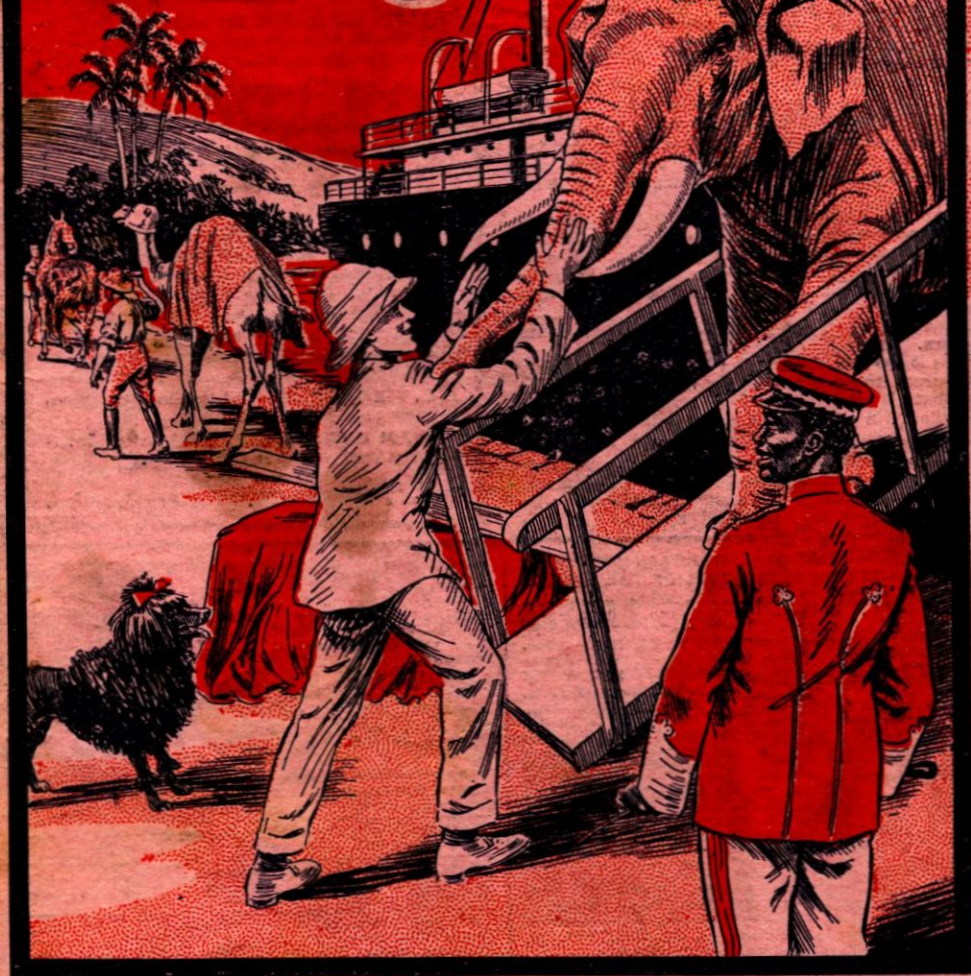


**SOUTH SEAS AND SAVAGES** — OUR THRILL  
ADVENTURE NO.

# Boys' Magazine

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EVERY SATURDAY



**DON DUVALL'S UNDERWATER CIRCUS**

Vol. XI—No. 288—September 10, 1927.

REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION  
BY CANADIAN MAGAZINE POST.

## A SHOCK FOR THE SPEED COP—

(Continued from page 14.)

on his bike and carrying in one hand his gleaming automatic.

The youngster was almost on the iron gate at the end of the drive by then. He was no more than a few feet from it when suddenly he braked.

As he did so he reached out a hand and grabbed one of the bars of the gate; then, driving on, he slammed it after him.

It was all done in a twinkling—a move that took the Cowled Man utterly by surprise. He had been close on the Paramount's tail, and as the gate banged shut between them he jerked on his brakes in vain. Skidding on the loose surface of the drive, he hit the bars almost at top speed.

Beyond the gate Rip drew up and, lifting his bike on to her stand, turned back towards the drive. As he did so he saw the crumpled ruin of the Cowled Man's machine—and the Cowled Man himself, huddled near-by.

Thrusting against the gate, Rip forced it back a trifle, then slipped through to the drive and dropped on his knees beside the fallen crook.

He lay face-downward, with one leg twisted grotesquely under him. He was unconscious and did not stir as Rip snapped the manacles about his wrists.

The lurid glow of the flames from the house played upon them—Rip and the man on whom he had so neatly turned the tables—and suddenly, even as he adjusted the handcuffs, the youngster thought of one who lay helpless in the midst of that inferno.

Rannigan! Rip had forgotten his very existence till now.

Was it too late to save him? Rip, straightening, half-turned towards the house, then checked as he saw that his prisoner's cowl had become disarranged and allowed a glimpse of a thick, bull neck.

Into the motor-cop's eyes a light of incredulity dawned, and then all at once he drew the prostrate crook over on to his back and snatched off his mask.

The man on whom Rip stared was his senior by several years—a big, powerful individual of the

bulldog type, with features that were of a harsh, brutal mould.

Just half-an-hour later, Rip O'Farrell put through a 'phone call to his chief from the local police-station.

"That high-speed hold-up man you sent me out for, sir," he said. "I've got him here, all nicely wrapped up. Would you book a roomy cell for him, and—hang on a minute, sir—would you just prepare yourself for the shock of your life? The Cowled Rider—is—Rannigan."

Look Out for a Great Yarn of Napoleon, the Mighty, Next Week.

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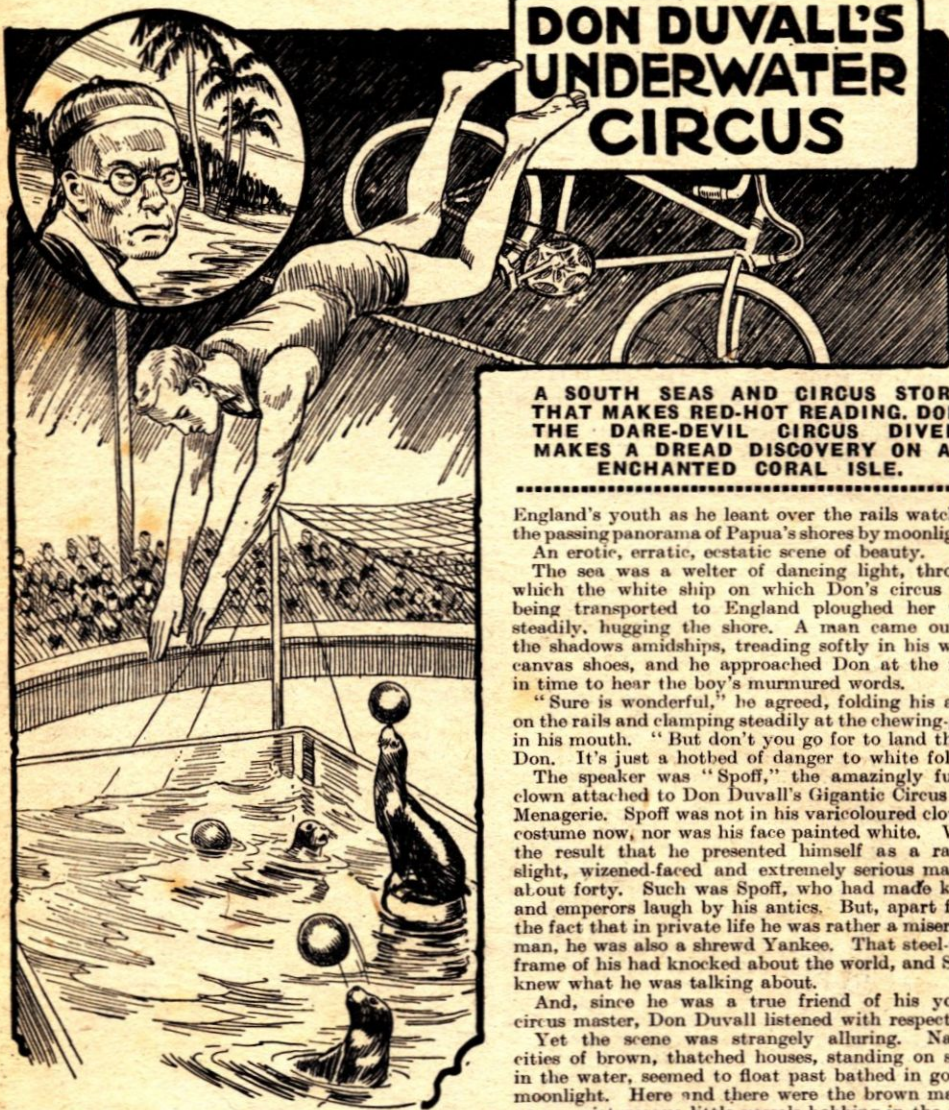
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It's Like The Unfolding of a Thrilling Screen Drama, Chaps—This Tale of the Circus Daredevil's Landing on a Mystic Isle Set Like a Jewel in the Blue of the Pacific Ocean.



## DON DUVALL'S UNDERWATER CIRCUS

A SOUTH SEAS AND CIRCUS STORY THAT MAKES RED-HOT READING. DON, THE DARE-DEVIL CIRCUS DIVER, MAKES A DREAD DISCOVERY ON AN ENCHANTED CORAL ISLE.

England's youth as he leant over the rails watching the passing panorama of Papua's shores by moonlight.

An erotic, erratic, ecstatic scene of beauty.

The sea was a welter of dancing light, through which the white ship on which Don's circus was being transported to England ploughed her way steadily, hugging the shore. A man came out of the shadows amidships, treading softly in his white canvas shoes, and he approached Don at the rails in time to hear the boy's murmured words.

"Sure is wonderful," he agreed, folding his arms on the rails and clamping steadily at the chewing-gun in his mouth. "But don't you go for to land there, Don. It's just a hotbed of danger to white folks."

The speaker was "Spoff," the amazingly funny clown attached to Don Duvall's Gigantic Circus and Menagerie. Spoff was not in his varicoloured clown's costume now, nor was his face painted white. With the result that he presented himself as a rather slight, wizened-faced and extremely serious man of about forty. Such was Spoff, who had made kings and emperors laugh by his antics. But, apart from the fact that in private life he was rather a miserable man, he was also a shrewd Yankee. That steel-wire frame of his had knocked about the world, and Spoff knew what he was talking about.

And, since he was a true friend of his young circus master, Don Duvall listened with respect.

Yet the scene was strangely alluring. Native cities of brown, thatched houses, standing on stilts in the water, seemed to float past bathed in golden moonlight. Here and there were the brown master proas—picturesque little vessels bobbing in the surf. And behind it all was a crash of reckless beauty; the moonlight filtering through palm branches and interlaced lianas on green moss, scattered with white starflowers. Everywhere amidst the looping palms were flowers; flowers hung in clusters, flame trees shed scarlet petals, and hibiscus blazoned around the nipa-thatched houses.

### The Terror Of Lu Wang.

"MY word! It's wonderful, isn't it?"

Don Duvall, the boy circus-owner, breathed the words softly. Glowing pinkly with health and dressed all in cool, white linen, with a wide panama hat, he presented an ideal picture of

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

Don sighed as he straightened himself at the rails.

"It's all like a dream," he said regretfully.

"Sure—an evil dream," Spoff replied, chewing assiduously. He flung out a gaunt hand. "There it is, Don. And it's crowded with white folk, with Spaniards and Portuguese—and Chinks. It seems civilised. The white folk grow rice and cocoanut plantations and their womenfolk hold dances and play tennis. They live in white bungalows, and make ice-cream and cool drinks from patent freezers. But they're ridden by malaria and a queer loneliness and hunger for home. And behind there's always the jungle—the real Papuan jungle, seething with danger, swarming with cannibals. This land is old—old as time, boy—and strange, things happen there."

Don laughed a little shortly. The clown, with his jarring American accent, his wizened face, seemed to put a new complexion on the wondrous beauty of these South Seas.

"Still, I wouldn't mind landing," the young circus owner said rather protestingly.

"Don't you, bo'," advised the Yankee, chewing hard and stretching himself. Then, seeing that Don

**MIDNIGHT MICK OF MAMMON'S HOTEL**  
**—THE FUNNIEST PAGE BOY IN THE**  
**THEATRICAL NIGHT LIFE OF LONDON**  
**—APPEARS NEXT WEEK.**

was still far from convinced, Spoff suddenly dropped his detached air; he leant on the rail, and his voice suddenly became shrill, earnest.

"Say, watacha wanna land for? The white community ain't big enough for a circus like us to play to. Besides, I thought you were homeward bound, to do that diving stunt of yours."

It was true. The big white ship was now sailing for England. Don Duvall's Circus had had a very successful tour in Australia, during which time the boy daredevil had put on a new aquatic turn of his own. He had spent some months in the South Seas, taking a special training course from brown Kanakas, native divers and swimmers, and he had trained himself to manœuvre in the water like a young otter. He had always been a proficient swimmer, but out here he had learnt the finer points of the game. His young body was trained to the last ounce, and he had evolved for himself a circus "turn" in which he did spectacular diving and swimming stunts in a huge glass tank. It had taken them by storm in Australia, and the advance bookings from England were colossal.

And now, when they had scarcely started on their homeward journey, Don was hinting of landing on this island off the shores of Papua!

At least, if he had not hinted at it in so many words, his attitude expressed his desire. Seeing that he was still silent, Spoff, the clown, leant nearer.

"Say, if you must land, don't land on that particular island," he urged. "It lies th' stars and stripes, but that joint don't reely b'long to Amurrica. The Big Boss is Lu Wang, and he's a sinister devil. He's got all the planters in his clutches, and if they dare—"

Spoff stopped short suddenly, and as Don followed his gaze out to sea the boy drew a deep breath.

Only a few hundred yards astern was a boat, a native *proa*, its brown sail unfurled to the night breeze. Yet a man was rowing strenuously, while another, a splendid bearded fellow, clad only in white trousers and shirt, balanced on his naked feet near the tip-tilted prow, a rifle levelled at his shoulder.

Twice the rifle cracked as the boat danced through the lit sea.

"Why—what's he firing at?" exclaimed Don

"It almost looks as if he's aiming at us!"

And then he checked and stared down. He saw the gleam of white arms, a mass of floating hair, like seaweed, and a swimmer came to the surface, arms upstretched.

Don, gripping the rails, saw that he was a mere boy, scarcely as old as himself.

Another shot rang out, and Don, his eyes narrowed and teeth gritted, stared at the man on the *proa* from whose gun that spurt of saffron flame had come.

"Cowardly," he gritted.

"Yep—but he got him," put in the laconic circus clown, pointing. Don looked back. The boy who had been shot was now struggling in the wash of the vessel. His eyes, like drowning stars, seemed to dart a desperate appeal to Don, and then he disappeared under the dancing, moonlit water.

"Good heavens, he's drowning!" muttered the Circus Daredevil aghast. He kicked off his white canvas shoes, flung aside his hat and jacket, and, disregarding Spoff's yell of frantic alarm, leapt lightly to the rail-top, poised and dived headlong into the sea.

The circus clown yelled once more, an alarm to the ship. But scarcely had the echoes of those fateful words, "A man overboard," died away on the velvety night than Spoff himself was leaping wide from the swaying rail,

Faithful friend that he was, he went after Don. He knew the dangers of that fairy bay. It was infested with hammerhead sharks, who lurked in the coral depths, waiting hungrily for prey at this time of the year.

Spoff, whose clowning actions had made vast audiences shake with merriment, carried a jewelled-handled Javanese knife at his belt. He had fought a shark once before in his lifetime, and he could do so again, if need be, he told himself.

He came up to see the ship's lights streaming away like a jewelled finger pointing a path through the seas. His cry of alarm had called others to the deck, but though Spoff yelled once more, he guessed that he was out of earshot. He could not tell at that distance whether they had seen him or not. He turned, looking round in the moonlit bay for Don.

The Circus Daredevil, however, had not come up to the surface, for he knew that he would easily be spotted, and he thought that he might possibly be shot at by the bearded man in white who balanced on the *proa*.

Don swam, or rather glided with swift, effortless ease under the phosphorescent waters. He had marked down the spot where the wounded boy had gone under, and a vein quivered in his temple as he made for it. Every moment seemed an æon of time during which he pictured the other boy sinking to the sharks. Would he be in time, he asked himself desperately.

Something stung him madly so that he almost expelled the breath that he held so tight behind his set lips. Whipping out his knife, he turned like an eel to see a vast gelatinous lump floating away. No; not a shark, but a jellyfish! The blood seemed to recede from his bursting brain in his relief, and he struck desperately forward again under the water.

Ah! what was that?

He dived down deep, deep, like a fish going to the depths. He had seen that matted hair, and struggling white form once again in the weirdly-lit underseas. The boy was sinking. Don cleaved through the still water after him and grabbed his hair.

How he struggled then, treading water—treading upward with his burden! The strange boy made no resistance, but Don felt as though a fire had been lit inside his chest, and in his bursting brain a little imp

seemed to be dancing, yelling madly to him to let go his burden and save himself.

That temptation he thrust from him with a fierceness only equalled by his struggles to save both himself and the other boy. Each of us holds his life a sacred trust, but Don knew that if he should lay down his in trying to save this other he would not be betraying that trust.

And at length with his burden he came to the surface. Gasping and tossing the fair hair from his face, he looked around him. Nothing was in sight save the shore of waving palm trees. The native *proa*, with its vindictive, armed man, had vanished. Don's eyes followed the white trail of foam left by the ship carrying his circus, and saw it a caingorm of tiny lights in the far distance. And there were

Signor Antonio, the ring master, was in command when Don was absent. In his broken Italian he frantically ordered the captain to put the ship about for the shore. The captain shrugged and went to his wheelhouse. That was what he had meant to do, anyhow. But he had thought that Signor Antonio had been trying to tell him something else.

And so precious minutes were wasted what time Don was forging ahead for the shore. The island was farther away than it had seemed, and as half-an-hour lengthened into an hour the boy was still striking through the moonshine, aimlessly it seemed to him. His limbs had become leaden, and after every stroke they tried to drag him under. He did not know whether the boy on his back was drowned or not, yet still he persisted.



**THE SINISTER ORCHIDS.**—Overcome by the awful stench of the jungle flowers, Don lost control of the canoe. It drifted . . . and suddenly he was sucked up by the vicious giant orchids. Togo the elephant, came crashing through the jungle, trumpeting madly.

the blobbing yellow lights on the island, seeming to beckon to him.

Spoff? He did not know that the circus clown had entered the sea after him. Certainly there was no sign of man to be seen.

Don made up his mind to strike out for those island lights with his burden. Taking a lifesaver's grip of the strange boy, he struck out, swimming steadily, silently.

If only he had had the omniscience to paddle quietly about in those flashing waters—to wait for the ship which even then had discovered the loss of its young owner and of Spoff—from what mad peril and horror might Don have been saved! But he did not know. It is not given to us to foretell.

Those aboard the ship were discussing with deep consternation the thing that had happened. How had Don gone overboard? And Spoff? Signor Antonio, the ring master, gesticulated and raved wildly at the Captain of the ship, while the black musicians of the negro band and the strong man and others stood around in dumbfounded apprehension at the catastrophe.

It was the sight of a shark's fins ever and anon that spurred him on. Surely he bore a charmed life that night, or the sharks were blind, for each time he saw one its great tail curved away from him. Don shut his eyes, and struck out, counting his strokes. Nor would he open those aching, throbbing eyes again to see the horrors of the sea. Minutes interminable dragged away while he seemed to be crawling through heavy sand with that load on his back. And then actually his knees touched something, and he gasped and opened his eyes. No; he was not sinking to the bottom: he was being washed in the surf that rolled on the coral spattered beach, and there was a long wharf jutting on the beach, sagging at its posts and in need of repair.

He had landed at something like civilisation.

But near the wharf, tugging at its mooring line, was a native *proa*; empty, yet it served to remind Don of the bearded man with the rifle. Summoning all his remaining strength, he lifted the boy, and staggered up the beach. It was a good job he was in shape, he told himself—a good job.

His sorely taxed brain ceased functioning with

startling suddenness. It was as though a violin twanged to hideous music had snapped its strings in protest. The awful dinning in Don's ears stopped, and the dancing specks of light through which he saw everything became swamped by blackness. With his burden he pitched face forward on the green moss and lay there still, unconscious.

