

Guire, who felt called upon to add to the general din.

"Me and the doc goin' to have a real newsstand right where I wanted it. Don't I wish Pete was home to hear the good news! What do you think o' that, maw? A great big newsstand right at the fountain where we can sell ten times more papes! Say, maw, the doc's a brick and don't you forget it."

"Well, hurry up and get dressed or you won't have much Christmas Day left."

Tom vaulted chair and cradle on his way back to the bedroom and slammed his tear soaked pillow into a corner of the room as an expression of his feelings towards tears.

"A real newsstand. A great big stand all to ourselves. I can see just how it's goin' to look. Gee! ain't that grand!"

But greater news was on the way

and before he had pulled on the empty stocking he heard a noise in the other room and peeped out. There was a big man in a fur overcoat at the door with another letter and he was not the postman either.

"Tom, here's another one for you." The summons was needless for Tom was already at his mother's side and had seized the white envelope.

"James B. Harrison, M.D.," he read. "That's about Pete. Jimminy Christmas! Say, maw, you open it. My hands is all shaky."

Mrs. McGuire could not make much better headway opening the envelope than Tom, but she managed to pull out the letter and Tom began to read laboriously.

"Mr. Thomas McGuire, 148 Willow St.

Dear Tom:—

Merry Christmas from Pete and the

doc. Hurrah for Pete! The operation was a great success. Pete will be running around without a crutch long before next Christmas. Come around to the hospital at four o'clock. Sincerely your friend,

JAMES B. HARRISON.

P.S.—By the way, Tom, I don't believe I shall have time to take care of my half of that newspaper privilege at the corner, so I return herewith the agreement cancelled. Leave a paper at my house every night while Pete is in the hospital and we will call it square. J. B. H."

"Three cheers for Pete," Tom yelled, and gave the table such a kick with his bare toe that it almost made him howl. A little thing like that was not allowed to break up the celebration so he grasped his mother's hands, and swung her around and around in a "ring around a rosy" until the poor

woman hardly knew whether it was Christmas or Fourth of July.

"Ain't this a grand Christmas?" he shouted, "ain't the doc bully? Ain't Pete the nicest brother in the whole world?"

"Yes, yes, yes," groaned Mrs. McGuire, trying her best to regain her breath and balance. "O, it's—too—good—to be true!"

"Well, it is true, fer I knew the doc wouldn't fool me. Ain't he the grandest ever?"

"Tom you'll never be ready to go to the hospital by four o'clock if you don't get dressed."

Tom rushed into the bedroom and came back with the empty stocking that had hung on the chair.

"Say, maw, I'll shut my eyes, and you stick them two letters in me stocking and I'll pretend I found 'em there. Ain't this a bee-oootiful Christmas?"

NUMBER 70, BERLIN

A STORY of espionage as they had it in England and still have it in Russia. Told with great simplicity and dramatic force. What is Number 70? That's what Lewin Rodwell knew all about when some people didn't.

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

AGAIN Trustram laughingly replied, "I didn't say so," but from his friend's manner Lewin Rodwell knew that he had learnt the great and most valuable secret of the true intentions of the British Navy.

It was not the first piece of valuable information which he had wormed out of his official friends. So clever was he that he now pretended to be highly eager and enthusiastic over the probable result of the strategy.

"Let's hope Von Tirpitz will fall into the trap," he said. "Of course it will have to be very cunningly baited, if you are to successfully deceive him. He's already shown himself to be an artful old bird."

"Well—without giving anything away—I happen to know, from certain information passing through my hands, that the bait will be sufficiently tempting."

"So we may expect to hear of a big naval battle about the sixteenth. I should say that it will, in all probability, be fought south of Iceland, somewhere off the Shetlands."

"Well, that certainly is within the range of probability," was the other's response. "All I can tell you—and in the very strictest confidence, remember—is that the scheme is such a cleverly conceived one that I do not believe it can possibly fail."

"And if it failed?"

"Well—if it failed," Trustram said, hesitatingly and speaking in a lower tone—"if it failed, then no real harm would occur—only one thing perhaps: that the East Coast of England might be left practically unguarded for perhaps twelve hours or so. That's all."

"Well, that would not matter very much, so long as the enemy obtains no knowledge of the British Admiral's intentions," remarked Lewin Rodwell, contemplating the end of his cigar and reflecting for a few seconds.

