to pounce!

TO Jimmy Potts' disordered mind it seemed that the Shadow took the form of an old-time cavalier. He thought he could see the tattered and filmy cloak billowing in the wind. Yes, and there was the feathered hat, and the top-boots——

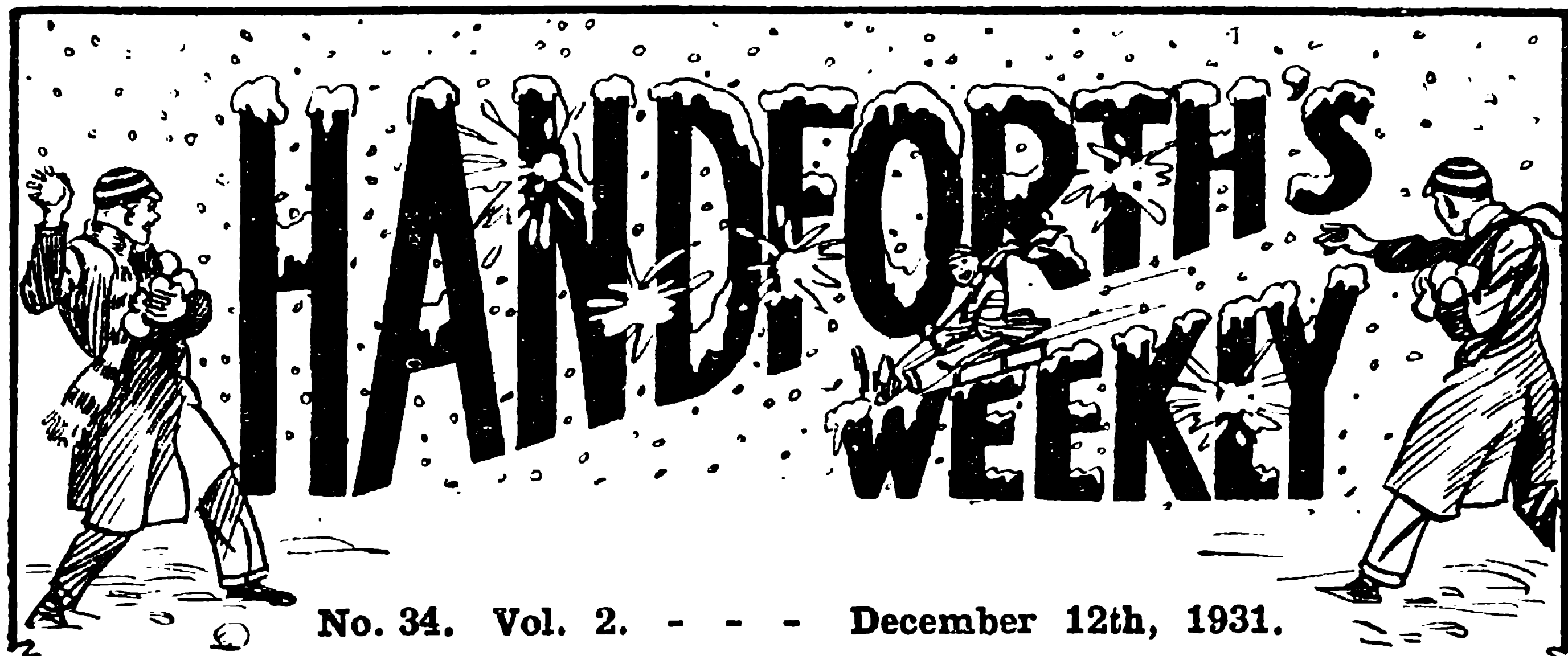
"Beware of the Curse of Tregellis!" came a voice from the Shadow; and now the voice was no longer a whisper, but deep, mysterious, vibrant. "Take heed, foolish boy! Have you not already been warned?"

Jimmy's eyes nearly bulged out of his head. The Thing was dropping lower and lower; it was getting bigger; it was pre-

(Continued on page 24.)



**Special Xmas number, and like an Xmas pudding, it's full of good things**



No. 34. Vol. 2. - - - December 12th, 1931.

**GREETINGS from The Editor  
and  
The "H.W." Staff**

**The Editor :** Hero's to you, by George ! May you have as jolly and as happy a Christmas as I mean to do. I don't know yet where I shall be spending Christmas. This Christmas Number goes to press long before our holiday arrangements have been made, and we may be on the other side of the globe at Christmas for all I know. But, wherever I am, I shall spare a thought on Christmas Day for the loyal readers of my WEEKLY. So once again: A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

**Professor Napoleon Browne :** The science of wishing, brothers, goes back to very early times, when it was the practice of various fairies, witches and what-nots to disburse the nett sum of three wishes to every young prince who befooled off to seek his fortune. If a fairy grants me three wishes this Christmas, I'll wish you a happy time with each one of them. Now say I'm not generous.

**Aesop Minor (Jimmy Potts) :** Now behold, there fell a season upon the land, wherein the people did make merry with feasting and music ; and the name of this good season, it was Christmas. And lo, throughout the length and breadth of the land, the people did say, one to the other, "A right merry Christmas to ye, i' faith !" And even as they did, do I also.

**C. de V. (Our Tame Poet) :**

*May your turkey be smothered in gravy ;  
May your pies have a flaky brown crust ;  
May you have enough food for the Navy,  
And eat till you jolly nigh bust.*

**Reggie Pitt :** May your joy be unspotted ; may your pudding be spotted—and, when you hide the holly in your pal's bed, may you not be spotted yourself.

**Nipper (Our Puzzle King) :** A MERRY Christmas and a HAPPY New Year to you all. By the way, here's a simple Word-Ladder. Can you change the word Happy into MERRY in four moves ? Answer elsewhere.

**A Christmas Toast**

*While hiking through this world  
of woe,  
May friendly thoughts remind  
us  
Our cares to pack in a haversack,  
And then leave it behind us.*

**CHRISTMAS CRACKERS  
Cracked by  
WALTER CHURCH**

**C**HRISTMAS comes but once a year.  
Summer also comes—but not so often.

\* \* \*

If Father Christmas visits Cutts, the village barber, this year, I'm willing to bet any money that Cutts talks him into having a haircut and shave.

Old Mac says that in Scotland the people have their Christmas trees on Christmas Eve. This is so they can use the tree for a Yule Log on Christmas Day.

I have received a present of a pair of moth-eaten old gloves from some kind friend. When I find who it is, I will have the gloves on with him with pleasure.

The biggest gasometer in the world is being completed at Battersea, in London. Before using it as a gas-holder, the authorities have granted permission to use it to boil a Christmas pudding which will really satisfy Fatty Little.

Following the invention of seedless raisins and pipless oranges, it is good to hear that somebody has invented a special prickle-less holly for Christmas decoration.

Having been merry and bright on the subject of Christmas, I will now try to be bright and merry while turning out two hundred lines for Crowell. Ah, well ! "I'm in the soup at the moment but, thank goodness, I shall soon be done," as the explorer remarked when the cannibals sat him in a cooking-pot



ARCHIE GLENTHORNE wakes up and holds forth on—

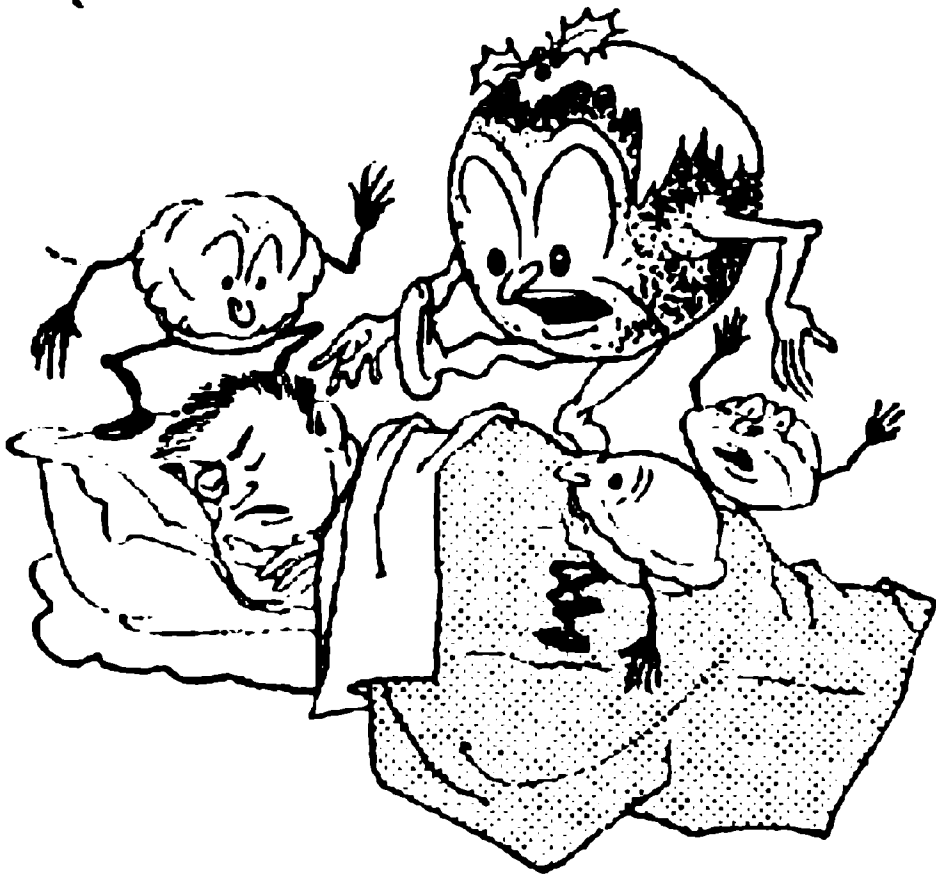
## CHRISTMAS INVENTIONS

IT'S about time, I think, that sundry brainy coves ceased from inventing petrol lighters and perpetual calendars, and turned their attention to the good old festive season. I mean, there's so many things about Christmas which could be improved.

Take dreams. Take, I say, dreams. When a chappie puts himself on the outside of enough food to support an ordinary working man for ten days, the said chappie naturally feels like an hour or so of assorted dreamless. But dare he? Not by a long chalk. Immediately the old optics close, puddings and lobsters and mince pies get their own back on him in no uncertain fashion.

After dinner last Christmas I lay me down and slept the sleep of the just, and the nightmare that promptly made its appearance on the menu was a corker. I still turn green when I think of the way in which the Christmas pudding and pies did a jolly old toe-dance on my tummy.

A little tabloid or pastille or something is needed which can be swallowed after dinner, and guaranteed to put the swift



half-Nelson on any dream that comes over the limit. Absolutely!

Then there's the business of your favourite armchair. Everybody has his favourite chair, and it's dashed awkward when a guest totters in and collars it. You can't very well turf them out without hurting their feelings. A little machine is required, which could be slipped under the lining of the chair when you are not using it, and which would run a sharp spike into any chappie who parked himself there.

Well, pip-pip! A Merry Chris-his-mmmmm—Snorrrrrre!

### Three Cakes at Christmas

GENOA CAKE

CHRISTMAS CAKE

STUMMA CAKE

## CHRISTMAS ETIQUETTE

Introduction in Good Manners by  
MONTIE TREGELLIS-WEST

IF you are asked out to a party at Christmas, dear old boys, a few tips from an expert will help to prevent various little contretemps (which is Greek for "bust-ups!")

If the turkey should happen to be tough, it is not considered good manners to produce a hammer and chisel and chip it into fragments. Make a small incision into the meat with your teeth, and then tear it apart with your clenched hands.

If you should happen to spill your soup all down the frock of the lady next to you, smile politely and murmur: "It's quite all right. I don't care much for soup, anyway." This will relieve her mind.

If, by some slight accident, you happen to set your friend's house on fire, the correct thing to do is to shake your head and say: "Tut-tut! How careless. I beg that you will permit me to fetch the fire brigade."

If you are called upon to propose a toast to "Friendship," it is considered advisable to dwell upon the happy time experienced by all, and to remind your hearers to treasure the memory of these moments, in order that they may have something to cheer them through the long spells of dread-

ful illness which are almost certain to visit them in the near future. This will promote much merriment and good-feeling.

## DESPERATE ARITHMETIC

Can you do this sum?

Take 10s. 6d. + 7d. + 5s. 6d. + 5s. + 7s. 6d. + 10s. + 9s. 3d. + 6s. 11½d. from 1s. 9d.

You can't? Well, I shall have to, if I'm going to buy any Christmas presents this year. (T. W.)

## THE BEST BOOK.

A reader wants to know which is the best book to read at Christmas. It's rather difficult to say, but I should think he couldn't go wrong if he chooses one out of the following five:

Nelson Lee.  
Nelson Lee.  
Nelson Lee.  
Nelson Lee.  
Nelson Lee.

(E. O. H.)

## WHY CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS?

Septimus Sapp (Southend) writes to ask why we have puddings at Christmas?

Fathead! If it wasn't for the pudding, how would Professor Tucker remember that it was Christmas? YE ED.

