

ON, ON, NAPOLEON! SMASHING YARN OF HISTORY'S MOST SPECTACULAR HERO INSIDE.

Boys' Magazine

2¢
EVERY SATURDAY



T.T. RACES—BOXING—SCHOOL YARNS—FUN—ALL INSIDE

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FOOTBALLS and FOUNTAIN PENS awarded to senders of all jokes printed on this page. Send in your favourite joke on a postcard to: Joke Editor, "Boys' Magazine," 146, Fetterlane, London, E.C.4. Coupon on Page 8 must accompany every joke submitted.



OBVIOUSLY.

AMERICAN: Do you know our spoons and forks are the size of shovels and pitchforks in England?

IRISHMAN: Begorra, I can see that by the size of your mouth.

(Fountain pen to J. HISCOCK, 10, Inverine Road, Charlton, S.E.7.)

NOT INTENDED.

JUDGE: Why did you break the bat on the man's head?

PRISONER: It was an accident, sir.

JUDGE: Accident; impossible.

PRISONER: It was, sir. I did not mean to break the bat.

(Fountain pen to J. O'BRIEN, Pontefract General Infirmary, Pontefract.)

THRIFT.

GUID WIFE: Did I see ye give that taxi-man a shilling, Donald?

DONALD: Hush, woman; 'twas a bad yin.

GUID WIFE: Weel, had ye no a bad saxpence?

(Fountain pen to F. BUNTING, 33, Long Street, Dordon, Tamworth.)

CHEEK!

STOUT GENT: Can you tell me the nearest way to the station?

BOY: Lay down and roll over about twice!

(Fountain pen to A. HEADON, 118, Greenheys Lane, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester.)

SAFEST PLACE!

COOK: Now, Tommy, why have you eaten all the pie?

TOMMY: Well, cook, you told me to put it where the flies couldn't get at it.

(Fountain pen to J. MAY, 23, Russell Street, Brighton, Sussex.)

HER USE.

JOHNNY: Mamma, I wish I had a little sister.

MAMMA: Why Johnny?

JOHNNY: 'Cos I'm 'ired of teasing the cat.

(Fountain pen to H. WHATLEY, 91, Larcom Street, Watworth, S.E.17.)



Tourist: Why don't you put a fence at this place?
Guide: Because the more people fall over it the more famous it gets.

(Football to F. WILKINS, 17, Southvill Plac., Bedminster, Bristol.)

HIS APOLOGY!

MOTHER: Did you apologise to that lady, dear, for stepping on her foot?

CHARLIE: Yes, mother; I told her I was sorry she couldn't keep her feet out of the way.

(Fountain pen to D. E. HELDEN, 51, Bargery Street, Catford, S.E.6.)

PREPARATIONS.

The chief fireman of the brigade was a slow, deliberate man. A call had just come through, so he summoned his men, saying to them:

"I hear the house is blazing and that it will be a long job, so you had better have your teas before you go."

(Will sender forward name and address?)

A BIG BERTHA.

FOND PARENT: Did you hear my daughter sing?
RETURNED SOLDIER: Yes.

FOND PARENT: What do you think of her range?
RETURNED SOLDIER: I should say she ought to kill at three miles.

(Fountain pen to LESLIE CLARIDGE, 18, Edward Street, Warsop, Notts.)

FLATTENED HIM.

SCOTSMAN: We have a house so small that we have to lay down to get in.

IRISHMAN: We got a house that we can only have flatfish for dinner.

(Fountain pen to F. MASON, Claremont, Tycoch, Sketty, Swansea.)

SMACK! SMACK!

TEACHER: Now, the nose is the nasal organ. What is the mouth?

BRIGHT BOY: Mouth organ, sir.
(Fountain pen to ERNEST BRAIN, 26, Alfred Street St. Paul's, Bristol.)

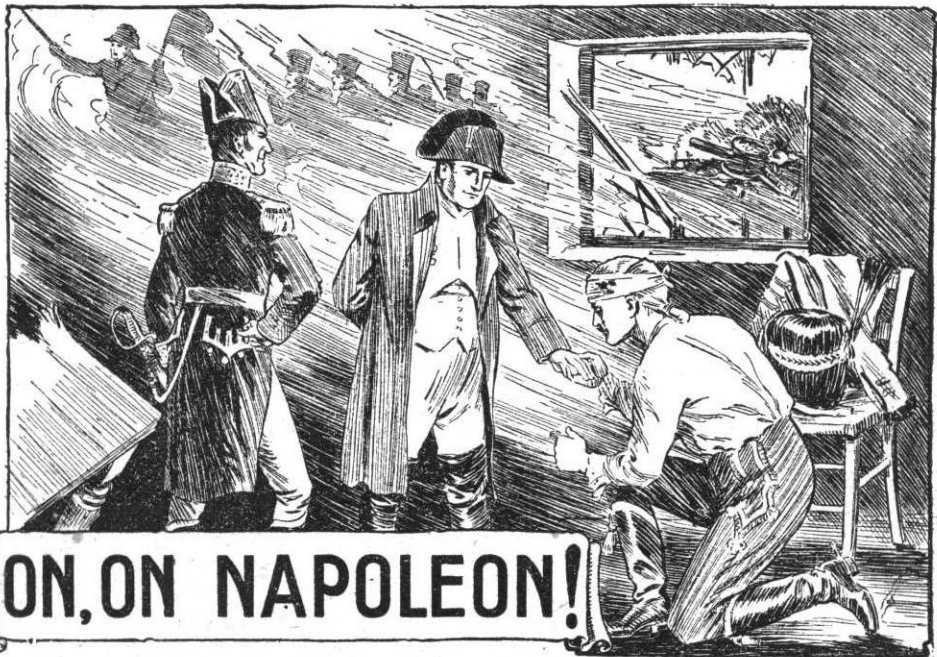
TIME!

PRISONER: How long will it take us to get through with this case?

JUDGE: Well, me—about three hours; you—about four years.

(Fountain pen to GEORGE BAYLEY, 29, Proes Street, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa.)

Charge! Charge! Captain Lefarge. You are the Wonder Man of Napoleon's Army. You alone can Avert Defeat. In you "The Little Emperor" places his Trust. What a Wonder Tale this is, Chums!



Napoleon, Beaten and Battered at Moscow, has yet one Man amongst all his Army who says *Vive La France* and Fights for the Tricolour. A Tale of Glamour and War, Chaps, such as will Excite your Imagination

Through the Enemy's Lines.

AN October night of 1812. The forlorn village of Linsk, in the heart of the vast Russian steppes, was the nerve centre of the Grand Army of Napoleon—which, four hundred and fifty thousand strong, had massed on the Russian frontier and fought its way to the coveted city of Moscow; and now, with the fortunes of war arrayed against it, with hunger stalking abroad amidst its thinned ranks, was toiling back in ignoble retreat.

On the rude pallet in a peasant hut of tree-trunks lay Captain André Lefarge, of the 8th Hussars of Murat's cavalry column. His clean-cut, soldiery face was haggard and strained, his trim military moustache was tinged with the iron-grey that tells of desperate privation, and there was a wound on his temple inflicted by a Cossack's lance.

It was a wound which might have placed most men in one of those wagons already filled with the stricken, but not the dashing Captain Lefarge—that bold, upstanding figure whose sabre was always to be seen in the thickest of every battle, plying for France and her Emperor.

Yet a day of hard riding and hard fighting, with little sustenance in the way of food, had left him weak with fatigue, and it was with some impatience that he answered the stealthy knock which sounded

upon the door of the hut and awoke him from a dismal reverie on his country's disastrous misfortunes.

The door opened, and two muffled figures slipped into the bare, impoverished dwelling.

The fitful glow of the bivouacs around which the weary soldiers crouched for warmth, lent a dim, eerie light that faintly dispelled the gloom of the hut, and all at once, as the two shadowy, silent figures straightened and drew down the collars of their great-coats, Captain Lefarge sprang from the pallet to his feet and stood rigidly at the salute.

For in spite of the gloom there was no mistaking them. His Emperor—Napoleon himself—that small, round figure in whom the genius of a world-ruler was encompassed; and Marshal Berthier, whom men called "the Echo of the Emperor."

Napoleon stepped forward—with that gracious air of camaraderie which so endeared him to his soldiers.

"Captain Lefarge," he said. "I have come to thank you in person for the part you played on the plain before Malo-Iaroslavetz, when you saved my life from a Cossack lance. I am happy to see that a wound which at first was thought to be fatal has not even incapacitated you."

He paused, but before Captain Lefarge could find words with which to express his gratification at the honour done him:

"There is yet another reason why I have come.

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

mon capitaine," the Emperor went on. "You will understand that my glorious soldiers—God spare them—are starving because the Russians have laid waste the land before us. Therefore, Smolensk is our goal—for at Smolensk there are stores, guarded by soldiers of France."

"I understand, sire," said Captain Lefarge.

"It has come to our ears," Napoleon resumed, "that the Russians who harass us on all sides as we retreat intend to send on a powerful force of swift-moving cavalry to launch a surprise attack on the town. Someone must ride to warn those at Smolensk. We have seen the folly of sending out a body of men. Therefore, one man must ride alone. For this mission I have placed my trust in you, Captain Lefarge."

The other dropped upon one knee. Forgotten were his weariness and exhaustion; forgotten the pain of his wound.

"Sire," he said firmly, "I promise you that Smolensk shall be warned."

The Emperor gave a wan smile. "You are confident, *mon capitaine*. Consider! You have to slip through the enemy lines—exhausted as you are—cover miles of barren, enemy country."

The young captain raised his keen, soldierly eyes to those of his Emperor, and in his glance a hint of fire seemed to play—the fire of courage, of bold audacity.

"Am I not a soldier of France, sire?" he said proudly. "Am I not Captain André Lefarge, of the 8th Regiment of Hussars? Then I cannot fail my Emperor."

Napoleon laid a kindly hand upon his manly shoulder.

"If courage will see you through, then assuredly you shall not fail. Meanwhile, it shall be given out that you have died of the wound received before Malo-Iaroslavetz, for none must suspect your going. *Adieu, mon capitaine!*"

With that he muffled himself, and a moment later slipped out into the night with his companion.

A glimpse of Captain Lefarge at that moment would have given no hint as to the desperate nature of the enterprise for which he had been singled out. With an eye that kindled and a cheek that was flushed, he donned his bearskin—and his short cloak he flung with studied carelessness upon one shoulder. Then, buckling on his sabre, he was ready.

As he slipped through the back door of the hut, a figure, clad in the uniform of a lieutenant of the 8th, started back from the shadow of a near-by outhouse.

Stepping from the hut, Captain Lefarge addressed the officer.

"I would suggest," he said, "that Lieutenant Chaubertin kept to his quarters and what concerns him."

The other, standing his ground, eyed the captain with an enmity which he did not attempt to conceal. He was tall and sallow, with jet black hair and dark, narrow eyes.

"I would suggest," he sneered, "that Captain Lefarge is not my warder. And I would suggest that it seems timely for me to add another scar to that one which you carry on your temple."

He clenched his hands, and when he spoke again his voice rasped harshly through gritted teeth.

"I am challenging you to a duel here and now, Lefarge—to settle our many scores!"

Captain Lefarge laughed contemptuously, easily. "Friend Chaubertin," said he, "I have business to do, and there is need for haste. Later, perchance, I shall accommodate you. In the meantime, Lieutenant Chaubertin will please to forget he has seen Captain Lefarge this night."

With that he brushed past his fellow-officer and, striding to that outhouse, entered to find his horse, "The Sarde," ready for him and saddled. He led the splendid animal forth and, keeping well clear of the bivouac fires, moved like a ghost through the gloom. The weary soldiers were huddled in sleep, but it remained for him to pass the sentinels. These would not be asleep, but vigilant and awake—and these were the men from whom he must shield his identity.

A word and he would be recognised, allowed to pass through in peace—but that was against the Emperor's orders. For one of those sentries might be an agent of the enemy, a traitor, a spy.

"Halt! *Qui va là!*"

The sharp command rang startlingly out of the darkness ahead of him, and inadvertently he drew rein. Next instant, recovering himself, he touched "The Sarde" lightly on the flanks with his heels.

The gallant beast leapt forward. Something whistled past Lefarge's head, and simultaneously, in the brief flash, he saw the vague, dim figure of his challenger—Then he was past the sentry and swallowed by the black heart of the night. To right and left there arose a chaos of shouting, and the darkness was stabbed with jets of flame; but, undaunted, Lefarge held on.

Something happened that took him utterly by surprise. Under him the saddle suddenly side-slipped, so that almost he fell from the speeding animal. But clinging on by a superhuman effort he managed to keep in his crazy seat.

Out of range of his friends' bullets, he dismounted to examine his saddle girth. He could see nothing, but from the feel of the severed ends of the strap he was suddenly assured that it had been cut, and instantly a name flashed across his mind.

Chaubertin! Could the jealous lieutenant have done this?

There seemed but one answer, yet, the cavalryman laughed softly.

"I am Captain Lefarge," he said to himself, "of the Eighth Regiment of Hussars. *Sacre bleu!* Could this dog of a Lieutenant Chaubertin foil me in my mission. No—nor all the Russian army. Come, Sarde, my old one, we will show the Cossacks a thing or two."

He remounted and rode forward. A distance of half a mile he had gone when he checked, on the verge of a large clearing.

He had glimpsed the smouldering fires of an encampment and huddled about the bivouacs in sleep were Platof's Cossacks, human wolves who preyed upon the famished French and now lay in a great circle about Linsk, joining hands with the pitiless hordes massed in the south.

It was a circle which Captain Vermont must penetrate—single-handed.

The Breaking of the Circle.

THERE was no strict watch on the part of the Russians, for they understood well enough that the wearied men of Napoleon's dwindling army were in no shape for night-sorties.

To a man of Lefarge's calibre, knowing no limits where daring and audacity were concerned, the outlook was sufficiently favourable.

He drew his sabre and presented it before him with a gesture eloquent of gaiety and sang-froid.

"The time has come," he said, "I salute the army of Russia ere I fall upon it." And without an instant's hesitation he set spurs to "The Sarde" and charged straight from the trees into that mass of shaggy Cossack horses.

The quiet of the night was rent with a ringing cry

as Lefarge struck with flat of his blade at the nearest horse, scattering them in a blind panic-stampede.

"For France and the Emperor!"

The panic spread with lightning rapidity, shouts and screams rent the air as the Cossacks, startled into awakening, scrambled to their feet and ran hither and thither. One man, armed with a rifle, suddenly perceived a mounted figure in the uniform of a French hussar bearing down upon him, and, as he turned to flee:

"It is the cavalry of Murat!" he yelled. "The French are upon us!"

It needed but that one name to complete the panic—the name of a gallant commander dreaded by all Russians.

Lefarge was in the thick of the crowd by then. A bullet tugged at his cloak, but he paid no heed. A lance drove upward to impinge "The Sarde," but

THE icy fingers of the pitiless Russian winter had closed about Captain Lefarge days ago—in the dawn following his rout of the Cossack encampment. From a distant hilltop he had watched the long column of the Grand Army winding out of Linsk, with its tragic mass of stragglers and its countless wounded borne in lumbering wagons.

Since then he had covered numberless leagues, riding far into the long nights and rousing from brief slumber at break of day. Then had come the cold mists, followed by whirlwinds of sleet—and finally, thick heavy showers of large snowflakes.

Somewhere ahead of Captain Lefarge was the cavalry column sent to attack Smolensk, and this he must outstrip. There was no food—bar his rations—in this barren country. Also, bands of peasantry, when sufficiently strong in number, had been known to murder and despoil solitary French soldiers.

Yet amidst that world of snow and ice, with danger threatening on all sides, Captain Lefarge sang the songs of home, with his bearskin set jauntily on his



THE BIG BLUFF.—Shouts rent the air as the Cossacks round the camp fire saw the French hussar bearing down, the panic-stricken riderless horses coming after him. "It is the cavalry!" the Russians yelled. "The French are upon us!"

watchful of the gallant animal's life as of his own, Lefarge struck aside the deadly shaft with a blow of his sabre and with the back-swing of that blow brought down the man who had wielded it.

A Cossack officer who had not lost his head in the panic sprang at his rein. Lefarge, chivalrous to a fault, respectful of courage in others, struck him only with the flat of his sword—a blow that stunned the Russian and sent him sprawling.

Next instant Captain Lefarge was through, and heading for the trees at the far side of the clearing; and in a backward glance he saw an entire encampment scattered to the four winds in an extremity of panic and terror.

Such was the affair that Russian historians were later to describe as "a surprise midnight sortie by the whole of Murat's cavalry, which threw into grave disorder a section of the Muscovite army."

handsome head and his short cloak hanging with studied negligence upon his shoulder.

He checked in his singing all at once. Ahead of him there was dense woodland, and suddenly, from amidst the trees, a small band of Cossacks rode forth, several of them drawing a sledge on which a light piece of cannon was mounted.

They sighted him almost simultaneously and a carbino banged. The ball whistled past Lefarge's shoulder, but by then the Captain was on the move, riding forward to a deep gully which he perceived.

"The Sarde" slithered down into it, and, thus under cover, Lefarge dismounted. Pistol in hand, he swarmed up the far bank.

Half of the Cossacks were advancing at the charge, leaving the remainder with the cannon and the sledge. Lefarge fired at them, and the leading rider plunged grotesquely from the saddle. Reloading, he fired again, and another man fell.

* * * * *



NEMESIS.—A blinding burst of electric fire struck down upon the glittering breast-plate of the traitor just as he was about to deliver the foul blow. For one dreadful instant he stiffened, then fell lifeless.

The Cossacks checked, having no stomach for such marksmanship. As they hesitated, a third member of their party fell to the Captain, and with that the Russians rode back to the woods.

They returned Lefarge's fire from behind the trees, but with small success, for though bullets chipped the ice of the bank on which the Captain lay, he suffered no more than a grazed wrist.

There was a lull, and during it Captain Lefarge considered the situation. It was clear that these men were either a band of guerrillas, those wild spirits who chafe discipline and detach themselves from armies; or else a foraging party from that force sent to the attack of Smolensk. Whichever they were, they were effectually holding him up.

His reflections were interrupted by a movement in the trees, and suddenly there was a puff of smoke and a roar. They were using the cannon upon him.

The shot whistled over his head and dropped well behind the gully. A second one fell a few yards in front of him.

Captain Lefarge changed his position, but the gun, mounted on a sledge after the Cossack fashion, was exceedingly mobile, and soon they had the range again.

The light was failing, and it was when the first shadows of night were creeping up that something

impelled Lefarge to glance to the rear. There, riding rapidly across the plain, he saw a party of men in the uniform of Russian cuirassiers.

He was between two fires—in deadly danger—but Lefarge gave vent to that gay, audacious laugh of his.

"*Mille tonnerres!* Am I a rat, to be cornered thus? No, Lefarge of the 8th will show these Russian *canailles* how we of Gascony use our wits."

The cuirassiers came on—and the darkness came on, intensifying. Lefarge, now sheltered in a deep gully, was confident that the approaching horsemen had not sighted him.

Their dim shapes were almost on him when Lefarge fired into the midst of them; then, turning, sprang for the saddle of "The Sarde"—mounted and rode like the wind along the gully.

He heard the shouts of the cuirassiers as they charged, and he knew that they plunged across the gully and, finding none there, carried on towards the woods where the Cossacks lay.

From those woods came a burst of firing, answered by the fierce yells of the cuirassiers as they launched themselves in a headlong charge for the trees.

In the darkness the Cossacks and cuirassiers had taken each other for enemies—even as Lefarge had intended!

Riding hard, the Captain listened exultingly to the sounds of strife behind him, till at last they faded in the distance.

The Storm.

THE crashing of the thunder seemed to stun the very air, sounding like a mighty cannonade.

Every now and then the velvet blackness of the night was momentarily dispelled by a vivid flash of lightning as Captain Lefarge dismounted outside a forlorn and untenanted peasant-hut.

He was wearied to the point of exhaustion by a long and arduous ride, and "The Sarde" was in no better shape than himself. First stabling the noble animal in a shed, the Captain made his way into the impoverished hut and, espying a rude couch, dropped upon it and was soon asleep.

In the lives of men bred to campaigning and its consequent dangers, instinct plays no small part; and it was instinct that brought Lefarge from the deepest slumber.

