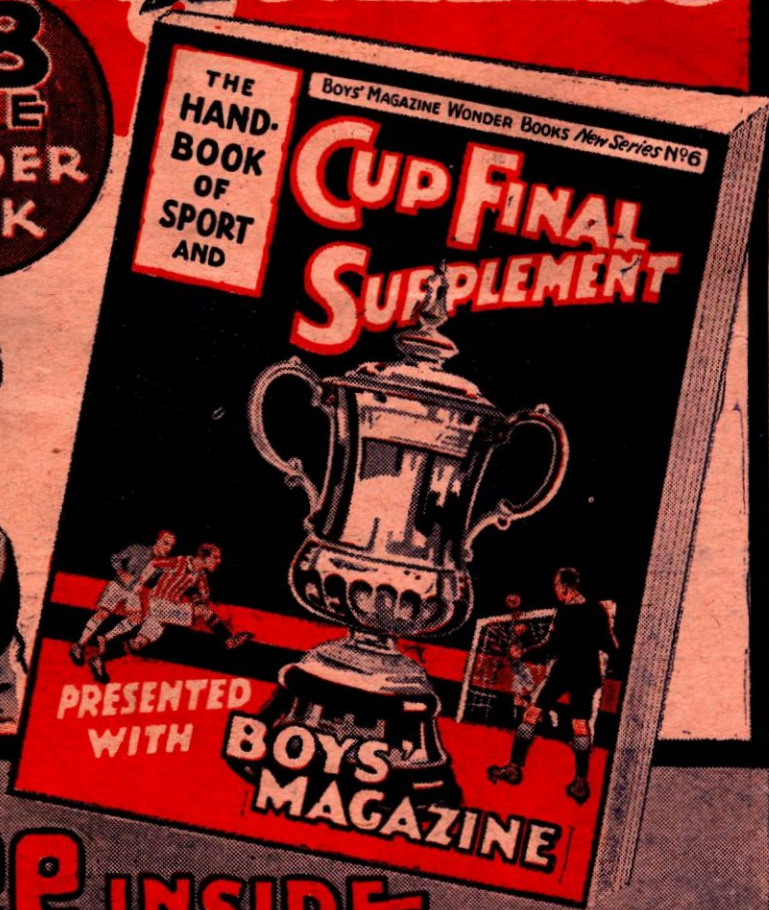


FIVE MORE GIFT COUPONS APPEAR WITHIN

# Boys' 2D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY

28  
PAGE  
WONDER  
BOOK



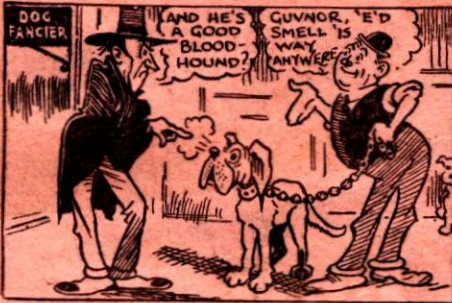
# Free INSIDE

GIGANTIC CUP FINAL NUMBER

VOL. XX—No. 529—April 23, 1932

FALCON SWIFT AND IRON-  
FOOT ANDY INSIDE  
REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION  
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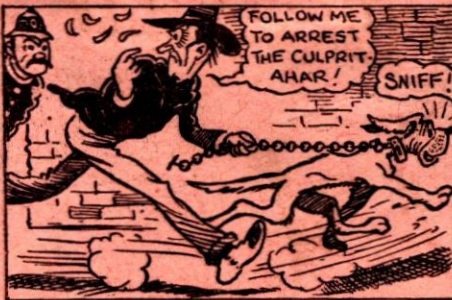
OUR COMIC PICTURE PAGE! FULL OF LAUGHS.



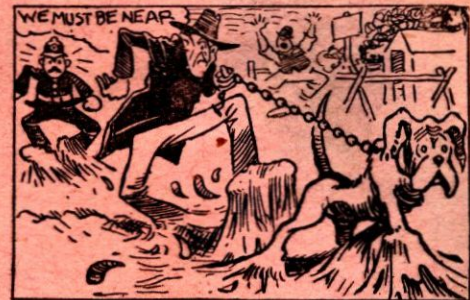
Sam wanted a bloodhound to help him in the search for a very slippery client, and visited a dog fancier.



Having got the dog, Sam took him to the scene of the burglary to get the scent, when suddenly Pongo thought of something and went out of the window like a greyhound!



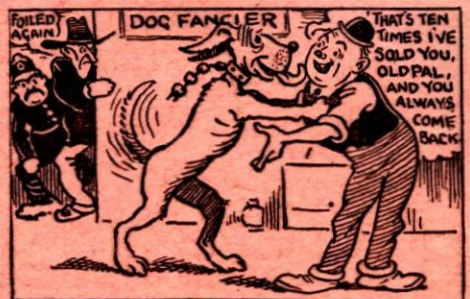
The dog continued to make a bee-line for somewhere or other, and Sam got a policeman to follow for the arrest.



The dog certainly went straight to it—straight through where they were concreting the road—



—And then the chain broke and the dog got away—



And when they found him Sam discovered that he'd bought a dog who had been carefully trained to go back home, so that his artful old rascal of a master could sell him again!

**FALCON SWIFT—AND—IRON-FOOT ANDY!**

**Soccer's Crowning Sensation when the Mag.'s Monocled Manhunter Solves the Mystery of the Missing Million-pound Footballer and Aids Andy to Win His Fortune —and the Cup!**

**GIGANTIC WONDER TALE OF WEMBLEY!**

Featuring Iron-Foot Andy, the Sporting Sleuth, Chick Conway, Bat Fulger, and a Yankee Gunman Gang.

**COMPLETE, AND CRAMMED WITH THRILLS.**

**The Lost Goal-Getter.**

**A**N express train thundered over the iron highway, roaring southward. Evening shadows were rushing across the countryside, and the slanting rays of the sun shone through the windows of a dining saloon where Wentworth Wanderers F.C. disported themselves.

They were rushing up to London a few days before the date of the Cup Final—heading for Wembley—and the greatest game of their careers. They had to meet the Athletic—a white-hot, smashing team of players from the Midlands. The Athletic had battled



*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.**

their way out of nowhere into the Cup Final, just as the Wanderers had done.

Wentworth owed some of their success to re-haired Andy Anderson, the boy who, with a single kick, could turn the spinning leather into a humming projectile. He looked quiet enough now as he sat on a plush seat, facing Baldy John Hampton, the Wanderers' international goalie. With him was Stiffy Johnson, a forward, and kindly old Joe Milligan, the trainer.

"So, ye see," Joe was saying, "we're not going up to London just to see the sights. Ye need to take things seriously, because the game next Saturday is going to be the match o' your lives!"

"Me and Stiffy will look after Andy," Baldy answered. "There won't be any skylarking this trip, kid!"

He nodded grimly to Andy. The ex-waif, who had made himself a marvellous name in a single season, was the youngest in the team, full of crackling high spirits. He didn't always like the hard grind of training, but he realised the seriousness of it now.

"I won't let you down, Joe," Andy said earnestly, gripping the old trainer's horny hand. "I give you my word of honour. I'll—I'll——" He broke off.

A hand had touched him on the shoulder, and in the doorway of the rocking, racing saloon he saw a tall man. It was Mr. Hamilton, a solicitor who accompanied the team.

Mr. Hamilton was executor for a peculiar will made by the uncle of Andy and Bat Fulger, his cousin in the team. By the will, a fortune came to whichever player collected the most goals that season, and Mr. Hamilton watched all matches in order to note the goals they each scored.

Andy rose and followed Mr. Hamilton across the connection into the next coach.

"What is it, Mr. Hamilton?" he asked.

For answer, the solicitor beckoned him on, and Andy saw that this other coach was the central luggage van. He saw doors at one side of the corridor standing open, and it was as he passed them, following the solicitor, that hands suddenly reached out of the doorway and yanked him backward.

He opened his lips to shout, but a cloth was flung over his head. He was flung face downwards, ropes spun about his body, and he was gagged firmly. He was dropped into a sack, and carried helplessly out of the van and down the corridor.

Five minutes later, Baldy turned to Stiffy. "Where's Andy got to?" he asked. "He—Ah, here's Mr. Hamilton!" he rose as he saw the solicitor coming down the car. "What have you done with Andy?" he asked.

