

THE MYSTERY OF THE DREAM CURSE. **BAFFLING DETECTIVE
YARN INSIDE.**

Boys' ^{2¢} Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



TREMENDOUS TALE OF EGYPT'S MYSTERY.

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THE MYSTERY OF THE DREAM CURSE

(Continued from page 25.)

ducks and panama hat he looked the boy again who read detective novels in Falcon Swift's flat, and sat curled up in the easy chair like a kitten, dreaming... Heaven knows what dreams come to a boy.

"Help me, Boss," he said with that engaging grin of his that showed white teeth.

Together they carried first, one, then another, then the third of the ill-starred Egyptologists, who so nearly had lost their reason in that tomb—took them into the circular chamber where first they had seen the uncanny marvels of the dead priest's art of hypnotism.

Laying the first man on the couch, Falcon Swift set in front of him an instrument he had discovered in the tomb. It was a strange instrument, like a revolving fan, except that each limb of the fan was a brightly coloured ball. A twirl of the hand set the whole instrument in motion, and it needed only a touch for it to continue whirling for a full minute.

And as it whirled the light from the moon fell direct upon it. Simple as this device was, Falcon Swift knew that it embodied one of the oldest arts in the world.

Dragging an Egyptian couch forward, Falcon Swift and Chick between them laid the first of the excavators upon it, the Sudanese from Cairo. He was obviously mad, but past raving; he was near to death with the shocks he had experienced. Yet Falcon Swift, soothing his brow and directing his gaze upon the revolving fan of coloured lights, talking

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to him gently, brought him back from the dream curse.

He followed the same process with Doctor Asough, and with his old master, Professor Silvergroom. Under the frowning frieze bearing the malevolent likeness of the High Priest, Professor Silvergroom was brought out of the dream curse and restored to sanity and reason.

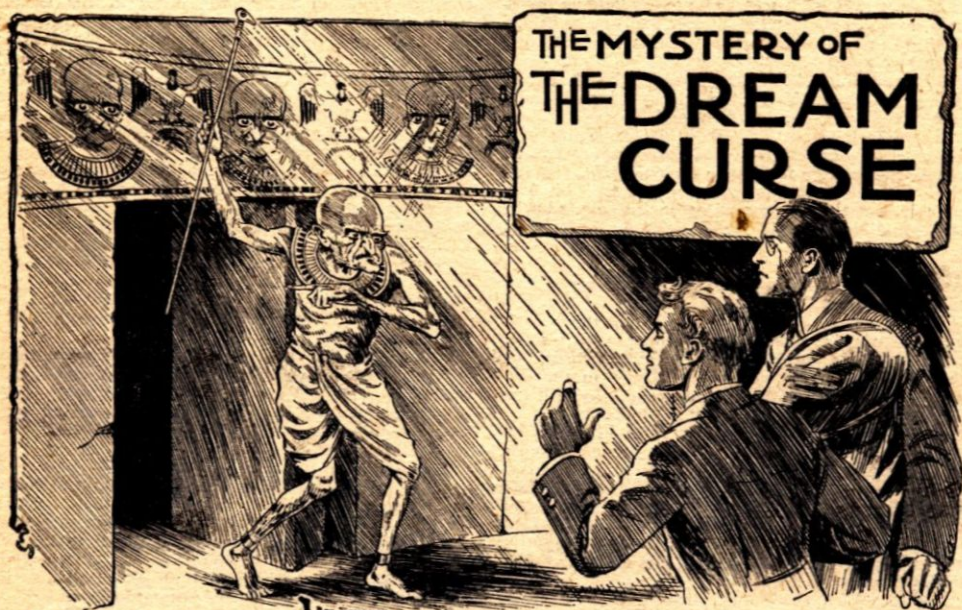
Indeed, so complete was his recovery that an hour afterwards, as the party were preparing to leave the tomb, Professor Silvergroom eagerly questioned Falcon Swift, who once had been his pupil in Egyptology, upon the discoveries he had made.

"The mummies did not actually emerge from their cases," said the Sporting Detective, gravely screwing his monocle in his eye. "Nor were there actually any batmen as we saw them. It was all a dream, induced by hypnotic influence. Come, let us have this place and go. In an hour and a half we shall be in Cairo, where we may get a good meal and rest at an hotel. We will leave the treasure, my friends. It is accursed—tainted."

And they agreed with the great criminologist, breathing eagerly as they emerged from that stuffy tomb into the fresh air.

Later, Falcon Swift explained the old magician's longevity by the hypothesis that he had kept alive by some power of hypnotism known only to the ancient priests of Egypt. When the Sporting detective broke his will it was equivalent to his death stroke. All through the ages he had lurked in the tomb, nursing his passions and hypnotically driving people mad who came under his control.

The Egg of the Plot was Hatched in a Temple whose Pylons Strike the Desert Moon, Chaps. It's a Long Yarn, and It's Complete.



INTRODUCING FALCON SWIFT, THE FAMOUS MONOCLED MANHUNTER, AND HIS BOY ASSISTANT, IN A THRILLING DUEL WITH AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PRIEST.

The Urgent Message.

SAVE for the ticking of the clock upon the mantel-shelf, the study of Falcon Swift, the famous private criminologist and sporting detective, was wrapped in utter silence. And by that same clock upon the shelf Chick, his boy assistant, had measured the period since last the silence had been broken. It was exactly one hour ago, and then the boy sleuth had broken the silence himself by purposely and ostentatiously rustling his paper.

Chick sat curled up in his favourite armchair in the study like a sleepy cat, as was his wont when he was not working. In winter his favourite occupation was to roast chestnuts in front of the fire, whilst curled up in the armchair reading—of all things!—cheap detective thrillers. As if he had not enough of thrills in his daily life.

Often Falcon Swift the detective, was busy for hours upon calculations or study of some criminal aspect of a case—intricate work in which Chick Conway could have little part.

Chick's was the alert, nimble brain of the cockney lad. In a tight corner, or when a matter wanted thinking out swiftly, the former London newsboy could be relied upon absolutely. And he generally came up splendidly to the occasion. But on abstruse problems of the sort in which Falcon Swift dabbled the boy sleuth was of little use.

Often the Sporting Detective sat at the large table covered by microscopes, books of fingerprints,

All the characters in the stories printed in this paper are fictitious: the names do not refer to any living person or persons.

reference books, etc.—often he sat, studying for hours.

And Chick would be quite content to remain somnolent in the armchair, or thinking, or reading. But now he could do none of these things. He continually gazed anxiously across the empty space of the room at his beloved Boss.

Falcon Swift sat with crossed knees in a chair, holding his monocle by its black cord, twirling it a little. He had sat like this for more than an hour, and at first glance his attitude would seem that of a man at ease.

But Chick had remarked uneasily the growing, if somewhat restrained feeling in the detective's finely carved face. As he gazed apparently out of the window Falcon Swift's eyes were vacant, yet withal they held the tense look of a man who sees visions. And as Chick watched covertly he saw a sudden flushing and paling of the face, a grim setting of the jaw accompanied by a dilation of the sensitive nostrils.

The boy sleuth didn't like it a little bit.

"Dash it all, it looks as if the Boss is in a dream," he told himself uneasily. He wanted to speak, to rouse the detective to animation, but it was a rule that when they were in the study together the detective was not to be disturbed in his work by any word from his boy assistant.

Chick hardly dared break that rule now. Nothing could be wrong, for Falcon Swift had been quite normal at dinner, and Biddy Malone, their house-

keeper, had cleared the table more than an hour ago. The detective had not left his chair since. Yet Chick was uneasy and was debating whether he should cough and so break the silence when, suddenly, the tension was snapped by Falcon Swift himself. With a start he turned, his face as white as a sheet and stared with dilated eyes a long moment at his boy assistant.

"Ah—er—Chick," the detective ejaculated at last, moving in his chair like one loosed from bonds. Chick gazed at him, very concerned.

"What's the matter, Boss—is anything the matter?" he asked hoarsely. He hesitated. "You've been acting queerly for—a long time."

Falcon Swift smiled—a grave smile. Still his face was pale, but the colour was gradually oozing back. He screwed his monocle into his right eye, and stared at Chick a long moment through the gleaming disc of glass.

At last he said abruptly: "Chick, have you any faith in dreams?"

Chick's eyes widened. But a cold, unpleasant chill ran up his spine. Something was wrong. Something eerie and musty, something terrible but intangible, hung like a brooding threat in the air. Chick tried to grasp what it was as a baby will try to grasp at the sunbeams. But it eluded him.

"Dreams, Boss? Oh, that's all rot, you know," he said a little gaspingly. "We leave dreams to girls and silly beggars who have too much to eat at supper."

Falcon Swift took out a fine cambric handkerchief and dabbed lightly at his face. His nostrils were still twitching slightly. To Chick it told its own story: this iron-nerved man had been mightily upset in some manner, and now was exerting every effort to control himself.

And for Chick there was consternation in it all, for he had been in the room all the time, and he had seen nothing happen. What then had happened?

Falcon Swift was speaking, his voice very quiet in the room.

"Nevertheless Chick, the old Egyptians held that there was a great deal in the mysteries of sleep. To those who hold the key, the madness of our dreams can show a clearer purpose and speak more clearly than all the acted wisdom of our waking life."

Chick was silent—awed. The occult, or anything akin to it—these were sciences in which he had never known Falcon Swift dabbled. Never had he seen the Boss in this mood before.

"Chick," Falcon Swift said after a long pause. "As you know, I have been approached of late by certain authorities of the British Museum in connection with the disappearance of at least three famous archaeologists in Egypt. The authorities are naturally concerned, for the loss of the three famous men is a severe blow to the country."

"I should say so, Boss," put in Chick, glad that the conversation seemed to have taken a rational turn.

"Well, it was announced in the newspapers yesterday that I had been called in on the case, and that it was probable I might take it over. I am doing so really because Professor Silvergroom, the last man to disappear, was my teacher of Egyptology at Cambridge, and I have a personal affection for him. He is an old man, and I fear that any great shock might kill him."

Falcon Swift's voice was very grave as he said this, but Chick, his assistant, did not understand at all. There was something deep behind all this, and he wanted to know what it was.

"Listen, Chick," the great detective said gravely as he took up a newspaper. "In this morning's *Dispatch* there is a remarkable story of a robbery on the Boulac Museum in Cairo—the National

museum of Egypt. It is said that many exceedingly valuable gold coins have been taken. And there is also a story floating about that two rather shrivelled-up men—one, strangely enough, in the garb of an ancient Egyptian priest, the other in the simple white ducks and sun helmet of nowadays—were seen carrying away between them from the Boulac Museum on the night of the robbery a sack that might very well have contained the stolen gold coins."

Chick sat up, interested. He guessed that in some way Falcon Swift had identified one of these men as Professor Silvergroom, the famous Egyptologist.

"It is a strange coincidence," went on the great detective in level tones, "that Professor Silvergroom should be one of the few privileged people on earth to possess a private key to the Boulac Museum. The Egyptian authorities are very jealous of their treasures as you know. None must go out of the country, but all must go to the Boulac Museum. Now the museum itself has been robbed—"

"You think then that Professor Silvergroom did it," put in Chick eagerly.

"I don't know," said the great detective earnestly, "but just now, Chick, I had a dream—a vision, call it what you will. I saw Professor Silvergroom mad, demented in the cell of a tomb. As if such things were tormenting him as I hardly like to describe."

A silence fell. All at once, quite involuntarily, Chick closed his eyes. And it was as if some communion took place between him and Falcon Swift, and he saw what the detective saw. All in a moment he saw it—the broad, lordly river, gleaming blue in the sunshine, the desert stretching away, and the children of the Nile—tramping it, on camel and on horse. And then—Chick saw an ancient tomb in the heart of the desert, a deep-cut cavity, and a room like a dungeon cell. In that cell crouched Professor Silvergroom, horror on his face, and creeping upon him step by step with horrid, crooked black legs, and protruding eyes of evil, was an enormous black beetle.

Chick saw the beetle climb slowly up on to the Professor—saw Professor Silvergroom screaming and striking at it in horror—and then saw that hideous scab head fasten at the scientist's throat, saw the blood flow . . .

Chick opened his eyes with a gasp, and stared shuddering and pale at the now composed detective.

"Boss, I had a dream—a horrible dream!" he exclaimed, gasping. "It all happened in a moment, but I dreamed I saw—ugh!"

"Yes, laddie," said the Sporting Detective, gravely and sympathetically. "It may interest you to know that of late I have been studying some of the ancient arts of the old Egyptian civilisation. Then they called it magic. Now we call each branch by its different name, such as hypnotism, mental telepathy, interpretation of dreams, and so on. It is all very queer, Chick, and now is not the time to go into details. But it amounts to this. The vision that you saw I first of all received, and by an effort of will I passed it through to your brain. That vision, Chick, is at once a message and a summons. To-morrow we sail for Egypt—for Alexandria. Yes, I have the passages already booked. To-morrow we sail to investigate this peculiar mystery of—well, shall we say visions?"

The fair-haired boy slouth shuddered. "I don't want any more visions like that, Boss," he muttered.

Amidst The Pyramids.

THE clear sapphire of the Mediterranean sky looked down upon a sea of the same azure colour. The blue waters seemed to extend to the rim of the earth, to the north and to the south, to the east

and to the west, it was all the same—an enormous expanse of sparkling blue, framed only by the huge sweep of the horizon. And through these sunlit seas a white ship was forging its way.

Boyish and lithe in his white tropical ducks and sun helmet, Chick Conway, the boy sleuth, leaned over the rails studying the startling blue of the Mediterranean.

The glamour of the East had caught the boy as if in a silken web. Now he understood those archaeologists who risked life and health in penetrating the dark tombs of the desert in search of remains of the most ancient civilisation on earth. For surely it must have been a wonderful land in the days of the Pharaohs—this land of sunshine and moonlight, of magnificent buildings and cities—this land of the lordly Nile.

Chick was longing for his first sight of Alexandria. The word had gone round that they would soon be sighting the Egyptian coast, and Chick was waiting

Chick gave a half shudder, and quite involuntarily he once again closed his eyes.

And once again out of the darkness a picture leapt in front of his brain. He started violently as if fire had touched him, and gripped the rail.

He saw a wondrous temple, its pylons striking against the moonlit sky. From out of the portals glided a wizened figure with enormous head, dressed in the garb of a Priest of the Temple. As if it were a cinema film the figure of the priest loomed larger, and Chick had a close vision of the most horrid and sinister face it had ever been his lot to see.

It was a face shrivelled and almost toothless as if the man had lived ages of time, and in every line of that terrible face was stamped with evil unspeakable.

The priest held in one hand a wand of ebony, tipped with ivory such as was used in olden times by masters of magic. This he waved, snarling and contorting his face horribly. And behind him appeared tongues of fire, leaping to the sky.

Then the vision was gone, and the boy sleuth's eyes opened. White and palpitant, he stared at the



THE GIANT BATS.—With queer screeching noises they came in flocks from the tomb of the mummies—the giant bats whose bite was death.

for the portals of the new world to open before his vision.

The Sporting Detective came quietly to the rails by Chick's side, and standing there a moment he thrust something into the boy sleuth's hand. Something cold and squat. And looking at it Chick saw that it was a revolver.

"Put it in your hip pocket and watch points night and day," the detective muttered. "I've an idea we're being watched even now. The newspapers were foolish to publish a report that I was taking up the case. They have forewarned our enemies, Chick, and Heaven knows, they are powerful enough."

"Who do you think they are then, Boss?" asked Chick eagerly.

"I don't know—I am not quite sure," responded the detective. He replaced his monocle and stared out to sea. "I thought at first that rival Egyptologists might be trying to harm the Professor, but investigations of the records of the other two reveals their absolute integrity. No; I have come to the conclusion that there is some awful and sinister influence at work."

Sporting Detective, who regarded him gravely through his monocle.

"You saw it, Chick—the vision that has been telephated to my own brain?" he asked quietly. "Heavens, I wonder what sinister influence is drawing us out here to the East. That is a lifelike picture, as the antiquaries will tell you, of an ancient Priest of Osiris—of Isis—of Horus—the gods of Egypt. Whether he dwells in Amenti, the Hades or purgatory of the ancient Egyptians, or whether he is still alive, I cannot say. But I feel that that repulsive figure and face is luring us here, laddie. I feel that now it has become a dreadful menace which we cannot escape.

Chick gave a long, shuddering sigh, and was silent, staring out over the shining brass rails at the blue sea.

The minutes passed in silence, while Falcon Swift, with troubled face, stood thinking there. Then, forgetting everything else, Chick breathed quickly as he saw the white square towers and minarets of the Egyptian coast coming into view.

And soon the ship was entering the harbour of Alexandria, and Chick saw the Eastern port in all

the beauty of the morning sunshine. The waters were alive, rocking a hundred ships, big and small, in their blue. The wondrous white light kissed the tops of a thousand palaces and temples, at last seeming to lose itself in the vast and gloomy Necropolis. Vendors in little dhows were trying to sell luscious fruits and dates, and black boys were entreating the passengers, to throw coins into the blue, clear waters so that they could dive for them.

Falcon Swift and Chick landed, and on the quayside chartered a modern and luxurious limousine, which rapidly took them through the white streets to the hotel at which they were staying, the Hotel D'Afrique.

The detective and his assistant lunched together in a luxuriously appointed private dining-room, overlooking the white street, thronged with picturesque dressed people of almost every conceivable nationality, and at the coffee stage the Sporting Detective lit a cigarette, his clean-cut face drawn in lines of thought.

"The trouble is, Chick, that no one knows where is this mysterious tomb in search of which Professor Silvergroom and, before him, two other famous Egyptologists came out here. All three of them are said to have received in England mysterious but undoubtedly authentic messages saying that if they visited this tomb at the full moon just before it waned, many secrets of ancient Egypt, together with much treasure, would be revealed to them."

Chick grimaced.

"Sounds uncanny, Boss. Wonder whether that merchant with the awful face and head sent the messages."

Even as Chick spoke these words the Sporting Detective suddenly rose and crossed to the window. His face expressed an excitement unusual to him, and Chick, sensing something, slipped from his seat and went to the detective's side.

"What is it, Boss?"

"Look, Chick," said the detective in a thrilling voice, pointing with an outflung arm. "That is Bombazani, the Arab spy and informer—one of the most trustworthy men the British Government had in their employ during the war. His work was prosaic enough then, for he merely had to watch our troops, see that none came to harm in the native quarters, and that trouble was avoided as much as possible. He did his work loyally and well, but he is made for higher things. When I knew that I was coming out here I communicated with him, telling him to get in touch with me. See; he has something to tell me. He is signalling."

Chick stared out eagerly through the brilliant sunshine, and saw the solitary figure of a white-robed Arab standing in the shadow of a portico. As the boy gazed with bated breath the Arab moved an arm majestically, but it was evidently some sort of signal, for the detective at the window nodded to himself with a grim satisfaction.

"He says that the tomb is barely ten miles from here in the desert," Falcon Swift muttered. "It is within sight of the Cheops Pyramids and the Sphinx, and it is a tomb which, houses grisly mysteries of which he would tell us more. . . . Ah!"

The detective suddenly broke off, his voice sharp on an exclamation. For within a few seconds a terrible thing had happened.

A second figure, garbed in the white cloak and head-dress of an Arab, had appeared in the street as if from nowhere, and swiftly passing that lurking figure in the portico had moved an arm in a swift throwing movement. Something had glinted in the bright sunshine—a knife, and their messenger had fallen face downwards on the stone, his hands grappling at his throat.

Together Falcon Swift and Chick raced out of

the room. They heard no sound of an alarm as they hastened down the stairs. The killer had done his work swiftly, expeditiously, while no one was about.

Coming out down the hotel steps at breakneck speed, the detective and his assistant saw the man who had done that swift killing hastening away.

Chick, without a moment's thought or hesitation, darted away from the Detective's side after the killer, his whole being athrill with a furious rage which he could scarce understand.

Falcon Swift had no opportunity of calling the impulsive boy back. He darted for the figure that lay there in the portico, for he did not want this matter to become the talk of Alexandria and Cairo.

Swiftly he gathered up the figure of the Arab, and bore it in his strong arms back to the hotel. Luckily no one was about as he mounted the stairs with his burden, and entering his suite of rooms he laid the Arab down tenderly upon a couch.

