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WAR IN CHINA! Gripping Exploits of British Secret Service Man Within

VOL. XX—No. 523—March 12, 1932

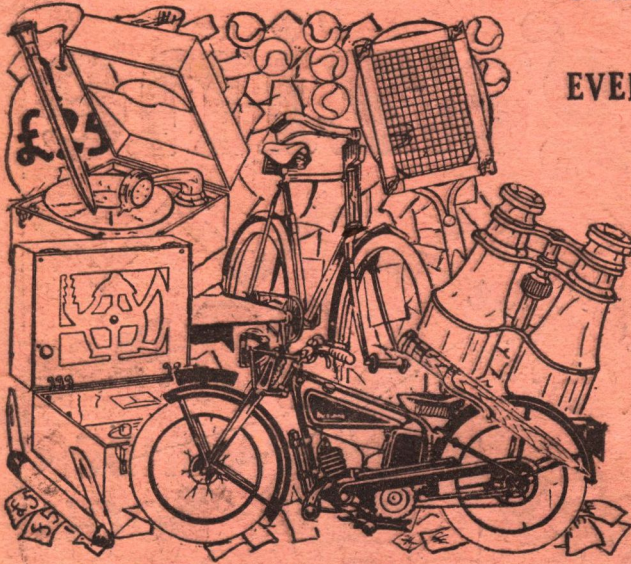
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STARTLING SURPRISE THRILLER OF WAR IN CHINA

THE EXPLOITS OF G13—MYSTERY MAN



From the Lanterned Underworld of Old Shanghai this Dramatic Complete Tale takes You on to the Shell-swept, Quaking Quagmire of the Sino-Japanese Battle-front. **BREATHLESS THRILLS WITH THE BRITISH SECRET SERVICE.**

At the Sign of the Black Lantern.

BOOM! Boom! Boom! Boom-boom-boom!
Booom!

Muffled by distance, yet no less ominous, the sound of the big guns from the north floated over Shanghai, penetrated through the beaded curtains that cloaked the low doorway of the little back-street chop-suey joint known as the Sign of the Black Lantern. At the cane tables natives who sat over their midday bowls of rice paused to listen; almond eyes registered no impression; impassive, fatalistic, the be-robed figures shuffled in and out of the eating-house as though the War God, Kwang-ti, and his

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

OUT EVERY SATURDAY.

savage grumbling had nought for them. And yet, beneath their fatalistic exterior, many wondered at the terror that had been unleashed, knew how near they were to the abyss—and shuddered!

But the thoughts that were passing through the keen brain of one of their number would have shocked even their Oriental calm could they only have seen into his mind! Clad in the voluminous silk robes of the mandarin, this worthy sat near the curtained doorway at a single table, watching through lazy, half-closed eyes every Chinese who glided into the Black Lantern from outside.

Certainly the man with the black beard—obviously not a Chinaman, but a native of Gueldonia, that troublesome bolshevistic state of Southern Europe—did not dream that the mandarin at the next table was none other than G13 of the British Secret Service. And G13 was a title to conjure with! In all the diplomatic circles of the world he was known as the agent *par excellence*. None could ever swear to having seen him—not even his chiefs at the British Foreign Office. Yet the work set him was always done. And the biggest jobs were always put into his hands:

So it was with the Shanghai trouble. It was known that an outside state was playing a queer game—trying, it was said, to embroil England and America in the war. Some said Gueldonia was the country, but there was no proof. Certain orders were issued to G13—and three days later a certain Chinaman who was not a Chinaman sat in the little chop-suey joint in a Shanghai back-street—and watched.

And though his blank, impassive gaze seemed to be only on the bowl of rice set before him, he saw and heard everything that went on at the table of the gentleman from Gueldonia.

A coolie sauntered through the curtained doorway, caught the eye of the black-bearded man and dropped into the vacant chair at the other side of the cane table. To G13, who read easily their lip-movements, though he could not hear, came the following conversation.

"I see you eat rice, to-day?" from the Gueldonian. And the answer to the greeting: "And all is well with thee, foreign brother?" A nod from the Gueldonian. Then the question: "Number one?" The coolie gave the affirmative. Whereat the big bearded man fumbled in his pocket and a slip of paper passed quickly between him and his companion. Two minutes later, the coolie rose and hurried from the Sign of the Black Lantern.

A strange light leapt to the eyes of the disguised Secret Service man; but he bent over his rice so that none saw. When he again looked in the direction of the other table another diner was just moving to the empty place vacated by the coolie. Again the greeting passed between him and the big, burly figure with the black beard. Then: "Number Two!" murmured the newcomer, and the Gueldonian produced another slip of paper, which his companion, ostensibly a well-to-do mandarin, quickly concealed in the folds of his robe and, after consuming a bowl of rice in silence, rose and shuffled from the place.

This time G13 rose, too. He passed through the beaded curtains seconds after the mysterious mandarin. Down the twisting, narrow street with its flamboyant signs and flags, its motley pedestrians through whose shuffling ranks weaved the ubiquitous sedan chair and one-wheeled cart, hurried the Secret Service man's quarry—oblivious of the fate that pursued him.

Suddenly he turned off into a narrow, deserted alleyway, leading to the waterside. He had taken

half-a-dozen paces beyond a bend in the lane which hid him from the sight of the multitude which passed along the busy street, when an arm like steel whipped around his neck. There was a dull *snap* and the Chinaman went limp.

G13 bent over his prostrate figure—long enough to extract the paper the Gueldonian had given him from his robes. Then he slid away from the scene, leaving the prostrate figure of the plottor where it had fallen. By the water-front where, out in the harbour, the lithe grey shapes of ships-of-war of half-a-dozen nations lolloped at anchor, G13 scanned the missive he had taken from his victim.

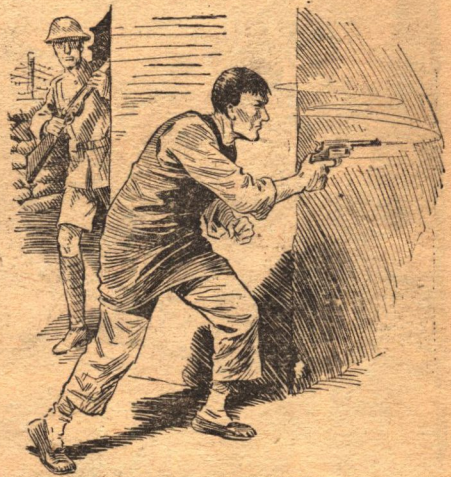
It was in code; but after consulting a morocco-bound code-book the Secret Service man scribbled the solution on the back of an envelope. His eyes narrowed as he perused the de-coded message:

Instructions to No. 2, Gueldonian Secret Service. Meet Nos. 1 and 3 to-night, five-thirty. At Dragon Gate. Second house on left of Street of a Thousand Ages. Knock three times. Our agent there will supply sufficient explosive for job. With time-fuse set to explode at 6-10. Carry into British Concession at 6 p.m. If challenged, reply carrying food. 1 and 3 have similar instructions.

(Signed) X, Gueldonian Secret Service.

A low whistle escaped G13.

"The skunks!" he gritted. "So that's the big idea. To blow the whole of the British Concession to blazes. Men, women, and children—all sky-high!"



Crack! As G13 pressed the trigger, the bullet sped towards its mark.

He looked at his watch. It was now 12.30 p.m. He had stopped the second accomplice of the bearded plottor from Gueldonia carrying out his orders. Number One was gone—Number Three not yet there, perhaps. There was a chance. . . .

Two minutes later G13 again entered the Sign of the Black Lantern. But no one would have connected him with the man who had left the place a quarter of an hour ago. The flowered robe he now wore was of a totally different pattern from his former one; though, actually, it was merely turned inside out. He also walked with a pronounced stoop, and a wispy moustache drooped from his lip. His cheekbones were higher, his face broader, heavier; two gold teeth showed where white ones had been before. G13 was a master of disguise!

The big Gueldonian was still seated at his table—and this time G13 shuffled boldly forward and seated himself opposite him.

"All is well with thee, foreign brother?" lisped the Britisher in the dialect Numbers One and Two had used. And his heart leapt as the other whispered back: "Number Three?"

So none had been between him and the man he had known as Number Two! Into the willing hand of G13 the black-bearded foreigner pushed another scrap of paper—and as he did so there sounded a hiss of rage and a taloned hand made a grab at the missive. G13 eluded the effort to snatch the paper from him—and, looking up, he and the Gueldonian saw the silk-robed figure of another chink who had entered the chop-suey joint in time to hear what passed between them.

"Quick, seize him!" hissed the newcomer in the Gueldonian tongue. "He is a spy! I am Number Three!"

Pandemonium followed. The black-bearded plotter jumped to his feet as G13 flung himself backwards out of the flimsy cane chair and made a dive for the doorway. The Gueldonian whipped out a black automatic and aimed it at the figure of the Britisher.

G13 wheeled, snatching up a basin of rice. In the same movement he sent it speeding with unerring aim at the plotter's gun hand! Then: *Bang!* *Bang!* His own gun spoke twice and the two foreign spies fell back, choking out their life's blood.

G13 slipped through the curtains and mingled with

can find Number One, the whole conspiracy will be nipped in the bud. I—well, talk of angels!"

No wonder the Secret Service man was for the moment surprised out of his habitual calm. Hardly had he mentioned Number One than he caught sight of the fellow. He recognised him easily; but it was impossible to tackle him and get the precious message he carried. For the man was not alone. He was being hustled along in the grip of a body of Chinese soldiers. G13 recognised his escort as a sort of modern press gang with the aid of which China pressed her unwilling sons into service.

Standing there in the broad main street of Shanghai with electric trams passing up and down and many of the people on the sidewalks clad in European clothes, G13 grinned under his disguise at the sight. It was hard to reconcile a press gang with the twentieth century.

Next moment, however, the fact that such things were possible—anything was possible—in China was brought home to him. A hand fell on his shoulder and he swung round to face a Chinese officer. A gang of khaki-clad figures stood behind the man. G13, too, had been conscripted for service!

In the Firing-Line.

IT is impossible to believe that the resource and daring of the British Secret Service man known as G13 would fail him in such a moment. With some deft counter-stroke he should be able to fling the press gang into confusion and make his getaway.



THE DYNAMITE PLOT EXPLODED!—From the load of "food" the two coolies were carrying came a burst of lurid flame that spread up and out and down, gouging out a huge hole in the centre of the great square, and smashing windows far and wide by its force.

the motley crowd that flowed along the street. As soon as he was sure he had lost the hue and cry, the British Secret Service man scanned the document the Gueldonian had given him. It was precisely the same as the one he had taken from Number Two. It remained now only to prevent Number One getting through, and enlisting further help in the place of Two and Three.

"H'm!" he murmured. "So far so good. If I

But nothing of the sort happened. He suffered himself to be led quietly away and signed on for the grand army of China—sworn to defend his supposed country's shores against the invasion!

Actually, he had realised that what had befallen him was the best thing that could have happened under the circumstances. It would enable him to keep in close touch with Number One—prevent him sending that fatal message!

He was hustled into a recruiting-office and given a Chinese uniform. Whether he was A1 for service did not seem to matter. At any rate, no physical examination was necessary—else they would have discovered his nationality.

Within two hours of his capture, G13 was jogging northward in an uncovered troop train. In the next wagon Number One travelled.

As the train rumbled further on its way, the sound of the firing, which had been a dull murmur in Shanghai, increased until soon the recruits huddled in the wagon train could see the angry spurts of flame from the muzzles of the big guns.

Boooooom! Boooooom! Cra-a-a-ash! Off the road a tree disintegrated as a shell dropped directly upon it. The pieces rained down upon the troop train. The earth all around was scarred and pitted—a scene already of awful desolation. And the war god was striding further south every day. G13 breathed a silent prayer of thanksgiving that it wasn't his own country which was the scene of battle.

A yellow cloud suddenly billowed down the line. Hoarse voices commanded the soldiers to don gas-masks, and scarcely had they obeyed than they were enveloped in the yellow, poisonous vapour.

Eventually the train ran out of the gas-bank and continued on its way, to stop eventually when the line came suddenly to an end. It had been ripped up by a recent bombardment.

The last part of the journey—about two miles—was done on foot. But at last the new company gained the shelter of the Chinese trenches.

Here was a scene of immense activity. Officers ran to and fro, chattering the different Chinese dialects as they gave orders to the men. One stopped near G13, and the Britisher listened to the hoarse-voiced commands.

Get ready. Enemy barbed wire cut. We are attacking Japanese trenches in about five minutes. Listen for the whistle signal.

Amid the smoke G13 saw the figure of an officer as he mounted the firing-step. The man was looking at his watch. Seconds now—then: "*Charge!*" shrilled the whistles.

With rifle at the slant, the Secret Service man scrambled over the sandbags in front of the trench, trotted along a lane which had been made in the Chinese barbed wire—and so out into no-man's-land. On each side of him moved a line of khaki-clad figures, yellow faces impassive, almond eyes staring straight ahead where death lurked at the end of bayonet and rifle. The Gueldonian agent was next-but-one to him on his right.

Over the rutted, shell-scarred land went the attacking wave, the Chinese barrage lifting in front of them as they went. Ahead, G13 made out the gaunt outlines of the enemy barbed wire.

But still the Japs held their fire. They were waiting until every man-jack of the enemy was at point-blank range. Better trained, better armed than the Chinese, they used all the finer tactics of warfare—to immense advantage.

Save for the encouraging cries of the Chinese officers, an almost deathly silence had fallen over that part of no-man's-land. It was shattered—annihilated.

The Chinese were less than ten yards from the other trenches when the gloom ahead was suddenly split by innumerable yellow-red flashes. Bullets screamed in a veritable hail of steel into the ranks of the Chinese.

Men dropped liked flies around G13. The screams of the wounded mingled with the cacophony of the guns. And then, out of the corner of his eyes, the

Britisher saw what he had been waiting for. The Gueldonian spy had suddenly thrown up his hands and fallen into the mud. Hit!

G13 dropped to the pitted surface of no-man's-land and, flinging away his rifle, began to crawl towards his enemy. The battle was no further concern of his! All he required now was to get that fatal piece of paper from the enemy spy.

After what seemed an age, he reached his man. The fellow lay in a twisted heap, his tunic stained horribly. But bending over him, the British Secret Service man discovered that he still breathed.

"The paper!" he hissed in the man's ear. "Quick, where is it?" The Gueldonian was close to death, but he managed to smile. Evidently he thought G13 was a friend—a fellow-agent of Gue donia. He fumbled painfully inside his tunic and produced the document. But his voice, low but triumphant, cut into G13's murmur of satisfaction.

"It is done—brother! The message—it has been sent!" And in his other hand he displayed a flat ebony box. "Others will obey my instructions!"

"Good heavens! A pocket wireless set!" gasped out G13. "You—you've wirelessed the contents of this paper?"

The other nodded—and fell back, never to move again.

The shock of the news numbed G13. Numbed him more than the shells that rained around him, bursting and crashing. Men brushed against him as they ran and fell, rose, ran and fell again, men who fought for what they called their rights against men who shot them for what they also thought right. But G13 had no thought for them. Only for the fact that his chase, brief though it had been, was for nothing. That he had committed himself to fight with men for whose cause he cared nothing, and that because of it he was far from his objective.

Far . . . but not so far that he could not reach the scene of the plotters' operations before the fatal zero hour of six! And with the thought, he turned about, to run through the stream of advancing Chinese the way he had come, elbowing through them. . . .

Until he felt one catch his arm, seize him in a grip of authority. "What's this?" said a voice in Chinese. "Deserting from the field of battle, eh? You'll come with me!"

G13 saw an officer gripping his arm, an officer who had paused in the mad rush, to prevent what seemed to him to be a case of cowardice.

"Come on!" he rasped. "I'll attend to you later." He rushed G13 forward towards the withering fire of the Japanese trenches, shoving him at the point of his pistol while he rallied his wavering men with flailing sword and yelling voice.

G13 had no recourse but to go, cursing fate the while. The officer was in no mood to listen to explanations, and the young Britisher knew that, had he essayed any, the man might have shot him out of hand. He would, as G13 realised, have been perfectly justified in doing this. The case demanded it.

It was ten minutes before the Chinese leaders realised, as the British agent had realised from the first, that this rush was doomed to failure. The Japanese position in their well-dug trenches, bristling with machine-guns at every few yards, was too formidable. And so at last the drums and the bugles called the valiant but beaten remnants to the retreat.

G13 was not sorry, though fear for his own life was not counted in his thoughts. He hoped, when the fierce rage of attack had left them, when they were once again calm rational beings, he could state

a case that would convince this officer of his dire need for liberty.

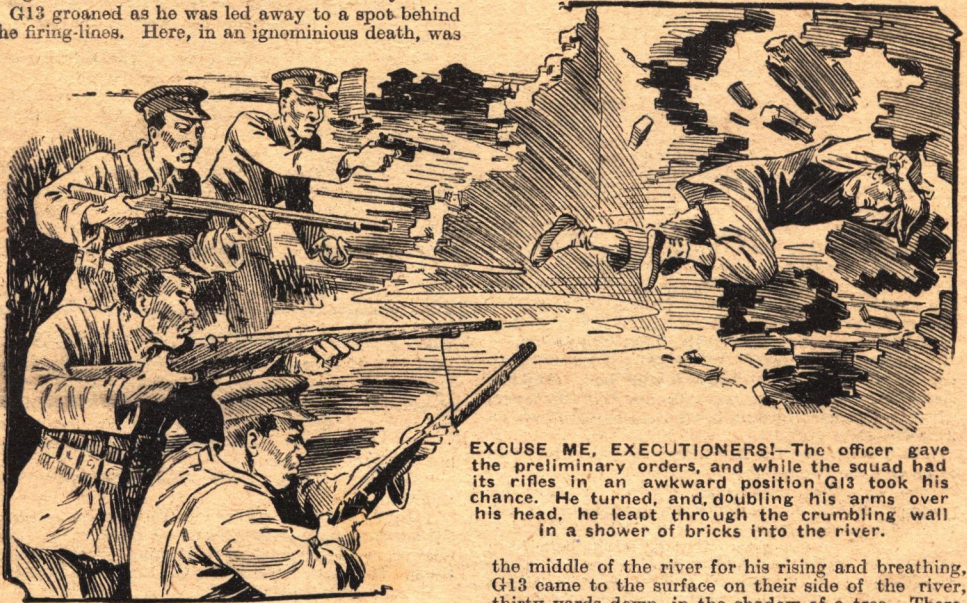
But Fate spoke otherwise. That officer had met cases of cowardice and desertion before, though even he was forced to admit—with a sneer—that none had as yet gone so far as to claim to be a saviour of the British Concession. He, he explained to G13, was no saviour of any nation, but a soldier to whom was given authority to punish any man in Chinese uniform caught running from the field of battle. Such were necessarily either cowards or spies, and for such the punishment was summary execution. He gave orders for the execution immediately.