### What Happened Afterwards.

THE night seemed to shiver suddenly, as if, warm, palpant itself, it were horrified at those two lifeless things on the green moss. The eternal diapason of the sea washing on the beach, seemed to take a warning note in its soft splash. A man struggled from out of that surf whose linen was torn in tatters down one side to show blood welling afresh from the flesh. He cursed with a show of teeth as he stared at the gaping wound in his side.

"Curse the sharks—curse 'em!" he ground out.

With the Javanese fish knife, which he still held in his right hand, he ripped off a long strip from his shirt and bound it tightly round his body to staunch the flow of blood. All his actions spoke of hurry. Indeed, Spoff the clown, was half demented. He had fought like a wriggling eel, knife in hand, against a shark that had attacked him. He had plugged that shark clean through the right eye with the long knife, and as the brute shot away in the agony of blindness, Spoff had seen its mate cleaving through the sea. A long swell in the sea just then lifted Spoff, and he had trudged madly down it and so escaped. But Spoff was not young enough to thrive on that brand of adventure. Not unnaturally he was upset as he struggled out of the sea.

He was mad—mad clean through, because he had seen Don with his burden ahead of him, swimming steadily and as if unwearied. Why didn't the boy stop? Why wasn't he exhausted, he asked himself unreasonably.

Spoff was consumed with anxiety about Don. He wanted to warn him, for the clown had his own secret knowledge of this wondrous isle of Luvano. He had been there before. And his mind read the riddle of the drowning boy whom Don had rescued. The stark, simple truth was that he was a pearl thief, employed by the notorious Chinaman, Lu Wang, for his enrichment. The boy dived in someone else's waters, stole the pearls and took them to Lu Wang. To-night he had been caught and, naturally, the enraged owner of that particular fishery had gone out hunting for him with a gun.

Spoff did not think that such a creature's life was worth saving. But he was anxious about Don, for the Circus Daredevil was tumbling into even more troubled waters than those from which he had just emerged.

Spoff cut himself a bamboo cane. He was too old a hand to move an inch on that island without a cane. Hurrying forward, he searched around, for he knew that Don had been near to collapse as he was himself. And then, bursting into the clearing, he saw the two boys—and he saw something else that caused him to rush forward with a cry of terror.

A snake was wriggling swiftly towards the two prone figures, coiling and uncoiling its black, slender length with sinuous ease.

Even as it stiffened, rearing up its head to strike at Don, the clown came up. And he slashed with the accuracy and force of desperation at that diamond-shaped head. The black snake leapt in the air, curling its seven feet round the bamboo in its death agony, its head half-torn from its body. As it dropped, Spoff slashed again and again at it, glaring down into its basilisk eyes—slashed until the snake was a pulpy mass of horror.

"Phew!" he breathed, resting on the bending

bamboo. An army of ants that had been swarming over Don and the strange boy made hastily for the mass on the ground. Spoff, the clown, pawed at the ground with his stick, looking uncertainly at the two boys, and then away. He could not think. His nerves were all unstrung.

There seemed to him a brooding threat in the air. He thrust away the warning that dinned and stormed at his brain. Warning? Bah! Nothing was wrong now. He had found the lads.

Making up his mind, he strode a few paces and slashed down a coconut from a nearby tree. This he cracked and carefully broke, to preserve the white milk inside. He was bending down beside Don with the coconut in his hands, when again a storm of doubt and apprehension assailed him. He looked round furtively.

He did not notice that the other boy—the strange boy—had his eyes open and was staring at him dumbly.

Spoff laid down the coconut. He could not stand it. This island was a place of—ghosts. No, not ghosts. It contained a living horror. Lu Wang!

The gaunt, sparely built man, in his naked feet, crashed through the blossoms of the flame trees and the fretwork bronze of the palms, looking for—what? He pressed the hand that held the bamboo cane to his side where the teeth of the shark had left marks that throbbled red-hot. He was just a little mad perhaps.

And then he saw him. Lu Wang, the Chinaman!

Spoff halted dead in his tracks in the shadow of a palm. He had been right then. That devil was there.

Spoff had once worked, as surely no convict ever worked in the stone quarries; for this Chink. He had slaved from the early morning till he dropped at night and lay on the stone to sleep. Then on again till another night brought surcease. Toiling in the silver mines for Lu Wang, the Chink!

He had escaped at last, his soul seared by that period of slavery. He never talked of it. But nor did he ever forget. He shook now with the passion of his hate as he glared at the dignified Lu Wang, walking in the moonlight.

Lu Wang's hands were folded in the sleeves of his robes, and he wore the cap of a mandarin. He was fat and gross, with a hanging jaw, and his eyebrows were sinister black bars. His slit eyes were never seen, for he wore dark, horn-rimmed spectacles.

And this was the spider of evil who had woven his dark web over the fair isle of Luvano!

His head and shoulders appeared through the magic casement of the palms, not more than a score of yards from where Spoff crouched. On a sudden, mad impulse the tragic clown laid the Javanese fish-knife flat in the palm of his right hand, and tried to still the shaking of that hand. Ordinarily he was a civilised, hypersensitive man. He would not have loosed a shot in the dark, or stabbed in the back—he would never have killed. But to-night he was bewitched. He was rabid with hate.

He was not an expert knife-thrower. The thin, shining blade tumbled rather than flew through the air, but the throw had proper length, and in its downward fall it stabbed into the Chinaman's leg half-way to its haft.

Lu Wang lost his dignity. Screaming in wild pain, he plucked and tore at the knife, and in answer to his agonised cries a score of coolies in white cotton and broad-brimmed hats bobbed their way towards him through the nipa-grass like giant mushrooms.

Spoff did a foolish thing. In panic he stampered from his hiding-place, straight into the arms of a couple of yellow men with eyes that seemed like gashes. They fell on him, each wielding a kris, and

yelling to the others. Flame seemed to touch Spoff in a dozen places as the awful knives cut him, and though he struggled madly it was of no avail. He was the vortex of a struggling heap of yellow men now and, mouthing inarticulately, they bore him to their master.

Lu Wang, livid with pain, was making great efforts to recover his stoicism. His mouth slashed in a grin beneath his dark spectacles as he peered at his assailant, now brought before him.

"Well, welly funny," he just whispered in pidgin English. He had recognised Spoff, and his repressed rage was staggering. "You come alonga me, all same feel mo' betta. You likee see my garden. You likee big flowehs, eh?"

Spoff stared at him, every drop of colour drained from his face. For he knew and understood what the Chinaman meant. Suddenly his reason seemed to fall away from him in screaming agony and, laughing hysterically, wildly, he collapsed in the arms of those who held him.

### Don Takes A Hand.

DON opened his eyes to find the isle of Luvano glowing like a giant emerald in the hot white sunshine of the tropic morn.

The sun, flaring down, was subdued to a softer light by the palms under which Don sat. A sun-tanned boy with only a loincloth for garment was bending over him with a coconut gourd in which was some liquor slightly fermented. Don's whole body glowed softly, for he had been massaged with some fragrant oil.

He sat up, his brain coming at once to a sharp focus.

"Hallo! What were you doing in the water? Why did they shoot?" he asked, as one who instantly recalls a dream on waking.

The youth quite simply opened the palms of his

hands, and in each were huge, lovely pearls, their satin-white sheen gleaming with some mystic, irresistible allure—that strange allure that has made men fight and work and shed blood all through the ages to possess them.

"Me steal from Ricardo," the boy said in halting English. "That's why he shoot me."

Don sat up, shocked—angry. His very poise was elequent of his indignation. He had been through all this to save a thief! But the strange boy's eyes were level and grave as they gazed into his own.

"Me no want," he said with a little despairing gesture. "Ricardo good to me, yet I steal. Lu Wang make me." He shook his head slowly. "I want to die—anything. But Lu Wang, he can make me do."

Don groped for understanding. And illumination was partly given to him. This boy was in the power of the Chinese lord. He was held as a fly in the spider's web. Don had sufficient intuition to see that.

Whilst he was pondering it there came a crash of footsteps, and as the curtains of the palm trees were parted he looked up to see the faces he knew well. Signor Antonio and the ship's captain, all in white, were in the forefront of a score of friendly faces, all belonging to members of the circus troupe. There were exclamations of hearty greeting on seeing Don, and he found his hand shaken until it was almost wrung off.

Don explained, in answer to the shower of questions. "Why, I went in for this chap who was drowning. The ship was making off at the rate of knots, so I pulled for the shore. Lucky you found me, though. This island is not as healthy as it looks by all accounts."

"But where ees Spoff?" put in Signor Antonio. "He go in ze water after you, *n'est pas*?"

Don's face was blank in amaze. "Spoff! Where's old Spoff then?" he asked anxiously. "Haven't seen him. You don't mean to



DISCOVERED IN THE ACT.—Don turned, in his hand the knife with which he had been slashing at the roots of the sinister, blood-sucking orchids. An electric shock seemed to run through him. For he was facing Lu Wang the Chinese master demon.

say the dear old chump came in after me? Why, the crazy idiot, the—but where is he?" he demanded, anxiety swiftly rising.

That was a question no one seemed able to supply with a satisfactory answer. And hearts beat fast, for it was a horrid thing to think of dear old Spoff gone to the sharks. But amidst the babble the strange boy plucked timidly at Don's sleeve.

"Is he so big?" he asked, lifting both his arms and his brows. "He make walk so?" He tried to imitate the shambling gait of the famous clown. And as Don nodded he said with that simple directness that savoured of the fatalistic

"Lu Wang get him. He throw knife at Lu Wang, so Lu Wang say he make for him much pain and death in House of a Thousand Dreams. Lu Wang take him away."

This was formidable.

For a few tense moments during which all the circus troupe seemed robbed of speech, Don struggled against a sickening sense of fear. Then feverishly he commenced to question this strange white boy who spoke English as though it were a tongue that was long alien to him.

The youth explained. He had been lying, unable to move, scarcely to breathe, yet he had seen all Stark terror creep into his accents as he spoke of Lu Wang. But when his tale was finished, Don's jaw was jutting queerly, and his eyes were like blue steel.

"It's—it's me for Lu Wang," he said slowly, with a hesitance born of sickening fear, and an awful sense of futility. Then he braced himself. Look here. The circus is playing on this island to-night I've got an idea—just an idea.

He stopped short, thinking abstractedly. A moment before he had put a swift question to this strange white boy. But the youth, with much vehement shaking of his head, declared that he could not take Don to the lair of the mysterious and sinister Chinese lord, that place called "The House of a Thousand Dreams," which Don now believed to be a place of horror.

Obviously the boy did not tell the truth. And Don did not blame him. Indeed, he felt a spark of pity for the youth's awful fear. It was like a cruel lash, flicking and cutting through all his manifest desire to aid these new-found friends.

Don had determined to make use of the white boy nevertheless. He learned that his name was Staller—a queer name.

The circus troupe, silent in deference to their young master's abstracted worry, followed him as he walked determinedly down towards the bay. A flock of parakeets scattered in fright from the trees at their approach, but Don, stumbling out into the blinding sunshine, scarcely spared a glance for the gaily coloured birds. His mind was all on his half-formed scheme, and his eyes were on the white ship in the bay which contained his travelling circus.

"We'll disembark," he said quietly. "We're giving a circus performance to-night that's going to surprise 'em on this island. Get a move on."

It was not often that the Circus Daredevil gave orders in that peremptory tone. He was more like a pal than a young master to the employees of the circus, who numbered more than a hundred. And therefore they put a jerk into their work, knowing that he must, indeed, be distracted.

It was not long before the ship had edged in through the coral reef that guarded the bay, and coming as far as she dared in-shore a specially constructed gangway was let down into the blue waters.

Don watched abstractedly as the cages containing the lions, tigers, pumas and other animals of the wilds were carefully wheeled down the gangway to the beach that danced in the heat haze

Followed the troupe of Shetland ponies, then the cream white horses. The negro band came afterwards, carrying their instruments in green baize cases. They were all in their scarlet and black uniforms and peaked caps, and the performers were in circus regalia; for Don wanted to attract attention; he had specially ordered that a full dress procession was to make its way to the European colony on the isle of Luvano.

As the procession commenced to stream off, Don waited eagerly. He was waiting for the African elephants, who came last in the procession. The young Circus Daredevil knew every animal and bird in his circus by name, and in spite of the fact that he employed several expert zoological assistants and animal trainers, all his leisure was spent in the menagerie, and he found that his own personality had an amazing attraction for these creatures of the wilds. He was passionately fond of animals, and they reciprocated his liking. There was not a bird or animal in the circus that did not respond to his low, queerly hypnotic voice.

And yet Don was only human, and in spite of the many performing dogs, and the Shetland ponies, and the seals, all of whom had a claim upon him, he had one favourite. And it was a heavy old African elephant who went by the name of Togo.

Togo had been born and bred in the African forest, a wild and at one time a ferocious and primitive mammal. But by some means Don had tamed Togo, so that the old fellow did tricks even for the ring-master, whom secretly he detested.

But Don he loved. The elephant had submitted to have his great grey chest emblazoned with a gilt crown, and with the words "Duvall's Royal Circus." He stood on gaily painted tubs, and caught flags in his trunk, he counted up to a score by scratching his great hoofs on a slate—all this he did because Don stood in the wings of the great marquee tent every night watching and encouraging him.

Now as he came down the gangway in the forefront of the twelve gigantic elephants Togo raised his trunk, waving it madly and trumpeting in a voice that was queerly weak for so tremendous an animal—trumpeting an eager welcome to his boy master.

Don smiled a welcome. He had to in spite of his worry, for he loved the great beast. It was his habit to talk to old Togo, to tell him his thoughts, and the animal always seemed to understand.

Don seized Togo's trunk, and twirled it playfully. "I'll walk with you, old chap," he murmured, and he nodded to the scarlet-robed native mahout who sat in the howdah of one of the mammoth beasts behind.

Don and Togo walked apart in the procession that wound its way along the golden beach.

"Togo, old fellow we've got to attract attention to-night," he murmured. "We're playing a full circus to a little community of white people on a South Sea island, but we're going to play for all we're worth. For we want to attract the attention of one man—a Chinaman!"

The elephant's tiny eyes gleamed intelligently as though he understood, and he lowered his massive head in a stately nod.

"I daresay there are many Chinks on this island," Don pursued. "But we've got to look out for one who is evil—one who means harm. Understand, old fellow?"

Again the elephant's great head went up and down as he shambled through the hot sand. "It is doubtful whether he understood. Don did not think so for a moment, but somehow there was always a queer comfort in communing with the sagacious brute.

"If he comes to the circus to-night—watch out!"



Don went on. "I've got something that I think'll attract him—a stunt. I'm going to put Staller on the bill. 'Staller of the South Seas, the island diver,' I'm going to call him. And I rather think that this Chinese devil wants to get hold of Staller. For he's useful; he knows how to find pearls!"

In which musing the boy circus owner manifested an almost uncanny prescience. For Wu Wang, the Chinaman, valued the strange white boy. It had been for him that he had waited whilst he strolled amidst the nipa-grass with such stately serenity . . . when Spoff had thrown the knife at him. Lu Wang valued Staller, the boy diver, and he valued pearls. He had a greed that amounted to a mania for the sheeny white jewels caressing his palms. And Staller knew how to get them for him. Don Duvall was setting the right bait to his trap, but he did not guess how the cunning prey was to close the vicious teeth of the trap upon himself.

THE sun flamed down from a sky of cloudless blue upon the huge marquee tent of Don Duvall's Gigantic Circus and Menagerie and Hippodrome of Stupendous Wonders, set on the yellow sands near the green fronds of the coconut palms that dropped listlessly in the still air.

Came the sounds of tent pegs being driven in, the roar of the animals of the wilds. Don sat on a camp stool, staring out across the sparkling blue waters, his brain combating the enervating air that was so heavy with heat, and rich with the honeyed fragrance of the pawpaw flowers.

Don was a showman always, a master manipulator of the most wonderful circus in Europe!

He was dictating to his sign-painter, who was busy with bills and flaring posters that should, in reality, have appeared on the hoardings in the West End of London.

Underneath the coloured picture of Don diving into a glass tank in which were his trained seals, the words originally had been:

DON DU VALL,

THE BOY WONDER,

IN HIS AMAZING AQUATIC TURN.

*See the Sea Lions. See the Marvellous Breath-taking Dives of the Aerial Acrobat.*

But, now, Don was getting his sign-painter to add these words:

*Assisted by*

STALLER OF THE SOUTH SEAS,

THE DIVING DEMON.



The sign-painter was working swiftly at his job. Against the jade-green cliffs of the jungle the new poster was being tacked on every tree. Don was planning just as though he expected to fill his huge marquee tent with the twenty thousand spectators it would hold in London.

He got up at last. "That's enough," he said quietly, and he strolled to Togo, his favourite elephant. Just then Don was a very worried youngster. Spoff! Poor old Spoff! What had become of him? The question dinned insistently in Don's brain.

THE night came, soft and velvety; globes of stars burned low on the horizon above a sea of rippling phosphorescence, and the great marquee of Duvall's Circus was enveloped in that starshine.

Beating on the intoxicating allure of the soft night, like the mad tom-toms of savages preparing for war, sounded the jazz music of the famous negro band. The Isle of Luvano seemed deserted. Palm sabres shimmered like golden spears, but no one walked either in the golden light of the beach nor did anyone lurk in the black shadows of the jungle. For White, Black, Spaniard and Chinese, to a man, the community of the Isle of Luvano was crammed under the tent tops of Duvall's Circus.

The audience was in a furor of excitement, its appetite whetted by the turns that had gone before. But now was to come the principal tit-bit of the entertainment, Don Duvall's Amazing Aquatic Turn.

The circus ring was ready prepared for Don's appearance. In the centre of the ring was a great glass tank, green with water from the Pacific; and in its depths, crouched on coral rocks, were the six trained seals, their black skins reflecting a sinister, sardonic gleam from the clusters of electric lights that blazed overhead.

Suddenly the negro band, from crescendo, dropped to a soft, crooning note. There came furious hand-clapping from the audience.

Don, in his circus garb, had stepped out on a tight-rope high above amidst the tent tops. As he ran lightly along the thin rope, his infectious, merry smile flashed round amongst the audience. How they cheered as a seal followed him along that rope, croaking frantically for help!

But Don had trained the seal, and each time it seemed to fall from its perilous perch he tossed a piece of fish to it, so that in catching the tit-bit the seal righted its balance. It was a wonderful piece

MY word, he's fly. Quick as lightning. And he's got a punch that kills. Lightning Jimmy Carew left a Public School under a cloud and became a stowaway on board ship. But still he would fight. You must read Next Week's Grand Yarn,

## THE FIGHTING BOY WONDER.

A Tale of Shocks and Thrills, Chaps. And there's other Good Stories to go with it. Don't miss the Big Yarn of Motor Racing Thrills for the Amateur Tourist Trophy at the Isle of Man,

## THE MOTOR CYCLING CHAMPION.

Stirring Yarn of the Days of Napoleon, "The Little Emperor," introducing Captain Lefarge, the gayest, most reckless Cavalryman in the French Shock Troops. Look out for it!

**"ON, ON NAPOLEON!"**

Tales of Fun and Thrills, Jokes, Serials. Don't Miss Your

**Boys' Magazine.**

of judgment on Don's part, and the audience clapped madly as at last the seal floundered and fell—straight into the glass tank.

Don tossed down coloured balls. The seals, with their whiskered noses, juggled with them as Don performed hand-throws on the tight-rope. So concentrated was he on his task that, naturally, he had no time to search amongst the audience; and, therefore, he did not particularly notice the heavy jowled Chinaman in gorgeous robes whose eyes were protected by dark, horn-rimmed glasses and who sat in one of the front seats, staring, staring. . . .

The audience was so spellbound by Don's performance that they had completely forgotten the fact that he was advertised to appear in conjunction with "Staller of the South Seas, the Diving Demon."

But the Chinaman had not forgotten.

He was enraged—cheated. Lu Wang, Chinese lord of the Isle of Luvano, did not like his schemes to "gang agley." He had come specially to the circus to get the boy, Staller. He wanted him.

He had little fear of being recognised as he sat there, a monstrous figure with arms folded in his robes. People stared at him, for he was a dominant personality; but none recognised him as Lu Wang, the sinister, almost legendary figure who lurked in the jungle, weaving his web of wickedness over this fairy isle.