Plainly the Arab, a bearded man with a fine, intelligent visage, was in bad case. The blood flowed copiously from a wound in his throat whence he had plucked the knife, and he had great difficulty in breathing.

He was, indeed, at his last gasp.

His eyelids fluttered upwards, and he stared for some moments at the detective. Then he seemed to see and recognise Falcon Swift, and a twisted smile came to his lips.

"My poor Bombazani!" exclaimed the Sporting Detective in real distress. But the Arab spy checked him with a gesture.

"It is the will of Allah. All things are Allah's, and glory be to him," he whispered. There came a dry, choked rattle from his throat, and he fell back silent.

But a moment after he made a movement, and managed to display the knife he held in his hand by the haft. Falcon Swift's monocle fell as he gazed at it, for the handle was wrought in the form of a priest's head, with green jewels for eyes. And it was a replica of the hideous face of the priest whom both he and Chick had seen in a vision.

"How came this thing about, Bombazani, old friend?" he asked almost in a whisper, and speaking in Arabic.

The Arab tried to raise himself on the couch.

"Effendi, it is madness," he whispered hoarsely. "Go ye not to the tomb of Amen-Aboutis, for in his temple and his tomb he is all powerful, and he has much black magic. This I know, for I have played the spy for you faithfully, Effendi. Go ye and take ship to England whilst Allah gives thee strength in thy limbs, so that thou might be hid from one who is thy sworn enemy."

"Nonsense," said the detective a little huskily. "You have given your life for me, and much will I do to avenge thee. Tell me, good Bombazani, who is this Priest Amen-Aboutis. He hath the look of a priest living before man began to count Time."

"Aye," whispered the Arab. He seemed to rally, and raising to one elbow fixed his feverishly glittering eyes upon the Sporting Detective. "He hath lived in the year 68 B.C., and he liveth now. By what black arts he hath accomplished this I know not. Nor can any man read me the riddle. 'Tis said that in time gone past, this Amen-Aboutis, Hereditary Priest of the Temple of Osiris, and of Isis and of Ra-Amen-Ma swore to live that he might be avenged on the Greek and the Roman who invaded this Egypt—fair land of Khem. But now after the generations the Moslem sway is over Egypt, and this priest who has become evil in that he hath defied death, now has one object. And it is one that mer

should respect. He has sworn to live to guard his tomb and its secrets from the despoiler."

After this long speech the Arab sank back exhausted. The flow of blood from his neck was somewhat stanchied by a fine cambric handkerchief which Falcon Swift held tightly at the wound. Yet it was plain that he was fast sinking.

The Sporting Detective, in the interests of all concerned, continued to question the Arab, though his humane instincts revolted against the inquisition at this hour.

"Aye, it is meet that the tombs of Egypt's kings should be left in peace," he answered. "But how hath this Amen-Abouthis wrought his evil work? Hath he not invited men hither so that he may destroy them?"

"You speak truth, Effendi," whispered the weakening Arab. "On the door of the tomb he hath caused to be placed the inscription that Spoilers of the Dead must visit it at the full moon just before it wanes, and many secrets will be revealed to them. In that way he hath gained many victims of his hideous rites. But if they go before the full moon, then they must live to wait for the death that he hath designed." Suddenly the Arab sat up, feverishly grabbing at the detective's arm. "To-night, Effendi, the full moon is on the wane, and the High Priest Amen-Abouthis hath victims whom he hath designed for a terrible death. But go ye not to the tomb—"

"Go?" echoed the Sporting Detective in horror. "Of course I must go—"

The Arab seemed to rally, only to fail again. Feebly he grasped the protecting arm around him, whilst his glazing eyes now vainly searched the detective's face.

"Did I not know thy firm purpose I would still beseech thee to turn thine eyes elsewhere," he whispered faintly. "But since thou must go—stay, here is the map. . . ."

His hand fumbled in his robes, and then his eyes closed. "It gets dark," he muttered wildly. "I am going—blind. May Allah forfend thee. To-night—the moon—is—on—the wane."

And with those words, spoken in a thrilling whisper,

he fell back on the couch with a choking rattle in his throat—dead!

THE Sporting Detective turned round. "Chick, where are you?" he asked sharply. And then only did he realise that his boy assistant was not in the room, indeed, was not with him at all.

Chick had made straight for the flying figure in the white robes of an Arab. Always impetuous, he saw only one object before him now, to capture that murderer, to unmask him, and to send him to his just punishment.

The boy sleuth was a fleet runner, more so than the knife man upon whom he gained rapidly. The fellow was making for the gates that led out to the desert, but he had scarce reached them ere Chick had jumped at him, and with an outstretched hand clawed at the Arab's flowing robe and literally tore it from his back.

Revealed now were the bare back and arms and almost mummified head of Amen-Abouthis, the High Priest of the Temple. It was the first time that Chick had seen him in the flesh, and though the boy sleuth knew of his terrible power for evil he could have smiled at the ludicrous appearance the little man presented, running as he was.

In body he was shrivelled almost to a skeleton, and as he cast a backward glance one saw the shining dome of his skull, the fierce, blackened brows, and the aged eyes glaring deep in their sockets. The cruel pointed nose, the thin gnarled lips and even sharper chin—all this presented a revolting picture, yet scarce one to inspire fear.

Yet this man was a High Priest of the ancient Egyptian Gods. Moreover he had lived through the ages, and he had black sorcery at his command. But a few moments before he had killed a giant Arab with a deftly thrown knife. He was evil incarnate—a creature to be respected as an enemy.

But Chick was young, and in his time he had been through mad perils. He had little respect for a wizened Egyptian sorcerer. The slowed-round head, with the eyes glaring, intimidated him not a whit—at least for a moment. He was inflamed with



THE MUMMIES.—Falcon Swift felt his brain reeling as the cases opened and the hideous mummies came out, screaming like Dervishes.

anger against this poisonous little creature who, yet, had he known it, had lived to encompass the ruin of Cleopatra, the beauteous and tragic Greek queen who had dared to don the scared golden horns of Isis, and sit on the throne of the Pharaohs.

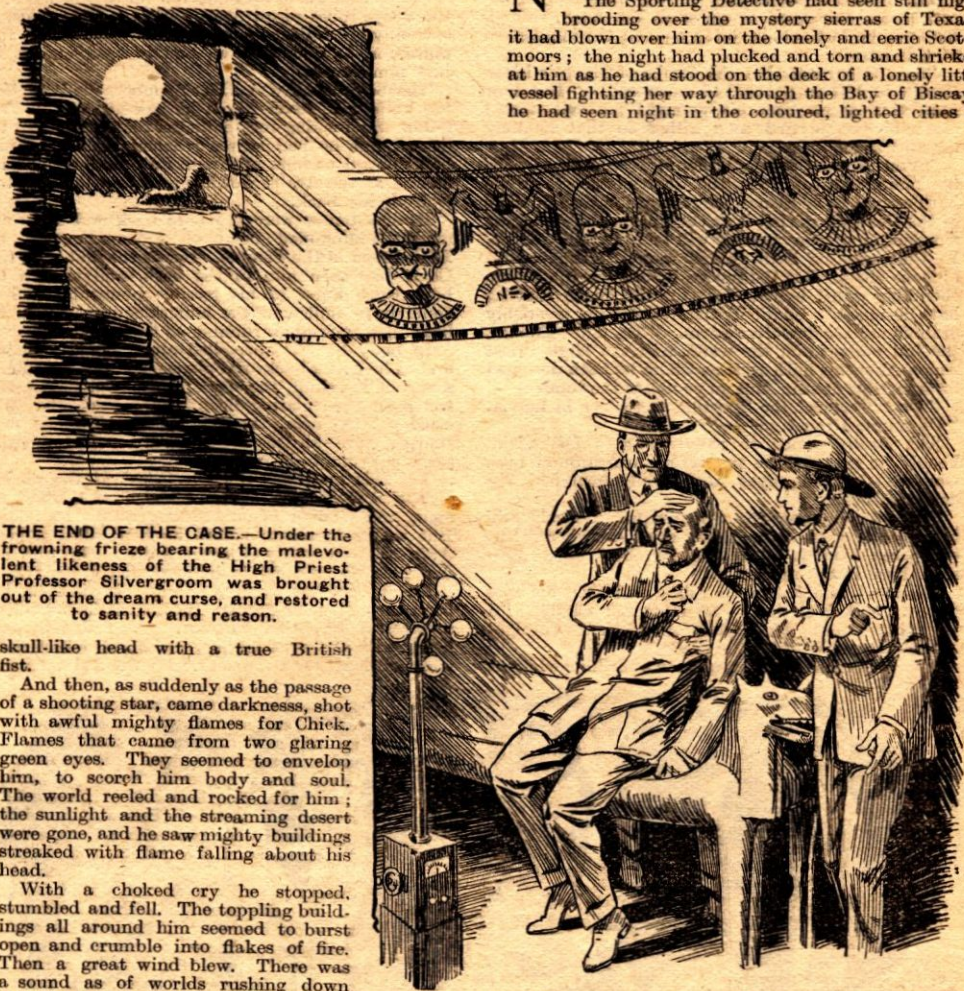
"Got you!" cried Chick, eager to punch that

had torn from his back, and mounted the other horse. In a billowing carpet of sand the horses surged forward, over the desert.

In The Tomb.

NIGHT in the Sahara!

The Sporting Detective had seen still night brooding over the mystery sierras of Texas; it had blown over him on the lonely and eerie Scotch moors; the night had plucked and torn and shrieked at him as he had stood on the deck of a lonely little vessel fighting her way through the Bay of Biscay; he had seen night in the coloured, lighted cities of



THE END OF THE CASE.—Under the frowning frieze bearing the malevolent likeness of the High Priest Professor Silvergroom was brought out of the dream curse, and restored to sanity and reason.

skull-like head with a true British fist.

And then, as suddenly as the passage of a shooting star, came darkness, shot with awful mighty flames for Chick. Flames that came from two glaring green eyes. They seemed to envelop him, to scorch him body and soul. The world reeled and rocked for him; the sunlight and the streaming desert were gone, and he saw mighty buildings streaked with flame falling about his head.

With a choked cry he stopped, stumbled and fell. The toppling buildings all around him seemed to burst open and crumble into flakes of fire. Then a great wind blew. There was a sound as of worlds rushing down the flood of time—and Chick knew no more.

What actually happened was that with outstretched arms to grab the puny figure of the priest who was glaring at him, he stopped dead and fell face forward in the sands—senseless.

Amen-Aboutis, High Priest of the Holy Osiris, stopped also and bent over his victim. From his lips came words in a terrific low muttered volume of venom, and Chick staggered up with eyes closed and stumbled over the sands to where two cream-white Arab horses were in waiting, held by a man garbed as an Arab.

Chick, still with his eyes closed, placed his left foot in the stirrup, and swung up into the saddle. The Arab mounted behind him, and the snarling priest, gathering up the robes that the boy sleuth

the Argentine, and in all the gay capitals of Europe. Night in Naples, in the wonder dream cities of Japan, where all is black and gold, with the dark shapes of the pagodas jutting against the light of the moon. But never had he seen such a night as this in the Sahara desert as he sat his camel and watched the full moon floating up over the Arabian hills.

There was mystery here—aye, and warning menace mingled with the beauty of it. Falcon Swift screwed in his monocle watching the moonlight as it bathed the temple before him, as its rays fell upon the distant pyramids and the inscrutable, battered face of the Sphinx.

The lordly Nile had been irrigated at this spot, and the canals formed great dark shining pools that looked like desolate banqueting halls. Near was a

dead city of ruins, with the gleaming robe of the moon thrown over it—the moon creeping over the illimitable desert, lighting it to dull gold. It was beautiful with the beauty of a dream, and solemn as the hour after death.

Yet Falcon Swift viewed it all only in a spirit of uneasiness and disquiet.

That evening before dusk as he had patrolled the streets of Alexandria in vain quest of his boy assistant, Chick, a villainous cowed creature had stumbled against him and thrust something into his hand. An ancient papyrus, writ in hieroglyphics, but the detective's knowledge of such things was sufficient to enable him to decipher it.

Your boy is prisoner, and will face worse than death at the waning of the moon to-night.

That was all, yet it had brought Falcon Swift out here prepared to surrender his own life if need be to save that of his boy assistant.

All at once he started violently, and leaning forward peered through the moonlight. A figure was running over the sand, the figure of a boy, and instantly Falcon Swift recognised it as that of Chick Conway. He swung off the camel, taking his revolver in his hand as he saw Chick stop all at once, and turn facing the temple whose pylon, or entrance column, seemed to rear to the circular lantern in the sky that was the moon.

The boy was crouched apprehensively, his eyes dilated with fear. Unmistakable was his attitude; it spoke eloquently of a cowed and beaten creature, and Falcon Swift, fearing the worst for his assistant, ran hastily to his side, his revolver in his hand.

"Chick, what is it? What's the matter?" he demanded urgently.

There came no answer from Chick who continued to gaze towards the temple with glazed and terrified eyes.

One glance into the contracted pupils of his assistant's eyes, and Falcon Swift's jaw set grimly. He thought that he had correctly diagnosed the boy sleuth's malady, and a moment later as the great English detective saw a flitting form outside the temple, he raised his revolver fully determined to kill.

It was the ugly figure of Amen-Abouthis, the priest of bygone Egypt. Only a glimpse of that humped, white-skirted figure had he, however, scarce sufficient for him to take aim. The hideous priest, leaning round a pillar, crooked a finger at Chick, and then was gone.

The boy sleuth, with a little moaning sound issuing from his parted lips, started forward in obedience to that gesture.

And Falcon Swift, with a despairing shrug, followed. Well he knew that he was entering a fearful trap with his eyes open, and there was a great despair

at his heart. But he was impotent, except to follow. He could not leave Chick to his fate.

* He held his revolver ready. If only he could get in one shot at that evil, shrunken Egyptian. . . .

The priest had disappeared. Chick was making his way with faltering and yet not uncertain steps towards the temple. He walked as one in a dream.

He walked steadily to a gigantic brown rock, scorching hot still from the sun, and straightway he lowered himself through into a hole underneath its shadow.

The hole had probably been dug by jackals, for this tomb was evidently secret, and though the temple had stood for ages until lately no one had guessed the secret it contained underneath it.

Slithering down through the hole 'midst a torrent of sand, Chick and Falcon Swift landed on a sand-bank some twenty feet down in an atmosphere intolerably hot. The detective's torchlight switched on, and he saw that they were in a stone apartment, half silted with sand. There was an open doorway, piled with sand, and stumbling over that entirely superfluous substance, Chick, followed by Falcon Swift, came out into a stone corridor entirely cool, almost free from drift-dust—but eerie as death, and smelling of mummified remains.

Chick, still with the appearance of walking in his sleep, trudged straight along the corridor, followed by the detective, who, glimpsing light round the corner, thrust his flashlight into his hip pocket again, and gripped his revolver.

And then they turned a corner in the stone passage, and a sight struck them like a blow.

Falcon Swift halted, striving to make a clutch at his reeling senses. He looked round him wildly and his monocle dropped from his eye. He and Chick were in a circular stone apartment through some cavity in which the yellow moonlight streamed with full and concentrated force.

That stone apartment in the tomb was lit as if by some golden and ethereal glow.

But that was not what blinded Falcon Swift, and quickly robbed him of his senses so that he stood there vainly wrestling with a numbed brain, frantically, desperately striving to move—to think—to act for himself.

He was held prisoner. And by what ghastly means?

All around that circular stone tomb was a frieze bearing with staggering repetition the lifelike portrait of the hideous old magician of the tomb, Amen-Abouthis! Lifelike? Glaringly lifelike! For the eyes in each plaque were jewels that concentrated in the moonlight's rays thin points of venomous light upon the detective and his assistant!

Falcon Swift wrestled grimly against an over-

A Startling Long Tale of Mystery, Wild Animals, Cowboys, Life, Next Week, Chums, Featuring Don Duvall, the Circus Daredevil.

LOOK OUT FOR A REAL TREAT.

THE CIRCUS IN THE WILD WEST.

This Magnificent Long Tale Tells of the Thrills of the Western Rodeo. It also Relates the Story of the Strange Meeting between Don Duvall, the Circus Wonder, and Rex Remington and his Bunch of Bar Eight Cowboys. Mind You Get Next Week's **BOYS' MAGAZINE.**



powering sensation. It was as if all his faculties were oozing from him. And well he knew the awful truth. Those eyes flashing light from every side under the moon's light held a hypnotic influence.

Chick was already under that influence. He was a lost soul, staring wildly at the eyes, which, under the waning moon, were now impinging in one concentrated point of blinding light in the centre of the tomb where the detective and his assistant stood.

A strangled cry came from Falcon Swift's throat as desperately he strove to move. And then the eyes round the wall met, and blinding flashes of fire tumbled and crashed all round the detective. Suddenly he lost all conscious thought, and knew nothing except that he was standing still and trembling, gazing at the awful apparition of Amen-Aboutis himself who, as if he had appeared from nowhere, now stood before the detective and his assistant.

A thin malevolent grin licked like a flame round the terrible mouth of the creature. He waved his ebony wand and stepped back, motioning; and blindly, unable to help himself, Falcon Swift followed, with Chick walking like one in a trance by his side.

Indeed, they both were now in a trance. His head throbbing as if under hammer blows, Falcon Swift saw the magician strike the wall with his staff, and then there was an explosion, an awful, consuming flash of flame and smoke, and a cavity was revealed.

Blindly obeying the will of the magician, the two followed him through into a vast chamber. Here, choking, stifling, on the ground and in the air, was the scattered dust of the departed. And yet through it all, as if in a rosy glow of fire, Falcon Swift saw in the centre of the apartment a heap of treasure—gold and jewels, cups and marvellously wrought ornaments. There were gold anklets, horns wrought with jewels. Indeed, here was gathered in one heap the accumulated treasure of the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

"Here, O children of an accursed race," said a croaking, mocking voice, "you are privileged to see the tomb of the dead Pharaohs, Kings of the Double Crown and Lords of the Upper and the Lower Lands. The Pharaohs of Egypt—dear land of Khem!"

He paused. His voice, croaking though it was, dinned like the echoes of thunder in Falcon Swift's ears.

"Behold, despoilers of the dead. Now behold the vengeance of the Pharaohs. O, ye temples whose pylons strike the sky, whose faith these intruders have betrayed—hear me now. I call upon the kings of Egypt to avenge their own."

He waved his wand, and at that the most awful thing happened. Round the sides of the tomb were arranged in upright positions the cases of mummies. At the wave of the wand these cases burst open, and from them came the mummies themselves, screaming and screeching like dervishes.

Falcon Swift saw the grisly objects advancing upon him, and he heard Chick scream and his own reason was like to leave him. Nearly choking with the sickly, all-pervading atmosphere of spices and mummy dust, he strove to move, but could not. Worst of horrors, he saw that the mummies were crumpling now that they were exposed to the action of the air. The likenesses of men vanished from them, and they became awful, ghostly shapes.

Falcon Swift felt himself seized by bony hands, and he heard Chick moaning, and with every effort of will he strove to keep his reason.

He was moving now with Chick—moving with the chill hands of death on his throat and around his face and on his shoulders. The mummies were holding him on all sides, and now they had relapsed to grisly silence. With lagging steps Falcon Swift

moved, and how it came about he knew not, but he and Chick were in a further chamber, more in the form of a cave. Here the moon's influence was gone, and greenish twilight pervaded the place so that objects were only dimly seen.

Falcon Swift was keeping a stern hold upon himself. Well he knew the terrible magician's object, which was to drive Chick and himself to the verge of raving, madness so that their brains burst and they died. Surely the most terrible death that any man could possibly conceive.

The detective fought and fought so that he was a trembling, quivering object. Madly he fought to come back out of the state of trance in which he knew he was. Suddenly, before his startled vision, there appeared in the dim, greenish light a row of stakes, and he saw that tied hand and foot to three of them were the men he had come to seek.

Professor Silvergroom was one; Doctor Ascough, an almost equally famous Egyptologist, was another; and the third was Heenan Scrymouche, the eminent Sudanese authority on archeology and Egyptology. All three men were staring with wild eyes in which already was the light of dawning madness at the awful, wizened little figure of the High Priest, and at the mummies bearing their victims towards the stakes.