G13 groaned as he was led away to a spot behind the firing-lines. Here, in an ignominious death, was

It was a lean chance, but it came off. The wall, giving under a multitude of strains, crumbled up beneath that hurtling figure, and in a shower of bricks and mortar he plunged head first into the turbid yellow waters of the river. A crash of rifle fire and a chorus of yells followed him, but he was gone, swimming fiercely under water.

Men rushed to the gaping hole, and leaned through, rifle and revolver ready for his reappearance. It was in his favour that there was no boat near, else he must certainly have had short liberty.

And while the cursing officer and the men watched



EXCUSE ME, EXECUTIONERS!—The officer gave the preliminary orders, and while the squad had its rifles in an awkward position G13 took his chance. He turned, and doubling his arms over his head, he leapt through the crumbling wall in a shower of bricks into the river.

the curtain to be rung down on his efforts. And his failure would encompass the death of hundreds of his fellow men, women, and children, whom he had set himself to save.

He was placed against a wall, behind which he heard the lapping and gurgling of the Yangtse-kiang, the famous Yellow River. And he guessed that he was at least ten miles from the British Concession in Shanghai.

The wall was old and crumbling. In places even it was fallen down, and G13 thought for a moment of possible escape through one of these gaps into the river. The officer in charge of the firing party, guessing these thoughts, saw that he was placed against a section that, though crumbling under the continuous shocking of shellfire, was as yet standing and free from gaps for twenty yards.

G13 waved away the bindings and bandages they offered him. He stood some five feet from the wall, regarding the rank of men with unflinching eye, to the evident surprise of those who had called him coward. The officer, determined that everything should be done in proper military style, gave the usual preliminary orders.

And G13 saw his chance, and took it. While the men had their rifles in an awkward position, while the officer had no weapon in his hand but a sword, he turned about, doubled up his arms over his head, and leapt head first at the wall.

the middle of the river for his rising and breathing, G13 came to the surface on his side of the river, thirty yards down, in the shadow of a tree. There, having rubbed his bruised and numbed elbows for a moment, he took as deep a breath as his lungs would allow, and dived, swimming like an otter for the far side.

His breath gave out before he reached it. But he rose, floating on his back, till his nose was above the water's level. A sharp breathe out, and a sucking in of new air, and he sank again, to complete the swim across the wide river, unseen by the watchers.

He drew himself out among a bank of reeds, careful still, for it would not have needed an expert marksman to pick him off with a rifle at that distance.

Luck was with him, however. Five minutes later he was haring down the rough road that led towards the town. And because of the Chinese uniform he still wore he was able to get a lift on a lumbering lorry, having convinced the driver that he was a runner entrusted with important news from the field of battle for the general commanding the troops in Shanghai.

Because of this, he had to drop off unseen from the back of the slow-moving vehicle as soon as he got past the sentries into the town, for the driver would have taken such an important person to the very doorstep of the general's headquarters. He shed the tunic and cap of the uniform as soon as he could and ran on in his coolie disguise.

As he ran he heard a clock striking. A quarter to six! And still a mile and a half to go!

Running men in the town are liable to excite

suspicion. And so G13 found himself forced to take irksome circuits and detours to avoid streets in which he might be stopped and questioned.

His breath was laboured, sweat streaming from him, while his wet clothes clung to him, hampering his movements. Yet he struggled on, knowing what depended on his success. Not only the reputation of G13 for doing his job, but the lives of thousands of Britishers who, unknowing it, depended on him for their safety.

The minutes ticked away, and he knew it must be nearly the hour.

Exhaustion dragged at him with a thousand tiny clutching hands. His feet dragged on the paving; his whole body ached with the efforts of the day. Yet he struggled on.

"Got to do it!" he panted. "Got to get there. G13—can't fall down—on a job."

On . . . on . . . stumbling over nothing, almost without the energy to change his direction as he came to the last corner and faced the great Concession gates across the end of the street with the wide empty square beyond. And ahead of him his blood-shot eyes saw two Chinese coolies, carrying between them a pile of boxes on a large tray.

"Thunder! They—they've beaten me!" His croaking gasp died as he tried to spurt. But his aching legs refused to answer the commands of his brain. The two coolies were at the gate now, passing the sentries without any trouble. And G13 stumbled on, no faster than they walked. In a moment they would be lost in the side streets of the Concession.

"Perhaps they aren't the ones!" He tried to console himself; but—they might be! And he could do nothing. They were slipping from his grasp, slipping through to wreak the vengeance of others on innocent thousands!

G13 was nearing the gates, and he cried out again as he saw the two sentries standing out in the middle of the way, bayoneted rifles crossed to stop his passage. Before he could explain to them his quarry would be gone forever.

His last hope was gone—that he might have been able to persuade the sentries to give chase. Their threatening looks told him that they would not leave their posts at the behest of a bedraggled ruffian in the dress of a coolie—and G13 never carried a mandate from his government. It was more dangerous than valuable.

The Britisher stopped, swaying on aching legs. He leaned against a post to steady himself. There was a chance—but he'd have to be careful to put it into effect.

The two coolies were in the middle of the great square. No one was near them. In a minute they would be among the people in the streets—but they alone stood in the square. That was the chance G13 saw.

From its secret holster he drew the tiny automatic he always kept hidden there. Steadying himself, against the post, he took aim, while the two sentries shouted and ran at him, thinking him an assassin.

If these two Chinese were not the coolies employed by the plotters, if they carried real food, not much harm would be done. But if . . .

Crack! The '22 smokeless bullet sped to its mark, and the soldiers stopped, their cries drowned by the thunder that was let loose over the town.

For the bundle the two Chinese carried disintegrated into a sheet of flame that blinded all who saw it. A mighty burst of red spread out and up and down, its edges capped with black smoke, hurling before it a crash like the roar of a hundred cannon. The rolling thunder was echoed back and forth from wall to wall, and in its wake came the crashing of broken windows and the cries and shouts of startled people.

One of the gate-posts was blown down by the shock that numbed the ears of everyone for a mile around. But no one was hurt—not even the two sentries, nearest the explosion, who simply stood and gaped for a minute after the shock had passed over their heads. When they turned to arrest the Chinaman who had caused it all, he was gone. And despite his obvious state of exhaustion, they were unable to overtake his stumbling form in the many streets they searched.

LATER that evening a tired but sprucely dressed Englishman went to the room he had previously engaged at a large hotel on the water-front of Shanghai. Before retiring for the rest he obviously needed he called the manager.

"Have this sent to the office of the International Press Agency," he said, giving him a note of high denomination, "and tell them to wire immediately to London this paragraph, to be inserted in the personal advertisement column of *The Daily Wire* :

G: Your lucky number, 13, has turned up.

That ad. in the "agony" column of the London paper next day told Big People at the Foreign Office that G13 had attended to the matter they had had in mind.

Falcon Swift, the sporting 'tec, and Chick Conway are coming back in a long, complete yarn of Mystery and Thrills at the Boat Race. Don't miss th's Treat, Chums.

THE BARMY ARMY AT ST. GIDDY'S—

(Continued from page 36.)

able yet to get it translated and find what it's all about. We've only got to get that map, find the location, and we're rich. And it's somewhere in this house. Not in the safe, because we've searched—not in Slammer's desk—"

"Listen!" broke in the other sharply. "What was that?"

They both stared straight at the service opening! Johnny Gee and his chums were trapped! Suddenly, unexpectedly, a thud had sounded—right behind them. It was this thud that the men had heard.

"Scoot!" hissed Dick Bannister.

"No, no!" gasped Johnny. It was at that moment that he felt something furry against his leg. He groped—and found a big cat.

Johnny Gee acted like lightning. He flung the cat through the opening, and by the greatest of good luck the startled creature clawed at the two faces which were about to be thrust into the opening. And that cat spat and swore in no unmistakable terms, too. The two men backed away, cursing and gasping.

And while they did this, Johnny Gee & Co. hurred themselves through the window, and closed it after them.

When the crooks looked into the pantry, it was empty. It seemed obvious to them that the cat, and the cat alone, had been in there.

Pausing only to cut the ropes from the sentry, and to recover the scarf, Johnny Gee & Co. fled across the estate.

"Well?" panted Johnny Gee, when they were at a safe distance.

"Crumbs! You were right!" said Dick Bannister breathlessly. "They're crooks!"

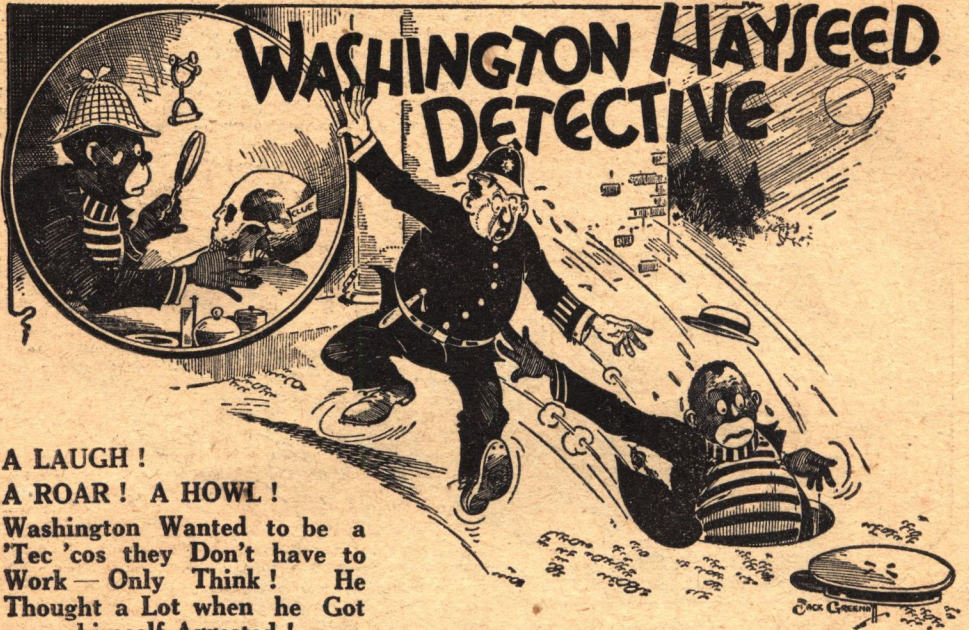
"Yes, my sons—and we're going to see that they don't swindle old Slammer," said Johnny Gee softly. "Somehow, I think that things are going to be pretty exciting during the next few days!"

And Johnny Gee was right!

With the Jovous Jurors to suspect is to detect!
Their detective exploits next week are one long
laugh!

WELL—HERE'S WASHINGTON, THE COMICAL COON SLEUTH!

The First Funny Exploit of a Laughable New B.M. Fun-Maker. Meet Washington Hayseed, the Great Defective, and His Assistant.



A LAUGH!

A ROAR! A HOWL!

Washington Wanted to be a 'Tec 'cos they Don't have to Work—Only Think! He Thought a Lot when he Got himself Arrested!

The Mystery.

"TIMOTHY BUSKIT, Ah ain't gonna look fr a noo ship. Ah'm gonna be a defective!"

These words issued from the broad lips of a coloured gent whom proud parents, way off in Tennessee, had christened Washington Hayseed; they were spoken to a cheery youngster who had lately been Washington's mate in the cook's galley of the tramp steamer *Isabelle*.

"Gee! That's a great idea, Wash," said Tim, with a grin. "I'm a bit tired of sailoring myself. Can I be your assistant?"

"Shuha! Dat's jest what Ah want. Ah've bin read'n 'bout dis yar guy Falcon Swift an' Ah reckon de job's dead easy. Coupla smart fellas lak you an' me could put him right in de shade!"

Washington fumbled in his pocket and drew forth a large square of white cardboard upon which his name was printed in big black letters.

"Ma card!"

Tim Buskit laughed. "S'big, ain't it?"

"Boy, ain't chu never heard a dem world famous words a Julius Caesar, 'It pays to advertise.' Dat's gonna be ma mottor."

"Sure, Washy, but you'll have to find a job to start on."

"Job!" gasped Washington Hayseed. "Young fella, dat's jest what Ah'm try'n to escape. Defectives doan' hafter work. All dey gotta do is think!"

Tim laughed again, and then at last succeeded in making Washington understand him.

These two strange pals were sitting in a little dockside teashop within sight of the ship from which, that morning, they had been paid off. Working

together as cook and cook's mate in the galley of the old tramp, these two had grown as thick as the soup they served to the hungry crew. They were inseparable. It was no wonder, then, that when Washington Hayseed revealed his plan to abandon sea-going and become a detective, that Tim Buskit should at once appoint himself Washington's assistant. The only difficulty was, as Tim indicated, that they hadn't a case to start on.

"Wait a minute!" said Tim suddenly. "I've got an idea."

Tim grabbed a newspaper lying near at hand and made a hurried search through the pages.

"Here we are," he said eventually. "I thought I spotted it in this paper. It says here, there's a gink making experiments for the war office on a new weapon. Now he's the kind of chap, I reckon, who needs a detective."

"Ain't no good on noo weap'ns," answered Washington Hayseed. "Doan' know nuth'n about 'em. Ah got ma old revolver yar, in case of necessity. Dat's all de weap'ns Ah want."

"No. I mean he's the kind of chap who could do with the protection of a 'tec. Say somebody was to pinch his plans or something!"

"Ah doan' s'pose anybody will."

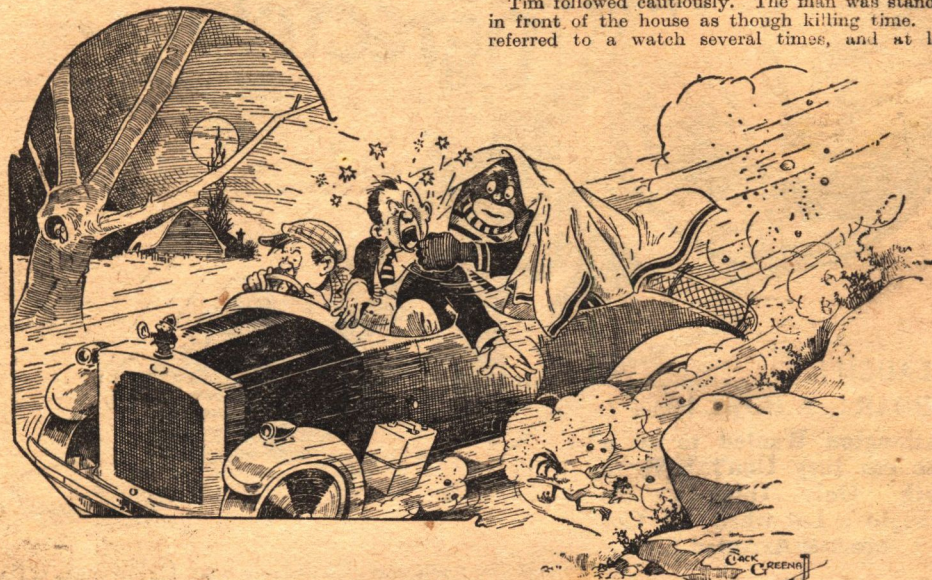
"Yes. I'm going to steal 'em! I'm going to borrow that rotten old revolver of yours—the thing can't go off, anyhow, it's broken—and hold this chap up in his own house. Then, just as I'm going to skedaddle with the jolly old plans, in comes Washington Hayseed, the famous private disinfectant, and arrests me. See!"

"Shuha, it's a good idea. De drawback is dat you'll hafter go to jail!"

"No, I won't. I'll be disguised, see, and anyhow

you won't send for the police. You'll just pretend to arrest me yourself. Come on. Let's find a telephone directory and get this chap's address!"

JOHN BENTLEY, the inventor, lived in a fairly isolated house in the suburbs, and he lived entirely alone. His work—the development of a new type of machine-gun—was such that he was compelled to work in strict secrecy. Therefore he



SLUGGED BY A NIG IN A RUG!—The crook turned toward the back of the car, and the rug suddenly seemed to rise up. A section of it hit him with the force of a steam-hammer, and he went out for the count.

was extremely annoyed when he read the paragraph in the newspaper that had given Tim Buskit his idea. Some stray reporter, he supposed, had snatched up the information from some careless war office official, and he was quick to phone up the editor of the newspaper and forbid him to print anything else on the subject.

This done, he forgot all about the incident—for he had more serious things to consider. For some time past he had been receiving letters from an anonymous correspondent, a professed agent of the Nuravian Republic, who offered to buy his invention over the heads of the British War Department. On his refusing, the letters had assumed a threatening tone, and John Bentley was getting worried.

Had he known, moreover, that two mysterious individuals were snooping surreptitiously round his house that evening, it is possible that he may have been more worried still.

One of these was Tim Buskit. In his pocket was Washington's broken revolver and he was "disguised" with a flowing beard that gave him the air of a rather juvenile Father Christmas.