His eyes glared basilisk fury behind their shielding, black spectacles as Don, amidst uproarious applause, ran back along the tight-rope and disappeared amidst the wings of the circus.

Next, Don came out riding a bicycle along the thin tight-rope far overhead. He wobbled once, twice; it seemed that he would fall, and the audience held its breath. But then he recovered and went on swiftly. Coming above the gleaming glass tank, he mounted quickly to the saddle of the swaying bicycle and dived sheer down into the water.

There was not a trace or splash nor the tiniest sound attendant upon that beautiful swallow dive and, as the audience watched the boy merman swimming from one seal to another, shaking each flipper and tossing the balls on each thin-pointed snout, they held silent . . . until at last it had to come, such a crash of handclapping as even Don Duvall's circus had seldom heard.

Lu Wang stayed still and motionless, his fury transcending all bounds as curtains fell down from each side to veil the boy in the tank. His Oriental cunning told him that in some way he was being tricked of his prey.

Don, climbing out of the tank, dripping wet, dropped to the sawdust floor of the circus ring and ran lightly into the wings as the curtains fell on either side of the tank. They used curtains in Duvall's Circus, just as on a stage, when they found it necessary; and as the tank was being removed, Don found a long snout thrust into his arms and, looking up, he saw the ponderous bulk of Togo in the wings.

Togo's eyes gleamed viciously, and he jerked up his head as though he would thrust his short ivory tusks into an enemy's hide. A queer, weak trumpeting came from him, and Don, knowing the faithful animal, understood at once that he was upset.

"Why, Togo, old boy, what's the matter?" he asked, with a sudden swift flare of fear.

The elephant, not being human, could not answer. But it jerked its head, and its trunk pointed almost in a straight line. Don could not make it out.

"Never mind, old boy," he said, thinking all at once that he understood. For Togo was accustomed to enter the ring, after Don's turn, with Spoff, the clown, and the two performed various nonsensical tricks that generally sent the audience into fits of

laughter. But Spoff was not here to-night. And the elephant was missing him, that was what Don thought. Patting the faithful monster, he led Togo away.

Still Spoff was a wonderful "draw" to the audience, and, in fact, the circus performance lacked a great deal of its attraction without his magnetic personality. Don was thinking this as he went to his private caravan—the only caravan that travelled overseas. It was luxuriously appointed, and it served the young circus owner as an office as well as a living-quarter.

He was sitting at his desk despondently when there came a sharp rat-tat on the brass knocker of the caravan door. Don went to it, to find himself confronted by a figure that sent a quick thrill of fear and anger quivering through his whole being.

For it was a Chinaman!

His face was like carved ivory above the robe of black silk which fell to his red-slipped feet. Lu Wang!

"Exclude," intoned the Chinaman, his face expressionless, his spectacles like twin black moons; "you want conjuler for circlus—velly good conjuler. Me, Sing Sah Fu, the chinaboy who makee blirds and dweams and allee same fings nice. You watch."

He stepped inside the caravan, and Don somehow felt powerless to resist. The man claimed to be a conjurer. Was he Lu Wang, the regal highborn Celestial who held this isle in his clutches? If so, there was an uncanny power about him. Dignity and cunning graced him. He spoke as if each word were carefully chosen to convey emphasis.

Suddenly in his hand appeared a long mahogany wand. "You watch," he hisped.

He waved the wand, and Don, to his amazement, saw Chinamen in native masks dancing inside the caravan, a weird, mad dance. It stopped, and he saw fires in which dragons curled and hissed. Then he saw wonderful woods and streams with red-lacquered bridges thrown across them, Chinese houses of many roofs one upon another like the tiers of wedding cakes. His brain reeled. Was he dreaming?

Suddenly it was all gone, and the goggled Chinaman was facing him, bowing in his robes.

"You give Sing Sah Fu job as conjuler?" he asked.

Don's every instinct reared in warning. It was a trap—some kind of trap. A frenzy of thoughts assailed him, but out of the chaos of his mind he heard himself speaking as if in someone else's voice: "We want a good turn. Go on at once and try your hand."

The Chinaman bowed again and turned away. Don told himself that he was wise, that he must keep this evil, mahogany-faced Oriental in sight. What sinister witchcraft had the fellow used to make him see those illusions? He was Lu Wang, and he must be watched.

As Don followed the slow, dignified tread of the Chinaman to the circus wings there came a mad trumpeting from nearby. It came from Togo, now roped up to one of the animal cages. The elephant struggled madly to get free and, as his Indian keeper came up and thrashed him with a cane, he only increased his trumpeting. He had sensed the presence of an enemy, and nothing would quiet him.

Don should have been warned by that mad trumpeting. But the boy Circus Daredevil was curiously vacant. His mind was in a daze. As if in a dream, he heard the Chinaman speaking to Signor Antonio, the ringmaster, arranging for his turn to be produced the next on the bill. Don was consulted, and he mechanically gave answers

(Continued on page 15.)

**BULLETS AND BOMBS.**—They're Like Flies to Rip O'Farrell, the Flying Squad Policeman—BUT WHAT DID THIS EXPLOSION EXPOSE?



**RIP'S ONE OF THE BOYS  
WHEN IT COMES TO  
THRILLS—**

### High Speed Hold-Up.

THE Chief of the Horse-Power Police, that swift-moving branch of the world's smartest service, the recently-formed motor-cycle detachment of the Flying Squad, leaned back in his swivel chair and drummed his fingers on the edge of his desk.

"You've heard of 'The Cowled Man,'" he said to the red-haired, stalwart youngster who stood before him. "The modern high-wayman, who packs an automatic, rides a Super-Eight bike and plies a brisk trade on the main roads from South London."

Rip O'Farrell, star turn of the motor-cycle detachment, nodded in answer.

"I've heard of him, Chief. The high-speed hold-up man who preys on City business magnates homeward bound in their Rolls-Royce and Daimler phantoms. The papers say he's slick enough to extract the gold filling from a Jew's tooth."

"He certainly has got away with a lot of stuff in the last month or two, and compliments aren't flying in our direction because of his successes." The Chief frowned. "He's so devilishly elusive. We'll hear of him on a lonely stretch of the Eastbourne Road one day—the Brighton road the next—and so on. Holding up a car here and a car there, till the local police and the Flying Squad detachments sent out after him are in a regular tangle. We've tried to anticipate him and lay traps—all to no avail. The luck's always with him, steering him clear of those traps."

He looked at Rip.

## A SHOCK FOR THE SPEED COP

**—BUT HE DIDN'T EXPECT  
TO FIND A CERTAIN  
FELLOW A THUG.**

"Since he's beaten us all along the line," he went on, "we're playing our last card. You're our last card, O'Farrell, and I'm convinced that if there's one man in the Force who can lay 'The Cowled Rider' by the heels—that one is you."

Rip flushed. "I'll do my best, sir," he murmured.

"I know you will," said the Chief. "But listen. You won't act entirely alone. I've come to believe that a bunch of men are too conspicuous where this Cowled Rider is concerned, but it's advisable to have two. Rannigan seems a likely companion for you. I've had a word with him already, and though he is really your senior, I've made it clear to him that he's to take his orders from you in this particular case. You see, I'm giving you a chance of big promotion, O'Farrell, because I think you've earned it."

He nodded in indication that the interview was over, and, saluting smartly, Rip turned towards the door of the office. As he opened it and stepped through he came face to face with a burly figure in the uniform of the detachment.

Rip grinned at him in recognition, for this was Rannigan, the man who was to act with him.

He was the youngster's senior by several years—a big, powerful individual of the bulldog type, with features that were of a harsh, brutal mould. Never pleasing, those features were the more formidable now by reason of an expression that was savagely resentful.

Said Rip:

"Well, Rannigan, you and I are in for a big-game hunt. How about getting down to brass tacks right away?"

Rannigan surveyed him with eyes that were mere glittering pin-points.

"You can go to Jerico, O'Farrell," he snarled. "The Chief can say what he likes, but I'm not going to take orders from a kid like you. I've got my plan of action mapped out—you can think of one for yourself—and we'll see who gets The Cowled Rider. I'm going to work on my own." And with that he turned on his heel.

Rannigan had always seemed to nurse a feeling of hatred and jealousy for Rip, but the youngster had not looked for this attitude in the man. It was an attitude which he might have communicated to the Chief, with painful results for Rannigan, but it was not in Rip's nature to adopt such a course.

Rannigan could do as he pleased. Rip was not scared of tackling The Cowled Man single-handed.

He made his way to the yard where the detachment kept their motor-bikes, and selected his own Paramount Super-Eight. He regarded it in the light of a "pet," and appraisingly he ran his eye over the monstrous machine, with its great cylinders, its highly polished, fish-tailed exhaust pipe and its wide handlebars.

He sat astride it and, drawing a number of newspaper cuttings from his pocket, began to study them. They dealt with the exploits of The Cowled Rider.

"He hasn't touched the Eastbourne road lately," Rip muttered after a while. "The Eastbourne road—there's a lonely stretch beyond East Grinstead. I wonder . . ."

A moment later Rip had kicked the starter and the bike was throbbing beneath him. As he slipped in the gear switch and dropped the clutch it surged forward with a roar.

For Rip, astride the Paramount Super-Eight, a veritable king of the road, the journey to East Grinstead was soon accomplished—once he had left the busy streets of the London suburbs behind him.

The bleak stretch of country was Rip's chosen "beat." At the southern end of the tract he turned about and patrolled slowly back, and he had scarcely covered a distance of half-a-mile or so when a big, closed-in car swung round a bend into view.

The chauffeur at the wheel jammed on the brakes at sight of Rip's uniform, and as the car came to a standstill a white-faced, elderly man scrambled out.

"I have been robbed," he said tremulously. "Robbed at the point of a gun." Then, angrily: "What are the police of this country up to . . .?"

Rip cut in on him with a sharp question, and fragmentarily he received the whole story. A cowled man mounted on a motor-cycle and armed with an automatic had suddenly emerged from a side-turning and, relieving his victim of everything of value, had sped off northward along the road.

The youngster waited to hear no more and, streaking away, left the cowled rider's victim fuming in the middle of the road. For a mile Rip raced on—"full out," for he knew that the high-speed hold-up man acted swiftly and, contenting himself with the proceeds of half-a-dozen robberies, vanished before the authorities could be summoned to the scene.

To-night he was reckoning with Rip O'Farrell and the Paramount Super-Eight.

A mile along the road Rip swung round a wide turn, and as he did so he came in sight of a motor-cyclist a couple of hundred yards ahead of him. A cowled figure moving slowly along the highway.

The bandit caught the powerful note of the Paramount almost at once, and Rip saw him crane round in the saddle. An instant later the thief had switched open the throttle and, with his bike roaring challengingly, was swinging out of sight into a side-turning.

Rip struck across country, thereby cutting off the

corner round which the fugitive had disappeared. The ground was broken and thickly dotted with clumps of gorse, but with the skill of a born trick-rider, Rip covered it, and a minute later he was in sight of the by-road.

It lay below him, and he saw, speeding along it, the cowled man. Rip was ahead of him now—though barely.

The youngster did not falter. Without an instant's hesitation he set his machine at a lofty bank that dropped almost sheer to the road. Once the handle-bars were almost wrenched from his grasp when the front wheel jarred into a hole overgrown with coarse grass, but he righted the bike with an effort and surged on to the surface of the road as the cowled rider raced level.

Driving recklessly Rip tried to cut across his path and force him to a standstill, but the bandit was a match for him in the handling of a bike. Braking slightly he turned in, and swept past the Paramount's tail.

Rip went after him, jerking open the throttle to the limit, and unfalteringly the Paramount answered.

They were over the sixty mark, but even so the cowled man craned round in the saddle and in that moment Rip saw the gleam of an automatic in his fist.

The crook levelled it at the youngster's front-tyre, but even as his finger curled on the trigger Rip flung up his own gun and let fly.

The automatic spun from the cowled man's hand, and all at once blood was streaming down his fingers, where the young cop's bullet had torn the skin. A moment later Rip was level with the fugitive and covering him steadily.

"Get off your perch, Big Boy," he commanded. "The game's up!"

The crook braked, and gradually came to a standstill. Rip, pulling up alongside, felt for the pair of steel "bracelets" he always carried, then, dismounting, lifted the Paramount on to her stand.

It was difficult to keep his prisoner covered at the same time. The gun wavered only a fraction, but it was sufficient for the desperate personality which that black enshrouding cowl concealed, for suddenly he slid his hand back to the tool-kit and snatched from it a heavy spanner. Next instant he had flung it at Rip with all his force.

The missile struck the youngster full on the temple, taking him unawares, and with a moan he sank to the road.

### The Trail.

**S**LOWLY consciousness dawned upon Rip O'Farrell, and gradually he recalled all that had passed before the heavy spanner had knocked him senseless. He sat up then, to find his Paramount Super-Eight still erect on her stand.

He scrambled to his feet, and as he did so he was aware of something in the palm of his hand. Glancing down he saw that it was a scrap of paper, which must have been placed there while he had lain unconscious.

There was a message scrawled on it.  
*Save everything and am on his track. Will leave an easy trail. follow.*

RANNIGAN.

Rip pocketed the scrap of paper and started to examine the ground near by. The first thing he saw was a cap-badge—Rannigan's—and a little way from it he found a pen-knife.

Rip pushed his bike from the stand, mounted and kicked the starter. A moment later he was travelling slowly along the road, following little personal effects which he knew to be Rannigan's.

The trail led him into yet another side-turning,

along which he rode for a mile. At the end of that mile he found himself turning in towards a great iron gate hanging open on rusty hinges. On the other side of the gateway lay Rannigan's cap.

Rip dismounted in the shadow of a lofty wall and slipped forward on foot towards the gateway. Warily he glanced through, and, at the far end of a weed-grown drive, he saw a great rambling house, obviously untenanted.

The light was failing, and in the gathering dusk the place looked sinister and eerie, so that Rip had difficulty in repressing a shiver. On the fringe of the shrubbery he paused to listen, but no sound broke the stillness. Steeling himself, he ran noiselessly across to a shattered ground-floor window.

He opened it cautiously and slipped through into utter darkness. As his eyes grew somewhat accustomed to that darkness he saw an open door giving on to a dim, spacious hallway.

He was empty-handed, for when he had recovered

rouses the curiosity of some prying country cop You and I can do without interruption for a little while."

He went out into the night air, and when he reappeared he was wheeling Rip's Super-Eight. He pushed it into the hallway, then let it fall with a crash to the bare floorboards.

The cowed man turned on his captive then, and with a sudden show of viciousness kicked the youngster in the ribs.

"So the Flying Squad put their "star" man on me, eh?" he snarled. "Well, here's their "star" man all neatly trussed and due for a cremation. Cremation, I said, O'Farrell, for I reckon the countryside could do without this old house. The yokels think it's haunted; I know it's a rendezvous for rats and vermin; and the owner—whoever he may be—would never sell it in a century of Sundays."

With superb coolness Rip grinned up at his diabolical captor.



**RIP'S FUNERAL PYRE.**—Building up a pile of rubbish, the crook emptied a petrol tin over it and struck a match. A moment later the flames were leaping high.

from that blow he had found his gun was missing, but fearlessly he went towards the door and stepped across the threshold.

As he did so something dropped over his head and shoulders with a suddenness that took him completely by surprise.

It was a rope which, tautening, pinioned his arms to his sides. He struggled, but in vain, for he heard the scuffling of his unseen assailant's feet, and with lightning rapidity the rope was wound about his body.

He had had no chance to defend himself, and now he was entirely at the mercy of his enemy. And all at once the latter landed a cowardly blow full on the youngster's jaw.

Rip fell, and by the time he had shaken off the effects of that cruel punch his bonds had been made secure.

Dimly he made out the figure of the cowed man, standing above him, and presently he heard his sinister, muffled voice.

"I'm glad you came," he sneered. "A bullet seemed too easy for you, and at the same time I couldn't see how I was going to carry you here myself. It might interest you to know I was on the look-out for you, and watched your every movement from the moment you showed up at the gate. By the way," he added, "you left your bike out there. I guess I'll bring it inside for fear it

"A rendezvous for rats and vermin," he mused. "You must be in your element here."

Behind the slits in the cowl the crook's eyes glinted savagely, and again he kicked viciously at the youngster.

"You can grin now," he ground out fendishly. "But pretty soon I'll be outside, listening to your screams."

He turned on his heel and, lighting an electric torch, made his way into the rooms which led off the hall, busying himself in each of them; and presently, from these rooms, lazy wraiths of smoke came drifting.

By then the cowed man was at the front door of the house, building up a pile of rubbish mainly composed of broken sticks of furniture. This done, he filled an empty oil-tin with petrol from the tank of Rip's Paramount Super-Eight and sprinkled the spirit lavishly over the heap of debris.

He struck a match, and a moment later flames were leaping high from the pile. With a diabolical gleam in his eyes the cowed man turned from it.



**THE CROOK CRASHES.**—It all happened in a twinkling, and the Cowled Man was taken utterly by surprise. Skidding on the loose surface of the drive he hit the gates at top speed.

"This old place will kindle in no time," he said exultantly. "It'll be a warm death for you, O'Farrell."

An instant later he had slipped into a room on the right—a room from which ruddy smoke was already billowing. Rip heard him fling up the sash of a window, and then there was silence.

Silence, but for the crackling of the flames.

### Rannigan.

**T**HE hallway was no longer in darkness, for through the open doors of the rooms leading off it raging flames cast an eerie, fitful glow. Moreover, the pile which the cowled man had kindled at the front entrance of the house was blazing furiously.

The dry floor-boards and the equally-dry panelling of the door had already caught fire, and Rip could feel the heat of the flames on his face and hands. But, though he no longer grinned, not a cry escaped his lips. His fiendish murderer, watching the inferno from the outside, would wait in vain for any sign of cowardice on Rip O'Farrell's part.

Yet the youngster was far from resigned to the ghastly fate which had been planned for him, and

while the flames raged and spread across the floor-boards—from the rooms and from the front door—he struggled desperately with his bonds.

His struggles were of no avail, and at last he sank back, exhausted by his efforts and half-suffocated by the smoke. And as he lay there the greedy flames came licking about his feet.

The bonds about his ankles parted all at once, eaten through, and with that he struggled up. His clothes were smouldering, but he was scarcely aware of the fact as he cast off his bonds entirely and ran from door to door of the rooms.

He saw no loophole of escape in any of them. Each one was a raging mass of flame—a barrier of fire in which he must perish ere ever he could reach a window.

There was a staircase at the back of the hall, but already the flames from one of the rooms had reached it and it had kindled up into a blazing mass in the space of minutes.

His only chance was the front door, for the flames there seemed less impenetrable. Unhesitatingly he launched himself into the heart of those flames.

They coiled about him greedily, igniting his clothes, scorching his hands and face; but he gained the front door and hurled himself at its blazing panels like a solid ram.

He heard the door strain on its hinges, but it did not give and, half-choked and badly burned, he was forced to stagger back to the centre of the hall, as yet untouched.

He stood there ringed by fire, hemmed in on all sides, and coughing painfully amidst the dense smoke; and as he stood there a downward glance drew his attention to his Paramount Super-Eight.

A gleam of inspiration came into Rip's eyes, and swiftly he stooped to the bike. The flames had not reached it and there was still some petrol in the tank—enough to carry him through.

He lifted the bike and flung himself astride the saddle. A moment later, as he kicked the starter, the powerful engine was roaring out a challenge to the raging inferno.

Rip streaked forward. Straight for the writhing mass of flame in front of him he drove, and straight for the blazing front door. The angry tongues coiled about him again, and the smoke swallowed him, but they had no time to wreak their deadly work on man or machine, for the Paramount's engine was screaming in low gear.

There was a smashing shock that jarred every bone in Rip's body—a momentary check—and then the machine was surging forward again, hurling before her a mass of flaming, splintered woodwork.

The front door had stood against the impact of Rip's semi-exhausted body, but, almost eaten through by fire, it could not resist the onslaught of the monstrous bike.

Amid a shower of sparks and a swirling cloud of smoke the Paramount Super-Eight roared out on to the drive, and as he came clear of the inferno the first object that Rip saw was the figure of the Cowled Man.

The crook was standing beside the motor-bike on which he carried out his daring robberies, and as he caught sight of the youngster he reached swiftly for his hip.

The speeding motor-cop drove straight on without a pause, and he was level with the Cowled Man before the latter had drawn his gun. An instant later, Rip was swinging round a bend in the drive.