The dingy hut was lit briefly to its farthest corner by a vivid flash of lightning, and in that burst of electric fire Lefarge suddenly saw an evil, bearded face very near his own—the face of a peasant who bent over him with a long, murderous knife.

More, the Captain saw through the open door a group of no less evil scoundrels peering from the threshold.

With a movement swift as the lightning-flash, Lefarge snatched at the armed wrist above him—caught it and, wrenching it, sent the deadly knife clattering to the floor.

Then, leaping to his feet, the Captain drew his sabre and struck the fellow to the floor.

The Captain wheeled for the doorway.

"Dogs!" he cried, scarcely realising that they could not understand his tongue. "Must I use on you the sabre that has spelled the doom of brave men?"

But at the first rasp of the steel as it had left its scabbard, the cowards had drawn back, and now they fled like sheep.

Just across the threshold Lefarge's keen ears caught the ring of hoofs on an icy roadway.

A fitful burst of lightning showed him a body of horsemen, and on the instant he recognised them as those cuirassiers who had afforded the diversion at the gully.

Swiftly Lefarge sped to the shed where he had stabled "The Sarde." The gallant beast was ready for the road, saddled for emergencies, and lithely the Captain mounted.

He rode like the wind, but in the vivid bursts of lightning he saw that the cuirassiers were hot on his heels.

A mile had flashed under "The Sarde's" hoofs when, in front of him, the frozen ground fell away precipitously for more than a hundred feet—impossible to descend.

About him, as he stood solitary there, the half-circle of his pursuers was closing. No use riding to right or left along the lip of the defile; the extreme wing men of the party would head him off. There was no escape.

The Captain had dismounted. He turned now, and his sabre rasped from its scabbard.

"We shall see if even the odds of ten to one are too great for Lefarge of the 8th," he said, and struck an attitude of defence.

The cuirassiers drew rein about him, and he was aware of carbines levelled at his breast, but ere a shot could be fired, one of the horsemen dismounted and came striding towards the Captain. He was the officer of the cuirassiers.

He came to a halt a few paces before the Frenchman, and as he did so a streak of lightning zig-zagged down the lowering sky. It gleamed upon armour and helmet, and it limned in stark relief the officer's face.

One glimpse of that face and Lefarge staggered back to the lip of the defile with a hoarse cry.

"Chaubertin!" he gasped.

For Chaubertin it was—Chaubertin of the 8th, in the uniform of an officer of Russian cuirassiers.

"At your service, *mon capitaine*," Chaubertin spoke. "In borrowed plumes, as you see, but it was more convenient to dress myself thus."

And Captain Lefarge, recovering himself, saw it all then. Chaubertin, hearing all that had passed between him and his Emperor at Linsk that night, had betrayed him to the Russians, and had deserted the Grand Army to lead a band of pursuers in person.

"A traitor!" said Lefarge grimly.

The point drove home, for, with an angry snarl:

"My affairs need not be discussed," said Chaubertin. "Suffice it is to say that the time has come for our duel. You see," he added mockingly, "I am ever chivalrous to a rival, and rather than shoot you out of hand, I give you the chance to fight."

There on the brink of the mighty defile the two fought, with the crashing of the thunder for plaudits and the lightning playing upon their features and transforming their sabres into flashing arcs of fire; with a half-circle of kneeling cuirassiers, armed and matchful; and with an army of Russia riding through the defile below.

The steel rang, and sparks leapt hither and thither with every desperate blow. Once Chaubertin ripped the Captain's sleeve—once his blade grazed the back of the Captain's hand—but in return Lefarge scarred him twice, and always it was Lefarge who pressed.

A change crept over Chaubertin. His breath no longer came freely between his lips, but in painful gasps. His sword-arm was muscle-weary with stroke and parry, and he was losing blood from the wounds he had received.

Stark fear gripped at Chaubertin's heart.

With a sudden sweeping blow, Captain Lefarge broke down the traitor's guard and slashed him in the left arm. Sick with agony, Chaubertin reeled back, and:

"Shoot him, you fools!" he cried in Russian. "Shoot him, or he'll kill me!"

It was in that moment that a blinding burst of electric fire lit up the scene, and simultaneously a glittering finger of lightning struck down upon Chaubertin from the sky. In one dreadful instant he was limned in an unearthly radiance that revealed his tortured, panic-stricken face; then, shrivelled and blackened, he fell lifeless.

The breast-plate of his traitor uniform, a veritable magnet for that lightning streak, had sealed his doom . . .

In a wide half-circle the cuirassiers of Chaubertin's party stood rigid and immobile, paralysed with awe. Lefarge was first to recover, and in the stricken attitude of the Russians he saw his chance. In a flash he had sprung astride "The Sarde" and, galloping madly through them, scattered their horses in all directions.

The way to his goal was clear now, and of all the shots fired after him into the darkness, none found a mark. Contemptuous of those bullets, the Captain rode on, erect in the saddle, but when he had covered some distance he paused and half-turned.

With a gesture eloquent of gaiety and light-heartedness, the Captain drew his sabre and presented it before him.

"I salute an army of Russia," he said, "which must fail to achieve its purpose. You may learn to curse—one day—Lefarge of the 8th."

NEXT WEEK'S FUNNY AND THRILLING LONG COMPLETE YARN.

THE KID PIRATES.



Tom Sawyer to Huckleberry Finn: Say, Huck, I thought you said you couldn't read or write? Huckleberry (winking): I guess I can't read at school, Tom. But say, this is different. It's just like us.

IT'S A SPECIAL PIRATE AND SOUTH SEA CANNIBAL NUMBER OF THE BOYS' MAG.

YOUR EDITOR'S NEWS— AND A BIG SURPRISE!

**MAGNIFICENT SPECIAL PIRATE AND
CANNIBAL NUMBER NEXT
WEEK, CHAPS.**

And There's Some Big Free Gifts Coming.

responsibility than he, who would lead the might of Britain's Air Power into the most hideous battle of the world's history.

And beside him stood a boy—Dick Brittenham, son of the Air-Marshal's old chum who died in his country's service. Dick already has done great service for the Air-Marshal, so "Tornado" Crichton decided to take him to the War Office to meet the Prime Minister. For "Tornado" knew that Flight Cadets—boys—must play their part in the new air war, just as "middles" played their part at Trafalgar. Trim boy airmen were wanted who could climb to the extremities of the tapering fuselage, clamber through the network of wires to the engines as the big bombers hurtled through the air . . .

The Prime Minister gave an audience to the Air Marshal and to his protege, Dick, who is only fourteen. "We are at war," he said in tones that thrilled, "and if you have the pluck, we need you. From to-night you will bear the rank of Flight-Cadet Brittenham."

There, chaps! Doesn't that sound like an exciting tale? You will learn all about it in next week's Mag. which is to be a

Special Pirate and Cannibal Number.

And a whoozer, I can tell you. Besides all the news of the free gifts and the new Air War serial, and the preparations for the Football Season, you are to get a spanking send-off to the Summer in the way of glamorous South Seas and Pirate tales that will thrill your blood and amuse you.

First of all I want to introduce

The Kid Pirates.

Such fun! A gang of boys start up as pirates in opposition to another gang with whom there is a deadly rivalry. They build a yacht, set up the skull and crossbones and start out to demolish their rivals. But then a dramatic and thrilling interest enters the yarn, and I'm not going to spoil the surprise by telling you what it is.

You will cordially welcome the idea of reading once again the adventures of your old friends, Thrill Phil, the Boy Film Actor and Roughneck Harry, his friend, the star camera man of Moonlight Pictures Incorporated. They appear in a yarn that will make you laugh and then hold your breath. It is entitled

Bluffing the Cannibals.

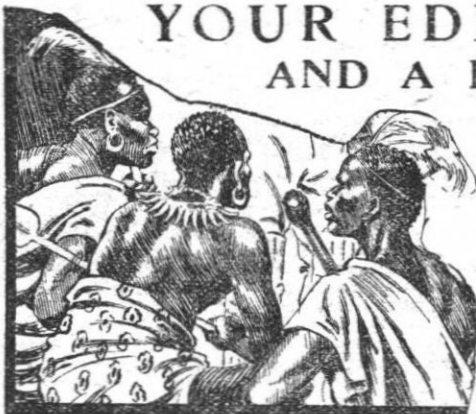
Chums, Thrill Phil puts up an astonishingly ingenious bluff when beset by a host of man-eating savages, and out of the whole adventure they get a great film of a ghostly lion. I heartily recommend it.

Other tales galore. I specially want to draw your attention to a new kind of thrill adventure practiced by two new chums who set up as

The Aerial Whale Hunters.

They also meet with savages. But just see for yourselves next week. Don't forget there are splendid surprises in next week's number. I haven't told you all by a long chalk.

Your sincere friend,
THE EDITOR.



MY DEAR CHUMS,
Not a word.

No; I'll not even hint a word at this date. As I sit in my private office it is raining cats and dogs outside, and I am quite content, even happy, for I'm perfecting the final arrangements for our grand Winter programme of football and thrill yarns and Free Gifts.

There! I said "not a word"—but it's out!

Well, not all of it. I've still got many surprises for you up my sleeve. But I may as well tell you now, my chums, that ere many weeks are past—nay, days even—you will find in your hands spiffing special numbers of the *Boys' Magazine* packed with Winter fireside treats in the way of reading and

Free Gifts!

Yes; free gifts! Something to do with football; something that will go down with our grand football tales and other yarns just as ginger pop goes down with a good cake.

For, chums, I've got the most amazing series of football yarns to give you in the good old Mag., and with them free gifts—not one a week, but more. Gifts that will surprise and delight you if you follow football.

A Terrific New Tale.

But more surprising is that before this (indeed, you will hear all about it next week) is to come, another big serial yarn that's simply inspired. A yarn of War in the Air. Just imagine it, chums! Suppose the next war broke out to-morrow, what would it be like? I'll tell you. No, I won't; I'll just ask you to visualise the position of the famous Air-Marshal "Tornado" Crichton in our magnificent new serial tale, coming the week after next, as he ripped open the envelope sent post haste from the War Office. Its contents read: "War—The Cabinet Meets To-night."

These words seemed to burn like letters of fire into the Air-Marshal's brain. Britain was on the threshold of the Great Air War. But was Britain prepared? No man in England bore a more terrible

JOKE COUPON.

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

Boys' Magazine

17/19/27.

Little Lights! Sparkling and Spinning! That's London, With Our Pretty
Cute Page Boy Playing a Part in Fun and Drama. What a Tale!!!
THE LIMELIGHT ON LONDON LIFE!



Micky's the Manager
when it comes to Run-
ning an Electric, Erratic,
Quick-Moving Mansion
for Millionaires.

**MICK
THE PAGE
BOY'S COLOSSAL
STUNTS TO BOOM
THE BIGGEST HOTEL
EVER KNOWN TO CIVILISATION**

Hurrah for the Rajah!

"YEAH BO, you sure have slobbered a bibful!
It's a lalalalooza! Let's give it the once-over
again!"

The speaker was a gigantic American, clad rather incongruously for four o'clock of a sunny afternoon. He wore full evening-kit of irreproachable perfection, and on his grizzled head, probably the largest Stetson broad-brimmed hat seen in London since Tom Mix rode down Rotten Row.

He had a square sun-tanned face, a crag-like jaw and piercing steel-grey eyes, which now twinkled humorously as he bent forward over his mahogany desk and smiled at his visitor, an alert, young reporter on the *Daily Gazette*. The journalist looked a trifle dazedly at his host.

"A lalapa what, Mr. Bangs?" he inquired. "I'm afraid I don't quite understand—"

"A lalalalooza," repeated the American patiently. "Say, can't you understand plain English? A wow! A cinch, a humdinger! Gimme that write-up."

He cleared his throat and read out the following extraordinary item which was to be read in amazement by the whole of England on the morrow:

**LONDON'S PALACE OF ALADDIN!
KING OF BABYLON'S LATEST!
GOLD AND SILVER BATHROOMS!**

Barnum B. Bangs, the famous American hotelier, known as *The King of Babylon* because of his grandiose and extravagant enterprise, announces the official opening of the world's most expensive hotel, in the street of millionaires—Park Lane.

The Hotel Mammoth—or, as it has been nicknamed in advance, *Mammon's Hotel*—is the last word in luxury and exclusiveness. It is twenty stories high, and will cater exclusively for millionaires, English and American. Bathrooms will have gold and silver fixtures, and the vestibule will give the effect of an ancient Moorish palace, reminiscent of the glory of the Arabian Nights.

"No expense has been spared to make to-morrow night's opening ceremony, with its carnival dances, the most brilliant function in the history of Park Lane."

"Uh, huh!" grunted Mr. Bangs approvingly. "That'll fetch 'em"

"B-but aren't you afraid of robbery—er—crooks getting hold of—"

"Nix! Look it here!" was the contemptuous reply.

Mr. Steele found himself gazing down the ugly snouts of two heavy-calibred automatics that had appeared miraculously from nowhere. Mr. Bangs grinned.

"Buddy, I'm the quickest man on the draw outa Texas. Start something and I'll send a classy wreath to the funeral!"

Before the reporter had stopped trembling, the Yankee pounded at a push on his desk, and a telephone rose magically. Steele noted dazedly that the receiver was inlaid with gold and silver filigree work.

"Hey, youse!" barked Mr. Bangs. "Send Midnight Mick along." He replaced the receiver, and the instrument sank out of sight.

A few minutes later the door opened and a boyish figure, clad in a dark-blue uniform with epaulettes of gold, and silver stripes, entered. He touched his jaunty, peaked cap and smiled.

He was a sturdy youngster of about fifteen, with a pleasant, freckled face, merry blue eyes and an infectious grin.

"Yessir?" he said quietly.

"This is the nipper I'm aloodin' to," explained Mr. Bangs. "Saved my life once. You kin put in an item about him in your rag—with a photo on the back page. He pulled me away just in the nick of time when a crane broke in Fleet Street."

"It was nothing, sir," protested Midnight Mick modestly.

"Forget it, kiddo," laughed the American.



HEY PRESTO—MID-NIGHT MICK—The door opened, and a boyish figure, clad in a dark blue uniform with gold and silver stripes, entered. He touched his jaunty peaked cap.

The reporter scribbled in his notebook.

"Yep!" continued Bangs. "I'd a' been squashed as flat as a waffle, but for this kid—so I've made him manager of my news-stand here in the Hotel Mammon."

"But why do you call him Midnight Mick?" asked the journalist curiously.

"Because mine's the only hotel in the world when guests get their morning papers at midnight the night before," explained the Texan. "Yes, siree, Midnight Mick's on duty all night—and that's the best part of the day, ain't it, kid?"

"Sure is!" agreed Mick breezily. "Want me for anything, Mr. Bangs?"

"Tell Willard I want him!" was the reply, and with a smart salute Mick left the room and entered the spacious entrance hall in search of Willard, the commissionaire.

Mick whistled cheerily as he passed his newspaper kiosk that stood in an alcove of the beautiful Moorish hallway. It was fashioned of cedar and sandal wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and blended harmoniously with its surroundings.

Since the day he had been appointed to his job, Midnight Mick had lived in a sort of perpetual daze at his good fortune. News vendor in a millionaire hotel and the trusted confidante of the world's greatest hotelier—Barnum B. Bangs!

Mick paused in his musings. From the aristocratic calm of exclusive Park Lane came the sudden pom-pom-pom of a drum!

"Great scott!" ejaculated Mick. "What the dickens—"

He halted on the steps of the hotel and watched, with goggling eyes the amazing procession which was bearing down on them.

It was headed by the unusual spectacle of a mammoth elephant of a queer pinky colour. On the beast's forehead squatted a dark-skinned mahout

or driver, clad in green robes and a khaki turban. Behind him, swaying perilously, so that its gilded trappings scraped the lowest branches of the trees, was a magnificent howdah of cloth of gold.

Within the palanquin sat a Hindoo, clad in gorgeous robes. In his turban flashed and sparkled an enormous ruby, and round his neck were necklaces of scintillating diamonds. Six swarthy Indians, mounted on zebras, behind, beating monotonously with their fingers on queer-shaped drums.

Mick gasped as the mahout raised a silver trumpet to his lips and blew a shrill fanfare. Instantly, the clamour of the mob of curious watchers was stilled.

The cavalcade halted at the entrance to Mammon's Hotel, and the voice of the mahout rang out shrilly:

"Oh, people of London! The Rajah of Marzipan is touched by your greeting and has bidden me disburse these tokens of his good will among you!"

So saying, the mahout leaned over and took from within the howdah a large bag of canvas. He inserted his hand and with a sweeping gesture showered a glittering handful of coins on the crowd below.

Instantly a frenzied clamour prevailed as the excited crowd whooped and fought and scrambled in the gutter for the coins.

A podgy gentleman with white spats gave a yell of rage as a burly navvy crashed his fist on to his silken topper in his eagerness to grasp some of the glittering shower.

"Oy yoy! Vot madness ith this!" he screamed. "Vereth the polithe. Polithe!" he gasped as he was roughly elbowed aside.

Micky dashed down the steps to his rescue. He recognised him as Mr. Isidore Bloomenbaum, the wealthy financier who lived further down Park Lane.

"Come in here, sir!" he urged. "The police ought to be here in a minute. I—"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Three revolver shots cracked out and Mick spun round.

On the terrace of Mammon's Hotel, two smoking pistols in his hands and a grin of welcome on his face, stood Barnum B. Bangs.

"Howdy, Rajah!" he bellowed above the frenzied din. "Turn down to the left and park Jumbo in the elephant garage!"

Isidore is Peeved!

"**THECANDALOUTH!**" shrieked Mr. Bloomenbaum, glaring at the crowd. "In Park Lane, too, I'll write to the *Timeth* about it. I'll—I'll—"

The agitated Hebrew jumped up and down like a marionette, waving his umbrella and bellowing till his podgy face was purple.

"Mick," murmured Barnum Bangs, "get rid of that spluttering seltzer bottle while I escort the Rajah to his suite."

He glanced meaningly at the almost-apoplectic Mr. Bloomenbaum. Mick grinned and saluted.

"If you please, sir," he said civilly, "the commotion is over now. The hotel doesn't open officially until to-morrow and—"

"Out of my way, you impudent rathel!" spluttered Bloomenbaum, aiming a vicious swipe with his umbrella at Mick, and he shot through the revolving door. Mick quickly entered another compartment.

So great was the momentum that Mr. Bloomenbaum skidded along the smooth marble flooring and fell with a crash. Two white-spatted feet hovered for a second on the edge of the bowl of the fountain that sprayed there, then:

Splash! With a shrill scream of fear Mr. Isidore

Bloomenbaum fell floundering into the ice-cold water.

"Help. Politha. Fire!" he bellowed, then fell face forward, the water effectually drowning his cry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mick, as Bloomenbaum sat up gasping.

His silk hat hung limply round his neck. The top of that resplendent headgear swung loose like a lid, revealing his wild staring eyes. Two fishes wriggled desperately on the brim and he was wet to the skin.

"Having a bath, Izzy?" queried a nasal voice pleasantly, and Barnum B. Bangs strode into the hall.

"Curse you, Bangs. I'll ruin you. I'll hound you out of thith hotel. I'll—"

"Mark this toecap, Izzy," broke in Bangs with a meaning look at his hefty footwear. "If you're not outa thib by the time I've counted three it'll mark you with a beautiful blue bruise. Get!"

With a malevolent glance of hatred Mr. Bloomenbaum got.

Mick wiped the tears of mirth from his eyes.

"I say, sir. I couldn't help laughing," he apologised. "He looked so funny in the middle of the fish and—"

"He's a funny guy, Izzy," said Bangs quietly. "He's a dangerous guy, too—but he cuts no ice with me," he added with a grin.

Mick's face was thoughtful. He felt they would hear more of Isidore.

The Plague Plot.

"SAY, Hiram, I guess publicity pays all right."

Barnum B. Bangs grinned amiably at His Highness the Rajah of Marzipan, who leaned over and extracted a cigar from the crystal humidor.

"You said it!" said the Rajah laconically.

"The pink elephant was a wow," continued Barnum.

"A cinch. The centipede's spats. It's knocked 'em cold! But don't forget the zebras—that was my brain wave!" returned the remarkable Indian potentate, whose real name was Hiram Hardnut, of Hardnut's Publicity Company Inc., New York.