Reaching the front garden gate Tim pushed it open and entered stealthily. Tim examining the front windows, could find no possible way of entry there, so turned his attention to the rear.

Thus he became aware that he was not the only person lurking suspiciously in John Bentley's garden. Rounding the corner of the house, he suddenly caught sight of a man intent on scraping the insulation off

two telephone wires which ran down the wall. As he watched the man ceased his scraping, produced a small telephone earpiece from his pocket and connected it carefully to the bared wires. This he held to his ear for some time as though waiting for a message come through. At last he gave a grunt of satisfaction, replaced the earpiece in his pocket, and crept round to the front of the house, passing close to where Tim Buskit stood concealed.

Tim followed cautiously. The man was standing in front of the house as though killing time. He referred to a watch several times, and at last,

seemingly satisfied that sufficient time had elapsed, walked boldly up to the door and knocked on it authoritatively.

A man whom Tim guessed to be John Bentley himself answered the knock. He looked suspiciously at the caller until he spoke:

"I'm Detective-Inspector Brant. The station phoned me to call on you at once. I live near here."

Bentley's face cleared. "I didn't expect anyone along so soon. Come in."

The mysterious stranger entered. The door was closed again and the scene cut off from Tim Buskit's curious gaze.

Tim took off his false whiskers and stuffed them in his pocket. There was no need now to create a pseudo crime as he and Washington had planned. Unwittingly he had stumbled on a real mystery. Tim dropped the rôle of hold-up man and assumed that of the detective.

The Defective Detective.

HE again examined the house to see if there was a way of entry there. He could find none, and his spirits had almost begun to drop with disappointment when he found himself standing on a coal-chute cover, obviously opening into the cellar of the house. Joyfully, Tim prised it open with the muzzle of Washington's dud revolver.

A pile of coal beneath made the drop into the cellar an easy one. Clambering on until he reached the solid concrete floor, he struck a match and looked around. At the far end a wooden staircase led

upwards to a door. Mounting this, Tim pushed open the door and listened.

There was a dull murmur of voices coming from somewhere. Cautiously Tim pushed the cellar door open a little wider, and found himself in the dimly lit empty hall of the house. He emerged carefully, tiptoed across the hall in the direction from whence the sounds came, and found himself at the curtained threshold of John Bentley's study. Soon he found a chink in the heavy hangings across the doorway and applying his eye to it, peeped in.

Within, Bentley was seated at a desk, and the man who had introduced himself as Inspector Brant was standing before him.

"I've been receiving threatening letters from this fellow for some time," the inventor was saying. "He appears to be an agent of the Nuravian Republic, and when I refused to sell my invention to him, he began threatening to *steal* it. That didn't worry me much until I received this letter early this evening. In it, he says he is coming to take the plans by hook or by crook *to-night*. Why he should tell me when he is coming I can't understand, but at any rate I thought it was time to send for a police guard. I'm not afraid for my own safety, but those plans of mine are very valuable to Britain!"

"Exactly," said the other. "Where do you keep them?"

"In here," Bentley indicated, tapping a drawer in his desk. "Locked, of course."

"Where's the key?"

"In my waistcoat pocket," answered Bentley, producing the article and showing it to Brant.

"That's fine," Brant walked over to a french window that opened from one wall of the room.

"This leads into the back garden, I presume?"

"Yes. On to the lawn."

Brant opened the window and looked out. The fact that he left it slightly ajar did not escape Tim Buskit, watching through the curtains.

Brant wandered round the room until he came to a large cupboard let into one of the walls. It was locked, but he secured the key from Bentley and examined the inside.

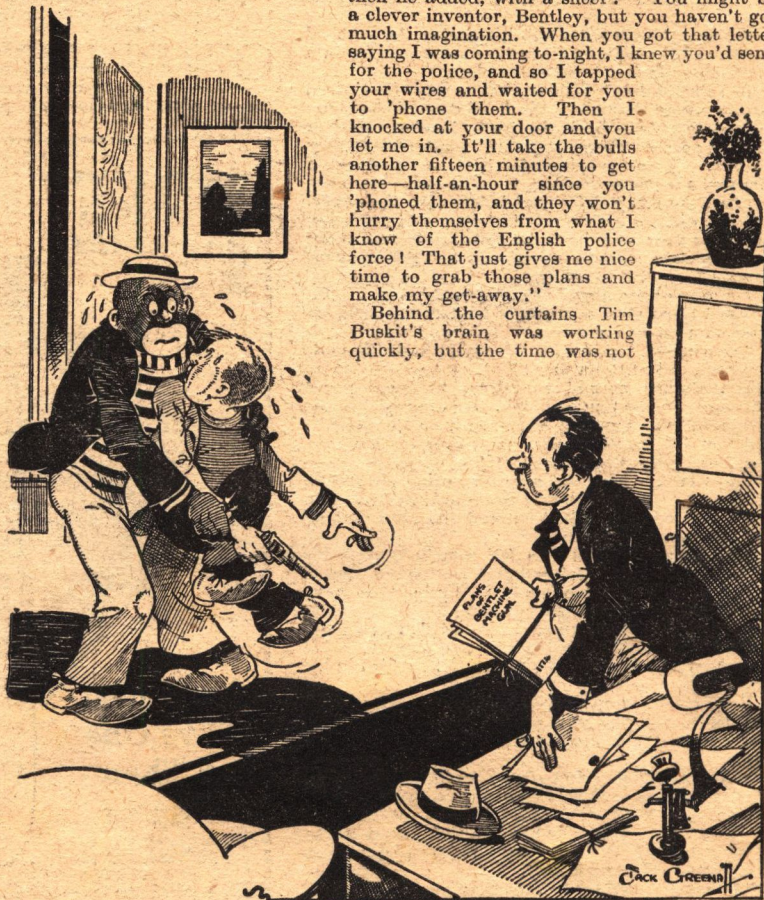
"Pretty roomy cupboard—large enough to lock a man in!"

"Yes, I suppose it is, but—" Suddenly the inventor broke off and stared at the evil grin that had over-spread Brant's face. Another second and his hand flew for the top drawer of the desk where a revolver lay.

But the bogus police detective was too quick for him. Before Bentley's hand could tear open the drawer, Brant's own automatic was digging in his ribs.

"Stand clear of the desk!" snarled Brant, and then he added, with a sneer: "You might be a clever inventor, Bentley, but you haven't got much imagination. When you got that letter saying I was coming to-night, I knew you'd send for the police, and so I tapped your wires and waited for you to 'phone them. Then I knocked at your door and you let me in. It'll take the bulls another fifteen minutes to get here—half-an-hour since you 'phoned them, and they won't hurry themselves from what I know of the English police force! That just gives me nice time to grab those plans and make my get-away."

Behind the curtains Tim Buskit's brain was working quickly, but the time was not



BLACK LOOKS COMING!—Under the threat of Tim's gun the crook was about to release his victim from the cupboard, when Tim felt two hands seize him from behind in an iron grip.

yet ripe to interfere. The police would be here in fifteen minutes. If he could stop the crook just before he attempted to escape he might be able to hold him until the police arrived.

"Now," barked the voice of Brant, "hand over the key of that desk!"

Bentley stood motionless.

"D'ye hear me! Hand over the key!" repeated Brant. "The Nuravian Government have promised twenty thousand pounds for those plans and I shouldn't let one life stand between me and a sum

like that! So you might as well hand over that key and keep a whole skin. Come on!"

Brant's finger had already taken the first pressure on the gleaming trigger, before Bentley took the key from his pocket and flung it on the table.

"Now," said Brant with a triumphant grin, "You'll oblige me by stepping into that cupboard. And no monkey tricks or you'll get an ounce of lead in you!"

Bentley obeyed reluctantly, and as he stepped into the cupboard Brant slammed the door and turned the key.

Pushing the revolver into his pocket, he grabbed the key of the desk, opened the drawer and began a hurried search for the valuable plans.

Tim Buskit decided it was time to act. He tiptoed swiftly across the hall to the front door of the house and silently drew back the latch, leaving the door slightly open to allow the police to enter when they arrived. Then grasping the butt of Washington Hayseed's fearsome-looking, thought quite harmless, revolver, he stepped forward boldly into the study.

Brant did not hear Tim's footsteps on the thickly carpeted floor, and the first intimation he had of the lad's presence was the stern order: "Put up your hands!"

The plans were already in the crook's hands. He dropped them with a gurgle of baffled rage, and his arms climbed ceiling-wards.

"One move," said Tim fiercely, "and I'll blow you back to last Christmas!"

Tim walked around the desk, his eyes never shifting from the fuming crook. He dragged Brant's revolver from his pocket and flung it on the table.

"Now I'll trouble you to walk over to that cupboard and release Mr. Bentley!"

Brant took a reluctant step forward, and then he stopped, his eyes wandering towards the door. Tim knew that somebody had entered the room but he dare not risk a look round.

Another second and Tim felt somebody grab his collar and a large dark hand grabbed his revolver.

"All right, sah! De crook is in de grips a' de great Washington Hayseed! Ah got him!"

"Leggo! Washy, you ass!" yelled Tim struggling frantically. But Washy thought this was only a bit of realism and wrestled the fiercer to hold Tim in his grasp.

Brant snatched up the plans from the desk and not waiting to ask the why or wherefore dashed over to the open french window and disappeared into the night.

Tim struggled fiercely to free himself, and suddenly Washington received a biff in the eye that sent him staggering to the floor with a thud.

"Yow! Say, what's de big idea! Ah'm s'posed to arrest you ain't Ah!" Washy scrambled to his feet and prepared for reprisals.

"Chuck it, you ass! That man was a crook—a real crook! And now you've gone and let him escape!"

"Gosh!" said Washington blankly. "Ah thought he was de Bentley guy!"

As Washington Hayseed spoke there came the tramp of heavy feet, and four uniformed policemen marched into the room.

"Just in time!" shouted the leader. "Hold 'em!"

The bewildered detective organisation of Hayseed and Buskit found itself in the grasp of four hefty coppers.

"Say, lay off me! Ah'm Washington Hayseed—de great—gasp!—defective. De real crook's escaped!"

"Anything you say might be used as evidence against you," said one of the policemen, and to all

Tim's and Washy's attempts at explanation they turned a deaf ear.

Bentley, hearing the hubbub, began to hammer on the door of the cupboard.

"Hello," said the sergeant in charge. "They've locked him in here! No key, either. All right, boys, You take these crooks along to the station while I get him out somehow. They'll be safer there."

And despite their protests that the real crook was even at that moment escaping with the plans, Tim Buskit and Washington Hayseed were borne out of the study by the remaining three constables.

OUT of the front door they were marched. One constable, with Washington Hayseed in his firm grasp, leading the procession, and Tim Buskit, with the other two policemen, bringing up

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YOUR EDITOR'S STORY SURPRISES NEXT WEEK

Grand Old Favourites Number on Saturday, Chums.
Get Ready for it!

CAPTAIN SKID IS HERE NEXT WEEK!

also the Flying Circus in the Jungle, Crime Castle (another Great Tale of Terrorland), Hoppy Travers joins the Foreign Legion, and the Boys of St. Giddy's, among Other Special Attractions.

MY DEAR CHUMS,

More Wonder Books, special new privileges for members of the B.M. Redskin League, and a stupendous new batch of high-powered Big Thrill yarns are some of the spiffing attractions your old editor has got up his sleeve for readers of the *Red Wonder Mag.* All chaps who are not yet members of the League should begin collecting coupons now. Three coupons and the declaration form duly filled in entitle you to membership and will bring you the code book and a bronze buttonhole badge by return of post.

You'll enjoy every word of the glamorous stories booked for next week's Old Favourites Number, chums. First on the bill is a grand long complete tale of those tried and true *Mag.* characters—Hannibal Sangster and his circus boys, Don Hawkins, the Human Torpedo, Dick Derring and the rest of the Flying Circus. This terrific tale tells of the latest adventures of

The Flying Circus in the Jungle.

In the gigantic aeroplanes which this ultra-modern circus uses instead of the old-fashioned caravans of a bygone era, the Flying Circus swoops down into Jodiphur in the depths of the Indian Jungle. I'll

JOKE COUPON.

Stick on postcard and send with your favourite joke to the JOKE EDITOR.

12/3/32.

not give the plot away here—just read it for yourselves next week. And don't miss that other old favourite, Captain Skid, the Dirt Track Ace. This spectacular hero of the cinders appears in a mighty new complete story, entitled:

The Ghost of the Speedway.

A Mysterious Unknown who hurtles round a deserted Speedway at dead of night—in absolute silence. No exhaust roar—nothing but that silent ghostly shape of rider and machine crashing round the dirt track at prodigious speed. Why? For the amazing explanation of this baffling mystery read this thriller next week.

the rear. Tim was still trying vainly to explain, but all the sympathy he received was: "All right. You can say all that at the station. Kerm on!"

Washington, who was also trying to explain, turned to the constable who was yanking him on and thereby failed to notice the still open coal-chute immediately beneath his feet.

Suddenly he uttered a wild yell of alarm. The policeman felt his grasp on Washy's collar wrenched free—and Washington Hayseed disappeared completely from view.

"Gor!" said the policeman. He stared blankly at the circular chasm at his feet until one of his colleagues stung him into action with a shouted order.



The next eerie exploit of the chums in Terrorland is the most absorbing yarn that has yet appeared in this series of hair-raisers. In

Crime Castle Harry and Bottles discover more of the dreadful criminal organisation arrayed against them.

Last but not least are the next exorciating adventures of the Boys of St. Giddy's and Hoppy Travers—the kid with a cool million quid. The St. Giddy's yarn is the sequel to this week's grand story so you won't want to miss that.

Hoppy Travers' latest tells how he joins the French Foreign Legion—and—Phew! You must read this chortler for yourselves.

Five More Free Gift Coupons

and full details of the next great gift book in the *Mag's* Wonder Book series also next week. Look out for them, chums, and further news from

Your sincere friend,

He Editor

"Quick! Into the house or he'll escape through the cellar!"

All three policemen turned right about and ran back through the open door of the house, dragging Tim with them. But their alarm was ill directed, for ere the last of them had disappeared through the house portals, Washy's woolly head emerged from the coal-hole, uttering abusive remarks about certain foolhardy persons who left the lids off their coal-cellars.

He scrambled out of the hole, and looked around, surprised to find nobody there.

"Say! Dey'se mizzled!" But even as he spoke, one of the policemen reappeared in the doorway and uttered a yell as he caught sight of him. Instinct

bade Washington run, and in half-a-second he was round the corner of the building and streaking across the lawn at the back.

The policeman gave a hurried toot on his whistle to call the others to his help, and then dashed off in pursuit. But the darkness was on Washington's side. He reached the far end of the lawn and the constable lost sight of him in the dark shadows.

The garden terminated abruptly in a high board fence. Washington grabbed the top of this, dragged himself up and scrambled over into the adjoining street. Near by, an empty touring-car was standing by the roadside. Hesitating only a second to think Washington leapt into the back of the car and covered himself over with a large travelling-rug he found lying in the bottom. He crouched down out of sight.

Presently he heard the pursuing bobby scramble over the fence, heard his footsteps approach the car and stop. Washy waited, breathless and motionless. He knew the policeman was looking in the car.

"Hey!" said a voice, some distance away. "That's my car. What's the matter?"

"I'm looking for a nigger. He gave us the slip about five minutes ago, and I thought he might be hiding in here."

"Well, there's no niggers in that car," said the voice of the newcomer, not at all friendly. "I've been standing near here all the time, and there hasn't been a soul in the street before you arrived."

Washington knew this was a lie, because the street had been deserted when he jumped in. He stifled an urge to rebuke the stranger for the untruth, and continued to lie still.

The policeman mumbled something about "must be still in the garden then," and wandered off. Washington heard the other man climb into the driving-seat, and, poking his head from under the rug, risked a peep at him. The collar of the stranger's overcoat was pulled up around his neck and a thick cap pulled down over the upper part of his face. Washington bobbed down swiftly as he heard fresh footsteps approaching.

"Step on it!" said a new voice. "The place is swarming with cops."

"I know," answered the man in the driving-seat. "Just foudh one snooping round the car."

Came the whirr of the self-starter and a slight jar as the car was thrown into gear. Washington felt the machine leap into motion.

"You've been a long time," said the driver. "I was getting worried. Walked up to the front to see if you were about."

"Had to lie low for a bit with all those bulls about."

"Did you get 'em?"

"The plans? Sure I got 'em. But it was a near thing. Just as I'd put the dope over on the Bentley guy some darn kid bounced in and stuck me up with a gat. Did I sweat? I'll say I did!"

"What happened?"

"Don't know quite. Some fool of a nigger came in after that and grabbed the kid, and I made my getaway. Next thing I know, the cops arrive, and I had to hide until things calmed down."

Washington Hayseed could hear every word of the conversation, in spite of the purr of the motor, and gradually the mighty deductive powers of the amateur 'tec brought to him the astounding conclusion that he was riding in the car with the crooks who had stolen John Bentley's plans.

"Step on it!" said the voice of the man who had called himself Brant. "We've only got five hours to get to Southampton and catch the boat! It's getting a bit chilly. Think I'll have that rug at the back."

Washington gasped. Something had to be done quickly. He clenched his huge dusky fist and waited.

Soon he felt Brant's hand groping over the back of the front seat. Washington made a swift mental calculation where Brant's face was situated and then slammed his fist upward, underneath the rug, with all the strength he could muster.

The astonished crook suddenly saw the rug rise up beneath him, and next second it struck him in the jaw with the force of a steam-hammer.

"Glug!" was all Brant said, and then he fell back limply, well out for the count.

The driver of the car looked at him in alarm. "What's up?" Grasping the wheel with one hand, he shook Brant with the other, but received no response. Then, obviously mystified, he brought the car to a standstill and turned to his unconscious confederate.