Falcon Swift, racked by the terrible struggle that was going on within him, the struggle to retain his sanity, was forcing himself to close his eyes so that he should not see more. And when he opened them again he was aware that both he and Chick were lashed to the stakes, and that the mummies mysteriously were gone. The magician stood before them now, waving his wand and mouthing horribly.

"O, despoilers of the dead," he croaked. "Soon now you shall die. Soon shall come merciful relief. Look—look ye who intrude here amidst the silent pyramids, into this temple of the Hierophant, hoary with years. See, now come the reincarnated mummies who have stepped from their sarcophagi. See, they come in the form of batmen whose bite is instant death."

He waved his wand, and suddenly the air was filled with subdued screeching and the flapping of wings. All five who were lashed to the stakes stared in horror. Flying towards them out of the dim greenish light were a horde of giant bats!

Madly the victims struggled with their bonds, but it was of no avail. Screams of terror and madness came from their throats. All were upon the verge of insanity except Falcon Swift and Chick—Chick who, had he but known it, was protected by the dominant will power of his detective master. Falcon Swift's enormous fund of will power was divided; part of it was spent in a tremendous effort to control the reason of his boy assistant whom he knew to be in a state of awful trance. His eyes were ever seeking the boy's face, and he kept muttering through clenched teeth: "Chick, laddie—keep your pecker up!"

And now the bats were hovering around, screeching and plucking, diving and swooping about the half-crazed victims. The cave was rent with screams of terror. The magician was grinning madly.

And the giant bats, whose faces bore some hideous resemblance to those of human beings, swooped and bit savagely one after another at their victims. Falcon Swift felt the bites like the plunges of a red-hot sword, yet he did not flinch—did not for a moment relax the terrific struggle that his will was exerting to fight this terrible sorcery.

As for the others, their screams became silent and their heads drooped and their bodies sagged, and to all appearances they were dead. Falcon

(Continued on page 25.)

The Escapades of Daredevil Air Acrobats. Gripping New Story Series.



Stan's Narrow Escape.

STAN ROGERS, star steeplejack in the town of Overtown, cupped his hands before his lean, weather-tanned face.

"Podger, you fat porpoise," he shouted, "how long are you going to mooch about down there? I'm waiting for those tools."

He grinned as an angry roar, more like the bellow of an infuriated bull, floated up from the ground below.

"Hold your noise, mon. Canna ye see I'm coming up? If these rotten ropes will stand a wee bit weight, I'll be wi' ye in a trice."

Podger McIntosh did not possess the ideal figure for a steeplejack. But Podger was deceptive. His slow-moving body was muscular and agile, and spite of the fact that he always protested that each climb he made would be his last, Podger could certainly climb chimneys and steeples. That was why Stan Rogers would never ascend a chimney unless his fat chum was on hand. That was why he had accepted the dangerous job of repairing the highest chimney in Overtown—the Blakemoor Cotton Mill chimney.

"Are ye satisfied, now. I tell ye this climbing will be the end of me. One of these days I'll fall and—"

"Bounce up again," put in Stan, as Podger reached the chimney top and settled himself in the sling beside him. "Come on, don't sit there glaring." His voice changed suddenly. "I want to tell you that there's something fishy about this job," Stan went on seriously. "Somebody's been up this chimney recently."

"Eh?" Podger's fat face expressed his surprise. "Up the chimney?"

"Yes." A puzzled expression came into Stan's keen eyes. Although he was barely eighteen, his reputation as a star steeplejack had been well earned. He had never refused a climb, no matter how dangerous the project was.

"See those?" Stan pointed towards two or three bricks just above his head. "They're new and I never put 'em in. I'm going to make inquiries when we get down. But come on, let's get busy."

For two hours the chums worked on in silence,

You ought to meet 'em.
Goodness knows they're
good.

marking out where the huge chimney required repairs, and then a shrill whistle sent Stan's gaze downward.

"Dinner-time, Podger. Down we go."

A false step would send the two youngsters crashing to the earth and certain death. Yet they swung down with the ease and swiftness of the born acrobat; and leaving Podger busy at a huge dinner basket, Stan made his way to the mill office.

Those new bricks puzzled him. He was certain that he himself had not put them in. Who, then, had been up the chimney and why? Five minutes' conversation with the mill manager left Stan more puzzled than ever. The manager had assured him that no one had been instructed to repair the stack but himself.

"Funny," Stan muttered. "Perhaps I was mistaken after all."

A thin, wiry-looking man stopped Stan as he walked across the mill yard. He wore the greasy, oil-stained overalls of an engineer, and there was a familiar grin on his thin, hook-nosed face.

"Give you 'arf-a-dollar, youngster, if you'll take me up the chimney. I'd like to see the view from up there."

Stan hesitated. Many people fancied they would like to climb a stack, though usually half the climb was enough for them.

This man's desire to climb the stack then seemed quite an ordinary one. And yet, looking at the fellow's thin face, Stan felt a strange distrust surge through him.

"All right," he said shortly, "I'll take you up after I've had a snack. I don't want your half-crown."

Fifteen minutes later, the engineer, watched from the mill yard by an admiring crowd, was ascending the chimney. Stan, with every nerve alert, was just behind the man, watching that he made no slip that would send both crashing.

Very soon Stan was convinced that the engineer had nerve. He climbed swiftly and firmly and halted only once before reaching the top. Then Stan, watching him closely, saw that the man's eyes were fixed upon the spot where he had noticed the new bricks in the chimney. It seemed to the steeplejack that satisfaction shone in the engineer's eyes.

Then the fleeting expression was gone and the engineer resumed his climb.

They reached the scaffolding that ran round the chimney, and without hesitation the engineer climbed on to it. Stan, watching the fellow closely, saw him gaze admiringly at the view. Down below, the mill-workers were a mere blur, and at this tremendous height it was necessary that Stan watch in case the engineer lost his nerve.

It was that close watching that saved Stan from a



A TREACHEROUS MOVE.—With malevolence in his eyes the engineer swayed against Stan, and sent the lad hurtling from the scaffolding. Instinctively the youngster grabbed at the life-line.

horrible death. He was standing beside the engineer when the man swayed suddenly. He lurched into Stan, and next instant the steeplejack was swept off the narrow platform.

Stan saw the engineer's eyes, lit with a strange malevolence, peering at him from the platform, and then he was hurtling through space. With the instinct born of a hundred dangerous climbs, the youngster tightened his grip of the life-line, which he had never released during the climb.

The strong rope, on which the life of a steeplejack often hangs, ran from the chimney top to the ground. And as Stan hurtled downwards, his fierce clutch upon it sent him swinging outwards from the stack. He felt as though a red-hot knife was being drawn through his hands, but grimly he held on. The rope, trembling to his weight, swung him back to the stack and safety.

The descent was made in silence. The narrowness of the escape had shaken even Stan's iron nerve. And when they reached ground, the engineer was pale and trembling.

"I felt faint suddenly," he began to explain. "I might have killed you."

Stan stared into the man's face. "You might," he said shortly. "I don't want another escape like that."

He turned towards Podger, whose fat figure was shaking like a jelly.

"Come on, let's get up again."

Alone he began to climb quickly. It is the fashion of airmen who "crash" and escape injury to ascend again as quickly as possible in case they forever lose their nerve. And this is precisely what Stan was doing.

Half-way up the stack he was completely himself again and there he waited for his chum to reach him.

"Podger," he said slowly, "I'm certain that guy tried to get me. We're on a queer job. We've got to watch out."

The Warning.

"WELL, I'm hanged. What do you make of that?" Stan Rogers stared at his fat chum.

In his hand was a small sheet of writing paper which a news-lad had handed him as he walked homewards from the cotton mill.

Keep away from the mill. Be warned in time. If you ascend the chimney again certain death awaits you.

The words were pencilled in a bold, rough hand, and there was no indication as to who was the author. For a moment the chums stared at each other, and then Stan's face tensed. Determination shone in his keen eyes.

"I was right, Podger. There's a mystery about that chimney," he gritted. "And I'm going to examine where it's been tampered with. Come on."

En route for the mill yard, the chums came into a narrow, dirty street from which several alleyways branched off. And as they were half-way along, it happened. Fully half-a-dozen men leaped from one of the alleyways. A life-preserver whizzed through the air and Podger sank to the pavement.

Before Stan could recover, the thugs had surrounded him. He recognised the thin face of the mill engineer, and without hesitation he struck out. His right connected with the man's jaw in a punch that knocked him yards away. And then the thugs were upon him.

PODGER McINTOSH twisted himself over to find himself in a small, dirty attic. He was bound hand and foot, and across Podger's face was a livid bruise where the life-preserver had struck him.

"We've been lying here for hours," said Stan, who was trussed helpless beside his chum. "Those thugs are a gang of—hush!"

Came the sound of voices and soon the room-door opened to admit four of the thugs. The leader was the mill engineer and across his shoulder was a gigantic steel trap. He grinned maliciously as the startled gaze of Podger and Stan rested upon the trap.

"It's for you, kids. You had your warning and ignored it. You've climbed your last stack. come on, boys, rig the thing up."

Quickly the thugs worked and when they had finished, the great trap hung from the ceiling by two ropes. A third rope was attached to the trap spring and this was tied to Stan's wrist. Then roughly the chums were bound back to back and made to sit up in the centre of the floor.

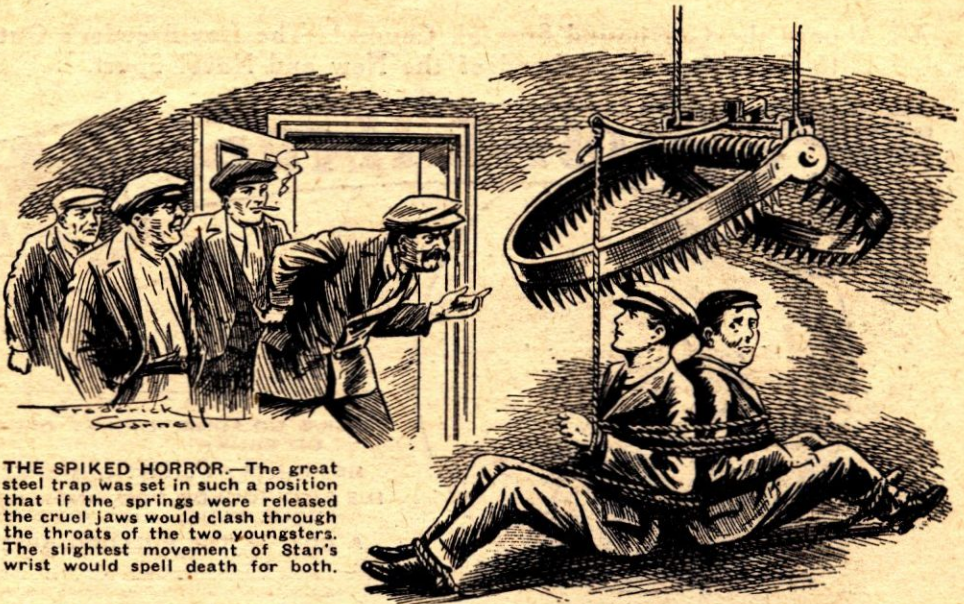
The huge trap, a circular one with great steel teeth, was prised open and then set so that a tug on the rope attached to Stan's wrist would release the spring. And, in their position, the great teeth would clash together about the throats of the youngsters.

"See the idea?" The engineer's tone was positively fiendish. "We're going to leave you here. If you try to break free, you'll release the trap spring and then—poof!"

He spread his hands significantly and with a last glance at the diabolical contraption, disappeared through the door.

For a few minutes neither of the boys stirred. Then Stan spoke.

"Podger, we've got to do something. There's a pointing chisel in my coat pocket. Try and reach it with your fingers. I'll keep perfectly still."



THE SPIKED HORROR.—The great steel trap was set in such a position that if the springs were released the cruel jaws would clash through the throats of the two youngsters. The slightest movement of Stan's wrist would spell death for both.

Instantly Podger was acting on the suggestion. His fingers groped carefully into Stan's pocket and closed over the chisel. Then commenced the most nerve-racking task Stan had ever undertaken.

"Podger, I've got to keep perfectly still. Try and work that chisel edge on to my wrists."

Bound with his back to Stan as he was, it was no easy task for the Scotch lad. But somehow Podger got the edge of the chisel against Stan's wrists. Then patiently he began to saw away at the ropes.

The pointing chisel was sharp and more than once it drew blood from Stan's wrists. Then, quite suddenly, he felt the ropes give. Ten minutes later the chums were on their feet, pale and shaken from their narrow escape.

"Podger, it's a cert the thugs won't return here. They'll bank on us setting that trap off and breaking our necks. I'll bet this place is empty."

Cautiously they descended the stairs and reached the door of the house. Stan's suspicions were confirmed. The place was empty. In a trice they were through the door and into the street.

"To-night," Stan said grimly, "I'm going to climb, crooks or no crooks."

* * * * *

THE Blakemore Cotton Mill was shrouded in darkness. Not a sound disturbed the quiet of the night as two shadowy figures halted at the bottom of the great chimney.

"Quietly does it, Podger. Make sure you've got your torchlight. We'll climb in the dark until we locate those new bricks."

Podger McIntosh never forgot that night climb up the great chimney. It was eerie, weird, calling for tremendous nerve. Somehow the chums reached the spot where Stan had noticed the new bricks, and with Podger's carefully shaded torch shining on the stack, he commenced to work.

He had dislodged half-a-dozen of the new bricks when Podger gave a startled cry.

"You were right, Stan. Look there, mon!" He flashed his torch into the cavity Stan had made. Beneath the light an oblong tin box was disclosed. Instantly Stan, almost forgetting where he was in his excitement, was prising up the lid with his "pointing" chisel.

"Gosh, look there. Jewellery!" It was true. The box was full of jewellery. Diamond pendants, necklaces, gold watches and every conceivable kind of jewel seemed to be there in the box. Quickly Stan snapped the lid down.

"Come on, Podger. Down we get. I'll warrant that engineer and his gang will be at this chimney to-night. We'll get the police here."

Rapidly the chums descended. Ten minutes later half-a-dozen policeman lay hidden in the mill yard. For half-an-hour they waited, and then Stan's surmise proved correct. The mill engineer and his thugs crept quietly to the stack. Just as the engineer was about to climb, the police dashed out.

There was a short, sharp scuffle and the gang was overpowered. And, later, the remarkable disclosure was made. The mill engineer, ostensibly an honest workman, was in reality head of a gang of "smash and grab" jewel thieves who had been working the country for months past. Once a steepolejack himself, the engineer had conceived the idea of building the stolen jewellery—which amounted to thousands of pounds—into the brickwork of the chimney until an opportunity offered to get it out of the country.

But for Stan's keen eyes the stuff would never have been found. For their part in smashing the gang, Stan and his fat chum received magnificent gold watches, which they wear with pride to this day.

Another Yarn of Stan, The Star Steepolejack, and His Fat Pal, Podger. Soon, Chaps. Look Out For A Clinking Long Dandy Cowboy Tale Next Saturday

All Aboard the Greyhound Special, Chums! The Boy Breeder's Out to Grab the Blue Riband of the New and Novel Sport.

DUNCAN AND THE GREYHOUND

IN

THE EXPLOSIVE HARE



DUNK'S NO FUNK, 'GAINST CROOK OR SKUNK

HE FIGHTS AT LIGHTNING SPEED; HIS GREYHOUNDS, TOO, KNOW HE'S TRUE BLUE,

A BOY OF THE BULLDOG BREED.

The Greyhound Special.

"AND so you're going for the Championship, eh, Duncan?"

The words were spoken by Squire Bransome and addressed to Duncan Grey—owner of that famous racing greyhound, Pretty Polly, and trainer of a dozen more.

Duncan Grey looked up from the handsome hound he was grooming, dandy brush in hand.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "There's a new track being opened at Wembley on the site of the big Exhibition, and I'm taking a team of dogs down there for the grand opening. There's one race they call 'The Championship Stakes,' and I'm going to enter Pretty Polly for that—the others can take their chances in the minor races."

Squire Bransome nodded. He was a greyhound enthusiast himself and the owner of that famous dog, Great Oak—the present champion.

"Well, I wish you luck, Duncan, my lad," returned the Squire heartily. "Of course, I'm running Great Oak, but he's getting on a bit now, and if he's got to lose it—then I hope it will be to his own daughter, Potty Polly. I suppose you'll be taking your stud down on the special train from Manchester to London?"

Dunk Grey nodded.

"Yes—and I must get busy to have them ready in time," he added, as he once more applied his dandy brush to the soft, smooth coat of the handsome creature he had between his knees.

"Then I'll see you there," remarked the Squire as he moved off with a friendly nod.

THE Greyhound Special was something new in the way of trains, but the enterprising railway company, realising that Manchester was, of course, the centre of interest in the greyhound racing world—for had not the first electric hare track been at Belle Vue—decided that a great number of enthusiasts would be going to this big meeting at Wembley and be taking their dogs to compete.

Accordingly they had advertised a "Race Special," which had, of course, quickly been dubbed by the papers as "The Greyhound Special," and some wag had even placed a stuffed hare on the engine as a mascot!

Instead of the horse-boxes of an ordinary race special, the company had adapted an old guard's van to the accommodation of the dogs by fitting kennels inside.

Dunk Grey had booked a dozen compartments and he was now busy placing all his greyhounds into them. All, that is to say, with the exception of the founder of his fortunes, Pretty Polly. He was going to take her into the carriage with him, for a scoundrelly ex-groom, Jim Kemp, had already made more than one attempt to get her from him. Dunk was going to run no chances this time.

And so "The Greyhound Special" set off from the Central Station amidst much cheering and hand-waving from the crowd which had come to see it off.

Dunk settled down in one corner of his carriage with Pretty Polly squatting on the mat at his feet.

Suddenly there sounded a shriek—as if of agonised pain—from the locomotive drawing "The Greyhound Special," and the hiss of escaping air, as the vacuum brakes were hastily applied.

Next instant a great shivering shock ran down the entire length of the train.

There came the sound of splintering wood as the three foremost coaches "telescoped" and the passengers were flung into writhing masses upon the floor of the carriages.

Dunk Grey was in the centre of the three coaches—yet his first thought was for Pretty Polly, and as he fell forward upon his face, he contrived to shield the dog's silky body from harm as he lay across it.

Then there came the stench of burning varnished wood to his nostrils. "The Greyhound Special" was on fire!

The compartment in which Dunk was now imprisoned had tilted over at such an acute angle that the door was now above him.

Desperately Dunk fought to reach it, and at length

managed to secure a grip and to drag himself up through the opening—Polly after him.

A ghastly spectacle met his horrified gaze. The locomotive lay upon its side gushing out great clouds of hissing steam—and lying across the line was the trunk of a huge tree.

Dunk decided to get Pretty Polly safely away from the blazing train—and then come back to do what he could to liberate the others.

Crossing the line at this point there was a slender girder bridge. Workmen had been employed painting the ironwork, and their tackle of scaffolding and ladders still remained on the bridge, and suspended from it Dunk perceived a length of rope hanging down almost to the top of the derailed train of carriages.

Racing along the top of the slanting coaches, Polly held firmly under his arm, Dunk made for the swaying rope.

He reached it and grasped it in his one hand, and then started to work his way up it.

It was no easy task—handicapped as he was by only having one arm to work with—the other being clutched round his treasured greyhound.

Yet somehow Dunk managed to reach the level of the bridge, and then it was that a pair of strong arms seized his at the very instant he feared he would be forced to let go, and he felt himself being dragged up and over the end of the bridge.

Dunk, glancing up to identify his rescuer, found himself gazing into the evil features of his sworn enemy, Jim Kemp!

With a savage cry, the young dog-owner exerted his last ounce of strength and managed to drag himself and Polly up on to the bridge.

A crowbar which the workman had left was lying there. Snatching it up, he dashed at Kemp, who was doing his best to drag Polly away.

Dunk brought the length of iron down upon the fellow's wrist.

A yell of pain escaped Kemp's lips. Then his uninjured hand whipped round to his hip-pocket to emerge a second later gripping a deadly-looking automatic pistol.

Dunk, the crowbar raised above his head, saw the pistol muzzle directed full at him, and swift as light brought the iron bar down.

Kemp crumpled up and fell to the ground like an empty golf bag—quite unconscious.

Turning, Dunk saw a uniformed Automobile Association road scout.

"Quick!" he cried. "Look after this dog for me whilst I go back to release the others trapped in that burning van. But look out for yourself—already that blackguard has tried to steal her!"