"Andy?" repeated the solicitor. "I haven't seen him!"

"But you just took him down the train with you!" Baldy exclaimed.

"You're mistaken!" the solicitor exclaimed, "I've been sitting with Manager Harvey in his compartment ever since we came through Crewe. This is the first time I've been through this saloon for half-an-hour!"

The two footballers stared blankly at the tall, distinguished-looking lawyer, then glanced at one another puzzled.

"I could have sworn it was you," Baldy grunted. "It must ha' been someone else, Stiffy. Let's see where Andy is, anyway!"

Together they went along the train. They enlisted the aid of the guard and some of the sorters from the mail-vans. From engine to brake-van the speeding train was searched, beneath the seats, in the racks, even the sacks of mails were examined—and yet they saw nothing of Andy!

Players risked their lives to peer between the

coaches. Baldy chanced everything and inspected the rocking roofs—but there was no sign of the boy. He had vanished as if into thin air!

The train slowed, and ran into the great London terminus. There was a crowd on the platform to welcome the team, and quickly the news went round—Iron-Foot Andy, their young idol, was missing!

Out of the station the Wanderers filed to a saloon motor-coach that was waiting for them. Mr. Harvey led the way into it and the players crowded behind him, silent and subdued. As he entered the coach Manager Harvey stopped dead, staring before him. At the far end words were chalked behind the driver's seat.

*Iron-Foot will be returned on payment of £5,000.*

*Tell the driver to hoot three times if you agree to pay.*

"Kidnapped!" Mr. Harvey gasped. "Get the police—we'll soon arrest them for this trick."

There was a police-inspector at the station, and when he saw the chalked words his face set. "Don't treat with them, Mr. Harvey," he said. "I'll have every man in the district on this job inside an hour—the gang can't be far away! And we'll have Andy back before midnight, don't you worry!"

But Andy had not been recovered by midnight. Instead, next morning chalked on the door of the team's hotel, Manager Harvey found these words:

*Pay—or it will be £10,000 on Wednesday!*

## Gunmen in Hiding!

ANDY rolled himself over the dusty floor, making for a chink of light which showed in the wooden wall. He knew that he was in an old, disused windmill, but how long he had been there it was impossible for him to tell, as he had been kept in the dark all the time.

At intervals, they had fed him, always with a light shining in his eyes so that he could not see the men who had kidnapped him.

Andy's bonds were strange. They were not rope because they stretched, and they seemed to be formed of twisted rubber. Until now a length of rope about his waist had secured him to a staple in the wall. Hours of work had resulted in his chafing the rope through, and now he rolled across the floor towards the chink of light.

He gained it, and peered through. He saw another part of the mill. At one side were gigantic mill-stones which had once ground corn, and on one of these a squat-faced man was perched. About him were strewn newspapers, and a second man, lean, with eagle-like features and a hooked nose, was squatting on a packing-case. Both were reading by the light of lanterns.

"Ten thousand pounds now demanded for Iron-Foot Anderson!" read the eagle-faced man. "Whole country indignant—police hope to recover footballer in next twelve hours!" He chuckled as he looked at his companion. "I'll say they hope, Spot. But——" He checked, one hand flashing to his left ermpit as he jerked to his feet and wheeled towards the door. "Spot" Shane slid off the mill-stones, an automatic flashing in his hand.

Both ducked behind the stones, watching the door. It opened, and a man came in. Andy gasped as he recognised Marcus Black the rascally solicitor's clerk who was scheming to gain Andy's uncle's fortune by foul means! The American crooks rose, putting away their guns.

"Say, you," Spot snarled, "what d'yuh want to come up like you was wearin' sneakers for?"

Black paced forward. "What's the game Grab?" he rasped. "I hired you to get Iron-Foot and hold him—I didn't say anything about asking for a ransom!" He rapped at a paper that he held. "I'm paying you, aren't I? And I'm——"

"Can it!" The eagle-faced gunman he called "Grab" grinned at him. "Sure you hired us, and we ain't double-crossin' you, pal—we ain't that kind! Only we got to look out for ourselves, see?"

"But, you fools, you've got the police up in arms! They're searching for him all over the country. You've got to cut out this ransom!" Black exclaimed. "You——"

"Who says so?" Grab asked, and his lean jaw tightened. "Listen, you yeller scut, we're holdin' the kid, but we're gonna grab off some dough for ourselves—and still hold him! The cops don't scare us!"

"Maybe they don't," Black said quietly, "but Bat Fulger told me to-day that the players are sending Baldy Hampton to bring Falcon Swift to investigate."

"Uh-huh, and who's he?" Spot grunted.

door opened and Beldy Hampton stepped quickly in. "How d'you do, Mr. Hampton!"

"How d'you do, sir," Baldy replied and gripped the detective's hand, then nodded as he saw Chick looking at him with admiration. "I've come about——"

"About the kidnapping of Iron-Foot Andy," Falcon Swift said. "I've been expecting you—take a seat, Baldy!"

Chick pushed a chair forward, and the goolie dropped into it, then the boy moved to one side of the room and curled himself up in an armchair, his gaze on his boss.

"Andy was kidnapped off the express on Monday—and you don't know how it was done," Falcon Swift said as he turned to the Wanderers custodian, and shifted newspapers which lay on the table, uncovering a big map. "The police can't get any clue, and you want me to investigate; is that it?"

"Yes," and Baldy nodded.



**THE FLAMING PETROL PERIL.**—As the tin dropped, automatics blazed at it, and sparks whipped from the metal. The tin exploded with a thunderous roar, and a mighty blaze of flame leapt high.

"He's the Sporting Detective," answered Black. "They call him the Monocled Manhunter—and when he gets on a case he doesn't quit until he settles it!"

"You don't say!" Spot sneered. "Well, I got a gat here"—and he patted his gun again—"which just hates them guys. Let this Falcon mutt try to horn in, and if he can beat a bullet, he sure is swift!"

### The Manhunter in Action.

"A GENTLEMAN to see ye, sorr!" Biddy Malone appeared at the doorway of Falcon Swift's sanctum. "Name of Hampton—a bald gentleman!"

"Show him in, please," Falcon Swift answered, and he removed his monocle as he spoke, drawing out a silk handkerchief and polishing the glass. The

"I don't want to see the Cup game spoiled, and I'd like to help find your goal-getter," said the famous detective. "I've been interested from the first, and I think I can tell you how Andy was removed from that express train!"

Baldy sat up. Chick leaned forward in his chair. Falcon Swift tapped the edge of his monocle against his thumb-nail, his fine-drawn scholarly features intent in the light of electric overhead.

"Someone disguised as Mr. Hamilton decoyed him from the saloon," he said. "Andy was not seen again—but he did not pass beyond the middle luggage-van, because a guard was in the corridor of the coach beyond, talking to a passenger, and would have seen the boy. Therefore, Andy was disposed of in the van itself."

"But we searched the van!" Baldy exclaimed.

"Andy had been removed by then!" Falcon Swift answered. "They put him in a mail-bag that they had ready—and they dropped him off that train at an automatic mail-collecting station at Whitecross Junction!"

"What?" Baldy started from his chair, staring blankly.

"Look at this map!" the detective said quickly. "See, here was where the boy left your saloon, five miles below Whitecross. Five minutes later you missed him, but in that five minutes the mail-bag—with Andy in it—was swung out from the side of a mail-van by men dressed as postal sorters."

"The bag dropped into the waiting net beside the line—and by the time you looked for the boy, the men concerned had become innocent passengers again, disguises removed and packed away in bags! Accomplices—or the men themselves—left the message in the motor-coach, while others removed the youngster."

Baldy gasped, staring from the map to the Sporting Detective.

"And would you like to know who the men are who've got him?" the Monocled Manhunter asked quietly as he gazed at Baldy.

"Who—who've got him?" the goalie gasped. "You don't know that, do you?"

"I think I do," came the answer. "There are two men named 'Spot' Shane and 'Grab' Guido—American kidnapers. They've been in the country two weeks, and police report says they were in your home town eight days ago—in contact with a man named Black. I may be guessing, Baldy, but I think I'm right!"

"You bet you're right, boss!" Chick said, as he uncurled himself and stood up. "The only thing is, where have they got Andy?"