Almost at the same moment, that same travelling-rug was flung over his head and he found himself struggling in the grasp of two powerful arms. Above his own muffled cries he heard a voice say:

"You'se in de clutches a' de great Washington Hayseed. Pipe down, or Ah'll knock de stuff'n out'n you!"

Washy's hand searched the man's pocket and he found what he guessed to be there—a revolver. The crook dragged the rug from over his head, and as he emerged to the outer world he felt a cold ring of steel press against the nape of his neck.

"Now, young fella, jest you turn dis buzz-wagon aroun' an' drive back de way you come. Savvy!"

* * * * *

THE police were still on the premises when the car arrived back, and Tim Buskit, with the help of John Bentley, had at last succeeded in convincing them that the real crook had got away with the plans. So, when Washington arrived back with the crook, still peacefully slumbering, and his confederate, the rejoicings were great, also the congratulations.

"Oh, dis ain't nuth'n," said Washington modestly. "Jest you watch our smoke when de organisation a' Hayseed and Buskit really gets on de job. So long, boys," he added to the policemen as they carted off the two thieves. "If you'm ever in a fix, jest call up Washington Hayseed an' his assistant. Dey'll see you through!"

Hoppy Travers, the boy millionaire, is back next week, chaps. Don't miss the chortling tale of his adventures as a soldier in the Foreign Legion.

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BOYS' MAGAZINE LEAGUE COUPON.

Boys' Magazine, 12/3/32.

IT'S NO JOKE IF YOU DON'T WIN A PRIZE!



Prison Visitor: Don't any of your relatives ever write to you?
Convict: They don't need to; they're all here!

(Football to _____, 155, Fieldgate Mansions, Myrtle Street, Commercial Road, E.)

REDUCING.

DRIVER: I wasn't going forty miles an hour, nor thirty, nor twenty, nor even fifteen.

POLICEMAN: Here, steady, now, or you'll be backing into something.

(Fountain pen to LIONEL BRADLEY, Ballintason, Lisbellaw, Co. Fermanagh, Ireland.)

THE SOLUTION.

At a fancy dress ball for children, a policeman, stationed at the door, was instructed not to admit grown-ups. An excited woman came running up to the door and demanded admission.

"I'm sorry, ma'am," replied the policeman, "but you can't go in."

"But my boy is dressed as a butterfly," exclaimed the woman, "and he has forgotten his wings."

"Can't help that," replied the policeman, "orders is orders. You'll have to let him go as a caterpillar."

(Fountain pen to DAN BARBER, The Cottage Gas Works, Moorend, Cleckheaton.)

TORE IT!

FIRST BOY: My father's so strong that he can tear up a pack of cards.

SECOND BOY: That's nothing. My father was late this morning, and he tore up the road.

(Fountain pen to _____, 25, Islandbawn Street, Broadway, Belfast, N. Ireland.)

NO (SUR)PRISE!

GUEST: I've just seen the family ghost!

HOST: Ha! Gave you a start, I'll bet!

GUEST: Believe me, I didn't need any start!

(Fountain pen to V. G. HENDERSON, 97, Limbury Rd., Luton, Beds.)

NEWS FROM THE COUNTRY.

Two men from the country were visiting the British Museum. One, who had never seen a mummy in his life, said to his pal:

"What's yon, John?"

"Yon's a mummy."

"A mummy! What's a mummy?"

"Why, a dead mon!"

"Well, I'm fair capped! Never saw t'like of yon afore! But, John, what's that on t'card behind 'im—B.C.48?"

"'Ee, tha's an ignorant beggar, Bill. That's t'number o' mooter-car 'at killed 'im!"

(Fountain pen to R. CAURAH, Turvey, Long Whaddon, near Loughborough, Leicestershire.)

A BIG DROP.

TEACHER: What is the strangest thing you have ever seen.

JIMMY: When a man fell from a forty-foot ladder.

TEACHER: Goodness!

Wasn't he killed?

JIMMY: Oh no, sir. He fell off the bottom rung.

(Fountain pen to GEORGE MARTIN, 99, Garvary Road, London, E.16.)

A BIG JUMP.

TEACHER: What is Australia bounded by?

WILLIE: Kangaroos, sir.

(Fountain pen to J. SHEHAN, 1, Panfield Terr., Carmarthen Rd., Cwmwrla, S. Wales.)

OF COURSE!

FIRST MAN: Why do people always have artificial eyes made of glass?"

SECOND MAN: So that they can see through them.

(Fountain pen to N. ROBERTS, 41, Vale Rd., Reddish, Stockport.)



The Teacher: What made you late this morning?

The Boy: Well, there's eight of us at home, and the alarm was only set for seven!

(Football to H. BARRET, 6, Grosvenor-street, Eastwood, Notts.)

GHOULS OF THE GUILLOTINE

(Continued from page 30.)

pulled the pointed hood up so that his head was altogether covered, leaving only a perpendicular slit-like opening in front through which he could see.

He sat there, a shapeless, huddled, and ominous figure, and for a long and silent space of time he subjected Nick to a close scrutiny.

"You guarantee this fellow, Merda?" asked a thin and rasping voice.

"Yes, citizen," said Merda, without hesitation. "It was he who cheated the guillotine when . . ." Merda rattled off Nick's exploit.

"Ah!" Two thin hands protruded from the vast sleeves of the habit. The hooded figure leaned forward slightly. "Listen. What is your name?"

"They call me Charles Tevain," said Nick, inventing a name on the spur of the moment. "It is not my real name, but it suffices."

"An aristocrat, perhaps?"

"Perhaps," agreed Nick.

"And, therefore, a hater of the Terror?"

"Entirely," said Nick. He had swiftly decided that, having taken the plunge, it might further his chances of probing this singular and sinister mystery if he agreed that he was of the aristocratic class.

"H'm!" The hooded figure at the table end grunted, and once more was silent. Then it jerked a question which staggered Nick. "Wouldst see Robespierre, Couthon, St. Just and the others dead, and The Terror ended?"

Nick stared. "If the miracle can be made, monsieur, I am with you," he said.

Yet again there was a long silence. The hooded figure talked on once more. There was a plot to slay Robespierre, not as an assassin slays, with pistol or dagger, but to impeach him before the Convention, to have tried and guillotined.

But all this meant danger. Resolute men with a purpose were required. It might be essential for them to act swiftly and certainly at a given date. Nick must swear an oath to assist at the word of Merda.

"Swear on what you hold most sacred," said the hooded figure.

"On the honour of my country," said Nick.

Merda blindfolded him once more and took him out to the chaise. It rumbled over the cobbles for many miles, stopped, and Nick was taken out of it and the bandage whipped from his eyes. He found himself outside the Luxembourg at exactly the same spot as before, with Merda at his side.

"Now," said Merda, "where can I always find you?"

Nick told him of the little bistro below the miser's house, and said that he was there most evenings, but that talking to him must be a matter of discretion. Merda understood, and they parted.

Nick, having had enough for one night, abandoned his reconnaissance of the Luxembourg and returned home. A man twisted and ducked at his heels all the way.

This man was cursing softly to himself. He had picked up the chaise and had followed it, running hard through the streets of Paris. He had watched Nick being led blindfolded into the house of mystery, and he had followed the chaise back to the Luxembourg. He was near to exhaustion, and Nick walked swiftly.

Nevertheless, the spy did not lose him. Nick did not suspect that he might be followed, and, having resumed his character as a foolish country boy, he lounged on loosely, now and again whistling a verse of the *Ca Ira*.

Nick reached the miser's house. It so chanced that the red-faced man who sometimes sat opposite him at the bistro was coming along the road, and Nick exchanged a greeting with him before going inside.

The red-faced man walked on, and the spy confronted him. "A word with you, citizen," he said.

The spy pointed to the miser's house. "A young man has just gone in there, and I observe that you know him. Who is he?" He flashed a card bearing the mandate of the Comité de Salut Public.

The red-faced man wilted, swallowed hard, and then said that the young man was a stranger—supposed to be the nephew of the blind miser in the house.

"Blind . . ." breathed the spy, his eyes alight with understanding. "Harkee. No word of this to anybody, else . . ." He whipped his forefinger across his neck, and the red-faced man turned pale and lurched homeward.

The spy hurried now through street after street until he let himself into a certain house. Robespierre was there, working as usual, and the spy presented himself before him.

"I come to report of the plot you suspect," he panted. He recounted his adventure. "Merda we dare not touch. He is too cunning to commit himself. But I think that if we took this supposed fool—who can be no fool, else Merda would not deal with him—he might talk before the guillotine claimed him; talk under persuasion . . ."

Robespierre picked up a little bell and tinkled it. An officer of the Republican Guard appeared.

To him Robespierre gave sharp orders, and in a few minutes, guided by the spy, the officer and three men set off for the house of the blind miser.

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Wentworth Wanderers in the Semi-Final!



IN THE NET!

ANDY ARRESTED ON THE GREEN ARENA! WHEN BULLY BAT'S VILLAINY COMES HOME TO ROOST.



IRON-FOOT ANDY Versus HIS RASCALLY COUSIN, A FORTUNE FOR THE FOOTBALLER WHO SCORES MOST GOALS THIS SEASON

The Moonlit Man!

FAINT moonlight came through the window of the training quarters where Wentworth Wanderers F.C. had been getting fit for their great semi-final Cup-tie on the morrow. The moonbeams painted spectral patches of light on floors and walls, revealing, among the paraphernalia of the gym, a figure which was crouched at one side of the big room.

The collar of the man's coat was turned high to shroud his face. He was bending over one of the lockers ranged along the wall; it contained the complete footer kit of one of the players.

The man drew out a pair of football boots, his every movement stealthy, and set them down on the floor. From his pocket he took a small box, and, bending close above the boots, he was in the act of removing the lid of the box when a sound came from behind him.

He turned suddenly, and gasped when he saw a form standing there. It was Joe Milligan, the likeable old trainer of the Wanderers, and moonlight just caught the grey in his hair as he peered at the crouching figure.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded, and padded nearer in his old, rubber-soled shoes.

The man by the locker did not answer. In the gloom, one hand reached out and gripped an Indian club which lay near. Old Joe Milligan bent forward, his lined face set and his eyes gleaming.

"What are you up to? Who are you and—?" He broke off as the intruder rose, club upraised.

As he straightened, a moonbeam momentarily lit his face—and then the club smashed down!

It landed with a sullen, ugly sound, and Milligan's

legs crumpled under him. He collapsed, no cry breaking from his lips, and showing no movement after he had hit the floor.

Panting, his assailant bent above him, his lips twisted off his teeth as he peered at the trainer.

"Got you!" he breathed. "You asked for that, you old fool! If you'd—"

The man broke off. He saw a trickle of blood running from the iron-grey hair, and panic gripped him. He caught at Milligan's shoulder and shook him.

"Here, wake up! I didn't mean to hurt you a lot!" He shook the trainer desperately, peering into features devoid of all colour. "Wake up! Say something, can't you! You're not hurt, I didn't hit you hard! I—I—"

His voice trailed away, and his breath came in a gasp. Then his voice sounded once more, quivering.

"He's dead! I done for him!" Long seconds passed as he gazed down at the inert figure. Then his shoe came into contact with the football boots at his feet.

He gasped when he saw them, then glanced at the club he held.

"Mustn't leave finger-prints!" he muttered, then set the club down and scrubbed desperately at the handle with his handkerchief before he replaced the club in the rack and straightened up again.

"I've got to be careful now," he panted to himself. "I might be suspected and—!" He paused, then gasped: "It's better to put the blame on someone else. Yes, that's the idea!" He looked at the boots, and a sudden grin came on his lips, distorted and cunning. "That's it!" he breathed. "I'll leave these boots alone, and put the blame on—him!"

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He tumbled the boots back into the locker, and closed the lid, then moved further along the wall, peering at the lockers there until he found the one he sought. From this he drew out a pair of boots, and removed the lid of the box which he still carried.

He tipped some of its contents into either boot, shaking the powder well down into the soles before he replaced the footer boots. Then he dropped the flat box into the pocket of a sweater in the locker he had first opened.

"That's fixed it!" he breathed.

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Andy reached the front of the long building and, to his surprise, found that the door was not latched. He stepped through to the dim hall and called for the trainer.

He received no reply, and he moved along to the boiler-room, and, finding nothing there, pushed open other doors as he reached them until he gained the big gym.

"Joe!" he called again. "Hi, Joe! Where are you?"

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Three Great Footer Favourites who Figure in this Grand Series: Stiffy Johnson (Outside Left), Baldy (Goalie), and Bludger (Right Back).

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"What?" The inspector strode swiftly towards him, taking one of the boots and licking his finger, he dipped it into the powder which strewed the sole on the inside. "Good heavens!"

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Gasping, still holding the powdered boot in his free hand, he kept his other fist under water, while Bat Fulger stood staring at him, and someone shouted for the doctor who always travelled with the Wanderers.

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like to

came a roar from the crowd—the United were taking the field!

"Turn out, the Wanderers!" A linesman shouted through the doorway, and in answer to that call men turned instinctively to obey.

The inspector strode across the room, and gripped Andy's arm.

"I've suspected you all along!" he said grimly. "You're under arrest, and it is my duty to warn you that anything you say may be—"

"I didn't do it!" Andy panted. "I didn't!" He turned as Mr. Harvey stood gazing at him. "I don't know anything about it, sir—it's all a mistake! Don't fill my place in the team—give me a chance to clear myself and come into the game!"

"I won't field the reserve man," the team-manager said. "It wouldn't be much good—we can't beat the United without you, Andy!"

The Fly-away Footballer!

A CELL door crashed shut behind Andy; bolts scraped home and he found himself surrounded by grey-painted walls.

He was in a police station cell, and through the glass-less grating in the end wall he heard the roar from the football ground. The semi-final was on! Play had been in progress for what seemed an age—and he stood charged with "assault and battery" on Joe Milligan, and with "attempting to inflict bodily harm" on Bat Fulger!

And out on the field, Fulger was taking his chance of scoring goals, because the very fact that they were a man short would make the Wanderers play like fiends. Goals had been scored already, Andy knew; he had heard the wild roaring of the crowd while he was being charged.

Manager Harvey was almost beside himself with anxiety, trying to find a magistrate who would grant bail—and the police were opposing it. They said that Andy was too dangerous to let out, because Old Joe Milligan was still unconscious and might not recover, for all they knew.

Andy almost groaned as he dropped on to the wooden plank at one side of the cell. He could hear the muttering roar of the Cup-tie crowd, swelling out and dying again—only to rise to a colossal yell:

"Goal-1-1!"

"Somebody's scored again!" Andy gasped. "I'm out of it—in a cell!"

He dropped his red head to his hands in despair, while the booming of the crowd drifted in, rising once more as the ball was kicked off and the game went on.

"Only ten men playing—waiting for me!" He breathed. "And I can't get to them! Can't—" He broke off and jerked to his feet, jumping towards the iron grille over the window-like opening.

Its ironwork was firm, bedded in concrete. The opening was a full two feet square, and only the three metal bars kept him immured. He shook at them fiercely, but they did not move, and he dropped to the floor.

"If only I could get out! If I could get to the field the fellows would rally round me and stop the police taking me off!" he told himself. "If I could smash those bars!"

Suddenly he felt in the pocket of his sweater a flat tin-box. He took it out, wonderingly. It was labelled *Purritina*: the stuff that had been found in Bat's boots.

Andy thought of the terrible plot that had been laid against him; and then he suddenly remembered the doctor's words:

"... this will burn through iron!"

He searched about the room. There was an earthen-

ware mug of water there—he mixed the powder in, careful not to splash himself.

Then, when all was dissolved, he tipped the cup slowly against the centre bar, letting the powerful solution trickle down.

There was a hissing and a spluttering, and he saw the bar getting visibly thinner as the potent liquid dissolved the metal. Wrapping his handkerchief round his hand, he snapped it with a fierce wrench just as there came a long-drawn roar from the ground.

"Half time!" Andy gasped. "Gosh—half time!"

In a couple of minutes, the other two bars had given to the same treatment—the weapons of the enemy were coming in very useful. The broken ends swiftly dwindled away under the trickling liquid, and as the last of it was used Andy found he had just enough room to squeeze through.

He clawed himself through it, and saw the yard of the station outside; he twisted agilely, then dropped to the ground—just as two policemen appeared.

They shouted as they recognised him and dived in his direction, while Andy shot across the yard and made a flying leap for the top of the ten-foot high wall opposite. He gained it, and poised for the fraction of a second as he looked beyond.

Passing him was a butcher's cart, with a man in a butcher's apron on the box. With a shout, Andy leaped off the wall, plunging full at him. The man saw him come, starting backwards in his seat.

An instant later, and Andy had struck him fairly. The man tumbled sideways, spinning to the road, dropping the reins as the horse suddenly took fright and plunged into a gallop.

That suited Andy! He needed transport to the ground, and the faster it was the better he'd like it! He snatched the flying reins, and managed to get enough pull on them to turn the horse when it reached the corner.

It went down the street, past the front of the police station, with the bit fairly between its teeth. Men in blue appeared after it, then the doors of the yard were flung wide, for a police car to come in pursuit, loaded with men!

The butcher's cart shot down the street, traffic swerving at the sight of a wall-eyed horse travelling at full pelt, with a wild-eyed, red-haired footballer half standing on the driving-seat, yelling the horse on.

Andy dared a glance back, and he saw that more cars were following the police machine now.

There was a corner at the end of the wide street, and it was only by sheer strength that Andy got the horse round it—then he saw the red roof of the grandstand before him! His heart leaped at the sight of it. He yelled the horse on; it was travelling at its limit—but the cars behind were closing in!

Andy saw them come up. He bent, and lifted the top of the shallow body to the cart. Next instant a leg o' mutton went skimming off the windscreen of the leading car! And half-a-second later two pounds of pork sausages wreathed about the driver's neck!