## THE SPECT

Being a story told  
Inhabitant, and tran

VIVIAN

"I knew a chap na  
And hated him li  
Ho had the most  
As ever you clapp  
His ugly dile was  
That every cove wh  
Rushed off to the

Now this bloke Bra  
That he was just  
Any British Grenad  
Or some of them  
That's what 'e than  
that,  
He was as timid as  
'E was, sir—'Eav

So two or three men  
We thought as w  
And frighten him up  
While takin' of hi  
We thought we'd b  
That if he saw a gh  
Just like a frighte

He took the bet—n  
The bravery 'o'd  
We walked 'im to St  
And left 'im there  
A place where, it w  
A gruesome, garshly  
Particularly 'aunt

We left 'im in the ch  
And said, 'You'l  
We bet you ten to o  
You won't stay til  
We left 'im there;  
knowned  
We wouldn't get far  
Without a scream

We rushed back t  
might;  
The scream 'ad th  
We thought he'd fa  
But that was just  
Old Ben was there!  
Seen' 'im sudden in  
The ghost 'ad fled





## RAL SPOOK

by Bellton's Oldest  
sposed into verse by

W. AVERS.

med Benny Brace,  
ke p'ison;  
tounding face  
ed eyes on;  
uch a shock  
bsaw his clock  
horizon.

ad the idea  
as brave as  
ier  
young shavers;  
ught; but, as for

a cat—  
an save us!

re coves and I,  
e'd be funny,  
pon the sly,  
is money;  
et that little funk  
ost, he'd bunk  
ened bunny.

ot to besmirch  
vaunted;  
Peter's Church  
undaunted;  
as known to most,  
'orrid ghost  
ed.

urchyard there  
l do it thorough?  
ne, all fair,  
ll to-morrer.'  
; we might 'ave

down the road  
of 'orror.

ere with all our  
rilled our marrer;  
nted dead in fright,  
an error;  
right—but mark!  
the dark,  
in terror."



## FATUOUS FABLES

By Aesop Minor

This Week: "The Boy and the Lemonade."

MANY moons ago there dwelt in the kingdom of Britain a youth named Stodgers, the son of Stodgers, whose delight it was to eat, drink—yea, and be merry; for behold, he loved food above all things, and prized tarts more than jewels.

And when Christmastide came upon the land, the youth said within himself: "Now

indeed may I enjoy the fruits of the land; and the succulent confectionery, it shall be eaten also. Yea verily, and drink shall not be wanting, for I will drink until mine eyes they can no longer see. Lemonade, raspberry wine and the pop of the ginger—these will I drink, and more also."

And it was so. For in truth Stodgers did excel himself at dinner, and all things that were good he put away at a great speed. And he did drink also, not wisely but too well, and his sire came unto him and said:

"It is enough. Thou hast drunk thy fill. By the beard of my father I swear thou shalt have no more lemonade or ginger-pop, for thou art filled to satisfaction and I have seen thee gorge thyself stupid."

But the youth was aggrieved within himself, and said:

"Lo, my father hath taken away all things that I may drink. What, then, shall I do? I am resolved what I will do. I will sneak into the kitchen and will make myself more lemonade from sundry lemonade crystals which I know are concealed therein. Thus shall I drink and be satisfied."

And, behold, he retired secretly to the kitchen, and found a large bottle containing curious crystals, labelled: "Salts of Lemon." And he brewed from these crystals a large and mighty drink which forthwith he scoffed upon the spot.

And of the remaining adventures of that youth—which were not many—it is not good for us to speak.

For are not salts of lemon used for various cleansing purposes, and is it not a DEADLY POISON? Yea, verily it is so.

Moral: "He that drinketh in secret shall repent of it in public."

## AN INVITATION

The Ladies of Moor View School request the pleasure of the company of the Gentlemen of the Remove at St. Frank's to a Christmas Party and HIGH OLD BEANO to be held in the Moor View Common-room on Wednesday next, at 6.30 p.m. sharp—which means 6.30 and not 7.30.

HOSTESS — MISS IRENE MANNERS.

The Ladies of Moor View School would be obliged if the St. Frank's Gentlemen would be careful NOT TO KICK UP A ROW, as Miss Bond is rather touchy these days.

Christmas Cakes (Extra Special Brand) made by the COOKERY CLASS will be served; but there is no obligation to eat them. Christmas Crackers, containing paper hats, will be doled out to the guests, and the guests are admitted only on the understanding that they will jolly well WEAR THEM.

The Ladies of Moor View School would be obliged if the Duke of Somerton could make it convenient to wear a clean collar for the occasion. (P.S.—Doris put this bit in.)

The decorations of the Common-room will be on a lavish scale, as the Ladies of Moor View School have pooled their pocket money, and the whole three and fourpence has been blued on decorations. (N.B.—No mistletoe.)

The Ladies of Moor View School would be obliged if the St. Frank's Gentlemen would kindly Respondez-vous Sil Vous Plait, in order that they may know how many are coming.

Signed, for the Ladies of Moor View School,  
IRENE MANNERS.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

(As rendered by the Bellton Waits.)

Goed King Wencer Slarss look tout  
Onna feasta Steeeeeeephen;  
Wenna snow lay rouna bout,  
Deepen crispen neeeeeeven;  
Brightly shonna moonat night,  
Dough d' fross was crooooo-well;  
Wenna pawman came in sight  
Gavring winner fyoooo-woooo-well.

C. de V.)

## Answer to Nipper's Puzzle

HAPPY HARRY  
HARPY MARRY  
MERRY.

DON'T BLAME THE PRINTER.

It is Christmas which has turned everything upside down.



## The CASTLE OF TERROR!

(Continued from page 20.)

paring to envelop him. He remembered what he had heard—that the cloaked cavalier sometimes enveloped its victim.

"Help!" screamed Jimmy, in terror.

Something seemed to snap in his brain, and he reeled. A dark figure, emerging out of the surrounding blackness, slid noiselessly up to him. As Jimmy staggered and half fell, the Unknown caught him and held him in a tight grip.

It was at this same instant that Uncle Ben and Nipper and Handforth and Sir Montie and the others came dashing out of a side doorway. They had heard Jimmy's scream for help.

"Look!" yelled Handforth excitedly.

None of them thought of looking upwards into the sky as they ran out across the courtyard. The moon had just emerged from a bank of black clouds, and the courtyard was flooded with the pale light. Two figures could be seen—the one gripping the other.

And in those tense seconds, as the boys rushed up, they made an astounding discovery. For in the moonlight they could not fail to recognise the man who was holding Jimmy Potts in his arms.

"Great Scott!" gasped Handforth. "It's Rutley!"

"Rutley!" ejaculated Uncle Ben, aghast.

Nipper and Tregellis-West had not been at Travis Dene, and they did not know Rutley. But Handforth and Church and McClure did. This man Rutley had been Sir Edward Handforth's butler! And there had been some queer goings-on at Travis, too—and Rutley had been mixed up in them. Rutley was a newcomer, and Handforth had insisted that he was in the pay of the Chinese crooks who were after Mr. Potts.

And now Rutley was here—clutching Jimmy in his arms!

"Quick—grab him!" shouted Handforth. "Didn't I tell you that Rutley was a crook? I knew it! Hold him!"

But Rutley had not been expecting this sudden dash from the castle; his calculations were upset. Suddenly he released Jimmy, and, turning on his heel, he sped away. He moved with the ease and grace of a trained athlete, which was in direct contradiction of his apparent age and bent figure.

"He's bolting!" roared Church. "After him!"

"Never mind," said Mr. Potts hoarsely. "Think of Jimmy!"

At that moment the moon slipped behind another heavy cloudbank, and

darkness shut down. Rutley, vanishing into the gloom, was no longer visible. Jimmy was standing like a statue, and his face was chalky-white in the moonlight.

"Come, lad," murmured Uncle Ben, placing an arm round him. "Pull yourself together. Ye've come to no harm. A curse on that meddling fool for giving ye such a fright!"

"It—it wasn't Rutley," muttered Jimmy, in a choking voice. "I—I was glad he came. I felt safer when he took hold of me. It was the other—Thing."

"What other thing?" asked Handforth, staring.

"The Shadow!"

"The which?"

"The ghost—the cloaked cavalier," whispered Jimmy, with a shiver. "It was over me—up in the sky—hovering——"

"Poor, poor lad," said Uncle Ben, in agony.

"You're wrong — you're wrong!" shouted Jimmy, with sudden vehemence. "I didn't imagine it, uncle! Don't look at me like that, all of you! I tell you I saw it up in the sky—a great shadow. And it spoke, too! It warned me——"

"Come, we'd better take him indoors," interrupted Mr. Potts, with sudden sharpness. "The poor boy has been imagining things again."

The other boys glanced up at the sky; they saw the drifting clouds, black, menacing, ragged in their formation. Nothing else.

"Yes, Jimmy, dear old fellow," said Vivian Travers gently. "Do, for the love of Samson, be sensible! Your imagination——"

"Oh, I don't know!" said Jimmy despairingly. "Was it imagination? It couldn't have been! I saw it—I heard it! I'm not such a fool that I could fancy——"

He was interrupted by a wild, throbbing scream of terror. Everybody was transfixed by that awful sound. It came from the old Keep, just round the angle of one of the buildings. And it was in that direction where Rutley had vanished! The cry was terrible in its anguished intensity.

Even Uncle Ben, who had braved all kinds of unimaginable horrors in China, felt the blood almost curdling in his veins. The boys were all pale.

"Did—did you hear that?" whispered Jimmy hoarsely.

"Yes, by George!" said Handforth.

"Then—then it wasn't my imagination that time," said Jimmy, with some relief. "Do you believe me now? I tell you there is something horrible going on here."



"Something crooked!" snapped Nipper, pulling himself together with a jerk. "Quick, you chaps! Come on! There's no time like the present! You stay here with Jimmy, Mr. Potts!"

"Ay, I'll see after him," promised Uncle Ben

The others hesitated; but when Nipper went off at top speed for the old Keep, they followed.

The moon came out again to help them; they shot round the ivy-covered corner wall, and they found themselves in a quaintly-enclosed space, with frowning battlements towering up around them. At first there was no sign of any living creature. Then Nipper pointed.

"Look!" he muttered.

They could see a figure sprawling on the old paving stones—a still, silent figure, just distinguishable in the moonlight.

"That crook, Rutley," whispered Handforth. "Great Scott! What's happened to him?"

Hesitating no longer, they ran up. The figure was sprawling face downwards, and it was deathly still. With a quick movement, Nipper seized one of the arms and dragged the body over.

"Yen!" went up a general cry.

The figure was that of Mr. Potts' Chinese valet! The yellow face was impassive, the eyes were closed.

"Is—is he dead?" asked somebody.

"No—only stunned," said Nipper, as he placed a hand on Yen's chest. "His heart is beating regularly enough. Perhaps he wasn't even stunned. It may have been fright which bowled him over."

"What's this?" came Mr. Potts' voice as he strode up. "Jimmy insisted upon coming, and—Keep your nerve, Jimmy, lad! This is no ghost. That fellow Rutley, eh? I'd give a fortune to know what game—By golly!" he added, with startled surprise. "Yen! I thought —"

"Yes, it's Yen, sir," said Nipper. "He's all right—breathing regularly. You don't happen to have any brandy on you, sir?"

The millionaire whipped out his flask, and some of the fiery spirit was forced between the Chinaman's cold lips. The effect was almost instantaneous. Yen shuddered, opened his eyes, and sat up. For a moment his face retained that characteristic impassiveness; then, abruptly, it became distorted with terror.

"The Evil Spirit!" croaked Yen wildly. "It fell upon me, and—and——"

His voice choked. He was staring up-

wards into the moonlit sky. And they knew that he was looking for the cloaked cavalier.

## CHAPTER 10.

### The Capture!

"THIS is nonsense," said Uncle Ben, almost roughly. "We don't want any of your heathen superstitions here, Yen! Tell me what really happened."

"Master, I hear the shouting, and I come," whispered Yen. "And as I run across this open space a voice speaks to me."

"From above?" asked Jimmy fiercely. "Quick! Where did the voice come from, Yen?"

"Young Excellency, it come from the clouds—from the heavens—from the very Terraces of the Night," muttered Yen, with a shiver. "And there, above me, I see the great figure of a strange man."

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Potts.

"It come lower—and lower," said Yen. "I cry aloud, and then the Thing smother me, and all goes black."

"Thank goodness," muttered Jimmy Potts fervently.

"What on earth do you mean, lad?" demanded his uncle.

"I mean, Uncle Ben, that Yen's experience proves that I'm not going out of my mind," replied Jimmy, his voice stronger, his face expressive of returned confidence. "Oh, you don't know how I've been tortured! Up till now I've been the only one to see these apparitions—and I've had half an idea that I'm going mad. But now Yen has seen the ghost, too."

"Begad! It's all most frightfully disturbing, dear old boys," said Sir Montie, gravely troubled. "I'm beginnin' to think that the dashed old cavalier has been doin' his famous walkin' stunt."

"Let's get indoors," muttered Church.

The others, too, were uneasy. They kept glancing at the sky and at the deep shadows of the old Keep. They were impressed by this startling corroboration of Jimmy Potts' story. Yen, too, had seen that spectre! Tregellis Castle was actually haunted!

As though there had not been sufficient excitement during these hectic five minutes, another sound abruptly arose above the blustering of the wintry wind. Vague shouts in the night—a wild commotion.

"What — w h a t ' s that?" asked Handforth, startled.

"Sounds like some of the other chaps





yelling," replied Nipper, whose nerves were as steady as a rock. "Something must be happening on the terrace. That's where those sounds are coming from!"

"They must have seen the ghost, too," faltered Skeets.

But the others were not so sure. The shouts were not shouts of terror—but of excitement.