"Not a long way from Whitecross!" came the answer. "Get the car, Chick. We're going up to Whitecross, but we won't trouble you to come, Baldy! Go back to the team, and tell them that Iron-Foot Andy will be at Wembley if it's humanly possible for me to get him there!"

The amazed goalie took his departure, and hardly five minutes later Falcon Swift was at the wheel of his specially tuned, supercharged Bentley, with Chick at his side as they roared out of Half Moon Street and headed north.

That machine could hit up better than 100 m.p.h., and every little while Chick saw the quivering needle wavering over the limit mark as they hurtled on. The miles ripped past under the stamping wheels, and it was barely midnight when the lights of Whitecross Junction speckled the night ahead. The Sporting 'Tec swung the car to a road beside the railway and stopped.

Just ahead, Chick made out a structure close against the line—a protruding iron bar and a great net near it.

"That's the mail-collecting apparatus," Falcon Swift said. "That's where young Andy was dropped, and we can be sure he wasn't taken far from here." He drew out the map he had brought and scanned it swiftly. "We want some deserted place where a bound figure could be taken—Ah!"

His gaze focussed on a point on the spread-out map, then he folded it swiftly and slipped into gear, sending the car on.

"A windmill, on a hill—that would be a good place for kidnapers, eh, Chick?" he asked. "A disused windmill from which they could keep watch in all directions! That would just appeal to Grab and Spot."

The car sped on, covering two miles before Falcon Swift swung it to a narrow road. The Monocled Manhunter throttled down and the car rolled on

to pull up at the hill-foot, where a narrow track led up to the windmill. The two alighted and moved on, both scanning the tarred face of the rounded building ahead. They heard its old sails creaking in the evening wind.

They crept to the door. Falcon Swift found the latch and lifted it. Beyond was complete darkness. He switched on an electric torch, moving into the mill and sweeping the white beam around. Chick followed him, then both stopped dead as the door swung shut behind them—and they heard a sudden drumming from somewhere!

It was like the impact of heels on a wooden floor, thudding warningly—and with that sound there came a sudden flash of flame from a corner, followed by the spitting, smashing crack of an automatic. The electric torch was shattered in the detective's hand!

"Down!" he roared, and flung himself flat with Chick, both pitching themselves behind a pile of rope and broken boxes which they had noticed near the door.

As they shifted, a second pistol crashed out. The bullets screamed through the air, smashing against the door.

The Sporting Detective drew his own weapon, snapping a couple of shots into the darkness. The moment that his own shot rang out, the first automatic blazed vengefully—and Swift realised that the gunmen had drawn his fire that they might locate him. The bullet ripped past his head and he ducked. More shots came—then tense, acute silence!

He and Chick listened with straining ears. The drumming sound had ceased, but somewhere in the dark they heard shuffling. The two remained crouching there. Then, suddenly, Falcon Swift thought he heard footsteps outside—and in that instant the door of the mill was jerked half-open!

He had a glimpse of a man. He saw a petrol-tin silhouetted against the sky as it was flung inwards. As it dropped, automatics from outside blazed at the tin, piercing it, the bullets whipping sparks from the metal and igniting the inflammable contents!

The tin exploded with a thunderous roar, and a mighty blaze of flame leaped high. Burning petrol slashed in every direction, setting fire to woodwork and debris as the mill door was closed—and barred!

### On the Broken Sails.

NOW the whole place was ablaze with light. The 'tec and his boy-assistant came upright and plunged for the door, beating out their burning clothing where petrol had caught it. They made for a window, tearing away the sacks that hung there to shield it. Beyond showed iron bars—and from out the dark came a shrieking bullet which whanged off a bar and skimmed between their heads!

"There's no escape that way——" Falcon Swift broke off. Once again that drumming of heels on wood had sounded, and he started across the burning floor, Chick close behind him.

They saw a vertical trap-door in the wall, and guessed that through this the gunmen had escaped. Beyond stairs, which led upwards, they found a door which gave on to a recess beneath the stairs themselves, and the detective smashed it open.

Light from flames that were rapidly making an inferno of that old, dry-wood interior, revealed a bound figure on the floor.

"Iron-Foot Andy!" Chick yelled, and the two bent over him.

Falcon Swift drew a knife and hacked at the toughened rubber of the boy's bonds. Desperately fast he worked, Chick aiding him, but pausing to tear the gag from the wizard footballer's mouth.

"Spot and Grab, two Yank kidnapers, got me!"

Andy gasped. "And they're after the gate-money at Wembley, too!"

"So many people want to go, that money's to be taken at the turnstiles this year, and they must know that!" the detective said quickly.

Andy wrenched his arms free, while Chick tore at the rest of his bonds. The two detectives helped him up.

"Up the stairs!" Falcon Swift shouted above the uproar. "Come on!"

He grabbed Andy and swung him out of the doorway, then all three bounded for the stairs. Burning treads gave under their feet, but they charged on, past the first floor and on to the rounded dome of the mill.

They were deafened by the wild roaring of the flames as they gained a platform at the top of the mill, to see here the great beam which was twisted by the sails, and the huge column which ran down to where the millstones had been. At one side was a narrow door, and Chick kicked it open—to draw back as he sighted the gulf beneath.

Before them showed the sails of the mill, a little to one side. One was already alight, touched off by the blazing of the tarred wall close against it.

"That's our only way down—on the sails!" Flames fluttered at the platform as Falcon Swift shouted. "Andy, you go first! Jump to the tip of that sail level with us—your weight will carry it down."

Andy tensed as he measured the distance to the top of the sail—a ten-foot jump. He drew back, then hurled himself through the air!

His outstretched arms wrapped about the edge of the time-worn sail—and he felt it start to go down. Slowly it swung earthward, then began to move with rising speed. He eased his grip as the earth swung up, then let go—just as the Bentley thundered into sight around the mill!

He saw Grab at the wheel, with "Spot" Shane in the back, and the American kidnapers were hurling the car beneath the falling boy! Vainly he tried to twist himself in the air and miss the car—but he could not!

He plunged to the back of it, Spot clawing at him—and on the top of the blazing mill Falcon Swift and Chick saw the gangster's hand drop viciously, to send Andy stunned to the bottom of the car!

### On the River's Brink.

IT was the day of the Cup Final.

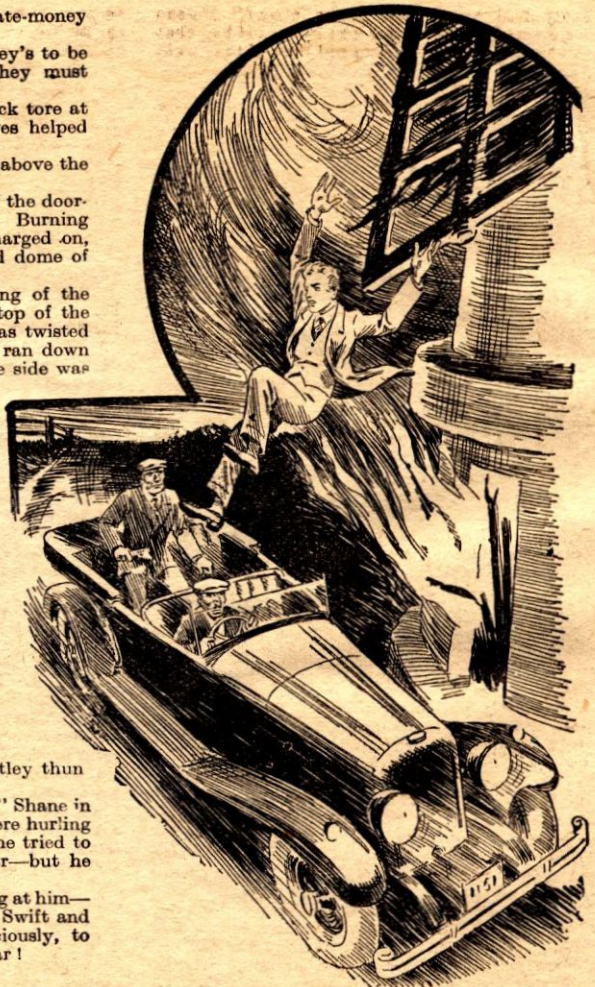
Papers in the streets shrieked the news that the kidnapers now demanded twenty thousand pounds for the return of Iron-Foot Andy. Manager Harvey was ordered to go alone in an open boat down the Thames from Westminster with the cash in one-pound notes—or Andy would not turn out for the Final!