Barnum B. grinned.

"Anyways, it worked. The noospapers have splashed your spectacular arrival last night, and I guess there's a coupla hundred applications for suites that I've had to turn down."

A knock sounded at the door, and the Rajah deftly flung his cigar into the empty grate. His dark face recovered its customary impassivity as Barnum B. jerked out a laconic "Come in!"

Midnight Mick entered—a resplendent figure in his gold and silver uniform. The lad glanced curiously at the pseudo Rajah, then lowered his voice.

"Bloomenbaum's here, sir," he reported. "He and another chap passed into the grill-room. I thought I'd mention it."

"Good for you, son," approved the Texan. "But I can't stop him if he's somebody's guest. I wonder who asked Izzy?"

"Looked a queer chap, sir. The reception clerk said his name was Kramer."

"Kramer?" echoed Bangs thoughtfully. "That

crook. Say, Mick, hang around and try and wise up what them nuts are aiming to fix. Good enough, son. Now chase yourself!"

When the door had closed, the American turned to Hiram.

"Kramer and Bloomenbaum—those eggs tried to jump my claim to this ground. They've gotten it in bad for me and, believe me, those birds have a pull."

"You should worry," commented Hiram. "Guess I'll mix in with the high-taxed ginks. You've put a good show up to-night, son."

Together they passed-out into the beautiful Moorish hallway. Pendant lamps of lapis lazuli shed a soft radiance over the whole scene. The fountain plashed with a myriad rainbow colours; from behind the beautifully carved ivory screens came the soft music of a thousand-pounds-a-week orchestra.

The Mammon Hotel was living up to its reputation—it was indeed a hotel of Mammon. Wealth, beauty and breeding were all assembled beneath the coruscating crystal chandelier of the ball-room, and Barnum B. Bangs smiled approvingly.

Already all the available suites had been snapped up, and the success of the millionaires' hotel was assured.

He chatted amiably to various American millionaires of his acquaintance, while the Rajah sat aloofly watching the dances from a curtained alcove.

Suddenly he stiffened as Isidore Bloomenbaum approached. With him was a thin, hatchet-faced man with an egg-shaped head and a pair of thick, horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Hello, Izzy! None the worse for your bath, I see!" drawled Bangs.

Bloomenbaum scowled.



A LOVELY LAKE OF WONDERFUL WATER—The prize page boy roared as Bloomenbaum sat up gasping. His silk hat hung limply round his neck. Two fishes wriggled on his head, and he was wet to the skin.

"I don't wish to be adrethed by you, my man," he said offensively. "Keep your plathe."

"You wrong me, Izzy. I'm the proprietor—not the manager—of this hotel. By the way, one of my goldfish is missing. Did you find one in your ear, by any chance—they're big enough!"

"Come away, Kramer!" said Izzy indignantly. "I'm thruprithed at you thtaying in thith vulgar hotel."

He swung his companion round, and they entered the hallway.

Meanwhile, Midnight Mick had been narrowly watching the pair from the privacy of his kiosk. He grinned as he noticed Izzy and his companion fit furtively into one of the alcoves behind a Moorish archway, for that alcove gave directly on to the back of Mick's kiosk and he had only to tiptoe up to the latticed sandalwood to overhear Izzy's thick, lispng voice.

"Tho it'th all arranged, Kramer, we'll ruin Bangth if you carry out your scheme."

Kramer pursed his lips thoughtfully.

"It's a risky business, Isidore," he grumbled. "I admit thith chap looks like ruining us unless we freeze him out. There was hardly a soul at the Blitz to-night."

Mick drew in his breath sharply.

"It'th a good job Bangth doethn't know you've bought the Blitz, anyway," replied the other. "Otherwise, he woldn't have let you thtaye here."

"Never mind that. Let's get the hang of your scheme again. You say Orville is due in England to-morrow and you've already cabled him to book a suite here?"

"Yeth. Thath thettled."

"But thith plague. How are you going to fix that?"

"Leave it to me," growled Izzy. "That chap who pegged out in Limehouthe is as like Orville as two peath. We'll fix it that hith body ith brought into the hotel. I can get a crook doctor I know to certify he died of the plague—bubonic—and thath the end of Mammon Hotel!"

Mick felt his blood run cold as the rascally Jew outlined his hideous scheme and then talked details.

It seemed that a man named Bates had died suddenly of an obscure disease at a tenement owned by Isidore at Limehouse. Bates had a startling resemblance to Orville, a rascally American millionaire shipowner.

Isidore's diabolical scheme was to get Orville to book a suite at the hotel, snuggle in the body of Bates in his luggage, and quietly disappear. Meanwhile, Bates was to be dressed in Orville's clothes and was to be discovered dead in the millionaire's suite.

The cause of the man's death being an obscure one, Isidore had arranged to spread the rumour that Orville had died of bubonic plague—that most hideous of all diseases.

Once the terrible rumour spread about the hotel being plague-infested, no power on earth could stop a boycott of the place, for bubonic plague is devastatingly contagious.

The cunning villains had already schemed out a method to account for the plague's appearance at the Mammon by deciding to attribute it to the Rajah of Marzipan.

"It fits perfectly," was Kramer's comment. "This nigger prince must have brought it over from India with him!"

Midnight Mick grinned. Evidently the scoundrels did not realise that the Rajah was Hiram Hardnut—Barnum's publicity man.

"Oh, well! Let's go," muttered Kramer. "The sooner we fix the Limehouse end the better."

They rose from the orange coloured divan and went out into the hallway. Mick shook his fist at their retreating figures and cudgelled his brains for a method to circumvent their dastardly plot.

"Well, kiddo," the voice of Barnum Bangs broke

in on Mick's reverie; "why the set face and the brooding brow?"

Mick gulped. "I—I've got something mighty serious to tell you, Mr. Bangs," he said earnestly.

"Go ahead—shoot! Come along to my room," said Barnum B.

Mick followed the tall Texan into his sanctum and sat down.

"It's that slug, Izzy, sir. They've got it in bad for you this time."

With that Midnight Mick plunged into a vivid account of the conversation he had overheard. Barnum B. Bangs listened in silence until the youngster had finished, and a curious glitter crept into his steely eyes.

"By the great horned toad!" he roared, and danced. "Mick. You and I'll smash these slimy crooks and hound 'em outa London, pronto!"

A Shock for Isidore.

MIDNIGHT MICK was up bright and shining next morning. He had an important job of work to do. Far into the night he and his guv'nor, Barnum B. Bangs, with the ready assistance of that impassive and imposing figure, the Rajah of Marzipan, had conferred; and the fertile brain of the Rajah—alias Hiram Hardnut—had finally evolved a scheme that made Mick howl with delight.

"That's the ticket, guv'nor," he commented enthusiastically. "I can do that job of work on my head. Izzy is going to Limehouse at ten a.m. to fix up the final arrangements. I heard him tell Kramer he's got a trunk big enough to fit the body. Number Three, Primrose Alley, is where the poor chap pegged out."

"Right—we'll be there!" said Barnum B. Bangs.

At nine thirty a.m. a husky labourer slouched down a mean and dingy thoroughfare beyond Limehouse Causeway. With him was a tattered, freckle-faced urchin with a bundle of morning papers under his arm.

Primrose Alley—what grim humorist had been responsible for the name is unknown to posterity—was the dingiest street in the dingiest dock quarter of Limehouse. Number Three was a ramshackle house, chiefly distinguished by ribald chalk marks on the door lintel. One was a peculiarly realistic sketch of a man dangling from a gallows, and bore the legend *Bill Bloggs will get his*.

"Nice neighbourhood," muttered the freckle faced urchin.

"You said it, bo," replied his companion in the unmistakable tones of Barnum B. Bangs. "Friend Izzy makes most of his dough from slum properties like thith. Wonder how he's aiming to fix this business."

He took up a position at the entrance of an evil-smelling alleyway that ran parallel to Number Three.

"You've got your instructions pat, kiddo?" he demanded.

"Sure!" murmured Midnight Mick. "If he uses the limousine, all the better—if not—"

"He won't come down in a limousine, boy. I know Izzy," drawled Barnum B. "He'll probably bring a coupla plug uglies with him—and then the fun starts."

They waited patiently

No one in Primrose Alley seemed curious as to their movements. In that dingy neighbourhood loafers are commoner than loaves—or loofahs!

Suddenly, Midnight Mick heard the grinding of protesting gears and a decrepit-looking taxi turned round the corner of Primrose Alley. The driver was an enormously fat man with a bloated red face and a multiplicity of chins. Mick noticed, with a little

shiver of repulsion, that on the top of the taxicab was a battered innovation trunk about six feet long.

The taxi drew to a halt at the kerb outside Number Three, and from their vantage point in the alleyway the two saw that the cab had three occupants.

In the shadow of the tonneau, an uneasy look on his flabby face, was Isidore. With him were two men dressed in loud che k suits with too many rings on their fingers. They wore billyco k hats and looked just what they were—a couple of racing touts and members of a notorious racing gang.

"Sallright, boss," one of them jerked through tight lips. "We'll fix it, and it'll be plain sailing to Paddington."

Mick noted he spoke without moving his lips—the infallible sign of an old lag.

"Be qui k. I nutht get ba k," came Izzy's hoarse voice. "I've fixed the woman in the houthe. You know what to do."

"Better lend us a hand, Jake, with this trunk," growled one of the men as he des ended.

The plethoric driver cursed softly and heaved his vast bulk from the seat.

Mick grinned. With his left hand he whipped aside the crumpled of the paper, revealing a little leeked automatic.

"Stick 'em up, Izzy!" he hissed, and his eyes snapped dangerously. "You're taking a little ride with us!"

The Jew half rose to his feet with a stranglod scream.

"Vot! 'Vy?" he gasped.

A flying figure emerged from the alleyway and Barnum B. Bangs leapt into the driver's seat. Micky closed the door with a bang and dug his weapon into Izzy's quivering paunch as the taxi leapt forward.

"Hoy! Stop thief! Stop!"

It was the voice of the obese taxi-driver. Barnum B. swung round the corner with a grim look on his face.

The police would soon be in Primrose Alley, and he didn't want any hitch to occur. Explanations would have been awkward, but fortunately he was prepared. Round the corner was a tumbledown mews. He and Hiram had located the lay of the



THE APE APPEARS—A Hindoo came with a steel chain tied round his wrist. At the end of the chain walked a great hairy ape, the ugliest creature ever seen.



"If I wasn't a 'ard-working cove wiv a wife and children— he began.

"Stow it! Yer knows you've lost yer licence—" The driver's bloated face paled. "Ush! Cripes, if the cops was to 'ear—"

"Then get a move on!" growled the other. Two of them lifted the trunk down gingerly, while the third man knocked at the door.

A slatternly woman with a mean, avaricious face opened it and the three men passed into the house, while Isidore cowered in the corner of his cab.

"Now for it, kiddo!" whispered Barnum B. "The cops are wised. They'll be here in less than five minutes."

Midnight Mick's eyes shone excitedly and he ran out from the alleyway.

"Piper, sir. Plumpton Naps," he called shrilly. He opened the door of the taxicab and held out a copy of the third edition of the *Evening Clarion*. Isidore's face went chalky white.

"Go away, brat! Avay mit you!" he almost screamed.

land early that morning, and here Barnum B. had parked his luxurious limousine under Hiram's care.

He swung into the mews just as the shrill *pheep* of police whistles sounded from the entrance to Primrose Alley. The cab stopped with a shriek of brakes and Hiram, who had removed his Hindoo make-up, jerked open the door.

"Out you get, Izzy!" snapped Midnight Mick. The Jew's face was grey with terror, beads of sweat poured down his flabby cheeks.

"You villains. You—you—dirty theoundrels!" he gasped.

The folds of some thick material smothered further utterance. He was dazed, suffocated and almost mad with terror. The world was a roaring darkness—suddenly a flame-red curtain danced before his eyes and he slumped forward unconscious.

The Vengeance of the Apes

BOOM! Boom! Boomba! Boom! When Isidore Bloomenbaum came to himself he was conscious at first only of a maddening

monotonous drum-beat which at first he thought was the throbbing of his temples.

Then, with glazed eyes, he sat up.

He found that he was lying on a slab of marble in what seemed to be an impenetrable jungle, from which monkeys chattered and shrilled. A nodding palm tree stirred lazily in a stifling hot breeze, and round its corrugated trunk Bloomenbaum saw something that filled him with a shuddering horror. It was the speckled green-and-brown coil of an enormous python. The wicked, wedge-shaped head moved soundlessly from side to side, and the gleaming eyes watched him with a horrible malignancy.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The sound of the drums grew in intensity, then suddenly it stopped. From a gap in the foliage stepped a bearded regal figure with gorgeous robes of green and a turban of cloth of gold in which sparkled a magnificent, blood-red ruby.

A panic of fear shook him as he heard the deep voice of the Rajah speak.

"Isidore—Bloomenbaum, dog, and worse than a dog. It has come to our knowledge that thou hast conspired against us—and that thou hast planned to bring shame upon me and my friends in the eyes of all men."

"I—I didn't. I—I wouldn't!" shrieked Isidore.

"Oh, have merthy your 'Ighneth!"

"What is the punishment of those that conspire against the dignity of our State?" asked the Rajah.

"Death!" chanted the three attendants with another roll of the drums.

Suddenly a roar of rage emanated from somewhere, a blood-curdling roar, terrible in its ferocity.

"Tis the sacred Tiger calling for blood!" said the Rajah. "See, dog of a Jew!"

He pointed, and Isidore almost fainted with horror as he saw a long, lean shape at the edge of the jungle. It was a tiger, its great jaws slavering hungrily.

"Where am I?" gasped Isidore. "How long have I left England? Oh, merthy, merthy!"

"Bring forth the ape!" commanded the Rajah, clapping his hands.

Instantly, a dark-skinned Hindoo appeared with a steel chain tied round his wrist. At the end of the chain walked an ungainly figure, and the Jew almost swooned with fear as he saw it was a great hairy ape about four feet in height.

The Rajah raised his hand in a dignified gesture.

"You, Isidore Bloomenbaum, are more to be despised than this the ugliest of all beasts of the jungle. You would have caused rumours of plague to be spread about the caravanserai of my friend. So be it—I have spoken. Let the vengeance of the ape begin!"

Isidore closed his eyes in an agony of dread. He could not speak, he could not stir. He felt numb and dead.

His marrow froze in his bones as a shrill peal of mirth rang out.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my sainted sock suspenders! Look at Izzy!"

He opened his eyes and before his startled gaze, seemingly quite at home in the midst of that awful jungle, was Midnight Mick.

"Hurry up, kiddo, with the paint pot!" called a cheerful voice, and Barnum B. Bangs stepped into the circle.

"You!" snarled Isidore. "You twisting Yankee—"

Something wet and sticky caught him full in the mouth. He gasped and spluttered with incoherent rage.

"Lay it on thick, Mick!" yelled Barnum B.

"Take that!" grinned Midnight Mick. With a flourish of his brush he dipped it into a pot of red enamel and proceeded to paint the writhing man's forehead a flaming scarlet.

"Wait for the blue, Izzy!" he chuckled. "Talk of bubonic plague, will you? This is fast-drying enamel and it won't come off in a hurry!"

In vain Isidore wept and squealed and vowed vengeance. At last Mick had finished, and a more hideous-looking creature than Isidore Bloomenbaum could scarcely be encountered in the ghastliest nightmare.

"Durn my hile if he ain't the warthog's beauty spots!" roared Barnum B. Bangs. "Listen, Izzy, before we release you on a staggered world. There ain't no such person as the Rajah of Marzipan.

We were wise to you and Kramer's little game—and your plug uglies are now in the Limehouse lock-up! Never mind the tiger, Izzy," he added soothingly. "The poor beast's terrified to death by your mug. Have you any idea where you are Izzy?" he asked.

The wretched prisoner shook his grotesque head and glared up speechlessly at his captors.

"In my private zoo in the basement of Mammon's Hotel, Izzy!" said Barnum B. Bangs. "Realistic, ain't it? These trees and vines were painted by the best scene-painter in Hollywood. You see, some of my Rajah guests might get kinda lonesome for their native land—so I've fixed a lot of little surprises like this. Nifty idea, eh?"

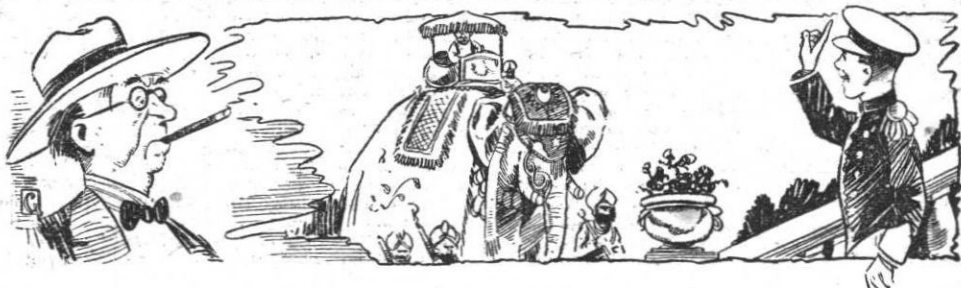
Isidore Bloomenbaum was too crushed to reply as Mick undid his bonds.

"This way to the exit, Izzy," said Barnum B., as he dragged his limp body to a passage cunningly hidden behind the realistically painted scenery.

"Go git—you blue-faced baboon!" he said, planting a hefty kick in the rear of Mr. Bloomenbaum's pants.

Isidore got—while the going was good.

Another Rollicking Tale of Midnight Mick of Mammon's Hotel Coming Soon.



Here He Is—The Motor Cycling Marvel.

GOGGLED GHOULS PLOT AGAINST
LARRY ON THE SPEEDWAY.

LARRY LIGHTNING

The MOTOR CYCLE

T.T. CHAMPION



A TALE OF
THE
MAD
THRILLS
OF THE
MOTOR-
CYCLE
RACES
IN THE
ISLE OF
MAN.

Larry Lightning Flies Round The Magic-Filled, Monstrous Thrilled Track of Danger—The Isle o' Man Tourist Trophy Track—On A Quest Of Riddles and Questions. A Tale of Danger And Terror.

Before The Fray.

"GOSH! I been to some plices in the Sarth, but that li'l i'lan' tikes some beatin'."

Micky Bowers, wizard motor mechanic, sniffed appreciatively at the salt ozone through a freckled snub nose and made the observation to the handsome, well-built youngster beside him.

The two were leaning over the rail of the *King Orry*, and before them stretched the coast of the Isle of Man. It was lit now by the brilliant August sun, and presented a pleasing picture with the holiday town of Douglas lining the bite in the rugged coastline known as Douglas Bay.

It was not for a holiday, however, that the jolly mechanic and Larry Lightning, his chum, had come to the land of ancient kings. For Jerry, at least, was to risk his very life in a fortnight's time battling for the Blue Riband of motor-cycling—the Amateur Tourist's Trophy.

On the same boat were other sun-tanned, light-hearted youngsters—from the varsities and public schools of Old England, eagerly looking forward to the moment when they would shoot off down the tortuous, risky road that marked the T.T. course.

Near to where Larry and Micky were standing, half-a-dozen were bunched, singing lustily to the accompaniment of a couple of ukuleles. But Jerry did not join in. There was a cloud on his usually sunny forehead, and he was thinking deeply.

Yet it was not on the dangerous task ahead of him that his thoughts ran. Danger was the salt of life to Jerry. His happiest moments were spent when the wind screamed her death song in his ears, when he felt the two-wheeled juggernaut below him hurtling in an ecstasy of speed over road or track.

There was a picture in his mind. It might have been called a cameo of weakness and wickedness. The face of a youngster of about Larry's own age—

good-looking, had it not been spoiled by a certain weakness of chin and eyes slightly unsteady in their regard. Behind loomed another—a visage deeply impressed with villainy, the face of a man who combined brutal ruthlessness with foxy cunning.

The boy was Larry's cousin, Marcus Lansdale, and nearest heir to the little fortune which had been left to Larry on his father's death two years before. The man called himself Silas Howard, and he had followed most of the shady professions during his crooked life—from pickpocketing to card sharpening. It was the latter talent that had got Marcus Lansdale into his clutches, and when the confidence man had learned accidentally of his near relationship to Larry Lightning, he had taken good care to keep him there.