There was a helter-skelter rush. Jimmy found himself carried along by the crowd. Uncle Ben was left to assist Yen indoors. Christmas dinner was completely forgotten. Scarcely any of the boys realised that these strange events were taking place during the meal. But it was this interruption of dinner, in fact, which had given rise to the fresh disturbance.

Reggie Pitt and Jack Grey had offered to dash out and bring in the absentees, and such fellows as Archie Glenthorne and Brent and Duncan had run out, too. Nobody in the cheerful dining-hall knew of what had been happening outside.

Reggie Pitt, being unfamiliar with the geography of the castle, hurried out upon the terrace, the others with him. They had just realised that they had taken the wrong direction when they saw a strange figure in the gloom, further up the terrace. It was the identity of this figure, and the nature of the articles he carried, which had given rise to all the excited shouting.

When Nipper and Handforth and the others rushed up, they beheld an extraordinary sight. For there was the mysterious Rutley, tightly held by four or five boys. And at their feet, on the snow-covered terrace, were some strange and bulky objects.

"It's Rutley! They've got him!" shouted Handforth triumphantly.

"What does it all mean?" asked Duncan. "This is the fellow who was acting as butler at your country house, Handy! What is he doing here?"

"That's what we're going to find out," retorted Handforth. "We spotted him five minutes ago round the other side of the castle, and he was in the act of collar-ing poor old Jimmy. But we got there just in time—and the beggar bolted."

"What has happened here?" asked Nipper.

"Nothing much," said Pitt. "We saw this man, ran up to him, and as he couldn't give an account of himself, we grabbed him. And look at all this stuff!"

Rutley tried to break free from his young captors.

"Master Edward!" he said hoarsely. "You can't believe that I was doing anything criminal!"

Handforth glared at him.

"Don't you 'Master Edward' me, my man!" he said darkly. "I never accepted you as our family butler, and don't you forget it! I told the pater, as soon as I arrived home, that you were crooked! What are you doing here at Tregellis Castle, anyway?"

"Great Scott! Look at this!" came a yell from Church.

Rutley was not given an opportunity to reply to Handforth. Nipper and the others were examining the objects which lay in the snow.

"Oh-ho! A whacking great box-kite!" said Nipper grimly. "Very simple—but very effective."

"A which?" yelled Handforth.

"Look, can't you see?" said Nipper. "An ordinary, common-or-garden box-kite, with cord and everything."

"But—but—but——"

"My dear Handy, have you forgotten there's a pretty stiff wind this evening?" asked Nipper shrewdly. "Ideal conditions for flying a kite!"

"Well I'm jiggered!"

"Look at the kite!" said Reggie. "There's a lot of filmy draperies attached to it, and the whole thing is shaped like a human figure."

"Exactly," said Nipper. "When this kite is flying overhead, we can be pretty certain that it looks like a ghostly cavalier, with outstretched arms. The wind would send these black draperies billowing——"

"A trick!" gasped Jimmy Potts joyfully. "Oh, thank goodness! So it was only a trick to scare me!"

"Not you alone, Jimmy, but everybody," said Nipper. "It just happened that you were the one who saw it, that's all."

"It scared Yen, too," Travers pointed out. "I expect the kite swooped down, and Yen fainted with fright."

Uncle Ben came along with Lord Westbrooke as the boys were making further astonishing discoveries.

"By Jove! Look at this!" Nipper was saying. "There's a kind of telephone wire running down the entire length of the control-cord. And what's this? A sort of miniature transmitter, isn't it?"

An idea occurred to him, and he dragged at the box-kite, tearing the filmy draperies away. Somebody flashed a powerful electric-torch light upon the apparatus.

"Here we are—as simple as any other kind of conjuring trick—when you know how it's done," said Nipper eagerly. "There's a little amplifying set fixed inside this kite, and a loud-speaker, too!"





Above was the apparition of the Cloaked Cavalier. "Help!" screamed Jimmy Potts. He reeled into the arms of an unknown figure which emerged from the shadows.

"By my ancestors!" exclaimed Uncle Ben furiously. "So it was worked that way, was it? Worked especially to frighten my nephew! Who is responsible? What have you got to say for yourself, you scoundrel?"

He turned upon Rutley dangerously.

"You are wrong," muttered the man, in a dull, listless voice. "I am not responsible for this."

"You had this infernal kite flying, and you whispered into that microphone," snorted Mr. Potts. "And your voice, amplified up above, sounded from the loud-speaker in the 'spook.' All very terrifying in the darkness, but simple enough when you get down to bed-rock. What did you do it for? What's your game?"

"I didn't do it," said Rutley stubbornly. "I was running across the Keep when I saw this kite flung on to the ground. I didn't work the deception at all." He looked round at the boys. "Don't you believe me?" he went on. "I only saw the kite by accident. How should I know who worked it?"

"You can tell that to the Marines," said Handforth, with a snort. "How the dickens can you have the nerve to stand

there and say that you didn't work this rotten trick? Why, you did the very same thing at my place! You tried to scare poor old Jimmy at Travis Dene."

"The sooner this fellow is put under lock and key, the better," said Mr. Potts angrily. "I'm beginning to think that he is in league with that other mystery fellow—Zacchi, or whatever he called himself."

"By George! That's possible, too, sir," said Handforth.

"At all events, we'll hold this man," said Lord Westbrooke gruffly. "Bring him in, boys, and we'll lock him away. I'll send for the police at once."

"No, no!" wailed Rutley. "I didn't mean any real harm, sir!" He passed a



hand over his brow. "I don't seem to remember," he went on falteringly. "It's—it's all so strange."

There was a feeling of general relief. Tregellis Castle was not haunted, after all!

Jimmy Potts was overjoyed, too. Yet, in his heart, he knew that the capture of Rutley did not explain everything. Was Rutley responsible for that mysterious apparition which had appeared in the bed-room? And what of the bat-like Shape which had been outside the window? Clever as Rutley might be, he could not have been in two places at once.

It was still a baffling riddle.

## CHAPTER 11.

### Handforth on the Job!

**R**UTLEY refused to make any definite statement. What he did say was vague and inconclusive.

"Don't let this affair upset our evening's enjoyment," said Lord Westbrooke, when he came into the great dining-room. "The wretched fellow is locked away—and there are plenty of places in Tregellis where a man may be locked in perfect security! He hasn't told us anything that throws any real light on the matter. Most exasperating—most annoying."

Later, the earl slipped away. The police had come, and Lord Westbrooke was looking unhappy as Rutley was taken out of his temporary prison, handcuffed, and marched off.

"I hate being compelled to give this man in charge on Christmas night," said his lordship unhappily. "But he seems to be a dangerous character, and we can't afford to be sentimental. However, unless we can get some additional evidence, we can only charge him with loitering."

"You seem to have some queer characters about the castle, my lord," remarked the sergeant. "Well, we'll look after this fellow. You leave him to us, my lord."

Somewhat to the disappointment of the boys, Rutley accepted his arrest tamely. He made no dash for liberty—as the queer Zacchi had done. Maintaining a stolid and stubborn silence, he went off with his captors.

"That's the only unsatisfactory part of the business," said Nipper thoughtfully. "We know, of course,

that that ghost was faked—but why? What was Rutley's game?"

"Easy enough!" replied Handforth. "Rutley daren't say anything, because he's merely the agent of somebody else—somebody bigger."

"You're thinking of that Chinese mandarin," said Nipper.

"Of course I am," agreed Handforth. "Why shouldn't I? Mr. Potts himself has said that the Mandarin Fu-Li-Sing is his enemy. The whole thing's as clear as daylight. Rutley was in the rotter's pay at Travis Dene—and he followed us here."

"To get at Jimmy?" asked Travers, shaking his head. "But it seems rummy, dear old fellow. I thought these blighters were after Mr. Potts."

"Well, of course, it's quite likely that they're after Jimmy, too," said Nipper. "When a Chinaman of high standing vows vengeance on a man, he includes the whole family. Perhaps he thought it safer to go for Jimmy, rather than Uncle Ben."

"It's Jimmy's turn first—and then Uncle Ben will be dealt with afterwards," said Handforth. "That's the programme, as far as I can see."

Lord Westbrooke had a different theory, and it was one with which Mr. Potts agreed.

"By what I can see of that fellow Rutley, he is not quite in his right mind," said the earl. "A crank, no doubt—not a dangerous maniac, but getting on the road towards it. It's far better for him to be under lock and key. He had no logical reason for what he did."

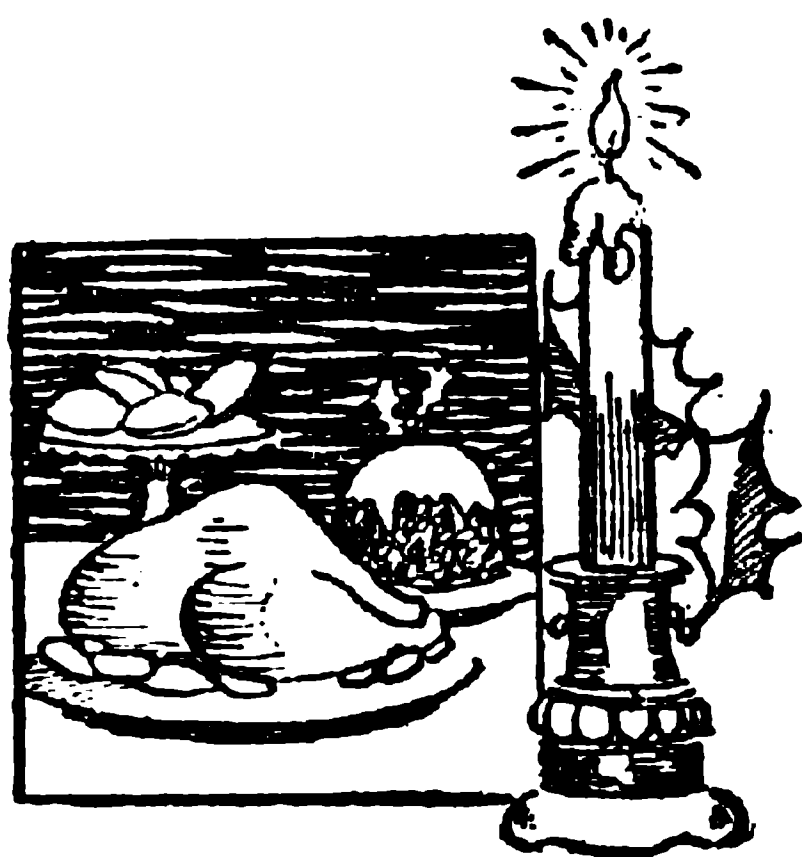
"That's my opinion, too, sir," said Uncle Ben firmly. "I'm infernally sorry that any of this trouble should have arisen—"

"My dear Mr. Potts, there's no earthly reason for you to apologise," smiled the earl. "We can dismiss the whole matter now—and continue to enjoy ourselves. There'll be no more ghosts at Tregellis."

And, indeed, the rest of Christmas Night was as it should be—happy, jolly, boisterous, and noisy.

The masquerade was a huge success, and the parlour games were enjoyed with that hectic abandon which is somehow reserved for Christmas-time. The boys and girls were contentedly tired when, at about one a.m., they went up to their various rooms.

"It's been just glorious, Montie," said Mary Summers enthusiastically.





"I'm most frightfully bucked, dear girl," beamed Sir Montie.

A crowd of others gathered round their host and added words of appreciation.

"It seems a shame that we should have to go to bed," laughed Doris. "But there's another day to-morrow—with more tobogganing. Boxing Day, too! More games in the evening, and lots of fun! Whoopee!"

They bade one another good-night, and Jimmy Potts went to bed, as usual, with his uncle. He had recovered his spirits admirably; he was trying to stifle those doubts which still beset him.

"Ye've nothing to worry about now, lad," said Uncle Ben kindly. "I'd give a lot to know just why Rutley played that trick—but he won't play any more. Gad! I'm having a wonderful time here, Jimmy, and I want you to have the same. Ye can't realise what this fine old-fashioned Christmas means to a returned wanderer such as I."

"I think I can, uncle," smiled Jimmy. "There's no place like England, really, is there?"

Uncle Ben took a deep breath.

"Ye never spoke a truer word, lad," he replied fervently. "But ye need to be away from England for some years to know just what this tight little island actually means to ye! Why, when I first saw the white cliffs, looming up through the grey fog, I had such a lump in my throat that it's a wonder I wasn't choked."

A tap sounded on the door—a firm, determined tap.

"Come in!" invited Uncle Ben.

Handforth strode in, accompanied by Nipper, Tregellis-West, Church, McClure, and Travers.

"I thought you were all in bed by now," smiled Mr. Potts.

"We're the night watch, sir," explained Handforth importantly.

"By golly! You're the what?"

"We want you to let two of us sleep in here, sir," said Handforth. "The others will remain awake—inside the bed-room and out in the corridor. We'll take it in turns throughout the night to keep guard."

Uncle Ben looked at them with a great warmth in his eyes.

"Ye're fine, sturdy lads," he said gratefully. "But, darn it, there's no need for all this hullabaloo. Some of ye can sleep in here, if ye like, but as for keeping watch—well, don't ye think it's unnecessary?"



"Nothing like being on the safe side, sir," replied Handforth. "These chaps have agreed with me——"

"We thought we might as well," said Nipper patiently. "We know what an obstinate beggar Handy is. It was about the only way in which we could get any sleep at all to-night."