Andy pelted each car as it strove to pass him, driving it back and letting the runaway horse have its head. Then, through all the uproar, he heard the hollow shout of the Cup crowd as the teams came out for the resumption—and he saw that the horse was heading for the private entrance of the stand.

He concentrated on it, hauling on the reins to prevent the animal diving headlong into the wall of the stand. He saw the entrance come up and, for a second or so, he stood on the cart's brake-pedal. It slowed the horse, and a moment after Andy had taken a flying leap at the door.

It opened before him when he charged it, then he

was fairly throwing himself through the stand, and the crowd saw a fierce-eyed figure streak from the players' entrance, hurting on to the field to join the ten-men team, just as the referee blew his whistle for the kick-off.

"What's the score!" Andy howled the query

with voices as those who hadn't seen the goal told the rest just how Iron-Foot Andy had scored!

The United buckled down to it. They crowded Andy until the Wentworth crowd begged them to give him room to breathe, and they still had the boy marked when the United forced a corner and scored from the goal-kick with a rush which ended only when half their team was inside the net with Baldy Hampton, and the ball beneath them.

Four all—and Andy bottled up!

Bottled up? Well, perhaps he was. But Andy was only waiting his chance!

When it came, he took it, and he made the marking United men look like whales trying to catch a minnow.

He was greased lightning. Again and again, opposing shirts crammed about him, for him to slip out and streak forward into the penalty area—steady—and shoot!

"Goal-1-1-1!" The crowd didn't wait to see the ball go into the net—they knew it would get there!

The Wanderers were one up again, but before they could settle down from the kick-off the dour United were at it. For minute after minute they attacked, then they got the ball in.

It left the Cup game five all—with not five minutes to go, and Andy a goal behind Bat's score.

Both teams were attacking now. The crowd was in a frenzy. The minutes slid by, ticking towards time. Twice Andy tried to get through—then he saw the referee looking at his watch. He saw the official get his whistle ready, glanced at his watch again—and Andy went after the ball.

It had come from a throw-in, and he took it from the United centre-half's very toe as it was passed to him.

The crowd watched—they couldn't shout now. They were past it! The referee was dividing his attention between fitting seconds and the fitting figure that shifted over the turf.

Andy knew that split seconds were left as he squirmed around a back. He passed him, beat the other by speed alone—and saw the goalie coming out!

There could be time only for one shot. Andy tensed, steadied, his right foot swung back—then he hit the battered sphere.

The impact of leather on leather rang across the ground. The goalie flopped and missed the ball—it sung past him, spinning—straight for one post.

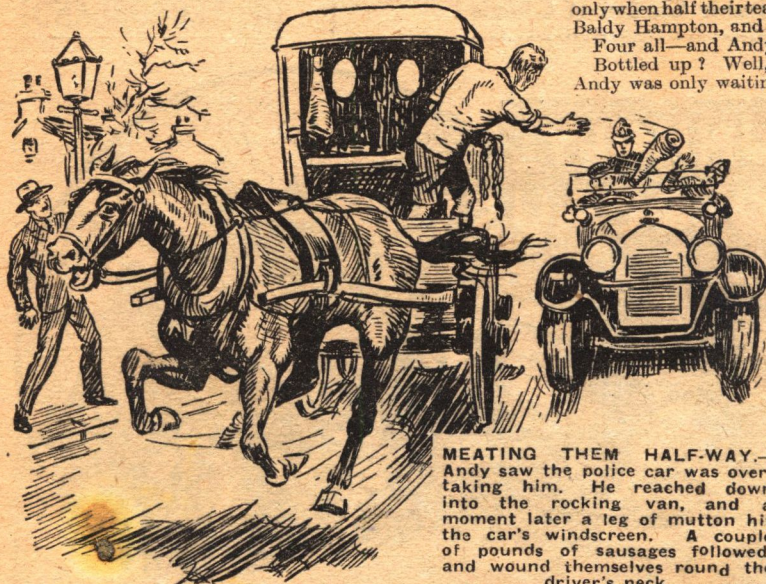
Andy watched—and saw the leather strike the white-painted woodwork—and saw the post pitch backwards and smash!

He heard the crash of the ball—he saw sagging netting—and then the leather was in the back of the net, skimmed off the post!

And in the middle of the field the referee's whistle shrilled.

"Goal-1-1-1!" yelled the crowd, but the call was half-hearted.

(Continued on page 26.)



MEATING THEM HALF-WAY.—Andy saw the police car was overtaking him. He reached down into the rocking van, and a moment later a leg of mutton hit the car's windscreen. A couple of pounds of sausages followed, and wound themselves round the driver's neck.

to Stiffy Johnson as he passed him to take up his own position.

"Three all—and Bat Fulger scored all our goals!"

The Shattered Goal.

THE first half of the Cup semi-final between the Wanderers and the United had been one long succession of football thrills, with Bat Fulger on top of his form and making the most of his chance to race ahead along the goal-paved road to fortune!

But now dishevelled police officers appeared at the players' exit from the stand—for a white-faced Mr. Hamilton to bar their path, others aiding him.

For a time there was almost a riot—and then Mr. Hamilton produced a magistrate whom he had traced to the ground, and undertook that Andy should be turned over to the police the moment the game ended. The magistrate gave orders to the police, and they formed a grim, blue, waiting group near the exit from the field.

"Bat's three in front of me—and the game's half done!" Andy told himself then. "Well, here goes!"

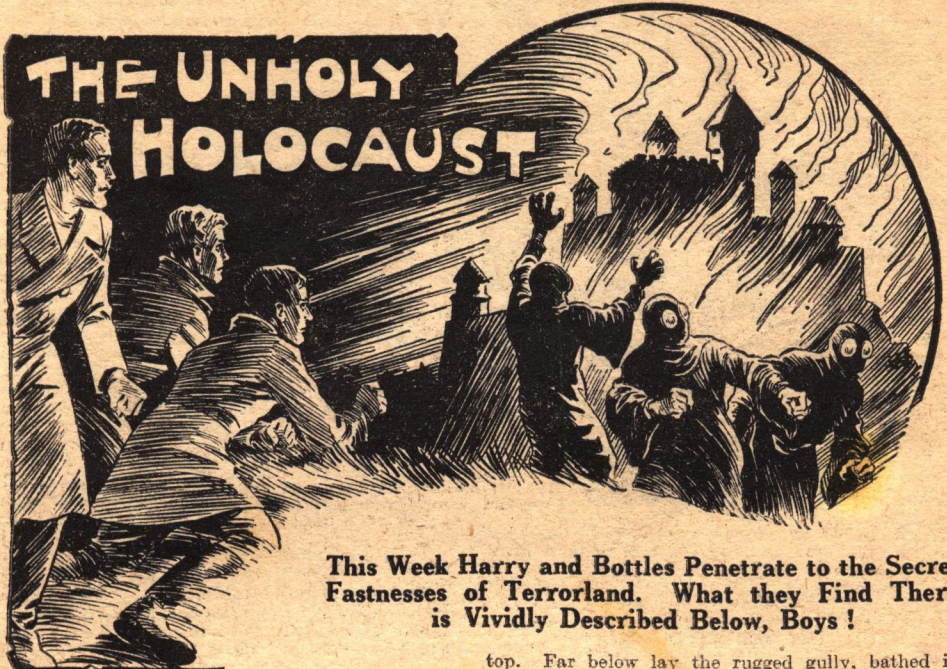
He saw the ball coming to him; he fastened on it—and was off! The crowd saw him as a weaving figure in white, swerving and streaking. The back barred his path, crouching with feet apart. Men who knew Andy's style held their breath as he steadied—and shot!

That shot took the goalie by surprise, but he went for it. He hurled himself full-length as he glimpsed the leather rocketing for the corner of the net. Something tipped his fingers and—

"Goal-1-1-1!" The crowd went half crazy. When the ball was kicked off again, the ground was buzzing

Cloaked by Four Walls in that Wild, Desolate Region, the Harz Mountains, is Terrorland. It is the Strange Setting for this Eerie Tale Series, Telling of Two Boys' Amazing Adventures in a Veritable Garden of Ghouls!

**ANOTHER WEIRD
COMPLETE TALE
OF TERRORLAND!**



This Week Harry and Bottles Penetrate to the Secret Fastnesses of Terrorland. What they Find There is Vividly Described Below, Boys!

The Spectral Hounds.

WAKE up, boys—wake up! The enemy is on us!

Professor Kingswood's voice was charged with urgency as he shook the shoulders of Harry Tracey and Jim—"Bottles"—Glass. The sleeping youngsters were aroused into instant wakefulness.

They were in a narrow cave, high up on the cliff face of a rocky, desolate gully in the Harz Mountains.

For three days and three nights Harry Tracey, the boy pilot, and his young mechanic, Bottles, had hidden in the cave from their grim enemies of Terrorland. Old Professor Warren Kingswood, whom they had rescued, had shared their ordeal.

They all knew that there was no escape from these mountains. The boys' aeroplane had crashed, during a storm, into the vast estate of the Count Sylvanus von Stelth. Completely encircled by a great medieval wall, the estate was inhabited by the greatest criminal organisation the world had ever known. And although the boys were outside of those grim walls, they knew that if they attempted to reach civilisation they would be seen, and stopped, and carried back into captivity.

It was night now, and the moon was sailing in a clear sky. They came out of the cave on to a narrow rock ledge. Overhanging rocks, above, hid the cliff

top. Far below lay the rugged gully, bathed in moonlight.

Along the rock ledge, on both sides, many weird-looking figures were creeping—figures that looked half human, half animal. They had great pointed ears, and their beast-like faces were shaggy. Instead of arms they had weblike wings, with claws at the ends.

But the boys knew that these were only clever disguises—adopted for the benefit of chance peasants, in the unlikely event of those simple folk being abroad after dark.

"They're closing in on us," whispered the professor quietly. "I'm afraid we're trapped, boys."

Even as he was speaking a spotlight from somewhere in the gully sprang into life, and hovered along the cliff face; it moved, and the next moment the old man and the two boys were revealed in the full glare of the light. No hope, now, of dodging back into the cave.

"There's only one chance," whispered the boy pilot. "We can't move either to right or to left. But the cliff is not sheer, and we can slither down into the gully."

"Into the hands of the enemy," said the Professor, pointing to other figures, far below.

"Yes, but we shall be on solid ground—and we can at least make a fight for it," muttered Harry, between his teeth. "Here, on this ledge, we shouldn't have a dog's chance. Come on!"

Between them, they seized the old man. They jumped from the ledge, and, striking the steeply-sloping cliff, they went sliding and skimming downwards. Hardly had they reached the floor of the gully, however, than they saw the new menace. Towards them came leaping three horrible creatures, and as they came they snarled menacingly.

The boys recognised them at the first glance—incredibly gigantic wolf-hounds! As big as ponies, they were great, shaggy monsters of unbelievable ferocity. Their coats were covered with some luminous powder or paint which made them look like spectral hounds.

But Harry Travers was not prepared to die so horribly. In a flash his automatic was out—and Bottles, too, possessed one of those handy weapons.

"Shoot—and shoot straight!" panted Harry. "If we don't shoot——"

"No!" interrupted the Professor sharply. "Kill those hounds and we are indeed lost! Leave them to me!"

And to the amazement of the boys he ran forward—unarmed, to meet those dread monsters. Instead of

both sides, came parties of the enemy. Escape seemed impossible.

"These dogs are as strong as lions!" panted Harry. "Quick! Will they obey you, Professor?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Then we can ride them—and charge through the enemy ranks," cried Harry. "Here, boy—here. Hold still!"

In a moment he was astride one of the great hounds, and the professor and Bottles followed his example. Then, at a word of command, the great dogs leapt forward. Down the gully they sped, their riders clinging desperately to their shaggy backs.

The Secret of the Great Wall.

It was a wild, exhilarating, nightmare ride. Almost with the speed of racehorses, the "spectral hounds" tore through a party of those disguised crooks. The men scattered as the hounds and riders swept through them. Pistol shots rang out at random, but in the confusion not a bullet found a mark.

Down the gully at full speed, then into a clump of dense fir trees—on, on!

Even the Professor could do nothing now. The hounds had taken control. And it was clear that they had a definite object in view: they were, in fact, returning home!



RIDING THE DEVIL DOGS!—The huge animals rushed forward, scattering the ghoulish batmen to right and left, and bearing the chums to the safety of the trees.

leaping at him, and tearing him asunder, they romped round him with every sign of recognition—and friendliness.

Harry guessed the truth. For five years Professor Warren Kingswood had been a prisoner in Terrorland, whilst his inventions had been exploited by the crooks. And during that time the old man, deemed harmless by his captors, had made friends with those giant dogs!

Harry and Bottles ran up, and the hounds, still barking, made no attack. And here it was that Harry had another of those brilliant inspirations of his. The situation was desperate. Down the gully, on

Suddenly, having cleared the belt of trees, the great mediæval wall of the estate loomed up immediately ahead in the moonlight. It towered high, like a vast battlement. With dripping jaws, the hounds dived through another narrow belt of trees near the wall, and now they abruptly halted.

For there, low in the wall, was a black hole. It was a passageway through which the dogs could get.

"Quick—in here!" panted the professor. "It's our only chance."

He spoke sharply to the hounds, ordering them to remain on guard. One after another the three fugitives wormed into that low, narrow tunnel.

Harry had an electric torch, and he had now switched it on.

"Ere, this ain't no good," gurgled Bottles. "We're goin' right back into Terrorland!"

"Safer within the estate than outside, boy!" muttered the professor.

They were almost through the wall by now; Harry could see a low, black opening, with a glimpse of bushes, beyond, which screened the hole. It was quite possible that the crooks knew nothing of this tunnel. It was a secret way known only to the hounds.

"Wait!" panted Harry abruptly. "What's this?" The light from his torch had revealed a great block of stone projecting, as though out of position. Now, for the first time, Harry realised that this tunnel was man-made. A thousand years old, no doubt—a relic of medieval times.

"Come!" urged Professor Warren. "We must not waste time—"

"Great Scott!" gasped Harry. He had pulled at the stone, and nothing had happened; but when he pushed it swung back, as though on a hinge, creaking loudly. His torchlight revealed an arched doorway, with a well-constructed stone tunnel beyond.

"Quick—in here!" exclaimed the youngster, worming his way through. "Those devils are after us, but they'll never think of looking here. They'll go straight through the tunnel, and in that way we shall elude them."

They all wormed their way through, and Harry closed the great stone. This time it went right home, so that there was nothing to indicate its looseness. Dimly, they heard shouts, Harry extinguished his light, and they all crouched there, glad enough of the respite.

They heard the baying of the hounds, and for a moment they were terrified, lest the dogs should betray them. But no; the baying grew fainter. They heard the shouts of men, and these, too, died away. It was clear that the dogs, with the men after them, had gone right through the direct tunnel in the wall, and they believed that the fugitives were somewhere within Terrorland.

"Safe!" breathed Harry exultantly. "We've tricked them! This hiding-place is a thousand times safer than that cave in the cliff! We're safe—safe!"

"Yus, mate, but where are we?" came an inquiry from Bottles.

It was safe to switch on the light again now; and they found that they could stand quite upright. The arched stone passage led interminably into the distance.

"Upon my soul!" ejaculated the Professor, his eyes gleaming. "Don't you understand, boys? This passage is built *within* the wall! It probably carries on round the entire estate."

"Do the crooks know about it?" asked Harry quickly.

"I doubt it," replied the old man. "It was built a thousand years ago, and it may have been a secret of the original builder."

It was not until the boys had slept—exhausted by their experience—that they realised, to the full, the glorious nature of their discovery. Daylight had come. Awakened, they could not fail to notice this; for the passage, to their bewildered surprise, was filled with a sort of subdued twilight.

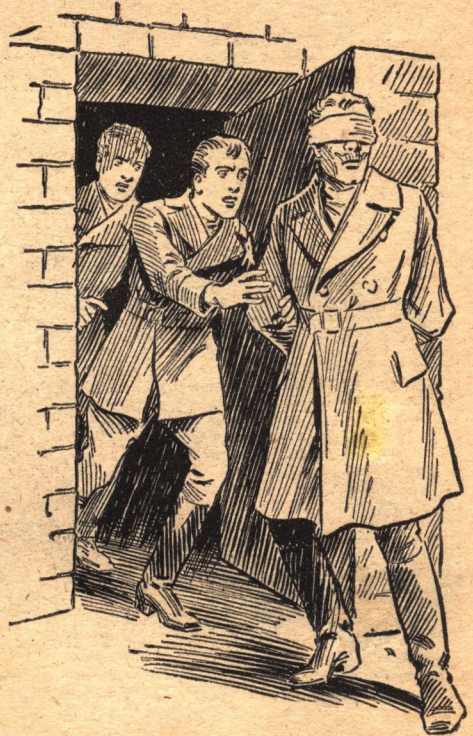
They soon understood why. At intervals, all along the passage, there were tiny ventilation holes, so small as to be practically invisible on the wall face, outside. Yet enough light came through to produce that dim twilight.

At regular intervals there were arched alcoves, and long-forgotten secret doors. The mechanism to operate these was in full sight.

"Look!" Harry said, flashing his torchlight on the floor. "Dust—the dust of centuries! Proof enough that the crooks know nothing of this secret passage! The enemy will never find us here. We can spy on these crooks and make raids and get away without leaving a trace."

Sentenced to Death.

It was Bottles who threw a spanner into the works. "An' what are we goin' to do about grub?" he asked practically. "You may not know it, Master



Harry reached out, dragged his father through the door, and Bottles closed the opening softly.

"Arry, but my stummick is so empty that I can feel the sides flappin' together."

"We'll get food," replied Harry confidently. "I vote we go on a tour of inspection straight away."

"Be careful, boys—do not take any rash chances," said the Professor warningly. "At one point this great wall joins up with the castle itself. If this passage penetrates as far as that, you might even find a means of entering the castle itself."