Purposely he played the part of a fugitive, and the Cowled Man did not hesitate to take up the chase. In a brief backward glance Rip saw the crook turn the corner at reckless speed, mounted  
(Continued on page 2.)

# DON DUVALL'S UNDER- WATER CIRCUS—

(Continued from page 10)



confirming what the strange Chinaman said. He scarcely knew what he was doing.

As if in a dream he saw the Chinaman walk sedately into the ring, equipped only with that black ebony wand. Yet at once he riveted the attention of the audience. He held them enraptured, tense.

He commenced to talk, in his native Chinese tongue, to wave the wand gently in the air.

And then Don wondered if the audience saw what he saw. A cool, green paradise of a garden. Ferns from delicate dwarf lace to giant tree ferns, flowering vines covering pergolas and archways, flame trees dripping scarlet petals, clumps of crimson and white hibiscus made beauty. A stream wandered in and out, and over it were red laquered bridges flung like a jewelled bow over lotus pools. The sinister Chinaman in the horn-rimmed glasses stood amidst a wonderful fairy garden.

Out of that dream garden there suddenly appeared giant flowers. They were orchids. Death orchids, a carnivorous vampire denizen of the tropic jungle. Vivid in colouring they waved gently to and fro amidst the dream garden. Yet everyone in the audience sat tense, and their nostrils were assailed by a most terrible putrid smell, like the smell of decaying flesh.

Don was conscious of it, conscious of a terrible oppressiveness. He wanted to step in, to stop this sinister witchcraft. But he was held powerless, his limbs as if paralysed.

And then he saw a pig run into the circus ring. And from his lips was forced an exclamation of horror. For intuitively he seemed to know what was coming. The pig ran straight to the sinister Chinaman, who pointed. And instantly the animal scurried towards the waving line of vampire flowers.

The black throat of one of the orchids opened, and the pig was sucked into it, whilst all the other flowers seemed to strain greedily towards it. The giant petals of the orchid curled like paper in flame, folding the pig in a trap which muffled and stupefied the beast.

The flower shook with the beast's struggles, and then was still. Sickened, horrified, trembling, the audience saw the orchid open again. Gorged, it allowed the pig to fall, drained of life and blood and substance, shrunken to a dirty, white mass.

Don, in disgust and horror, struggled against the trance that was on him. He turned, as if with a violent effort, and he saw Staller, the strange white boy, standing by his side. Staller, with a deathly white face, a vacant look in his eyes, staring straight at the Chinaman.

Don gripped him. "You know him?" he said

urgently. "That's Lu Wang, isn't it. Speak—speak!"

But the boy only shook his head and, casting off Don's restraining arm, he commenced to walk steadily, slowly, into the circus ring. Straight for the Chinaman he walked while Don desperately fought against the terrifying paralysis that was on him. Suddenly it was as if bonds had burst from around him. His will had conquered, and aflame with rage, he drew from his hip pocket a revolver which he had lately taken to carrying with him.

The Chinaman, smiling beneath frowning brows, was pointing towards the orchid which had sucked in the pig, and the boy was walking towards it. Don, his heart beating madly, levelled the revolver and pulled the trigger again and again.

The six racketing shots shattered the circus arena, and Don, with a feeling that he must rub his eyes, saw the wondrous tropical garden suddenly vanish. All that remained was an enormous flame-coloured orchid in a pot in the centre of the arena, broken, drooping, yet its stems still quivering with ghastly life. But Don knew as he ran into the ring that he had broken the spell by shattering that flower of terror.

The strange boy stood before the orchid, palpitating in every limb. But the Chinaman, with a basilisk glare of hate at Don, had gone. He was scrambling amongst the audience, pushing his way with drawn scimitar towards the exit before anyone could stop him. And, indeed, no one tried. For he was an object of terror in his awful rage.

Don, his revolver empty, was likewise powerless to stop that figure of evil. How he wished he had saved one cartridge, for he would not have hesitated to shoot under the circumstances. But the Chinaman had disappeared even before he reached Staller. Don seized the dazed and still hypnotised boy by the arm. For it had all been hypnotism—that garden. All save that solitary pork-fed orchid which was only too horribly real.

"Listen," Don urged, seizing the trembling and almost collapsing boy by the shoulders. "That's Lu Wang, and I want you to lead me to his lair. You've got to, you understand? At once. I'll take no denial."

He exercised all his will-power to counteract that of the Chinese, and in a measure he was successful, for the vacant look passed somewhat from the boy's face, and he nodded.

"It is a place of death and danger," he whispered. "But come."

THEY went out into the starlit night, and plunged into the jungle. Don scarcely saw the wondrous beauty of that island by night, he scarcely knew where they were treading. Hours it seemed to him they walked, and all the time Don's heart was hammering a tune of fear.

(Continued on page 36.)

# Your Editor's News.

GRAND "ALL NEW HEROES" NUMBER NEXT WEEK, CHUMS. DON'T MISS THE FIGHTING EMPEROR IN THE BIG CLASH-OF-THRILLS YARN.



## ON, ON NAPOLEON!

Introducing Captain Lefarge, the Most Dashing Cavalry Officer in Napoleon's Army.

**M**Y DEAR CHUMS,  
I think, if you were to take the consensus of opinion on the most famous man in history, the general vote would be for Napoleon Bonaparte.

You must remember that "the Little Emperor" was not only a great soldier, but a statesman as well—and, indeed, he made many of the greatest constitutional laws by which the Republic of France is governed to-day.

Napoleon stalked through that turbulent period of history, a majestic and amazing figure of Romance. True, he met his Waterloo, but it is a psychological fact that all real genius overreaches itself. All really great men ride for a fall. Napoleon, even at the end, when he faced death on the island of St. Helena, was the supreme egotist. He believed in himself. Until the end, he was astounded and dazed that so great a man as himself should, like Humpty Dumpty, have had "such a great fall."

It needs that supreme and colossal self-conceit to help a man to the greatest heights. We, who are more self-contained and evenly balanced, know that they are dangerous, dizzy heights, and that the fall is almost inevitable. Yet we admire the man who can climb to these peaks.

And perhaps, chums, there is in some of you the spark of genius that will enable you to climb high. With it, your old editor maintains, there must go a certain amount of self-conceit. If you have brains you have a right to entertain a good opinion of yourself, chaps. And you will go far.

But here is the point. Such a superman was Napoleon that of a purpose he surrounded himself with men of dash and fire and brilliance. Young men, most of them. They helped him to power. Perhaps at times they pitied their Emperor that he was so wild and erratic a genius, but they were brilliant themselves and they clustered round the most brilliant star in the whole of the intellectual firmament of that time. They loved him—Napoleon, Emperor of France!

Such a one was Captain Lefarge, a dashing young cavalry officer attached to the Emperor's personnel. Captain Lefarge was a typical young French officer—fiery, courageous to a degree, and a fine soldier. You will hear of him in the great long yarn of fighting thrills that appears next week—

### On, On Napoleon!

Believe me, chums, it is a ripping tale of a splendid and picturesque period, and so vivid is every

#### JOKE COUPON.

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

Boys' Magazine.

10/9/27.

incident that you will almost imagine you are meeting the little Emperor himself and that you are fighting side by side with the brave and dashing young cavalry officer who is the hero of this new series of tales.

It is by way of being a Surprise Thrill Number of the Mag. next week. I can tell you, lads, there is a host of good stories for you, and all of them introduce new heroes. Another new character you will meet is

### Lightning Larry, the T.T. Motor-cycling Champion.

Now this month the Amateur Motor-cycling Tourist Trophy races take place at their usual venue—the Isle of Man. I dare say a good many of you have seen those races and have been thrilled to the marrow by the courageous deeds of the young British speedmen who take part in them.

I can tell you, chaps, it needs no ordinary courage to hurtle at more than sixty miles an hour along the hairpin track—competing all the while against throbbing, eager machines—diving headlong down precipitous, rocky paths—all for the honour and glory of Sport. Some folks would say it was madness; but, if you saw it, you would cheer wildly, you would feel the blood course hotly in your veins, you would almost shed tears of admiration for the fine and plucky manhood that by some perverse streak of nature has sacrificed itself in these mad but noble causes since the time "when knights were bold."

So don't forget to look out for Larry Lightning in the Amateur T.T. motor-cycle races next week.

And, just by way of causing some riotous, laughter-provoking fun after all the thrills we have got for you next week, we have pleasure in introducing to you the most comical, quaint and resourceful page-boy that was ever born—

### Midnight Mick of Mammon's Hotel.

Micky is some streak of lightning, believe me—a high-speed quivering live-wire. In his gorgeous chocolate-brown uniform, studded with gold buttons, he's a familiar and popular figure in the most marvellous and luxurious hotel in the world—the hotel that never closes, made of silver and gold and shining lights and flowers. And, my word, don't some queer things happen to Midnight Mick, the page-boy of Mammon's Hotel.

And, to round up a rattling programme, I have a stirring and dramatic boxing story for you, introducing Lightning Jimmy Carew, the boy boxing wonder, whose punch kills. A yarn of uncanny power this.

Just tell one or two of your chums about our packed programme of red-hot thrillers, won't you?

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.



NEW CHUMS FOR YOU, CHAPS!

The Cable Laying Kids. | In The South Seas With Sharks. | Dive For Dear Life.

# The DIVING DAREDEVIL

A Salt Sea Tale, Sure to Tickle Your Taste.



## Hurricane to the Rescue.

IT was plump Not-A-Bean Carboys who started the thing; for it was Not-A-Bean—so called because of his continual state of hard-upness—who found the telescope on the shore.

"Hullo," the rotund youngster exclaimed, "I wonder how this got here?"

"Never mind wondering," Harry Hardman—better known as "Hurricane" Hardman, on account of a certain quickness with his fists—grinned. "Let's have a squint if it's any good."

"Dat's de idea," chimed in a broad Cockney voice. "What abaht 'avin' a glance at dat boat out dere?"

"Skin" Roberts pointed across the dancing sea. Some little distance outside Banarvon Bay a peculiar-looking ship was at anchor.

A mile away stood the City Lads' Camp, from which the three chums had strolled this glorious summer's afternoon, never dreaming of the astonishing adventures in store for them.

Hurricane Hardman got the telescope to his eye, and a sudden exclamation escaped him.

"Boys, she is a queer ship. And there's something queer going on aboard her. They're fighting about something."

Clearly across the sea came the staccato bark of a revolver. Not-A-Bean and Skin were almost dancing with excitement by this time. But Hurricane kept the glass fixed to his eye.

He could see half-a-dozen men against the deck rail of the ship, kept there by the menacing revolvers of four other men. Stretched full length on the deck was a uniformed figure that Hurricane saw was either an officer or the captain.

Came again the bark of a revolver, and Hurricane saw another man topple to the deck and lie still.

"Come on, we're looking into this!"

Scarce waiting for his chums, Hurricane raced down to the water's edge and plunged in. Next instant he was swimming with a fast overarm stroke for a small motor-boat which was anchored in the bay. Even as he threw a leg over the boat's edge, Not-A-Bean and Skin reached it.

In a trice the three had tumbled aboard, and Hurricane started the engine as Not-A-Bean pulled up anchor. The motor-boat swung round in a foaming rush. Straight for the mysterious ship Hurricane set its nose, and as the racing boat skimmed on the chums could see the details of the mutiny.

"They've cleared the deck, and they're getting under way." Hurricane, tense at the boat wheel, fed the engine "gas" as he spoke. "But we'll reach 'em in time. Dive for the rail as I swing the boat alongside and get aboard."

It was a daring plan. But without hesitation the chums acted on it. As Hurricane swung the motor-boat broadside on to the ship, Not-A-Bean and Skin dived for the deck rail and Hurricane followed.

Next instant all three were scrambling to their feet aboard the bigger craft.

"Well, you young rats. What's the game?"

Hurricane glanced up at the evil-faced man who confronted him. Across the brow of the fellow's right eye was a livid bruise, and as he stood there staring at Hurricane his teeth were bared in a snarl. His right hand held an automatic, loosely.

"Just what I was wondering," said Hurricane coolly. "I thought——"

Hurricane's sentence was never completed. Like

## A Chink's Cunning.

lightning he threw himself across the deck, diving low for the man's ankles. A bullet ploughed into the deck between Hurricane's feet, and then he was across the other, pinning him down to the deck.

"Now," Hurricane demanded. "What's going on on this boat? I reckon—"

"Look out, Hurricane!"

Hurricane Hardman swung round at the warning yell. Coming straight for him across the deck was the ugliest Chinaman he had ever thought to see. He had padded softly to within three feet of Hurricane, and the long, curved knife in his hand was already raised to strike when the lad swung round.

With lightning-like rapidity Hurricane rolled over and over across the deck. The knife came down, missing him by inches, and before the Chinaman could recover Hurricane launched himself. His fist took the Chinaman in a smashing uppercut to the point that shot him clean across the deck.

"Put your hands up, the three of you. No fooling, or we'll drill you cold!"

Facing the chums were four men, and each held a levelled revolver.

"Put your hands up, boys," Hurricane signalled to Not-A-Bean and Skin. "We're licked."

"That is velly, velly sensible of you." In a purring, sibilant whisper came the Chinaman's voice. "Now take them below. I will deal with the estimable English boys later."

## A Narrow Escape.

"Oh, dear!" muttered Not-A-Bean apprehensively. "Why did I go and look through that spy-glass?"

The three chums were sitting in a small cabin. A strange see-saw motion told that the ship was travelling swiftly away from Banarvon Bay.

Hurricane Hardman grinned. He seemed to be the only one of the trio who was unperturbed at the position into which the telescope had led them.

"What are you worrying about?" he said. "I reckon we're in for an exciting trip. We'll wait for this chap to come round, and then we'll know what's what."

Hurricane nodded at the figure of a tall, broad-shouldered man who lay in a bunk in the cabin. The stranger was breathing stertorously, and his face was ghastly pale. But, even as Hurricane spoke, he opened his eyes. Colour came back to his cheeks.

He gripped the bunk edge and hoisted himself into a sitting position, staring in astonishment at the three lads.

"Who are you?" he asked.

In a few curt sentences Hurricane explained how they had come to be aboard, and the man's face became anxious.

"Boys," he said gravely, "you don't know what you've done. I'm Captain of this ship. It's the cable ship, *Baretia*. The men have mutinied and stolen the ship. That Chink, Wu Sing's at the bottom of it all. I was a fool to sign him on this voyage for—"

The Captain broke off. The door had opened to admit the Chinaman and three other men.

"So you have recovered your senses? P'laps now you will agree to sail the ship to my orders?"

Behind the Chinaman's almond eyes was a baleful threat. But the captain seemed unafraid. His lips closed in an obstinate line.

"Listen, Captain Brandon," the Chinaman's voice cut like a knife through the cabin. "I will give you five minutes to decide. If you do not agree then, I

## The Shark Surprise.

shall chop off one finger of each of these estimable boys' hands. Then, if you still do not agree, I will chop off the rest of their fingers, and then—"

"You fiend!" Captain Brandon cried hoarsely. "I'll sail the ship, but if you harm these boys I'll kill you."

The Chinaman bowed.

"I thought you would agree. These intelfeling dogs shall come with us, they will prove useful."

FOR two days the *Baretia* had ploughed her way across the sea. The chums had been kept to the cabin, but apart from the close confinement they had suffered little. Hurricane was puzzled.



"Boys," he said, on the second day at sea, "this Chink's got something up his sleeve with regard to us, else he wouldn't look after us like this. He's a yellow dog if ever—"

A slight sound drew Hurricane's gaze to the cabin door. It had opened silently, and framed in it was Wu Sing. His almond eyes had narrowed to mere slits and his face was revolting in its ugliness.

"So the estimable English boy t'inks I am a yellow dog, eh? We will see." An automatic glinted from under the wide sleeve of Wu Sing's coat. "Follow me on deck, and no tlicks, or I shoot."

Once in the open, the chums gazed about in surprise. Captain Brandon, brisk and alert, was giving orders as though there had been no trouble on the ship, and men were hurrying to and fro to obey.

"Boys," the Captain called the chums across as they reached deck. "I've compromised with Wu Sing. I've agreed to sail the ship to anywhere, providing he lets me get on with the ship's real work first. This is a cable repair ship, and my job is to locate a faulty cable that's at the sea bottom, haul it up and repair it."

Captain Brandon lowered his voice.

"And after we've done the job we'll have a shot at Wu Sing. He's not getting away with it if I can help it. Now, watch out, we're grappling for the cable—"

## A Boy Faces the Beyond.

A sudden yell from the bow end of the ship sent the Captain at a run along the deck.

"They've hooked the cable," he said to Hurricane, who was running with him. "Now you'll see something."

Clustered round the ship side were half-a-dozen men, and all were staring down into the sea. Just as the newcomers reached them a yell of amazement went up. For, as the cable-lifting apparatus got to work, a huge body broke the surface of the sea. It was a gigantic whale, entangled in the thin cable which had been lifted from the sea bottom.

Instantly Captain Brandon dived forward.

"Look out," he yelled, "that monster's still alive. He'll smash the ship's side in if we're not careful. Cut the cable, quick as you can."

A stream of water shot into the air from the great beast's "blow hole," and as the cable slackened from about its body, the whale's tail came round in a smashing impact that shook the ship.

Madly the Captain and crew hacked at the cable, and then relief shot into Captain Brandon's face as the cable parted. The whale, now fully recovered, gave a final furious smash with its tail and then dived.

The narrow escape had shaken all on board ship, but now that the danger was over Captain Brandon took command.

"We'll have to steam about five miles now before we dare grapple for the cable again," he explained to Hurricane. "When we pick it up we'll splice in another length. Then if we get a chance we'll signal to the shore that this Chink has stolen the ship. Look out, here's Wu Sing."

The Chinaman, with his peculiar cat-like tread, was approaching, and without another word Captain Brandon turned aside. Wu Sing surveyed Hurricane suspiciously, then a smile spread over his yellow face.

"You English dogs will have to work with the crew. Savee?"

## The Bay of Death.

The Chinaman pointed to a huge tank which stood on the deck at the bow end of the ship.

"The cable is in there coiled ready to dlop into the sea. It will be your duty to stand here and direct it over those wheels to the ship's side."

Hurricane nodded. The strange apparatus interested him, and he was by no means averse to lending a hand with the cable laying. In a few moments he had seen that when the cable came out of the huge tank it would have to be guided carefully over the wheels and pulleys until it reached the ship's side. Then, as the vessel steamed slowly forward, the weight of the cable would carry it down into the sea over the stern.

A sudden bustle about the tank roused Hurricane. The crew were about to lay the cable. Captain Brandon gave an order, and the youngster jumped forward to his place by the tank. So interested was he that he did not see Wu Sing pad softly up behind him.

Slowly the thin cable came out of the tank and Hurricane guided it over the wheels. It began to drop into the sea as the ship steamed forward. And then it happened.

Wu Sing gave a sudden leap, seized the cable and swung it in a loop over Hurricane's body. In an instant Hurricane was faced with a horrible death. The thin cable, with its three-ton strain, would cut him in two. For a long, tense moment Hurricane knew fear. The cable began to tighten slowly about his body.

Almost simultaneously Not-A-Bean and Skin dashed forward. Not-A-Bean leaped to the apparatus that paid out the cable and stopped it whilst Skin, waiting for the cable to slacken, wrenched it quickly from Hurricane's body.

Hurricane, pale and shaken from the narrowness of his escape, swung round towards Wu Sing. But the Chinaman, with a baffled rage in his eyes, padded swiftly along the deck.

That same night the chums stood leaning over the deck rail of the *Baretia*. An hour ago the cable had been repaired and with it had gone the last chance of rescue. Wu Sing had watched carefully that neither Captain Brandon nor Hurricane had been able to signal to the shore depot that all was not right with the ship.

It remained now to see what lay behind Wu Sing's theft of the *Baretia*.

"Kid," the tall, thin man who had first accosted Hurricane on the *Baretia* loomed up out of the darkness. "You're wanted in the Captain's cabin. Come on."

Sight of Wu Sing and Captain Brandon greeted the youngster as he entered.

"Listen," the Chinaman stared malevolently at Hurricane. "You have intelfeled in what does not concern you, so you must take the consequences. The clew have agreed to leave everything to me because I can make them velly lich."

Greed and excitement shone in Wu Sing's almond eyes. With a gesture he produced a faded and torn piece of parchment, and with one talon-like finger pointed down.