"Rats!" said Edward Oswald. "Rutley's been arrested, and he's in a cell by now, but Rutley was only an agent—a cog in the wheel. Anyhow, we're jolly well going to see that Jimmy gets a proper night's rest to-night. And if any more tricksters start their monkey-business, we'll be ready!"

Mr. Potts was clearly embarrassed, but he took the thing in a jovial spirit. And perhaps, after all, there was something in Handforth's idea. Jimmy was certainly haggard and jumpy; and this "night watch" wheeze would give him a sense of absolute protection. Jimmy himself was grateful—so grateful, in fact, that he did not utter a word of protest.

Thus it came about that he slept on this eventful Christmas night with his chums guarding over him; he slept in the knowledge that others were alert and watchful.

The night passed—significantly enough—peacefully. Handforth called it a swindle. He had been expecting something exciting, and he was quite "done" when dawn came and nothing untowards had happened.

— — —

## CHAPTER 12.

### The Peril on the Ice!

WITH the coming of daylight there was no longer any necessity for guards. Even Handforth went off to his own bed.

Jimmy Potts, in fact, was one of the few guests at Tregellis Castle who had had a night of uninterrupted sleep. He felt the benefit of it, too, for he awoke clear-headed and refreshed. He found Uncle Ben dressing.

"Hush, lad—no need to awaken the others," murmured the millionaire, with a warning uplift of his finger. "I'm afraid they've had a patchy night, with all their unnecessary watching."

"They're bricks, uncle," whispered Jimmy, looking at the sleeping figures. "I've got to thank them for a ripping night's sleep."

"Ay, it's good to have such chums," agreed Mr. Potts. "Fine, staunch lads. All praise to 'em! Hadn't ye better turn over and get another hour, lad?"



"I couldn't sleep any more, uncle," replied Jimmy. "I think I'll get up—and go out for a walk with you."

"It's a sensible idea," said Mr. Potts. "It'll give ye a healthy appetite for breakfast. I thought of going down to the lake. They say it's fine for skating to-day."

Jimmy jumped out of bed, leaving the others undisturbed. Before he was half-dressed Uncle Ben had gone—saying that he would wait for Jimmy on the terrace.

He did not have to wait long, for Jimmy was soon ready. Running down into the hall, he encountered Fenn, the butler. Fenn beamed upon Jimmy.

"Quite an early bird, eh?" he said brightly. "Good-morning—and a fine morning it is."

"Ripping," agreed Jimmy. "Glorious blue sky—brilliant sunshine. I say, Fenn, this is Christmas as it should be."

"I hear that the ice on the big lake is in first-class condition, young gentleman," said the butler smiling. "If you didn't happen to bring any skates with you, I dare say I could find you a pair—"

"Thanks awfully," said Sir Jimmy, "but I have my own. By jingo! I'll fetch them! Might as well try the ice before the crowd gets along."

He found Mr. Potts out on the terrace, smoking.

"Skates, eh?" chuckled Uncle Ben. "I thought ye couldn't resist the temptation,

lad. H'm! I don't think much of them," he added critically, as he examined the skates. "Mighty poor things, these."

"I thought they were all right," protested Jimmy.

"You ought to have a better pair," declared Uncle Ben. "You never fetched that little parcel out of the car, did you? Now, if you'll run round to the garage—"

"Uncle, you old bounder!" gasped Jimmy, his eyes sparkling. "You don't mean—"

"Get off with ye!" chuckled the big man. "And don't be long. It's cold, standing about."

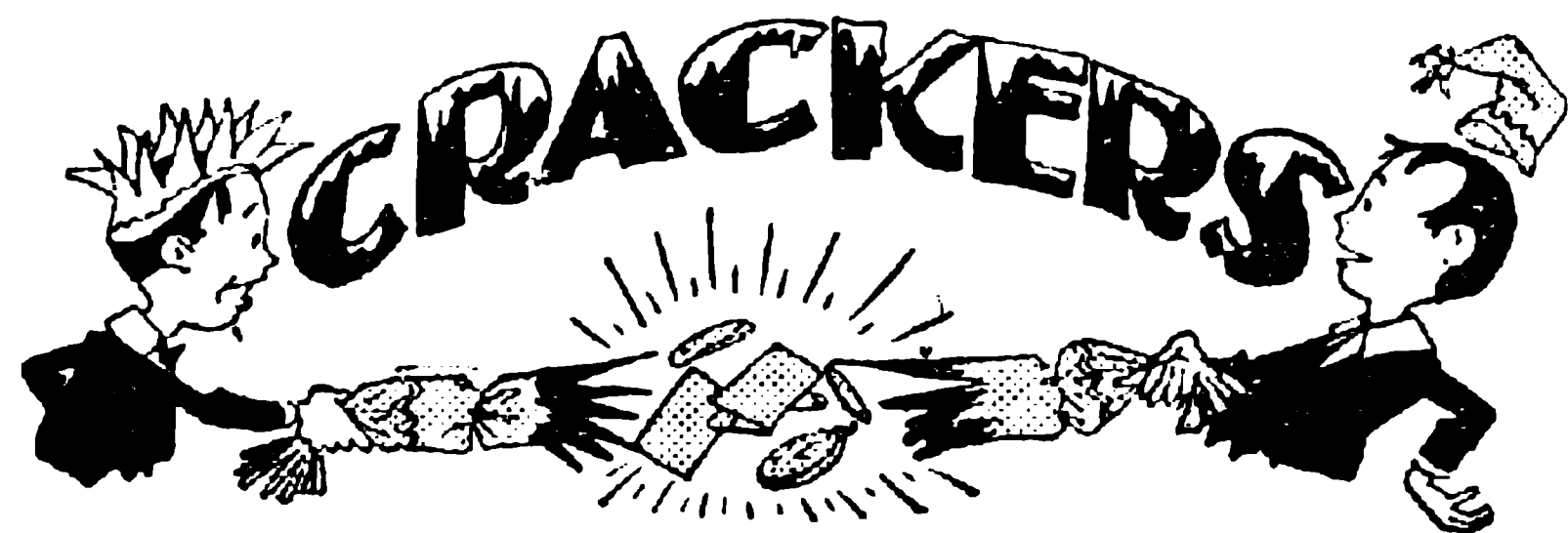
Jimmy was soon back. That present Uncle Ben had referred to was a pair of wonderful new skates—gleaming, glistening objects which Jimmy gazed upon with awe.

"You're the kind of uncle a chap dreams about," he said happily.

"Stuff and nonsense," laughed Mr. Potts. "Come along, lad! It's a fair walk to the lake, I believe."

They strode off through the crisp snow, glad to be out in the invigorating air so early. Nobody else had yet made an appearance—and it still wanted an hour to breakfast-time. For breakfast at Tregellis, during holiday-time, was not an early meal.

Leaving the lawns and gardens behind, they struck off across the snow-lad parklands. There was a well-defined track, where the snow was much trodden.



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

#### A BAD EGG.

Diner: "What sort of pudding do you call this?"

Waiter: "We call it college pudding, sir. Do you like it?"

Diner: "No, I think there's an egg in it that ought to have been expelled."

(F. Edwards, 22, Liddington Road, West Ham, London, E.15, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

#### WAIT AND SEE.

Angler: "Any chance of getting a bite here?"  
Small lad: "Yes, sir. If you sit here until the farmer's dog comes, you'll get one."

(F. Howells, 3, Married Qts., Shoeburyness, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

#### HIS LAMENT.

"There are five shillings," said the old gentleman to his young nephew. "That's one for every Christmas you have seen. What more could a boy wish for?"

"Only that I was as old as you," replied the bright lad.

(T. Hutchinson, P.O. Box 4609, Johannesburg, South Africa, has been awarded a useful prize.)

#### GOOD BUSINESS.

Dealer in second-hand garments: "We can't mark this suit 'fashionable'—it's too shabby."

Bright assistant: "No, but you might mark it 'Very much worn.'"

(R. Bassett, 16, Stanley Road, Brighton, has been awarded a penknife.)

#### A BARGAIN.

An Irishman went into a chemist's shop to purchase a small bottle. Seeing the one he wanted, he asked how much it would be.

"Well," said the chemist, "it will be two-pence as it is, but if you want anything in it I won't charge for the bottle."

"Faith, sorr," said Pat, "put a cork in it."

(J. Holman, 85, Enys Road, Camborne, Cornwall, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)



"We're not the first to go to the lake," said Jimmy.

"There were over a dozen men at work half of yesterday," said Uncle Ben. "It was a rare task sweeping the lake clear, I hear—but the ice is perfect this morning. Safe, too. Our genial host assures me that the ice is strong enough to stand a small army."

"Lord Westbrooke is a top-notch," declared Jimmy. "What a ripping Christmas we're having, uncle! Do you skate?" he added abruptly.

"I? Well——" Uncle Ben laughed. "I'm not so young as I was," he said dryly. "I've done some skating in China—we get some rare ice out there at times. But when a man's working he hasn't much time for such frivolities as skating. No, lad, I can't say that I'm much of a skater."

They came within sight of the lake, and it was indeed a glorious spectacle in the morning sunshine. A great oblong expanse of water, now wholly covered with ice. The parkland dipped down to it in one direction, with a few leafless trees here and there. But on the opposite shore of the lake there was a dense belt of woodland, the trees coming right down to the water's edge. In mid-summer that shady bank, with the wood as the background, was a rare spot for fishing—as Sir Montie knew from experience.

"Ay, it's fine!" said Mr. Potts, as he strode gingerly on the ice at first, and then stamped about with confidence. "Solid as

a rock, lad! Let's see what kind of a skater you are, Jimmy."

Jimmy soon had the skates fixed, and he went streaking joyously over the ice—proving, in that first minute, that he was a capable skater.

"Why, bless me, you're quite an expert," said Uncle Ben admiringly. "I'll warrant you could skate to the far end of the lake and back within five minutes."

Jimmy laughed.

"I can do it in three," he boasted.

"Fiddlesticks!" said Mr. Potts, with scorn. "Just because ye fancy those new skates——"

"But really, uncle, I mean it," smiled Jimmy. "A fellow can get up some high speed on skates, you know. I bet you I'll be back here in three minutes."

Mr. Potts pulled out his watch.

"All right! I'll make ye prove your words," he said, his eyes twinkling in spite of his severe tone. "Go ahead, lad! See that big tree yonder, on the far bank? That one that stands out by itself?"

"Yes."

"Ye'll skate straight for that tree and back—and no turning before you're within a yard of the bank," warned Uncle Ben. "I'll time ye! Now, get ready. Go!"

Laughing heartily, Jimmy Potts sped off. Uncle Ben watched admiringly, one eye on Jimmy, and the other eye on his watch. He was certainly astonished at the terrific speed

### THE CAR WAS A CROCK.

Bill: "How do you like my new car?"

Tom: "How much was it?"

Bill: "It was given to me."

Tom (studying car keenly): "Then you've been robbed."

(*R. Hammond, 30, Wilmer Gardens, Hoxton, London, N.1, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

### READY BY EASTER.

Slow waiter: "Have you ordered anything, sir?"

Disgusted diner: "Well, I asked for Christmas pudding, but that was so long ago that you'd better bring me a hot-cross bun."

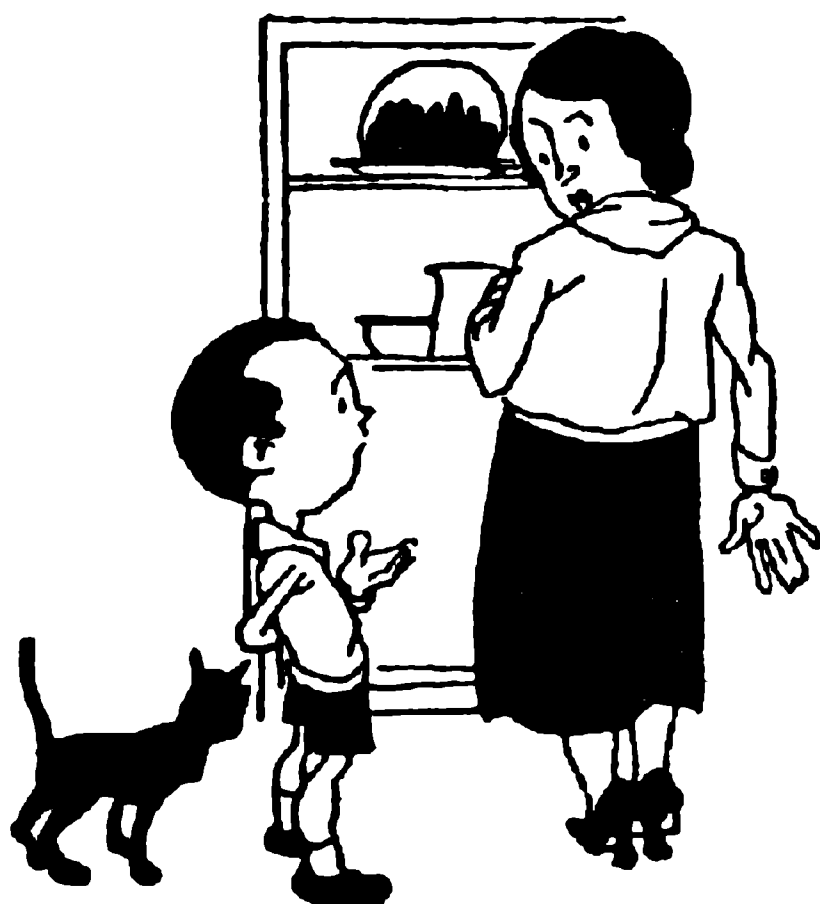
(*F. Margesson, 84, Felsham Road, Putney, London, S.W.15, has been awarded a penknife.*)

### TOO OBSERVANT.

The teacher was impressing his pupils with the necessity of being observant. For a test, he instructed the class to study the contents of the room carefully.