A hearty swipe on the back from the muscular hand of Micky Bowers roused the young motorcyclist from his reverie, and the cockney youngster's voice informed him that they had arrived.

The *King Orry* was just bumping against the quay, and next moment she was made fast by the agile sailors. Then, one by one, the mo'-bikes were lowered to the quay with the aid of a steam crane.

Larry's Sunbeam was the last to come over the side, and it was immediately pounced upon by Micky Bowers, who spent a busy ten minutes cleaning off the petroleum jelly which had been smothered over the machine to preserve the metal from the action of the sea air, the while Larry visited the nearest garage for a tin of petrol. (The steamship company won't allow any "juice" in the tank while bikes are on the boat.)

With a triumphant gurgle the liquid "gas" teemed through the orifice and then, straddling his beloved steed, Larry kicked down at the starter.

"All aboard!" sang out Micky, the irrepressible, as he clambered behind his chum. Larry let in the clutch and they throbbed forward from the quay.

Lilac cottage, where the two chums were going to

live until the day of the race, was situated about two miles out of Douglas, and they were soon humming merrily along the road.

"Look out, Larry!" The swift caution broke from Micky as his keen eyes spotted something ahead. Larry switched his head to the front, and a gasp escaped him as he also saw!

A steam wagon, heavily built and cumbersome, was drawn up lengthwise on the near side of the road which took a sharp bend round a towering hill. At the other side was the sheer drop down to the sea—a cruel line of foam telling of the jagged rocks that waited there.

For a breathless moment it seemed that those rocks were to receive fresh prey. But Larry had glimpsed a desperate chance, and, with hands like iron on the handle-grips of the gallant Sunbeam, he took it.

A narrow path led down from the road, winding parallel with it, about twenty feet below the edge of the cliff. But now the Sunbeam was bucking and skidding as it plunged down the narrow, steeply sloping way, and it needed all the youngster's skill—all his iron nerve—to save the machine from slipping off the path to the terrible doom that waited far below.

Micky, hanging on like grim death behind him, closed his eyes to shut out sight of the dizzy drop...

When he opened them again he found himself still astride the rear mudguard of the Sunbeam with Larry's broad back immediately in front of him.

The bike was just running back on to the road. And as it reached the macadam way once more Micky toed the footbrake, bringing it to a standstill.

"Crizy fool—to turn a lorry like that!" grunted Micky truculently. "Such idjits oughn't ter be allowed on the road."

"More rogues than idiots," returned Micky quietly. "You see I caught a glimpse of the face of one of the men on board. It was Silas Howard!"

That Night.

LILAC COTTAGE, whitewashed walls gleaming in the moonlight, made a silent patch against the ribbon of road that wound tortuously past the little lichen gate.

From the bedroom occupied by Micky Bowers, rhythmical snores proceeded. The wizard mechanic was fast in the arms of Morpheus, dreaming, perchance, of the shining pistons and con-rods he loved by day.

In the darkness of the other room, Larry Lightning sat bolt upright in bed and listened tensely. A sound had come to his ears, waking him, from the direction of the little creosoted shed in which the Sunbeam was housed.

Next moment Larry was racing down the narrow, old-fashioned staircase to the garden.

The bushes, dim shapes in the moonlight, stirred fitfully in the night wind. It was eerie there in the silence—and for a moment the youngster who had braved a thousand perils on the road felt a twinge of something akin to superstitious dread. Brave men quail like that sometimes in the darkness.

The feeling passed, and with a laugh Larry made for the Sunbeam's shed. He found a yellow shaft of light filtered into the rear garden from the half-open door. A man was bending within—bending over his beloved "bus"!

Larry recognised him immediately. It was Silas Howard! The fellow was sawing at the rod that led from the footbrake to the rear brake-drum with a small, but non-the-less keen, hacksaw.

"You dirty scoundrel!" the words cut like a whiplash through the still air, and simultaneously Larry leapt at his man.

Both went down in a kicking, sprawling heap—with Larry on top.

More like a serpent than a human being, however, was the fellow against whom he had to contend. In falling, Howard's hand had encountered something hard and cold—a steel spanner, lying on the floor beneath him.

Crash! Like a broken hawser Silas Howard's arm came round, bringing the heavy spanner down with all his force on the youngster's unprotected head. A choked-off groan escaped his whitening lips before Larry slipped away into unconsciousness. Then he was still.

Climbing to his feet, Howard regarded his inert figure for a long moment, a queer light in his eyes.

"I could kill you now, you cub," he murmured at last in an expressionless voice. "But I was going to fix it so that you died on your motor-cycle. I'll keep to that arrangement."

That, like all criminals, Silas Howard had a strong sense of the theatrical, subsequent events proved.

Bending forward, he picked Larry up in his gorilla-like arms and thrust him across the tank of his Sunbeam.

The silencer was still on the exhaust; a subdued throb sounded as the engine woke to life. Jamming the gear lever into "first," Silas let in the clutch, and the Sunbeam slid forward.

—In front of the cottage the road slanted steeply up a long hill, past a row of unfinished bungalows. Silas drove up the slope, reaching the apex just as Larry stirred back to consciousness.

"You have come to just in time to know your fate," Howard told him. "You're going to travel down this hill aboard your motor-cycle. There's a solid brick wall at the bottom, and as there's nowhere where you can swerve off the road, I guess you'll hit it. But you're supposed to be such a crack rider we'll handicap you a little more."

So saying he bound the youngster's arms to the elbows and then forced him into the saddle of his Sunbeam.

Finally he coolly finished sawing through both brake rods and then, with a mocking wave of the hand, sent the motor-cycle careering down the hill. Every moment the dizzy speed increased.

It seemed that the sporting young rider was doomed. But a few short minutes now and that solid wall would loom out of the moonlit darkness to crash him into eternity. His thoughts switched to Micky. If only Micky—

Something seemed to break in his brain. For standing in petrified amazement near the bottom of the hill was Micky himself.

The sound of the motor-cycle engine as Howard drove it out of the shed had awakened him, and, thinking it was Larry, he had come out of doors to ascertain the reason for such strange nocturnal practice.

Every second Larry's danger became plainer and Micky glared wildly round for some means of averting the catastrophe.

It seemed hopeless till his eyes alighted on the gaunt shape of the crane used by the workmen who were building those bungalows close to. Then a shout left Micky's tense lips and he went racing to the control cabin of the crane.

Fortunately it was worked by electricity and answered immediately to the controls when Micky switched it round till it overhung the road. The crane hook was about six feet above terra firma now, and rushing out of the cabin Micky leapt up to it, somersaulting till he hung face downwards with his feet twined around the hook.

Not a second too soon! Like a fleeing phantom of the night the motor-cycle whizzed underneath.

Wildly the young mechanic clutched at the figure of his chum; there was a wrench on his arms and shoulders that threatened to tear them from their sockets, the blood that already suffused his head seemed to be about to burst from his veins and then the motor-cycle went careering on—riderless. Larry was safe in his chum's strong hands.

Waiting until the pendulum motion of the crane rope had died down, Micky dropped his chum to the ground and with a reverse somersault joined him. Then his pocket knife was out and he severed the other's bonds.

"Thanks—Micky——" Something choked in Larry's throat and he could not say more—but the hearty grip in which he seized the mechanic's hand spoke volumes.

The Amateur T.T.

THE clear, hot sun that slipped up over the horizon on the fateful September morning when the Amateur T.T. race was scheduled to be run, promised an ideal surface and a big crowd.

Soon after breakfast the thirty-seven miles of road that marked the course was closed to vehicles, and the marshals, bronzed youngsters, some of them past T.T. riders themselves, took up their positions.

All along the course glaring adverts. advised



safety. Switching his handlebars he went careering down the crazy path that showed a way to escape.

motorists to fit so and so's tyres and be satisfied, fill their tanks with at least eight different kinds of oil and petrol, and not to forget that safety first was the cardinal rule of the road.

Behind Lilac Cottage Micky Bowers lifted an oil-smudged face to address a characteristic remark to Larry Lightning, looking bronzed and fit in his leather riding breeches, padded jacket and huge crash helmet. He indicated the Sunbeam, now decorated with a yellow disc, on which was Larry's number—thirteen.

"She's abso—bloomin'—lutely in the pink!"

By a stroke of good fortune Larry's bike had not come entirely to grief on that fateful night nearly a fortnight ago. As Micky had snatched his chum from the saddle the Sunbeam had developed a speed wobble and finished up on her side a hundred yards below the scene of the rescue.

It had taken Micky two whole days to repair the

damage done to her, but he had succeeded in his self-appointed task.

Strangely enough there had been no further manifestation from the scoundrels who were working for Larry's downfall. But that they had given up the task was highly improbable.

It was with nerves as steady as a rock that Larry Lightning at last straddled his machine under the banners at the starting point of the great race.

The dense crowd became tense, hushed, as the signal for the first rider to plunge along the white road that led to victory and perhaps death was given, and No. 1, mounted on a H.R.D., thundered away in a cloud of dust and oil smoke.

Larry, keyed up to almost breaking pitch, fretted till his turn came. Yet, in spite of his concentration on the herculean task ahead of him, he found time

DANGER — TO DEFEAT DANGER — The great tractor completely blocked the road but Lightning Larry saw a slim chance of

to ponder vaguely over the identity of the man riding No. 12. Swathed in a bulky riding outfit, face half-hidden by huge goggles, the fellow was quite unrecognisable yet strangely, intangibly familiar to the young amateur.

His mount was a Norton, the machine that is high up in the list of those that have taken T.T. honours from time to time. The roar of it was almost shattering as the starter signalled No. 12, and machine and rider hurtled away.

Larry's moment had come. His knuckles whitened on the grips of his beloved Sunbeam and he adjusted the air and gas control to a fine point as he waited for the fateful signal.

It came! Head down—Larry ran forward. In the first yard the engine coughed spasmodically; then the roar of the exhaust boomed out and the machine jerked into speed as Larry took a flying leap into the saddle and thundered faster, faster—

until he streaked from view of the crowd that watched and cheered.

The speedometer needle flickered from ten to forty as Larry went through the gearbox. Then he was in top and increasing the speed every second.

Objects blurred in spite of the goggles that protected the young speedman's eyes; the air around was a veritable inferno of sound—a live thing screaming a thunderous hymn of speed. Wind-lashed Larry juggled with the controls, whipped round a right-angle bend with his knees almost brushing the dusty road, straightened and sped on.

Eighty . . . eighty-five . . . ninety and then the speedometer seemed to grin as a hundred miles per hour showed on its gleaming face.

Jerry grinned, too, as a blur of faces flashed past as he switched over Devil's Bridge and momentarily a hearty cheer from hundreds of throats rose even above the fierce crackle of his own exhaust.

It is like that—the T.T. course. Stretches of barren open road with ever and anon dense crowds of sightseers peopling notorious points along the winding track.

A tremendous ovation greeted the daring young amateur as he jammed on both brakes at Governor's bridge, skidded into the defile and hurtled out, increasing speed again, into the home stretch.

Douglas once more—one lap over and the loud speakers booming the news that number thirteen's time for the course made a new record.

The wisecracks shook their heads. Rarely does the rider who breaks record for his first lap last to the gruelling finish. But Micky Bowers grinned exultantly. He knew the rider and the 'bus numbered 13.

On . . . on . . . blurred faces again, hairpin bends and occasionally yet another rider who would not ride further that day and at least one who might never ride again. Such is the price that English sporting blood is prepared to pay for the laurels of the victor's simple crown.

Three laps had gone by the board and he was launching on the fourth, when the loud speakers informed Larry that he was second in the race. The rest were trailing behind now—all except one who was still hurtling somewhere ahead of him.

And the number of that one was—twelve! Larry started in spite of himself as he realised that the man he still had to conquer was the mysterious Norton owner whose presence had filled him with vague misgiving at the start of the race.

He had left the watching crowd far behind again, was hurtling over a deserted stretch of road, high above sea level, when the pistol-like thrum of a motor-cycle engine struck on his ears. At last! He was overhauling the mysterious No. 12!

Rounding a bend he espied, less than a hundred yards ahead of him, a cloud of dust which marked the rival racer.

A grim smile curved the youngster's lips as he adjusted the air and gas another fraction and watched the space between him and the man ahead lessen gradually. Here the road led alongside a swollen river, well-wooded slopes sometimes hiding the water.

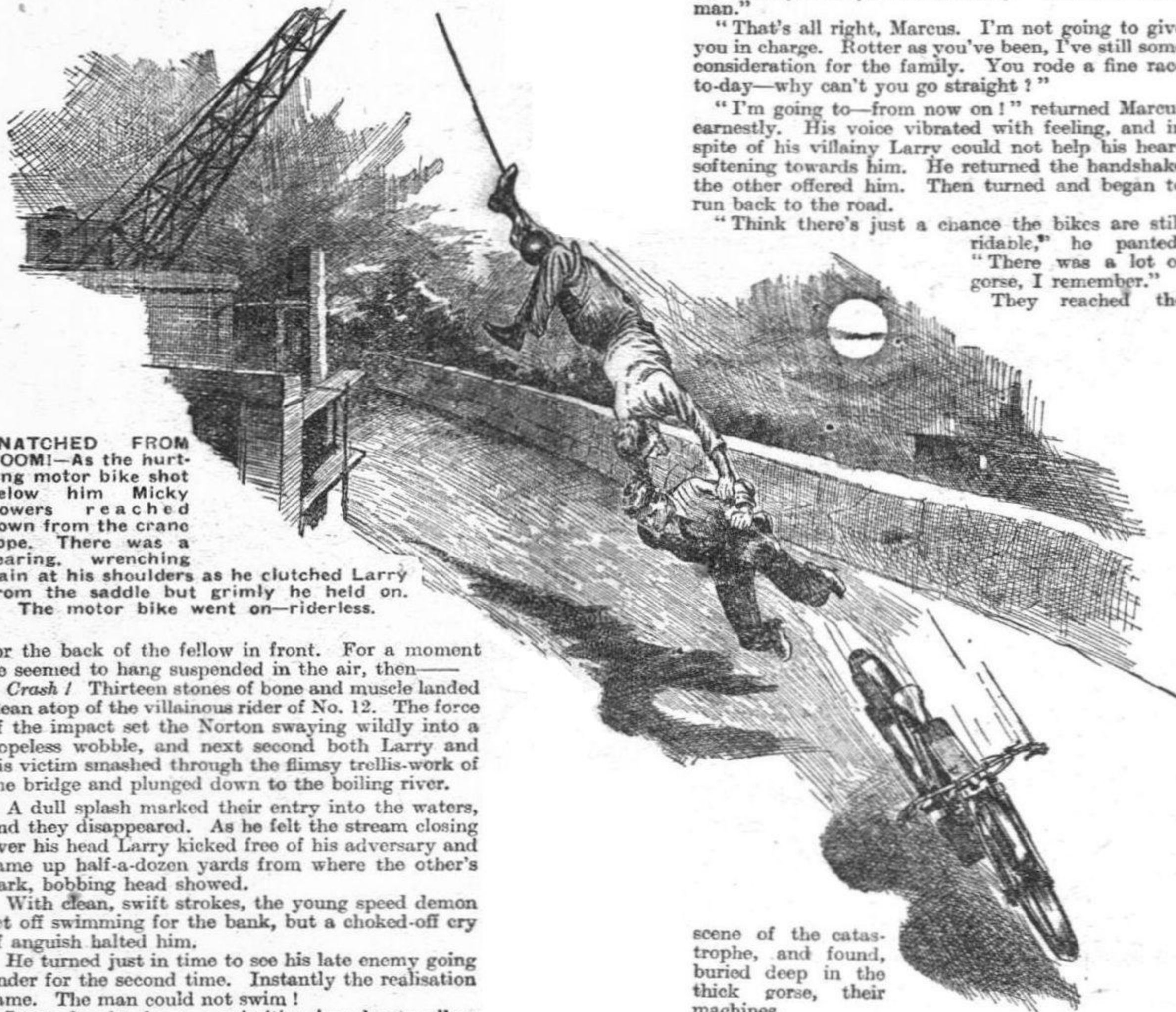
Plainly Larry could see his rival's tense, straining figure through the speed dust. Another minute now and he would be alongside—

And then something happened. The fellow ahead stole a swift glance over his shoulder as he became aware of Larry's approach, and for a moment he fumbled with something—some control on his handlebars. A dense vapour mingled with the upflung dust. Larry suddenly found breathing difficult as that vapour enveloped him. A lethargy began to steal over his keyed-up senses. He was falling from the saddle, falling . . . falling—

With a stupendous effort he pulled himself together long enough to realise something of the truth. There was poison gas billowing from that saddlebag on the rival machine. It was stealing his consciousness.

Gathering his remaining powers of action, Larry decided on a desperate expedient. The rider ahead was less than two yards away now, travelling over the little bridge that spanned the stream. If Larry could only get ahead of that gas—

Standing on the footrests, he bunched his body springs and then stiffened suddenly in a vibrant leap



SNATCHED FROM DOOM!—As the hurtling motor bike shot below him Micky Bowers reached down from the crane rope. There was a searing, wrenching pain at his shoulders as he clutched Larry from the saddle but grimly he held on. The motor bike went on—riderless.

for the back of the fellow in front. For a moment he seemed to hang suspended in the air, then—

Crash! Thirteen stones of bone and muscle landed clean atop of the villainous rider of No. 12. The force of the impact set the Norton swaying wildly into a hopeless wobble, and next second both Larry and his victim smashed through the flimsy trellis-work of the bridge and plunged down to the boiling river.

A dull splash marked their entry into the waters, and they disappeared. As he felt the stream closing over his head Larry kicked free of his adversary and came up half-a-dozen yards from where the other's dark, bobbing head showed.

With clean, swift strokes, the young speed demon set off swimming for the bank, but a choked-off cry of anguish halted him.

He turned just in time to see his late enemy going under for the second time. Instantly the realisation came. The man could not swim!

Larry fought down a primitive impulse to allow him to go to the fate he richly deserved. Turn ng on his back, he swam to where a dark head showed again for a moment, and grabbed the hair in a muscular hand. Then he started with his burden for the bank.

Time and again it seemed that the foaming waters would triumph and wrench both men away to perish miserably. Larry won through, and at last gained the bank only a dozen yards below the bridge.

Once on terra firma, he dragged the other to safety and sat facing him for a long minute recovering his

breath. Then, slowly, No. 12 removed his goggles and Larry found himself staring into the face of—his cousin, Marcus Lansdale!

"What—what—" he began. The bedraggled figure beside him raised a hand.

"Larry," he said slowly. "I know I deserve shooting. I've been a rotten, crooked cur. Howard persuaded me to try this latest stunt for taking your life, and I was so mad I agreed to it. But before you have me arrested I'd like to shake hands with you for what you've just done, Larry. You're a white man."

"That's all right, Marcus. I'm not going to give you in charge. Rotter as you've been, I've still some consideration for the family. You rode a fine race to-day—why can't you go straight?"

"I'm going to—from now on!" returned Marcus earnestly. His voice vibrated with feeling, and in spite of his villainy Larry could not help his heart softening towards him. He returned the handshake the other offered him. Then turned and began to run back to the road.

"Think there's just a chance the bikes are still rideable," he panted. "There was a lot of gorse, I remember." They reached the

scene of the catastrophe, and found, buried deep in the thick gorse, their machines.

Both had badly dented tanks and handlebars more or less out of truth. But, marvellously, none of their tyres was punctured, however, and when they tried their engines they answered the call.

It was obvious that the Norton, whose tank was leaking badly, would not run far, and Marcus decided to run to Douglas and abandon the race. Larry's Sunbeam was in better fettle, and he stood a sporting chance of getting the trophy.

Away he roared, leaving his suddenly reformed cousin to follow at slower pace.

The End of the Race.

A SOUND like the swift succession of pistol-shots caused the crowd gathered at the finishing-post of the Amateur Tourist Trophy race to tense suddenly and peer along the straight stretch of road along which the riders must come.

A dot appeared in the distance, hurtling towards them. Quickly it became plainer, resolving itself into a motor-cycle on which the crash-helmeted figure of the rider crouched.

Eyes were straining to identify him when another exhaust note mingled with the first and a second dot leapt into view.