"There," he said, "lies a fortune. The ship *Scarentio* foundered in that bay with 'all hands. There is over one million pounds' worth of salvage in that bay. The *Scarentio* was never found. But, one time, when I worked on the cable ship *Berdina*, when we lifted up the cable there came up what was

TENTACLES OF TERROR.—It seemed that the seaweed was alive with waving tentacles. They came writhing for Hurricane. Then the youngster's axe swept down in smashing blow after blow.

left of a man's coat, a captain's coat. In a waterproof wallet was this chart. No one saw it but me."

The Chinaman leered across at Hurricane.

"I say nothing but I know that I have found the *Scarentio*. It lies in the Bay of Death, the home of the devil fish and the man-eating shark. And you shall dive for the *Scarentio* in the bay."

The ghastly villainy of the Chink sent Hurricane berserk with anger, and he made as though to throw himself across the table at Wu Sing, but the sudden appearance of a revolver sent him back in his chair.

Turning to the door, the Chinaman gave one baleful glance at the lad, and was gone.

For a moment there was silence in the small cabin. Then Captain Brandon spoke.

"Boys," he said, and the anxiety in his tone was unmistakable, "I am afraid you are in a very bad position. This Chinaman is undoubtedly boss. We haven't a friend on board now that he's won the crew over. But"—he held out a huge hand impulsively—"we'll stick together, eh? And if the worst comes to the worst—I'll sink the ship and send Wu Sing and the whole lot of 'em to the bottom."

One by one the chums shook hands with the Captain.

"I've heard tales of this Bay of Death," the Captain went on. "It's reputed to be full of devil-fish and man-eating sharks. The African natives won't go in it. If you three lads dive there you're going into dire peril. Now look here."

Rising to his feet, the Captain fingered carefully at the cabin wall. There was a sharp metallic click, and a small panel slid aside, disclosing a cavity. From it Captain Brandon took a number of small sticks, to which were attached long fuses.

"Boys," he said, turning to the chums, "here is a powerful explosive. You're going to have a fighting chance in the Bay of Death. Once you get down, keep letting one of these go. You'll scare the sharks and devil-fish for a time at least. Now, cut off, and remember I'll be about, watching for a chance to get that durned Chink."

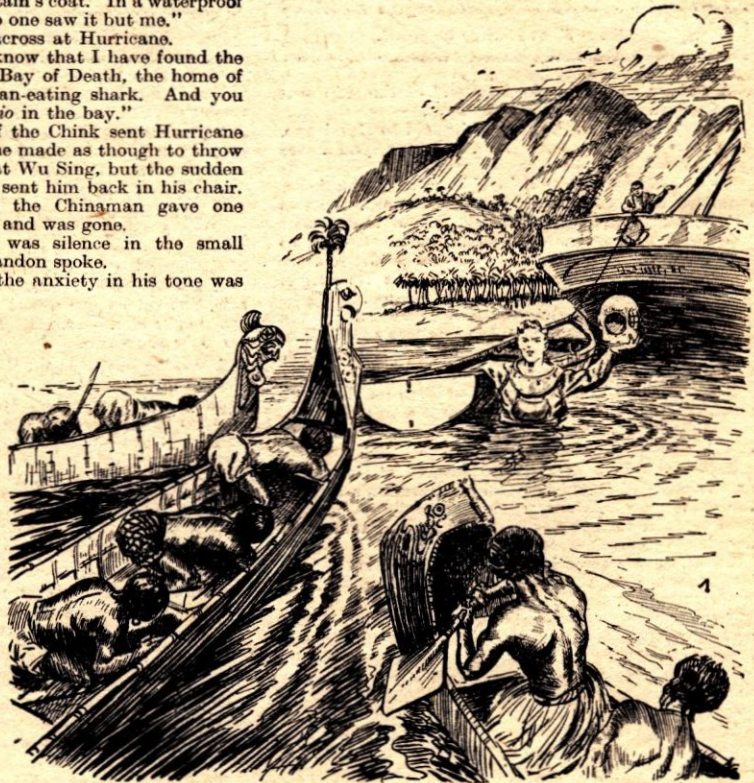
Outside on deck, with the explosives secreted in Hurricane's pocket, the chums discussed the position.

"S'trewth, 'ow'm I going to dive in this 'ere outfit?" Skin wanted to know. "I can't swim a blinking inch. 'Sides, wot's a devil fish?"

"Octopus," said Hurricane briefly. "But it's no use worrying. Come on, let's turn in."

Quickly Hurricane led the way to their cabin, and in silence the three turned into their bunks. For a long time Hurricane lay there, staring up at the cabin roof. Then he dropped off to sleep.

Half an hour later a yell that threatened to rend the cabin sent Hurricane tumbling from his bunk. Not A-Bean, screaming that an octopus had got a grip on his nose, was writhing on the cabin floor, with Skin, who had caught the full force of Not-A-Bean's fist, vainly endeavouring to pin the fat boy



**SURPRISING THE NATIVES.**—Hurricane discovered that a mob of savages had attacked the *Baretia*. But as they saw him a swift change came over the scene. The blacks fell upon their faces in a worshipping attitude.

down, under the impression that he was a twelve-foot man-eating shark.

### Fighting the Devil-fish.

"W'ERE here, boys."

Captain Brandon stood beside the chums on the deck of the *Baretia*. Towering up before them were huge, rugged mountains covered with thick jungle growth.

The cable ship lay in a small bay. With a born navigator's skill, the Captain had threaded his way through a line of jagged rocks that fronted the bay, and now the *Baretia* lay at anchor.

No sign of life came from the jungle growth, but suddenly a black, triangular fin broke the surface of the water. Instantly the chums were at the deck side, peering down at an enormous shark. The monster swung over until the white of its body showed through the water. The chums, staring aghast, saw a great mouth of teeth, and then with a splash the shark had disappeared.

"Velly intertesting." The four turned at sound of Wu Sing's voice. "You see the great fish? Velly soon you go down. Now, come."

The Chinaman tugged at Hurricane's sleeve, and for a moment the lad thought madly of crashing his fist into the yellow face. A look from Captain Brandon stayed him.

A few yards from where the *Baretia* lay at anchor,

men were getting the diving-boat ready, and in less than a minute Hurricane was donning a diving-suit.

Very soon Hurricane was going down into the green water, the leaden boots sending him swiftly to the bottom. For a few moments, unused to the tremendous pressure, he was in danger of losing his balance, but quickly he regained control.

He found himself staring at a great forest of seaweed, and amongst it was a sight that sent all thought of danger from Hurricane's brain. For, half buried in that mass of weed, was a ship.

Carefully, Hurricane picked his way along the bed of the bay, growing gradually more and more used to the diving-suit. Reaching the seaweed, he forced his way through, and soon he was standing on the deck of the sunken ship. And then, even as Hurricane worked his way forward, a sickening horror swept over him. Two great saucer-like eyes were staring full at him from the undersea forest!

For a moment Hurricane was paralysed with fear. A waving tentacle writhed forward and swept across the glass of his diving-helmet. In another instant the tentacle would have tightened round the lad's neck, but like lightning Hurricane's axe swept down, and the tentacle relaxed suddenly, severed right through.

Madly then Hurricane fought to control his brain; for it seemed that the seaweed was alive with waving tentacles. One curled round the rail of the *Scaerentio*, and then Hurricane felt another grip his left arm in a vice-like grip.

He felt himself being gradually drawn towards the saucer eyes, and of a sudden an idea flashed into his brain. Relaxing slightly, he allowed himself to be drawn forward. Then, in one tremendous blow, he buried the axe full between the eyes of the devil-fish. The tentacles relaxed suddenly, there was a frantic thrashing of the seaweed, and the thing fell back, dead.

For a few moments Hurricane swayed on his feet—almost overcome with exhaustion. Then he felt himself being drawn swiftly up through the water. Breaking the surface, he saw the reason.

Fully a score of huge negroes in three great canoes were in the bay. Close by the diving-boat was the *Baretia*, with Wu Sing and the crew clustered at the deck rails. The Chinaman was shouting frantically. Hurricane could see his lips moving, but the diving-helmet made the words inaudible.

Swiftly Hurricane reviewed the position. The negroes were huddled back in the diving-boat as far away as possible from the strange animal they had drawn out of the sea. And as Hurricane began to unscrew the helmet they broke into a frightened chatter.

Quickly Hurricane worked at the helmet, for an idea had flashed into his brain. The huge negroes might be the means of saving the *Baretia* from Wu Sing.

Even as he removed the helmet, Wu Sing's voice came to Hurricane's ears: "Frighten them away. They think you are a god."

One look at the cowering negroes showed that the Chinaman was right. As soon as Hurricane had removed the helmet they fell face down before him in the canoes. Hurricane addressed himself to the nearest black and pointed first to himself and then to the cowering negroes, and after to the jungle-clad shore.

Instantly the blacks were yelling furiously. The strange god wanted to go with them. Before Wu Sing could grasp what was happening, the canoes were making for the shore with Hurricane aboard.

A few minutes later he was face to face with a huge negro who was obviously chief of the tribe, and

Hurricane listened patiently whilst the blacks explained that they had brought the strange god from the bottom of the sea. That was sufficient to impress the chief, and he stared with awe at Hurricane. Then, when the blacks told how Wu Sing had shot one of the tribe, the chief's face was terrible to look upon.

At this juncture Hurricane decided to impress the chief with his powers. Fumbling in the diving-suit, he reached one of the explosive sticks. It was a moment's work to adjust the fuse and place it beneath a gigantic tree. Then, motioning the watching tribe to get to a safe distance, Hurricane set light to the long fuse.

Even as Hurricane reached the safety mark, the stick exploded. The great tree crashed down. Instantly the chief was bowing low before Hurricane. The youngster saw clearly that he was master of the crowd.

Quickly he explained his desire.

By signs he showed the chief that he wanted to take the *Baretia*. There was to be no bloodshed, unless Wu Sing put up a fight. The chief gave a muttered command, and a tom-tom rambled out. Like lightning the tribe, numbering about forty warriors, leaped to obey the war drum.

Spears and assegais appeared like magic. Half-a-dozen canoes were launched, and with the chief and Hurricane in the lead, swept across the bay to the *Baretia*.

Hurricane, standing in the chief's boat, assured the crew that no harm would come to them unless they resisted the blacks. The answer was a revolver-shot from Wu Sing. And, then, before Hurricane could move, a spear flashed through the air.

It took the Chinaman full in the throat, knocking him back against the deck rail. There for a moment he swayed in his death agonies. Then, with a scream, he slid through the rail into the Bay of Death.

A white-bellied monster flashed up through the water almost before Wu Sing reached the surface; there was a swirl of foam, and the Chink was gone.

The mutineers surrendered completely then. Obeying Hurricane's orders, the blacks tumbled aboard, where Captain Brandon took command. The leaders of the mutiny were quickly bound and imprisoned below deck. Then, as the blacks, waving their spears at the strange figure of Hurricane, who had again donned his diving-helmet, turned back to the shore, the *Baretia* got under way.

"Boys," said Captain Brandon as they threaded their way through the maze of rocks and reached the open sea, "we've got out of this scrape. Never mind the *Scaerentio*. I'll report on her whereabouts at the first port and leave her to the salvage companies. The cable company will want to know where I am. I've got my job of repairing the cables to attend to. And," the Captain looked at the chums, "I shall want some new crew. Good wages, good grub, and plenty of excitement. What about it?"

Hurricane grinned and looked at Not-A-Bean and Skin.

"Are you on?"

"Not 'arf," said Skin. Count me in. Wot abart it, Not-A-Bean?"

The fat youngster looked from his grinning chums to the Captain.

"All right," he said, rubbing his nose reflectively. "I'm one of the crew. But—no more octopuses!"

Napoleon, the Wide-Awake Wielder of Men's Destinies, will Devastate Your Senses with Stunning Thrills Next Week.

# The Lester's Realm



Workman (to mate who has just fallen off building):  
Crikey, you've got four sides of that 'ouse to fall orf an' you must go an' fall on my pie.

(Football to J. Shirkey, 34, Bloomgate, Lanark, Scotland.)

## THE REASON!

A gentleman found a boy standing beside an overturned haycart. He said: "It will take some time to put this mess right. Come into the house and have something to eat, and then I will give you a hand."

The boy demurred, saying his father would not like it. However, eventually he accepted the invitation and made a hearty meal. Whereupon the gentleman said:

"Why did you think your father would object?"

"Please, sir," replied the boy, "because father's under the hay!"

(Fountain pen to Miss P. TUBBALL, Woodhouse, Stag's Head, S. Molton.)

## A PAINFUL JOKE.

An Englishman held his hand in front of a brick wall and asked an Irishman to hit it. Pat hit with all his might, but the Englishman drew his hand away, and Pat bruised his fist against the wall.

Soon he went back to Ireland, and, meeting a friend, he decided to try the joke on him. There was no wall in sight, so he put his hand in front of his nose.

"Hit that," he said. The other punched at it, and Pat drew it away. He never tried that joke again.

(Fountain pen to HORACE GRANVILLE JEFFERIS, 4, Half Moon Street, Portsea, Hants.)

## PAINSTAKING.

TEACHER: You have spelt "apartment" with two "p's."

SCHOLAR (willing to oblige): I'm sorry, miss, which "p" shall I take out?

(Fountain pen to S. W. GRIFFITHS, 73, Tangier Road, Copnor, Portsmouth.)

## FLATTERING!

FARMER (to Bishop): Are you a curate?

BISHOP (modestly): Well, I was once.

FARMER (sympathetically): Drink, I suppose!

(Fountain pen to W. LANDRY, 31, Felixstowe Road, Kensal Rise, Willesden, N.W.10.)

## A TACTLESS QUESTION.

Mr. and Mrs. Bailey were entertaining friends.

"I think I shall get a car this year," said Mr. Bailey during a lull in the conversation. "I haven't decided what make, but it's no use buying a cheap one. I suppose I could get a serviceable little affair for six hundred or so!"

While the company were gasping at the careless mention of such a sum, the host's youngest son remarked:

"And will that funny little man with the black whiskers call every week like he did when you bought me the bike, Dad?"

(Fountain Pen to W. BLANCHARD, 4, Beresford Terrace, Upper Belle Vue, Moor Green, Cowes.)

## HIS ACCOMPLISHMENT.

Bobbie's report from school was a very bad one. His father was commenting on it with feeling. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," he said. "See what a lot of prizes your sister has got, and you haven't even earned a certificate!"

"Oh, I got a certificate once, Dad," replied Bobbie.

"Indeed: what for, I should like to know?"

"For being born," was the laconic reply.

(Fountain pen to CLIVE STEVENSON, 150, Court Oak Road, Harbourne, Birmingham.)

## SOME ANIMILE.

CIRCUS MAN (hunting runaway elephant): Have you seen a strange animal round about here?

FARMER GILES: Oi have. There's been an injur-rubber bull eating my carrots wid 'is tail.

(Fountain pen to —, 3, Carleton Road, Tufnell Park, N.7.)



Hotel Manager: Why don't you take the boots downstairs to clean 'em?

Boots: I can't—the chap behind the door is hanging on to the laces.

(Football to T. Steel, 24, Bouverie Road W., Folkestone.)

**FOOTBALLS and FOUNTAIN PENS** awarded to senders of all jokes printed on this page. Send in your favourite joke to: Joke Editor, "Boys' Magazine," 146, Fetterlane, London, E.C.4. Coupon on Page 16 must accompany every joke submitted.

Once Again! The Gayest Adventurer that Ever Appeared in the Boys' Mag. A Tonic Tale of the Dandy Cowboy Bucking Against a Bold Wild West Bandit.

# THE DANDY COWBOY TRAILS THE MYSTERY RIDER



## The English Rancher and his Boys of the Bar Eight Ranch Round Up a Thorough Paced Rascal.

### In the Nick of Time.

**D**AWN came with startling suddenness in a glare of white, blinding sunlight. One moment everything appeared enwrapped in a grey mist, elusive, ghostly and fantastical, and the next was flung into bold relief in the scorching rays of the early-morning sun.

Rex Remington, owner of the Bar Eight Ranch, drew Firefiend, his sweating foam-covered horse, to a welcome halt and sat gazing intently ahead to where, at the base of a great wall of red rock that rose sheer for three hundred feet, a continuing dust cloud followed a black dot, moving slowly north.

Through the long hours of the night the Dandy Cowboy had hung grimly on to the trail of that black dot, which he knew to be the most cunning and ruthless outlaw it had ever been his lot to come up against. He was known throughout the length of the Pecos Valley as the Mystery Rider.

For the past six or seven weeks the masked Mystery Rider had spread a reign of terror throughout the Valley, though Rex, strange as it may seem, had not, until the previous night, set eyes on the outlaw.

He had been returning to the Bar Eight after paying a visit to town, when, upon nearing the ranch, he had seen the masked figure emerge from among the shadows of the ranch-house and, mounting a horse, ride silently away. Rex had determined to follow and, not even stopping to ascertain the reason for the Mystery Rider's visit to the ranch, headed westward toward the mountains in pursuit. The

darkness had made tracking difficult; and now, with the coming of daylight, he discovered that at least three miles separated him from his quarry.

The Dandy Cowboy leaned forward in his saddle and patted the sleek, glistening neck of his beautiful black colt. "Firefiend, old boy," he drawled, "we'll get a move on now and meet up with our friend over yonder." Rex spoke lightly, but there was a look in his eyes and a tenacity of purpose about the set of his mouth that boded ill for the Mystery Rider should he succeed in overtaking him.

He urged Firefiend forward, and the horse settled into an easy, swinging stride, running at an amazing pace.

While he was yet a mile from the wall Rex observed the outlaw disappear into a narrow cleft. He put Firefiend to a faster pace and shortly gained the opening.

The tortuous windings of the gorge hid the mysterious outlaw from the cow king's vision, but Rex knew his man would not be far away.

The young rancher urged Firefiend even faster, all-impatient to end the chase.

Racing between two gigantic boulders, he swept round a narrow bend and then suddenly swerved. But he was unable to avoid the rope that snaked out from the side of the gorge. The noose dropped neatly over his head, pinning his arms to his sides and the next moment he was jerked violently from the saddle. He hit the ground with a crashing force that jarred every bone in his body and, rolling sideways, struck his head sharply against a protruding

piece of rock. Then his senses left him and he slipped into a world of darkness.

THE Dandy Cowboy returned to consciousness to discover the Mystery Rider peering at him with eyes that glittered balefully through the eye-slits in his mask.

Rex was in a tight corner. Balanced precariously at the top of a short, steep slope that dropped away to a sheer hundred-foot precipice was a large boulder of rock, and to this the Dandy Cowboy was bound so that he was utterly and completely at the outlaw's mercy.

"I'm powerful glad yuh've collected yuhr senses," said the outlaw. "I'm jest itchin' to tell yuh how yuh're goin' to die." He chuckled softly. "I aim ter roll that boulder down the slope, and as it rolls it's purty certain it'll break every bone in yuhr body!"

If he expected Rex to show signs of fear, he was disappointed. The Dandy Cowboy's lips were curved in a derisive smile.

Muttering to himself, the outlaw stepped behind the boulder and, placing his shoulder against it, commenced to heave it over the drop.

The rock moved slightly; the outlaw redoubled his efforts and the boulder moved again. It seemed that it must go rolling down toward the precipice, carrying its human burden with it. But at that tense moment the death-like silence was shattered by the crash and boom of exploding colts.

The Mystery Rider leaped back from the rock and whirled about, to see a number of grim-faced cowboys racing down on him. It was the Bar Eight outfit.

Only for a moment did the Mystery Rider hesitate; then, springing sideways, he darted into the shelter of a jumble of rocks and vanished from sight followed by a vicious fusillade.

Jack Jakers, the foreman, and "Tiny" McPherson, who were leading the group, raced toward the Dandy Cowboy and, with a few quick slashes of their keen-bladed knives, severed his bonds.

"Thanks, boys," drawled Rex, flinging a speck of a rope from his chaps. "You were only just about in time."

"We saw yuh start after him last night," Jakers explained. "I was crossin' to th' corrals when I saw yuh, so we jest saddled up an' came along."

Half-an-hour later the Bar Eight punchers, having failed to find the trail of the Mystery Rider, returned to their horses and headed for the ranch.

### Shots in the Night.

THE door of the Bar Eight bunkhouse opened to admit the tubby figure of Bud Malone, the fat member of the Bar Eight outfit.