"Now, Jones," said the teacher at length, "have you observed anything peculiar?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jones immediately. "You're wearing odd socks!"



(*T. Beard, 17, Boyer Street, Derby, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)

### OFF THE TARGET.

The sergeant was talking to a bunch of recruits.

"For the last time," he shouted, "I ask you this simple question: What is a fortification?"

The recruits stood fast. No one answered. Striding up to the most intelligent-looking man, the N.C.O. bawled:

"You! Tell me, what is a fortification?"

"Two twentifications," came the hesitant reply.

(*G. Mees Lymwood, Talbot Street, Brierley Hill, Staffs, has been awarded a penknife.*)

### MAKING SURE OF IT

Tommy: "Is that right mummy, that you shouldn't put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day?"

Mother: "Yes, dear. Why?"

Tommy: "Well, I was thinking I'd better finish up that Christmas pudding in the cupboard."

(*J. Phillips, 49, Stiven Crescent, South Harrow, has been awarded a pocket wallet.*)



the boy attained. He streaked across that fine stretch of ice like a championship skater.

"Splendid," murmured Mr. Potts, his eyes sparkling. "Wonderful!"

Jimmy's performance was exhilarating—and he proved, beyond all else, that he had almost completely recovered his old spirits. He was making in a bee-line for that fine old tree which stood out like a landmark on the far bank. Nearer and nearer—

Then, in a flash, stark drama—and peril.

Even Mr. Potts heard the deadly, ominous crack—not unlike that of a pistol shot. It came clearly through the air, and was immediately followed by two or three other report-like sounds. Jimmy Potts stumbled, hesitated, and giddily swerved.

The next instant he plunged headlong downwards, and was gone!

### CHAPTER 13.

#### The Man With the Hidden Face!

**H**ANDFORTH, in his dressing-gown, quietly opened the door of Uncle Ben's bed-room. He peeped into the apartment. He gave one stare, then he jumped, and then he uttered a startled yell.

"Gone!" he gasped hoarsely.

Handforth had a habit of jumping to melodramatic conclusions. He dashed across the room, intending to shake Gresham and Duncan into wakefulness—for Gresham and Duncan had been the last "guard" to sleep with Jimmy. The two Removites needed no shaking. Handforth's yell had been effective.

"Hallo! What's wrong?" gasped Harry Gresham, still half-asleep.

"Where are they?" roared Handforth.

"Eh?" gasped Gresham. "They? Who?"

"Jimmy—Mr. Potts!" bellowed Handforth, with an eloquent wave of his hand.

"Great Scott! Has something happened to them?" asked Duncan, in alarm.

"They've gone!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And you—you human logs were in here all the time!" went on Handforth accusingly. "You rotters! They've both been kidnapped—under your very eyes—in broad daylight—and you didn't even sound the alarm! The worst has happened! Didn't I tell you——"

"But we couldn't help it" protested Gresham. "We were asleep!"

Nipper and Sir Montie and Tommy Watson, fully dressed, appeared in the doorway.

"Somebody having a little argument?" asked Nipper politely.

"There's no argument," howled Handforth. "Jimmy Potts and his uncle have gone."

"What of it?"

"What of it!" gasped Handforth. "Didn't you hear what I said?"

"You said that Jimmy and his uncle had gone."

"That's right," shouted Handforth excitedly. "You don't seem to be very concerned about it."

"Why should I be concerned?" asked Nipper. "Jimmy and his uncle can go for a walk in the park if they like, can't they?"

Handforth's jaw sagged.

"A—a walk in the park!" he stammered.

"My dear chap, why do you get these fantastic ideas?" asked Nipper kindly. "You come in here, find Mr. Potts and Jimmy gone, and you immediately jump to the idiotic conclusion that they've been kidnapped. Fenn tells me that they went out ten minutes ago to have a look at the ice on the lake. Jimmy took his skates with him."

"Oh!" said Handforth feebly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They laughed callously, and Handforth dashed back to his own bed-room to dress. Nipper & Co., going downstairs chuckling, decided to follow Uncle Ben and Jimmy out to the lake.

To their satisfaction they found Mary Summers and Irene Manners and Phyllis Palmer on the terrace—all three of them looking exceedingly charming in their winter kit.

"Come on, girls!" said Nipper briskly. "Let's go and have a look at the ice. I hear it's first-class this morning."

"Glorious!" cried Mary. "I'm longing for some skating."

They went off in a happy crowd. The girls were amused when Nipper related the story of Handforth's "bodyguard."

"None of us expected anything to happen to Jimmy, but Handy was certain that more ghosts would appear," said Nipper dryly.

"Then, this morning, he thought that Jimmy and his uncle had been spirited away by mysterious enemies."

The girls laughed.

"All the same, it is queer," said Doris, becoming serious. "Why should anybody have evil intentions towards Jimmy? He's such a nice boy, too."

"That's not the only mystery," remarked Tommy Watson. "What about Mr. Lee? He disappeared even before we left St. Frank's, and nobody has heard a word since. Nipper seems to think that he's alive, and I'm glad to see Nipper so jolly confident. But I'd want better proof——"

"Don't let's talk about it, old man," interrupted Nipper gently. "Hallo! There they are! By Jove, look at Jimmy! He's streaking a bit."

They had rounded a clump of trees, and ahead of them was the lake. It was still some distance away, but everything was brilliantly clear in the morning sunlight. Mr. Potts' sturdy figure could be seen on the bank, and there was Jimmy skating like the wind, approaching the further bank.

"I'm jealous," said Irene. "Oh, why didn't we bring our skates, too? Doesn't it look too lovely for words?"

Nipper was glad that the conversation had been turned. He did not want to discuss his guv'nor. He knew, of course, that





A man in a cloak, with his face hidden by a scarf, streaked to the spot where Jimmy Potts had plunged through the broken ice.

Nelson Lee had escaped on that eventful night at St. Frank's—but for some reason of his own, the great detective was lying "doggo." Nipper had sometimes wondered what Lee was doing during this Christmastide.

"Well, if we can't skate we can slide," said Sir Montie contentedly. "After breakfast—"

He broke off abruptly. For in that second, without the slightest warning, Jimmy Potts had vanished! The boys and girls were too far away to hear those ominous cracks; thus the shock of the thing stunned them. One second Jimmy was there, shooting over the ice; the next second, after a momentary swerve, he had gone. He had plunged right through—and at the spot there now showed a dark, irregular patch.

Uncle Ben, on the bank, started running forward in frantic concern. Then he seemed to realise that it was impossible for him to reach the danger-spot in time to be of any assistance. For he checked, spun round, and waved his hands in panic.

"Help!" came his voice faintly. "Help, help!"

The cry shook the boys and girls out of their momentary stupefaction.

"Jimmy's through!" said Nipper tensely. "Oh, my hat! He's gone through the ice!"

"Run!" urged Mary in anguish.

They ran like the wind. Uncle Ben, who saw them approaching, waved frantically. But Nipper, at least, had a feeling as though a cold hand had clutched at his heart. He instinctively knew that it would be impossible for them to reach Jimmy in time.

For the unfortunate boy had not appeared again. He had simply vanished—and there could be little doubt that his forward rush had carried him under the ice, where it was unbroken, and now he was trapped.

"Run—run!" panted Nipper.

Considering the hardgoing over the frozen snow, they achieved an amazing speed; and it spoke well for the stamina and agility of the girls that they did not fall far behind. It was a frantic, desperate dash to save a life, but it was obviously a hopeless dash.

Then, at that moment, another figure appeared.

Unexpectedly, dramatically, it leapt from the dense trees on the far side of the lake. It went streaking across the short stretch of ice to that spot where Jimmy had disappeared—the figure of a man, wearing a black, enveloping cloak. Strangely enough, his entire face, except for the eyes, was hidden by a tightly-knotted scarf.

"Look!" cried Doris. "Oh, thank Heaven! There's somebody there! We should never have done it."



Uncle Ben was running his hardest round the bank; but he was a big man and his running days were over. He continued to shout as he ran. It was his calling, perhaps, which had attracted the attention of the Man With the Hidden Face. Without the slightest hesitation the mysterious stranger plunged in.

The boys and girls saw a heave of the icy water. The man vanished. The water churned and foamed. Then a figure appeared, two figures.

"He's got him—he's got Jimmy!" yelled Watson.

"Hurrah!"

"Hold him, sir—we're coming!"

"We'll help!"

"A fine deed—the act of a hero!" shouted Uncle Ben thankfully. "But can he hold on? Hurry, boys—hurry!"

## CHAPTER 14.

### Nipper's Startling Theory!

THE Man With The Hidden Face performed an apparent miracle.

With scarcely any visible effort he hoisted Jimmy Potts out of the water and on to the strong ice. For all around that jagged gap the ice was sturdy and tough. The stranger then hauled himself out. He stood there, the water dripping grotesquely from his cloak.

The boys were running up now; they were on the ice, dashing towards the danger spot.

And the Man With the Hidden Face did a peculiar thing.

Instead of waiting, he gave one look at the approaching boys, then swept round on his heel, and sped off. He had hauled Jimmy out, and he had seen that the other rescuers were practically on the spot. They could deal with Jimmy—now—better than he!

Every movement he made was lithe. His figure was lean and tall, and as he waited for a moment he had held himself rigidly erect. He plunged amidst the trees at the lake side, and like a shadow he vanished.

"Who was it?" asked Watson, in amazement. "Why did he bolt like that?"

"Most frightfully rummy, dear old boy," said Sir Montie.

But the others had no time to waste on the riddle just then. They were seizing Jimmy and carrying him farther away from the danger zone. He was conscious, but very bewildered.

"What's happened?" he muttered, with chattering teeth. "I can't remember. I fell in, and I struggled, and then somebody grabbed me——"

"My boy—my boy!" exclaimed Uncle Ben, running up, puffing hard. "On, my poor boy!"

"It's all right, sir—he hasn't come to any harm," said Nipper briskly. "That unknown man fished him out."

"An act of amazing heroism," said Mr. Potts hoarsely. "Where is he? Hero, lad,

take my overcoat. Quick, now, we must get him to the Castle."

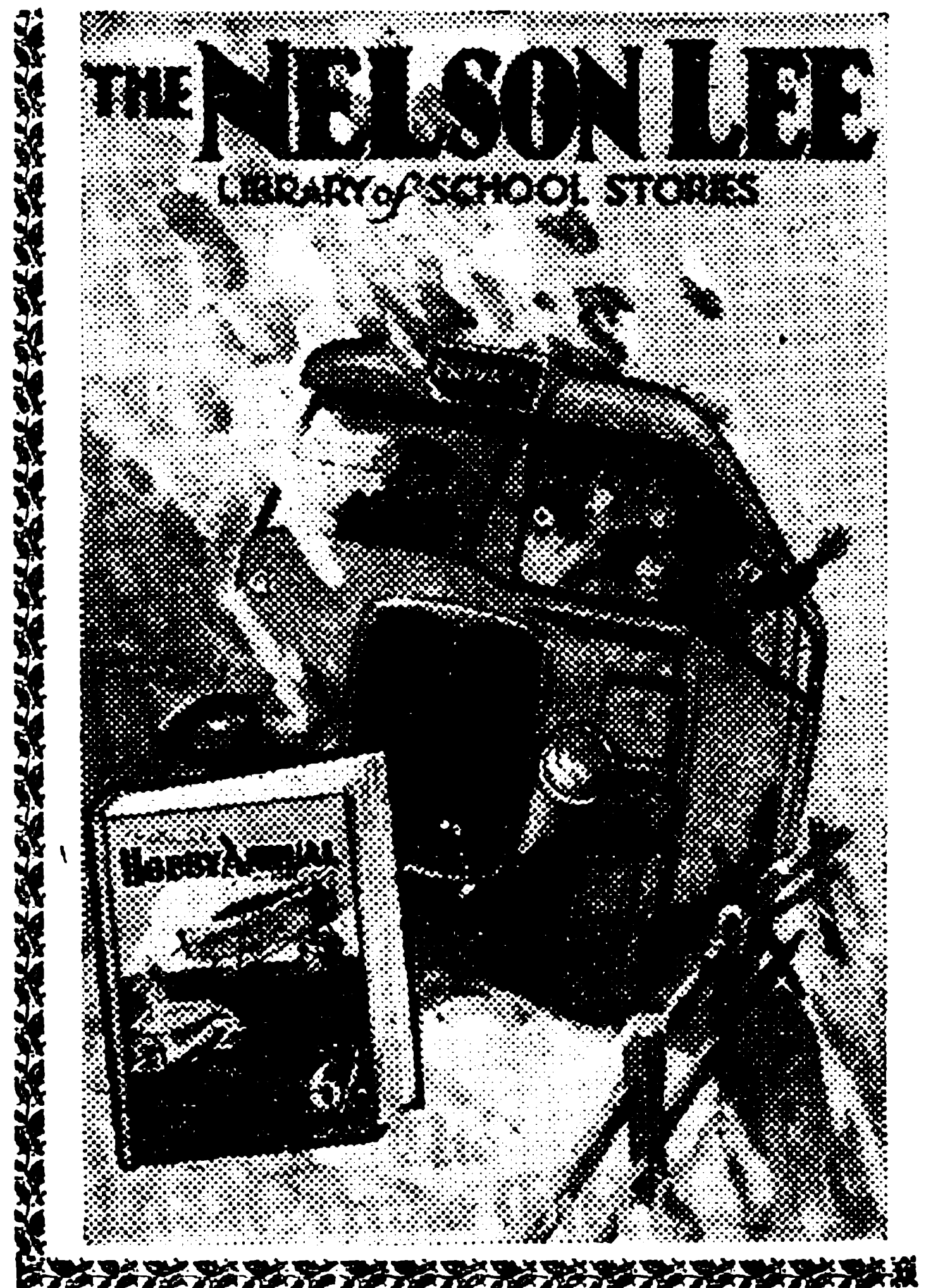
Jimmy was wrapped about warmly, and the other boys would not allow him to walk. They carried him. Once or twice Nipper turned back, but he could see no sign of that mystery figure.

