

DANGERS OF THE SURF.

BRAVE RESCUE AT NEWCASTLE.

RESCUER NEARLY DROWNED.

Newcastle beach was the scene of two rescues from drowning on Saturday afternoon and yesterday morning, both being distinguished by conspicuous bravery on the part of the rescuers, although, through interference by those dangerous, meddling people who will persist in getting in the way on such occasions, one of the rescuers yesterday morning nearly lost his life.

Miss Whitelow, a visitor from Singleton, was bathing in the surf on Saturday afternoon near that part of the beach reserved for ladies, when she was caught in the undertow and swept seawards. Her plight was noticed by Mr. John Payne, a Newcastle resident, who was standing in the Lower Reserve. Racing down to the beach, he plunged in without waiting to divest himself of his clothing, and, reaching the lady, managed, after a struggle with the waves, to get her on to a ledge of rocks. The waves were ugly, and breaking over the rocks, and Miss Whitelow was again washed off, but Mr. John Fuller, a member of the Newcastle Surf Club, had gone out, and Mr. Payne and he succeeded in getting her safely back to shore. Mr. H. Findlay also went out with the line, but Mr. Fuller and Mr. Payne had by this time got Miss Whitelow into safety.

Yesterday morning Mr. Peter Harkins, who lives in Newcastle, got into trouble through being carried out by the undertow. Mr. S. Staton, who was standing at the water's edge when the alarm was given, raced for the line, and donning the belt, went in to the rescue, Messrs. Gordon Lees and George Preston having meanwhile swum out to the struggling man. Mr. Staton had a very bad time. The waves were of that ugly kind known to surging parlance as "dumpers," and Mr. Staton was dumped three times before he reached his man. Once when within a few feet of him he was caught by a big wave and dashed back some twenty yards. But it was when he secured the patient that his trouble began. Despite all that those who were nominally in charge of operations on the beach could do, the line was rushed by a lot of undoubtedly well-meaning but misguided individuals, who proceeded forthwith to haul on the line—as one irate member of the Surf Club put it—"as if they were pulling in a schnapper." Staton's plight can be well imagined. The line had become twisted around his neck, and through the strain that was being put on it from ashore, he was being slowly choked. But through it all he stuck bravely to his man, bringing him safely in. Then he collapsed. He had swallowed a lot of water, and, as he remarked in

ed a lot of water, and, as he remarked in the afternoon, he knew something of the sensation of drowning. Mr. Staton was in such a bad way, that medical assistance was summoned, and Dr. McDonald, of the Newcastle Hospital, went down to the Surf Club's shed and treated him.

The incident, which very nearly had a tragic termination, shows the necessity of the strictest enforcement of that clause of the bathing ordinance, which refers to persons interfering with those using life-saving appliances. The clause reads as follows:—"Wherever life-saving appliances are in use, either by members of the public or by any volunteer life-saving club, for the saving of life, any inspector may (a), if he considers that the work is hampered by too many persons assisting, or for any other reason, may direct any person to cease assisting; (b) direct any person to stand back from the scene of operations, and every person so directed shall obey." The penalty for the breach of this clause of the ordinance is a fine not exceeding £10, with the alternative of imprisonment up to three months.

Apart from the possibility of punishment under the ordinance quoted, the occurrence of yesterday morning should impress on people the extreme necessity of standing clear when the time comes for the life-savers to get to their hazardous work. In the ranks of the Newcastle Life-saving and Surf Bathing Club there are many splendid fellows, some of whom are nearly always on duty, and among the pluckiest and most expert of them is Mr. Staton, whose life was in such imminent danger yesterday. It is the intention of the inspectors who are members of the club to have the ordinance strictly enforced in future, but at the same time it is hoped that the demonstration of the great danger of interference will give protection to the members of the club when engaged in the work to which is the primary object of its constitution.