The man on the foremost machine showed clearly now. They read the number on the front of his 'bus—nine!

"Come on Number Nine—Number Nine does it!" The roar leapt from a thousand throats. But it hushed all of a sudden.

It was seen that the pursuing machine was overhauling the leader rapidly. His number, too, was now plain for all to read.

And a snub-nosed, oil-spattered individual nearly went frantic with joy as he deciphered it.

"Come on, Larry!" he roared. "Give 'er the gas, boy!"

Nearer, nearer,—those two hurtling machines throbbed, and the rearmost, as though moved by some giant chess player, switched from second place to first less than half-a-minute before he crossed the finishing-line.

"Number Thirteen wins!" The news flashed from end to end of the island and on to England herself, even as Larry tumbled, covered with oil and dust, from the saddle.

Before any of the rest of the crowd could reach him, Micky Bowers was pumping his hand till he threatened to jerk the young speedman's arm from its socket.

"Strike me pink, Larry!" enthused the wizard mechanic. "You've worked the oracle. For one year you're the proud howner of the hamatoor—"

He broke off as the sudden, startling crack of a revolver sounded from the midst of the crowd swaying towards them.

In the hush that followed a youth was seen to be struggling furiously with a heavily built man, who was trying to turn a gun he held on to his daring aggressor.

Many hands helped the younger to complete his task, and soon the would-be assassin was wearing a pair of handcuffs, snapped over his wrists by a convenient man in blue.

As Larry came up, one of the spectators was explaining.

" . . . trying to shoot the winner of the race . . . suppose he'd been bettin' . . ."

Larry looked full into the face of Silas Howard. He ignored the fellow contemptuously and turned to the youth who had foiled the fellow's last attempt on his life. It was Marcus Lansdale!

"Thanks, Marcus," he said simply, while the other looked more shamefaced than he had ever done. The two gripped. Marcus Lansdale's reformation was complete.

On the mantelpiece of Larry's den, back home in England, there now reposes the Trophy presented to him at the Grand Ball held on the night of every T.T. to celebrate the event.

It is, of course, the young racing crack's most treasured possession. But most of all he values it because it was in the winning of that trophy he lost an enemy and found a chum.

Our Special Pirate, Bandit and Outlaw Number

JIMMY CAREW WAS A KID WITH A PUNCH THAT COULD KILL,
YET HE WAS A BOY WITH A HEART OF GOLD.

The Fighting Boy Wonder



HIS FATHER WAS A "PRO." HE WAS A PUBLIC SCHOOL-BOY WHO FLED HIS ALMA MATER IN TORMENT, 'CAUSE HE THOUGHT HE'D KILLED A BOY. WHAT A WONDERFUL BOXER HE MUST HAVE BEEN.

Jimmy's Just Jazz Incarnate. Don't you hope you'll meet him with his Eyebrows Peeping on a Happier Horizon than you see him in this story? Anyhow, it's a Compelling Complete Yarn.

The Storm Bursts.

THAT Jimmy Carew and "Red" Malcolm must eventually clash in battle was infinitely more certain than that the risen sun would set. All that concerned the fellows of Hazelwood was the result of such a meeting.

Had Red's opponent in the prospective battle been any other inmate of the old school, the issue could have given no cause for doubt. Although only a member of the upper fourth, Malcolm was, in age, qualified for the Sixth; but his brain, unlike his great body, had not developed with his thews; so where the latter could enable him to batter his way through the stoutest opposition, the former failed to carry him from one form to another.

Jimmy Carew was the antithesis of his rival. Smaller; two years younger—sixteen, to be exact—he was, physically and mentally, as quick as Red was slow. Where Red walked heavily on the flat of his feet, Jimmy stopped upon his toes. Where Red took sixty seconds to decide into what corner of the goal he would place his pot shot, Jimmy made up his mind in two—then tricked the ball over the line into the corner where the custodian was not!

Jimmy's father was the famous "Crash" Carew, retired, undefeated middle-weight champion of the world.

And there lay the fly in Red Malcolm's ointment.

It was natural, perhaps, that the advent of a professional pugilist's son to Hazelwood should give rise to some curiosity and, unfortunately, not a little snobbish ill-feeling. Jimmy had, in time, worn the latter down; but the former remained until he met and defeated one Andy Baker.

They still spoke of the affray for miles around.

Baker had been acknowledged undefeated champion of the countryside. But Jimmy Carew changed his status—and paid for Andy's week in the local hospital afterwards.

All save Malcolm were quite satisfied that Jimmy was the genuine article. Red only owned another's superiority through personal contact; he refused to admit Jimmy his superior; hence the inevitability of their meeting.

Little Simpkins of the School was the instrument chosen by Fate in the weaving of her designs.

The fag adored Jimmy Carew as much as he hated and feared Red Malcolm; Red knew this, and so did Jimmy. Hence, when Jimmy overheard a cry of pain one afternoon his face went white.

Jimmy always went white when trouble was brewing. Andy Baker had been misled by the paleness of his antagonist just before their little affair . . .

A thin, piping voice followed:

"Let go my arm, Red. If Carew were here you wouldn't dare twist it so—ow!"

Malcolm said: "What! You young rat, if you don't go down on your knees and beg my pardon for mentioning Carew's name in my presence, I'll break the bone."

"No, you won't," said Jimmy quietly, coming round the corner. "Let the kiddy loose, Malcolm, or I'll break yours." And he seized Red's arm, twisting it high up the bully's back.

Malcolm turned from the fag to his enemy, eyes glazing with fury.

By this the corridor was crowded.

"Will you fight?" ground out Red Malcolm.

"If you like," said Jimmy, releasing his grip.

Quick as a flash, Red struck him across the face with his open hand. But no sound save the echo of the slap broke the silence.

It was Jimmy himself who led the concourse across the quadrangle into the shadow of the tall elm trees, and it was Jimmy who was first stripped to the buff in preparation for the fray.

"I'll second you if you wish, old chap," said Dick Andrews, the skipper of the Fourth, approaching and making a knee. Jimmy just nodded his thanks. His face was like a sheet.

Red was not long behind his opponent in divesting himself of his upper garments. It seemed strange to see both bare to the waist; the participants in most similar affairs usually contented themselves in taking off their jackets.

To the uninitiated the greater bulk of Malcolm promised a complete annihilation of the smaller and more frailly drawn Carew. But there were others who saw more in the rippling muscles, compact shoulders, deep chest and pink skin of the latter than in the larger but flabbier body of the bully.

A fifth former named Shaw—a great sportsman and no mean boxer himself—took on the combined duties of referee and timekeeper. He drew out his watch. "Are you ready?" A pause. Then: "Time!"

Both boys left their respective second's knee and advanced into the centre of the ring. There was no attempt on the part of either to shake hands; feeling ran too deep for such formalities. They squared up, and Red opened hostilities. He bore in upon Jimmy with great, powerful blows.

The move was typical of him who made it. Anybody with more acumen, and who had witnessed the battle between Carew and Baker would have adopted other tactics, for in such did Andy meet disaster. But not Malcolm.

Jimmy made no effort to meet the bully's onslaught. When those whirling fists seemed to all but touch his slim form, he stepped neatly to one side and his right described a half circle for Red's neck.

There followed a dull thud as the blow landed on a point beneath and just behind Malcolm's ear. Forward upon his face went the bully, to lie, an inert heap upon the grass. Shaw waved Jimmy back and began to call the passing seconds.

"One—two—three—four—"

Red stirred, rolled over and presented a dazed face to the onlookers. His backers urged him to rise.

"Five—six—seven—eight—"

The fatal words seemed to penetrate to the dull brain of the stricken boy, and he got to his knees. Even as the "Ten" trembled upon Shaw's lips he was clear of the ground.

All eyes were fixed upon Jimmy Carew. What would he do? One well-directed blow must end the contest.

But Jimmy only stood back, hands hanging at his sides. A cheer of admiration greeted the action.

"Time!" called Shaw. The first round was over.

So ably did Jimmy demonstrate his superiority in the four rounds that followed that there is little reason to describe them individually. He literally played with his burly antagonist.

Malcolm's plight was pitiful. He staggered about the ring, occasionally summoning up sufficient strength to make a blind charge at his foe, only to recoil before a hail of lefts and rights.

The spectators, much as they detested the bully, began to feel genuinely sorry for him. Red did not merit it. An idea—brutal, disgusting—was forming in his mind.

In the next round he put that idea into practice.

The two met with a crash, and Red's knee swept up. Jimmy Carew went to the ground, writhing in silent agony. When eventually he recovered and waved back those who would have wreaked vengeance on the bully and stopped the fight, a demon blazed in both his eyes.

Jimmy Carew had lost his temper, and when the son of "Crash" Carew could not control that, he was capable of delivering a blow that would slay.



A KNOCK-OUT FOR A CAD.
—Springing forward, Jimmy lashed his enemy full upon the point of the jaw and the mutineer crashed like a felled ox to the deck.

Adopting a crouch in place of his former erect poise, Jimmy slid towards his enemy.

Once—twice, he struck. A strange, grey tinge swept across Red's face; his eyes grew dull and lifeless; his body seemed to sag like a partially filled sack.

When he had finally subsided Jimmy Carew was gone, and only little Simpkins observed his going.

HALF-AN-HOUR later Simpkins dashed into the local station; spotted a face at a carriage window, and rushed towards the compartment.

"Oh, Jimmy; they say he's dead! The police have been sent for. Say they won't catch you—please."

Jimmy patted the flaxen head and smiled grimly. "They won't, sonny," he said quietly.

Mutiny Breaks Out.

"A STOWAWAY!"—Captain Brakeshaw, of the schooner *Spume*, now completing her third day out from Liverpool, gazed at the burly figure of the first mate as though he meant to eat him—"Did I hear you say you had discovered a rascally stowaway aboard my vessel, Mr. Marles?"

Mr. Marles nodded, and made haste to hide a covert smile as his glance went to the youthful delinquent whose shoulder he held firmly.

"Yes, sir," he replied.

Captain Brakeshaw snorted. He was not a hard man, despite his fierce expression and short, aggressive beard. Nevertheless, he had a sailor's natural contempt and detestation for the non-working, non-paying passenger.

His fierce eyes took stock of the stowaway. He saw a mere lad of no more than eighteen, well set up, strangely calm and dignified in spite of the shameful condition of his clothes, who returned his glare with steady eyes set in a pale face.

Captain Brakeshaw strove to force that gaze down, failed much to his inward chagrin, then essayed to cover his failure by a show of bluster.

"Confounded young rat!" he bellowed furiously. "How dare you stow yourself aboard my ship! I'll have you rope-ended and keel-hauled for this, my lad! What's your name, for a start?"

"Carew—James Carew," was the quiet reply.

The Captain's lip curled. "Carew, eh? You look it—every bit as soft as the name. A whelp, without enough guts in him to do an honest hour's work, I'll stake my life."

The pale face grew paler. But its owner bit his lip and remained silent. The skipper lashed himself into a fury.

"Darned young hound!" he roared. "Here, Marles," he snapped, turning upon the mate. "A rope's too good for such trash. Give him a couple with your boot!"

Grinning broadly the mate prepared to obey. His foot, shod with a heavy seaboot, swept back. It never came forward. Jimmy Carew appeared to grow taller of a sudden; his right fist described a half-circle; there sounded a dull thud, and Marles, caught off his balance, dropped to the ground as if he'd been shot.

He was up in less than ten seconds and bearing in upon the striker. Six feet in height; weighing close on sixteen stone, he must have pulverised the lad. The skipper hauled him back by main force, pinioning him against the wall.

"No, you'd kill him, Brakeshaw said. "By gosh, it was a rare smack!" He looked admiringly at the stalwart figure of the lad. "Say, sonnie; I withdraw my remark about guts, but where did you come to knock a sixteen-stone man off his feet?"

Jimmy spoke for the first time since mentioning his own name.

"If you'll forgive me not bothering to answer such questions just now, I'd like to point out that there's serious trouble brewing for you and the other officers, sir," he said very seriously.

Captain and Mate exchanged significant glances. The former regarded the boy curiously.

"Let's hear all about it, lad," he commanded shortly. Both listened attentively as Jimmy told his story.

It appeared the stowaway had secreted himself in one of the holds before the *Spume* sailed, but made it a habit to come from his hiding place in search of food and fresh air during the night.

Only the night before he gave himself up, he had overheard certain members of the crew discussing a plot whereby they intended to kill the captain and his three officers and take charge of the ship themselves.

"So I awaited my opportunity," Jimmy concluded. "And gave myself up to Mr. Marles here, unobserved by any of the hands."

Brakeshaw and the mate withdrew to the other end of the cabin to hold a consultation. Presently they turned upon the waiting lad. The captain placed his hand on Jimmy's shoulder.

"Your information has not come altogether as a surprise, Carew," he said quietly. "We have had our suspicions of brewing trouble, especially among the lascars; but I'll admit, we had no idea it was so imminent."

"However," he added more briskly. "Forewarned is forearmed; and, take my word for it, these fellows will not find us unprepared."

As unobtrusively as possible the second mate, the boatswain and two of the men, all trustworthy members of the *Spume's* complement, were called to the captain's cabin, where the situation was explained to them.

"We have no idea when the rumpus will start," the skipper said. "So keep your eyes and ears open for information. In the meantime, each of you take a revolver from yonder chest. At the first intimation of trouble don't hesitate to let blaze—and shoot to kill!" he finished grimly.

That night the mutiny broke out.

CAPTAIN BRAKESHAW and Jimmy Carew were sitting talking in the skipper's cabin when the sharp crack of a pistol awoke the echoes, followed by harsh cries and the rush of many feet on the deck overhead.

Man and boy sprang to their feet, seizing the weapons ready to hand. The captain was half-way towards the door when it burst open to admit the first mate, with the boatswain and one of the two seamen on his heels.

Blood was pouring from a terrible gash across Mr. Marles' forehead, and he was obviously in a bad state. He strove to speak, but could only stammer incoherently.

Wilson, the bo'sun, came to his aid.

"Caught us unawares, sir," he panted. "They shot Mr. Jenkyns (the first mate) out of hand; flung Harris overboard and nearly killed Mr. Marles. The devils are coming to finish you off—Here they are!"

A dozen voices were raised in oaths and wild shoutings, and the companionway steps resounded to the clatter of heavy feet as the mutineers swarmed from the deck.

"Kill the dogs!" bellowed a great voice, audible even above the general din. "One rush, lads, and the ship's ours!"

"Big Larson the scug!" cried Brakeshaw

recognising the tones of the gigantic cook. "Quick, boys! Get the door shut!"

Hardly was the last bolt shot home when the panels quivered under the blows of some heavy instrument. The roaring voice of Larson claimed admittance. "Come out, you rats!" bellowed the cook. "There's no use holding on! Open the door till we give Davy Jones something for his locker!"

"Fire a volley through the door," whispered the skipper. The resultant explosions rang deafeningly in the narrow confines of the cabin, and the acrid smoke stung their nostrils. Yells of pain from the passage told them the shots had not been wasted.

"That's to your account, and you'll square it!" shouted Larson. "Ye've killed Mayers and Bryant; and Saul's face is half-blown away! Break in the door, me hearties!"

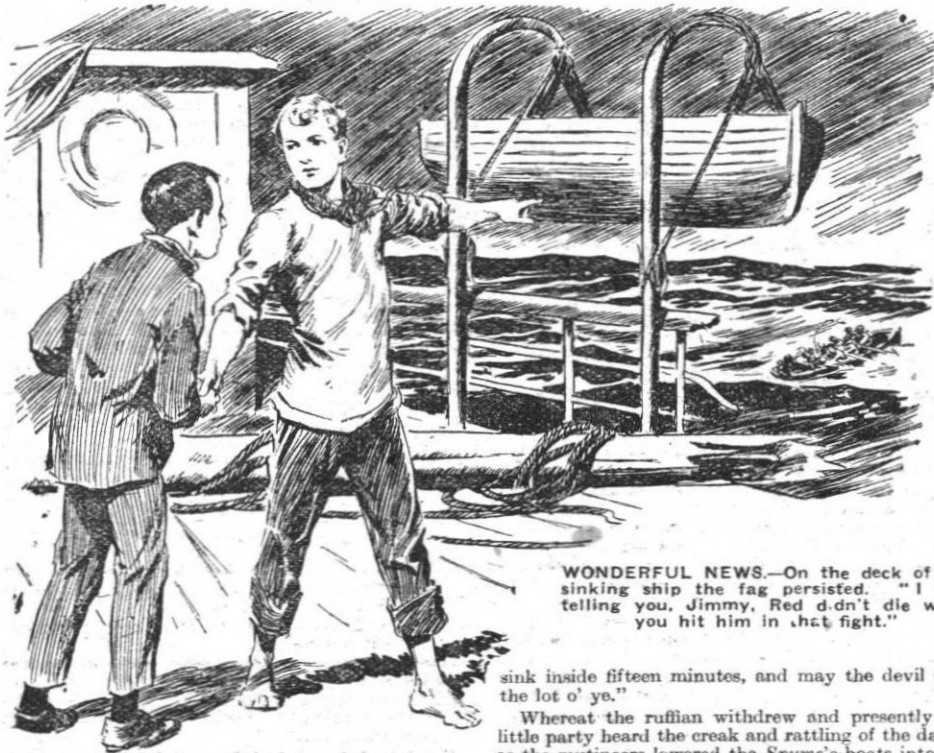
bellow to his followers, who obeyed the host, loosing off as fast as they could reload.

For another half-hour the fight continued, to the cracking of revolvers and rifles. By a miracle the defenders remained unscathed throughout.

The mutineers were not so fortunate. Packed together in the narrow passage, they could not escape the return fire, with the result that many were killed or wounded ere Big Larson roared at them to beat a retreat.

An hour passed without any indication of a fresh assault. At the end of the hour footsteps approached the cabin and Larson addressed those within.

"Hi there, you rats!" bailed the cook. "The lascars have cut up rough and won't fight no more. One o' em's gone below to skuttle the ship. She'll



WONDERFUL NEWS.—On the deck of the sinking ship the flag persisted. "I was telling you, Jimmy, Red d.d.n't die when you hit him in that fight."

sink inside fifteen minutes, and may the devil take the lot o' ye."

Whereat the ruffian withdrew and presently the little party heard the creak and rattling of the davits as the mutineers lowered the *Spume's* boats into the water.

THE defenders were in a quandary. To venture forth and endeavour to stop the mutineers from vacating the ship, or to try and obtain seats in the boats was to risk almost certain death. On the other hand, were they to remain in the cabin it meant a swift but horrible end by drowning.

It was Jimmy Carew who helped them to a decision. Jimmy's face was of a deadly pallor, and his mouth drawn and bloodless: but in his blue eyes blazed a light that overawed even those dauntless men to whom danger was the very spice of existence.

"We must wait until the last boat is ready to start off," he told them. "That will mean we'll have only some eight or ten of the scoundrels to deal with.

But the stout oak resisted their utmost efforts, though it quivered and shook under the violent assault.

"All right, you dogs!" roared the cook. "We meant to take you alive; but we'll forego that pleasure! Now, boys, a volley, altogether!"

The defenders flung themselves down as a hail of lead whizzed across the cabin. Without rising, the officers and Jimmy replied to the fire, eliciting screams of pain and wild oaths from the mutineers.

"If only we could get Larson, the other's might throw in their hand," growled the skipper.

The cook, however, was too wily a bird to be caught. From the sound of his voice it was obvious he had withdrawn out of pistol range and was directing operations from the rear.

"Fire, and keep on firing!" they heard him

One rush should be sufficient to overpower them, and the boat will be ours."

The whole thing was a gamble, but a very necessary one under the circumstances. With a precautionary look to see that their weapons were loaded, the little party stole from the cabin and ascended the companionway to the deck.

They were not a moment too soon. Already three of the *Spume's* four boats had departed, and the fourth was being lowered even as they appeared. The prospective crew consisted of nine lascars and hulking "Big" Larson.

The cook was urging on the lascars to the accompaniment of bellowed oaths and skilfully directed kicks. He wielded a short bar of iron in his brawny fist.

Captain Brakeshaw and the rest looked at Jimmy for the signal to attack. Somehow the lad seemed to have assumed the mantle of leader, despite his age.