"Jove!" breathed Harry, his eyes gleaming. "And the crooks know nothing of this passage—they do not even suspect its existence!"

They hurried away, bubbling with eagerness and excitement. This adventure was becoming breathless. The passage proved to be in perfect condition throughout; in no place had the roof fallen, and it was quite dry, owing to the cunning system of ventilation. The air was pure.

The passage took a sharp turn suddenly, and now the gloom increased almost to inky blackness. The

passage was penetrating into the very recesses of the sinister castle !

Through a spyhole in one of those recesses, Harry saw a great chamber; he had been attracted by the humming of machinery. He caught a glimpse of a motor car, and, stacked high, hundreds of cans of petrol. They passed on, and suddenly Bottles reeled.

"Lumme!" he whispered hoarsely. "What's—what's that niff?"

"It smells like freshly-baked bread!" said Harry, with a gulp.

It was. In another of those recesses, further on, there was a spy-hole. Harry could see that this was the castle bakery. He took a great chance—but the need was desperate. Food they must have.

Operating those ancient metal bars, he unsealed the secret door. And to his joy, it opened at once,

They found another of those secret doors—and, peeping through the spyhole, they beheld a great printing works. Presses were humming, men were moving to and fro. Harry caught a glimpse of one man holding up an oblong of paper which was unquestionably a pound Bank of England note.

"They're forgers, too!" he whispered. "This is the factory! Look, Bottles! This is where the crook organisation makes its forged paper money! English—French—German—Italian—American! I'll swear that pile over there is a pile of ten-dollar bills!"

"Couldn't we destroy the place—just as we destroyed the coining factory?" whispered Bottles.

"By glory, yes!" vowed Harry. "Remember that garage place—with all the cans of petrol! Supposing we can grab some of those cans, and then open this door, here, and set fire to the juice!"



FIRE FOILS THE FIRING-SQUAD.—The men curled their fingers round the triggers of the guns, when suddenly there came yells and shouts from inside the castle. The whole squad turned towards the men who ran out of the path of billowing flames, and for a moment all eyes were away from the prisoner.

with scarcely a creak. At the first glance through the crevice—the door opened inwards—he gulped with relief.

For, built against the face of the wall, were shelves, and right against Harry's face were piles of freshly-baked bread! He pulled the door open further. It's movement could not be seen by any of the men within the great room, owing to the shelves.

Harry seized three of the loaves, and at the same time Bottles, crouching down, found some heavy tins on a lower shelf. He seized one of them. They closed the door again.

"Wake me up, somebody!" breathed Bottles. "Look at this 'ere, Master 'Arry! A whacking great tin of corned beef!"

They jagged it open with an instrument in Harry's pocket-knife, and Harry's first thought was for the Professor. He sent Bottles back with one of the loaves and a great hunk of meat. Never in their lives had the boys enjoyed such a sumptuous repast.

And they were overjoyed by the thought that here was a constant source of food supply. They would not need to worry about drink, for at one spot along the passage the boys had passed a running stream of water, where a natural spring bubbled in a tiny rivulet across the floor of the passage.

Bottles was soon back, and now, strengthened by their meal, the boys pressed on.

They hurried back, intent upon the scheme. Destruction! That was their object. To destroy—to wipe out—to obliterate these criminal factories!

Hurrying back along the passage, they over-ran their mark. When Harry looked through one of the spyholes, he found himself staring into an enclosed courtyard, with grim walls rising, and with the sunshine slanting down.

"Wrong place," he whispered. "We've come too far—"

He broke off, for at that moment he received an overwhelming shock. Men dressed in black, with saucer-like windows in their hoods, had come into view: and amongst them was a man in breeches and a leather flying-coat. He was hatless, and his hands were bound behind him. Another crook, dressed in green, was in command.

The prisoner was Harry's own father!

The Rescue.

HARRY'S brain reeled. His father! Here, a prisoner!

Before Harry could control his thoughts, a figure in rich purple came within the view of that spyhole. He, too, was hooded like the others. Voices came through to the hidden boys.

"You made a grave mistake, Captain Tracey,

when you flew over this estate—said the Purple Unknown relentlessly.

"You devils!" came the voice of Harry's father. "What have you done to my son?"

"Your son has caused us enough trouble!" snapped the other. "He and those with him are still at liberty—but you must not imagine, for one moment, that they will escape. They are hiding—and they will be found."

"Why have you brought me here?" demanded Captain Tracey angrily. "What is the meaning of all this melodramatic nonsense?"

"I will show you, my friend, whether it is nonsense," replied the Supreme Unknown. "You are one of the few men I fear. Oh, yes, Captain Tracey! I am well aware that you hold a special commission in the British Secret Service."

Harry's heart leapt; even he had not known that. "We have one way of dealing with—spies!" continued the Supreme Unknown. "We sentence them to death in the old-fashioned military way."

He turned abruptly, and gave some sharp orders in German. Harry's father was moved across, and he was placed with his back to the wall—and Harry nearly gasped aloud when he found that the fatal spot was within a yard of the secret door! A firing party was sent for.

"Bottles—the petrol!" he panted. "It's our only chance!"

Madly the boys raced along the passage. They found that other alcove, with the secret door leading into the petrol store. With a creak the door swung open. Both boys grabbed two cans of petrol without being seen by the workmen. They were back in a moment, and the door was re-closed.

Gasping, they raced along to the forgery plant. It was only necessary to open this door an inch or so. The boys unstoppered the cans, and they allowed the petrol to flow through over the floor of the "factory."

When the last can was nearly empty—and Harry was now in a state of terrible tension—shouts arose from some of the men. The petrol had been smelt—and seen!

"Back, Bottles!" panted Harry. He struck a match and dropped it through the little crack. There was a blinding blaze of fire, and a sound like a puffing explosion. In the same instant Harry slammed the door, and locked the lever. He was scorched, but the flames, inside, were trivial. Through the spy-hole he saw nothing but a blinding blaze of fire. Wild, desperate shouts were sounding.

"Back to the other door!" hissed Harry. "If dad is still alive there's a chance—"

He was the first to reach that other secret door, leading into the enclosed courtyard. Voices came to his ears.

"Ready!" came the sharp command, in the Supreme Unknown's harsh voice. "Present arms!"

Harry clutched at the levers of the door, knowing, as he did so, that he could not force the door open before the word—"Fire!" was uttered.

But a dramatic interruption came at that moment. Men ran madly into the courtyard, shouting with alarm. And well they might! For that great workshop where the printing-presses were situated was a raging mass of flames. Nobody knew how the fire had started—but every crook knew that nothing could save the "factory" from destruction.

The Supreme Unknown and the other hooded figures turned upon those shouting men. It was Harry's chance.

With a wrench he had the door open; he grabbed his father, who was standing, bound and blindfolded, near and yanked him back into the tunnel. It was all

over in a flash. The door was closed again, and the fastening rods secured.

Not five seconds had been occupied; and when the Supreme Unknown turned back to the firing-squad and the prisoner he gave a hoarse shout. For the prisoner had vanished!

"Fools—fools!" he screamed, in German. Neither he nor any of the others guessed what had happened. They believed that Captain Tracey had run through an arched doorway which led into the castle. They ran through, shouting the alarm.

But Harry's father was in that secret tunnel—and he was gazing with bewildered, joyous eyes into the face of his son.

"Dad—Dad!" choked Harry. "We were just in time."

"Harry, my boy!" whispered Captain Tracey. "You! I—I don't understand!"

When Captain Tracey heard the full story he seized his son's hand and gripped it hard.

"My boy, we'll carry on fighting these crooks—together!" he said tensely. "We'll stay in this dread Terrorland until we have wiped out the crooked organisation and exposed its mysterious leaders!"

Another grand yarn in this series coming next week, chaps—look out for "Crime Castle!"

IN THE NET—(Continued from page 21.)

Was it a goal? If the goal was damaged, then was not the game automatically suspended?

Players asked one another—and on to the field came the police to arrest Andy! He saw them, and his heart slumped.

Grimly they marched on. They surrounded him, while the crowd stared. The police had started to march him towards the stands—when a figure appeared at the players' exit.

It was a pale-faced man who staggered as he tried to run. There was a bandage around his head, and it was Joe Milligan. The trainer came on, reeling up to the police, staring at Andy.

"I broke out o' hospital—they told me ye'd been arrested!" he gasped. "But it wasn't him!" he told the police. "He isn't the one that laid me out—yon's the man!"

He pointed to where Bat Fulger was coming up behind. The scoundrel had stopped dead, and before he could move, police were around him.

Andy, spellbound, saw his cousin being marched away, and he heard the police-inspector saying:

"It looks as if we shan't want you, Andy!"

JOE MILLIGAN had seen and recognised Bat Fulger in the moment that the man had struck him down. The police learned where Bat Fulger had obtained the powder, and the evidence against him was complete. He was taken to court; but he was lucky, because Joe Milligan didn't want the charge pressed too heavily and so lose a member of the team.

Fulger got off with a heavy fine, and this news reached Andy at the same time as the decision of the football authorities was announced concerning the last kick of the semi-final.

The shot which had shattered the post was allowed as a goal!

"That puts me level pegs with Bat!" Andy told himself. "And now we're o.k. for Wembley and the Final!"

A New Free Gift Book Coming on Saturday Week, chaps—"Ships of the Seven Seas!" A ripping gift you won't want to miss.

OUR GIGANTIC TERROR TALE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

This Week's Laughing, Debonair Nick Chance, the Human Enigma, faces the

GHOULS OF THE GUILLOTINE!

Meet Nick Chance, the
Incomparable English
Thrill-Maker. Created for
the Mag. by

JOHN HUNTER.

because he and his father alone knew the hiding-place of the famous Beleceux emeralds—and Robespierre and his colleagues were not above cupidity

A spy found the old man in his hiding place, and tried to torture from him the secret. But the torture killed the Vicomte, and the spy died horribly—and still the Black Phantom was unaware of the whereabouts of the emeralds or of the Marquis de Saint Gervain.

During the search that followed for the Marquis the saving of other aristocrats by the Phantom went on apace. So, when a seeming half-wit country lad heard two soldiers planning vengeance on Raoul de Quinzain, an aristocrat, Raoul received a warning which kept him from their hands. And, while the soldiers questioned his father and his son at the old castle, a perfumed exquisite who was Nick Chance, the Englishman, appeared in the great hall.

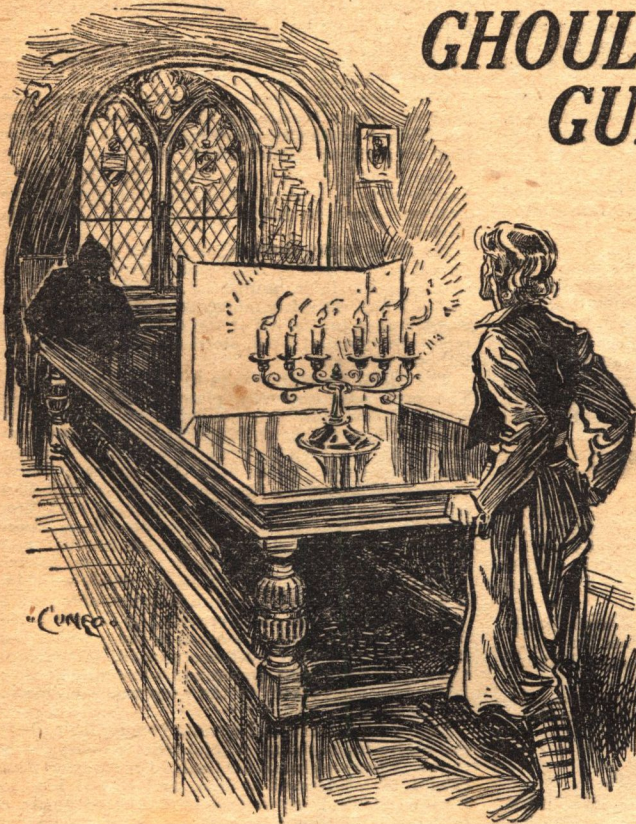
There was fighting, in which the soldiers got away, carrying with them the crippled boy, Michel. To the tower top they went, and there, hoping to draw the lad's father into a trap, they set fire to the great beacon.

Berand Prepares Vengeance.

PIERRE climbed the iron ladder at the brazier's side and thrust his flaring torch amid the piled and resinous fuel in the great iron basket. It caught, crackled gustily, shooting red sparks on all sides.

His men dropped to the top of the tower and they watched the brazier. Slowly the flames took hold. Slowly they lifted their dipping and waving heads above the basket. Lurid light began to be shed on the top of the tower, light which showed Berand and his two sombre companions, which showed little Michel, leaning on his crutch, Berand's great hand at his shoulder.

"He'll see it," chuckled Berand. "Lying in wait outside, eh? I can see the whole plan. That exquisite knows not this country. Quinzain does. Quinzain was to get fast horses, or, perhaps more likely—as the old man would be with them—a coach, from where he would know how to find such,



Nick was placed at one end of a table, in the full light of the candles. At the other, in the gloom of the screen, sat a figure hooded and cowed like a monk. "Would'st see Robespierre and the rest dead, and France free?" asked a voice.

THE blood-stained hand of terror lay heavy over France.

The mob, ground down for centuries, had at last turned like a wounded monster at bay and was busy trampling the lilies of the most despotic monarchy the world has ever known. The gleaming knife of Madame La Guillotine rose and fell, rose and fell—as into her dreadful maw the flower of France walked, head erect, a careless jest on the lip—yet awed by a sense of calamity and doom!

And then, when the Terror seemed to have reached its blackest hue, a white ray of hope illumined the night. A name was whispered, the name of one careless dare-devil who snatched her prey from the very steps of the guillotine—the Black Phantom.

Aristocrat after aristocrat doomed to the Knife was saved and smuggled into England. Who was he, this gay, laughing enigma who defied the People?

The Vicomte de Beleceux was among those rescued, but he refused to go to England till he had found where his son, the Marquis de Saint Gervain, was imprisoned. His son had not been executed

while the exquisite came in and either played for time or effected a rescue. Well—there it is."

Berand's reasoning was absolutely accurate, for this was exactly what Nick and Quinzain, having met on the Paris road, had arranged.

The fire in the brazier basket was now rapidly gaining strength and would soon be blazing fully.

Berand's great fingers bit hard into Michel's frail shoulder. "Afraid?" he snarled.

Now Michel was simply eaten up with terror. He hardly knew how to stand on his one sound leg and his crutch because of it. He had to set his teeth very hard and swallow something in his throat before he answered.

"I should never be afraid of you," he said; and added, in quick boyish pride: "If my father were here you wouldn't dare to do this."

Berand flung him down on the stones. His words rang true. Berand knew they were a fact. The man who had thrashed him for the vile crime he had committed would have driven him from the top of the tower screaming, if he had been present.

Michel got up and drew back from the men. He had no way of escape. Useless for him to flee through the doorway down the narrow steps leading to the tower-top. Disabled as he was, he would have been caught before he had covered a few yards. He could only stand, wet through in the driving rain, chilled by the roaring wind which now fanned the brazier flames to fury, and tremble, watching, hoping against hope that a miracle would save him.

He looked out from the tower-top. The great square, un-mortared masses of stone which the ancient builders had so cunningly piled one atop of the other so that they stood for centuries, dropped in a sheer wall to the black-swathed earth below. There was no way down for him . . . none.

Yet—rather than face the brazier he would jump. Better a swift fall and a swift death than that . . .

Berand turned to him and lifted his finger. Berand's face was wreathed in a grin.

He said: "Let us hope Quinzain watches. Let us not doubt that he does. Come . . . boy . . ."

He stepped towards Michel.

Nick Springs the Trap.

DOWN in the great dining-room the old seigneur, under the lash of Nick's impatient tongue, had stirred himself from his chair.

"Good fencing," he said tonelessly. "Though I thought your attack needed . . . Eh? Ah. The door. But yes. It is locked. Now where is that boy?"

Nick took a deep breath. The old man was momentarily helpless. Berand's blow had almost finished him. Nick ran to the long window at the end of the hall, it being his intention to get out through the window, run right round the chateau and enter it by the front door, if that were possible.

But he was bitterly disappointed. The original castle had been built on a great tongue of rock; so that though the dining-hall was on the ground level of the front door, its outer wall actually dropped sheer with a precipice some hundred feet high.

Above the dining-room window the rough old wall lifted to the tower-top. Now as Nick looked out of the window and, in the blackness, realised all this, he saw a sudden dancing light flicker redness downwards, and, leaning far from the window, he looked up.

He turned to the old seigneur. "There are flames on the tower-top," he gasped. "What might that mean?"

The seigneur stared at Nick, his face gone pale. The great brazier was, as has been seen, his special

pride. Outrage was being done to the House of Quinzain. Some alien hands had fired the brazier!

He staggered forward and he reached the window and leaned out. Nick seized him and held him there, for there was every likelihood of the old man dropping to his death far below.

He drew back. "They have fired the brazier!" he cried. "They have dared . . . The canaille have fired the Quinzain brazier!"

Why, Nick asked himself, should the ruffians have fired the great brazier on the tower-top? What possible use could they serve by doing so? Or were they summoning others to their aid?

One thing, however, was plain. By lighting the brazier they had revealed to him the spot in the chateau where he might possibly find them and Michel.

He stood back, hesitant, and then drew from a pocket a small roll of black silk. The old man was sitting at the table, muttering in despair; and he saw nothing. In a few moments the Black Phantom was standing on the sill of the open window, lashed at by the rain and wind, stood above the seemingly fathomless drop.

The Black Phantom began to climb the old walls. The man who originally planned the castle had visited Rome and had seen the Colosseum, had observed how the great blocks of that architectural marvel are not held together by cement or mortar, and he had tried to emulate the ancient builders. He had succeeded up to a point, but his work had not preserved the finish of the Roman structure, with the result that the massive walls, though perpendicular, held nooks and crannies for feet and hands all the way up their height.