The A.A. man nodded as he took Polly's lead in his grasp.

"You can safely leave her with me," he answered, and the next instant Dunk had gone back over the bridge and down the rope on to the top of those blazing coaches lying in the cutting below.

THERE Dunk ran full tilt into Squire Branscome. "This is awful!" cried the Squire, and then the two set to work to liberate the yelping hounds in the guard's van before the flames could reach it.

Dunk and the Squire worked like ten men—not merely liberating their own dogs, but getting the whole van full free and driving them up the steep embankment to the haven of the road.

Then the Squire turned to Dunk.

"Well, and what's to be done now?" he exclaimed. "Here we are with a whole string of greyhounds which are due at Wembley to-day and no means of getting there!"

Duncan nodded.

"That's true enough," he agreed. "We must find some way of getting to Wembley to-day—but first let me go and make sure Polly's all right—and get her back!"

With these words, Dunk sped off to the spot where he had handed Pretty Polly into the keeping of the A.A. patrol man. He reached the spot, but of the man in the yellow uniform he could see no trace. Kemp, too, had disappeared.

A ghastly thought came crashing into Dunk's brain. Was the man in the uniform of the A.A. man but one of Kemp's accomplices disguised?

The thought sickened him, and despondently he retraced his steps to where the Squire stood doing his best to keep the string of greyhounds together.

"What's wrong, Duncan?" asked the Squire, and in a few words Dunk told him.

Before Squire Branscome could reply, a large motor pantechicon came along the road, and Dunk gesticulated wildly to the driver to pull up.

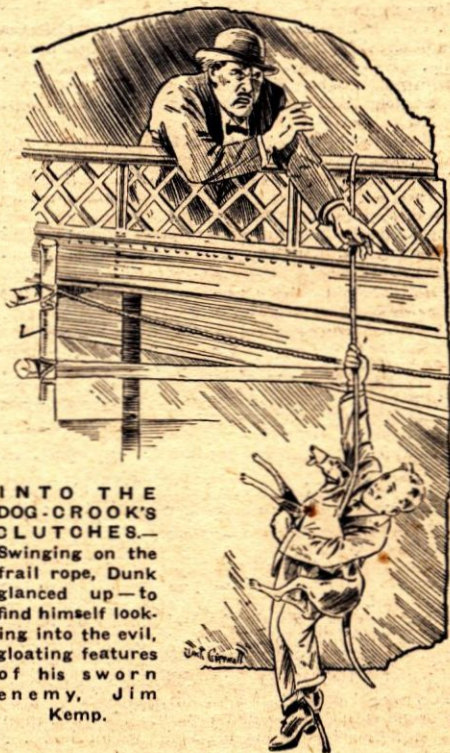
"Seen an A.A. scout on the road as you came along?" cried the lad anxiously.

"Yes," answered the driver. "One with a sidecar repair outfit, followed by a powerful big car that had someone in it who looked as if he'd met with an accident. They were both going a fair lick, and I thought the A.A. chap was off on ahead to find a doctor perhaps."

Dunk did not trouble to explain. His worst fears seemed to have been confirmed by the man's words.

Squire Branscome addressed the driver of the pantechicon.

"Want to earn a twenty-pound note for yourself?" he asked, at the sound of which the man's mouth



INTO THE DOG-CROOK'S CLUTCHES.—Swinging on the frail rope, Dunk glanced up—to find himself looking into the evil, gloating features of his sworn enemy, Jim Kemp.

watered. "Then turn your van about and let us get these dogs inside—then drive us back to London—to Wembley. Oh, I'll fix it up with your firm. I know Sir Charles Pickerson quite well—you won't get into trouble."

"Very good, sir," agreed the driver, and then Duncan and the Squire, together with some of the owners of the other hounds who had arrived in the meantime, full of thanks for the saving of their dogs, proceeded to pack the greyhounds away into the van.

"Right away!" cried Dunk as he half-pushed the last hound into the van and closed the doors. The van shot forward with a jerk, and thus Squire Branscome, Dunk and the other owners and all their dogs journeyed to London—all save Pretty Polly!

Poor Duncan Grey sat brooding in one corner of the van, cursing himself for having fallen so easily into the trap.

The Championship Stakes.

WEMBLEY! The scene of the biggest exhibition ever opened in the British Isles, and the great Stadium laid out as the world's finest greyhound racing track!

So immense was it, in fact, that there were two distinct courses, one of which was reserved for the Championship Stakes which were to be run that afternoon.

The Champion Stakes now looked to be almost a "walk-over" for Squire Branscome's Great Oak, for Dunk's Polly was the only serious rival.

Duncan found he could take but little interest in the minor races—although he did "saddle" a couple of firsts from his kennels.

He was more busily occupied in keeping a sharp look-out for his arch-enemy, Jim Kemp—for for the face of the A.A. man to whom he had handed Pretty Polly.

Duncan was moodily seated upon an upturned bucket near the kennels when a ragged urchin crept up beside him.

"Your nymie Grey?" asked the dirty-faced boy in a hushed whisper. Duncan nodded.

"Then I was told to give this to yer!" returned the ragged lad as he thrust a dirty, crumpled-up piece of paper into Dunk's hand.

Mechanically the young greyhound breeder unrolled the scrap of dirty paper; then he became electrified as he read:

It's all right—I've got your greyhound safe! But they suspect I've still got her, and I'm being watched. The lad who brings you this will lead you to me.

A.A. SCOUT No. 49,236.

Dunk gave a whoop of joy, and diving his hand into his pocket, handed a ten-shilling note to the lad who had delivered the message.

The next instant, however, his face clouded. What if this were but another move in a cleverly contrived trap?

Dunk wasn't going to run his head into the noose a second time, so before he went off with the boy he sought out his friend the Squire, and quickly showed him the note.

"It might be a trap, as you say, Duncan," returned Squire Branscome. "But off you go—I'll be in the background."

Dunk expressed his thanks and dashed off in the direction the urchin led him.

The Squire, meanwhile, beckoned to a policeman, and together they followed in Duncan's wake.

The ragged urchin led Duncan round the back of the grand stand to the motor park. The A.A. man was standing beside his machine, which had the sidecar repair outfit box alongside it.

"I got your note," Dunk said warily. "Where's the dog?"

Before answering, the scout shot a glance in the direction of a group of men—one of whom had his head swathed in a white bandage, and whom Duncan recognised as Jim Kemp.

"I've got him safe and sound," returned the fellow in the A.A. uniform, "but I don't like to let up here, with those fellows so near. I've had a tussle with them already. They tried to overtake me all the way down here, but I tipped 'em off to other A.A. men on point duty and they held 'em up at the cross roads as long as poss; to give me every chance. I'm glad I was able to get here and find you in time for The Championship Stakes."

Duncan heaved a great sigh of relief—it seemed as if he had fallen into no trap—that he had providentially happened upon a friend in need in the A.A. man.

"All right," replied Duncan. "Follow me round to my kennels. You can leave your machine here."

"I think," replied the A.A. scout meaningly, "I'd better bring it with me, if you want to get your dog back safe and sound."

Dunk was mystified by the man's cryptic words, but once inside his own kennels, their meaning became plain; for, turning to the sidecar repair box of his "combination," the A.A. scout pushed up the lid.

From within leaped Pretty Polly and made for Duncan with a yelp, frantically wagging her tail with delight!

"Well, I'm bothered!" exclaimed Duncan, delightedly. "She's as fit as a fiddle. I don't know how to thank you. I'll see the Association hear about your good work, and there'll be something substantial coming to you from me after the race—but you will excuse me now. I'll have to get her ready for The Championship Stakes at once."

* * * * *

S*SIX to one—bar one! Six ter one the fee-uld!*

The raucous-voiced bookmakers in the ring were shouting the odds as they never had before, over The Championship Stakes.

They regarded it as a foregone conclusion for Great Oak, the hitherto unbeaten greyhound, and were asking the ridiculous odds of "Three-to-one-on" about Great Oak, but you could have pretty well any price you liked about the others on the card—now that they had heard that Pretty Polly was not an "arrival," and therefore a non-runner. Not that their consciences prevented them taking money over Polly; and in Squire Branscome they thought they had a mug of just the right shade of emerald to suit them.

"Which one, sir? Pretty Polly? Oh, six to one to you, sir!" they replied, and the wink went round.

Then suddenly the numbers were hoisted in the frame and one particularly bucolic gentleman who rejoiced in the assumed name of "Harry Sanderson"—but who hailed from Aldgate—nearly had three different coloured fits at once.

"Strewth!" he yelled. "Pretty Polly's a runner, and I've laid her all down the book at six ter one. 'Ere, evens the field—who wants it?"

But the Squire had already invested all he wanted at "Six to one. He stood to win just short of a thousand pounds with only an outlay of about a hundred and seventy.

He now also proceeded to back his own dog at "evens"—instead of having to lay the odds of three to one. No wonder the Squire smiled as he passed along the front row of bookies, jotting down his bets.

Mr. Sanderson leaned over and whispered something into the "cauliflower" ear of one of his runners.

That pugilistic-looking gent nodded understandingly and hurried off. Had you followed him, you

Another Ripping Greyhound Racing Yarn Appears on Saturday, Chums. 17

would have seen him a few minutes later in earnest conversation with a man whose head was swathed in a white bandage.

Meanwhile, the parade of the dogs entered for The Championship Stakes was taking place before the stands.

Duncan Grey had drawn Number Three position in the starting-box—his favourite one—and he was Number One on the card.

Proudly he led Pretty Polly along at the head of the string of hounds, with a smart little red body-cloth tied over her sleek, muscular loins.

The parade over, he led her round to behind the starting-box, and, pulling up the sliding panel, gently urged Polly into the narrow compartment.

He gave her a final pat upon the flank, whispered something in her ear which the intelligent animal seemed to understand, and then moved off to a vantage point upon the stands to watch the great race.

At length the dogs were housed in the starting-box, and the starter signalled to the man in the control tower that all was in readiness.

The man in charge of the "electric hare" placed his hand upon the control lever and the "tin rabbit" popped out of its trap to the accompaniment of the inevitable roar of laughter which greets its appearance from the stands.

Bunny did a preliminary canter of one circuit of the course, and then, rounding the bend behind the starting box, shot out at an acute angle in front of the box and in full sight of the hounds, eager and impatient to be off.

Simultaneously, six streaks of lightning were liberated from the box and shot forth—soon to be travelling at well over forty miles an hour after the hare ahead of them.

Duncan Grey, his field glasses glued to his eyes, noted with satisfaction that Pretty Polly had got off nicely level with the rest and was now racing for the first curve.

Polly seemed possessed of almost human intelligence, and knew as well as any champion jockey that to be "on the rails" was the shortest way round the track—and therefore the best.

Great Oak had drawn Number One position—on the rails—and was now hugging them as he streaked up the straight opposite the stands, but then as the first curve was reached, the older dog swung out over such a trifle—so great was his speed.

In a flash, his own daughter—Pretty Polly—seized the opportunity. A spurt and she had slipped through and wrested the coveted rail position from her sire.

Now the two drew out ahead of the rest of the

field as they came tearing round the top bend and into the straight before the stands, heading for the winning-post—three hundred yards ahead.

Neck and neck they raced—neither leading upon the other. One second Dunk would gasp with the belief that Polly's sleek nose was an inch or so in front—the next it would be Great Oak.

The rest of the dogs were now left in a bunch hopelessly behind, battling for third place.

The hare had almost reached the finishing-post when something happened.

There was a deafening roar—a flash of flame—and the dummy hare was blown into a thousand fragments—leaving a great yawning hole in the centre of the track.

The roaring of the crowd died as if cut off with a knife, and a horrible silence fell over the huge arena.

Dunk Grey—amazed as he was to understand the meaning of it all—had eyes for the two leading dogs now lying as still as death near that gaping crater.

Thrusting people aside, he vaulted over the front of the stand on to the turfed track.

A dozen strides and he was upon his knees beside the two prostrate animals, where he was joined a few seconds later by Squire Branscome, anxious to know the extent of the injury to Great Oak.

But mercifully both dogs still breathed—they had only been stunned by the concussion of the explosion.

MEANWHILE in an obscure corner of the refreshment room a villainous little coterie were busy opening a bottle of champagne.

They consisted of "Harry Saunderson," Jim Kemp, the gent with the "cauliflower" ear, and some others.

Saunderson held up his glass and clinked it against that of Jim Kemp.

"Well done, Jim," he murmured in a tone hardly above a whisper. "If either of those brutes had got home, it would have ruined me. But I guess that's the end of Branscome's Great Oak and Grey's Polly. Clever plan of yours to sink that explosive and detonator overnight, to be fired when the 'tin rabbit' passed over it during the actual race. Now we shan't be bothered by either of those brutes again."

But there he was wrong, as you will learn in the next story of Dunk Grey and Pretty Polly.

Look out for the next Greyhound Racing yarn soon, boys, and remember that the "BOYS' MAG." is the ONLY Boys' paper to feature stories of greyhound racing.

TWO FAMOUS BOYS' MAG. CHARACTERS
APPEAR IN ONE GRAND, LONG COM-
PLETE STORY, NEXT WEEK, CHUMS.



The Dandy Cowboy Meets Don Duvall, The Boy Circus Owner, and in Next Week's Hundred per Cent. Excitement Tale You'll Find

THE CIRCUS
IN
THE WILD WEST.



THE River, the Cool, Green Softly Whispering Water, Running Through the Fair Countryside—that's Where You'll Find this Grand School Story of Fun and Mystery Laid this Week, Chums. Cyrus P. Kane, the Amazing American Kid has a Big Startler Up His Sleeve for St. Matt's College.

A Mysterious Affair.

CYRUS P. KANE, the Canadian fourth former at St. Matt's College, speeded out of the little village of Wryming, his powerful legs working furiously at the pedals of his bicycle. Behind him a clock tolled out six times, causing the rider to utter a whistle of dismay.

"Phew! six o'clock," the lad muttered lugubriously. "Guess this child is fixed for trouble when he gets back home."

Despite his newness to the old school, this rule that no inmate should be abroad after six was well known to the Canadian, and his breaking of it was accidental rather than deliberate.

Kane had been negotiating the purchase of a cricket bat, and Cyrus P., who knew more about baseball than cricket, had spent precious minutes in making a close inspection of Mr. Carter's wares.

He made his purchase at last and, much to the little sports vendor's amusement, the article he chose was the very one Mr. Carter had first shown him.

So, the deal having been completed to the satisfaction of both, the Canadian mounted his "jigger" and rode off in the direction of St. Matt's.

Fortunately the return journey was mostly on the decline, and Kane whizzed along at a good pace.

He was negotiating a narrower and lonely section of the road when the steady hum of auto engines broke upon his ears and with a roar and a rush the car dashed by. Kane had a lightning glimpse of a big limousine; then a cloud of dust blotted out the machine.

"Rotten road-hog!" Cyrus P. growled. "Reckon I'd like to say a few words to—hello! the blighter's stopped!"

Sure enough, the limousine had halted about twenty yards ahead. The driver had descended and was tinkering about inside the raised cowling.

"Say, guy!" Kane called out, dismounting as he drew level with the car. "What the rattlesnakes do you mean by raising such a sandstorm? 'Think you gotta—' he broke off with a gasp of astonishment as, without warning, three men sprang out of the vehicle and hurled themselves upon him.

The Canadian recovered from his first surprise very quickly and, getting his arms free, he sent a couple of well-directed blows into the faces of his assailants. One of them staggered back, clutching an aching jaw; the second dabbed at a blood-stained mouth.

"Grab the little hound!" cried the third member of the trio. "Quick, you fools!"

Kane's momentary advantage was swept away as the attackers flung themselves at him again; and, lifting him from the ground, they bore him to the open door of the motor. In another instant he would be inside . . .

Bang! The sharp report of a revolver rang out from close at hand. His captors dropped Cyrus as if he had suddenly become red-hot as a bullet sang

What Cheer? Fun and Frolics on the River—and an Amazing Mystery Plot too, with Cyrus P. Kane, the Kid from Canada, Playing the Star Role.



above their heads. They turned to see, some fifty yards down the road, a man who supported in one hand a motor-cycle and in the other held a levelled pistol. A black mask of some sort hid the upper part of his face.

No sooner did the stranger observe that he had been seen than he mounted his machine and came thundering forward.

But the others did not wait for him. They scrambled aboard the car which jerked into motion and vanished in a cloud of dust. Simultaneously the motor-cyclist wheeled round abruptly and also disappeared.

"Waal, I'm durned!" was the Canadian boy's remark as he rose to his feet, secured his own machine and rode on to the school.

"YOU'RE late, Master Kane," was the porter's greeting when Cyrus passed through the gates.

"You've missed call-over. The Head's called a meeting of the whole school in the lecture hall for six-thirty."

"Good! I'll pop along; and thanks, Miggy."

Cyrus gained the lecture hall just as Dr. Jameson took up his place at the dais. The Mutineers, Fred Strong and Co., regarded him curiously as he plumped beside them.

"Where the deuce have you been? demanded Strong in a whisper.

"Tell you all about it afterwards—no time now," was the reply.

With a preliminary cough, the Head began to address the assembled school.

"You boys are aware that, for several years, it has been St. Matt's habit to hold a river regatta on the Wrye. The events have, hitherto, been contested for by St. Matt's and their neighbours from Hendover School for the Maurice Cup. This year, however, a third party enters the arena. A company of Territorials is encamped near-by, and their Commanding Officer has requested that his men be allowed to submit entries. I have, on behalf of you all, consented to the request."

The roar of cheers that greeted this announcement left no doubt as to St. Matt's approval of Dr. Jameson's decision.

"I am glad to find my boys such sportsmen," he said, smiling. "But I have yet another surprise for you. The gentleman who has just taken the Manor has written to me offering to put up a cup to be won by the team who can score the highest points on the rifle range."

"And that is all, boys," the doctor finished hurriedly, and left the hall followed by a deafening roar of applause.

"Now, young Canada," said Fred Strong, when the mutineers had adjourned to Study 10; "just give an account of yourself, my fine youth."

Cyrus Kane told his story in a few words. The chums heard him in growing amazement. None of them could offer any explanation of the mysterious affair.

"Now I want you chaps to keep mum about it for a while," Cyrus said. "Perhaps we'll be able to nab these fellows ourselves. Reckon this is going to be an exciting week."

Cyrus P. was quite right. But how exciting, even he did not realise at the moment.

Drama at the Regatta.

AS soon as dinner was over St. Matt's joined the crowds who wended their way to the banks of the gleaming Wrye. It was a merry throng. Little business was done in Wryming during St. Matt's Regatta week; four days' holiday being the general order of things in the little village.

Beside those particular events which had to do with the winning of the Maurice Cup, there were numerous other attractions for the spectators.

In one instance the villagers had floated a raft in the centre of the river upon which they had erected a boxing ring. Two local champions were selected to wage war upon one another; a task which they were eagerly pursuing, their fists being muffled in gloves as large as pillow-cases.

The Territorials were much in evidence also. A few yards away from the boxers they had floated another raft and equipped it with a full troupe of nigger minstrels. The comic songs, quips and jests and extraordinary antics of the cork-blackened "Terriers" kept the shouts of merriment echoing from bank to bank.

On the river itself, punts and skiffs, hired out from the Green Harp Inn, just above the weir, moved lazily about beneath the broiling sun.

The high-diving competition was announced in due course. Having been elected Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Carlow addressed the crowd through a megaphone.

"Ladies and gentlemen: the first event on our programme in connection with the Maurice Sports Challenge Cup is the high-diving competition . . ." here the speaker went into details as to conditions, etc. "The names of the entrants are as follows. Representing the Territorials: Corporal Meadows; Hendover School: V. Smithson; St. Matt's: F. Strong."

The diving-board which had been set up for the occasion became the cynosure of all eyes. Corporal Meadows was the first to take the twenty-foot plunge, and a general shout of admiration greeted his effort as he shot through the air, to strike the water without causing a splash.

Smithson followed Meadows. The Hendover lad dived splendidly; but it was obvious to all that he failed to equal the example set by his predecessor.

St. Matt's cheered their champion to the echo when the leader of the Mutineers took the board. Straight as an arrow, Strong slipped down, cleaving the water in faultless style.

A breathless hush followed as the judges conferred together. Presently Mr. Carlow megaphoned their decision.