With his gleaming eyes fixed steadily upon Larson, Jimmy raised his hand. Instantly the five hurled themselves at the mutineers, their weapons spitting flame and lead.

It was no occasion for niceties; both parties were fighting for life itself, neither expecting mercy from the other. Every moment was golden, for by this the *Spume's* decks were almost level with the water.

Jimmy Carew made straight for Big Larson, though with what real intention it is difficult to say. The cook swung round to meet him, snarling like a cornered wolf. Up swept the iron bar, and Jimmy's weapon went flying from his hand.

A numbing sensation ran up Jimmy's arm and he staggered back, Larson boring in upon him to deliver the *coup-de-grace*. By a miracle, the lad escaped the stroke, and the cook swayed as a terrific jolt caught him in the plexus.

Jimmy gave him no chance to recover. Springing forward, he lashed his enemy full upon the point of the jaw, and Larson subsided to the deck.

With the downfall of their leader, the lascars gave up the fight. Captain Brakeshaw took a quick look about him.

"Four minutes before she goes down!" he cried. "Come on, you fellows; into the boat—sharp!"

All made haste to obey, leaving the captain, Jimmy and Larson alone on the sea-washed deck. Brakeshaw and Jimmy lifted the inanimate form of the cook and lowered it to the waiting boat. Then:

"Get into the boat, my boy," said the old sea dog. To his astonishment, Jimmy refused.

"There's only room for one more, sir," he said simply.

Captain Brakeshaw drew himself up. His ex-

pression was a strangely mixed one: admiration struggled with curiosity; but both lost the battle to grim determination. He confronted Jimmy Carew squarely.

"Boy," he said to throw you in." And he sprang at his defier.

Jimmy grinned into his rugged face. The last round," he said, and started.

He did not waste the precious moments. Ducking beneath the huge, clut-hing hands of his opponent, Jimmy struck twice. The captain didn't even grunt. He swayed drunkenly, and, as he did so, the lad seized him round the buttocks, lifted him clean off his feet and hauled him into the water.

"White man coming aboard!" he called, grinning down as those below hauled the captain into their craft. Then he stood back as the vessel beneath him gave a sudden convulsive heave.

A small, dishevelled figure came running along the deck and stood at his side. Jimmy Carew looked down upon a flaxen head and white, upturned face.

"Hello, Simpkins," he said, just as though the two had met in the quid at Hazelwood.

A hand sought that of Jimmy.

"I was stuck away in one of the holds, Carew. I tried to find you sooner; but I couldn't get out until one of those fellows had opened the hatch. Jimmy, I followed you to tell you that Red didn't die after all—"

The elder boy did not hear. He was thinking swiftly. All personal interests had to go by the board if the youngster was to be saved.

"Qui k, laddie," he shouted. "Give me a hand with the other lifeboat. There's still just time."

Working frantically the two pushed the boat into the waves—now almost level with the deck—and sprang in. They had hardly covered twenty yards when the doomed vessel slipped beneath the waves.

Jimmy's thoughts were not enviable as he watched it go. But for the necessity for saving Simpkins, he, too, with his guilty secret would have now been under the sea.

The Second Former's voice interrupted his reverie.

"I was telling you, Jimmy—when we had to escape from the *Spume*—I followed you to tell you that Red didn't die after all—"

Jimmy didn't hear any more. Something welled up within him—a triumphant wave of exultation. He could go back now to Hazelwood and start afresh.

"Shake, youngster," he said heartily. The two gripped.

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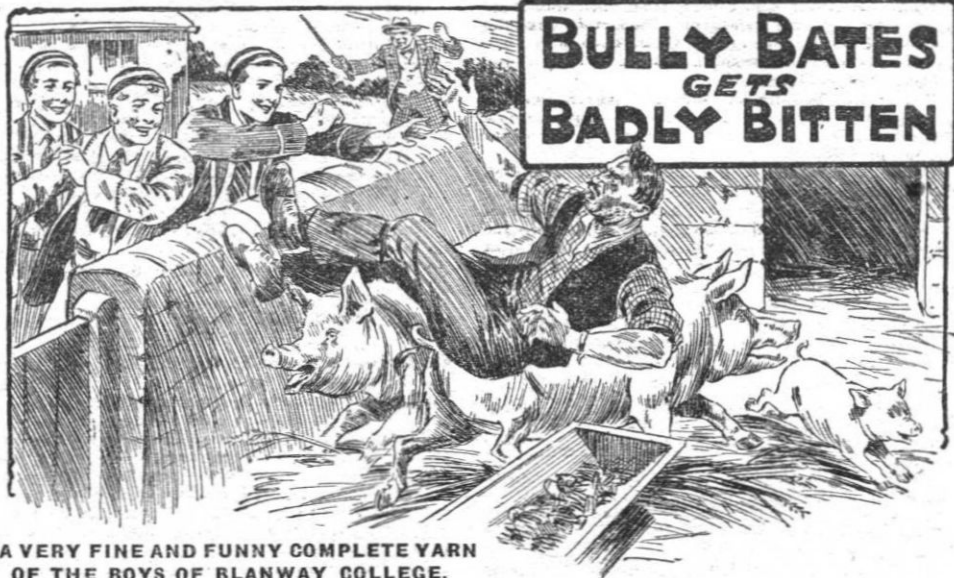
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THE CADS OF BLANWAY COLLEGE
versus
"THE CLEAN SCHOOL CRUSADERS."

"Scorcher" Smith the Marvel
Schoolboy Scores Over His
Deadly Rival Again.

**BULLY BATES
GETS
BADLY BITTEN**



A VERY FINE AND FUNNY COMPLETE YARN
OF THE BOYS OF BLANWAY COLLEGE.

The Egg Fight.

"SCHOOL House cads," muttered Bully Bates. His cronies, Barson and Billings, looked round apprehensively.

It was Saturday afternoon, and the three New House fellows were strolling along Burlington High Street on their way to the river. The weather was far too warm for cricket, and a bathe in the cool, sparkling water offered more enjoyment.

"Where are they?" asked Barson.

"Coming up on the opposite side of the road. Get in here, quick!"

They dodged into Mr. Salt's, the grocer, and Bates, with a grin on his unpleasant features, approached the proprietor.

"Give me two dozen of your cheapest eggs, Mr. Salt," he ordered flinging two half-crowns on the counter.

"What the idea, Bates?" asked Billings, as the grocer handed the eggs out.

"A little surprise for Scorcher Smith," grinned the bully. "Load up with munitions."

"Good egg!" chuckled Barson.

They picked up as many as they could hold, then waited impatiently for their rivals to appear.

Unconscious of the unpleasant surprise which was in store for them, Scorcher Smith, Carstairs and Sandeman strolled leisurely along Burlington High Street. They had planned a day on the river and all were clad in spotless flannels.

The first intimation they received of the ambush was an egg of doubtful origin, which spread itself over Carstairs' face.

"Ouch!" gurgled the junior, as the evil-smelling liquid trickled into his mouth.

Scorcher gave a yell as a similar missile, hurled with unerring accuracy, smote him on the chin.

Ha! Ha! Ha! Bates & Co. shouted with laughter

as Sandeman received an egg on the ear, quickly followed by another on the chest.

"Kim on, charge the bounders!" rapped out Scorcher, and dashed across the road with his chums at his heels.

Another volley of well-directed eggs met them, and they paused in their stride.

"Sock 'em!" roared Bates, hurling egg after egg.

The School House fellows were soon in a shocking condition. Their clothes were ruined, and their red, angry faces streaked with yellow.

But at last they dashed into Mr. Salt's shop, with flashing eyes and clenched fists.

"Where are they?" snapped Carstairs.

The grocer jerked his thumb over his shoulder.

"Opped it, back way," he smirked.

"D'you know where they were going?" asked Sandeman.

Mr. Salt scratched his scanty locks. "Well, er—" he hesitated.

Smith slipped half-a-crown into his palm. "Perhaps that'll help you to refresh your memory," he insinuated.

"Thankee, Mr. Smith. I don't know 'xactly w'ere they're going, but they had bathing costumes and towels with 'em."

"They'll be going to the pool, I'll bet," Scorcher exclaimed.

The pool was a backwater of the River Blan, and a favourite bathing-place with the Collegians.

"The general idea, as they say in military circles," went on Smith, "is to wait until they're in the water, then collar their clobber an' substitute ours. Poetic justice, what?"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"Good stunt," chuckled Sandeman.

"Come on then, May we go out the back way,

Mr. Salt? We don't want to be seen in the High Street like this."

"Certainly, Mr. Smith."

He conducted them through the house, and opened the back door for them. "Good luck, young gentlemen. I like a bit of a joke mesel!"

In the lane the Fourth-formers stopped. "Look here, you fellows," said Smith, "we must avoid the main roads. Our appearance is liable to provoke merriment and ridicule among the natives."

"Yes, but how?" asked Carstairs.

Smith thought a minute.

"I know," he said at length. "It's risky, but it's the only way out. Through Sir Jasper Bray's grounds."

"Corks!" Sandeman murmured in dismay.

Carstairs was silent, but nevertheless the idea did not appeal to him.

Sir Jasper was the owner of a fine old Elizabethan manor, and the grounds covered many acres. He detested boys, and there was no love lost between him and the Blanway fellows. Any boy trespassing on his ground was looking for trouble, and, if discovered, got it. Sir Jasper's favourite instrument of correction was a sjambok, which he relentlessly used on anybody or anything that earned his displeasure.

Smith, noting his chums' hesitation, shrugged his shoulders. "You can do as you please, but I'm going through. I'm dashed if I'm going to be beaten by that cad, Bates."

"I'm with you then," volunteered Carstairs.

"And me," added Sandeman.

"Good, come on then."

They walked briskly along the lane for a distance of about a hundred yards, then branched off at right angles down a private footpath. Presently they came into view of an iron gate let into the high brick wall. Scorercher looked round cautiously.

"No one in sight. Bend down, Car."

Carstairs obligingly stooped, and Smith scrambled on to his back, reached the top of the wall and drew himself up. Sandeman immediately followed, then each taking hold of one of Carstairs' arms, they hoisted him up. They dropped over into the grounds, and there held a council of war.

"As far as I can make out," said Smith, "we must continue in a dead line from here until we reach the wall on the other side. Over there is old Jasper's farmyard. We'll have to hare through that, over the fence and across the fields to the river. Understand?"

Carstairs nodded.

"Lead on, Macduff," invited Sandeman.

Smith crept cautiously forward with his chums at his heels.

"There's the wall," muttered Sandeman presently.

Carstairs gave a sigh of relief as the red bricks revealed themselves through a gap in the trees.

Snap!

"What was that?" whispered Sandeman, looking round uneasily. "Sounded as if a twig snapped under somebody's foot. Listen! There it is again."

They all heard it this time, but before they could make a move, a man broke through the cover of the trees and ran towards them. His face was red with heat and anger, and his little eyes gleamed malevolently. It was Sir Jasper Bray.

"What—what do you mean by trespassing here, you young scoundrels?" he exploded. "How dare you enter these grounds—how dare you?"

"Short cut, sir," answered Smith coolly. "We're in rather a hurry."

"You impertinent young puppy! Egad, but I'll make an example of you." He raised the sjambok he was carrying and rushed savagely at Scorercher.



ACCENT ON THE EGGS' SCENT.—"Ha, ha, ha!" Bates and Co. shouted with laughter as Sandeman received an egg on the ear, quickly followed by another on the chest.

Sandeman thrust out his leg, and Sir Jasper tripped and fell headlong to the ground. Smith picked up the whip and sent it spinning into the trees.

"Quick, you chaps! Over the top!"

The wall presented no difficulties to the three athletic juniors, and, one after the other, they dropped into the cobbled farmyard. They were half-way across before the angry voice of the baronet made itself heard.

"Briggs! Parker!" he bellowed. "Stop the young scoundrels!"

Mr. Briggs, who had been enjoying a quiet nap within the shadow of the pigsty, opened his eyes at the sound of his master's voice and blinked round.

His vision was arrested by the three juniors streaking across the yard, and as he was not lacking in intelligence, he put two and two together.

"Hi! Stop, you young rips!" he shouted, scrambling to his feet.

"Rats!" retorted Scorercher. "Put it on, you chaps."

An ugly expression came into Mr. Briggs' eyes as he lumbered across to intercept them. He planted himself firmly in the schoolboys' path, his fists doubled.

"Charge!" rapped out Scorercher.

The three juniors, never pausing in their stride, crashed into the burly form of the farm-hand.

"Ouch!" He sprawled on his back, and stared dazedly at the blue sky above.

"Grab him," Scorercher commanded.

Briggs was too sore to protest, and they picked him up and carried him to the pigsty.

"One! Two! Three! Go!"

The farm-hand described a graceful arc over the wall and fell with a bump and a yell amidst half-a-dozen grunting pigs. The juniors roared with laughter as the animals surrounded Briggs, poking him with their snouts.

"Don't stray from home again," warned Sandeman, wagging an admonishing finger at the unfortunate man.

Flushed and triumphant, Smith & Co. crossed the yard and scaled the fence. Once on neutral territory they slowed up, breathing stertorously.

Through the trees they caught the glint of the sunlit river, and, a moment later, were rewarded by the sound of splashing.

Smith grinned. "They're in all right. Careful, you chaps."

Extreme caution was necessary, for they were but a few yards from their foes, and the snapping of a twig under-foot might ruin the whole carefully planned scheme.

"Wait here a tick, you chaps," breathed Scorchler. "I'm going forward to reconnoitre."

He wormed his way along the ground like a snake, taking advantage of every scrap of cover. Now he could plainly hear the splashing and voices of Bates and Co., and he raised his head cautiously.

The New House fellows were fully twenty yards from the bank. Smith looked round for their clothes, and to his delight spotted them not a dozen paces away. He slipped back into cover, and wriggled his way along until he was within a few feet of the coveted garments. To secure them it was necessary to expose himself to the enemy's view, and his breath came a little faster. He took another peep. Bates & Co's attention was momentarily engaged as they punted a bladder about, blissfully ignorant of the close proximity of the prince of japers.

"Now or never," he muttered.

He stepped forward, and, stooping, swiftly swept up the entire pile of clothes. He thrust them under his arm and gained the shelter of the friendly trees. A moment or two later he rejoined his chums.

"Get changed as quickly as you can," he said, throwing down the bundle. They might discover that their clothes have been pinched at any moment, and that would spoil the whole jape."

Hastily and in silence they changed their egg-stained clothes for the immaculate grey flannel suits which had once adorned the three bullies.

"How does it look, Car?" asked Sandeman, posing like a mannequin.

"Not so bad. Your coat looks a bit big, though, and the sleeves are too long."

"Why!" exclaimed Scorchler, who was struggling with a jacket several sizes too small. "Swap over, this is more your fit."

"What about our togs?" asked Sandeman a minute later.

"Oh, leave them there," replied his leader, "they'll find 'em all right. Ready? Good! Then we'll go an' get a boat for an hour or so."

Short Cut—and Painful!

"HAD enough, you chaps?" asked Bates, treading water.

"Just about," Billings answered. "Suppose we get dressed now, then go and have tea in the village."

"Good idea," agreed Barson.

They swam leisurely to the bank, then Bates, who was the first to land, gave a sudden shout.

"Our togs!" he cried, "they've gone!"

"Rats!" grinned Barson, "you're pulling our legs."

"I tell you they've gone. Come and look if you don't believe me."

With alarmed expressions the two New House fellows joined their leader.

"No doubt about it, that's where we put 'em," said Billings, indicating the spot.

"I wonder——" Bates broke off with a shout.

"School House rotters! Smith & Co. have pinched 'em!"

"Hi! You chaps, come here!"

The voice was that of Billings, who had been



NOT NICE PRESENTS.—"Kim on, charge the beggars," rapped out Scorchler, and dashed across the road with his chums at his heels.

wandering about aimlessly. The other two broke through the trees, and found him pointing down at their rivals' discarded garments.

"Oh, the cads!"

"The blisters!"

"The rotters!"

Bates picked up a pair of egg-stained trousers, and shuddered.

"Look—look at 'em," he stuttered.

Billings shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I suppose there's nothing else to do but to put 'em on," he said philosophically. "Anyway, they'll be less conspicuous than bathing costumes."

With helpless rage burning in their breasts, the three bulls' changed.

"Well, what now?" asked Barson, slipping on a blazer liberally streaked with yellow and white.

"We'll cut through Sir Jasper's," growled Bates. "If we're spotted like this, we'll be the laughing-stock of the village."

His chums did not relish the prospect of trespassing on the martinet's property, but the risk was nothing compared with the humiliation and ridicule which they would certainly suffer by going through the village.

Muttering dreadful threats and imprecations against Scorchler Smith, they crossed the field and stopped before the farmyard gate.

"No one in sight," breathed Bates, looking round.

"We'll dash through here, over the wall, and the rest will be easy."

They climbed the gate, and had nearly traversed the yard when a sudden rush of feet behind them caused them to whip round.

Three hefty farm-hands were running towards them, and their expressions were anything but friendly. Behind them, waving his hands excitedly, was Sir Jasper.

"Catch them, men! Those are the young scoundrels who assaulted me!"

Bates & Co. put up their hands to meet the attack, and a battle royal ensued. The three juniors were no match for the burly farm-hands, however, and a few minutes later saw them lying on their backs, bruised and breathless.

Sir Jasper vanished, to reappear presently armed with a long, supple cane. "Turn 'em over, men," he barked.

(Continued on page 36).

OUR PALS IN THE HANDS OF SAVAGES. THE BIG BOSS OF CRIME *versus* THE MAN ABOUT TOWN IN THE INTERIOR OF DARKEST AFRICA!



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 Herculane 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, Herculane, 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.

Jimmy however, escaped from the apes, and luck aided him, for he found an abandoned balloon belonging to an explorer who had at one time visited this peril plateau. In the balloon Jimmy sought out his friends—and found them, making a last stand against the apes.

In the Natives' Power.

THE big game cricketers could hardly believe their eyes.

Jimmy, whom they thought had become the prey of the puma, was up there, aloft in the starlight, his clean-cut face grim and determined as he poised spear after spear in his right hand and aimed each with deadly accuracy at the apes.

It was dark, yet the starshine seemed to centre around him; they could see him distinctly.

Jimmy, after hours of struggling, had got in the balloon. It must be borne in mind that when he awoke from his fall into the pit he had been in a state of sore stress. It is not nice to come down to the grimly materialistic, yet the fact remains that the one-time debonair man-about-town's face was

scratched and bleeding, already becoming infected as do even the slightest wounds in the tropics, and his body ached from deeply embedded spines and sores.

In the balloon, before he did anything else, Jimmy stripped almost nude, and removed the jungle barbs with a certain instrument that Sambo had given him. Then he rubbed his body with a sweet-smelling compound that the black cricketer had concocted, the mingled juices of strange herbs. Feeling much refreshed, he found a spring, and slaked his thirst. All this he did before he ventured to essay his hand at manipulating the balloon.

Jimmy had flown a single-seater Bristol fighter 'plane over the Bos-h lines during the war, and he had some knowledge of balloon aeronautics. It was not long before he had assured himself that the balloon was airworthy, and he was throwing the sandbags out, and gently rising on the slight breeze that danced up from the foot of the plateau.

Yet day had lengthened into night, and the stars were shining again, like the lance points of an army waiting the dawn as Jimmy ascended.

His heart was sick, turning over with the tumult of his feelings. Jimmy had imagination; power. He could visualise the fate of his companions, and he expected at the most to see their bones spread out upon the plateau.

His brain flared to anger at that thought. He cared nothing for his own life just then, but as the balloon dipped and bobbed crazily in the almost still air he registered a vow that, even though they were brutish creatures, he would avenge upon the apes the death of his friends.

He hoped only that the balloon, crazily falling and rising in its progress would bear him until he found the apes. After that he cared nothing.

An idea had come into his head. Sambo—that shrewd negro!—had whispered to him of a certain deposit of native spears, sharpened and ready for war, their points barbed with a certain deadly poison that took effect and killed instantly. Sambo had moved those spears from their original hiding-place under the mangrove to another place; for he was well equipped with cunning, Sambo, and he had made sure that they should not be too fully armed.

Incidentally he had told Jimmy of the new hiding-place of the spears.

And the former man about town went out for it as the balloon topped the ridge of the plateau, its gas bag flapping and ricocheting in the almost still air like a crazy kite.