"The deuce of it is that they used our own car to capture the boy again!" Falcon Swift murmured as he paced the floor. "We've done every possible thing since we got away from that mill, Chick—but these crooks are clever!"

"We'll get news yet, boss," said Chick, who sat with the headphones of a short-wave radio set clamped to his ears.

Falcon Swift had friends in London's underworld. His human hounds were on the scent, questioning for the kidnapers. Soon one of them must locate the boy as a result of the widespread search, when news would come over the short-wave set.

"The news may come too late!" Falcon Swift



**A WHIRLWIND FROM THE WINDMILL.**—Andy let go of the sail just as the Bentley, driven by the two American kidnapers, thundered round the mill. He plunged down straight into the back seat.

breathed. "And he may not be in condition to play, even if we do get him! He may——" Falcon Swift broke off. Chick had gestured suddenly, listening intently.

"O.K., Larry!" he called. And then: "Boss!"

The monocled man-hunter slipped across the room, snatching the headphones. "Yes, Larry?" he called.

"I'm on 'em!" a hoarse voice came over the ether. "Me an' Fiddler found them two Yanks! We went——"

"Where's Andy?" Falcon Swift asked abruptly. "Bow Creek!" came the answer. "They've got the boy in the basement of Jenner's Warehouse—and they've got machine-guns with——"

"Larry, watch the place—stand by until I get there!" Swift said.

He hurled the headphones aside, and jumped for

his desk. He snatched two loaded revolvers from a drawer, then dashed from the room, Chick with him. They spoke no word, but raced from the house to a garage at the corner of Half Moon Street. Here waited a big, open Hispano-Suiza—a magnificent machine that filled the street with thunder as it shot out of the garage, with the detective at the wheel.

The glittering car hurtled down Piccadilly, threading the traffic, defying police signals, horn howling, and the grim-eyed manhunter taut behind the wheel. It skimmed the radiators of buses, scared taxi-drivers, flashed under horses' heads, and rocketed through the City. On it went, roaring down to the river, and suddenly stopping where Bow Creek crossed its path—and a man in a choker stepped from an alley. It was Larry the Mug, a reformed crook, who now formed part of the Sporting Detective's underworld net.

"The warehouse is at the bottom of the alley!" the ex-crook said.

"Right! Chick, stay by the car—I'll handle this. There'll be shooting," the detective said, and went down the alley at a run.

He saw the warehouse at the back of a wharf, wire-guarded windows as dark as menacing eyes. He crossed the wharf and peered over the edge, to see piles beneath, and, at the back, a door which gave on to the basement of the building.

Falcon Swift dropped down to the Thames mud and moved between the piles, making for this door. It was not barred, and he drew it cautiously open, and instantly slipped inside.

Before him was a dark, brick-lined cellar. At one side was a ramp, leading up to double doors that gave on to a narrow road, and at the foot of this ramp he saw his Bentley. He moved slowly forward, revolver in hand—to sight a man emerging from a doorway at the far side of the cellar. It was Grab!

The man shouted, jumped backwards, then dropped full-length in the doorway. Around the post at one side the detective saw the thick, wicked muzzle of a machine-gun! Instantly a stream of bullets smashed at him. He jerked sideways, dropping behind barrels which were stacked on the floor, crawling on as bullets tore the woodwork. He skimmed along the wall, behind the timber and barrels, to emerge bare yards from the door.

Grab Guido sighted him and tried to swing the machine-gun round—but he was too late! Falcon Swift was on him—diving at him, and the crook flung himself back from the menace of that leaping form.

The Monocled Manhunter snatched at the gun, dragging the weapon round. He heard Grab shouting, and he had a glimpse of Spot Shane with an automatic. A bullet ripped from the doorpost, then both gangsters were streaking for a flight of stone steps at the far side of the other cellar. Grab snatched Andy up from where he lay bound at the foot of the steps!

They used the boy as a shield, preventing Falcon Swift from firing—whanging bullets at him from their automatics as they made their escape!

The two gained the door at the head of the steps, dragging the wizard goal-getter as they kicked the door open—then a human thunderbolt came at them from behind! It was Chick, lashing out with both fists, taking them unawares, so that they released their hold of Iron-Foot Andy.

The bound figure of the boy went rolling down the steps to the cellar floor, with Chick stumbling and pitching headlong after him. The gangsters levelled their bullets to pump lead into them—when the machine-gun hammered its war-song! The kidnappers immediately jerked themselves through

the door to safety. Falcon Swift jumped to his feet and ran towards Andy and Chick.

"I thought there might be another way in, so I watched it, boss!" Chick panted. "Get after them, I'll see to Andy!"

The detective darted on, while Chick hacked at the footballer's bonds, freeing him.

"What's the time?" Andy gasped, the moment his gag was loosed.

"One-thirty—about!" Chick replied. "You'll be there for the kick-off, Andy."

They moved up the steps together, emerging in a yard at the back of the warehouse, just as Falcon Swift reappeared.

"They got away, doubled round the front and cleared off in a motor-boat!" he exclaimed. "We've got to get Andy to Wembley! Take the Hispano, Chick, and I'll bring Andy in the Bentley!"

He darted down to the cellar with Andy, running to where his Bentley stood. He jumped into the driving seat, and the engine roared as the footballer joined him. Falcon Swift opened the doors with the car, forcing it against them until the lock burst and the big, high-powered machine surged into the open!

The Bentley rocked out to the road, joining the Hispano-Suiza as Chick sent it away—starting an impromptu race to Wembley!

Andy was rescued, only the Cup Final itself lay ahead—and if the two Yankee crooks tried any smash and grab business with the gate-money, Falcon Swift would be there to stop it!

### Ten Men at Wembley!

WEMBLEY—and the world's biggest sporting crowd! Thousands of people were converging on the roads to the ground when Falcon Swift, Chick, and Andy arrived.

With roaring engines and ceaselessly hooting horns the two magnificent machines surged through the crowd. Mobile police had recognised the lost footballer, and they ripped ahead on motor-cycles, striving to clear the way. The procession grew as more motor-police joined in.

Somehow, news had got ahead that Andy was coming. At the stand entrance he saw the Wanderers grouped—Baldy dancing madly, Stiffy yelling his head off, old Joe Milligan dithering with excitement. Some of the players was half in their footer kit, and behind them appeared the Athletic men cheering with the rest! Wanderers and Athletic alike rushed Andy into the building.

"Stand away!" Old Joe Milligan tore players aside as he thrust his way through. "Strip, Andy me boy!" he called. "Let's look ye over and see what they've done to ye! It's massage and a cold shower for ye, son." Meanwhile, Falcon Swift and Chick interviewed officials and gave warning of the attempt that was to be made to steal the gate-money—with the Sporting Detective laying a plan of his own.

When all the players were ready, old Joe went amongst the Wanderers, shaking hands and wishing them luck—his eyes a bit dim. If they won this would be his day of triumph and the peak of his fine career.

And while Andy waited, he saw Bat Fulger glowering at him. How much his cousin had been behind the kidnapping, Andy did not know—but he did know that Bat would play for all he was worth out there on the field.

The call came. The team filed out—just as there came the mighty roar of the crowd greeting the Athletic when they appeared. Andy saw the field, green and sunlit, scored by white lines and the tight-packed, howling crowd welcoming them with a shout that thrilled through Andy's chest.



The toss was taken and the teams were lining up, with Andy at inside right and grim Bat at inside left—both out for goals!

*Phew-ee-eeep!* A roar from the crowd, the sound of the ball being punted off and the greatest game in football history was on!

The spectators saw Andy's red head streaking like an auburn flash against the green, weaving and dodging, with half-backs shadowing him mercilessly. They masked his shots and worked like maniacs to stop him getting in one of those terrific iron-foot drives.

But he had a chance before half-time came. Taking the ball from a throw-in, he tore over the turf. Half-backs tried to check him, but he beat them. The backs converged. He dodged one, and steadied himself.

Andy shot in the instant that the second back charged and sent him slithering over the grass—but behind the shot Andy had packed all his marvellous strength. Yet the ball was diverted enough to make it hit the angle of cross-bar and post—hit it, and burst!



**CROCKING THE CROOK FORWARD.**—As Grab pulled the trigger one of the police threw his truncheon. It thudded against the crook's head. Andy pitched himself at the other kidnapper's ankles. Next moment the gunner's bullet crashed into Bat Fulger's knee.