"I shall never forgive myself—never!" Uncle Ben was saying, as they hurried along. "It was I who told him to skate across the lake. But how was I to know——"

"Nobody can blame you, sir," interrupted Watson. "And don't worry—Jimmy will be all right!"

"But will he?" groaned Mr. Potts. "There

## COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



is something fiendishly uncanny about these incidents. And all these Mystery Men!" He shrugged his shoulders helplessly. "Rutley and Zacchi and Heaven alone knows who else! They menace the boy—they try to frighten him out of his life. And then another Mystery man appears on the scene and saves his life. What can it all mean?"

Nipper could have answered—but he did not. For a startling theory had occurred to Nipper; and it was a theory that made his eyes sparkle.

There was a mild sensation at Tregellis when they arrived. Jimmy was rushed upstairs and dumped into a hot bath. Then, with many eager helpers, he was rubbed down, rolled in warm blankets, and put straight to bed. He protested vigorously, but his uncle would not listen to him.



"I'm all right, uncle—really I am," said Jimmy. "That hot bath worked wonders. I'm feeling as fit as a fiddle again."

"It seems to me you've got a temperature," retorted Uncle Ben. "Anyhow, until the doctor comes, and until he has had a look over you, you'll stay in bed. By golly, those fiends nearly had you that time, lad!"

"But it was an absolute accident, uncle," said Jimmy, staring. "How could it have been anything else?"

Even Uncle Ben was forced to admit, on calm consideration, that the affair could have been nothing but a pure mishap. The men who had tested the ice had missed that one

"An extraordinary affair," said Lord Westbrooke, after breakfast. "I've had grooms and gamekeepers searching every inch of the wood, and a great deal of the parkland, but they haven't found any traces of that hero. There is a lane just beyond that wood, and it's just possible that the man was driving along in a car. Seeing that you boys were on hand, he dashed back to his car and drove home—realising that a hot bath would do him good. Perhaps we shall hear something of him later. Anyhow, he seems to have disappeared completely."

"It's most frightfully rummy—it is, really, uncle," said Montie, shaking his head. "And all the rummier because it was Jimmy Potts who fell in. I mean, why not some other chappie? Jimmy's had quite enough frightfulness without that happenin' to him, too!"

"But that's how it is in this life," growled Lord Westbrooke. "Well, it's no good worrying our heads. Accidents will happen, of course. I'll make certain of that ice before we begin any skating this morning."

Nipper, wandering alone, had time to think. He was certain, in his own mind, that he had solved this little riddle. He knew the identity of the Man With The Hidden Face!

Nelson Lee!

"I know it—I can feel it in my bones," muttered Nipper. "It was the good old guv'nor! He had that scarf round his face because he didn't want to be seen."

The more he thought of the incident, the more certain he became. He remembered how Nelson Lee had pledged him to silence. Lee had said that he preferred to remain "dead" over the Christmas holidays. Nipper had been wondering what Nelson Lee was doing. Now he knew! The great detective had probably been at Travis Dene, too—watching over Mr. Benjamin Potts and Jimmy! Lee was doing the same here.

Nipper did not fail to recall Jimmy's extraordinary statement of the "bat-like" figure which he had seen on the window-sill of his bed-room when the Cloaked Cavalier had appeared. Nipper was beginning to think that the figure on the window-sill had been Nelson Lee! Lee—on guard—ready to jump if his help was needed. He had not jumped in because the boys had burst into the room. And Jimmy, in his excited state, had taken the vague shape for something supernatural. It all fitted together.

Nipper felt strangely comforted. The very knowledge that Nelson Lee was lurking about somewhere made him feel that Jimmy and his uncle were not in any great danger. Perhaps Lee had visited the little police station—perhaps he had talked with Rutley. It was even probable that he had collared that queer wretch Zacchi. Were they agents of the mysterious mandarin? It seemed very likely.

But Nipper kept these thoughts to himself. He could not share them even with his closest chums.

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fatal spot. Perhaps the nearness of the trees had something to do with the thinness of the ice just there. But it was all the more extraordinary because the ice in the vicinity had proved to be strong and thick.

Jimmy's accident was one of the subjects of conversation at the breakfast table, and everybody was mightily relieved to know that Jimmy had come to no real harm. The other subject of conversation was—the Man With The Hidden Face. It was he who had saved Jimmy from certain death. Uncle Ben and all the boys and girls were convinced that they could not have reached the spot in time.

"But who was he?" everybody wanted to know. "And why did he bolt like that? Where is he now?"





Much to everybody's delight, the doctor announced that Jimmy Potts was fit, and he could join in the winter sports without any fear of ill consequences.

And so that memorable Boxing Day was spent as happily as Christmas Day—in a wild, hectic round of winter sports. But another night was approaching—and it was at night-time that the evil things happened!

## CHAPTER 15.

### The Clue of the Yellow Fangs!

#### BOXING Night!

In the expressive term of the Americans, the party at Tregellis Castle "made whoopee" in no uncertain manner. The party began working itself up between tea and dinner; but after dinner it really got going. The fun was fast and furious, and so far as the young people were concerned, it was one of the happiest Christmas parties they had ever attended.

"They're enjoying themselves, by gad!" remarked Lord Westbrooke, as he stood inside the brilliant ball-room, watching the animated scene.

"Good luck to 'em!" said Mr. Potts, nodding. "We were young ourselves, once, eh?"

"And not too old now to enjoy the same sort of fun," retorted the earl, with a twinkle. "Bless my soul! You ought to have seen me five minutes ago, Mr. Potts—with at least six charming young ladies round me, all clamouring for a kiss. Some of these parlour games are not half so silly as they seem, by gad!"

Mr. Potts laughed.

"Where is that particular game going on?" he asked dryly. "I haven't been lucky enough to get into it yet."

Lord Westbrooke gave him a quick look.

"You don't seem quite yourself, Mr. Potts," he said bluntly. "Forgive me for saying so, but I've noticed a worried look on your face once or twice."

Uncle Ben started guiltily.

"By golly! I didn't know I could be read so easily," he said. "That's bad! I shall have to be more careful."

"Not worried about the boy, are you?"

"Bless my life, no, sir," said Mr. Potts. "He's all right. Look at him! Having the time of his life with those boys and girls, I should imagine. Marvellous young animals—boys! The way in which they can recover is little short of miraculous."

"I rather think," said the earl carefully, "that you are trying to change the subject."

"Well, I'll confess that I'm not as contented as I might be," said Uncle Ben, with reluctance. "I have a feeling all the time,

Lord Westbrooke, that my presence here is—well, rather like a damper on the party."

"Nonsense, my dear sir—nonsense," said the earl. "Good gracious me! Look at the party for yourself!"

"I'm not thinking so much of the young people," said Mr. Potts slowly. "There have been some strange happenings—and it's no good blinking at the facts. That man Rutley—"

"He's under arrest."

"I know; but we don't know who he was, or why he came from Travis Dene," said Uncle Ben. "At least, we can only guess. There's not much doubt about it. He came here after me. I know a great deal of the Chinese, Lord Westbrooke—and whilst a great many of them are honourable and honest as men of any other race, there are others who are fiendishly cunning. The Grand Mandarin of Shan-Si belongs to the latter breed. There's something in the Chinese psychology which a white man can never fathom."

"True—true!" admitted his lordship.

"This infernal mandarin has absolutely no grudge against my unfortunate nephew—but he would blot out Jimmy's life with as little compunction as he would tread on an ant," said Mr. Potts soberly. "Jimmy is of my blood—and by killing him, the mandarin would bring suffering to me. I could be dealt with later. You see? The more I think of these peculiar events, the more I suspect, against my better judgment, that the hounds are on my trail. And if anything happens under this roof it would be a terrible shock for Lady Helen and her young guests."

"Come, my dear sir, you mustn't talk like that," said Lord Westbrooke. "I don't believe for a moment that you are in any real danger. It all seems so—so fantastic."

"I happened to go out on the terrace half an hour ago for a breath of fresh air," said Uncle Ben quietly. "I'll swear I saw a figure dart for cover behind a big clump of laurel bushes."

"Good gracious!"

"Now, mysterious men don't hang about a place like Tregellis Castle in ordinary circumstances," continued Mr. Potts. "We can dismiss the very idea of burglars. It's far too early in the evening. I went to the end of the path, but I could see nobody. I'm beginning to get uneasy about all this."

"H'm! It is certainly—h'm—worrying," admitted Lord Westbrooke, frowning. "Funny thing about that wretched fellow Zacchi. How on earth did he vanish? You don't suppose—"

Crash!

A particularly noisy game of musical chairs was in progress at the moment, and all the boys and girls were shouting and laughing, but that sudden splintering crash of glass rose above all other sounds. The game stopped abruptly, and all eyes turned upon the great window where the crash had occurred. It was heavily curtained, but one of the curtains was thrust aside.

"Oh!" went up a gasp.



A figure stood there—the figure of a man in a black robe. He appeared to be a Chinaman, although a closer look revealed the fact that he wore a yellow mask.

The man swept a quick glance round until his glittering eyes saw Mr. Benjamin Potts. His hand went up, something flashed, and it streaked across the room like forked lightning.

"Not this time!" snapped Uncle Ben harshly.

For a man so big he stepped aside with amazing agility. His hand whipped up—and there, in his grasp, was a quaint-looking Oriental dagger. He had actually caught it in full flight!

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Lord Westbrooke, staring.

"We learn how to dodge daggers in China," said Mr. Potts grimly. "That was intended for my heart—and it would have gone home if I hadn't dodged in the nick of time."

The rest of his words were drowned in the tumult which now arose. The intruder had vanished—he had backed out through the broken window. And Nipper, Handforth, and a number of other boys were rushing headlong in chase. Lord Westbrooke and Mr. Potts shouted to them to come back, but they took no heed.

It was bright moonlight outside on the terrace, and the snow-covered lawns were bathed in the silvery radiance. As the boys tumbled out they could see very little at first—for the lights in the ball-room were brilliant. After running a few steps in the cold, crisp air, Nipper let out a yell.

"There he goes!" he shouted. "Look! Over there—across the lower lawn!"

"By George, yes!"

"After him!"

"He tried to kill Uncle Ben!" panted Jimmy. "We must capture him!"

They went streaming across the lawn.

Then another shout went up.

"There are two of them!" warned Nipper. "I say, we'd better be careful, you chaps! Look! Can't you see two figures running — They've dodged behind those evergreens now."

Not many of those hurrying boys had seen the two figures, but Nipper knew that he had made no mistake. It was a futile chase, however. The strangers succeeded in making their escape. For it was pitchy dark in the shadows behind the heavy clumps of evergreens and under the firs and other trees.

The boys, having lost their quarry, found it impossible to pick up the trail again. They searched high and low—and by this time, too, footmen and grooms were rushing out with lanterns. Uncle Ben himself, scorning all danger, joined in the hunt.

One discovery was made—and it was a curious one.

There was a spot behind some bushes where the snow was considerably trampled, as though there had been a quick, desperate struggle. Amidst the disorder of snow lay a curious little object. It had remained un-

seen until one of the grooms came along with a lantern.

Nipper picked it up, and he drew his breath in sharply as he did so. Handforth and Travers and one or two others gathered round, staring.

"What is it?" asked three or four eager voices.

"An upper dental plate," said Nipper.

"What!"

The others stared—and they recognised the ugly yellow fangs which were attached to that very novel dental plate. Zacchi's!

## CHAPTER 16.

### Uncle Ben's Decision!

ALL the boys remembered the mysterious Zacchi, and his horrible-looking yellow teeth. So they had been false! And what honest man would wear a dental plate fitted with such fangs?

Nipper's thoughts were busy. Zacchi, as he had half suspected, was one of Mr. Potts' enemies—perhaps in league with Rutley. They were the Mandarin's agents! It was Zacchi who had thrown the dagger. And then, in escaping, he had been pursued by—Nelson Lee!

Nipper thrilled at the thought. Lee had struggled with the wretch, and in the fight those false teeth had become dislodged.

Others were thinking in just the same way—only they did not guess at the identity of the second man.

"Zacchi's teeth!" said Handforth, staring. "That proves that Zacchi wasn't a ghost, eh? He was here, too—he tried to kill Mr. Potts!"

"But what about the other man?" asked Gresham.

"The other man was probably the man who dragged Jimmy out of the lake," said Travers shrewdly. "Mystery Man No. 1 appears to be a bloodthirsty enemy, and Mystery Man No. 2 dodges here and there doing the rescue stunt when necessary. Upon my Samson! Things are getting exciting!"