Though this fact rendered Nick's climb possible, that climb yet remained one of immeasurable peril.

He felt like a maimed fly crawling up the wall. He felt unutterably tiny, a wisp of a thing which the first real puff of wind must sweep aside. Above him the wall seemed never ending in its towering height; below him the bottom of the drop was invisible in the darkness.

The wind shrieked and screamed round the corners and the walls, as though a fiend cried to fellow fiends that a victim was found for them. Once a great gust caught him, whipped at him, and caused him to loose one hand hold, so that he swung outwards, a foot wedged between two stones, a hand clinging to a stone above, and the other foot and hand wild in the air.

He got his second hand back in time and, pausing a moment, went on.

Now the brazier flames were higher. Now some sparks dropped out past him, whirling brightly downwards in the great wind until they flared to intense whiteness and sudden extinction.

At last he saw the serrated edge of the battlements of the tower-top just above him, and seeing this he heard a scream.

It was a high wild scream, a terrible scream—wring at last from the brave lips of Michel as Berand picked him up.

And Nick knew. He knew with a cold white rage at his heart; knew exactly why that brazier had been lighted, knew exactly what horrid thing might be done on the tower-top if he did not reach it, if he died on reaching it.

He set his teeth and clawed upwards the faster, taking risks now which he had not taken lower down. He reached up with his hand and felt it, instead of groping across the rock face till it found a cranny, lying flat-fingered over a rock-edge.

He was clutching the battlements. He pulled desperately with both hands, his legs swinging over the hideous void, reckless that one or other of the

ruffians had only to see him in order to push him back and down.

They did see him. Berand had one foot on the brazier's ladder. Pierre and the other man were watching him.

And suddenly, as though a magical thing had been done, a black and hooded figure came from out of the night itself, whipping into view a slim sword blade.

Berand cried aloud and dropped Michel. Pierre rushed. His sword whistled in the air. The black thing slid sideways like a practised boxer of modern days. The slim sword lunged, drew back, and Pierre choked and died.

Now Berand and the other man were at him. They came a little fearfully, very desperately. There was something terrible about this black quiet thing which had come out of nowhere; yet they must slay it or themselves be slain, and they knew it.

The Black Phantom spoke never a word. That was the Black Phantom's way. The exquisite with the quizzing glass talked all the time he fought. The Black Phantom spoke not at all. He was a line of dark silence moving against the night's darkness, soft-footed, enigmatic with his unchanging black hood, revealing neither fear nor courage, anxiety nor glee.

He got the second man very quickly. He retreated and suddenly stepped in—a trick old with fencers and boxers. The other man was not ready for this sudden change of movement, and he took the rapier in his throat.

Now only Berand and the Black Phantom remained, with little Michel crouched down against the battlements, slightly sheltered from the rain and wind, his crutch at his side.

Berand choked and loosed oaths. He fought like a madman. He gibed and jeered and insulted.

And the Black Phantom remained quiet. Under the wild lash of Berand's attack he was cool and precise, unfurried. Under the oaths and insults he remained unmoved. And the black hood presented its changeless front to the terrified desperate man, as though doom's own face floated ethereally in the night before him.

Berand pressed, missed, saw the end as he missed, and shrieked.

The shriek checked suddenly. Berand was on his knees . . . his face . . . He ceased to move.

The Black Phantom picked up Michel and his crutch as though he picked up a baby and its toy with one arm and he went through the door to shelter, leaving the Quinzain brazier, lighted for the last time, burning itself for all time to extinction, shedding its lurid red light on the faces of the dead.

In the corridor Nick took off his black silk, rolled

it and placed it into his pocket. He looked at Michel. They stood where a great candelabra shed light around them.

Nick said: "Michel, you have seen something to-night which you shall tell to nobody; not even to your father or your grandfather. I ask it on the honour of a gentleman of France."

Michel said eagerly: "Monsieur . . . anything for you . . ."

And Nick, reading the high dancing light in his eyes, looking at his poor twisted leg, wondered what great romances the little boy wove for himself in his thoughtful hours, what adventures he endured, what great deeds he wrought . . . in the golden lands of



THE PHANTOM AVENGER.—The Black Phantom came out of the night at Berand and his men as they shoved the crippled boy toward the brazier. They whipped round with cries of terror.

his imagination. He carried Michel to the dining-room, unlocked the door—they had left the key outside—and went in.

The old seigneur was sitting at the table cracking nuts and sipping his wine, and he mumbled: "I was reflecting, monsieur, if you will pardon my insolence, that de Briault was, really, a better fencer than yourself. His defence . . ."

They heard rushing footsteps on the corridor, the door burst open, and Michel cried: "Father! Father!" He hobbled to the arms of a tall man in the humble guise of a coachman, and the tall man, with a sob, snatched him up.

Nick checked him. "Monseigneur. Michel will doubtless tell you of the tower-top at his leisure. All is well, and there is nothing to fear if you hasten. You said you had in the chateau sufficient moneys to take you to England through Germany, and there, I understand, you have great wealth with various English merchants."

Quinzain nodded, set Michel down and hurried off. He returned with a small canvas bag filled with golden Louis.

They went out to the coach. The horses were restive, pawing at the ground. They had been in stable for several days, and they fretted to be on the road and away.

Some few articles of clothing were thrown into the coach, and the old seigneur, who did not seem to comprehend that he was leaving his ancestral home for ever, was assisted inside, with Michel. Michel had gathered up his wonderful chessmen and their board and had them with him. Quinzain climbed to the box. He gathered the reins and leaned towards Nick.

"Monsieur," he said, "I know you not, and perhaps may never meet you again. But I saw the tower-top, and I know all the debt I owe you. We shall reach safety now. That is assured, for these horses will come to the German frontier without check." He paused. "Only one thing I regret, and that is that I must abandon that which took me to Paris—my efforts to save a friend. But I have Michel and my father to think of."

Nick smiled at him. "Would you trust me to try and aid your friend? I return to Paris now."

Quinzain hesitated. "It is not that I don't trust you, monsieur. That I surely must do. But there is peril in it. You see, Phillippe de Gervain has . . ." "Gervain!" gasped Nick. "'Tis he I seek in Paris."

Quinzain took a deep breath. "Then we are thrice well met, monsieur. I learnt it in a roundabout way. But it is true. He lies in some secret dungeon in the Luxembourg. That is all I know, but I know it for a fact."

Nick said adieu to him. He stepped back. He heard Michel's voice: "Monsieur! Monsieur!"

He gave Michel his hand. The coach moved and tore their grip asunder. Nick stood in the driving rain and watched it roll on its way to safety as the horses lunged to the collar.

It has to be recorded that all through that long uninterrupted flight to the safety of the German frontier, Michel did what he had never done before in his life—argued fiercely with his grandfather that the great de Briault could never possibly have been such a swordsman as the man Michel had left behind him, and who, all through Michel's crippled life, remained enshrined in his heart as a hero among heroes.

Meanwhile, the Black Phantom returned to Paris. He sang as he rode. He knew where to find Phillippe de Gervain.

Nick Finds Allies.

H EAT lay oppressively on Paris—intense, suffocating heat, which made the festerous streets beyond the Pont Neuf, in the Cordeliers district, reek with foul odours, which brought folk to their doorsteps night and day; heat that hung across the city like a pall.

It was, in the new fantastic calendar of the Revolutionaries, Thermidor. In the old calendar—the month of July. Men and animals dropped dead in the streets from the heat. No wind stirred. There was blazing pitiless sun by day, storms and unrelieved heat by night.

It was a strange and terrible fact concerning the

great Revolution that whenever a crisis drew near it was marked by such heat as distinguished this period called Thermidor.

Nick stayed yet at the house of the old miser. He had returned in two days instead of three, and the old man was pleased with him. Once more the semi-idiot boy frequented the bistro down the street, and told, amid roars of laughter, how his master had "gated" him for being drunk a night or two earlier.

And all the time Nick watched the great prison of the Luxembourg, within the massive walls of which, somewhere, Phillippe, Marquis de Gervain, lay a prisoner.

It was one night, as Nick strolled round the Luxembourg, that he observed a man in the uniform of a policeman standing not far from him. Now Nick knew that every hour was fraught with peril for him in Paris, and he wondered whether the policeman was there by chance or design, whether the trail of the Black Phantom had been found.

He strolled past the policeman deliberately and looked vacantly into the man's face; and then he started. For this policeman was the man called Merda who had befriended him and who had asked him to meet him once.

Nick, strolling on, debated within himself, and then turned back and went straight up to Merda.

"Hello, my friend," he said. "At last we meet again."

Merda eyed him for a moment in astonishment, then recognised him and talked rapidly, asking him where he had been, what he had done. Nick replied without giving much away, certainly without revealing where he was hiding, and Merda asked him if he were still of the same mind and opposed to the Terror. To this Nick most heartily agreed. Merda asked him if he would meet him again the following night, at the same spot, and to this Nick also agreed.

On the night after, Nick presented himself at the corner of the Luxembourg gardens. A chaise stood on the cobbles. Merda approached him. Nick, of course, wore his country lad's clothing.

"You'll come with me," said Merda, "and you'll be blindfolded, an you don't mind. This is a matter of vast importance, and no chances can be taken."

Nick had concealed on his person a fine silver-chased and loaded double-barrelled pistol of more than ordinary accuracy for those times, and he consented to be blindfolded, thinking that, anyhow, he must go through with his adventure. The chaise carried him off.

Where they drove he did not know, but he guessed, from the time the chaise took rattling over the cobble stones, that it was wasting distance in order to deceive him. This, also, he expected.

At last he was helped from the coach, and knew that he went in through a house-door. He was guided up some stairs, across a polished floor, and brought to a standstill. A voice said: "Let him see."

The cloth was taken from his head. He found himself in a big room. It was a strange room in its illumination.

He was at one end of a very long table. On this table, quite near to him, was a great silver stand holding six candles. Just beyond this stand, and rearing above it, was a wooden screen, painted white on the side nearest the candles and Nick.

Therefore, the light of the candles was heavily reflected on Nick's face; but owing to the height of the screen the other end of the table was in deep shadow.

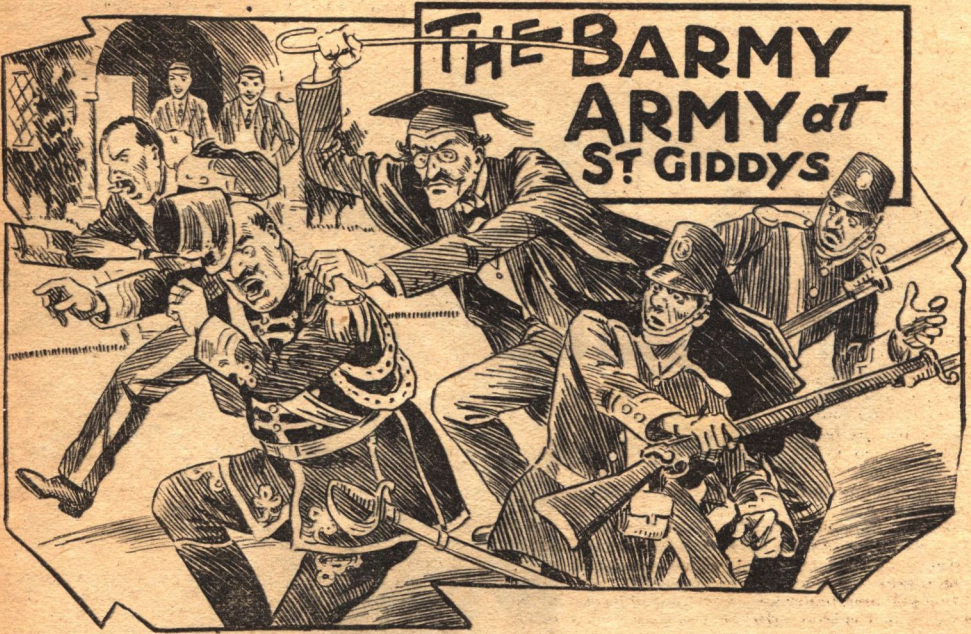
At this end sat a man. He wore what Nick thought—from the little he could see of it—might have once been the black coarse habit of a monk. He had

(Continued on page 16.)

LARKS AND LAUGHS AT
THE SCHOOL OF
SHOCKS.

THE BOGUS
BODYGUARD.

MILITARY MONKEY-
INGS—AND SOME
SURPRISES.



Fall in! For Another Ripping Long Complete Tale of the Dizzy Doings of those Great Schoolboy Characters—The Boys of St. Giddy's. A Laugh in Every Line of this Great Yarn?

CATTY CANES THE WRONG CROWD! The irate Housemaster waded into the Soldiers of San Salva. He thought they were Johnny Gee and Co. in Disguise! But they weren't!

Six to One!

"GREAT Scott!" exclaimed Johnny Gee, staring. "What is it?"

"A bicycle gone to seed, I should think!" grinned Dick Bannister.

The Joyous Juniors of the Remove Form at St. Giddy's were in Merivale. It was a half-holiday, and Johnny Gee & Co. were scouting round, looking for trouble in the shape of their rivals of Earlswood School.

But they now found themselves gazing, with interest, at an extraordinary cycle which was propped against the kerb. It was of astonishing length, and it possessed no less than six saddles and six pairs of pedals. It was, in fact, being used for an advertising stunt, and the rightful riders of the contraption were in the local inn, partaking of refreshments.

"Begad!" ejaculated Lord Reggie Pelham-Smith, jamming his topper more firmly on his noble head, and screwing his monocle more firmly into his eye. "Six places, dear old chappies, and there are six of us! What about it?"

"Reggie," said Johnny Gee softly, "you're a genius!"

"Yaas, begad, I've always known it," agreed Lord Reggie modestly. It was the work of a moment for the eager juniors to mount the remarkable machine. Johnny Gee himself took the front seat, with Dick Bannister immediately behind him. Then came Lord Reggie, Snowball, Tony Graham, and the Hon. Bob Vernon.

"All ready?" sang out Johnny Gee. "We're off!"

"Yo! Yo! Rader!" gurgled Snowball, his eyes rolling. The contraption got into motion, and Johnny Gee, though he was quite an expert cyclist, found himself all at sea. This queer bike just wouldn't be controlled; it wobbled from one side of the road to the other.

"Yarooooooogh! Yow! Whoop!" yelled Tony Graham. "Look out! We may be off—but there are two ways of being off, and I think we're going to try the second way!"

"Shurrup!" gasped Johnny Gee. "I'm just getting the hang of it!"

Scattering all and sundry, they got out of the village street; and the cycle, with the six Joyous Juniors on it, went careering into Merivale Lane. It swerved round the bend like some fearsome juggernaut, and it was a mercy that no other traffic was on the road.

But Samuel Arbutnot Slocum was certainly on the road—but only for a moment. He was gloating over a big basketful of eggs he had “scroured,” and he was dreaming of a large table entirely covered with sizzling fried eggs.

Then Johnny Gee arrived.

“Ow! Help! Wattisit?” yelped Fatty. For one so bulky, his backward leap was worthy of a full hundred marks. The egg-basket hurtled into the

upon that gap in the trees—so he didn't see the burly, fiery-looking gentleman with the bristly moustache and monocle. It was Colonel Slammer himself, that redoubtable old warrior, and the sworn enemy of the Joyous Juniors!

He was marching side by side with a tall man in a gorgeous uniform, which looked like something out of last year's pantomime. It was red and blue, and festooned with gold lace, and across the man's chest



air—and immediately, in Fatty's vicinity it rained eggs.

Plop! Squelch! Biff! Zugg! Plop! Fatty's vision of fried eggs vanished, for the quality of that hen fruit which squelched down upon his head was not even C3.

“*Yarooooop!* I'm poisoned!” howled Fatty Slocum, staggering back. “I'm gessed!”

But there are always compensations. In staggering back, Fatty slithered into the ditch, and with a dreadful squelch he vanished into the black, muddy water. And that water, although odoriferous, was like lily-of-the-valley compared to the egg perfume.

Cra-a-a-ash! Fatty Slocum faintly heard the sound as he came up for the third time. He didn't know it, but Johnny Gee & Co. had made a nasty gap in the fence which surrounded Colonel Slammer's property.

That contraption had proved too much for Johnny. It kept going all right, and that was just the trouble. The blessed thing wouldn't stop! It was careering along at breakneck speed, and Johnny, in attempting to find the brake, swerved giddily at the corner.

“Look out!” he roared. “We're for it!” They sliced through the fence like a circus rider going through a paper hoop. Splinters of wood flew in all directions—but, mercifully, Johnny Gee & Co. were not hurt.

On went the contraption, bumping, swaying, swerving.

Johnny Gee was doing his utmost to steer the metal monster to a rising hillock of ground—where, by the very force of gravity, it would automatically come to a standstill. But, in order to get there, a belt of trees had to be negotiated—and Johnny had a whole collection of private doubts.

The route would take him diagonally across the drive—and there, on the drive marched a startling cavalcade.

Johnny Gee's companions saw it, because they had nothing else to do. Johnny's gaze was fixed

was a red band, covered with medals. Behind came a dozen dazzlingly attired, undersized soldiers. In a way, it was an impressive-looking entourage—but not for long.

Owing to the trees, Colonel Slammer and his extraordinary friends did not see the hurtling cycle until it was too late. And Johnny Gee, also owing to those trees, didn't see the Grand Parade.

“Look—OUT!” howled Dick Bannister wildly.

Whizz! Z-z-zzzzz! Whack! Biff! Wallop! Johnny Gee & Co. sliced right into the middle of the parade; soldiers fell to right and to left, there was a final spectacular crash, and the joy ride was over.

His Excellency the President!

JOHNNY GEE found himself sitting on somebody's face. He knew this, because he heard weird gurgling sounds immediately beneath him.