The crowd was roaring for that wonderful shot, when the half-time whistle went—and it was as the teams filed into the stand that Spot and Grab made their attempt on the gate-money!

It had been left on the office table, in four great bags, but Falcon Swift and Chick and aiding police were watching when the two gangsters shot through the door and grabbed the money. They were in and out before they could be intercepted, but their route to the outer door was cut off.

They leaped away from police who appeared there, dashing down the corridor along which the Wanderers were returning from the field. It was Bat Fulger who saw them come, and who recognised them.

He shouted, jumping sideways to a narrow door which led to the open air, flinging it wide for the escape of the pair! And as they darted for it, two policemen appeared in the doorway, truncheons out!

A gun glimmered in Grab's hand, and he pressed the trigger. His bullet missed and, as he fired again, one of the police hurled his truncheon. The weapon exploded when the truncheon caught the crook at the side of the head—and the bullet hit Bat Fulger! He fell as the police dashed in, with Andy pitching himself at Spot Shane, grabbing the gunman's ankles and bringing him down.

Handcuffs clicked, when Falcon Swift came up and the pair were secured, while the detective bent over the groaning Bat.

"He's got it in the leg—there'll be no football for him again to-day!" the Sporting Detective said quietly, while Andy stared at him. "This man will be out of the game for the rest of the season!"

Andy gasped. Bat was out—and it meant that the fortune would come to Andy, since his cousin could score no more goals! It also meant that the Wanderers must go into the second half with only ten men!

"We've got Marcus Black, sir!" a policeman

saluted the detective. "He was waiting for the gangsters with a car."

**T**HERE were fifteen minutes of the Cup Final to go—and the Wanderers were one down!

They'd played all they knew, but the Athletic had held them. The men from the mines were attacking again, trying to make their victory sure, when the ball went off and Andy found himself retrieving it from near where Joe Milligan sat.

"Stick it, Andy!" he called, and the wizard goal-getter glanced at the grey-haired trainer.

He could see sadness in Joe's face. Andy gritted his teeth. He remembered all that old Joe had done for him in the way of training and advice. He

**THE CHIEF'S CORNER.** Hints and Information for members of the B.M. Redskin League. This week The Chief tells you **HOW TO NAME YOUR TRIBE.**

**H**OW!

I'm giving a prize of a Special B.M. Fountain Pen to R. BANNISTER (2a, Tiber, York Road, London, N.1) for an interesting letter. I'm not going to quote it to you, but he gets the prize for giving good Indian names to his braves.

Several Chiefs of tribes have written asking me to suggest names for their braves. Most of you know the traditional tribal names, but personal names for the braves are more difficult to find.

In most tribes, the name given to a child at birth is the name of the first thing he takes any notice of. A Christening Ceremony is held, and the child left to find a name for itself. The Medicine Man of the tribe watches him carefully, and if the child appears to notice a bird flying overhead, he may earn the name of Grey Hawk, Swift Eagle, or some-

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### BOYS' MAGAZINE LEAGUE COUPON.

Boys' Magazine, 23/4/32.

flicked the ball to the half-back, gasping below his breath:

"To me!" he breathed. The half-back poised the ball, then sent it in to the boy's toes.

Andy was off instantly, travelling like a coloured streak across the turf. The crowd roared. They saw the defence piling up, trying to stop him, but he went through them, swift and irresistible. He saw the goal—the "keeper coming out. Then he hit the ball with a kick that carried all the impetus of his run! The custodian dived for the leather—all but got his striving hands to it—then it was across the line!

The Athletic lined up, dancing in their anxiety to get at grips again and snatch victory. The ten Wanderers crouched, grim and in fighting mood as the ball went off. The teams clashed in mid-field. Minutes slid away—the referee glanced at his watch.

Bare seconds to go, then Andy had the ball again, collecting it after the Athletic had forced a corner and with the whole length of the field to travel.

He raced through the defence—wingers and halves sped after him. He crossed the half-way line as the backs bunched in—they wouldn't tackle him, now they wanted only to block the goal!

On he went, straining. He saw the penalty area—the spot—the goal with the "keeper and the flanking backs to stop the leather!

On, still, Andy raced, then the crowd hushed as they saw him steady—and kick!

*Blaw!* The leather shifted like a projectile. It

thing of the sort. He may get the name of Waving Corn, Running Water, Big Oak, Charging Bull—whatever his eyes first seem to notice is his name for life.

A similar ceremony may be used for naming your own braves. Bind their eyes with an ordinary bandage suitably decorated with paint

and beads, and then turn them round three times in the middle of a field or wood. Then take away the bandage, and let them call out their own name from the thing their eyes first light on.

Some Indians also have nicknames which take the place of our Christian names. These are obtained by some feat of arms, some peculiarity of dress, or something of the sort. A good shot would be called Straight Arrow, or a great hunter might be known as Kill-a-Bear.

You can use all these tricks in naming your braves. Don't just sit down and think out an Indian name you like; let every name have a special meaning as applied to each brave.

Another Pow-wow soon, so look out for it:  
Good Hunting, THE CHIEF.



changed to a dark streak that defeated the eye. The goalie dropped, the backs hurried themselves at the leather and— "Goal-1-1-1-1!"

*Phew-ee-ee-ee-ee-ee!* The referee was pointing to the centre-spot, and the ball was tearing at the netting!

There was no time for the leather to be kicked off before the whistle signalled the end of the Cup Final.

The Wanderers had won, two—one, and both their goals had been scored by the kidnapped footballer!

**M**R. HAMILTON, the solicitor, came into the dressing-room when the players were examining their medals.

"The surgeon says that Bat Fulger will never play football again," he said. "The fortune is yours, Andy!"

Players came round and told Andy that victory was due to him—He heard them thanking him, and he liked the idea that they were pleased with him—but what he liked most of all was the look in Joe Milligan's eyes.

"Joe, when I get my fortune, I'll give you a medal for training us," Andy said quickly. "It'll measure about a foot all round, made o' solid gold!"

"I don't want any medals—just shake hands with me!" the old trainer said happily.

Great News, Chums. Speedman Samson Back next week in the Mag's Grand Speed Special. AND FIVE MORE FREE GIFT COUPONS.

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MEET THE JUNGLE SLEUTH  
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GRIN AND GRIT

THE ALMOST-HUMAN  
ANIMAL ASSISTANTS.

**BILL TRAIL,  
JUNGLE DETECTIVE**

**LEOPARDS,**

**GET YOUR MAN!**



### "Trail Em's" Trail.

THE whole black and white population of Betembi gaped when Bill Trail arrived and walked down the main street without a glance to right or left. At the big fellow's heels padded two full grown leopards each with a square army-pack strapped to its back. Even here, on the fringe of the African jungle, that was a strange sight.

Bill stopped at the office of the Empire Gold Mine Trust, looked up at the sign over the door, and entered. The two leopards took up their position, one on either side of the door, pointed fangs bared.

Inside the office of the Empire Gold Mine Trust the big fellow found a fat Boer seated at a desk.

"Pieter Van Dyne, I suppose?" he rapped.

"Ja!" the Boer acknowledged.

"My name's Bill Trail of the British Secret Service," the big fellow went on. "I've come to clear up the bit of trouble here. First of all I want to make sure I've got things all right."

Van Dyne blinked, then opened his mouth as if to speak, but Bill with a gesture waved him to silence.

"Wait, I've not finished yet. First of all, these mines haven't been doing well lately. About a quarter of the usual out-put, I've been told. That's why the British Government that owns 'em is mighty keen it should be looked into. On top of that three of the managers they've sent out to look after things have vanished. Have you any explanation?"

The fat Boer blinked continuously for about ten seconds. No doubt about it Bill had upset him.

"I know nothing 'cept dey go for ivory," he said. "I warn dem dey never come back but—*ach!*—dey go. First Blake go, he does not return. Next Jackson he hears what Blake go for and he follow. Grime after dat. He would not be warned and, alas! I haf to report that he also never come back. It is all I know!"

"It's plenty," Bill Trail snapped. "Ivory did you say? I knew Grime and he wasn't the sort to go on a wild-goose chase. Where did they expect to find this ivory. Do you know?"

"Ja!" the Boer answered. "Everyone in Betembi knows. There is a lake up-country where an old witch-doctor hid the tusks he made the warriors of his tribe pay him, to keep off evil spirits. Many hundredweights are there, but no one has yet found it."