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Having come to the conclusion that it was a waste of time to search any longer, they all went indoors. Uncle Ben was acclaimed as a marvel—much to his embarrassment.

"Never saw anything like it in all my life, sir," said Handforth admiringly. "By George! The way you caught that dagger was like a miracle."

"I doubt if I should have caught it if I hadn't been half on my guard," admitted Mr. Potts. "Something seemed to warn me. You remember, Lord Westbrooke, how uneasy I felt? I don't know what it was, but I was jumpy, nervous. And when that crash of glass came I knew!"

"If you hadn't moved you would have been killed," said Lord Westbrooke quietly. "Thank heaven the tragedy was averted."

Mr. Potts squared his shoulders.

"The incident has at least helped me to make up my mind," he said firmly. "Much as I should like to remain under your hospitable roof, Lady Helen, I must ask you to grant me leave to go."

"It is for you to decide, Mr. Potts," said Lady Helen quietly.

"Oh, but begad, I mean——" began Montie.

"Mr. Potts must be allowed to know best, Montie," said his aunt.

Montie said no more. He quite understood that Lady Helen was horrified by what had happened; moreover, she would put no obstacle in Mr. Potts' way if he was determined to leave.

"It is far better for us to be frank, lad," said the millionaire. "We know—now—that these infernal Chinks are after me. I could not possibly remain under this roof, bringing danger to you all. I shall be glad, Lady Helen, if you will allow me to take my departure the first thing in the morning."

"Shall I go with you, uncle?" asked Jimmy eagerly.

"Yes, you must come, too," said Mr. Potts. "We are both in danger—and with our departure Tregellis Castle will be free from all menace. By golly! It's a pity, and I hate to admit that such fantastic things as these can occur in real life. But we have had the proof. We must go. In London, perhaps, we shall be able to secure the protection of Scotland Yard. In fact, I shall make a point of visiting Scotland Yard immediately upon my arrival."

"And a sound, common sense plan, Mr. Potts," said Lord Westbrooke heartily.

The party came to an abrupt conclusion. After that dramatic interruption, games and gaiety were out of the question. Fortunately, the hour was late and everybody was tired, so it was not any great hardship to retire.

"I'm not allowing you to take any more chances, Mr. Potts," said Lord Westbrooke, after most of the young people had gone to bed. "Whether you like it or not, I have given orders for two of my menservants to patrol the terrace outside your bed-room window—throughout the night."

"I am grateful, sir—but it grieves me exceedingly," said Uncle Ben. "For the boy's sake, I will utter no protest."

"Furthermore, two of my footmen will be on duty in the corridor, outside your bedroom door," continued the earl. "Yen, your own servant, may be a very good man, but we'll make doubly sure."

"I can only again say that I am extremely grateful," said the millionaire. "It is far better that I should take Jimmy away. All this excitement is bad for him. Much as we love this historic castle, the atmosphere is—well, not exactly mysterious, but it is hardly the kind of atmosphere for a boy in his nervous condition. London, with all its lights, with its theatres and its hotels—that setting will be more fitting."

"I entirely agree with you," said the earl. "And on no account neglect to enlist the services of Scotland Yard."

Nipper and Handforth and some of the others had been preparing to maintain a watch during the night; but they were told by Lord Westbrooke that their services would not be required. The matter was in the hands of grown men.

"Well, it's a swindle," said Handforth gruffly. "Why shouldn't we be allowed to keep watch?"

"Don't grumble, old man," said Church. "Montie's uncle is doing it for our sake. We're guests—and there's no reason why we shouldn't have our night's rest. After all, there are plenty of men about the place—and there's not one chance in a thousand that anything exciting will happen."

"I suppose that's right, too," admitted Handforth reluctantly. "These beggars only act when they can take people by surprise."

"In that case, we might as well go to bed," said Nipper. "Well, cheerio, you chaps. Pity that old Jimmy is leaving us—but perhaps it'll be for the best."

They parted, and Nipper was passing along the corridor to his own bed-room when something caused him to halt. A door was standing wide open near at hand. His heart thudded. That door, he knew, belonged to one of the rooms which was not in use. Inside all was black and mysterious.

"I say, you fellows——" began Nipper.

A hand shot out of the darkness, and Nipper was suddenly pulled headlong into the dark room. The door closed with a soft click.

"This is the second time I have been obliged to adopt these tactics with you, young 'un—but I want to have a word with you in private," said a soft, familiar voice. "My presence in this noble house is not generally known—and I have no desire that it should be known."

"Guv'nor!" gurgled Nipper, with mingled joy and amazement.

For he recognised the voice of Nelson Lee.

*(Continued on page 43.)*



***Gather round for a cheery chat with your Editor.***



A breezy chat with readers conducted by the **EDITOR**. All letters should be addressed to The Editor,

**NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.**

**H**APPY Christmas, everybody!

Christmas is the time when we eat, drink and are merry—when we forget our cares in laughter and gaiety and games. 'Three cheers for Christmas!

Here's wishing all my reader-chums the happiest and jolliest Christmas you've ever spent. Write and tell me all about it, if you like—I can assure you that your letters will be extremely welcome and appreciated.

And don't forget to mention this special bumper Christmas number of the NELSON LEE to your chums who are non-readers. Tell them what a good thing they are missing. A copy of the Old Paper is the finishing touch to an ideal Christmas!

\* \* \*

Pen-sketches of three more St. Frank's Fifth-Formers: **GEORGE HODDER**. A "whale" on classics. A very learned fellow and so advanced in Latin that he is practically as good as a dictionary. Heaps of fellows are friendly with him, not because they like him personally, but because they can learn such a lot from him during a brief chat. **STANLEY HULBERT**. Wears glasses. Regards himself as a poet. One of his essays is generally to be found in the "Senior School Magazine." But the only people who read his poems and essays are the editor and Stanley himself. **BERTRAM LOVE**. Stout and jolly. The butt of the other Fifth-Formers and a thoroughly good fellow. His sunny good nature has made him one of the favourites of the Upper school.

\* \* \*

Your only hope of obtaining every number of the Old Paper that has ever been published—Tom Dalglish (Glasgow)—is to get in touch with a reader who has the whole collection for sale. If you are in earnest about this I will print your full name and address in an early issue.

It would interest you—Julius Herman (Tarkestad)—to know that Herbert Vandyke, the South African junior at St. Frank's, plays regularly for the Fourth Form XI, and he has recently shown such improved form that he is almost certain to get his place in the Junior School XI.

\* \* \*

The best boxer in the Ancient House Remove—"A Reader" (Luton)—is Nipper.

\* \* \*

Edgar Fenton has been the captain of the school—Leonard Howarth (Wardle)—since the first St. Frank's story appeared. The titles you require are as follows: Old Series, No. 370—"The Cannibal Horde"; 371—"The Black Invaders"; 372—"The Terror from the Sky"; 373—"The Secret of the Pirates' Cave"; 374—"The Winged Deliverer"; 375—"The Golden Rover"; 376—"The Kingdom of Wonder."

\* \* \*

At one time—Jack Godden (Hilton, South Australia)—Lord Dorrimore had a small moustache, but he is now clean-shaven—and looks all the better for it. There is not much difference between the ages of Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore. The West Square is behind the West House; a big, open space between the wing of the West House and the Ancient House, with West Arch in a central position. Hubert Jarrow is in Study F in the Ancient House, and his chums are Jerry Dodd and Charley Bangs.

\* \* \*

Bertie Onions will probably be appearing in the stories at intervals—Wyn Rawles (Stratford, New Zealand). The word "Remove" is pronounced in the ordinary way. Congratulations, Miss Wyn, for your most excellent and interesting letter. I shall look forward to hearing from you again



A scoundrel rides post-haste in a post-chaise—and is mislaid.

# Outlawed!

A stirring serial of old-time  
romance and adventure.



By  
**DAVID  
GOODWIN**

## A Free Ride for Slink!

“**W**HAT did your master pay you to do this, knave?” inquired Dick of the postillion.

“I know nothing about it, sir!” cried the fellow, trembling. “I was to jump off if the mares started to bolt!”

“If!” retorted Dick. “You knew right well they would bolt, scoundrel! Where is Samuel Slink faring this morning—ch? Speak!” he added fiercely, clapping his double-pistol to the man’s head.

“He—he was to ride along presently, on his nag!” stammered the prisoner.

“Didn’t I tell you, Turpin?” said Dick. He shut the chaise door. “Now, you red-nosed rascal, go to the mares’ heads, and hold them steady where they are. When you see Samuel Slink coming, beckon to him to ride up, and do it earnestly, hear you?”

“Y-yes, sir!” stuttered the postillion, whose knees were knocking together with fright.

“Leave your post, or make any move of treachery at your peril! Remember

that two pistols will be covering you from the pinewood, and any act of disobedience will be your last! Let him take the bridles, Turpin, then do you draw back among the trees.” Ralph, come with me.”

In a few moments there was nothing to be seen save a lemon-coloured chaise standing in the middle of the highway with a dismounted post-boy in front of the mares, holding them by the bridle as though his life depended on it.

Hidden in the pine-grove, Dick watched the road, pistol in hand. He told Ralph of the plot on his life, and that volatile young person sat down on the moss and laughed till Dick threatened to stuff some of it into his mouth.

“Keep quiet, you young ass!” hissed Dick. “By the rood, here comes Slink!”

Down between the hedges appeared a sorrel nag, astride which sat the lean black-clad figure of Samuel Slink. He pulled up abruptly, and craned his long neck forward in surprise, as he saw the chaise standing still.



The postillion, desperately mindful of Dick's pistol, freed one arm and beckoned frantically. Samuel Slink rode forward until he was within fifty yards of the chaise. Then he halted again, peering suspiciously about him. He put his hands to his mouth and called nervously:

"What's the matter?"

"Come here!" replied the post-boy in a hoarse howl, meant to be a whisper.

But Samuel Slink did not obey. He was more than ever suspicious; it was not his habit to take risks. He began to edge away again nervously. Then, like a thunderbolt, Dick and Black Satan shot out from the wood and dashed at him.

"Halt, there, Samuel Slink!" shouted Dick, presenting his pistol.

But Slink gave a shriek of terror, and clapping the spurs to his nag, galloped away frantically for the village.

Dick did not fire. He spoke to Satan, and in a dozen bounds the magnificent black horse overtook the sorrel. Dick bent over and caught the bridle, pulling the nag up short. Samuel Slink shot over its head on to the road.

"Now, Master Slink," said Dick, covering him with the pistol and releasing his hold of the nag, "get up and accompany me to the chaise, where I shall require a little explanation of you."

"Spare me! Spare me!" shrieked Slink, clasping his hands.

"If you do not obey," rapped Dick, "I shall follow my friend Turpin's advice and shoot you through the head. And that will be annoying, because it will prove him in the right and myself in the wrong. Choose quickly—which is it to be?"

Whining and cringing, Slink picked himself up and sneaked towards the chaise, Dick shepherding him along with the pistol. When the man found Turpin and Ralph waiting to receive him, he burst into fresh lamentations.

"Now, Master Slink," said Dick grimly,

"as you are still in your old trade, despite Vane Forrester's death, and are now in the service of Hector of that ilk, you must take the consequences. I am no admirer of hired assassins, especially when directed against me and my kin."

"I am but an old and faithful servant!" wailed Slink; "I have never harmed a fly!"

"And yet, after hatching this cowardly plot, you came here to assure yourself that it had succeeded, and that my brother had shared the fate of those who sit behind the Grantley mares!"

"The fate?" moaned Slink. "What fate?"

"The fate of being bolted within a locked chaise, and being dashed to death in the quarries, you skulking knave!" quoth Dick harshly.

"I know not what you mean!" cried Slink, trembling.

"Ah!" said Dick innocently. "Have I made a mistake? It was not you, then, that Turpin and I saw buying the mares at the coper's yesterday?"

"Ay, I bought them," nodded Slink, realising that he could not deny the charge. "I lent them to the landlord of the inn. And beautiful, harmless creatures they are, as you may see, sir!"

"Then there is nothing wrong with the mares?"

"Nothing, sir; else I should not have bought them."

"Master Slink," said Dick earnestly, "I have done you great wrong. I must apologise."

"Indeed, sir, I was pained at your suspicions upon an honest old servitor like myself," cringed Samuel; "but let that pass!"