"Corporal Meadows the winner!" he bawled. Whereupon the rivals united in cheers for the successful competitor.

"Say, you chaps," Gerry Drew said to his chums, as the three Mutineers and Cyrus Kane stood listening to the minstrels. "I wonder who's the joker in the little motor launch?"

They regarded the object of Drew's remark with curiosity. The launch was a small, trim craft with a crew of two men, neither of whom the comrades recognised.

"Blessed if I know," Strong said. "I—my hat! Here's another one!"

A second launch somewhat larger than the first,

came slowly round the river bend and took up station close to boat number one. It contained three men, all equally strangers to the Mutineers.

The juniors' attention was distracted the next moment when the three boats for the "fours" race, which was to conclude the entertainment that day, lined up at the starting-post. The course was a mile. Hendover drew the inside position and St. Matt's the centre. Mr. Carlow's pistol cracked and away they went.

For the first quarter of a mile the three boats kept practically level; then Hendover's advantage began to reveal itself. Slowly but surely they forged ahead, closely pursued by St. Matt's, with the Territorial crew slightly in the rear.

"Come on, Hendover!"

"Hend—over!" echoed the visitor's school cry.

But suddenly, a quarter of a mile from the winning-post, St. Matt's seemed to take on a new lease of life and began gaining upon their rivals with amazing rapidity.

The Hendoverians fought manfully to keep their lead. But in less time than it takes to tell, St. Matt's were leading by more than a length.

A mere hundred yards separated them from the winning-post now, and the result appeared to be a foregone conclusion. Cyrus Kane, the St. Matt's stroke was allowing his efforts to slacken a little, when a warning shout came from the river bank. From the corner of his eye the Canadian junior saw the smaller of the two motor launches shoot out towards the St. Matt's boat.

It seemed that nothing short of a miracle could prevent the launch from striking the lighter craft.

The miracle happened. With a staccato burst of her engine, the second motor-boat darted forward, thrusting her short prow between the other two vessels. There followed a harsh, grating sound as both met in a slanting blow. Then, to the utter astonishment of the beholders, the launches opened out to full speed and vanished round the river bend, leaving St. Matt's to pass the post, winners by half a length.

As the Mutineers and Kane wended their way back to the old school, Fred Strong broached the subject in his direct way.

"There's something dashed strange in the air, you fellows. And it looks to me as if old Kane had a lot to do with it. First, there's the attempt at kidnapping him last night; then this business of this afternoon. I wonder what will happen next?"

"Never mind," said Tom Knowles cheerfully, clapping the Canadian on the back. "You've still got the Mutineers to look after you, my son. Don't forget that."

In Peril From The Air.

THURSDAY dawned with a promise of maintaining perfect weather conditions, a promise which was amply borne out as the hours progressed.

Throughout the general round of fun, however, Cyrus Kane's face wore a very worried expression. Fred Strong remarked on this as he and the Canadian entered the dining hall.

"It's about the dad," Kane explained. "I've had a wire which led me to understand that he would arrive here yesterday; yet there's no sign of him so far."

"I shouldn't worry, old man," said the leader of the Mutineers. "He may have had some business to carry out in London. You bet on it, he'll be along some time to-day."

"I hope so, anyhow; but I'll be glad to see him," was the other's rather dubious remark.

That afternoon, swimming races were the order of

the day. First there was to be a hundred yards event in which the contestants would be fully clothed, save for boots or shoes; then would follow the half-mile race in ordinary swimming costume, and the under-water race.

In the former, Ralstone himself was down to carry the colours of St. Matt's, the half-mile being left in the able hands of Cyrus Kane, whose speed and stamina in the water had no equal at the old school.

The start of the first race brought the spectators crowding to the banks in tremendous excitement. In order that no advantage in weight of garments might exist between the competitors, all wore khaki uniform.

Crack! went the starting pistol, followed by a splash as the three struck the water together.

For thirty yards or so the swimmers kept practically level; then Ralstone, using his powerful arms in the Australian "Crawl" stroke, forged rapidly to the front.

He was immediately challenged by the Hendover representative who "trudged" in Ralstone's wake like a young grampus.

The Territorials' man was left in the rear, and it was obvious he had no chance against his rivals.

Jameson of Hendover did his utmost to overhaul the skipper of St. Matt's. But Ralstone had gauged his task correctly. Amid a roar of acclamation he passed the post, winner by nearly ten yards.

"Splendid," said Strong enthusiastically to the Mutineers. "That puts us one up on the 'Terriers.'"

"Wait, my son," remarked the captain of Hendover, who stood near-by. "There's still the half-mile and the under-water events left."

The Hendover captain's hopes were fulfilled in a very short time, for the swimming-under-water race was easily won by Phillipson, whose total time submerged was a little over two minutes.

Thus the scores stood, one event for Hendover and the Territorials and two for St. Matt's.

Preparations for the start of the half-mile were going forward when the deep hum of an aeroplane engine overhead attracted the attention of the crowd.

No sooner had the machine got directly above the spectators than the pilot commenced to go through the most amazing and thrilling evolutions.

He looped the loop, rolled over from wing-tip to wing-tip; zoomed and dived; and finally spun down to within a hundred feet of the gleaming river.

When he recovered, to shoot skyward again, the crowd drew an almost audible sigh of relief.

"Jolly good," was the unanimous decision. "But we mustn't forget the race."

This had already commenced. Once more the "Terriers" appeared to be unlucky in their selection of a champion. Kane and Dickson were battling together well in front, with the latter leading by a couple of yards.

The Canadian junior was striving might and main to overhaul his rival. Dickson, however, seemed indefatigable and untiring. As the winning-post drew closer, the Hendover fellows nearly went mad, their voices completely drowning the yells of encouragement from St. Matt's.

"Hend—over! Hend—over!"

And Hendover it proved to be. There was barely a foot in it at the finish, for Cyrus Kane drew up with a magnificent spurt. As the two scrambled from the water they were surrounded by their admiring supporters.

Ralstone thrust his way through the ranks.

"Come on, you chaps; no hanging about. Get back to the dressing-ten—sharp's the word!"

Kane was first away. He was clear of the crowd

and approaching the tent when a man suddenly came running towards him, calling out as he came.

The Canadian junior halted as the stranger drew up with him.

"Oh, Master Kane; a moment, if you please. I am the bearer of a message from your father."

Cyrus uttered an exclamation of joy and impatiently watched the other as he fumbled about in one of his pockets.

"It's a letter," the man mumbled. "I put it in here. Where the—ah, here we are!" He produced an envelope which he was on the point of tendering to the lad when an interruption occurred.

There was the deafening roar of an engine overhead and the aeroplane came swooping down upon them at a terrific speed. From below the fuselage a long rope ladder depended, swaying before the rush of wind.

Straight for Kane and his companion the machine dived, hardly fifty feet up. Cyrus felt an arm like steel fasten round his waist. As in a dream, he saw the plane shoot above him like a great, black shadow. Vaguely he saw his captor's free hand raised to arm's length and grasp the swaying ladder. There followed a terrible upward jerk; then . . .

Crack! Crack! The reports of revolver shots fired from near-by came so close upon one another that they sounded as a single explosion. Kane heard his captor utter a cry of agony, and next instant the lad thudded to earth as the man released his hold.

Cyrus was bewildered as the aeroplane mounted heavenwards, the stranger swinging like a fly at the end of the dangling ladder; then he looked round for his mysterious rescuer. There was no one to be seen!

There was no longer any chance of keeping secret the mysterious attempts at kidnapping him made within the last few days, and back at the school the

whole business had to be told to Dr. Jameson, who expressed himself unable to fathom the problem.

"I cannot accept the responsibility of your safety, Kane," the Head said. "All I can do is to inform the police of what has occurred. In the meantime you must go warily and never be far away from your school-fellows. It is evident some evil is dogging your footsteps."

"One thing else puzzles me," Fred Strong remarked afterwards. "Who saved you on the first occasion; and was it the same chap who fired those shots this afternoon?"

But Kane could only shake his head in a helpless sort of fashion.

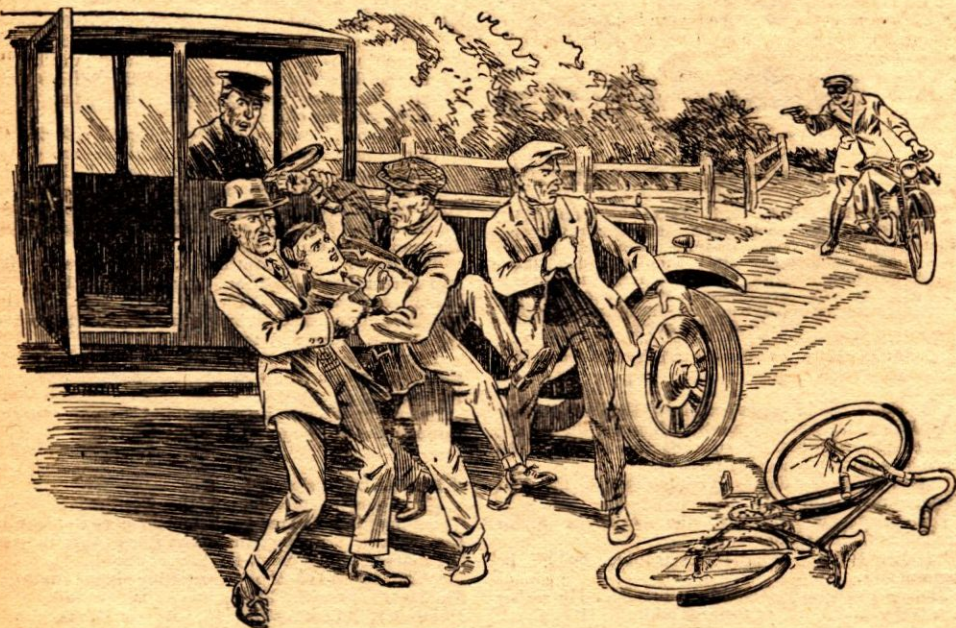
Unravelling The Mystery.

IN view of the state of the scores—St. Matt's, two events, Hendover two events, and their rival one—excitement waxed high as to whether one of the schools would win the Maurice Cup, or the Terriers would make it a dead heat on the range at two-all.

The competition was divided into two courses, the first to be fired off before lunch, the second during the afternoon. At eleven o'clock promptly the three teams met on the Terriers' range.

If the Territorials expected to sweep the board they were quickly disappointed. In the handling of their rifles the cadets were in no way behind their more experienced rivals; and Cyrus Kane's skill was truly amazing. Out of six shots at two hundred yards, the Canadian junior was signalled five "bulls" and one inner; a feat which he repeated at four hundred.

St. Matt's were in high glee, and when the score for the two districts were called out, Kane was the hero of the hour, having totalled forty-six out of a possible forty-eight.



THE UNKNOWN RESCUER.—Bang, the sharp report of a revolver shot rang out close at hand and his captors dropped Cyrus as though he were red hot. Some fifty yards away a masked motor-cyclist stood with his gun trained on the rogues.



CHECKMATING THE AERIAL KIDNAPERS.—Crack, crack! The sound of revolver shots fired from nearby came so close upon one another that they sounded like a single explosion. Kane heard his captor give a cry of agony; then the fellow released his hold, and the Canadian Junior thudded to earth.

St. Matt's, 271; Territorials, 270; Hendover, 262.

* * * * *

AS Fred Strong emerged into the quad after dinner he was espied by Miggins, the school porter, who ambled towards the leader of the Mutineers and touched his forelock.

"Seen Master Kane, young sir?" inquired Miggins respectfully.

Ere Strong could reply, the Canadian junior strolled up behind him.

"Hello, Miggy; what's the trouble, bo'?" he demanded.

The porter regarded Kane doubtfully. He rather resented Cyrus' familiar form of address. But Cyrus P. had plenty of money; and Miggins had handled some of it in tips.

"A gent down at the gate inquiring for you, sir,"

he vouchsafed. "Says as he wants to see you very important."

"I'll go with you, Kane," Strong whispered. "It may be another 'have.' Two's company, you know."

The Canadian nodded and both lads strode in the direction of the school-gates. A tall man—a stranger to both of them—came forward to meet them.

"Master Kane?" this individual said, interrogatively.

Cyrus P. nodded shortly.

"It's rather important," the stranger began. "If you young gentlemen would step outside the gates—"

The chums did not hesitate. Completely unsuspecting, they followed the man out into the roadway. Strong had just time to observe a large, closed motor-car when something was flung over his head and shoulders. Powerful hands lifted him from the ground, and next instant he felt yielding upholstery around him. Another body, evidently that of his chum, cannoned into him. There followed the bang of the closing door, and the car leapt into motion.

As soon as he had sufficiently recovered from his surprise, Fred Strong commenced to struggle furiously. A buffet in the side of the head almost stunning him, warned him not to repeat this effort.

The motor stopped at last and, still muffled in the garments, both lads were hustled out of the vehicle and into some building. Several flights of stairs were negotiated before they were released. A door crashed shut behind them ere they could free themselves of the enveloping clothes.

A hasty survey of their surroundings revealed a small apartment whose only piece of furniture consisted of one cane chair. Light was admitted by means of a square window set a few feet above their heads.

"This is a pretty kettle of fish," said Strong, ruefully. "Whatever is in the wind, these blighters have us fairly."

Without making any reply, Cyrus P. placed the chair in position beneath the window and, mounting it, peered out. Then he sprang lightly to the floor and commenced peeling off his coat. His face was strangely pale and grim as he addressed his chum.

"Strong," he said quietly, "there's a forty-foot drop to the ground, bo'! and a thick trail of ivy growing up the side of the house. I think it'll bear my weight; in any case, I'm going to try."

And before Fred Strong could utter a protest, the plucky lad had jumped on to the chair and scrambled through the open window.

The leader of the Mutineers sprang up after him and thrust forth his head. A projecting ledge hid Kane from view.

The minutes passed by with agonising slowness for Strong. Five . . . ten . . .

Then came the sound of distant voices raised in shouts of alarm followed by the sharp cracking of revolvers.

Throwing discretion to the wind, Strong plunged through the opening and gripped the ivy.

* * * * *

"PARADE—'shun!"

The deep voice of the Territorials' Commanding Officer rang out to every corner of the range, bringing the assembled Cadets and "Terriers" up as one man.

"The result of the competition is as follows: St. Matt's School, 498 points; Territorials, 492; Hendover School, 487. St. Matt's is, therefore, adjudged the winner. Parade—stand at ease—stand easy!"

The last order had barely been uttered when a

deafening roar of cheers split the air. Caps were flourished at arms' length and rifles were shaken vigorously.

The losing teams grudged nothing of their rivals' victory.

Naturally the victors were jubilant. Not only had they retained the Maurice Cup, but they had also won that offered by the anonymous donor for marksmanship. It was a great triumph for St. Matt's, albeit they accepted their honours modestly, giving, in their turn, a hearty round of cheers for the losers.

It was in the midst of this latter outburst that Ralstone espied a coatless figure come running swiftly towards the party. To his astonishment, the captain of St. Matt's recognised Cyrus Kane. He swung round as the Canadian junior dashed up, gasping and dishevelled.

"Great scott! Kane; where in the name of goodness have you sprung from—and dressed like that?"

As well as his breathless condition would permit, Cyrus told his story. Ralstone listened in growing amazement. The "Terriers" Colonel and Mr. Carlow came forward to investigate, and heard the tale with grim faces.

"But this is terrible!" exclaimed the former. "You mean to say these scoundrels actually fired upon you, my boy?"

"I guess I do, sir." Kane had almost recovered by now and his reply was quite cool. "I counted ten of the beggars—all armed. How they missed me is more than I know."

Colonel Locke faced his companions with square-set jaw.

"Gentlemen, we must take a hand in this game," he said quietly. "Obviously it is a task beyond the local police."

Mr. Carlow looked startled. "You mean, sir——" he began. The other nodded.

"Exactly. There is a nest of desperate ruffians in possession of the Manor. In the interests of law and order I intend utilising my men to displace them from their stronghold."

Mr. Carlow did not argue. "As you like, sir; but I cannot permit my charges to take such risks."

The cadets were all eagerness to know what was in the air as the Territorials were called to attention. They watched Cyrus Kane anxiously. But the latter showed no inclination to satisfy their curiosity. Instead he found himself a position in the soldiers' ranks and marched off with them, unobserved by the agitated Mr. Carlow.

It was about a mile to the Manor, and as the party

swung through the entrance gates a pistol shot smote their ears. Rounding a bend in the drive, they descried a knot of figures struggling violently.

"It's old Strong!" yelled Kane, spying his chum in the centre of the group.

At the sound of the Canadian's voice the men ceased struggling and sprang apart, then turned and made a bolt for the house, making no attempt to use the revolvers they carried.

Colonel Locke bellowed a stentorian command. "Stop—stop! Another step and I will order my men to fire!" It was bluff; but the desperadoes dared not risk disobeying. Covered by a score of levelled rifles, they halted and sullenly turned to confront their captors.

"Drop your weapons!" ordered the Colonel in a voice of tempered steel. The command was obeyed without question. Whereupon the soldiers advanced and surrounded the prisoners.

It was at that moment that a tall, clean-shaven, athletic-looking man appeared in the doorway to survey the scene with steady, grey eyes.

Cyrus Kane gave one amazed glance at the newcomer. Then the Canadian junior rushed forward with a yell of sheer joy.

"Dad! Dad!" he shouted.

THE Canadian millionaire's explanation revealed the whole plot.

A gang of Continental crooks, learning that Hiram Kane was coming to England, had decided to kidnap the millionaire's son and hold him to ransom.

By some means or other, Scotland Yard had got wind of the plot and had forged a scheme to baffle the plotters.

Part of this plan necessitated Hiram Kane becoming the tenant of the vacant Manor under an assumed name. As a guard to both father and son, three detectives were despatched to Wryming, and it was they who had forestalled each attempt made upon Cyrus.

Unfortunately, the crooks got to know all this with the result that they had trapped the millionaire and his guard and taken possession of the Manor, eventually capturing Cyrus in the manner already described.

"But all's well that ends well," was Hiram Kane's concluding remark. "I enjoyed your regatta, and am glad my son's school managed to win the cup which I took the liberty of presenting."

A statement with which St. Matt's heartily concurred.

The Dandy Cowboy in A Spiffing New Long Tale Next Week, Boys.



In Next Week's Wild West and Circus Number a New Pal Appears—

TOD, THE LION TAMER.

DYNAMITE,
The Savage Zoo Lion.

Don't Miss the Tale of His Taming by a Mere Boy in Next Week's Mag.

A Tale Flaring with Thrills. Watch Out!

Also There Will Appear an Exciting Long Story—Featuring Two Famous Mag. Characters At Once—Don Duvall, the Circus Boy Wonder, and Rex Remington, the Famous English Rancher, with all his Bar Eight Cowboys.

THE CIRCUS IN THE WILD WEST.

Tell Your Chums to Get Next Week's BOYS' MAGAZINE, too!



CRICKET BATS
and
FOUNTAIN PENS
awarded to senders of
all jokes printed on
this page. Send in
your favourite joke to
Joke Editor "Boys'
Magazine," 146, Fetter-
lane, London, E.C.4.
Coupon on Editor's
page must accompany
every joke
submitted.

The Professor: Now I'll get a good snap!

A GOOD DISGUISE.

The old man had returned to his native village after many years abroad. Suddenly he stopped in the street and laid his hand on the head of a small boy who was just passing.

"Ah! A new face, a new face!" he said.

"No, it isn't, sir," was the prompt reply; "it's just been washed—that's all!"—G.H. (Lowestoft).

DRASTIC TEACHING.

A darkey had been tried, found guilty of murder and sentenced to be hanged. The time set for the execution arrived, and the condemned negro was led to the scaffold.

"Rastus," said the sheriff, "have you anything to say before the sentence of the law is carried into execution?"

"No, Boss," replied the prisoner; "I ain't no speechifier, but I suttently finks dis am g'wine to teach me a lesson."—L.T. (Southall).

LOST BLESSINGS.

JUDGE: You have a pleasant home, a good wife and happy children?

PRISONER (hopefully): Yes, yer Honour.

JUDGE: Well, you won't see them for two years.—E.C.K. (Paddock Wood).

TOO HOMELIKE.

MUM (going for the seaside trip): Willie, have you packed your toothbrush and comb and brush and soap?