Jimmy bent to manipulating the lines, pulling the gas bag over so that it took what wind there was

and drove in over the edge of the cliff on to the plateau again.

His eyes, accustomed by now to the tropical darkness pierced downwards, and at length he opened the valve of the gas bag, descending in a series of short downward stabs, infinitely sickening to one not accustomed to such means of aerial travel.

He bumped heavily to the ground two hundred yards away from the native village, already built of mud and cane huts in the three days that the N'gwambi tribe had been there.

Jimmy, with a shudder, averted his eyes from the grotesque-appearing devil hut as he climbed out of the balloon. He had chosen his landing-place well. For gnarled trees, festooned with the deadly Spanish moss, protected him from the view of those who might be watching from the native village.

But there was a silence that was disquieting as Jimmy Brent softly trod through the shadows. He could not understand it. He had expected to be guided to this spot by camp fires. There was none. He had been forced to find his way half by instinct, half by a keen use of his eyes. And he did not like the atmosphere at all as he cautiously reconnoitred.

Not a sign of a native. Were they lying in wait for him?

He determined to stake all on a gamble. He had to pass through a patch of open starlit ground, within full view of the native encampment, to reach the hiding-place of the spears. Bent almost double, he hared it, running with madly beating heart.

Every moment he expected to hear the enraged shouts of the savages, and to know the whirring menace of spears around him. Yet neither came.

The native village was deserted. Not even a fire burned.

With fast-beating heart he reached the patch of mangrove that Sambo had told him of, whilst he, garbed as a native witch doctor, had bent over Jimmy in that devil hut. It was right in the open starlight. Jimmy inwardly said things far from complimentary about Sambo's choice of a hiding-place as he crouched there delving under the prickly growth. At any moment he expected that death would be launched full at him.

Yet nothing broke the eerie stillness of the tropical night.

It was uncanny—formidable. Because he had gambled, scarcely caring whether he won or lost, Jimmy Brent found the little beads of perspiration standing out on his forehead as he gathered up a great armful of the spears. He had won. Yes; they were there all right. Luck was smiling on him. Yet what did it all signify? Just revenge.

Revenge on a poisonous brood of senseless, primitive apes! To what depths had Jimmy descended that he should stoop to so puny an act.

Yet fiercely he told himself he would do it. Kill them all. . . Hadn't they killed his friends? Yes; there was something bitter-sweet in the idea of revenge after all.

He staggered through the starshine, the great bunch of poisoned spears gathered to his chest, making for where the balloon was hidden. Still he expected to be laid low any moment. Yet nothing happened.

The silence was uncanny.

Jimmy had an active brain that before now, when he found himself landed in a tight corner, had worked like some lightning-smooth piece of machinery. Just now Jimmy was obsessed with one idea. Revenge. Yet, just as some tiny cell in his brain pumped its message of hope, telling him his friends might not, yet be dead, so his subconscious brain warned him that there was danger in this dead silence, this uncanny, eerie stillness in the native's village.

He reached the shadows of the trees, covered with their deadly Spanish moss, and, first depositing the spears, he climbed over into the basket of the balloon.

The balloon bobbed up as he jerked free the guy ropes from the gnarled, upshooting tendrils of the trees to which he had anchored his craft.

Up into the hot, still, fever-laden air of the African night.

Jimmy had had only one touch of malaria since he had come out here. Somehow either his luck or his splendid constitution had staved off the attacks that were common to all the rest of the big-game cricketers. But suddenly he felt his pulses drumming, and a red-hot fire seemed to burn within him. Almost he yielded to the impulse to rub his eyes, as one does on awakening from a dream. But instead he grasped one of the near-by spears whilst his heart seemed to choke in his throat.

It was true. His eyes were not deceiving him. Streaming across the plateau were his friends. He counted ten of the big-game cricketers, including Sambo, all alive, and able, at any rate, to run from the apes who came in shambling pursuit.

Jimmy saw the big-game cricketers making for the edge of the plateau over which he had risen in the balloon. They could go no further. They were cornered. One or two of them still held their empty rifles, and with their backs up against the rocks they prepared to make a last fighting stand.

Jimmy ground his teeth as the balloon drifted. How slow it seemed! Every second was an eternity. Jimmy wished for his fighting Bristol plane zooming through the air then. He tugged at cords, trying to accelerate the wretched balloon's progress, even while his heart swelled with gladness, and yet quavered with horrible fear. His friends were alive, and yet in danger. And as yet he was powerless to help.

He saw the apes shambling close, their wicked eyes shining red in the semi-darkness. And now the horrid stench of them came to his nostrils. He was close; almost close enough to launch a spear. He took one, and poised it aloft over the side of the balloon.

Whizz!

It missed, went far from its mark. One of the apes was striking savagely at Sir Mark Anton now. Sir Mark crashed the butt of his useless rifle against the hairy, brutish paw, and though that terrific blow elicited a scream of pain from the ape, it also broke off the rifle stock short. The ape, snarling horribly, shambled on to the young cricketer as if to maul him against its awful chest. Jimmy, suddenly ice-cool, took up another spear, poised it and hurled it with all the strength of which he was capable, inwardly praying that his aim was still as good as when he played cricket for Loamshire's First Eleven.

It was. It transfixed the ape in the small of its back, just as the brute's breath was hot on Sir Mark Anton's face, just as it was reaching with its long, hair-covered arms to grab its white prey. Not so much the sharp-pointed spear as the poison with which it was impregnated did its swift, devastating work, and the ape pitched forward within three seconds of being spitted. Sir Mark Anton leapt out of its way as it crashed to the rocks on its terrible face, and the young cricketer's countenance was transfigured with gladness and gratitude as he looked up at his deliverer.

And now Jimmy was like a hurricane in full blast. As fast as one spear left his hand he took up another, throwing with deadly accuracy and force. He seemed inspired, and he poised there in the pitching balloon basket like a Viking of old, his fair hair streaming over his forehead as he flung spears with a strength that seemed phenomenal.

The balloon drifted on with sudden rapidity, caught by a gust of wind it seemed.

Jimmy's spears dropped downwards rather than outwards now. He had pulled the gas cord, and the balloon was sinking; he was within easier striking distance, and his spears were doing terrible havoc.

One after another the apes fell with a swan song between a scream and a snarl that had somehow a terribly grotesque human note in it. All of a sudden Jimmy felt sickened with it all. They were horrible travesties of men, these creatures—just like men . . . and he was killing them fast.

His mind took this sudden, queer trend because he saw one of the apes frantically gathering one or two others—probably its one intimate clan—and most obviously urging them to run from the hail of death that came from above. The ape's gestures were grotesquely human. And suddenly Jimmy felt sick of the killing.

They were shambling away now, the apes, some on all fours, and only a few retaining their upright position. No need now for revenge, for they had not gained their object after all.

Jimmy, drifting very low, prepared for the bump of landing. He was apprehensive of the drop over the cliff edge which he was rapidly nearing. But then suddenly he stiffened, and let loose the cords that were pulling the gasbag down to the basket. Frantically he called out to the big-game cricketers, even while he stooped down.

"Run, chaps—run for your lives. The natives are on us!"

The next second the dreadful meaning of his warning became only too apparent. From behind the cover of low-lying shrub and bush, fully two score of ghastly painted natives burst out, yelling and screaming like dervishes.

Jimmy cursed his luck that in the balloon he had not spotted them. They were making for the big-game cricketers, and their intentions were only too evidently hostile. A hail of spears flew through the air. Jimmy suspended his operations—he had been bending to seize up the last remaining bags of sand and throw them overboard. Now he yelled a warning to his friends.

"Down—take cover!"

They dropped down behind the cover of the rocks even as the shower of spears thrown with deadly accuracy whizzed over their heads. Jimmy might have escaped there and then, but the thought never for a moment entered his head.

He seized up one of the last remaining three spears and hurled it. Instantly there came a scream of anger, and the witch doctor, grotesquely garbed in nodding plumes, ran in advance of his tribe a spear poised in his hand.

The savages now were swarming like a horde of ants towards the sagging balloon.

Jimmy drew back his arm to throw his last spear at the hideous, coal-black figure of the witch doctor. His aim for once erred, and the spear spat up dirt a yard from the glistening naked form. It was Jimmy's only chance—his last. The next second he crouched as the air around him became black with hurtling spears; there was a terrific explosion like the report of a cannon above him, and his every bone was jarred as the basket crashed to the ground with the gas balloon pierced by a dozen spears.

Jimmy trying to clamber out of the basket, saw a shadow suddenly rise before him. Feet padded all around him. Hands came from the night, and he went down with a horde of coconut-oiled savages on top of him. An evil-smelling cloth was drawn across

his face, his feet and hands were gripped tight, and he felt himself lifted and borne quickly away. He writhed and twisted to free himself from the cloth that was choking him, but all in vain. He was in the clutch of the savages.

Someone hit him savagely on the head with a stone axe, and Jimmy knew no more.

At last Jimmy opened his eyes again, a hot burning ache at his brain. He was in a canoe, lashed there. Paddles splashed, and he felt the canoe moving. The cloth stifled him, and red flames seared his eyes, yet he managed somehow to move his head.

It was starlight still, brooding darkness and starlight on the hot, steaming river. And behind him were paddling swiftly perhaps a dozen more native canoes, each bearing its quota of prisoners. They were all in the same boat, Jimmy reflected drearily. Prisoners of the savages.

A harsh voice spoke from the platform on the canoe behind him. A voice that Jimmy recognised.

"Now, James Brent, Esq., you shall understand the true meaning and ecstasy of pain and death."

Jimmy slewed his head, and his eyes became like tiny pin points of light in the tropical night. He recognised the man who had spoken, though the fellow was grotesquely smeared so that his almost nude body was black as ebony. He recognised him, spite of the blood-red betel juice with which his face was smeared, spite of the nodding parrot's plumes, that decorated his head, and the necklace of bones around his neck.

It was Henri Velasquez.

The Big Boss evidently has copied Sambo's example, indeed taken his place as the witch-doctor. Watch out for Exciting Developments Next Week.

Three
Rousing
Cheers, Chaps!

Thrill
Phil,
The
Boy Film
Actor,
Coming
Again
In Our
SPECIAL
PIRATE AND
CANNIBAL
NUMBER
NEXT WEEK.

Watch Out
For Special
Surprises.



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

THE PLANET SCHOOLBOYS

Specially Written for our Chums by
EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

The Continent Of Weed.

DEEPER and deeper into the weed! Very few of the adventurers realised the grim nature of this new peril during the first few moments. It had seemed to them that they were diving to destruction, and now, when they found themselves still safe and sound, their main emotion was relief. The fact that the forepart of the ship was clogged by the weed did not seem to matter much.

"Let's go out on deck!" shouted Freeman excitedly.

"A priceless scheme, laddie!" said the Hon. Freddie, nodding.

"Rather!" said Willis. "Come on!"

All the boys went running out, and they took no notice of the disordered condition of the lounge—the result of the recent mad capers, occasioned by the wind. They wanted to get on deck—to have a look at this vast, weed island at closer quarters.

"Think there's any danger, Prof?" asked Sir Bags, after the boys had gone.

"Danger!" echoed Professor Roxley Drewe, his voice husky and agitated. "Good heavens, Clarence, of course there's danger! Man alive, do you realise that we may never disentangle ourselves from the grip of this weed?"

"Well, I must admit that I haven't got the wind up yet," said Sir Bags coolly. "And as for this bound, we'll soon deal with him!" he added, looking down at Count Popandos. "He's the cause of all this trouble, anyhow! The best thing we can do is to pitch him overboard into this pre-ious weed!"

"No, no!" gasped the Count, his eyes alight with terror. "I was mad—"

"Yes, we know all about that game!" interrupted Bags curtly. "You've fooled us once, Popandos—but you won't fool us again! Gad, to think that we lavished our pity on you, and gave you all the privileges of a sick man! Never again, my beauty!"

"We'd better have him taken below and locked up!" said the Professor, with a frown. "And this time we will see that he's held secure!"

In the meantime the boys were crowding against the rail, staring down at that great mass of weed. The immensity of it awed them, and for some little time they stood there, staring in silence.

"It—it doesn't seem possible!" muttered Barry Drewe at last.

And the others could easily understand his meaning. As far as the eye could reach, on every hand, the weed stretched out. It was like a great continent, extending in illimitable masses. From thousands of feet above, they had been able to see the edges of this weed continent—they had seen the open water beyond. But now that they were on practically the same level as the weed, the horizon was only broken here and there by humps of the foul stuff.

The weed growths were enormous. The boys found themselves looking down upon tangled masses

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



of great greenish roots, many of them as thick as tree trunks, twisty and contorted. There were great fronds, too—enormous things, measuring many feet across. So densely packed was this weed that one could have walked across it with ease. In one or two places the water could be seen—scum-covered and stagnant. But they were only little pools. The weed sent forth a pungent, sickening smell—the odour of decay and stagnation.

"We're always meeting with fresh surprises," said Hardy in a low voice. "Who would have believed that this weed would be here like this? And what about the old Rover? Do you think we shall be able to get free of the stuff?"

"Goodness knows," replied Barry, with an anxious look towards the bows. "We're pretty deeply in, you know—and these enormous weed growths seem to be pulling us down, deeper and deeper. Unless we get out pretty soon there'll be no chance for us."

"Look!" muttered Billy Ward. "We're down by the bows lower than ever! And isn't there a sort of movement up there in the weed?"

"Oh, my hat, so there is!" whispered Jefferson. "Perhaps some of those awful sea monsters are after us—"

"There's no sense in meeting trouble half-way, old man," interrupted Barry. "Perhaps we shall get out of it all-right. Anyhow, we can only trust the Professor. He's in command of the ship, and everything's up to him."

"But—but I can't get over all this, you know!" said Freeman, waving his hand vaguely at the weed. "It's—it's unbelievable! It's like nothing on earth!"

"Well, we're on Venus, aren't we?" said Puggy Dibble in a trembling voice. "What fools we were to come! We'll never get out of this mess! That old idiot of a Professor ought to be boiled in oil for leading us into this danger!"

"Dry up, you croaking worm!" said Freeman with a glare. "It's not the Professor's fault!"

"Look!" shouted one of the other fellows, his voice rising high with excitement. "The weed seems to be alive! Can't you see it moving?"

It was true. The very weed itself seemed to be

coming to life—sluggishly and relentlessly. Many of the fronds were opening, and the great weed tendrils—each one as thick as a tree trunk—were rising up into the air, writhing, contorting, and sinuously moving.

It seemed that the weed was something living—something possessed of intelligence—and the boys felt that they were in the presence of a new Horror.

The Desperate Fight.

"GOOD Gad!" muttered Sir Clarence Bagshot. He had come out on deck and, unnoticed by the boys, he was standing against the rail, looking down at the weed. And Bags, too, could see that insidious movement—that ugly, evil sign of danger.

"It's horrible—horrible!" came a shout from Willis. "Look, you fellows! The stuff's alive!"

"Don't get excited," growled Freeman. "Of course it's alive!"

"But I don't mean in that way!" panted Willis. "It's alive like—like an animal! We're being dragged lower and lower all the time!"

Bags compressed his lips. It seemed a fantastic suggestion of Willis's—that the weed was alive in the way he had hinted. But nothing could alter the fact that the *Rover* was being drawn down—down into that tangle of horror.

"Can't we do something, Bags?" asked Barry Drewe, running up to the sporting baronet.

"No good asking me, young 'un," said Bags gruffly. "I don't know what to do. Give me an elephant gun and a rhinoceros to blaze away at, and I'll probably do some damage. But I'm no hand at mechanics. I don't know how on earth we're going to get the *Rover* out of this mess. We shall have to trust to the Professor."

"What do you think about all this horrible weed, sir?"

"Once," said Bags, "I saw a bit of the Sargasso Sea. You've heard of it, young 'uns, eh? It's a kind of tideless sea in the South Atlantic—where

the drifting gulf weed forms a great island after this fashion. All sorts of fantastic stories have been told about the Sargasso—legends and fairy tales, most of 'em. But I'd be ready to believe anything about this dump of weed!"

Professor Drewe came hurrying out.

"It's no good—we can't shift, Clarence!" he exclaimed, his voice shrill with anxiety. "Our engines are useless against this force! The weed has got us firmly in its grip, and we shall have to take immediate measures if we are to free ourselves."

"What sort of measures?" asked Bags. "Tell me what to do, Prof, and I'll get busy."

"Why not try the machine guns, sir?" suggested Barry eagerly. "If this stuff is alive, as Willis has hinted, the machine guns might do some damage. They might cause the weed to lose its grip. Anyhow, it would be better than standing here, doing nothing!"

"The boy's right!" said Professor Drewe quickly. "The machine guns, Bags! You know more about that than I do. Hurry round to the men, get them stationed at their posts—fire at this infernal weed, and see if you cannot shift it!"

"Well, there can be no harm in having a shot at it," said Bags. "It's more in my line, anyhow. Leave this to me, Professor—I'll get the machine-guns on the go!"

And Bags, glad of something to do, rushed off, the boys would have followed, but Jerry Mannering came up at that minute, and he called sharply to them.

"Steady, young 'uns!" he said. "You'd better come inside—out of danger."

"But there's no danger here, sir!" protested Freeman. "We want to help with the machine-guns—"

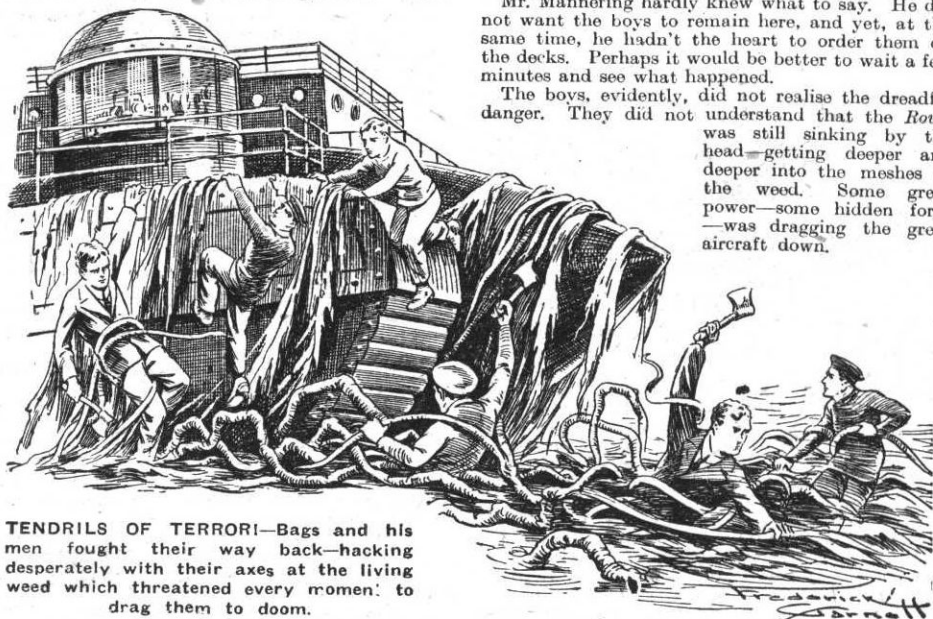
"There is no necessity for that," said Mr. Mannering. "There are plenty of men—and they know how to handle machine-guns better than you do, Freeman."

"Well, be a sport, sir," said Freeman. "Don't send us in just as the fun's starting."