"Right," Bill said. "Now tell me just how I can get to this lake, because I'm setting off for it right away."

"But eet ees dangerous——" Van Dyne began.

"Can it!" Bill said. "What's the best way?"

The Boer shrugged his fat shoulders. "You take the trail that goes along the left side of the river and follow it for a day, then strike east. The natives will then tell you where the lake is."

That was all Bill wished to know. He turned abruptly, stepped out into the main street and strode away. The two leopards padded at his heels.

Van Dyne left his desk, and ambled into a room at the back, where a weedy specimen of humanity, of Portuguese or Spanish descent, was checking books.

"Jules!" Van Dyne snapped. "Go and light the fire on Krobo Hill. One more British fool goes in search of the lake that does not exist!"

Taking up his hat, Jules passed out at the back of the shack and quickly disappeared into the jungle. Van Dyne was chuckling and washing his hands with invisible soap as he returned to the desk in the front office.

Meanwhile Bill Trail had reached the track that

"Somebody following us, eh?" And spreading his arms to right and left he whispered: "Fade!" Immediately Grit and Grin melted into the trees on either side of the trail. Ten yards away in the trees they were invisible, but Bill knew that their green eyes were watching him with cat-like keenness as they kept abreast of him.

Suddenly from behind there came soft, swift foot-falls and Bill swung round to find half-a-dozen armed blacks running up behind him.

Surprisingly Bill did nothing, but simply stood there facing them. Non-plussed the blacks stopped ten yards away.

Thus they stood for five seconds, the blacks shifting uneasily. Then someone behind them cursed, and a tall, thick-set man wearing an Arab burnous pushed his way to the front. His rifle poked in Bill's ribs.

"So!" he said. "Another fool Britisher falls into the hands of Kasadi. Raise your hands!"

"Why all this pantomime?" asked Bill coolly, as he obeyed.

"You shall soon learn." The words came in a sinister hiss from his strange captor. "If you have not before heard

of Kasadi let me tell you that I have done more trade in slaves than any other man. And you will make a better slave than all of them, for you are stronger. N'gombi will pay more for you than for the other three put together."

Bill's eyes narrowed. "Three others, eh?" he said.

"Of course. They, too, came along this trail, and I caught them as I have—"

And then Bill acted. His fists clenched, then swung down upon the top of Kasadi's head and even the cloth hood of the burnous could not deaden that blow. It would have felled a mule. The slave-trader crashed senseless to the ground.

As if that was the signal they had been waiting for, Grit and Grin appeared, arching through the air and leaped snapping and snarling among the blacks before they could shoot. Bill jumped over the prostrate form of Kasadi and joined his leopards, hitting right and left.

That was too much for the natives for they were cowards at heart. Dropping their rifles they turned and rushed away into the jungle.

Grit and Grin would have followed but Bill called them back.

"Let 'em go!" he said. "They're harmless now they've left their rifles. Here's the viper among them and I think I'm going to learn from him just what happened to the three managers of the Empire Gold Mine Trust."

Kasadi was beginning to recover. When his eyes



THE SPOTTED TORNADOS.—Bill's clenched fists descended on Kasadi's head, and the slaver crashed senseless to the ground. Instantly Grin and Grit leapt out of the jungle, snapping and snarling amongst the blacks before they could shout.

led from Betembi along the left bank of the river through dank and almost impenetrable jungle.

He turned round and spoke to the two leopards still at his heels.

"Grit," he said, addressing the one on the left. "I don't like that Van Dyne so much. There's something in his eyes I couldn't quite trust. We'll look out for him."

The leopard inclined its head as if it understood. "Grin," he said, addressing the other leopard. "This is supposed to be tough country, so watch out."

And Grin inclined its spotted head as Grit had done. The people of Betembi had stared when they first saw Bill and his leopards, but if they could have seen him now, talking to them, and receiving nods in reply, they would have stared a hundred times harder.

Nor would it have been the first time people had goggled at that strange trio. As a member of the British Secret Service in Africa, Bill, with his leopards, had been tackling jobs with such success that he had been given the name of Trail-'Em Trail. For he had never yet failed to trail a mystery right to its source.

### Kasadi, the Slave Trader.

IT was late in the afternoon when first Grit, and then Grin, gave a snarl. The fur on their necks stood upright in ruffs, their muscles twitched. Bill nodded understanding.

finally opened he looked up to see Bill standing over him, and the snarling leopards crouched on one either side.

"Don't stir," Bill warned. "Grit and Grin are quite harmless so long as you remain quiet and answer my questions."

Kasadi stared from one leopard to the other, but he remained quite still.

"Now, about these three," Bill said. "Their names were Blake, Jackson and Grime, eh? They came from Betembi?"

Kasadi nodded. "You said you captured them, as you thought you had captured me," Bill went on. "Then you sold 'em to somebody whose name I've forgotten. Who was it and where?"

"N'gombi's village is two day's march from here in that direction," the slave-raider gestured. "N'gombi likes to have white men to serve his food and pick his teeth. He is very rich and pays well."

Bill Trail looked grim. "Get up!" he clipped. "You're coming along to make sure you've not been trying to diddle me. I'd advise you not to try any funny stuff because Grit and Grin like you about as much as I do—and that's nix. Move!"

Kasadi quickly scrambled to his feet in face of that warning. He moved off along the trail and looked round to see the two leopards padding close on his heels. He had no inclination to loiter or try to slip away after that.

It was hard going even for Bill, who forced the pace through steaming swamp and jungle. On the afternoon of the second day Kasadi announced that the village of N'gombi was near.

"How far?" Bill demanded.

"An English mile along this trail," the slaver stated. "Sit down, right there!" ordered Bill.

Kasadi sat down and watched Bill open the pack on Grit's back. From it the big fellow took out a large hand-mirror and a bottle of stain as well as a tin of grease. He then sat down on a log while he fixed the mirror in a bush before him.

"Now, sit as still as if you were having your dial painted," he ordered, then set to work.

Kasadi gaped at the transformation a little brown stain on his face and grease rubbed into the hair, made to his captor. In five minutes it would have

been hard to tell which was which, apart from their clothes. Bill was known as the greatest expert in disguise in the Secret Service and Grit's pack contained nothing but disguise materials.

"Now, off with those togs," snapped Bill. "I'm going to wear 'em."

A few minutes later Bill Trail had vanished and in his place stood Kasadi the slaver, while a sweating wretch, clad only in a loincloth, sank wearily to the ground.

"While I'm gone," Bill told Kasadi, "you'd better rest up, because if all goes well you'll be hitting the trail back to Betembi to-night. I'll leave Grit and Grin to keep you company."

So saying, Bill strode away in the direction of N'gombi's village. His disguise was perfect. Every gesture and the swing of his body belonged to Kasadi.

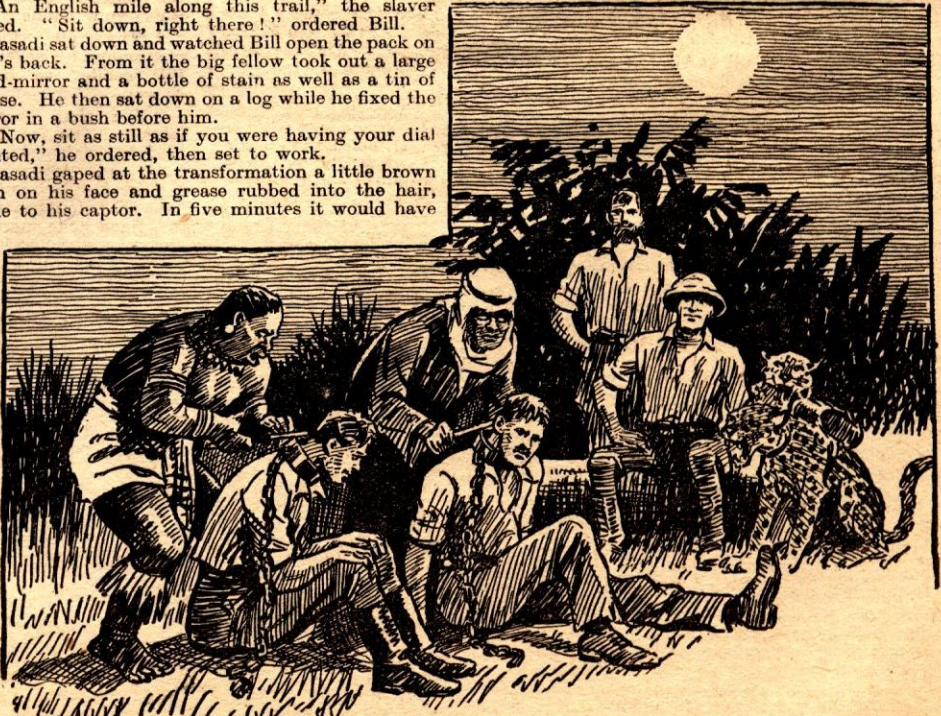
The slaver watched him disappear through the trees then gaped at the two silent watchers at his side, and groaned.