WILLIE (disgustedly): Here, Mum, stop it. I thought we were going for a holiday.—F.M. (Salford).

SOME WALKER!

JUDGE (sternly): Why did you steal the tortoise?

LOAFER: I didn't. It followed me home.—H.R. (Belfast).

PLAUSIBLE!

VISITOR: But this man's too big for a dwarf.

SHOWMAN: No, mum, he's the tallest dwarf in the world.—T.J. (Flint).

THE ROUGH SIDE.

GENT: You must have seen quite a lot of the rough side of life, my poor man?

TRAMP: Yus, guv'nor; I use ter work in a sand-paper factory!—F.T. (Southfields).

EDUCATED PERCY.

Percy's father was going to take his little son to a restaurant. Before going, he taught him table manners. During the meal he found Percy scratching his head with his spoon.

"Percy," he said sternly, "what did I tell you?"

"Well," said Percy meekly, "why didn't the waiter give me a fork?"—J.N. (Chelsea).

A GRUESOME GARGLE.

An American was touring America, and during the first stage of the journey he called a negro waiter and asked him to fetch him a glass of beer with some ice in it. The waiter replied that there was no ice on the train, but the American offered the black a shilling if he supplied his wants. The waiter departed and after a while returned with the drink.

On the second day the American increased his tip to two shillings and so on until the tenth day he promised to give the waiter ten shillings. The waiter replied:

"It am like dis, Boss. Ah would very much like to earn the ten shillings, but if Ah keeps takin' de ice de corpse won't keep."—J.P. (Chepstow).

NOTHING DOING.

RAILWAY SURVEYOR: I want to run a line through there.

FARMER: What! Through my barn?

RAILWAY SURVEYOR: Yes, through there.

FARMER: Well, you can't. Do you think I have nothing to do but to open and shut the door every time a train wants to pass through.—W.H.P. (Fulham).

MAKING ACQUAINTANCE.

IRATE STRAPHANGER: Look here, who're you pushing?

SECOND STRAPHANGER: Dunno, what's your name?—S.B. (Hants.)

QUITE TRUE.

JONES: What's Brown doing now he's sown his wild oats?

ROBINSON: Growing sage.—R.N.F. (Coxhoe).

BOTH BUSTED.

SPEEDEM: Hullo, had an accident?

SPEEDIT (fed up): Yes, the wheel was knocked spokeless and I was knocked speechless.—R.W. (Cornwall).



Truculent Youth (to sugar candy sticks): Come out here, and I'll lick the whole lot of you!



**THE
MYSTERY
OF THE
DREAM
CURSE**

*Continued
from
page 10.*

Swift alone remained upright, and now he was staring steadfastly at the priest who, mouthing and snarling horribly, was returning his intent stare with glaring eyes in the depths of which lurked pools of red fire.

It was an awful battle between them—a duel of wills. Falcon Swift had made a long study of the art of hypnotism, and now he was straining every nerve to fight this ancient and evil devotee of the strange and terrible art.

Did he fail? Whose eyes were first to fall? It was like fire from clashing swords, the meeting of those eyes, and as the evil old magician suddenly waved his wand and backed slowly away, Falcon Swift closed his eyes, weak and trembling, from the terrific forces through which he had been.

Only for a moment did his lids close, however. He opened them again at the croaking words:

“Live—live for a few moments more, O, despoilers of the dead, for I myself, the High Priest of the Temple, would kill you. Watch me!”

Powerless to resist, the agonised victims lifted their heads. They were not dead, but in a dreadful trance, and most of them were near to the madness of death.

Waving his staff, the magician slowly backed away until only his eyes were seen glowing in the greenish darkness. Those eyes—like two stars of fire! They held the victims palpitant, transfixed, and waiting in an agony of suspense for the death that would be a merciful release.

Then an awful thing happened there in the darkness. The eyes commenced slowly to increase in size, until at last they were huge, gleaming balls of fire, but yet holding the appearance of eyes that rolled and glared their mad hate.

They were advancing now, those eyes. Screams burst afresh from the victims bound to the stakes—screams that became intensified as it was seen that the eyes now belonged to a gargantuan insect creature, more resembling a mammoth beetle than anything else, with many legs and waving antennae.

Slowly the monstrous thing advanced, and creeping through the cave its waving legs turned the shining beetle body at last towards Heenan Serymouche, the swarthy Sudanese Egyptologist. To the horror of all the beholders the great beetle dragged the screaming man down from the stake, and stood over him as if to devour him.

Falcon Swift looked at Chick, and saw that the boy was in a pitiful plight. The detective braced himself up and concentrated every atom of will power he possessed into the gaze that he directed at that hideous beetle crouching over its victim on the ground. For a few seconds the detective felt himself on the edge of a screaming void. The strain was telling—telling. Yet he intensified it.

He knew that if he failed now he must surely go mad.

And then part success crowned his terrific exertion of will power. For the beetle turned its head and stared directly at him, then commenced to move

waveringly and uncertainly towards the detective, its dull eyes turned black now but fixed upwards upon the detective.

Step by step Falcon Swift contested the beetle's advance. Never had he, when rowing or boxing or engaging in any other sport, known so terrific a strain, mental and physical, as he put upon himself then. And the mental struggle was telling on the beetle, too. It had ceased to advance, and now was dashing backwards and forwards, a horrid, tiny squealing noise coming from it as if it were in dreadful distress.

And indeed it was, for Falcon Swift's will was forbidding it to advance.

And then all of a sudden it happened. The beetle made a little rush forward, and then there was the sound of an explosion, a flash of flame, and a disgusting smell loaded the air. As the smoke cleared the Sporting Detective saw that the strangest thing of all—and it was the thing that he expected and desired—had happened. The quivering beetle had vanished, and there, grovelling in the dust in a state of collapse, was Amen-Aboutis, the High Priest.

“Oh, Man, save me—save me,” he mouthed in a voice of stark terror. “Save me, for at last, after all these ages, I feel that I am on the verge of death.”

A fierce reaction had set in upon Falcon Swift. He was trembling, and disgust and loathing of this creature that grovelled in the dust filled his whole being. Somehow he forced himself to speak.

“So, O Priest, you admit that I am your master?” he said sternly. “By hypnotism have you induced these people into such a state of trance that they have seen things in an unnatural sleep that has probably robbed them of their reason. This trance—can you end it?”

“End it,” shrieked the old magician. “Now I can do nothing, for my will power is taken from me. O, master, master—save me. For I am like to die.”

He got up staggering towards Falcon Swift, Conquering his loathing and disgust, the detective ordered him to cut free his bonds, an order which, tremblingly, the wizened little Egyptian obeyed. But he had no sooner done it than, with a horrid dry choke, he threw up his hands and fell in a heap at the Monocled Manhunter's feet.

Falcon Swift bent over him. And a brief examination sufficed.

“Dead,” he pronounced, speaking absently to himself. “Surely this is the strangest case I have ever encountered. By mysterious, long-forgotten arts this man must have kept himself alive from generation to generation. Only in one thing was he vulnerable, and that was his will. Once that was conquered he collapsed, as we see here, and died. Remarkable—amazing. But, ye Gods—what a fight I had!”

Suddenly a voice, eager and boyish, interrupted his musings.

“Boss, is it all over. What—what happened. Boss—oh, I've had such a rotten dream. I dreamed—dreamed—But where are we?”

The great detective crossed joyfully over to his boy assistant and, bound as Chick was, he shook him by the hand.

“Splendid, Chick. Why, laddie, you must have a fine will power to go all through this and yet remain comparatively sane. You've been through it, Chick—been through Hades. But we won't talk now. These other poor fellows are in a very sorry plight I am afraid. We must cut them free.”

Chick, his humane and professional instincts at work, roused himself. As he slashed savagely with the knife at the bonds of the three Egyptologists, one would never have dreamed he had been through the ordeal he had actually experienced. In his white

(Continued on page 2.)



THE CIRCUS IN THE WILD WEST

Don't Miss This
Grand Long Yarn
of Mystery and
Drama Next Week.

MY DEAR CHUMS,

As I sit writing I can hear the hammering of tent pegs being driven into the ground, the raucous cries of men, and the deep growls of animals who once were wont to inhabit the deep and tangled depths of the jungle.

I have set my back to it all, chaps, fascinating as it is, and I am sitting on a camp stool, hammering away at my portable typewriter, while nearby is my car with Seat, the dear old fellow, squatting near the steering wheel, on guard, trying to look as responsible as any man, though he'll never be anything else but a mischievous white-haired terrier, whose real speciality is chasing rats.

Yes; behind me, chaps, is a real, live circus just encamping, and preparing for their first performance this evening.

I shall not be present to see the show, for I have to motor back to the teeming, busy city on urgent business. For the machines will be roaring at their work of printing the hundreds of thousands of copies of the *Boys' Magazine* at midnight, and your old editor must have one final inspection before the work commences.

But during these summer months, chums, whilst the sun is shining, I generally manage to get away from the office for a quiet hour or two to perform the task which, somehow, has become my favourite—writing this my chat with you—although I find that, to steal away, it is necessary for me to combine business with pleasure.

For instance, take this particular case, chums. Next week the good old Mag. is issuing a

Special Circus and Cowboy Number.

And in a really magnificent long complete yarn you will find two of your favourite heroes appearing together under the most remarkable circumstances.

JOKE COUPON.

Stick on postcard and send
with your favourite joke to
address on Joke Page.
Boys' Magazine.

50/7/21.

Your Editor's News.

**SPECIAL CIRCUS AND COWBOY
NUMBER NEXT WEEK, CHUMS.**

Don Duvall, the Circus Daredevil, than whom there is no better showman character in Storyland, is meeting that popular favourite the Dandy Cowboy out on the prairies. And you are to read next week a special long tale in which is interwoven a most amazing mystery with tremendous excitement and fun.

Two famous authors have got together and collaborated on this super-yarn. Mr. Bud Kelland, the author of our cowboy tales, as it happens, is over here on holiday. I specially wanted him to meet the author of our circus yarns, and what do they do, chums, but get together and talk about making their two heroes meet!

Mr. Bud Kelland is an enthusiast over his stories. He knows all there is to know about a ranch and herds of steers, and he has shot grizzlies and roamed the whole of Dakota for the buffalo and the antelope. He understands animals, and has an instinct as well as love for them.

But the bluff Old-timer commenced to contradict the author of our Circus stories about certain points—and that after they had concocted a thrilling plot yarn between them, chaps. He has seen rodeos, and has known wild horses, but he would not agree to certain exciting parts of the yarn introducing lions and tigers and horses in a circus.

So here we are, chums, down at a certain seaside resort. And we have had a long and fascinating insight into the life of a circus. And, thank goodness, Mr. Bud Kelland is satisfied, and they are busy putting the finishing touches to the story.

The Circus in the Wild West.

It is a grand and ripping yarn, chaps, and there is a trail of terror running through it, which, whilst being healthy excitement, will keep you on tenterhooks to the end.

Your old editor's rule is that he must have good, full-blooded yarns. Nothing namby-pamby, yet healthy and clean. I am going to introduce to you a new character in

Tod the Lion Tamer.

Just meet him. And meet Dynamite, the most savage lion in the world. An exciting and powerful complete yarn, this.

Gee whizz! I've not left myself much space to tell you about the rest of the bumper programme. A fine complete tale of Terry the Tank in Braganza, the hot-bed of Europe, next week. The Tank subdues a revolution all on its own—yep, and the thrills come thick and fast.

Then there's a surprise detective story introducing two new characters to you, chums—two youngsters starting as private detectives. They have terrible luck in their first case, for they are actually employed by crooks to carry out a nefarious job that is right outside the law. You must read for yourselves of the exciting developments, and how they turned the tables on the gang.

Grand surprises in our new serials, "The Planet Schoolboys," and "The Big Game Cricketers."

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.



Just Commencing,
Chaps. Grand New
Series of JIMMY
BRENT, the
Amazing Man About
Town and Mystery
Crook, on Tour
With His Friends
on a Mystery Quest.

HURCULANE! That was the magic substance that took James Brent, Esq., Man about Town, to the Dark Continent.

Velasquez, the Big Boss of the Underworld, plotted to use Hurculane for his own crooked ends—for by its aid a man's strength was increased a hundredfold. He schemed to compel a black boxer, Sambo Mauley, to take the wonder-drug and in a meteoric flight to the top of the boxing tree earn Velasquez a fortune.

But Jimmy Brent knew, and together with Dick Challenger and Sir Martin Anton, Bart., went out to Africa where the mysterious plant, Hurculane, grew in abundance. Sambo went with them, and was suddenly attacked by a huge rhinoceros. Gripping the mad brute by its single horn he wrestled with it frantically . . .

The Fight with the Rhino.

JIMMY BRENT and his companions stared aghast as Sambo rushed at the huge rhino.

The sudden entry into the clearing of the fleeing natives, and then the crashing oncoming of the three rhinoceroses all happened with such unexpected suddenness that the big game cricketers (though they were men who customarily lived by their wits) were for a few moments almost bereft of their faculties.

Not so Sambo, however. For all his childish ways and large, good-natured grin, the ebony-coloured member of the party knew one or two things from experience about the jungle, and in particular, about the rhino.

He launched himself for that head and for the black, curved-back horn with the reckless abandon of sheer confidence. The rhino saw him coming, and its great protruding eyes turned apprehensively sideways as it stopped dead with head lowered.

There was the shock of the meeting. And for a split second the big game cricketers stared as if petrified at Sambo straddled over the leathery folds of the animal's hide, gripping very grimly that curved-back horn.

Then there was a terrific flurry in the clearing. The rhino, biggest, after the elephant, of terrestrial mammals, turned round and about like a dog enacting its tail. The dust went up in a cloud from the sun-baked earth, and through the cloud the cricketers

saw the form of Sambo flung out like a sheet in the wind.

Jimmy Brent commenced to run towards the yacht nosed in towards the bank. But then he stopped. He would never reach it in time to get a gun before Sambo's fate was settled.

Jimmy gripped his cricket bat, deathly pale underneath his tan. During the six weeks he had known Sambo he had learned to like the coloured man extremely. With the cricket bat in his hand he advanced upon the bellowing, snorting and thoroughly frightened rhino.

But a cry came above the dim from Sambo.

"No, Massa Jimmy. Don't you go fo' to make no fumadiddles wit' dis ole cow. She bery hot stuff. You'm leave 'um Sambo!"

Jimmy gaped in astonishment that Sambo, being whirled about madly in the air, could cry out that.

Curiously enough the other two rhinos had stopped at a respectful distance, and with a great deal of vociferous snorting were watching apparently in fright their companion's tussle with the coloured cricketer. Of the three that had appeared so suddenly upon the scene the wrestling rhino was the only one possessed of a horn, from which it is to be deduced that he was the male and therefore the most fierce.

But something other than the sight of the natives, who now stood with their knuckles at their teeth watching, had incensed the rhino to this madness in the scorching heat of the jungle clearing. The dark blood flowed from a wound in the great bull neck and stained the ground even as the brute threshed about.

Sambo, however, knew that the rhino can seldom use its horns effectually in charging or killing. Nature perhaps had intended it for use in clearing a path through the jungle. Curved back as it was, it was no offensive weapon.

Those watching saw the great head of the rhino jerk back again and again in a mad effort to throw the weight that was clinging so tenaciously to its back, but with no success. Sambo was like a limpet.

They marvelled at his skill and strength. But none knew what Sambo knew, that only an hour before he had chewed the last remaining leaf he possessed of the marvellous shrub which had been dubbed Hurculane.

At length the rhino, sensing that it could not rid itself of its burden by ordinary means, commenced to gallop at a great pace, lumbering animal though it was, in the direction of the dense forest and undergrowth that fringed the clearing. Those who watched shouted in alarm, and then they drew quick breaths as they saw Sambo hurl himself off the back of the rhino, not relinquishing his grip of the horn, however. He landed lithely on the ground, and with a sudden

quick twist he threw the great mammal—threw it so that it crashed down to earth and rolled over helplessly on its back.

It was a marvellous throw, reminiscent of cowboys at the rodeo, and as quickly as he had performed it Sambo jumped clear of the enormous, helplessly rolling animal.

"Dere you are, old hoss; dat ought to satisfy yore frisky craving for de time being."

And, indeed, it apparently had, for the huge rhino, after many grotesque contortions, at last managed to regain its legs, and it stood, its whole gross body shaking and quivering, a pitiful weak cry, wholly incommensurate with its vast bulk, coming from its steaming nostrils.

"Dere, dere, old fellow. Let old Sambo help," said the black cricketer in his deep voice as he approached.

The great hippo quivered and wailed in a pitiful manner, yet, as though Sambo held it under some power, it did not move. It cast rolling eyes around in fright, but still steadily the black cricketer advanced.

"Dis am dirty work, b'golly. Dese here is dum-dums!"

It was true that they were "dum-dum," or expanding bullets. Amongst his other accomplishments, Sambo had once been guide to a party of hunters in Africa, and he knew that dum-dum bullets were not reckoned to be "the decent thing." They often caused hideous wounds without killing.

"You'm poor old hoss," muttered Sambo. "You'm come alonga me and wash that wound."

And he led the rhino, who had been wailing pitifully, down to the river bank. The beast scrambled in eagerly, and taking a great mouthful of water, blew like a grampus.

"Dat's de way, old hoss," Sambo roared. "Don't you cry no more. Just you have 'um good bath."

Jimmy Brent & Co., who were lingering in the background, now thought it time to enter the picture. And so evidently did the natives, for they crowded forward, with red mouths showing and some awful dirge issuing from their lips.

Sambo turned round grinning, however. He under-



HIPPO MADE COMFY—"There you are, old hoss," roared the black cricketer, "You have um big drink and don't cry no more."

At last, to the astonishment of the others, he stood by the beast's side, patting it gently, and with bent head observing its back keenly.

"By golly," he exclaimed all of a sudden. "Dis am a bery funny thing. Dis rhino baby, he am been shot."

It was true. With some big elephant gun the brute had been caught in the neck. The bullets had not penetrated far owing to the rhino's thick skin, and it appeared to be only a rather ugly flesh wound.

Sambo, after muttering and rolling his eyes, took from his pocket a black case and opened it. Inside, among other instruments, was a pair of surgical tweezers. The black cricketer was surgeon, physician, cook and almost everything else to the party. It was only by a happy coincidence that he carried this case with him, however.

Very soon, to the bewilderment alike of the handful of natives, and of the big game cricketers who stood by watching, Sambo was picking the bullets out of the leathery hide of the rhino. He frowned as he did so.

stood this chant to be an expression of admiration, and he was not displeased that the natives should see his conquest over the rhino.

But suddenly his grin faded, and he peered through the undergrowth nearby, his black face changing from benevolence to ferocity.

He breathed quickly, trying to strain through the tangle of young growth, knit to a solid mass by the lianas, trailing vine and twisted mangroves.

It was the sight of a man that had pulled his nerves suddenly taut. The sight of a man lurking there in the dense jungle, a big elephant gun in his hands. He wore dirty white knee breeches, and pith helmet, and there was a bristle of beard on his fat face—a face that had the yellow tint that comes from fever in the African jungle.

Sambo distinctly did not like that sinister lurking figure, nor that face. It brought a shiver of half-remembrance to him. He was suddenly, in his mind's eye, back in the underworld of London, hunted and harried, with the knowledge that the lynx eyes of the police were upon him, and that the prison doors might open at any moment to engulf him.

He stood tense a moment, then suddenly a queer panic overcame him and robbed him of all caution. He waved an arm, signalling to Jimmy Brent and the others who were coming towards him from the clearing to hurry.

And that was his undoing. For the man in the undergrowth saw the gesture and rightly interpreted it as a sign that he himself had been seen.

He turned round and barked an order.

Even as Jimmy Brent and his friends came hurrying up from out of the jungle came scrambling and pouring a number of black figures, with that sinister figure in the dirty white ducks and pith helmet lurking in the background, the elephant gun in his hand.

With savage cries and with spears and shields upraised they launched themselves upon the big game cricketers.

The natives who crowded behind the cricketers yelled in warning and dismay. For these were evidently their friends, and they were so impressed by Sambo's masterly manner of dealing with the rhino that in mind they were friendly disposed towards Jimmy Brent & Co.

The white man behind, with the bristling beard and yellow, fever-stricken face, was savagely urging the natives on; evidently speaking in their own dialect.