"Not at all! Not at all!" said Dick. "Every reparation shall be done you. I must make good the wrong. You shall journey on your way in this comfortable chaise, drawn by these harmless creatures, and my brother Ralph will ride your

#### HOW THE STORY BEGAN

*DICK FORRESTER*, formerly a young highwayman, has been deprived of his fortune and estate at Fernhall by the trickery of

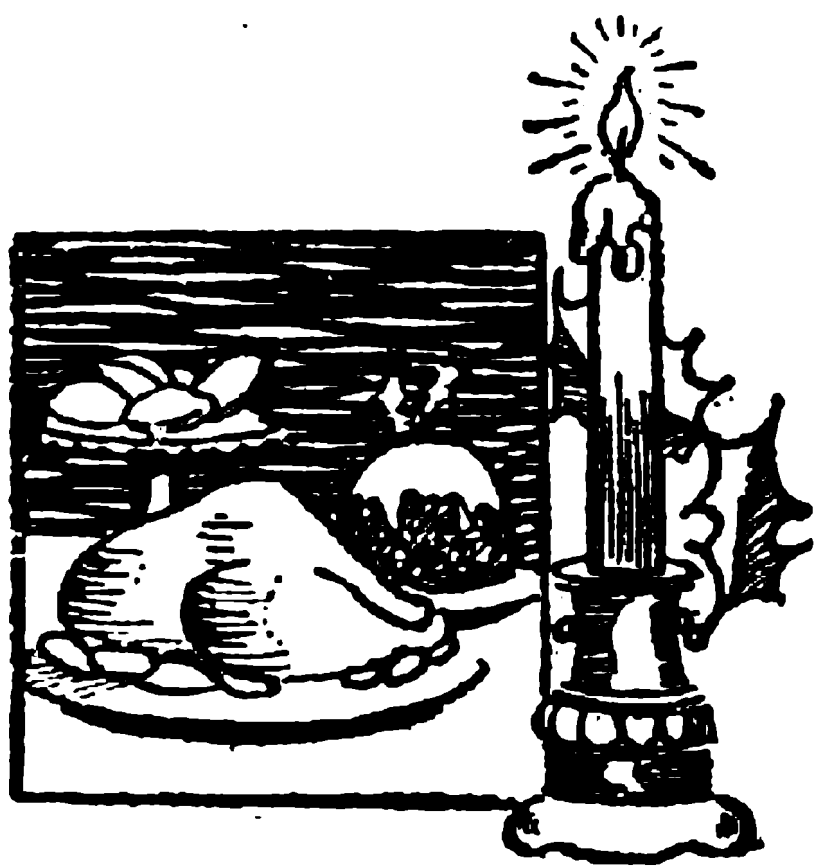
*HECTOR FORRESTER*. This is only the beginning of Dick's troubles, for he next falls foul of

*CAPTAIN SWEENEY*, the notorious leader of a gang of footpads, and is also wanted by the King's Riders for assisting his former comrade of the road,

*RICHARD TURPIN*, the famous highwayman, to escape capture. Dick is forced to become an outlaw, and he and Turpin ride off together. They are pursued by Riders, but make their escape after a fierce fight. Turpin goes off on a mission, arranging to meet Dick three days later. Sweeney makes numerous attempts on Dick's life, but every time the young outlaw eludes him. The two comrades come together again and, learning that Hector is disgracing the name of Forrester by his meanness and tyranny, they travel to Fernhall, where Dick teaches his rascally cousin a well-deserved lesson. Later, they learn of a plot—arranged by Hector through his rascally agent, Samuel Slink—to send Dick's brother, Ralph, to his death in a chaise pulled by wild horses. The highwaymen stop the vehicle in time, and then await the arrival of Samuel Slink.

(Now Read On.)





nag to Ensleigh Town for you. You will arrive the quicker."

"Nay, sir; I—I prefer to ride on my horse!" stammered Slink.

"Post - chaises are not for the likes of me."

"Not a bit of it. You must

let me put the matter right," insisted Dick. "It shall never be said I wronged an honest man. Ralph, open the chaise door, and I will help him in."

"I will not go in! I do not like post-chaises!" cried Slink, and turning, he tried to make a bolt for it. But Dick caught him by the arm.

"In with you, you rascal!" thundered Dick. "Enough of this. If you have spoken the truth, you will take no harm. If you have lied, you stand convicted of the attempted murder of my brother, and you shall have the same chance to which you condemned him!"

He bundled the yelling Slink into the chaise, and jammed the door hard to with a kick, disregarding the man's frantic protests.

"Up with you, there, post-boy! Quick, unless you prefer a bullet! Stand aside, Turpin!"

Dick gave the near mare a smack with his hand, there was a wild squeal, and off dashed the pair of them like a shot from a gun? Before they had gone fifty yards, the post-boy threw himself off skilfully, rolled to his feet, and scampered away among the trees. The mares galloped like demons along the road.

The chaise tore and bumped after them, and Samuel Slink's head, thrust through the window and bobbing like a jack-in-the-box with every bump the vehicle made, roared and bellowed lustily.

The three comrades watched the thing as it became a mere speck in the distance. There was a sudden puff of dust, a far-off crash, and no more was to be seen of the lemon-coloured chaise and the Grantley mares.

#### Under Escort!

**T**URPIN shut the lid of his snuff-box with a snap.

"So much for Samuel Slink," said the famous highwayman. "You are well rid of him, Dick. Speaking for myself, I would have given him a bullet by way of send off, to make

sure; but there is no doubt he has met his end. Shall we ride on, and see how it befall?"

"No," replied Dick. "I care not what has become of Samuel Slink. My only desire is to hurry Ralph on to St. Austell's, out of the way of assassins and schemers. Whatever has happened to Slink is no more than he condemned Ralph to."

"I feel no great curiosity myself," agreed Ralph. "The man was too much of a coward, besides his rascality, to deserve any pity. There is his sorrel nag yonder, and as my chaise is gone, I will borrow the late Samuel's horse, and ride on with you to Pakeley."

"Nay; leave the beast alone, and jump up behind me on Black Satan," said Dick. "It will do you no good to ride a dead man's horse. Did Hector's rascals hear of it, they would get you arrested on some plea or other, and brought into trouble."

Ralph mounted Satan behind his outlawed brother, and the three set out again.

"To be rid of Samuel Slink is cheap at the loss of a chaise," remarked Dick, "and the knave is well served, since his own horses have killed him instead of you. It is a pity about the loss of two such fine creatures, for they have certainly broken their necks in the fall in yonder quarry. Pink me, I should liked to have had the breaking-in of them; I think I could have tamed them. They cannot be as bad as Satan was before I broke him in—he killed as many men as the two of them together."

"No, matter," consoled Turpin, "the mares died in a good cause. I only regret that your worthy cousin Hector was not in the chaise as well."

"Nay; I shall rid myself of Hector in a better manner than that," retorted Dick. "Turn off across the open here, Turpin; I must not ride along the highway with Ralph behind me, lest I bring disaster on him. We will cut across country to Pakeley, where he can get another chaise, and post onward with all speed. Ralph, sit tight!"

Away went the horses across the open heath, threading in and out among the quarry pits, and skirting the groves of pine trees. Both Satan and Bess were fresh, and in four hours' time Pakeley Town was neared, and the travellers halted.

"We've left the enemy behind this time," remarked Dick. "Jump down, Ralph, and go into the town on foot. You must not be seen with us. You've plenty of money. Go to the chief



hostelry in the place, which is Queen Anne, and order the best chaise and horses they have. Get your meal while they are put in, and then push on without delay. We shall await you on the other side of the town, and though you will not see us from the chaise, we will be close at hand should any danger threaten."

Forty minutes later, after having dined at another inn which was known to Turpin, the comrades rode forth again, skirted the town, waited till Ralph's chaise arrived, and then, though never seen by either Ralph or his postillion, guarded it the whole journey through. Dick rode a quarter of a mile behind, and Turpin about the same distance in front. It would have been a daring and a skilful enemy who eluded those two watch-dogs.

They put up for the night at separate inns, after a long journey, and nothing happened next day worthy of note. At last the old landmarks appeared once more, and as they drew near to St. Austell's, the two highwayman rode beside the chaise, for their presence here mattered the less.

"We had some rare sport hereabouts last year, Dick," chuckled Turpin.

"I think it will be quieter now," remarked Dick.

"Quieter! With you and that young rip of a brother of yours stirring up everything and everybody! I'll warrant there's trouble enough within a week!"

"Well," quoth Dick, laughing, "that's as it may be. But what I mean is, 'tis the safest place from Hector's plotting. In Vane's time, when Ralph was at the school, here, it cost both of us many a tussle to thwart the man's villainies. As you may remember, Ralph found time, among his many devilries at the school, to win a scholarship, which placed him under the care of the school guardians, and, of course, he has it still. So, you see, there is no way for Hector to trick him out by process of law, and you may leave me to see he does not do it by force."

"They all know here that Ralph is the brother of Galloping Dick—eh?" asked Turpin.

"Ay, but with the scholarship, that can do him no hurt. He is popular with all the boys—it isn't every Fifth Form youngster who has a real live highwayman for a brother! As for Dr. Trelawney, the Head, he is my sworn friend, since I had the luck to save his life. But see, here we are at the school, and—by the rood—yonder comes Trelawney himself out of the gate!"

*(Another rousing instalment of this magnificent serial next week.)*

## The CASTLE OF TERROR!

*(Continued from page 38.)*

### CHAPTER 17.

#### Off to Somerton Abbey!

"DON'T appear to be so surprised, Nipper," chuckled Nelson Lee. "You half suspected that I was somewhere about, no doubt?"

"Yes, rather, guv'nor," replied Nipper. "All the same, you gave me a bit of a start. What are you doing here? Were you the man who dragged Jimmy out of the lake this morning?"

"I'm not here to answer any questions," murmured Lee. "I'll satisfy your curiosity later on—when I'm ready."

He switched on a small electric lamp, and placed it on a table.

Nipper, who was expecting to see Nelson Lee in some clever disguise, was astonished. For Lee was just himself, neat, spruce, and very virile.

"You look awfully fit, guv'nor," whispered Nipper breathlessly.

"Work always keeps me fit," replied Lee. "And I can assure you, young 'un, that I have been having plenty of work just lately! Now, listen to me. I understand that Mr. Potts is planning to take Jimmy away in the morning?"

"Yes, sir!"

"To London?"

Nipper nodded.

"They mustn't go," said Nelson Lee. "And it is for you, Nipper, to alter the arrangements."

"I? But what can I do, sir?" asked Nipper, in amazement. "Mr. Potts won't take any notice of me, will he?"

"He may not take notice of you, but you must persuade all the other boys—and the girls, too—to back you up," said Nelson Lee. "You need not say that you have had any word with me. Let them think that it is your own idea. The solid mass of opinion will influence Mr. Potts, and that is all I require. You can do this in the morning—taking them by surprise."

"But I don't understand," protested Nipper. "I say, guv'nor, it was you who collared that beggar Zacchi, wasn't it? We found his false teeth in the snow. You didn't let him get away, did you?"

"I am very much afraid that he is a slippery customer," replied Nelson Lee gravely. "Far more slippery than you imagine, Nipper."

"And what of Rutley, sir?"

"Rutley is every bit as slippery," said the detective. "He has escaped from the police."

"Great Scott!"

"But keep this to yourself, Nipper—don't let Mr. Potts or Jimmy or any of the boys or girls know that Rutley has escaped. I've told you more than I intended to already. Now listen, young 'un. In the morning you



will suggest that Mr. Potts allows his nephew to go to Somerton Abbey."

"To—to where?"

"I seem to remember that Somerton, of the Remove, invited you all to spend part of the Christmas holiday at his ancestral home," continued Nelson Lee. "He already has some of his friends there—De Valerie, Fullwood, and some others. I want all you boys and girls to take advantage of that invitation—and Jimmy must go with you. On no account is he to be taken to London. Now slip back to your room, Nipper—and don't forget my instructions."

Nipper went, his head in a whirl of astonishment.

IN the morning after a perfectly peaceful night, Nipper sprang his bombshell.

At first, Mr. Potts flatly turned down the suggestion. He used all sorts of arguments. But in the end he compromised.

"I'll tell you what, lads," he said. "Jimmy can go with you to Somerton Abbey—he'll be perfectly safe there. The danger is for me. I won't come—I won't bring danger on an-

other splendid English home. At least, not until I am well prepared."

"You mean, you'll go to London, sir?" asked Nipper.

"I shall go to London, and consult with Scotland Yard," replied Mr. Potts. "You, Jimmy, will go with these good young people. And at Somerton Abbey, no doubt, you will be able to enjoy the rest of your holidays."

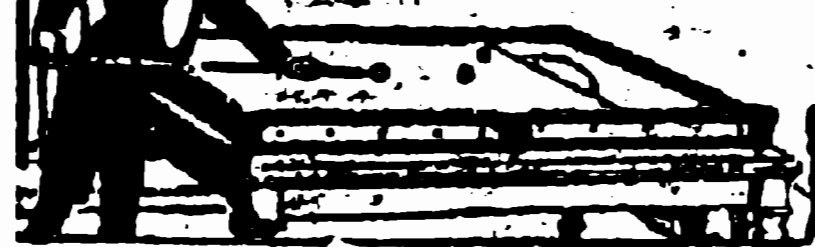
Nipper was satisfied. Nelson Lee had expressly told him that Jimmy Potts was to go to Somerton—and Jimmy was going. Perhaps it was all to the good that Uncle Ben would not be with the party.

But if they were expecting peace and quietness at Somerton Abbey, they were booked for a tremendous shock.

THE END.

(Next Wednesday's grand story of the Chums of St. Frank's is entitled: "The Well of Doom!" Packed with thrills; exciting—and mysterious! Order your copy today.)

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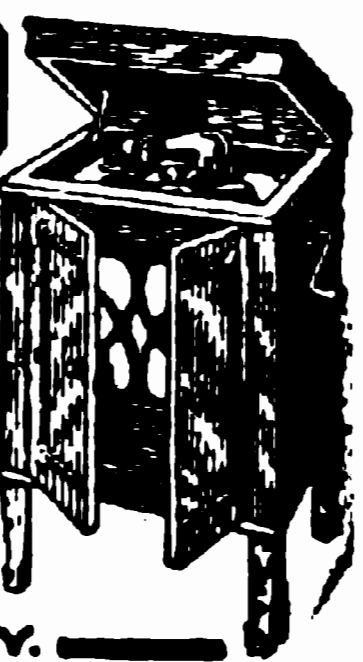
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