Then he blurted out:

"Gad! that's jolly interesting. I

PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

LEWIN RODWELL and Sir Boyle Huntley are directors of the Ochrida Copper Corporation, in London. Jack Sainsbury, a clerk of the company, overhears a conversation between them which leads him to suspect them of being traitors. Jack and Dr. Jerrold, an intimate friend, have together been investigating acts of espionage for the War Office. Dr. Jerrold is found locked in his room, dying. He explains that he has been shot. His death is a mystery. There is no bullet wound. He leaves a letter for Jack, with Trustram, of the Admiralty. This letter is not to be delivered or opened for a year. Jack hears that Rodwell is a German, and his real name Ludwig Heitzman. The Coroner's Inquiry into the Doctor's strange death results in a verdict of suicide. Doctor Jerrold leaves £18,000 to Jack. Rodwell is aware of Jack overhearing his conversation with Boyle and has him dismissed from the company. Trustram has become quite friendly with Rodwell, who cunningly draws naval secrets from the Admiralty official.

By WILLIAM LE QUEUX

shall wait for next Wednesday with all eagerness."

"You won't breathe a word, will you? Remember, it was you who obtained the information by suggestion," Trustram said, with a good-humored laugh.

"Can't you really rely on me, my dear fellow, when I give you my word of honour as an Englishman to say nothing?" he asked. "I expect I am often in the know in secrets of the Cabinet, and I am trusted."

"Very well," replied his friend. "I accept your promise. Not a word must leak out. If it did, then all our plans would be upset, and possibly it would mean the loss of one, or more, of our ships. But you, of course, realize the full seriousness of it all."

"I do, my dear Trustram—I do," was the reassuring answer. "No single whisper of it shall pass my lips. That, I most faithfully promise you."

CHAPTER VIII.

Toilers of the North Sea.

JUST as it was growing dark on the following evening, a powerful pale grey car, with cabriolet body, drew out of the yard of the quaint old Saracen's Head Hotel at Lincoln, and, passing slowly through the town, set out on the straight, open road which led past Langworth station to Wragby, and on to Horncastle.

The occupant of the car, muffled up as though he were an invalid, had come in from London half an hour before, taken his tea in the coffee-room, and had resumed his journey,

together with his smart, clean-shaven chauffeur.

Though he posed as an invalid at the Saracen's Head, yet as soon as the car had left the town he threw off his thick muffler, opened his coat and drew a long sigh of relief.

Truth to tell, Mr. Lewin Rodwell, whose photograph appeared so constantly in the picture-papers, was not over anxious to be seen in Lincoln, or, indeed, in that neighbourhood at all. With Penney, his trusted chauffeur—a man who, like himself, was a "friend of Germany"—he had set out from Bruton Street that morning, and all day they had sat side by side on their journey towards the Fens.

MANY times, after chatting with Penney, he had lapsed into long spells of silence, during which time he had puffed vigorously at his cigar, and thought deeply.

Until, after about five miles, they passed Langworth station, they had been content with their side-lights, but soon they switched on the huge electric head-lamps, and then they "put a move on," as Rodwell was anxious to get to his journey's end as quickly as possible.

"You'll drop me, as usual, at the three roads beyond Mumby. Then go into Skegness and put up for the night. Meet me at the same spot tomorrow morning at seven-thirty."

"Very well, sir," was the young man's obedient reply.

"Let's see," remarked Rodwell. "When we were up in this lonely, forsaken part of the country a week ago,

where did you put up?"

"The last time in Louth, sir. The time before in Lincoln, and the time before that in Grimsby. I haven't been in Skegness for a full month."

"Then go there, and mind and keep your mouth shut tight!"

"I always do, sir."

"Yes, it pays you to do so—eh?" laughed Rodwell. "But I confess, Penney, that I'm getting heartily sick of this long journey," he sighed, "compelled, as we are, to constantly go many miles out of our way in order to vary the route."

"The road is all right in summer, sir, but it isn't pleasant on a cold stormy night like this—especially when you've got a two-mile walk at the end of it."

"That's just it. I hate that walk. It's so dark and lonely, along by that open dyke. Yet it has to be done; and, after all, the darker the night—perhaps the safer it is."

Then he lapsed again into silence, while the car—well-driven by Penney, who was an expert driver—flew across the broad open fenlands in the direction of the sea.

The December night was dark, with rain driving against and blurring the wind-screen, in which was a small oblong hole in the glass, allowing Penney to see the long, lonely road before him. Passing the station at Horncastle, they continued through the town and then up over the hill on the Spillsby road and over the wide gloomy stretch until, about half-past seven o'clock, after taking a number of intricate turns up unfrequented fen-roads, they found themselves passing through a small, lonely, ill-lit village. Beyond this place, called Orby, they entered another wide stretch of those low-lying marshes which border the North Sea on the Lincolnshire coast, marshes intersected by a veritable maze of roads, most of which were without sign-posts, and where, in the darkness, it was a very easy matter to lose one's way.