And he had evidently great influence, for they came on a screaming mass. Jimmy Brent & Co. formed up in a phalanx to oppose them, but unfortunately half the party had been foolish enough to come on shore without weapons, and only Dick Challenger and Sir Martin Anton possessed revolvers.

Those two revolvers barked their messages of death, however, and a leaden hail tore into the ranks of the savages.

For a full minute the battle raged. The spearmen in their head-dresses of nodding parrot plumes were brave. They had never seen a lethal weapon before, never seen the terrible havoc it could wreak, until this man who now shouted and screamed encouragement from behind them had fired with his awful elephant gun. Because of that gun and of certain beads and other gee-gaws that he had given them, they had made him a sort of king amongst them. But now they knew that he was not alone in possessing a "stick that went bang."

Still they came on. They were brave, and their numbers were overwhelming. One or two quickly got through the barrage of revolver fire, and Jimmy Brent met them as they came, and fought them, grasping his cricket bat and using it as a club.

But the end came quickly. The big game cricketers could not possibly withstand that savage, concentrated attack for long. Jimmy Brent saw an ugly, dark, berry-painted face within an inch of his own, and struck it away with all his force. A spear-point lunged for his eyes, and that, too, he struck away, with the consciousness that there were glistening brown bodies all around him, and that his companions were fighting back to back with their bare fists.

The revolver fire had ceased. Even the blacks were silent, concentrated on the hand-to-hand struggle that now had ensued. Save for the quick gasping breath of the combatants, and the thud-thud of blows the fight was a strangely silent one.

Jimmy Brent, pressed on all sides, all at once saw a great club, wielded by a madly-grinning native, crash down for his head. Instinctively he put up his arm to ward the blow, but the club descended on the arm with a force almost sufficient to break the bone, and as it landed on his head Jimmy Brent, man about town, dropped in a crumpled heap to the ground.

HE came to himself again, and groaned as he opened his eyes; for the sunlight seemed to strike into them like two lengths of sword steel. His head felt as if it were bursting, and for some minutes his mind groped around futilely, trying to recollect what had happened.

And then in a flash it came back to him, and he looked round. He remembered now. He had seen the awful, gross face of Henri Velasquez behind the natives, and he knew that the "Big Boss" of the underworld was here in the unmapped interior of Central Africa, and that they were his prisoners.

Jimmy struggled against a sense of futility.

He raised himself to one elbow, and saw their launch, securely anchored and moored by iron cables to two great forest trees. But Jimmy's eyes sharpened as he stared. For on the deck were Henri Velasquez and other villainous-looking white men, probably members of his party. They had taken possession of Jimmy's launch.

With head throbbing madly the former man about town lay back.

The others still lay unconscious under the burning sun. Jimmy happened to catch sight of Sambo Mauley, lying stretched out, face upwards: he happened to catch sight of the coloured cricketer's face, and cool as he generally was, Jimmy Brent went into a convulsion of shuddering. For the tiny black ants were crawling over Sambo's face, and it was terribly red and swollen.

For minutes that merged into hours Jimmy lay there under the glaring, molten ball of the sun. Some of the others were talking aloud, tossing, groaning. Sambo himself had come back to consciousness and was bewilderedly lamenting his fate.

"Golly, dis chile am in a mess. Phew—my face! She hurts."

And then there sounded soft footsteps, and Henri Velasquez approached the recumbent forms with cat-like tread. He laughed silently and mockingly.

"Greetings, m'sieu," he cackled, taking off his filthy pith helmet and bowing. "I thank you for the plans, which I took the liberty of removing from your person. And you must thank me too that I did not deprive you of your life."

Jimmy wriggled round.

"You darned swine," he gritted through set teeth, "if only I were free—"

For answer Velasquez moved forward and bent down with a knife. In a trice he had cut Jimmy Brent's bonds. Stiffened, blackened and weary Jimmy pulled his tired frame together, and tried to move, but he could not. Laughing hatefully Velasquez drove his clenched fist into the other's face. Jimmy fell back and tried to moisten his parched lips with his tongue.

"But come," he heard Velasquez's foreign intonation. "It is the black trash that we want—that nigger! He knows how to find the Hidden City and whilst he is alive to tell his story our expedition is threatened. He must die and at once. Take him up—no, take them all up. They shall see his death."

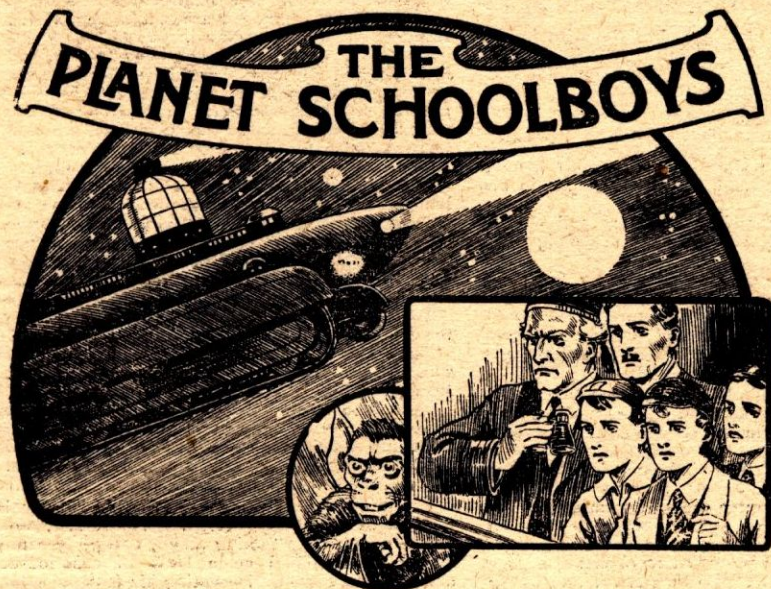
Jimmy felt himself lifted in black arms and carried through the glaring sunshine. Presently he was conscious that he was being lifted up the gangway to the deck of the launch. And others were coming behind.

He was on the deck, propped up against the rails, and gazing out at the dark, steaming river.

"Tie up a board to the rails," he heard Velasquez's hateful voice again. "We will make the nigger walk the plank first—to the crocodiles. Then others may follow. We'll see how we like the sport, eh?"

Forced to Walk the Plank? What will be the Black Cricketer's Fate? Don't miss Next Week's Exciting Long Instalment, Chaps.

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By EDWY
SEARLES
BROOKS.

IT came down from the stars—a thing of gleaming metal, bristling with strange, scientific contrivances yet possessed of neither planes nor propellers. A crowd of schoolboys gasped at the magic of the wonder machine's flight and, when it reached *terra firma*, came in a bunch to investigate the phenomenon.

Professor Roxley Drewe and Sir Clarence Bagshot met them on board and chatted with Mr. Jerome Mannering, the popular Fourth Form master, while Barry Drewe, the Professor's nephew, proudly conducted his chums, Don Masters and the Hon. Freddie Trevor, on a tour of inspection.

"But—but how does the blessed thing work?" demanded George Freeman, leader of "The Firm" at Castleton School. The Firm consisted of Jack Willis, Leonard Hardy, and their truculent leader.

The question was permissible, for the wonder flyer was opposed to all the accepted rules of flying. The Professor was now explaining to Sir Bags and Jerry, as the knight and the schoolmaster nicknamed each other, this very secret.

"By harnessing wonderful forces from the ether, I can reduce the earth's attraction to nil and travel

in any direction I care to direct," he was saying, when there came a dramatic interruption. Count Popandos, a sinister-looking foreigner, appeared, and, before any of the three could stop him, he dragged at a lever near the Professor's hand. It snapped off short. Simultaneously the aerial monster gave a tremendous lurch and shot heavenwards, throwing the juniors gathered on her decks to their faces. Count Popandos appeared from below and, without hesitating, cast himself into space.

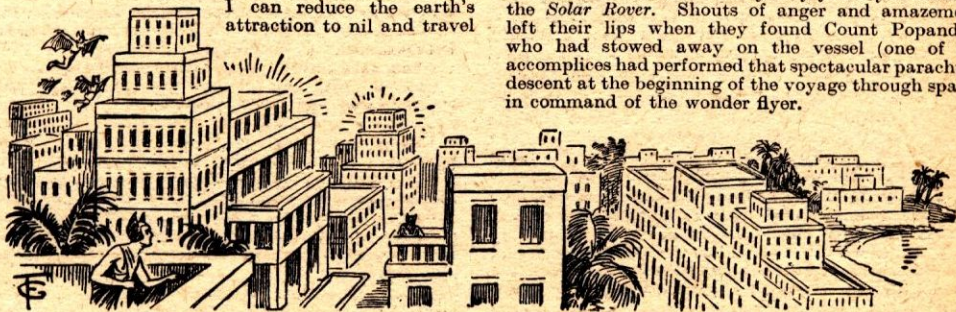
White-faced and dishevelled, the Professor herded the juniors into the inside of the vessel.

"At the present moment," he told them gravely, "we are heading straight for the planet Venus at many thousands of miles per second!"

To the voyagers' intense joy, they were able to make a safe landing on the planet.

Freeman, anxious to be the first human to land on a planet, jumped to the Venusian ground first, to find himself held fast in a huge spider's web.

In the nick of time the erstwhile leader of The Firm was rescued, and everybody journeyed back to the *Solar Rover*. Shouts of anger and amazement left their lips when they found Count Popandos, who had stowed away on the vessel (one of his accomplices had performed that spectacular parachute descent at the beginning of the voyage through space) in command of the wonder flyer.



With a mocking wave of the hand, Popandos sent the *Solar Rover* hurtling upwards—but not before Barry Drewe and Freeman had managed to clutch at one of the great tractors and so gained the deck.

They leapt upon the Count, but bribed members of the crew overpowered the daring youngsters, and they were incarcerated below. When they had become used to the darkness, they found they were not alone. Three queer forms confronted them. They were Puggy Dibble, Royce and Hoskins—stowaways from Castleton School!

And then, exploring their prison, the youngsters came upon a trap-door—a road to freedom!

The adventurers left on Venus were at that moment facing terrible danger. Captured by giant bat-men, they were taken to the strange beings' stronghold—caves in the face of a great cliff. It seemed they were doomed. . . .

A deluge of Venusian rain saved them. The stupendous downpour prevented the Venusians from flying and they rushed for shelter, all thought of their captives gone.

In a bid for escape the adventurers came out on a rocky ledge—to see the *Solar Rover* swooping towards them. Freeman and Barry had regained command, and they took their comrades back to safety.

The *Solar Rover* flew on—to find, on the other side of the mysterious planet, a wonderful city with grotesque buildings towering for thousands of feet in the air.

The Landing—and Another Shock.

"WONDERFUL!" said Professor Roxley Drewe ecstatically. "Positively wonderful!"

"Look!" shouted Hardy, pointing. "It's all marble!"

"No, stone!" said Freeman. "A kind of pinkish stone."

"And the ground's paved with it, too!" ejaculated Barry wonderingly. "I say, these Venusians seem to be pretty civilised, don't they? Very different from those horrid creatures we saw at first!"

"I rather think the good old Professor has been giving voice to some brainy chat," observed the Hon. Freddie. "I mean to say, when you come to think of it, why not? Here we are, as it were, oozing over a sort of Venusian London or New York. On the other side of the hemisphere we must have got mixed up with the good old savage tribes."

"It seems like it," said Don Masters eagerly. "Oh, why can't we go a bit lower?"

Even as he spoke, the *Solar Rover* dropped perceptibly, and her speed decreased. She crept nearer and nearer to that great gleaming city on the ocean shore.

The buildings were extraordinary. The majority of them towered to a height of three and four thousand feet. They were square in design, all angles and straight edges. They looked like some futuristic city. And up those great walls there were hundreds of openings—black, gaping openings. There were big spaces between these buildings, and the ground was paved with the same pink kind of marble, or stone. Everything was glittering and gleaming in the sunshine.

And there were figures, too—thousands of them. The approach of the *Solar Rover* was causing excitement and interest among the Venusian inhabitants. Thousands of bat-men were floating about in the air, fluttering from building to building, crouching in the openings, high up, midway, and others near the ground.

"They're smaller!" said Sir Bags as he lowered his binoculars. "These Venusians are little more than half the size of those we met on the other side of this



A YANKEE VENUSIAN!—"We welcome you to Venus," said the strange being. "Guess we're real glad to see you guys in this dump." He was speaking in American

globe. And they look different, too—altogether more human in appearance. Their faces aren't so animal-like."

"I have noted that already!" said the Professor excitedly. "These creatures are gentle in appearance—and their bodies contain no fur. By what I can see, they appear to be clothed in some sort of fabric."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" shouted Freeman. "So they are! They're wearing clothes, you chaps!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Another proof that my first theory was correct!" said the Professor eagerly. "The first Venusians we saw were savages—but these people are civilised. Wonderful—wonderful! Do you think we could risk a landing, Clarence?"

"Don't call me Cla—"

"I beg your pardon!" said Professor Roxley Drewe hastily. "I really beg your pardon, Clarence! That is to say, Bags! Good gracious! A preposterous name—Bags! An absurd name, indeed! I cannot for the life of me understand why you object to 'Clarence'!"

"Well, we'll let it pass!" sighed Sir Bags patiently. "Shall we risk a landing, eh? Why not? These Venusians don't seem to be hostile, anyhow. And we can always shove the old *Rover* into the air again if there's any sign of danger."

"Yes, let's land!" went up a general shout.

And so, with extreme caution, the *Rover* was brought lower and lower. By this time she had left the ocean behind, and was now right over the top of this amazing city. It stretched for miles in all directions—and in the far distance other towns could be seen, built of these similar marble edifices, but smaller, and more compact. Right across the great vista of land, these towns were dotted about in profusion. But the city immediately underneath was the biggest of all—as though it might have been the capital.

Thousands of the Venusians were floating about, flying with singular ease, and in no way frightened.

They circled and wheeled in great formations, fascinating to watch.

And the *Rover* sank lower and lower—until, at last, she touched lightly upon the ground, between three or four of those towering buildings. She seemed to be in a sort of central square, where the pink paving stones were as smooth and as clean as a tiled floor. On this planet it was obvious that vehicles of any kind were unnecessary—since all the inhabitants could fly. There was no reason for trains, or trams, or omnibuses. All the Venusians were provided with their own method of quick propulsion. And there was no limit to the height of their dwelling places, since they could so easily reach the topmost floors.

Crowding on deck, the adventurers stared in wonder at the scene. In great flocks, the Venusians were settling down on the ground, keeping at a respectful distance from the *Rover*. Others were crowding in all the openings of the buildings. They were watching—as though nervous and afraid. There was not the slightest indication of hostility.

And then George Freeman let out a yell. He waved his hand aloft.

"Aho, Venus!" he roared. "Here we are—straight from Earth!"

And then the amazing thing happened.

Fully five hundred of those Venusians came floating nearer—half-flying, half-hopping. They settled all round the *Rover*, and a great, concerted shout went up from these strange bat-men. And that shout caused the adventurers to start with bewildered amazement.

"Welcome to Venus!" went up the great chorus, in a strange, guttural tone. "Welcome to Venus!"

But the staggering fact was that these creatures not only spoke in an earth-language—but they spoke in *English*! They were welcoming these voyagers in their own native language!

What unbelievable, incredible, colossal thing was this?

An Extraordinary Discovery.

SIR CLARENCE BAGSHOT gave a short, forced sort of laugh.

"Well, of course, this is impossible," he said, firmly. "It's no good trying to kid ourselves, young 'uns! It's sheerly impossible. These Venusians aren't talking in English, really. They can't be!"

"But we *heard* them, sir!" ejaculated Barry, breathlessly.

"We heard something, I'll agree," nodded Sir Bags. "It sounded just as if these queer creatures shouted 'Welcome to Venus,' but you're not going to make me believe that they really spoke in English! It's—it's too ridiculous. What do you say, Prof?"

Professor Roxley Drewe seemed to come out of a trance.

"You are quite right, Clarence—quite right!" he said, with a sort of gulp. "These—these extraordinary Venusian creatures cannot really be speaking in an earth language. And for us to imagine that they are using English is additionally absurd. There are some things, no matter how incredible at first sight, that we can believe. But not this—certainly not this! It is totally opposed to all scientific thought and investigation to assume that there are parallels in the earth and the planets. Indeed, such a thing is outrageously nonsensical. The conditions on the planets are so vastly different—"

"But, uncle!" broke in Barry. "We heard these Venusians talking in English! We must believe the evidence of our own ears, mustn't we?"

"I'll tell you what," roared George Freeman, excitedly. "Let's try them again!"

"A bally brainy scheme, by gad!" said the Hon. Freddie, screwing a monocle into his eye, and inspecting the distant Venusians with concentrated interest. "What-ho, there! I mean to say, aho, and cheerio!"

Robin Hardy leaned far over the rail.

"Come nearer!" he shouted, beckoning to several of the Venusians. "We are friendly! Come nearer, so that we can greet you properly!"

And to the astonishment of all the others, a group of Venusians moved cautiously forward, and raised their grotesque heads in meek obedience.

"Speak!" shouted Robin. "Speak to us!"

"We welcome you!" said one of the Venusians stepping forward from his companions. "You from earth, yes? We sure welcome you, strangers! Venusville greets you all! I guess we're glad to see you guys in this dump!"

Robin Hardy turned to the amazed adventurers, grinning widely.

"There you are!" he chuckled. "No mistake about it now, eh? This must be one of America's colonies!"

"Astounding!" ejaculated Professor Drewe, passing a hand over his brow. "The boy is absolutely right! This—this creature was not talking in English, but in American! I am staggered—dumbfounded!"

"I rather think we're all knocked over," said Sir Bags, shaking his head. "Ye gods and little fishes! It was startling enough to hear these beggars talking in English. But American! Will somebody kindly stick a pin into me?"

"But there *must* be some explanation, sir!" said Barry. "I—I mean, it's—it's so uncanny! How can these Venusians be speaking in American? Or, to be more exact, in Americanised English?"

"That's better!" nodded Sir Bags. "The Americans have a playful little habit of disparaging everything British—but, by glory, they have to do it in the English language, when all's said and done!"

"But what can it mean?" asked Mr. Mantering, looking at Sir Bags in blank stupefaction. "Bags! Can't you suggest anything? How can these Venusian creatures be using our language like this? It's not feasible—it's not credible!"

"And yet they're using English," said Sir Bags coolly. "We've all heard—and we're not all crazy, are we? And it's no good asking me for any explanation, old man. I'm just about flummoxed."

"Look!" interrupted Freeman suddenly. "By George! Look over there!"

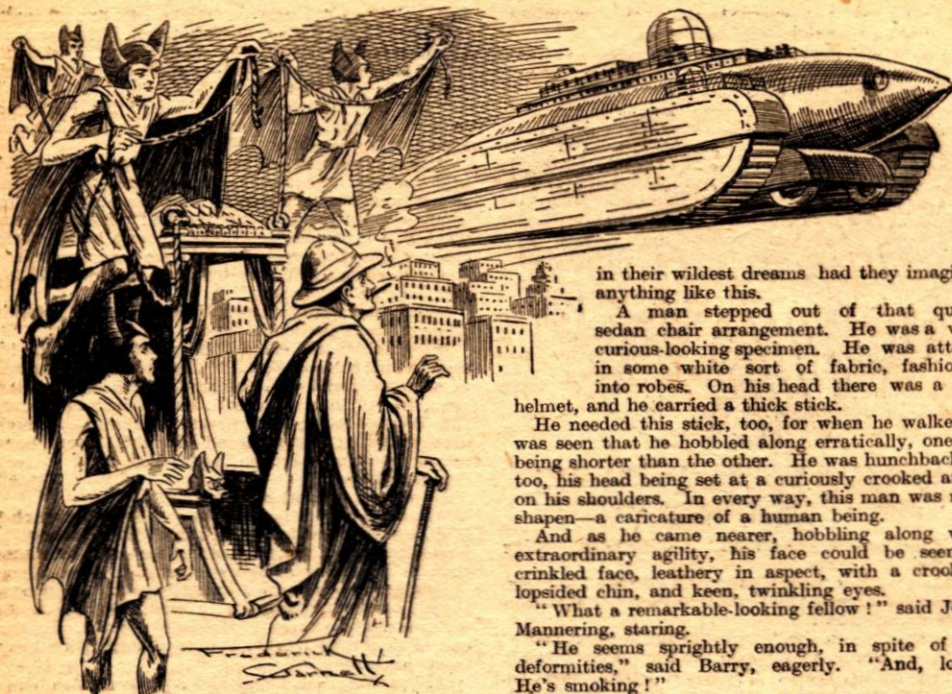
"Oh, my goodness!"