"Say, Boss," he announced, "I've kinda got an idea that that darned polecat, the Mystery Rider, is prowlin' round th' herd. We ain't seen nothin' of him, but they's restless some."

"Have you scouted round for him?" queried Rex.

"Yep, but I reckon he's takin' a heap of care not to show hisself."

The Dandy Cowboy rose to his feet and addressed his two companions, who, together with himself, were the sole occupants of the bunkhouse; of the other punchers, some were guarding the herd, three miles to the south, while the others were enjoying one of their infrequent visits to town.

"Bud, you stay here and keep on the look out," he said. "Jack and I will ride over and have a look round. If he is there, he's there only for one thing, and that is to stampede the herd."

Rex crossed to the door, while Jack Jakers reached

for his cartridge-belt, suspended from a peg above his bunk.

As the Dandy Cowboy stood framed in the lighted doorway, gazing out over the moonlit plain, the brooding quiet of the night was broken by the sharp report of a rifle. A bullet thudded into the wall of the bunkhouse close to Rex's head.

But the Dandy Cowboy's keen eyes had located the streak of flame that accompanied it. It came from a clump of trees that crowned a small knoll some distance away.

Whipping out his guns, and calling to Jack Jakers to extinguish the lamp as he did so, Rex leaped into the shadows beyond the doorway and, followed by Jack Jakers and Bud Malone, went speeding swiftly across the plain, heading for the knoll.

No shots greeted them as they entered the trees—nothing but an ominous silence.

The Dandy Cowboy dismounted and, bidding the others wait, went cautiously forward on foot. He crept toward the spot from whence he had observed the spurt of flame from the rifle of the hidden marksman.

Jack Jakers and Bud Malone awaited Rex's return with impatience.

Three minutes, which to them seemed more like three hours, passed, then the tall form of the Dandy Cowboy loomed up before them.

"He's not there," said Rex. "He must have seen us coming and slipped away. But it's impossible for him to have gone far; we'll search and find his trail. You, Bud, can ride straight across to the west side of the trees, Jack can ride north, and I will ride to the south side. If you see him, or pick up his trail, whistle."

The three riders departed in their respective directions, Rex skirting the edge of the trees, but taking great care to keep well within the shadows.

He had almost reached the end of the knoll when a piercing whistle sounded from the direction in which Jack Jakers had ridden. Immediately, he wheeled firebrand and raced to the spot from whence the sound had come.

Bud Malone reached the foreman ahead of Rex, and when the young rancher rode up he found the two cowboys kneeling on the ground carefully scrutinizing the tracks of a single horse. The tracks went north.

The Dandy Cowboy's gaze swept the plain, but there was no sign of life—everything was silent and still.

"I guess he's ridden into an arroyo," said Jack Jakers. "He's not runnin' any risks of makin' hisself a target."

Rex examined the tracks and then turned to the foreman. "Jack, you wait here," he said. "Bud can ride back to the ranch and fetch Deroc, then you can follow the trail from here. I'm going to town to get the sheriff and a posse. I should like to see it through with just you boys, but he's too dangerous to be allowed at large any longer."

Rex swung into the saddle and, with a word of farewell, turned firebrand's head in the direction of the town and raced away.

The Dandy Cowboy rode at top speed and at the end of half-an-hour reached town.

He tied his horse to a rail of the town corral and was about to cross the open space to the sheriff's office when he saw, standing in the shadows of the bank, a saddled horse. Instantly his suspicions were aroused.

He crossed the street and crept silently to the rear of the building.

There he found a window which was, or rather had been, protected by iron bars; these now lay

on the ground, having in some way been forcibly removed.

A faint sound coming from the interior spurred Rex to action. Climbing through the window, he saw the Mystery Rider kneeling before the safe with a small lamp to afford him the necessary illumination.

By some peculiar sixth sense the outlaw must have become aware of his presence, for he leaped to his feet and spun round with a muttered oath. For a split second they stood staring at each other, then the outlaw moved. With a flick of his foot he overturned the lamp, plunging the room into darkness; and, simultaneously, the thunderous reports of his shooter seemed to rock the very walls. Rex ducked swiftly. Ere the Mystery Rider could fire again, the Dandy Cowboy was upon him.

Panting and straining, they reeled across the floor locked in close embrace. Vainly the outlaw tried to turn his weapon into Rex's side, and failing in this brought his knee up with a vicious jerk in the pit of the Dandy Cowboy's stomach. Rex gasped with pain, his hold relaxed, and he staggered back against the steel grill.

The outlaw laughed savagely and raised his gun;

light of which he stared at Rex's opponent who was rising slowly to his feet.

"By thunder!" he exclaimed. "The Mystery Rider!"

He turned to Rex.

"What th—how th' great-horned toad did yuh git in here?" he asked.

Keeping the outlaw covered with his revolver, Rex swiftly acquainted the sheriff with the reason for his presence in the bank.

When he had finished, Rex sheathed his guns, while the sheriff stepped close to the Mystery Rider. He was about to remove his mask when to their ears came the pounding of hoofs.

The occupants of the room turned and, through the crowded doorway, espied a band of masked and mounted men flourishing drawn guns.

Quick to take advantage of the surprise which the advent of the masked horsemen had created, the Mystery Rider snatched the sheriff's gun from its holster and trained it upon his captors.

"Stick 'em up!" he snapped. "An' keep 'em up!"

There was nothing for it but to obey, and hands shot ceilingwards with alacrity.



THE BOULDER'S BURDEN.—It seemed that the boulder must go over that fearful precipice as the masked outlaw pushed. But at that tense moment the silence was shattered by the crash and boom of exploding colts.—The Bar Eight U outfit had arrived.

but, before he had time to press the trigger, Rex, pulling himself together, punched him full in the face. The Mystery Rider went crashing across the room, his gun clattering noisily to the floor.

Suddenly, from the street, came shouts and the sound of running footsteps. Men were coming, attracted by the shots.

A loud hammering shook the door.

"Open in th' name o' th' law or, by heck, I'll let daylight through yuh!" roared a bull-like voice. Rex recognised the voice as that of the sheriff, Bill Nevin.

Keeping one eye on the outlaw, Rex crossed to the door and drew the bolts. A key grated in the lock and next moment the sheriff, followed by the bank manager and a number of citizens, entered.

The sheriff carried a lantern held aloft, by the

"Line up against the wall an' drop yuhr gun-belts, but don't let yuhr fingers stray too far from the buckles or yuh'll be digestin' lead," he said.

His command obeyed, he backed warily to the door and, leaping across the threshold, slammed the door.

"By thunder!" roared Bill Nevin. "The skulkin' coyote'll git away."

Rex snatched up his gun-belt from the floor and, springing across the room, flung open the door and darted into the street.

Everywhere excitement reigned. Men ran hither and thither, some shouting, others firing their guns, while a number ran for their horses in readiness to form a posse for the immediate and inevitable pursuit of the outlaws.

Rex grabbed the arm of a man who was running





**THE BLACK-MANED AVENGER.**—Firefiend reared with a scream of pain—and before the Masked Mystery Rider could fire again his forehoofs crashed down. The fellow went catapulting backwards.

past him. "Which way did that bunch of outlaws go?" he snapped.

"They're headed east, pard; but th' Mystery Rider ain't with 'em none—he's fannin' th' breeze west toward th' mountains."

The Dandy Cowboy turned to Bill Nevin, who had followed him from the building.

"Bill, get two posses," he said. "You can go after the bunch with one, and I will head the other after the Mystery Rider."

Five minutes later, Rex, at the head of a posse of some twenty men, swept out of town in hot pursuit of the outlaw.

Exactly an hour after the posse that pursued the Mystery Rider had left town, a lone horseman raced at incredible speed over a sandy scrub-covered plain, heading due west. The horseman was Rex Remington, who, having outdistanced the others, once again found himself alone on the trail of the Mystery Rider.

### The End of the Trail.

**T**HE Dandy Cowboy swung down from his saddle and moved cautiously forward toward a tangle of bushes and undergrowth that grew close to the wall of the canyon he was traversing.

For two days Rex had hung grimly on to the trail of the Mystery Rider. Through forest and gorge, canyon and gulch, it had led him; until now he was nearing the mysterious outlaw's lair.

Silently as a panther Rex had covered some thirty yards when suddenly he emerged into a small box-

canyon. Boulders abounded in profusion, appearing grotesque in the dim twilight, while from near-by came the sound of running water.

Night was rapidly approaching and the Dandy Cowboy was looking for a suitable spot to pitch camp.

After a few moments' meditation, he decided to return for Firefiend and camp in the canyon.

He turned, and was about to re-enter the niche when out from behind a large boulder close to which he had been standing there stepped a sinister masked man with gun upraised. Without a sound the figure sprang upon the unsuspecting young rancher and brought the clubbed weapon crashing down upon his head with stunning force.

Rex returned to his senses to find himself lying, bound hand and foot, in a small cave that gave on to a rocky ledge overlooking the yawning gulf of a mighty canyon. He was conscious of a great thirst that was accentuated by the fierce rays of the sun that beat in upon him.

Rex lay back and closed his eyes, only to open them a moment later to find the outlaw gazing down at him with a malignant stare.

"So you've come round, eh?" he said. "Good, now I can inform yuh as to exactly how yuh're goin' to die. I'm goin' to shoot yuh to death, bit by bit—shoot yuh to pieces."

Bending forward, he smashed his fist full in the Dandy Cowboy's face.

The blow drew blood, but Rex maintained his scornful silence, and with an oath his captor stepped out on to the ledge and drew his revolver.

"Yuh're goin' to get a taste of what's comin' to yuh right now." His voice was thick with passion as he slowly increased his pressure upon the trigger. Rex braced himself to receive the searing red-hot pain that in another second would stab him.

But the outlaw was not destined to pull the trigger, for at that moment there came a clatter of hoofs and from out of a near-by hollow there dashed a great, black horse whose bared teeth, outstretched neck and dilated eyes told plainly of the rage that possessed him. The horse was Firefiend.

The Mystery Rider whirled from Rex, his gun belching flame.

Firefiend reared up with a scream of rage and pain, but ere the outlaw could loose a second shot the huge animal came crashing down, his forefeet smashing against the outlaw's chest, sending him catapulting backwards.

The Mystery Rider screamed with fear as he staggered back, right to the very brink of the canyon. Madly he fought to retain his balance, but failed, and plunged backwards into space.

One last despairing cry floated upward and then came silence, deep and unbroken save for the ring of Firefiend's iron-shod hoofs on the rocky ledge as he sidled, snorting, toward the cave.

Rex shuddered, despite himself, at the outlaw's sudden and terrible death. Then, after a moment, he commenced struggling with his bonds.

By rubbing the cords that bound his wrists against the rowels of his spurs he quickly freed his hands, and in another moment, with one stroke of his knife, had severed the cords about his ankles and was free. He briskly rubbed his cramped limbs to restore the circulation and then led Firefiend back to the hollow.

Having done this, he then packed the Mystery Rider's belongings on to the dead man's horse and, saddling Firefiend, mounted and, leading the other animal, rode through the hollow and started on the back trail to the Pecos Valley, which, thanks to Firefiend's resourcefulness, had been freed of the menace of the Mystery Rider for ever.

Get in Gear for a Thrilling Long Motor-Cycle T.T.  
Yarn Next Week, Lads.

## SACRED APES IN BLACK AFRICA HOLD OUR PALS PRISONER!



Grand New Series  
of  
**JIMMY BRENT,**  
the Amazing Man  
About Town, and  
Mystery Crook, on  
Tour With His  
Friends on a  
Daring 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 became chief of a tribe, and at their head he made war on Velasquez, but the Big Boss was more cunning than he, for by means of white man's magic, he captured the natives' imagination and forced them to take Sambo's friends prisoner.

Sambo, disguised as a witch doctor, entered the devil hut in which they were kept.

He managed to get them away by swamping the camp fires with sand—only to find that they were pursued by the sacred apes, who roamed abroad only in complete darkness.

### Escape.

**W**ITH hideous animal snarls a bunch of the jungle apes clawed and grabbed at the strange barrier that had risen as if by magic between the big game cricketers and themselves.

That rope netting hanging between the trees seemed to be made of steel. The apes slashed in blows upon it that would have caved in the side of an ox, yet they had no effect whatever upon the protecting net.

"How ever did you come across this netting?" whispered Jimmy Brent to Sambo amidst the hubbub that raged like an electric storm around them. The coloured cricketer grinned.

"Me come alonga big feller explorer," he explained. "He find dis place and de apes. So de ole feller make dis net to protect himself. Berry fine, too."

"I should say it is fine," breathed Jimmy in thankfulness as twenty-five stone of awful bone and muscle hurled itself snarling against the net.

"Shoot for the eyes," Sambo had said. And Jimmy raised his rifle, took careful aim and pulled the trigger. This was big game hunting, indeed. It

was the biggest and strangest game that Jimmy had ever seen.

The roar of the report frightened the ape not at all, but the flash of flame that came for a moment from the rifle did. Their snarls changed to shrill, horrid screams as they retreated a moment, but the light had been too swift and too small to intimidate them much. They came on again with a slow, deliberate crawl that was horribly suggestive.

But once within a few yards of the net they sprang on it with the ferocity and force of a projectile launched from a huge gun.

Sambo took from his pocket a matchbox, grouped three or four of the precious matches together, and struck them. The apes retreated, screaming anew at the sudden light they hated. Sambo flung the tiny flare from him as the flame commenced to ebb.

"Pity we ain't got some of dem fireworks ob Mister Velasquez," he remarked grimly. "We sure would send dese apes squealing for Mamma!"

Jimmy laughed, then suddenly the laugh choked off on his lips, and his blood seemed to congeal in his veins. He had half-turned, only to find himself staring at two red glowing lights. He was hunter enough to know that they belonged to some ferocious creature.

"Look," he whispered.

As if urged by an impulse of self-preservation all the big game cricketers turned to stare at those animal eyes. They moved nearer, and the swift, stealthy grace. Then a horrid snarl broke out on the night air, and they all scattered as the great beast launched its great, catlike body at them.

Jimmy Brent, with his rifle loose at his shoulder, pulled the trigger, and the weapon kicked viciously, knocking him backwards. That and the roar of the gun confused him so that he did not know what had happened, though he was conscious of a body thudding the ground near-by him. Then he saw the puma pawing the ground in its death agonies, and he sent another shot into it.

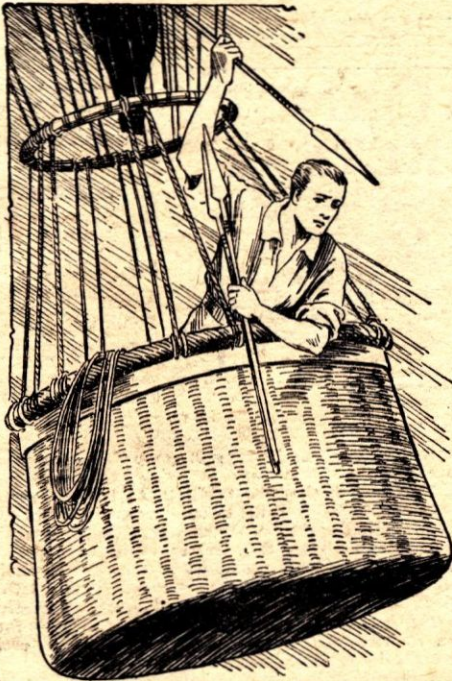
"Phew!" he exclaimed, his brow glistening.

There were enemies both in and outside the mysterious Hidden City in the heart of the jungle.

"Can't we make a fire?" whispered Jimmy. "That would drive them away, eh?" He stared down at the still quivering figure of the jungle beast, and shuddered.

"I don't scarcely reckon dere's any wood," Sambo said laconically.

He spoke only the truth. The ground was bare



A shower of spears came whizzing down from the sky. Floating over in a balloon was—Jimmy Brent.

and hard and sunbaked, holding no sign of vegetation of any sort. Whereas in the jungle they had only to stretch out their hands to gather in brush and twigs in as great amount as they desired, here on this plateau amidst the ruins of the city they were destitute of what had become a vital necessity. Fuel! The trees to which the netting was attached might yield branches, it was true, but even to approach those trees was a hazard fraught with danger.

The apes were untiring in their efforts to claw down the rope netting, and it seemed that in the end they must succeed. The rope that once had been so stout was now slightly rotted through many forest rains, and a gaping hole with broken strands of rope presently rewarded the efforts of one of the largest and most ferocious of the apes.

No more shots came from the rifles of the big game cricketers, for their ammunition was gone. Jimmy Brent had one unspent cartridge remaining in his two bore rifle, and that he was saving for an emergency.

"We'd better man the posts, as it were," muttered Sir Mark Anton, and six or seven of the big game cricketers crowded to the gaping hole in the net, their rifles clubbed in their hands.

They hit with all their strength at the awful snarling beasts just discernible in the faint starlight. The wooden stocks of their rifles crashed against bone that was like iron, and the effect was ghastly, unnerving; for the beasts appeared to take the blows as they would slaps from a tiny hand. Their horrid curved and yellow teeth snapped and bit at the failing rifle butts, and in many cases they managed to grip them and pull them from their

owners' grasp. It was not many seconds before the big game cricketers beat a hasty, snarling retreat. The onslaught was too great, too formidable.

"We've got to get out of this," Jimmy repeated desperately; "we can't hold on until daylight."

Scarcely had the words left his mouth when his whole body tensened, and he stared with a fast beating heart. Another creature of the wilds was emerging from the crumbling buildings of the Hidden City. What it was Jimmy did not know, he could not see; for there was a ghastly darkness here under the trees.

But he saw the glowing eyes of the beast, and his nostrils were assailed by an awful animal stench. He threw up his rifle to his shoulder. His last shot!

The red glowing eyes seemed to leap at him, looming before his vision like something grotesquely out of focus in a screen drama. His finger was curled round the trigger, and it tensened. Came a racking shot, swiftly succeeded by an awful roar that shook the hot, still night, and then Jimmy, through a red blurr, saw an immense catlike form grovelling along the ground, evidently grievously wounded. His second bag! Yet the brute was not *hors de combat* by any means. Jimmy had a blurred vision of terrible, curved talons, a creased and spitting brute face, and he saw the immense striped body flattened to the ground, *wriggling under the net!*

Instantly the former man-about-town was gripped by a wild, uncontrollable impulse.

The immense creature of the wilds had found its avenue of escape, and was through. It was wounded and at bay, and it was probably as dangerous as it had ever been in all its savage existence. As though catapulted, its great, striped body was launched from the ground at the nearest ape who threatened it, and with a single flick of its paw it raked the stomach of the mighty beast, found it in its weakest spot.

The ape's death snarl was horrific. Like some giant, prehistoric man, it lifted its tremendous arms, and with the blood spurting from its wound it slowly sank to the ground in a paroxysm of snarling pain. Meanwhile its attacker was slinking off, its own bloodcurdling snarls quivering on the night.

It was an immense and awesome jungle drama. The other apes were staring as if transfixed at their dying companion. Save when these apes fought one against the other, which often happened, none of them was ever known to die. They were too mighty in the jungle. The tiny brains of the others could not cope with this frightening phenomenon. They stared in terror.

Not so Jimmy Brent. He had taken the opportunity that offered—and a mad, wild risk it carried with it.

For he had dived under the netting even as the snarling puma had done, and swiftly, with his rifle gripped by its barrel, he ran wraithlike over the plateau. In a few seconds he was in the hot shadows, in safety. For as the dying ape finally crashed to the ground, its immense fellows fell upon it like carrion birds and tore the unfortunate brute limb from limb, snarling and quarrelling horribly over the spoil.

It was a ghastly sight, and the big-game cricketers behind the net felt that they wanted to be sick. Yet the distraction had provided Jimmy Brent with an opportunity to escape.

"Shure and begorrah, an' he'll be after finding some way out of this rotten hole, will Jimmy," declared Micky Dolan, the huge and genial Irishman with such a show of confidence that all doubts in Jimmy were laid to rest at once.

"He'll have to put a jerk into it then," was the gloomy opinion of Sir Mark Anton. "Once these brutes have finished their little repast . . . ugh!"

And he turned his head away, not liking the sight of the apes' meal.

As for Jimmy, it scarcely need be said that he did not wait to see the primeval destruction of the dead ape. The snarls and screams of the quarrelling and feasting brutes came to his ears like the music to a nightmare. He hurried on.

He had not the ghost of a plan in his mind. All he knew was that he had to help the others, and quickly.