"He is a wizard," he muttered. "Nay, he is more, he is a dem—"

And there Kasadi stopped, terrified, for both Grit and Grin had snarled as he commenced the work. It was as though they understood what he was going to say about their master and were warning him not to say it.

"SO Kasadi comes to see how N'gombi uses his white slaves! Truly thou wilt have that honour, for N'gombi is pleased with these last slaves thou hast brought him."

The chief spoke in puffs that reminded Bill of a



CUTTING NO ICE.—Bill and Grime sat down and watched the slaver and the fat chief filing through the iron collars of the freed slaves. The two leopards stood by, snarling menacingly.

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grampus. He was fat and paunchy like a pig. He was also greasy and odorous.

The big fellow's eyes were taking in everything, for he had not forgotten his purpose in entering the village.

Three staples driven in the main posts of the chief's hut, with chains attached, puzzled him until N'gombi clapped his fat hands; then their use became clear. The chains rattled and the three white men appeared. Each had an iron collar round his neck attached to the other end of the chains.

"N'gombi does not mean to let his slaves escape," Bill said, speaking calmly, with an effort, in the chief's own language.

"Impossible!" N'gombi declared. "Day and night they are chained, and at night they sleep in the hut with me so that I may amuse myself by waking them to do something. And always one of my best warriors is by the door should they bite through the chains or pull them loose and escape."

The big fellow had learned what he wanted to know, and now he rose and bade N'gombi farewell, saying he had to look to the arranging of a midnight raid on a village and the carrying off of some prisoners.

"Reckon he'd have a fit if he guessed his was the village I meant to raid, and his fat self a prisoner I intend to carry off," Bill muttered, making his way back to where he had left Grit and Grin in charge of Kasadi. Here he waited for darkness.

There was still an hour before the moon would come up when Bill set off back to N'gombi's village. He had washed the stain from his face and had put on his clothes.

He left Grit to look after Kasadi, while Grin padded at his heels. Bill hardly made any more sound than the leopard as he approached the village and Grin was moving like a ghost.

"This way, Grin," Bill muttered, skirting round to the rear of the chief's hut.

Here in the long grass which grew right up to the hut they crouched, watching the big black who was on guard, dimly outlined against the sky.

Bill murmured something softly to the leopard, then edged forward and a little to one side of the sentry, completely screened by the long grass.

The warrior had finished humming his tune, when he heard a hiss from the grass to his right. There must be a snake there. Better spear it before it could do any harm.

As he bent over the grass with this intention, something leapt up and fastened round his throat. He tried to shout, but the words would not come.

Bill Trail's fingers were gripped too tightly round his wind-pipe.

While he was still dazed Bill smashed a blow behind his ear. "No time for soft treatment," Bill grunted, as the black went limp. "Come on, Grin, N'gombi next."

They entered the chief's hut. Bill almost recoiled at the smell inside and wondered how the three white slaves had stuck it. Then from one corner of the hut a loud snore told him where the chief was.

"Your meat, Grin," he muttered, and instantly the leopard sprang through into the darkness of the hut.

There was a thud, followed by the instant stifling of the snore, sounds of frantic movement, and then silence.

The sound of the struggle had awakened the three whites sleeping at the end of the hut. Bill heard their chains rattle.

"Keep quiet!" he hissed. "I've got to get those chains off somehow, and without much noise either."

He heard three separate gasps of amazement. "Gosh, it can't be true! I must be dreaming," a voice muttered.

"A pretty real dream then, Grime," Bill said, for he recognised the speaker. "My name's Trail. Now keep quiet and leave it all to me."

"If it's Trail-Em Trail, then I'm leaving it to you," Grime's voice answered him. "Better try the staples, and we'll carry the chains."

That was an idea. Bill hurried quickly outside and got the spear belonging to the unconscious sentry. He grabbed it up quickly, without giving the black a glance, or he might have seen that he was beginning to come round.

Bill worked swiftly. Using the spear as a lever, he was able to prise the staples quietly out of the wooden supports. At last he had them all free.

"Now beat it," he told the three white men. "Take the path from the south of the village. I'll catch you up with N'gombi."

Carrying their chains, Blake, Jackson and Grime went as silently as possible.

Bill turned to the couch of straw on which N'gombi lay with Grin atop of him. "Get up, Grin," he ordered. "I'll kill him if he makes a sound."

The leopard rose, and, immediately, Bill guessed that there was no need to knock the chief out as he intended. Fear had already done that. He was still unconscious. Bill lifted the fat chief across his shoulder and, with Grin at his side, followed the others who had already vanished along the trail.

The big fellow never gave the sentry another glance. That was a mistake he found out when he was still twenty yards from the trees, for a wild shout told him that the black had come to and was rousing the whole village.

"Mix 'em up a bit, Grin," Bill said, as he gained the shelter of the trees. Promptly, the leopard wheeled and streaked back among the huts.

Sounds of blacks screaming with fright reached Bill. They were still audible when Grin padded up behind him.

He caught up with the released whites, and, without stopping to explain, led them to where Kasadi was being watched by Grit.

At sight of the slaver, the three managers, in spite of their chains, would have hurled themselves at him in revenge for what they had suffered through him. But Bill stopped them.

"There'll be plenty of time for that after he's done some work," he said, and producing three files from Grin's pack handed one to Kasadi and another to N'gombi who had come round. "Get busy on

(Continued on page 33.)

## THE CREW OF THE "HAPPY HADDOCK"—FUNNIEST FELLOWS AFLOAT!

"Laugh and the Ship Giggles With You," is the Motto of the Breezy Lads Who Appear Below! Get Ready to CHORTLE, CHUCKLE, SMILE, ROAR and HOWL, BOYS!



All Aboard for Laughs and Thrills with the Mis-adventurous Mariners of the "Happy Haddock!"

### Ahoy!—The Happy Haddock!

THE good ship *Happy Haddock* was a unique vessel. For instance, she was liable to deposit considerable portions of her garboard-strake in D. Jones's locker at the most embarrassing moments; also, as she bounded over the waves, she had a tendency to bound so exuberantly as to leave her rudder behind. Smoke never, by any mischance, came out of her only smoke-stack. It always found some much shorter cut through the deck-boards, or through her well ventilated plating. The crew was constantly in danger of leaning carelessly on her bulwarks and falling into the sea. Her engines!—what can be said of her engines?—Not much!

Skilled in the art of always being missing when there was any work about, the crew were at once the pride and despair of the ship's master, Cap'n ("Papa") Keelson, and his mate, Al Hettup.

"Mister" Al Hettup—for the mate of a ship is always called *Mister*—was a yankee. He spent half his life looking after the crew, and the other half looking for the crew. As the *Happy Haddock* bounded joyfully over the horizon, shedding here a bolt, and there a screw, with gay abandon, Mister Hettup stood at the fo'cas'le hatch and called down to his tender charges.

"Hey there! You lazy sons of bandy-legged land-crabs! Up on deck here, or I'll knock the gull-durned heads off your gull-durned half-baked necks!!!"

No answer to Mister Hettup. Evidences of heated argument float up from below.

"Ahey!" bawls the mate. "Whar's the blink'n' bo'sun? Hey there! Dutchy Jud, show a leg or I'll—"

The golden head of Dutchy appeared from the depths. "Ya vant me, mister?" he asked innocently. "Want you! Say, I've jest given myself the croups hailin' you! What the gull-durned some-think is goen' on down below?"

It took some minutes for the mate's words to sink in to Dutchy Jud's Swedish brain. The real name of Dutchy, of course, was Bjornson Bjones, but he was mostly called "Jud," to avoid the danger of laryngitis.