Several of the Castleton boys were pointing. Something had appeared in the sky, from beyond one of the enormously high buildings. About a hundred Venusians were flying down towards the *Solar Rover*, and they were spread out fan-shape, the rear being brought up by an extraordinary contrivance.

It was a kind of litter, or cradle—something after the style of a sedan chair, with an Oriental splendour about it. It was floating through the air, attached by long cords to a dozen Venusians. These twelve Venusians were flying steadily, six on either side—with the cradle suspended between them. And the whole remarkable procession was dropping lower and lower, and coming straight towards the *Rover*.

"I say!" ejaculated Freeman, hoarsely, as he pointed. "Look who's in that sedan chair thing!"

"A man!" shouted Professor Drewe. "Good heavens! A man—a human being! What new marvel is this?"



THE KING OF VENUS!—From the sedan chair descended a queer misshapen figure. On his head was a sun helmet, and he was smoking a huge cigar.

The Amazing Mr. Zeff.

AS the sedan chair, with its twelve attendants, came floating down, it was noticed that the crowds of Venusians backed away—as though in reverence. And from thousands of throats—from every opening in all those enormous buildings—came a long, rolling shout of acclamation. It sounded as if the Venusians were crying: “Hail—hail!”

Sir Bags laughed—but there was now a note of relief in his voice.

“Well, of course, this explains a whole lot,” he said. “There’s a man in that cradle—a human being! At a rough guess, I should say that he’s an American.”

“Undoubtedly, Clarence!” said Professor Roxley Drewe. “Undoubtedly! And this accounts for the fact that the Venusians can speak the English language. I felt that there must be some logical explanation. But how in the name of all that’s wonderful could this American have reached the planet? The very explanation of this startling mystery only opens a more staggering field of wonder!”

“Well, we shall soon hear the truth about it,” said Bags, nodding towards the ground. “His highness has landed, and I must say I admire his choice of vehicle. Rather a nobby idea, that!”

By this time there was not a single member of the Rover’s crew who had not come on deck, and was leaning eagerly over the rail. Every one of the adventurers was watching—fascinatedly. They had expected to find some wonders on Venus—but never

in their wildest dreams had they imagined anything like this.

A man stepped out of that queer, sedan chair arrangement. He was a very curious-looking specimen. He was attired in some white sort of fabric, fashioned into robes. On his head there was a sun helmet, and he carried a thick stick.

He needed this stick, too, for when he walked it was seen that he hobbled along erratically, one leg being shorter than the other. He was hunchbacked, too, his head being set at a curiously crooked angle on his shoulders. In every way, this man was misshapen—a caricature of a human being.

And as he came nearer, hobbling along with extraordinary agility, his face could be seen—a crinkled face, leathery in aspect, with a crooked, lipsided chin, and keen, twinkling eyes.

“What a remarkable-looking fellow!” said Jerry Mannering, staring.

“He seems sprightly enough, in spite of his deformities,” said Barry, eagerly. “And, look! He’s smoking!”

“By jingo, so he is!” said Don Masters.

At last the hunchback halted—right beneath the hull of the Solar Rover. He stood there, looking up. And now it could be seen that his leathery face was flushed with wild excitement.

“Darn my hide and burn my bones!” exclaimed this surprising individual, in a deep, roaring voice which was out of all proportion to his appearance. “Then it’s true! Human beings—and Americans at that!”

“No—British!” called down Sir Bags. “We thought we’d just pop in, you know.”

“Well, strangers, you’re sure welcome!” called up the hunchback. “I never thought to see anybody from earth while I lived! I guess this is real swell!”

The ladder was quickly lowered, and the hunchback came up with the agility of a monkey, and joined the excited crowd on deck.

“Well, gents, my name’s Zeff—Mr. Hudson Zeff, of Kansas City, Mo. You’re British, eh? Dog-gone it, I’m pleased to greet you! Never was so pleased in all my life! Hot zigerty! I guess I can’t believe it, even now!”

The quaint American was very excited, and he went round from man to man, and from boy to boy, shaking hands, and generally behaving like one demented. Not that this could be wondered at. He had never believed it possible that anybody could come to Venus from earth—and yet, here they were! Small wonder that he was crazy with excitement and joy.

Professor Roxley Drewe had a new light in his eyes now—a light of understanding.

“Hudson Zeff!” he ejaculated. “Good gracious! Hudson Zeff—the Kansas Maniac!”

“You’ve got me, sir!” said Mr. Zeff, twirling round. “I guess that’s the name I was known by, back there in little old Kansas City!”



A DRAMATIC MEETING.—And then, as the light came on, Puggy Dibble and Co. found themselves facing Count Popandos and his rascally allies.

"I don't quite understand," said Sir Bags, looking puzzled.

"And yet it is perfectly simple," said the Professor. "Surely, Clarence, you remember the great sensation of ten years ago?"

"Eleven years ago," corrected Mr. Hudson Zeff.

"Well, eleven, then," said the Professor. "Don't you remember, Bags? There was a tremendous lot of excitement about it—although, I fear, the British newspapers did not give much prominence to the matter."

"And I was probably tucked away in Central Africa, or somewhere," said Sir Bags. "Well, what about it?"

"Why, Mr. Zeff was the laughing-stock of America," said Professor Drewe. "He had built an enormous rocket—a kind of space annihilator, as he called it. His scheme was to be shot off from the earth, by means of tremendous springs, or high-explosive charges. I do not quite remember the details. And his object was to reach the moon."

"It sure was—but I missed it!" said Mr. Zeff, nodding. "I guess I slid past the moon without even seeing it—and I landed on Venus. And here I've been ever since, boys! Meet the President of Venusville—the first human being to land on a planet!"

The President of Venusville.

GEORGE FREEMAN was looking rather disappointed.

"Why, there's nothing particularly marvellous about it, after all," he said, with a snort. "And we've been kidding ourselves that we were the first human beings to land on Venus!"

"You'd best get rid of that idea right now," said Mr. Zeff promptly. "An American was the first guy to land on a planet."

"But I would like to point out, Mr. Zeff, that you had no means of returning to earth," said Sir Bags drily. "We, on the other hand, have a ship that we can control. We can return to earth whenever we please. It's not of much value to earthly science when a man shoots up to a planet, and is never heard of again, eh?"

"Boys, you've got me!" admitted Mr. Hudson

Zeff, nodding. "I sure admit that I had no means of getting back. And so, in a way, you Britishers can claim to be the first discoverers of Venus. But don't forget that I was here first—even though I couldn't get off the blamed thing!"

"But how did you land?" asked the Professor, in astonishment. "I have always contended that such a thing was impossible."

"There's no use asking me questions like that," said Mr. Zeff. "I remember getting into that darned rocket, and when I came to myself again, I was on Venus—and five solid months had passed. From what I've been able to gather, I must have missed the moon, and my rocket must have been drawn into the attraction of Venus by some means. That's how I figure it, anyway."

"But why were you not killed when you hit this planet?" asked the Professor.

"I guess that's one of the mysteries of life!" replied Mr. Hudson Zeff. "The atmosphere served as a brake, and I was observed, by these Venusian guys, to fall into the ocean, like a flaming rocket. The asbestos lining of my rocket saved me—although even with that I was burned horribly. Every bone in my body was broken, too. Yes, sirs! Every dog-gone bone!"

He waved a hand expressively.

"Look at me!" he went on. "Some sight, eh? Well, I'm glad enough to be alive! These creatures hauled me out of the sea just in time—and they sure thought I was dead. So I was, nearly. Every bone broken, my body burned and blistered. Even now I can't understand why I recovered. But I did. It took me a whole year—twelve solid months. By the end of that time I could hobble about, with all my bones set wrong."

"These Venusian beings did not attempt to harm you, then?" asked Bags.

"Harm me?" said Mr. Zeff. "They're sure the most docile guys you could wish to meet! Harmless—innoct—simple. Why, within two years I was their leader—their boss! And now I'm President of the whole blamed race. I've taught them English, too—taught them slick American ways. I guess there are shops and stores on these streets!" he added, waving a hand towards the Venusian city. "Yes, sirs! Shops and stores modelled on the best American lines! I live way back yonder, in the President's White House. I guess you'll have to attend a celebration banquet to-night."

"But aren't you terrible keen to get back to earth, sir?" asked Barry curiously.

"Well, I ain't so sure," said Mr. Zeff, with a whimsical smile. "I'm some little guy here—President, King, Emperor! I'm everything!"

"Well, you'll be somebody on earth, too," chuckled Sir Bags. "When we get back—that is, if we ever do—we shall all be more important than any Presidents or Kings! The world will go crazy over us. And America, by the way, will cease to laugh at the Kansas Maniac!"

They talked excitedly—and now, of course, they could understand. By some sort of miracle, this daredevil American had succeeded in landing on Venus. But he had been broken up—smashed almost to wreckage. He had recovered, true enough, but he was now a caricature of his former self.

And while they were on deck, talking, astonished by all they saw and heard, there were three others who went below. These were Puggy Dibble & Co.

Puggy Dibble, to be frank, was not a boy of much imagination. Once he had grown accustomed to all these wonders, he accepted them as commonplace. In fact, Puggy was stupid—with the stupidity of the

born simpleton. What little brain power he possessed took the form of cunning. And his precious chums, Royce and Hoskins, were little better. They were birds of a feather—three of a kind.

And Puggy was thinking more of his stomach just now than of the wonders of Venus. There was something in the Venustian atmosphere which had a tremendous effect on Puggy's appetite. Even at home—at Castleton School—he had been famed for possessing more guttony than any living being. But, on Venus, he found it almost impossible to satisfy himself. And while everybody was excitedly gathering round the astonishing Mr. Hudson Zeff, Puggy drew his cronies aside, and they all went below.

"Grub!" said Puggy, in a low voice. "Now's our chance, you chaps! Let's go down, and raid the saloon sideboard! We can just do with a feed!"

"Oh, rather!" said Royce and Hoskins, in one voice. And below they went—only to find that the saloon was bare of any foodstuffs. So they went further afield—foraging down in the store-rooms. There was not likely to be any interruption now. For all the members of the crew were on deck.

And thus Puggy Dibble & Co. suddenly blundered into the prison of Count Alexis Popandos.

The Bargain.

"CRUMBS!" ejaculated Puggy, in alarm.

He had just opened one of the store-rooms, and a voice had come out to him—a voice from the darkness. It was so unexpected that Puggy Dibble backed hastily away, thoroughly frightened. "Tell your master that I wish to see him!" came the voice. "I demand to see him! Am I to be kept here, locked away like a very dog? It is outrageous."

Royce grasped Puggy's arm.

"It's old Popandos!" he muttered. "No need to get scared, Puggy! He's roped up, you know!"

"Who's scared?" demanded Puggy, blusteringly. The news that Count Alexis Popandos was roped up gave Puggy a great deal of courage. He went back into the doorway of the store-room, and felt round the corner. He found the switch, and pressed it on. Then the three boys looked at the prisoners with interest.

Count Popandos and his two accomplices were at the back of the little store-room—securely roped up. Professor Drewe had taken no chances with the rascals! All three of them were bound hand and foot—to be dealt with later. The Professor had thought it a good idea to thoroughly frighten them first—to make them believe that they were to be kept trussed up like this for good.

"They're only three of the boys!" said one of the other men. "They won't help us, Count."

But Count Popandos was looking at Puggy Dibble with a wild hope in his eyes.

"Here, boy—here!" he said, in a low voice. "Don't be afraid! I cannot harm you—I am helpless! But there is money for you if you will do as I say! Money—five pounds!"

Puggy Dibble hesitated, and edged towards the door.

"You're the rotter who tried to steal the airship!" he said accusingly. "I'm not going to set you free—"

"Nonsense, boy!" interrupted the Count keenly. "I do not wish you to set me free! I desire ease—that is all! And I am willing to pay for it. There has been a great misunderstanding. Professor Drewe has mistaken my motives from the very first. I am an Italian gentleman—a Count! I am a nobleman. Do you think that I should commit any act of scoundrelism? It is all a mistake, boy!"

Puggy Dibble & Co. were impressed by the Count's earnest tone. He certainly looked a gentleman—in

their eyes. But they only saw the superficial exterior; they were not clever enough to detect the black hearts of these rogues.

"Come, come!" urged the Count. "It is a very simple thing I desire, my boy! Just untie these ropes which bind my hands. That is all—nothing more! I am cramped—I am in pain. I will give you five pounds for this slight service."

Puggy remembered Mr. Hudson Zeff's reference to shops and stores, and it occurred to him that there might be some excellent Venustian tuck-shops! His greedy mind was on the alert at once. He was too stupid—too obtuse—to realise that any action on his part might lead to disaster.

"A fiver?" he said. "I'll do it for ten quid, if you like!"

"Look here, Puggy—" began Royce, in a scared voice.

"Dry up, you ass!" hissed Puggy. "There's no danger—and we might as well get ten quid easy!" Count Popandos nodded with vigour.

"Very well—very well!" he said. "I will give you ten pounds."

"Let me see your money first," retorted Puggy. "Foolish boy!" snarled the Count. "How can I give you money while I am still bound? Here—unfasten this one hand. Leave my feet tethered—as a proof that I mean no ill to you. Unfasten my hand and I will give you the money."

"Well, that sounds safe enough," said Puggy, with a smirk.

He went forward, producing a pocket-knife. And in a moment the Count's hands were freed. Without hesitation, he felt in one of his pockets and produced a bundle of currency notes. He counted out ten, and handed them to the eager Puggy.

"My only hat!" gasped the podgy junior. "Then—then you really meant it?"

"Of course I did," laughed the Count. "That is all, my boy—that is all! And thank you. I am glad that you have responded to my appeal. You are a humane boy. I am grateful—very grateful. And now, if you please, you may go. But take care to say nothing of this to Professor Drewe, or any of the others."

And Puggy went out of the store-room, bolting the door after him. He and his two chums were looking rather surprised.

"Well, that was easy, wasn't it?" grinned Puggy. "Ten quid, my sons! And we were all broke! Ten giddy quid! And for doing nothing!"

"Blessed if I can understand it!" said Royce. "Why did that ass pay you ten quid for just freeing his hands? He's still bolted in—can't escape!"

Puggy Dibble chortled.

"That's just the beauty of it!" he replied. "We've got ten quid for doing nothing. Let's clear out of here—quick! We might be spotted by somebody!"

And they scuttled off, little dreaming of the harm that they had done. Their insignificant brains could not grasp the full meaning of Count Alexis Popandos' crafty plan.

Up on deck, Puggy was already acting in his usual fatuous way.

"Well, you chaps—let's go ashore!" he was saying eagerly. "Let's go and find a tuck-shop or something."

"A tuck-shop—on Venus!" grinned Willis. "You fat ass!"

"Didn't Mr. Zeff say that there were shops here?" retorted Puggy.

"Even if there are, they'll be no good to you!" said Freeman, with a glare. "You haven't any money, Puggy—unless you've boned it! You're always broke!"

"Am I?" queried Puggy Dibble, dashing his notes. "I've got six quid here! And Joyce and Biggs have got two quid each, too! We're going to have a spree!"

The other juniors looked at the a wonderingly—and they looked at those notes even more wonderingly.

"There's something fishy about this," said Barry Drewe, with a frown. "Where did you get that money from, Puggy?"

But Puggy Dibble & Co. walked off, grinning widely—enjoying the mild sensation they had caused.

The Escape.

COUNT ALEXIS POPANDOS paced up and down the dark store-room with feverish excitement.

His two companions were not so hopeful. They could not quite see the object of all this scheming.

"It's no good, Count!" said one of them. "What can we do? You paid that kid ten quid for releasing your hands, but we're just as helpless! We're locked in—"

"Silence, fool!" broke in the Count harshly. "Have you no brains? Those boys—fortunately for us—were idiots. And you seem to be little better," he added sourly. "Cannot you see what this means? Come, I will free you now!"

In the darkness, he struggled with their ropes, and before long all three of them were at liberty. That is, they were no longer bound. But there was no escape from that store-room.

"Well, we're no better off, are we?" said one of the men out of the darkness.

"Not yet—but we shall be!" retorted Popandos. "Fools—fools! Cannot you think for yourselves? Before long a man will bring us food. He will unlock the door, believing that we are bound and helpless."

The others uttered startled exclamations.

"You—you mean that we can spring on him, and—"

"Yes, yes—of course!" said the Count exultantly. "We can spring on him before he can be aware of our intentions. It will be easy—simple! For we can lock the man up, and then take our time. It is my intention to regain control of this airship!"

It was indeed a cunning plan—dangerous because of its simplicity.

And while Popandos and his men waited, Professor Roxley Drewe and his party prepared to go ashore. They were availing themselves of Mr. Hudson Zeff's invitation. He wanted them to look round this marvellous Venusian city.

"Take your time, gents—take your time!" said Mr. Zeff genially. "Just walk around the Square for a piece, and make yourselves thoroughly at home. I guess all strangers are welcome in Venusville! I've got to get back to the White House, but I'll be right here again within half-an-hour."

"And will these—these funny merchants let us walk where we like, sir?" asked Don Masters.

"Sure!" said Mr. Zeff, grinning. "I've already given them the tip, as a matter of fact. They look upon us as superior beings, sonny. They won't harm a hair of your heads."

The Castleton boys were thoroughly excited.

"Come on—let's get down!" sang out Freeman.

"Let's have a walk round!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Steady, young 'uns!" said Sir Bags. "We'll go together, when we do go—"

"Really, Clarence, I see no reason for this suggestion," put in the Professor, frowning. "Let the boys

go by themselves, if they want to. All the better—all the better! I want to investigate those wonders in peace. If they are with us, their chatter will disturb me, and then go alone!"

Sir Bags chuckled.

"All right, Prof!" he grinned. "I'd forgotten that point. Cut out, boys—but don't go too far away. Keep within sight of the Rover."

"Right you are, sir!" they sang out.

And before long all the fellows were on the ground, examining their surroundings with great interest. Some distance from them, Professor Roxley Drewe and Sir Bags and Mr. Mannering and several officers from the Rover were about to enter one of the Venusian buildings. The airship was left standing there, in the centre of the Square, with two or three men lounging on deck, officially on guard. But there was no reason for any guard, really—for Count Popandos and his associates were supposedly helpless, below.

The adventurers would not have been so easy in mind if they could have known what was happening at that critical moment!

For one of the Rover's stewards had gone down to the store-room, taking a big tray with him. It was the time for feeding the prisoners. The steward had received his orders, and they were being carried out to the letter. At certain fixed times the prisoners had to be fed.

But as the man opened the door, and prepared to enter, a hand came clutching out. In a second, the startled steward was seized in a fierce grip. His tray went flying over his head, and he was pulled headlong into the darkness of the store-chamber.

"What the thunder—"

But they were the only words he uttered. For something descended upon his head with a sickening crash. He fell forward, senseless. And the voice of Count Popandos sounded—throbbing with gloating triumph.

"We've settled him!" he muttered. "The ropes—the ropes! Quick, men! We've got him!"

And within two minutes the unfortunate steward was roped up. He was gagged helplessly, and thrust into a far corner of the store-chamber. And then the three rascals crept out, and bolted the door behind them. None knew of their escape, none was prepared for the dramatic surprise that followed.

For Count Popandos mounted cautiously to the promenade deck, and he peered out. The very first thing he saw gave him a shock of amazement and joy.

Professor Roxley Drewe, Sir Clarence Bagshot, and the other men, were all walking into one of the great Venusian buildings. And there, far away on the other side of the Square, the boys were equally interested in this Venusian city. The Solar Rover was practically unguarded!

Never had Count Popandos hoped for anything like this! After the first shock of surprise, at seeing these great marble buildings, the one vital fact burned itself into his brain. The Rover was unprotected! Now was the moment to act!

Chaps. The Satanic Count Meets with the Luck that Sometimes Comes the Way of Villains in Next Week's Long and Thrilling Instalment of this Wonder Yarn. But then—the Unexpected Happens in a Thrilling Manner. Don't Miss Your Mag.