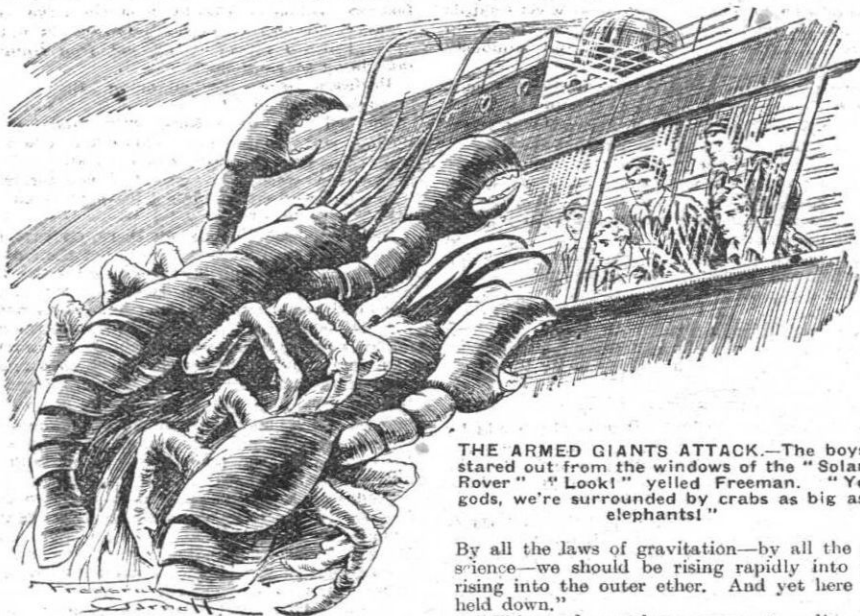
Mr. Mannering hardly knew what to say. He did not want the boys to remain here, and yet, at the same time, he hadn't the heart to order them off the decks. Perhaps it would be better to wait a few minutes and see what happened.

The boys, evidently, did not realise the dreadful danger. They did not understand that the *Rover*

was still sinking by the head—getting deeper and deeper into the meshes of the weed. Some great power—some hidden force—was dragging the great aircraft down.



TENDRILS OF TERROR!—Bags and his men fought their way back—hacking desperately with their axes at the living weed which threatened every moment to drag them to doom.



THE ARMED GIANTS ATTACK.—The boys stared out from the windows of the "Solar Rover" "Look!" yelled Freeman. "Ye gods, we're surrounded by crabs as big as elephants!"

To shoot at this weed seemed a futile, imbecile thing. But what else was there to be done? And it wasn't as though the weed was inanimate, like some ordinary vegetable growth. It was alive—it was active—it was like some gigantic creature.

And then, with a devastating rattle, one of the machine-guns opened fire.

"There they go!" yelled Freeman, rushing forward.

"But—but it seems so useless!" panted Barry. "Look at all this weed—stretching for miles and hundreds of miles! What's the good of firing our puny machine guns at this mass?"

From every part of the vessel came the whirring and rattling of the machine-guns, intermixed with the sharp cracking of rifles. And almost at the same time a slow, hideous movement of the weed could be seen. It was heaving itself—rolling and writhing. Were those shots having effect, or was this just a natural phenomenon?

And the battle went on—this battle between the desperate party of human beings and the unknown horrors of the Venusian weed continent!

The Fear Of The Night.

AT the back of it all was the dread of being hemmed in this weed when the night came.

The night!

On land the Venusian night had been deadly enough, and the adventurers had already had a taste of what the Venusian sea could offer, after daylight had fled. But what chance would the Rover have out here, amid all this deadly weed, once the darkness had shut down? What awful horrors did this weed conceal?

So every effort was made—every man did his utmost. And all this time the ether motors were going at full power—tugging with amazing force, and yet apparently doing nothing. For the Rover still remained clutched in the grip of this weed.

"I can't understand it!" said Professor Roxley Drewe tensely. "What power can this be, Clarence?"

By all the laws of gravitation—by all the rules of science—we should be rising rapidly into the air, rising into the outer ether. And yet here we are, held down."

"This weed must have some extraordinary power of suction, or something," replied Bags. "Anyhow, we're putting up a stiff fight. And it seems to me that the weed is easing up a bit. Am I mistaken, or are the bows a little higher than they were five minutes ago?"

"A trifle—a mere trifle," said the Professor. "We are still held down, Clarence. Look! These green ropes of slime are twined round the metal work forward—some of them extending right over the very bows! They are as strong as steel cables—and they are growing tighter and tighter!"

They were all feeling helpless. What more could they do now? The machine-guns were having a trifling effect, it seemed, but something more drastic was needed. The weed was slowly but surely gripping the forward part of the vessel, and the movement was spreading, too. Sooner or later, the entire Rover would be gripped by these weed tendrils—by these animal-like cables of green foulness.

"It's the night I am worrying about," said the Professor, with an anxious glance at the sky. "It is already well after mid-day. The afternoon is upon us, Clarence—and night is not very far off. The Venusian day, you will remember, is very much the same as the earth day. Roughly, about twenty-three hours. What if we cannot get free before darkness?"

"Don't ask me," replied Bags. "I don't like to think of such a thing."

"But we must think of it," insisted the Professor. "My ship—my ship! She is being dragged under—"

"Never mind your ship," growled Bags. "I know she's more to you than mere human life, Professor. But what about these boys? I think we'd better call for volunteers and go overside."

"In heaven's name, what for?"

"We'll take hatchets—and axes," replied Bags grimly. "We'll hack at these weed growths and free the Rover in that way. We might have a shot at it, anyhow."

"Yes, yes," said Professor Drewe, his eyes glittering. "It is certainly a good idea of yours,

Clarence. But the danger, man! Have you thought of the danger?"

"Unless something is done, we shall all perish," replied Bags quietly. "Better sacrifice a few lives, and get the job done, than stand here, idle."

The volunteers were quickly forthcoming. Bags only found it necessary to go among the men, telling them of his project, and they came forward willingly enough. Yet they must have known that they were about to take their lives into their hands. There was something about this weed which horrified them. They were not exactly afraid of it—but they were awed. There was a quality about the stuff which hunted at an abominable peril.

"What's in the wind now?" asked Barry Drewe, as he noted the preparations. "My only hat! They're not going overboard, are they?"

"Looks like it," said Freeman with a start. "Come on! We'll be in this!"

"It's about time we did something, anyhow!" said Robin Hardy. "It's like their nerve to leave us out in the cold all this time!"

But when the boys crowded up to the foreward part of the ship, where the preparations were being made, they were ordered back.

"It's no good, boys—you don't appear in this act," said Sir Bags briskly. "We're going overside—to have a sloop at this weed with axes."

"But we can help, can't we, sir?" asked Barry.

"Yes, you can help by obeying orders, and keeping well back," replied Bags promptly. "Sorry, young 'uns, but this is a dangerous job, and—"

"We're willing to take our share of the danger, sir," said Freeman.

"I know you are—but there's nothing doing," said Bags. "Jerry, old man, keep these youngsters well back, will you?"

"Leave them to me," replied Mr. Mannering grimly.

And the boys, much to their disgust, were compelled to retreat. And the attacking party, armed with great axes, climbed over the rail and descended to the slimy, mysterious weed.

The Coming Of The Darkness.

WITH Sir Bags leading the way, the men went forth on their desperate mission.

Perhaps the very fate of the *Solar Rover* rested upon the efforts of these brave spirits. For unless the weed was conquered, the *Rover* would remain immovably fixed. Already she was entangled in this dreadful stuff. What hope could there possibly be on the morrow—always providing that the Venusian night was survived—when the weed had gained a firmer hold?

Many of the boys thought of stories they had read, concerning the Sargasso Sea. They had read of hulks being found there—Spanish galleons and other ancient craft. For hundreds of years these vessels had been hemmed in by the Sargasso Sea, and Heaven alone knew what terrible battles their crews had had before death had mercifully come to relieve them.

And the Sargasso Sea was a mere joke to this incredible Venusian weed continent!

So it was not very surprising that every soul on the *Rover* was filled with a wild anxiety. Most of the boys kept a stiff upper lip, although their hearts were thumping with anxiety and doubt. Only Puggy Dibble and his two friends gave way under the strain. They whimpered openly—they grumbled and complained. And they were perilously near, indeed, to tears. Terror had gripped them.

"We're all going to be killed!" wailed Puggy. "Oh, why did we come?"

"Nobody asked you to come!" retorted Freeman tartly. "You weren't invited, so you'd better not grumble! Besides, we're not going to peg out yet, you blubbering idiot! We'll get free from this weed before we've done."

"We can't—we can't!" whimpered Biggs Hoskins. "The weed's got us!"

And then a yell came from Billy Ward. He was pointing, and at the same moment a number of shouts came from further along the deck.

"It's the weed—the weed!" shouted Barry. "The men are fighting against it—fighting for their lives!"

It was true enough. Down there, on that weed, Bags and his men were trying to get their axes to work on the giant tendrils which gripped the *Rover*. Many of the tendrils had been already severed, and as they were cut—as the axes beat deeply into the pulp-like weed—a black, evil-smelling liquid oozed forth. And those broken stems were writhing and twisting—and in some extraordinary way they were reaching out towards the men.

A shriek went up, followed by many other shouts. And that shriek had come from one of the men below. He had dropped his hatchet, and the boys saw, with horror, that he was fighting desperately with a great weed frond. It had opened out just near him, and had closed upon the man like a great folding blanket. He was struggling insanely to get free from that grip.

And then it was seen that other men were in danger. Sir Bags himself was hacking away with his axe, for the enormous weeds were rising up and attempting to destroy these humans who dared to give battle.

All thought of freeing the *Rover* was abandoned. Bags and his men were fighting their way back—and it seemed that they would never win. For as they attempted to climb up the ropes of the ladders those weed tendrils reached out and gripped them. And other tendrils were constantly writhing upwards from the mass of the weed.

"Gad, it's terrible!" muttered Jerry Mannering. "The thing is happening in front of my very eyes, Professor, and yet I can't believe it. This weed is alive—like some hideous creature!"

Professor Drewe nodded.

"I am reminded of the upas tree," he said tensely. "The upas tree—which attacks, and sometimes kills, unwary travellers who linger beneath its branches! This deadly weed is a Venusian counterpart of the upas tree, Mannering. It is not really alive—in the sense that it possesses an intelligence—but there is some vile quality about it which causes it to grip and destroy everything that comes within its grasp."

"They're aboard—they're aboard!" went up a great shout.

"Oh, thank Heaven!"

Bags and his men, streaming with perspiration, and well-nigh exhausted, came over the rail. They had been fighting every inch of their way—and they deemed themselves lucky to be alive.

And the attempt to free the *Rover* had failed. It was obviously impossible to venture upon the weed, unless one wanted to die a horrible death.

But there was one consolation. The *Rover* was still safe and sound. And as the hours passed she seemed to maintain her own. Her ether motors were at full power all the time, and although she could not free herself, she was now stationary. The weed was unable to pull its victim down into the mysterious depths.

Frantic efforts were made during those last remaining hours of daylight. The machine-guns were kept continually in action, and even the heavy guns were

used. But it was all to no purpose. And at last the darkness came—the dreaded Venusian night!

The Horrors Of The Night.

IT was difficult to believe that any danger existed. The dining-saloon of the *Rover*, brilliantly illuminated by electric lights, was looking quite gay and festive.

An hour had passed since darkness had shut down, and every door and window and porthole was hermetically sealed.

And now it was dinner-time.

Sir Bags, with his usual lightheartedness, had proposed that dinner should be served in just the usual way. Why make any difference? He felt that a hearty meal would put strength and courage into all of them. And, perhaps, it would help to calm the unknown fears that were besetting them all.

"Well, while there's life there's hope," said Bags cheerily, as he sat down at the table. "George, my son, be good enough to pass the rolls! Or do you want them all for yourself?"

George Freeman gave a kind of gulp.

"I can't eat a thing," he replied. "I'm not hungry."

"Rot!" said Bags. "Once you start eating you'll go ahead like a trencherman."

And in this statement Bags was correct. Most of the boys had felt that food would choke them. But after they had started eating they discovered that they were really hungry, and as the meal proceeded so a calmness fell over the adventurers. The *Rover* was very quiet, very still. Was it possible that the night would pass without any fresh peril?

"What are we going to do after dinner, sir?" asked Barry. "Shall we go on deck again—?"

"The decks are out of bounds, my son," interrupted Bags. "Nothing doing! We're all locked in, and in we'll stay."

"But oughtn't something to be done, sir?" asked Freeman. "What's the good of sitting here twiddling our thumbs?"

"Speak for yourself, young 'un," replied Bags.

"You can twiddle your own thumbs if you like, but I regard it as a pure waste of time."

"Sir Clarence is perfectly right, boys," put in Professor Roxley Drewe. "We can do nothing further until the morning—and even then I am doubtful if our efforts will be of any avail. We can but hope for the best. After a brief interval, you had all better go to your cabins and get some sleep."

"Sleep!" echoed Barry. "Oh, uncle! How can we sleep at a time like this?"

"Personally, old cheese, I regard it as a priceless suggestion," said the Hon. Freddie. "I mean to say, a dose of the good old dreamless is just what the doctor ordered. Absolutely the stuff to make a chappie forget his worries and troubles."

"But if we go to sleep we may never wake up again!" said Puggy Dibble, his eyes rolling with fear. "Some awful thing might come out of the night and destroy us—"

"Then it's far better to go to sleep," said Bags firmly. "If we've got to be destroyed, let it come swiftly and mercifully—"

"Hark!" broke in Robin, starting to his feet.

"What was that?"

The others were on their feet now, their faces alert, their eyes excited.

"Eh?" he gasped Freeman. "What was what?"

"I thought I heard something—a kind of thudding sound—right down in the ship!" said Robin.

"Some of the men, down in the stokehold," said Bags carelessly.

"But there isn't any stokehold!" protested Barry.

"Well, down in the kitchens, then," said Sir Clarence. "What's the difference? Why quibble over—"

"There it is again!" shouted Robin. "Be quiet, everybody."

They all stood there, tensely alert.

Thud—thud—thud—thud!

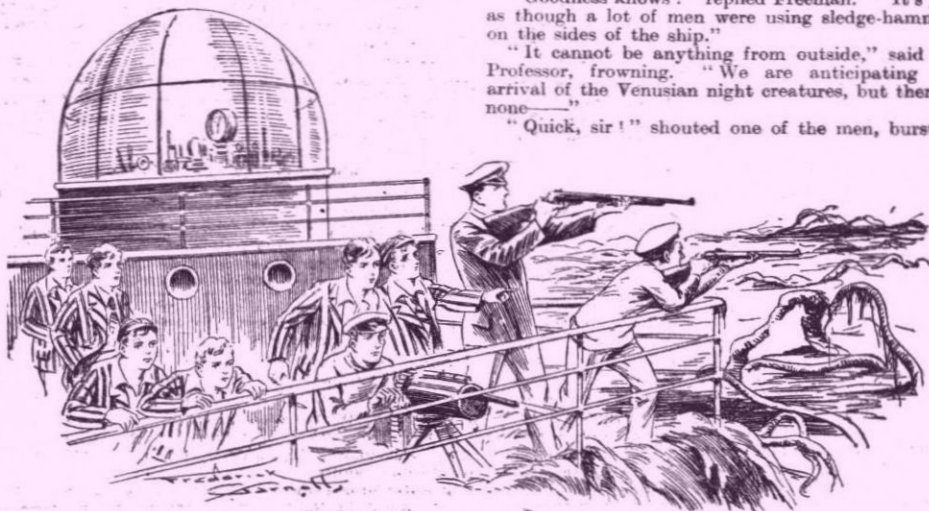
It came from several quarters now, and they could feel the very deck beneath their feet quivering. It was a mysterious sound—half metallic, half muffle.

"What is it?" asked Jefferson breathlessly.

"Goodness knows!" replied Freeman. "It's just as though a lot of men were using sledge-hammers on the sides of the ship."

"It cannot be anything from outside," said the Professor, frowning. "We are anticipating the arrival of the Venusian night creatures, but there is none—"

"Quick, sir!" shouted one of the men, bursting



WAR AGAINST THE WEED!—From every part of the vessel came the rattling of machine-guns, intermixed with the sharp crack-crack of the rifles. It was a seemingly hopeless task—to free the vessel from the clinging weed

into the dining saloon. "There are some monstrous things trying to come aboard, up by the bows. We can't see them very well, but they're shaking the whole ship!"

"Oh, my goodness!"

There was an uproar at once, and the excitement was supreme.

"The searchlights!" shouted Don Masters. "Why not put the searchlights on? They may protect us—and we shall be able to see, too."

"Yes, the searchlights!" went up the shout.

"Keep your hair on," growled Sir Bags. "The searchlights have been on for the last half-hour. We didn't tell you, because we thought you'd all want to crowd at the windows—"

He broke off, for the boys were rushing to the windows.

And the boys saw something. . . they saw several objects.

A Night of Mystery.

THUD—thud—thud!

In a continuous succession of gigantic blows, the unknown things out in the weed kept up a tattoo against the *Rover's* sides. And these blows were getting harder now—until the vessel shook and quivered with the very force of them.

"What are they?" panted the Professor. "What can it be that is causing all this noise. My ship—my ship! She can't stand such a bombardment as this!"

"It sounds bad, Prof., but it may not be so serious," said Bags. "Let's have a look—"

Crash—crash—crash!

Those sounds could no longer be described as thuds. They were deafening blows, and the air was filled with the tremendous noise. And not merely from one part of the ship did they come, but from all parts. From aft, from forward—to port and to starboard. The *Solar Rover* seemed to be surrounded by these unknown monsters.

A shout came from one of the windows.

"Look!" yelled Freeman. "What are they? Ye gods! They look like crabs! And they're as big as elephants!"

"Good gad!"

"No, they're lobsters!" yelled Billy Ward. "Look at 'em—terrific great things!"

The Professor stared out, his eyes glittering.

"Yes, Clarence; undoubtedly these creatures are crustaceans."

"Crusta—which?" said Bags.

"There are thousands of them!" went on the Professor, in dire alarm. "We shall never be able to withstand this attack, Clarence. These crustaceans are unbelievably big—enormous monsters, truly as large as elephants! I have no doubt that they roam over this weed in droves. And perhaps they have scented us—perhaps they knew that we were here, but did not dare to venture near us until darkness had fallen. And now they are trying to smash the sides in so that they can get at us."

"At us!" panted Barry. "How awful!"

It was, indeed, a shocking thought. These giant Venusian crustaceans were swarming round the *Solar Rover*, trying to gain an entry. So long as they kept to the weed level, and hammered at the vessel's stout sides, no great harm was likely. But what if these things climbed higher, and drove their great claws against the glass? One blow would be sufficient to shiver the stoutest glass.

In the blaze of the searchlights the crustaceans could occasionally be seen. They were something

like lobsters, and something like crabs—a kind of cross between the two, and they were provided with enormous front claws—claws that were many feet in length, and as hard as wrought steel.

Thud—crash—thud!

"But what can we do?" asked Professor Drew, clutching at Bags' arm. "Clarence—Clarence! Cannot you suggest anything?"

Sir Bags scratched his head.

"Sorry, Prof, but I'm done," he said blankly. "What can we do against such monsters as these? The machine guns and rifles are useless—no better than pea-shooters—and we can't use the big guns at such close range. We should only blow ourselves to pieces if we tried that game."

"But look!" said the Professor, pointing. "More of the crustaceans—more and more! Very soon they will be overwhelming us and—"

Cra-a-a-sh!

"Well, that's done it!" said Bags, between his teeth. "Good lord, it seems to be all over, Professor."

For that last crash had been a shivering of glass! And everybody there, including the boys, turned and stared—stared with wild expressions in their eyes, and with their voices stilled. The crustaceans had broken the glass in another part of the ship, and they were in!

Attacked by armed terrors of Nature! The adventurers are about to face the greatest peril they have encountered in this Land of Horrors. Another Masterly Instalment Next Week, Chums.

BULLY BAGS—(Continued from page 27).

"Here I say—" protested Barson. "Ow—" He yelped with pain as the stick descended on the seat of his trousers.

"Ow! ow! Stoppit, you beast. Ow!" A dozen times the cane rose and fell, then Sir Jasper, who was breathing hard, indicated that Billing's time had come. He bore his punishment tearfully, but Bates, who was made of sterner stuff, went through it without flinching.

Sir Jasper flung down his cane and pointed to the gate. "Now get out, you young hounds," he panted—"and don't ever let me see you in these grounds again."

Slowly, awkwardly, the three bullies picked themselves up and limped painfully towards the gate.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

A shout of laughter caused them to look up, and, to their intense humiliation, they saw Scorcher Smith & Co. leaning against the fence. They had come up from the river just in time to see the last few strokes of Bates' flogging.

"Worth a guinea a box," grinned Carstairs. "The old hunk evidently mistook them for us."

"Eggstraordinary!" chuckled Smith.

The three bullies clenched their fists, but they were too weary to fight, and they limped away, their cup of woe filled to overflowing.

Look out for some Sensational Surprises Next Week. Gifts and Other Spanking News.

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