“Oh, crumbs!” he gasped, shifting his position backwards, until he was sitting on a heaving chest.

“*Carramba!*” gurgled the man on the ground.

“I don't blame you!” said Johnny Gee breathlessly.

Dick and Tony dragged Johnny Gee up—for they saw that he was sprawling across the chest of the gorgeous individual with the festoons of gold lace.

“Huh!” snorted Colonel Slammer sulphurously.

FATTY TREATMENT FOR CROOKS.—The startled creature clawed at the two faces and spat and swore in no unmistakable terms.

"You young miscreants! Trying to kill us, by thunder! Huh! Trespassing on my land, by gad!" "Oh, crumbs!" gasped Johnny Gee. "It's old Slammer!"

"How dare you refer to me in that disrespectful way?" bellowed Colonel Slammer. "My dear sir! Your Excellency! A thousand apologies for this appalling accident! By thunder! I'll make the young villains suffer for this!"

"Oh, golly, golly!" gurgled Snowball. "What am all dese soldiers for?"

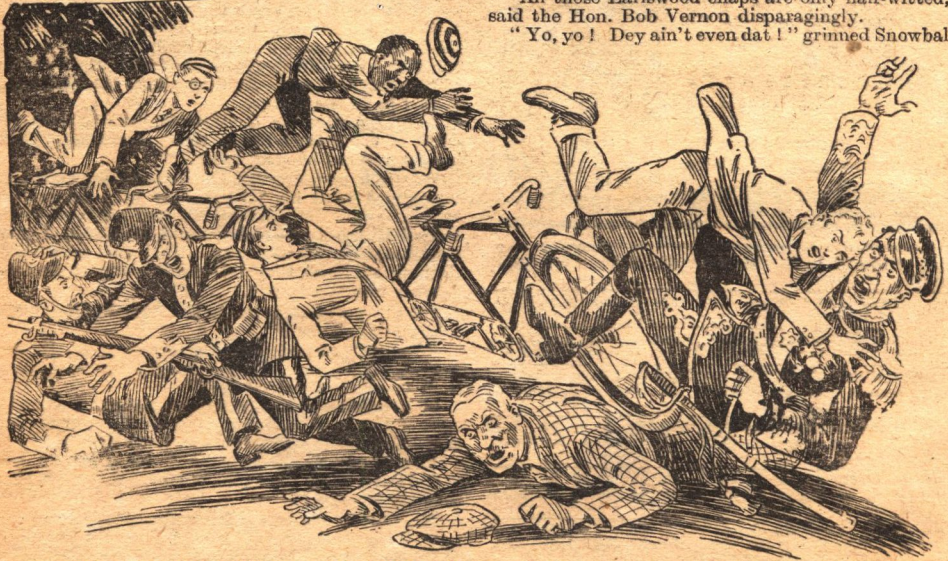
"How dare you?" snorted the irate colonel. "Don't you know who these gentlemen are, you young hooligans? You have attacked and assaulted His Excellency, Don Lopez Cordova, the President of San Salva!"

"Jimminy!" ejaculated Johnny, opening his eyes wider.

"And this other gentleman is General Carillo, the Commander of the Presidential Bodyguard! And look at the bodyguard! Wrecked, by thunder!"

"For thees, in my country, the boys would be shot!" said the President, his eyes burning, his waxed moustache performing a north and south movement not unlike Harry Tate's.

"We keel them, yes?" puffed General Carillo.



THE COLONEL COMES A CROPPER—Johnny Gee and Co. shied right into the middle of the parade; soldiers fell to right and left; there was a final spectacular crash, and the joy ride was over.

"Excellency, command! Let me order ze firing-squad!"

"Carramba, no!" snapped the President, controlling himself. "We are not in San Salva now."

"Leave them to me, Your Excellency," said Colonel Slammer. "I'll deal— Why, what the— Hi! Come back, you young miscreants! They've gone, by thunder!"

Johnny Gee & Co. had thought it just as well to go while the going was good. They took the "velocipede" with them—and to their intense relief they discovered that it wasn't damaged. In Merivale Lane, breathless, they ran into Tommy Rhodes, the cheery leader of the Earlswood juniors.

"Pax!" said Tommy, in alarm. "If you St. Giddy's fatheads think that you can jump on me—"

"Keep your hair on," interrupted the curly-headed Remove leader. "Phew! We've had a hot time, Tommy!"

He briefly explained what had happened, and Tommy Rhodes whistled.

"Yes, the President and his bodyguard arrived at Colonel Slammer's last night," he said. "I heard all about it. This giddy President is in England to work up a loan of some kind—probably to finance another revolution. He's Colonel Slammer's guest because the old blighter—meaning the colonel—has got some property in San Salva."

"Come off it!" said Johnny Gee, with a sniff. "Think you can spoof us with a dotty yarn like that?"

"I'm not spoofing," protested Tommy. "It's the truth—honest Injun!"

"Oh, well, we'll believe you," said Dick Bannister. They were successful in smuggling the "velocipede" back from where they had taken it, and then they went up Merivale Lane towards St. Giddy's. Johnny Gee was looking thoughtful.

"So Don Lopez Cordova, President of San Salva, is in England to raise a loan?" he remarked. "I'm not doubting Tommy's word—but it seems to me that Tommy is a simple soul, who would believe anything."

"All those Earlswood chaps are only half-witted," said the Hon. Bob Vernon disparagingly.

"Yo, yo! Dey ain't even dat!" grinned Snowball.

"I'll bet Don Lopez is in England because San Salva is too jolly hot to hold him!" went on Johnny.

"He's even afraid that his enemies will follow him here. What does he want a bodyguard for, if he isn't scared? And that gives me an idea!"

During the rest of the walk to St. Giddy's he talked rapidly—and the Co. chuckled and gurgled, and finally howled with laughter.

Catty Faces the Firing-Squad.

MR. ERNEST JAMES CATTERMOLE, M.A., the cross-grained Housemaster of St. Giddy's, got up from his study chair and reached for his cane.

This was such a favourite exercise of his that he was an expert at it. He had distinctly heard soft

footfalls and whispering voices out in the corridor. And whisperings usually meant japes.

He opened the door softly, and crept out. The voices were coming from round the bend of the corridor, and Mr. Cattermole compressed his thin lips as he recognised the unmistakable tones of Johnny Gee. Like a panther stalking his prey, Mr. Cattermole edged towards the corner, his cane quivering with eagerness, as though invested with life.

"... those fancy-dress costumes we once used in a play," came Johnny Gee's voice. "That's the best of having a Remove Amateur Dramatic Society, my sons!"

"Think those costumes will do?" came Dick Bannister's voice.

"The very things! Comic opera military uniforms—with swords and everything."

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"My only hat!" came Tony Graham's chuckle. "It'll be the jape of the term!"

Mr. Cattermole hesitated. Perhaps, on second thoughts, it would be better to wait and catch them red-handed. So he crept back to his study—and waited. The Joyous Juniors were getting up a jape, were they?

Catty gloated. Presently, he would go out, and— His pleasant thoughts were jarred upon by noises which came from outside, in the Close. He went to the window, irritated—and then he jumped about a foot into the air.

"Good—goodness gracious!" There was quite a gathering outside. Half the school seemed to be in the quad, and the attraction was a body of gorgeously attired soldiers, with a fat little officer at their head. They were all undersized, and they looked so comic, in fact, as they stood at attention, that the juniors were gathering round to enjoy the fun.

"Good heavens!" panted Mr. Cattermole, his eyes glittering. "So—so this is the—er—jape! I heard them speak of comic uniforms. Upon my word!"

Grasping his cane more firmly, he sallied out on the warpath.

It was unfortunate—for Catty—that Colonel Slammer and Don Lopez Cordova had left the bodyguard in the Close while they went along to pay a visit to Dr. Holroyd. Colonel Slammer had come to St. Giddy's to make a serious complaint, and as that complaint was directly connected with the President of San Salva, it was only fitting that the bodyguard should be in the picture.

"So!" panted Mr. Cattermole, dashing down the steps of the School House three at a time. "I've caught you red-handed, have I?"

He strode up to General Carrillo and the presidential bodyguard with his face flushed with triumphant satisfaction. Mr. Cattermole had his back to the School House now—or he would have seen Johnny Gee & Co. in the doorway. They had seen Catty dashing out, and they had come along to find out what it was all about.

"Sir!" puffed General Carrillo, with dignity. "You addressed me, yes?"

"Dolt!" rasped Mr. Cattermole, in derision. "Young hooligan! Do you imagine for one moment that you have deceived me?"

The audience waited, vastly interested. And on the School House steps, Johnny Gee sank gracefully into the arms of Tony Graham and Lord Reggie.

"Hold me up, somebody!" breathed Johnny. "Old Catty must have been spying. He thinks those soldiers are—us!"

Mr. Cattermole was getting himself nicely worked up. "You thought you'd fool me, eh?" he hooted. "I'll teach you to play these preposterous jokes!"

Slash! Slash! Slash! Swish! With immense gusto, Mr. Cattermole set about General Carrillo, and his cane worked overtime.

"Yow! Yaroop!" shrieked the commander-in-chief of San Salva's army. "Carramba! Desist! For this, dog, you die! Yow! Whoooooo!"

Fearlessly, Mr. Cattermole attacked, singlehanded, those twelve armed soldiers. And the twelve armed soldiers, howling with pain and surprise, scattered in all directions.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Catty!"

"Now!" panted Mr. Cattermole, coming to a standstill, and glaring round in his triumph. "Now, you young rascals, you will do five hundred lines—"

He stopped abruptly, and his jaw dropped. For he had just caught sight of Johnny Gee & Co., on

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the steps. But he was only startled for a moment. There were plenty of other boys in St. Giddy's!

"I'm going to find out who you are!" he panted, swinging round upon General Carillo, and grabbing at his moustache. "You needn't think—Why, who-what—Good Heavens! It won't come off!" "Dog! Animal!" howled the General. "Seize him, men!"

Fortunately, a sudden shout sounded, and the President himself came running up, with Colonel Slammer and Dr. Holroyd.

They managed to cool General Carillo down, and Mr. Cattermole was saved—but only in the nick of time.

Johnny Gee—Espionage Agent!

SILENT, mysterious figures slipped one by one over the wall of St. Giddy's, and dropped into Merivale Lane.

"Everybody here?" came a soft whisper.

"Yo, yo! Rader!"

"If we hurry, we can get back before supper, and that's all that matters," murmured Johnny. "Come on, my sons! This is where we get our own back on old Slammer!"

The Joyous Juniors were grotesquely arrayed. They were, in fact, wearing fancy dress costumes of a military type. In their red tunics and plumed helmets, and masses of gold lace, they looked quite impressive.

They cut across the meadows near Merivale Wood, and in a very short time they were stealthily making their way across Colonel Slammer's estate. The house loomed ahead, with many lights showing from the lower windows.

"Thought so!" whispered Johnny Gee, as they crept nearer. "Twig the bodyguard? I had a chat with Sergeant Rumble after tea, and he told me that

the President keeps his bodyguard posted round the house, like a lot of sentries. Old Rumble heard it from one of Slammer's servants."

"Looks as if you were right about the President being scared of spies," whispered Dick Bannister.

"Well, we're the spies," said Johnny, impressively. "Making a determined attack! The agents of the revolution! Ha, ha! Are you ready for the grim deed, comrades?"

"Ay, ready!" hissed the others.

"Then roll up the machine-guns—get the hand-grenades ready," said Johnny Gee. "On! On, comrades, to the attack!"

The air became filled with fiendish yells, and the soldiers jumped to attention.

"Charge! Down with the traitor President!"

Black objects hurtled through the air—to fall on the ground and burst with dull explosions. They flared up in lurid yellow fire, illuminating the scene eerily.

Crack-crack-crack-crack-crack! Boom-boom! Crack-crack-crack-crack-crack! It sounded like a bombardment, accompanied by machine-gun fire. But the short, staccato cracks were only caused by noisy fireworks; the booms were harmless maroons.

But the effect of it all was staggering. In the lurid light, the bodyguard saw uniformed figures rushing up, with fixed bayonets. And with howls of fear, General Carillo's soldiers flung down their arms and bolted. They flew in all directions—and at that moment some french windows burst open, and out came Don Lopez Cordova, with General Carillo and Colonel Slammer at his rear.

"Good Heavens!" gasped Colonel Slammer. "An attack! The enemy, by thunder!"

Johnny Gee & Co. swept up. They weren't in the least surprised that the bodyguard had bolted. They had expected it.

"Ah-ha!" shouted Johnny, dramatically. "'Tis the base traitor—Colonel Slammer! *Carramba!* Get him!"

"Wait!" howled Colonel Slammer. "I'm not the man you want!"

"You have sheltered Don Lopez Cordova—and for that you shall die!" hissed Johnny Gee. "Gimme a bomb, somebody!"

The boys hurled themselves upon the "enemy," and, somehow, Don Lopez got mixed up, and over he went. Johnny Gee crashed over with him, and it was by sheer accident that Johnny grabbed a piece of folded paper which fell from the President's clothing.

Crack-crack-crack-crack-crack! Other fire-works were exploding—and, suddenly, Colonel Slammer realised the truth. In fact, he had recognised Dick Bannister.

"*Pah!* We've been fooled!" he hooted. "These are those St. Giddy's boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better get yourself a new bodyguard, President—this one's unreliable!"

And the Joyous Juniors, yelling with laughter, scuttled away into the darkness. Colonel Slammer shook his fists and raved.

"Wait until to-morrow!" bellowed the Colonel. "I'll have you expelled for this, by thunder! You young miscreants!"

Johnny Gee & Co., racing back to St. Giddy's, felt that they had scored a point. But one or two of the juniors were a bit dubious. They had called the tune, and now they would have to pay the piper.

"Got our own back," said Johnny. "Old Slammer won't make any complaint. He'd make himself too ridiculous—and the President and his bodyguard, too! We shan't hear any more about it, you mark my words."

And the others felt that he was right. They managed to get in without being seen, and collected in Study No. 4.

"Just about bedtime, so we can call it a day," said the Hon. Bob Vernon contentedly. "What's that you've got, Johnny?"

"Found it at Colonel Slammer's—in the mix-up," replied Johnny Gee. "I believe it fell from the President's pocket."

He unfolded the paper. It had, crudely scrawled upon it, a kind of map, or plan, with a great many words in Spanish.

"Probably a plan of some fortifications, in San Salva," said Dick Bannister, as he looked over Johnny's shoulder.

But a strange, eager light had come into Johnny Gee's eyes. "No, it isn't," he said. "My sons, we've had our fun—and now we must start on some real work. We're going out on a little expedition—after lights-out."

The President's Secret.

MIDNIGHT. St. Giddy's lay quiet. Colonel Slammer's home was dark and silent, too. But on the terrace stood a motionless figure. Another stood on the front steps. There were, in fact, four of these men on guard.

Dim, mysterious figures approached out of the gloom. Johnny Gee & Co. were on the warpath again—and this time in real earnest! So far, Johnny had not explained to his chums the reason for this midnight excursion.

With a sudden swoop they dashed round a laurel hedge, and the sentry, who was smoking idly, went

down with scarcely a sound. A scarf was tied tightly round his face, so that he could utter no outcry, and his hands and feet were bound.

"Good egg!" breathed Johnny Gee. "That was smart work, my sons!" The schoolboy raiders moved on—until they arrived at the little window of the butler's pantry. This side of the house was now unguarded, and the boys forced the window, and got in without attracting any attention.

"Jimminy! We're taking a risk, aren't we?!" breathed Dick. "If we're caught here—"

"Rats!" interrupted Johnny Gee. "We haven't any reason to love Colonel Slammer, but we're doing him a good turn! The old boy's a fiery merchant, but he's all right at heart. I don't like to see him in real trouble."

"Great Scott!" whispered Tony Graham. "What do you mean?"

"Perhaps we've come here for nothing—that remains to be seen," replied Johnny grimly. "But that 'map' I found wasn't a map at all but a plan of this house."

"*Phew!*"

"The point is, why should the President of San Salva carry a plan of Colonel Slammer's house in his pocket?" went on Johnny.

"You—you think that these people are robbers?" asked Dick, in wonder.

"I don't know what they are—but there's something fishy about them," replied Johnny Gee. "Old Slammer has been fooled up to the eyes. I mean to squint round and—"

He broke off suddenly, for just then they heard the creak of a door—and the unmistakable sound of a floorboard squeaking. Then, suddenly, unexpectedly, a strip of light appeared at the other end of the pantry.

"Hist!" breathed Johnny. "Not a word, chaps!" He recognised that slit. Leading from the pantry to the kitchen there was a service opening, so that crockery, and other things, could be passed through without troubling to go down a long passage.

Johnny crept up to the slit, and he found that there was a kind of flap, which could be pushed upwards. He edged his fingers under the crack, and the flap rose slightly.

"Those papers are in this house somewhere, and we're going to find them, Mick!" came a determined voice. "I thought we'd succeed at the first search."

The boys could see the two men—Don Lopez Cordova and General Carillo. They were both half-dressed, and in the light from the electric lamp their faces looked sinister. It was significant that they now spoke in ordinary English—without a trace of an accent.

"We can't stay too long!" came Carillo's voice. "If Slammer gets to know that the real president has been captured by the revolutionaries, and is being held a prisoner—"

"Don't be a fool!" said the other man. "San Salva is too important to be mentioned in the English newspapers. There won't be any news. We've got to find that letter, before Slammer gets the Spanish translated, and finds that oil has been struck on that land of his by the prospector he sent out."

"Yes, it's a pity the man wouldn't talk, when we made him a prisoner, and tell us the exact location of the strike," snapped Carillo. "We might search for years and never find it. But the report was sent to Slammer, and the location is marked on the accompanying map—although Slammer hasn't been

(Continued on page 8.)