Stumbling this way and that, he ran on. His stomach was turning now with the fear that he felt. While he had been with the others he had been of stout courage, for one can but die. And a death at the hands of savage, lustful apes in the heart of dark Africa was at any rate a clean death. But now he felt that he carried the lives of his companions in his hands, and he must see to it that he did not betray them.

Running blindly on, it seemed suddenly to Jimmy that the ground opened in a yawning chasm at his feet. He stumbled and pitched headlong, sliding down what seemed to be the chalky side of a deep pit. He gave up then, thinking that he must crash to

came back like a straggling fugitive of some hopelessly beaten army. Bitter, agonising memory. It was dawn, and he had been lying here like a fool, sleeping or unconscious, whilst his pals . . .

Jimmy choked, and tried to stop thinking.

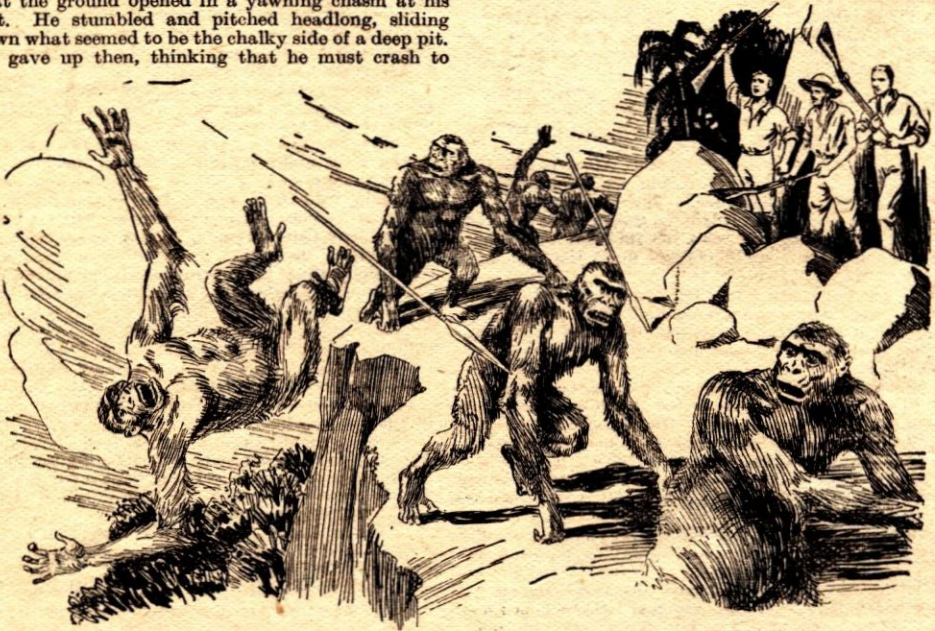
He rolled over, the prey of a terrible sense of futility and despair. Hard to be a stoic just then as he realised that he had taken his friends out here to Africa, had gambled with their lives, and lost.

And then all at once he opened his eyes wide, and stared, gripping the loose stone near him in his torn and bruised hands. Was he dreaming? What did he see? Surely it was not true.

A balloon!

An aeronautical balloon, its huge gasbag intact and waving gently in the tiny breeze of early dawn. Jimmy was astonished out of his senses for a full half minute. "Whassamarrrer with me?" he growled, "B'gosh, am I going dotty?"

He crawled on his stomach towards the amazing



THEIR BACKS TO THE WALL.—Encouraged by Sambo's shouts they prepared to fight to the death, as the apes came shambling upon them.

death. Hurling, bumping and turning over as he slid down, Jimmy closed his eyes. A great rock hit his temple, and darkness spread before him like the spreading of a great inky pool.

He was still at last, with small boulders and rocks piled all around him—still and unconscious in the bottom of a great pit. And there, only a few yards away, bobbing gently in the almost motionless night air, was a great globular shape. The gods grinned on Jimmy Brent, once man-about-town in London's West End. He was probably one of the luckiest men living, though he would not have acknowledged that just then as he lay unconscious in the pit depths. But always when things were dark, Fate took him by the arm and led him round a corner to where the light gleamed.

Jimmy opened his eyes as the first faint light of dawn sifted through the dark sky. He closed his eyes quickly again, knowing horrid pain. Memory

apparition, quickening his pace as it still remained before his eyes. A balloon, moored by ropes to the rocky pit bottom, complete with basket, sand ballast, and guy ropes. Surely good fortune had transcended all bounds in bestowing this gift upon lucky Jimmy Brent.

Jimmy checked suddenly. Hanging half over the basket he saw something, the white skeleton of a man!

Then he understood.

He had heard Sambo tell of another man, a famous explorer and scientist, who had voyaged into the unknown to discover the Hidden City. He had taken a small party of four with him, and all the members had straggled back to civilisation save himself. Sambo Mauley, the negro, had been one of that party, and he was the only remaining member alive to-day. That was how he had come to know of the Hidden City and the Hurulane. That was how he had known

(Continued on page 36.)

# THRILLS AFLASH! Gripping New Yarn of the Mightiest Mystery—Space!

## PLANET THE SCHOOLBOYS

Like a hurtling meteor of the night sky, the *Solar Rover* flashes to Venus

Specially Written for our Chums by  
EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

### The Thunderous Opening.

**F**LASHING through space on the *Solar Rover*—a marvellous machine invented by Professor Drewe—a band of schoolboys landed on the planet Venus.

They found it peopled by a nation of strange winged beings, ruled by Hudson Jeff, a Yankee who had landed on the White Planet ten years before in a projectile.

Count Popandos, a crooked schemer, turned Hudson Jeff against the adventurers, and he shut them out of his city—Venusville—just as the terrible Venusian night descended.

In so doing he invited tragedy! Attracted by the lights of the *Solar Rover*, dreadful, nameless monsters came out of the darkness, giant buildings toppled under the onslaught. It seemed the city was doomed—but by moving out over the deserted plain that surrounded the city, the *Rover* lured the monsters away.

In the confusion Barry fell overboard and, hiding in a cave, discovered Count Popandos. When the dawn came and the monsters fled, the schoolboy took the Count, who seemed to be insane, back to the *Rover*.

Spite his past crookedness, the adventurers put him into a comfortable bed and ministered to his wants. They little knew! The rascally Count was only pretending to be insane while he hatched fresh villainy.

### The Sign in the Sky.

**C**OUNT ALEXIS POPANDOS was looking wholly evil as he allowed himself to fall back once more on the pillow.

"Yes, I shall surprise them all—very soon!" he repeated tensely. "But not yet! No! This time I shall make sure—and so I shall wait!"

And while he lay in bed there, gloating over the success of his trick, there was a good deal of bustle on the *Solar Rover's* decks. Barry Drewe and his chums were not in evidence, however. For all the boys had gone down to their state-rooms, and were fast asleep by now. They hadn't had a wink of sleep all night, and they were feeling exhausted—now that the safety of the daylight had come.

And Sir Bags and Professor Drewe and Mr. Mannering were rather glad. It was a relief to them to have the boys out of the way for the time being. For there was a great deal to be done. Sleep for them was not to be thought of yet.

"We must make a thorough examination of the ship, and ascertain what damage has been done," Professor Drewe was saying, his voice filled with anxiety and concern. "I am afraid she has suffered a great shock—but until every plate and bolt has been examined we cannot be certain as to her condition. It will indeed be an appalling catastrophe

if it proves that she is strained to such an extent that we cannot venture again into Outer Space."

"Well, Prof, there's no need to be pessimistic," said Sir Bags cheerily. "Even if one or two plates are strained and bent, we may be able to repair them. Let's hope for the best."

"What about Zeff?" put in Mr. Mannering. "We shall have to adopt some plan, you know. Zeff is bound to turn up sooner or later—"

"Yes, of course," interrupted Professor Roxley Drewe with a frown. "We must be prepared for Hudson Zeff! I do not think the man is a rascal, but he is undoubtedly a fanatic."

"Yes, and he's still got those men of ours," growled Bags. "Last night, before the darkness came, he collared the *Rover*, and kidnapped some members of the crew. If he comes near this ship again, we'll make it quite clear to him that we'll stand no more of his nonsense. His idea was to send Popandos into Outer Space, and to keep all the rest of us on Venus. Well, after one night on Venus, I rather fancy I should prefer good old Piccadilly—even though it is 'up'!"

"I don't think Zeff meant us any harm," said Mr. Mannering thoughtfully. "In my opinion he is slightly crazy—"

"Beg pardon, sir!" interrupted one of the engineers, coming up and saluting. "The other members of the crew are just coming along—with that queer, misshapen fellow."

"Good glory!" said Bags. "So Zeff is putting in an appearance already!"

They hurried to the rail, and they beheld Hudson Zeff in the distance, his deformed figure looking grotesque and fantastic. The missing members of the *Rover's* crew were with him. And all round flew the Venusians, as a kind of escort.

Professor Drewe gave some orders, and within a minute the rail of the *Rover* was guarded all round, by men with rifles.

"Just a minute, Mr. Zeff!" sang out Bags. "After what happened yesterday, we are none too certain of you—"

"It's all right, folks—I've brought back your men," said Hudson Zeff, coming to a halt about twenty yards away from the *Rover*. "What fool games were you up to during the night? Do you know that you nearly brought disaster upon my city?"

"If we did do so, it was entirely unintentional!" said Professor Drewe coldly. "And we cannot forget, Mr. Zeff, that you attempted to hold us all against our wills, and to seize our ship."

"Forget it!" said Hudson Zeff. "I guess I was too hasty. Just one of my fits, gentlemen! You are guests here, and I want to put things right. You must have had a bad night, by what I can see, and if you'll all come along to the White House—"

"Nothing doing!" interrupted Bags. "We're staying here, Mr. Zeff. Thanks all the same, but we don't trust you. We feel a lot safer on our own deck."

A shadow came across Zeff's face.

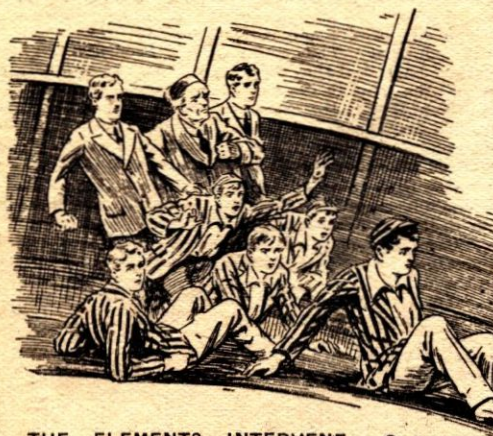
"I'm sorry we can't get together," he said. "I didn't mean you any harm, and—"

He suddenly broke off, and glanced at a number of the Venusians, who were making curious sounds, and looking up into the sky. Zeff turned, and stared into the sky, too.

There was nothing particularly startling to see. The great disc of the sun had come from behind an immense cloudbank, and its burning rays had already made the plates of the *Rover* uncomfortably hot. But the air was clear, and the only indication of anything unusual was a strange lurid glare in one section of the horizon. It sent flickering shafts of light, right up to the zenith—as though an enormous fire was burning, hundreds of miles away.

"What is that glare, Mr. Zeff?" asked Professor Drewe, almost excitedly.

"That?" said Hudson Zeff. "Nothing. A commonplace phenomenon of this planet. Take no notice—it means nothing."



THE ELEMENTS INTERVENE. — Count Popandos was about to fire into the heart of Sir Bags when the Solar Rover heeled over. The unexpected lurch sent the rascally count tumbling into the controls. They moved and . . . the starship dropped like a stone.

"But why are your Venusians looking so alarmed?" asked Bags keenly.

"They are strange—and they excite themselves over trifles," replied Zeff. "What are your plans, gentlemen? Your ship appears to be disabled? I guess she's out of commission, eh?"

"We do not know yet," replied the Professor, coming to himself with a start. "But before long we shall make tests—we shall go into the upper air, and undergo some exhaustive trials."

"For my own sake, I hope that your ship is disabled beyond all repair—but for your own sakes I hope she is still airworthy," said Hudson Zeff frankly. "You see, gentlemen, I am candid. I want you to remain on Venus, but you are determined to go back to earth. Well, let us hope that this test will decide your fate." Then he turned and went back the way he had come followed by his Venusians.

As he went a puff of hot wind came from across the sea. It was a curious wind—just a single burst of hot air, as though a blast furnace had sent forth a belching gust. And then it had passed, and the atmosphere was normal again.

## The Great Wind.

SIR CLARENCE BAGSHOTT frowned, and scratched his chin.

"Rather rummy, the way Zeff went off, with all his Venusians," he said, as he stood against the rail. "What do you make of it, Jerry?"

Mr. Mannering shrugged his shoulders.

"How should I know?" he said. "There is no accounting for what Hudson Zeff does—or says. Why bother about him? Our greatest anxiety, just now, is to discover whether the *Rover* is airworthy or not. At least, Zeff was frank—but he knew better than to attack us."

Over half-an-hour had passed, and the airship's engineers, and the other members of the crew, were overside, examining the plates, testing the tractors, and so forth. Professor Drewe was with them, and Sir Bags and Mr. Mannering had the deck almost to themselves.

One or two other bursts of hot air had come—just puffs of wind, apparently emanating from nowhere. But they did not take much notice, for they were all filled with concern regarding their ship. Neither had they seen a gleam of sudden excitement in Hudson Zeff's eyes—as he had turned to go. But that gleam had been there—and it had meant something.

At last Professor Drewe came hurrying up the ladder, and he was streaming with perspiration. There was a light of hopefulness in his expression.

"I believe she will fly, Clarence!" he said excitedly.



"What is more satisfactory, I believe she is still capable of withstanding the enormous forces of Outer Space."

"Are we going to have a trial now?" asked Bags.

"At once!" replied the Professor. "But first we shall make exhaustive tests at a height of about twenty thousand feet. Before venturing into the rarefied atmosphere of the greater heights, I want to test every control."

"Well, I must say it's a scheme I heartily approve of," observed Bags. "We don't want any leaks in the old tub, do we?"

"The tiniest crevice might bring disaster to us," said the Professor, nodding. "During our journey back to earth—or to Mars, as the case may be—we shall be travelling in the atmosphereless blank of Outer Space for days. And it is imperative that our manufactured oxygen—our false atmosphere, as it were—should be kept within the vessel."

"Then let's make these tests, by all means," said Bags heartily. "By the way, Prof, have you any idea what those puffs of hot wind mean? We've had two or three of them."

"They are truly extraordinary," declared the Professor. "But then, many things on Venus are extraordinary. Zeff has assured us that the glare in the sky means nothing, and—"

"That glare has gone—long ago," put in Mr. Mannering.

"To be sure!" agreed the Professor. "But I have been so busy that I did not notice. Very unfortunate—very tragic, indeed. I had hoped to make careful observations."

He went off to the control-room, and everybody else waited anxiously. All the members of the crew came on board, and at last the *Rover* tilted slightly, and then rose from the ground. Up she went—higher and higher.

"Well, she's capable of flying, anyhow," said Bags. "That's something to be thankful for."

They went up into the control-room, and they found Professor Drew looking very relieved.

"The damage is less than I had feared," he declared. "We are in the air, Clarence! And I find that the ship answers her controls as perfectly as ever. I intend to go straight up until we are in the rarefied regions. Then, perhaps, we shall be able to—"

He broke off, as the *Rover* gave a strange, unexpected lurch. Bags and Jerry were sent slithering across the control-room, and the Professor only saved himself by clutching at the levers.

"Great Scott!" gasped Mr. Mannering. "What was that?"

"Heaven knows!" said the Professor. "My levers were quite steady—"

"Whoa! Here we go again!" yelled Bags. "By the Lord Harry! What the deuce—"

He broke off, clutching at anything he could lay hands on. For the airship was tilting up, and rolling at the same time. One of the officers came staggering in through the doorway.

"The wind, sir!" he gasped. "It's the wind! We're in a cyclone, or something!"

"Great heavens!" shouted the Professor. "Look at the indicator! We are rising at an appalling speed—and yet I have shut off the power! We are caught in this wind—and we are going straight upwards!"

Bags managed to get out on deck, and he clung to the rail, staring down at the Venusian ground. The *Rover* was already between twenty-five and thirty thousand feet high, and Venusville was looking like a toy city, far, far below. But there was something else that Sir Bags noticed, too.

In the sky, all round, clouds had appeared—and they were the most extraordinary clouds that Bags had ever seen. They were like whirling wreaths of vapour, fashioned into cone-shaped spirals.

And then there came a change. Wind appeared again—hot, suffocating wind. And this time it beat directly downwards! It wasn't like any wind that Bags had ever experienced on earth. It did not come horizontally—but downwards, from the upper skies!

And it beat down with such force that Bags was almost flattened to the deck. Only by clutching at the rail did he remain in a standing position. Down came the wind, with devastating, unbelievable force. And the *Rover* was forced down and down—rolling helplessly, heeling over, and tipping this way and that. So forceful was this wind that all control was completely gone. The airship was at the utter mercy of the Venusian elements!

And yet the appearances had been so deceptive,

for there was not the slightest sign of a hurricane in the look of the sky. There had been nothing to give the adventurers warning of what was to come.

And now the *Rover* was struggling like a crippled thing, shooting upwards one minute, and then being driven down the next.

And Bags clenched his teeth as he remembered one thing. Hudson Zeff had noticed that sign in the sky—and that sign had protended this deadly wind! And Zeff had said nothing—knowing, in his heart, that the adventurers were to go forth into the heavens.

## The Great Fight.

BARRY DREW sat up, dazed and bewildered. "What the— How the— Oh, my goodness!" he gasped. "What's happening?"

"Goodness knows!" panted Don Masters. "There's something absolutely wrong!" said the Hon. Freddie, with a gulp. "I mean to say, the merry ship is tossing about like a rowing boat in a channel storm! The good old dreamless is positively interrupted!"

The chums of Study One picked themselves up rather dazedly. They had suddenly been flung out of their beds, and they were bruised and bewildered. It was the same in the other staterooms. Freeman, Hardy & Willis—the celebrated Firm—did not even trouble to dress themselves. They reeled out of their stateroom in their pyjamas, and no sooner were they on deck than they went slithering across to the rail.

"Get back, boys!" came a roar from Sir Bags. "You'll be overboard in a tick, if you stay out here! We're liable to capsize at any minute!"

"Capsize!" gasped Barry Drew. "But we're thousands and thousands and thousands of feet up in the air!"

"Yes, and we shall be upside down before you know where you are!" shouted Bags. "It's the wind—and we don't know where it's coming from next. We seem to be in a sort of vortex—Whoops! Here we go again—down—down!"

And the *Solar Rover* went downwards with a horrid sort of shudder, which ran through her entire bulk. She was being forced down by the enormous strength of the great wind, which came perpendicularly down from the upper heights.

And now there was a new sensation. For the *Rover* was spinning—round and round. It was as though she had become a top, and was gathering speed. Everybody on deck clutched madly at anything they could hold. And suddenly the *Rover*, with a shuddering lurch, came out of the spin, and went shooting downwards at an acute angle. And then, just as abruptly, she shot off, and went flying upwards, her decks tilting acutely.

And all this time the controls were stationary. By all rights, the *Rover* should have remained motionless in the air, hovering. But that wind had got hold of her, and nothing could be done. The Professor had already tried to descend, but this only made matters worse.

And the strange part of it all was, the sun was still shining. This was merely a wind storm—a terrific hurricane of opposing winds. They came from all sides—from below, and from above. The adventurers were stunned and battered by the force of that hot cyclone.

Once, indeed, the *Rover* nearly went completely over, till she was almost upside down. It seemed that all hope was lost, and more than one fellow on deck believed that he was about to be sent to eternity. But at the last moment the *Rover* swung back, and assumed an even keel again.

"Look!" panted Freeman, pointing.

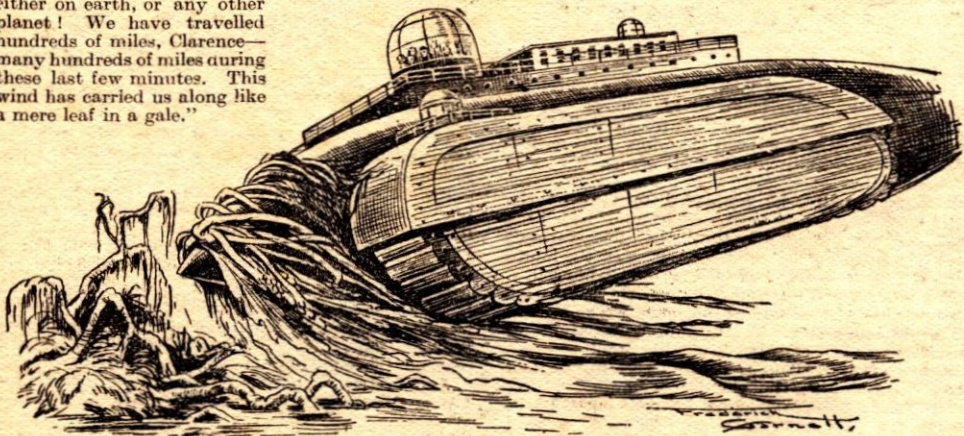
In the far distance, right on the horizon, they could just see a glimpse of Venusville. It was tens of miles away now—and it was gradually vanishing. The *Rover* was getting out over that vast Venusian ocean, although there was no accounting for this. For, according to the vessel's controls, she should still have been practically over that city. She was being forced out over the sea, and the speed of that wind must have been incredible.

For ten long dreadful minutes it persisted, and the *Rover* was in danger every few seconds or so. But so stoutly was she built, so perfect was her balance, that she weathered the storm with success. There came a final outburst, in which the vessel was sent downwards with horrifying force—the wind beating with terrific violence against her decks. And then she seemed to go into a long glide, out of that storm centre.

"Phew! That's better!" panted Bags. "What do you make of it, Professor?"

He was in the control-room now, and Professor Drew was clutching at his levers.

"I am at a total loss," he confessed. "I would never have believed that such winds were possible—either on earth, or any other planet! We have travelled hundreds of miles, Clarence—many hundreds of miles during these last few minutes. This wind has carried us along like a mere leaf in a gale."



A PERILOUS PLUNGE.—Z-r-r-r-r-r-h. It was a curious sogging sound accompanied by a terrific shock. The *Solar Rover* had crashed into the weed. And every moment she went deeper and deeper.

"Yes, and old Zeff knew that we should catch it, too!" said Bags hotly. "The infernal blighter! He knew this wind was coming—that glare in the sky was a sign of it."

"Good gracious! I believe you are right!" said the Professor, with a start. "That was why the Venusians were looking so alarmed—that was why they were so uneasy! These winds are periodic, no doubt. And Zeff believed, in all probability, that we should be sent to utter destruction. He did not even give us a warning!"

"Well, we're still in the air, and we'll have a very interesting chat with Mr. Zeff when we get back," said Sir Bags grimly.

"But yet the storm is not over!" said Professor Drew. "There may be a second vortex for us to pass through—an additional storm centre. We cannot tell yet, Bags. We are travelling at an enormous speed, even now—for the wind seems to have settled itself down like an ordinary earth wind."

They went out on deck, and they found the *Rover* shooting across that great dead sea—at a height of many thousands of feet. And when the Professor tried to call a halt, he found it impossible to do so.

The *Solar Rover* was in the grip of this great gale, and the force of it was so stupendous that nothing but disaster would have come if they had attempted to check their progress. The Professor's ether motors would undoubtedly have been strained to such an extent that they would have collapsed.

The only thing to do was to wait until they had got out of the centre of this extraordinary wind storm.

### Popandos Acts.

WITH a quick step, Count Popandos darted away from the door of his cabin, and flung himself on the bed. He had been listening for many minutes—for well over half an hour, in fact—and at last he could hear footsteps approaching.

He sprawled there, flat on his back, with his legs in a distorted attitude, with his arms outstretched loosely—and with his mouth agape, and his eyes wide open. His eyes were staring—staring unseeingly.

During that last hour, Count Popandos had been in a state of utter terror. The cabin door was locked,

and he had been unable to get out. He had been flung from one side of the little room to the other. He had thought, twenty times, that his last moment had come. But now the *Rover* was steadier, and he had decided to act. He knew that the vessel had passed through some sort of storm, and he was also aware that she was at a great height in the air. But all these thoughts left his mind now. For the second was rapidly approaching when he would find it necessary to come into action.

A key turned in the lock, and somebody entered. As a matter of fact, the man was a steward, one of Professor Roxley Drew's most trusted employees. He was bearing a tray, for he had brought the "patient" a specially prepared meal.

Never for a second did the Professor, or any of his companions, believe that Count Popandos was bluffing. They thought that he had gone out of his mind, owing to his experiences in the Venusian night. They believed him to be like a child—an object of pity rather than an object of suspicion.

And the steward came to a halt just inside the cabin, and a gasp sounded from him. For one glance



at Count Popandos had filled him with alarm and dread.

Truly, the Count presented a very startling appearance.

The man set his tray down, and hurried over towards the bed. There lay the Count, sprawling, his eyes wide open, his whole attitude grotesque. In that dramatic second, the steward believed the Count was dead. Perhaps he had had a fit—perhaps he had been killed during the *Rover's* appalling tossing. At all events, he was unconscious, and harmless.

The steward bent over the bed—right over the prostrate figure of the Count.

And then—the Greek acted.

With a swift, deadly movement, his arms came up, and his fingers clutched at the throat of the steward. The next second the unfortunate man was swung right over—clean across the bed, and the Count was on the top of him! Tighter closed the fingers on the steward's windpipe until the man went limp.

Popandos darted across the room, and he closed the door and locked it. Then he turned, with his back to the panels. His face was flushed, and his eyes were terrible to see. On the bed lay the steward—unconscious.

"Yes, it succeeded beyond all my hopes!" muttered the Greek. "The rest will be simple! But I must be careful—very careful! There must be no hitch this time!"

There was an insane look in his eyes. Perhaps he had, really, taken leave of his senses. At all events, he was a dangerous man—an evil force. But in his madness he was cunning. There was something dreadfully deliberate about his next movements.

Working rapidly, he proceeded to tear all the clothing from the steward. The man had been wearing a uniform, similar to all the other stewards on board. Ruthlessly, the Count dragged the man's suit off, and then he proceeded to don it himself.

In less than five minutes, he stood there, wearing the steward's attire—and as both men were of about the same build there was nothing unusual in his appearance. The clothing fitted him well.

The Count was about to move across to the door again when another thought struck him.

"The man may recover his infernal senses!" he muttered. "I cannot take any chances. I must be certain!"

He ripped off one of the sheets, and tore it into strips. Then he bound the steward cruelly, and gagged him.

"An inspiration—a real inspiration!" murmured Popandos tensely.

Those strips of torn sheet had given him a new idea. Deftly, he arranged one of the strips into a bandage, and wound it round his head—and round his face. And that great bandage served the purpose of a disguise.

And who would take any notice? After the recent tossing and spinning of the *Rover* no members of the crew would suspect anything if they saw this steward going about with his head bandaged. It would be assumed, at once, that he had been injured in the battle with the wind.

And so Count Popandos crept out—his mind crazed, his heart full of black villainy.

### The Hold-Up.

"IT'S weed!" said Hardy wonderingly. "Sea-weed, you chaps!"

"But whoever saw seaweed like this?" said Willis, aghast. "Oh, my goodness! Look at it—like a tremendous forest!"

Many of the Castleton fellows were at the rail, staring downwards. The *Rover* was still at a great height, but the atmosphere was so clear that the boys could see the ocean, far below. But now they could see something else, too.

As far as the eye could see, in every direction, there was the sea—the strange Venusian dead sea. Every trace of land had gone. But there, below them, stretching out for miles and miles on all sides, was a great island of seaweed.

It was not ordinary seaweed—but great tangled masses of slimy vegetation, dark green in colour, and with roots and tendrils which seemed to be as thick as tree trunks.

"Why don't we go a bit lower?" demanded Freeman. "We can't see very well at this height. And there's something rummy about this weed, you chaps. I want to get a closer look at it!"

"Better go and ask the Professor to descend!" said Hardy, with a grin.

"Yes, by jiggery, I will!" said Freeman promptly. He went into the lounge, and as he did so a steward appeared—a man with a great bandage right across his face.

"Hallo!" said Freeman. "You seem to have been in the wars!"

The steward glanced round, and he nodded briefly. "Yes!" he muttered, and passed on.

George Freeman came to a sudden halt, and a light of suspicion leapt into his eyes.

"Hi, you fellows!" he shouted. "Quick! It's Popandos!"

The Count gave a snarl of fury. He had not expected to be recognised so promptly—he had not reckoned upon Freeman's excellent eyesight.

He did not make the mistake of turning on the boy. Instead, he made one leap towards the control-room, and sped up the stairs. As he did so, he drew a revolver. He was glad that that revolver had been in the steward's pocket! It made his task easy now.

He could hear a commotion in his rear, caused by the boys—but he took no notice. In two strides he was in the control-room, and now he had discarded that bandage. He no longer needed it. He had reached the control-room—his objective!

And in that wondrous apartment he found Professor Drewe, Sir Clarence Bagshot, and Jerry Mannering.

"Now, gentlemen—you will obey my orders, or die!" shouted Count Alexis Popandos, his voice rising into a scream of triumph.

"What the—" began Bags.

"Up with your hands!" thundered Popandos.

Bags made one grab for his own revolver, and his hand reached his hip pocket.

*Crack!* A bullet tore through his sleeve, and the Count's voice ripped across the control-room.

"Up with your hands!" he repeated. "Fool! Do you want me to shoot you down as you stand?"

There was no help for it. Sir Bags, gritting his teeth, was compelled to raise his hands above his head. Mr. Mannering and the Professor had already obeyed that deadly order. They could do nothing else. And Count Popandos had leapt at the controls, and was standing there—one hand against the levers, the other holding his revolver, with the barrel pointed at the startled trio.

"I fooled you nicely, didn't I?" went on the Count, laughing mockingly. "You thought I was mad—and perhaps I am mad! Who can tell? But I am not so mad as you think! I can control this ship—and do as I like with her! And you are my prisoners—you are my slaves! Refuse to obey my orders, and death will follow on the second!"

"Good heavens!" panted Professor Drewe. "What do you intend, you madman? What do you hope to gain by this insane act?"

"It is not what I hope to gain—it is what I have gained!" retorted Count Popandos. "I am in command of the *Rover*, and if you have any sense left you will realise that fact!"

"But you cannot expect to remain in command!" shouted the Professor. "You cannot keep us at bay like this for ever, Popandos! Sooner or later, you must give in, and sooner or later—"

"Enough!" snarled the Count. "I am playing with you—I am amusing myself now! Within a very few minutes, I am going to shoot you—I am going to kill all three of you! And do you think the members of the crew will disobey my orders? Do you think those boys will dare to oppose me?"

"Yes, we will!" shouted Freeman, from the doorway.

Bags was hoping that Popandos would relax his vigilance for a moment—that he would glance towards the doorway. But Popandos did not do so. He kept his attention fixed upon those three men.

"Go!" he shouted. "You boys—go! If you do not do so, I will shoot this instant!"

"You had better go, boys!" panted Professor Drewe. "We do not want any bloodshed!"

"It's only bluff!" said Bags contemptuously. "He's got us here, at the point of his revolver, but he needn't think we're scared of him!"

"No!" shouted Count Popandos, his voice rising with maniacal fury. "Then I will show you, my friend! You shall be the first to die! You shall be my first victim!"

He swung his revolver round, and his finger trembled on the trigger. And then, at that second, the wind came again—with a greater fury than ever.

### Into the Weed.

**T**HE *Solar Rover* rocked as if in mortal agony. Even as Count Popandos was about to fire—as

he was about to send a bullet into Sir Bags' heart the *Rover* tipped right up, until her stern was pointing directly downwards. It was a terrible movement, a violent, devastating lurch. And round the vessel's plates the wind could be heard, howling with a demoniac fury.

Much happened in that fateful second, too.

Popandos was not prepared for the sudden catastrophe. He lost his balance, and fell against the controls. And as he did so one of the levers went right over, and the *Rover* dropped with such terrific suddenness that the sensation was sickening. Everybody in the *Rover* felt a deadly feeling at the pit of their stomachs. The *Rover* was dropping—dropping like a stone.

And Bags, in spite of the motion, went reeling across the control-room, and he grappled with Popandos. Jerry Mantering was with him, and between them, they had the Greek down, and they held him there. Afterwards, they could never tell how they did it, for it was practically impossible to keep any balance, or to breathe.

Professor Drewe, in that same second, had been flung over, and was knocked almost senseless. He only had sufficient strength to half-raise himself on one elbow, and to point.

"The levers!" he croaked. "The levers! Bags—Bags! It will mean death unless—unless—"

Twirling with that same top-like momentum, the *Rover* was hurtling downwards to destruction. Not only the wind had got hold of her now, but the ether-motors were no longer functioning. The *Rover* was dropping like a solid piece of metal, gathering speed with every yard. She was like a glittering meteor, falling from the skies.

"The levers!" shouted Barry Drewe frantically.

"I can get there!" gasped Freeman.

He was nearest, and although it was impossible to walk, or to crawl, the leader of the Firm gave a sort of rolling motion, and went pitching over towards the controls. More by chance than anything else, he seized the right lever, and his weight fell upon it, and had instantaneous effect.

For the *Rover* seemed to steady herself, and that downward plunge was stayed. But she had gathered such momentum that it was doubtful, even now, if disaster could be avoided. She seemed to have got out of that wind vortex. It had been a sudden gust, probably a final spasm of the recent storm. At all events, it was over, and the *Rover* was now in still air again.

She was hurtling downwards still, although her speed was diminishing with every second. But could she pull up in time?

Drunkenly, the Professor pulled himself to his feet, and he went staggering across to the controls. Freeman was doing his best, but he did not know how to act. The Professor did, and his one object, now, was to send the *Rover* forward—to send her shooting in a great glide, so that she would rise again.

But he was just too late.

He saved the vessel from destruction, but he did not save her from striking the dense weed which now covered the whole ocean below.

Zzzzzzzzz!

It was a curious, zoggging sound, accompanied by a terrific shock. Even as the *Rover* was about to skim forward, and to recover herself, she touched the weed. For twenty or thirty yards she tore along over the top of the stuff, and Professor Drewe was in a state of mortal agony. From above, that weed had seemed to be as hard and solid as a forest. But in actual fact, the weed was sodden and soft—a spongy mass of waterlogged vegetation.

And the *Solar Rover* went driving into this tangle, deeper and deeper, until her bows were completely buried. And then she came to a standstill—held there. Her ether-motors were at full power, and by rights she should have been shooting upwards into the sky. But that weed had gained a firm grip now, and was holding her down. She was caught in the grip of it, listing over to starboard, her bows choked with the deadly stuff.

But at all events, she was still, and she was unharmed.

"Are we safe?" gasped Freeman incredulously.

"My boy—my boy!" panted the Professor. "You have saved us all—your prompt action was miraculous!"

"What about yours, sir?" returned Freeman. "It was you who saved us. I thought we were all going to be dashed to death!"

"We are tangled in this weed—held by it!" said the Professor, looking through the thick glass of the control-room. "Good heavens! This is the most amazing thing that has happened to us on this most amazing planet!"

They had no thoughts for Count Alexis Popandos then—or for any of their minor injuries. They could only stare out upon that weed, and marvel at it. It was green and slimy, and was massed in enormous quantities. Here and there were pools of water, with scum swirling on the surface.

And as they watched they became aware of something which filled them with a new dread. Slowly, relentlessly, the *Solar Rover* was being dragged down into that weed—deeper and deeper!

**The Cruel Grasp of Nature is Reaching Out for the Adventurers Who Have Braved So Many Perils. Is All Lost? Staggering Long Instalment Next Week.**

**DON DUVALL'S UNDERWATER CIRCUS***(Continued from page 15).*

At last they came to a broad river, shining under the starlight.

"There is a boat there," droned the boy. "Go along the river until you see the orchids, and then put on a diving-suit that you will find in the boat, and go under. And in the house of glass you will see the orchids of death. I attended them, watering and heating their roots. Now, if you kill . . . I may be free."

With which statement he turned abruptly away and stumbled amongst the forest growth.

Don looked after him hesitatingly a moment, and then decided to take his advice. He got in the small canoe, and commenced to paddle through the starshine.

And then all at once he rounded a bend in the river and saw the death orchids.

It was as though he had suddenly stepped into some carnal house. The smell of the dreadful tropic growths assailed his nostrils, making him sick instantly.

Overcome by the stench of the jungle flowers he lost control of the canoe. It drifted. . . Don wanted to cry out. He saw that he was going near the bank, near those hideous death traps—

And then suddenly he was sucked up by one of the vicious giant orchids. Uncanny fear throttled his courage. He could scarce struggle. The giant veins coiled like hideous serpents around his limbs, and in a paroxysm of terror he screamed again and again.

Through the jungle there came a tremendous crashing and trumpeting. And Don's deliverer appeared. It was Togo, the elephant. Some intuition had caused the faithful beast to break free from its tethering rope and to follow the boy into the jungle. And now he came smashing through the vicious growth of orchids, trumpeting madly.

Reaching Don, he laid about him madly with his trunk, reducing the yellow and scarlet balloon flowers to a mass of wreckage in a few seconds. Don was free, on the ground, sickened by the nauseating fumes, his stomach turning.

Yet he managed to recover himself sufficiently

to reach up for the trunk of the faithful elephant and caress it.

"Togo, old fellow," he half whispered. "Our work's not done yet. I'm going down there. See this diving-suit. I'm going down under water."

And then, with scarcely a splash, he had gone under the river.

Down, down into the shining depths, until all at once he saw it, glittering huge, thick with the roots of the devil flowers. The strange underwater greenhouse.

As he had suspected he would, Don found an entrance by a series of airtight chambers. And at last he came into the greenhouse itself, ornately furnished in Chinese fashion, fetid with the awful smell of the orchids, which bloomed in profusion even in that underwater den.

Don saw a long Chinese knife lying handy, and picked it up. He commenced to hack like a man possessed, until suddenly he heard a sound—

He turned, in his hand the knife with which he had been slashing at the roots of the sinister, blood-sucking orchids. An electric shock seemed to run through him, for he was facing Lu Wang, the Chinese master-demon.

The Think, wielding a terribly long kris, made a rush at Don, and in a moment they were fighting, back and forth, back and forth.

Don all at once saw his chance and made a lunge, and the Chinaman stepped back swiftly to avoid it. The result was dreadful. For he had gone too near one of the giant death orchids which instantly sucked him greedily into its awful face.

Don turned away, sickened, from the Chinaman's struggles and screams. He would have helped if he could. But it was impossible. He was too late. The life blood was already being sucked from Lu Wang the Chinaman's body. Nemesis had overtaken him.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is little more except happiness to tell of that strange episode. Don reached the surface safely again to find that the mysterious Chinaman's house was no longer hidden and guarded by the waving death orchids. And in the house he found—Spoff!

They returned, glad that they were alive, with Togo to the circus.

**THE BIG GAME CRICKETERS—***(Continued from page 29.)*

of the rope netting which the scientist had erected as a protection against the apes.

And now Jimmy had come into this inheritance!

Jimmy's face twisted curiously as he stared at the balloon, and his eyes held a very bleak look. Too late! What an ironic jest! He had found it too late, for long before now his friends had surely passed into the grip of the apes!

**M**EANWHILE, what of Sambo and the others held prisoner in the Hidden City by the Sacred Apes?

Dawn peeped through the foliage of the trees, and, marvellous to relate, they were still alive. The apes had disappeared.

During the day, he had crept up into the trees and, with his knife, he had carefully cut partially through the cords that held the rope-netting up. Then he waited in tense anxiety.

Darkness drifted down on the jungle. And with it came the apes once again, stealthy, silent, sinister.

In a great bulk they approached nearer and nearer to the netting that guarded the big-game cricketers. They had evidently put their tiny animal brains together and had determined by a joint effort to pull that netting down. . . . And it came down on top of them, as Sambo had anticipated.

"Run—run for your lives, by Golly!" roared Sambo as the apes struggled in the entanglement of the net.

But they did not get far. Barely to the edge of the plateau, down which Sambo had hoped to scramble with his companions when the apes were on them. With their backs to the wall, encouraged by Sambo's shouts, they prepared to fight to the death as the shambling apes came on them.

And then came success in a startling form. A shower of spears came whizzing down from the sky—poisoned native spears, aimed with deadly accuracy. Sambo, staring up through the faint starlight, gave a great shout.

For it was Jimmy Brent, Jimmy floating over the edge of the plateau in a balloon!

Exciting developments Next Week, chaps.  
Watch out!