"I t'ink Slim an' Fat haf slight arg'ment, mister. Fat says Slim pinch his waistcoat."

"Pinched his waistcoat, huh? Fetch the derved seaclams up here!"

Bo'sun Jud disappeared once more below decks. He re-emerged, presently, followed by a tall, slender, rather mournful-looking man. He was "Fat" Burns, musician by inclination, seaman by necessity. Behind him came Seaman "Slim" Small, who was just slender enough to climb through the hatch without jamming tight in the process. In the rear of these two came a cheery Chink, whose name was An, illustrious and honourable member of the Ancient House of How, the ship's cook.

"What's all this about a weskit?" growled the mate, when they were lined up before him.

"It's 'im," said Fat Burns, indicating Slim with a jerk of his thumb. "That's mine 'e's got on, an' 'e sez it's his'n!"

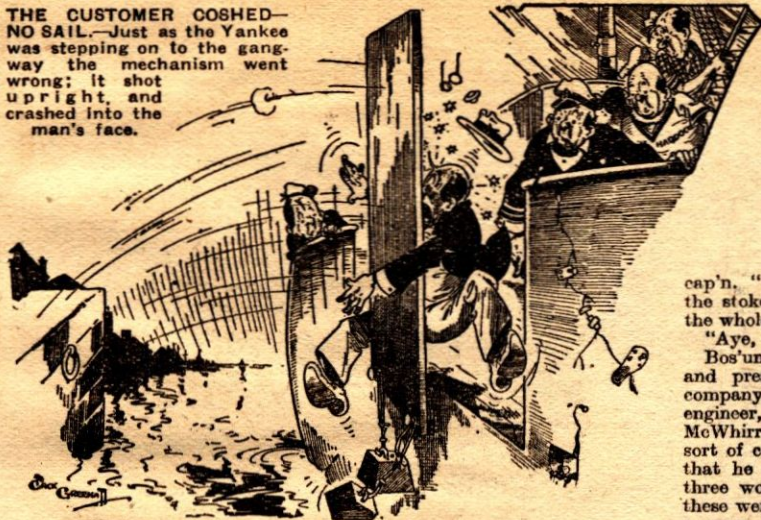
"So 'tis!" said Slim. "He ain't got a weskit what's pea-green colour!"

"No more is yon," answered Fat heatedly. "It's blue, that is! Ain't it, mister mate?"

"I guess it is," growled Hettup. "C'morn, Slim, takktorf. No good playin' them old lag's tricks."

"Sink the ole lugger!—if I ain't goin' colour blind!"—Slim shed the disputed waistcoat discreetly and handed it to Fat—"Could've sworn that weskit was blue, mister mate!"

**THE CUSTOMER COSHED—NO SAIL.**—Just as the Yankee was stepping on to the gangway the mechanism went wrong; it shot upright, and crashed into the man's face.



"Ya vat peeg!" suddenly spluttered bos'un Jud. "Ya haf mine jersey got on!"

"Sink the ole lugger! So I have!" said Slim with an apprehensive glance towards the mate. He peeled off the jersey and handed it to its rightful owner. This seemed to be the signal for An How, the cook, to exhibit an example of Oriental botheration.

"Tzitzuangpu tai-sung!!! He has the hon'able blades of the hon'able An How on his dishon'able back!"

"Sink the ole lugger! These yourn, Chinky!" said Slim, viewing his braces. "Reckon I'm gettin' careless, like. Sorry. Here y'are!"

Slim hitched up his pants with a length of yarn and gave the braces back to their legitimate proprietor.

"Say!" roared Hettup with a sudden scowl of fury. "Whar the gull-durned somethink did you git that gull-durned shirt you've got on?"

"This shirt, Mister Hettup? Why, I got it off the clothes-line aft. I seem to remember washing it yesterday!"

"That's mine—that is!" barked Hettup. "Tak-torf! Or I'll knock yer fat carcass outen it! I'll keelhaul yer! I'll——" Slim hauled himself out of the mate's shirt hurriedly.

Just at that moment Cap'n Keelson, owner and skipper of the tramp steamer, *Happy Haddock*, wandered across the deck, stroking his tarbrush beard thoughtfully.

"All the crew here, mister?" he asked the mate.

"Aye, sir. I think so," answered Hettup, hurriedly rolling his shirt up under his arm.

"No, they ain't," said the skipper. "McWhirr ain't here—Stap me! Man, wherd' ye git that singlet?"

"What, this, cap'n?" answered Slim, looking decidedly uncomfortable. "I just washed it. I——" Cap'n Keelson grabbed him suddenly. "Stap me! It is mine!"

Slim dragged off his last garment hurriedly. The skipper scowled.

"Mister mate," he said, "pay this man off!"

"Sorry, sir. We ain't got'ny money."

"Well—er—pay him off when we get some!"

Slim stood there, nude from the waist up. Not that the skipper's threat worried him. Cap'n Keelson was always ordering the mate to pay his men off, but as there was rarely any money aboard—and when there was it was always needed for more urgent purposes—the threat was never carried into effect.

"Now, Mister Hettup," said the cap'n. "Send for McWhirr and the stoker. I want to speak to the whole crew."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Bos'un Jud was sent below, and presently returned in the company of McWhirr, the Scotch engineer, and the stoker. Mr. McWhirr was not a very chatty sort of cove. Reputation had it that he spoke, on the average, three words per week. Two of these were "aye" and the other a cuss. The character of the

stoker was hidden beneath several impenetrable layers of dirt.

"Now, men," said Cap'n Keelson, "I want to speak to you serious. Why, stap me! that boy's missing again!"

"He's behind the deck-house, sir. Inventin' things agen," said Fat Burns. "Shall I fetch him?"

"Stap me! Bring him here, immediate!"

Fat hurried off. He came back soon, followed by a small snub-nosed youngster whose most prominent feature was a broad grin. His name was Christopher Charlemagne Pipweedle, but he was mostly called Pip, as life is short. Pip was cabin-boy, cook's mate, coal trimmer, errand boy, steward, engineer's mate, grease monkey, carpenter's mate, bos'un's mate and, in his spare time, was to make himself "generally useful."

"What you bin doing?" growled the skipper when Pip made his appearance. "Waste'n your time again, eh?"

"S'a'right, cap'n," young Pip answered. "I've got the most marvellous idea for an unsinkable lifeboat what ever was!"

"Unsinkable lifeboat! Unsinkable washtub! Stap me! What you think I pay you for? Pay this man off!"

"We ain't got'ny money, sir," said the mate mechanically—he repeated this phrase some dozens of times per day.

"All right. Pay him off when we get some! Now, men, listen to me!"

**Improving (?) The "Happy Haddock."**

THE old *Happy Haddock's* on her last cruise, boys," went on Cap'n Keelson. "When she docks, in an hour or two, she docks for the last time."



There was a murmur among the men—a sorrowful murmur.

"I don't mind telling you, boys, I'm a bit in debt like, and the underwriters is claimin' the old *Haddock* for the shipbreakers." Cap'n Keelson's voice was sad. "Unless I can get another cargo, the *Haddock* becomes scrap-iron—an'I'm afraid the chances of getting another cargo is thin. Nobody'll trust their stuff to an old tramp like this, nowadays."

"Ain't there a chance of gettin' any sort of a cargo, cap'n. Not even *guano*!" said the mate.

"Not a chance, mister. If we wasn't headin' for an American port it might be different. But here—" Cap'n Keelson shook his head. "You see, boys, it's like this. If I can get a big cargo, I can get an advance on it and pay the underwriters off. If I can't . . . well, as I just said, the old *Haddock*'s got about as much chance as a sausage-roll in a den of hungry lions!"

"S'a'right, cap'n, don'tcher worry!" piped the voice of the cabin-boy. "I've made—and I'm going to make—improvements in the old *Haddock* that no other ship's ever had. Have you seen my automatic dustbin-emptier? And my patent self-hoisting gangway? No! They'll open your eyes when you do! And my unsinkable lifeboat—gee!—I can't describe it! It's almost too marvellous! A whole crew can jump on it and it won't sink!"

"What's all this flappledoodle?" said Cap'n Keelson. "Stap me! If you've bin amuckin' up of my ship, I'll rope's-end you! Stap me, I will!"

"Hon'able Pip top-side clever allright," put in An How. "He savvy invention help miselable Chinaman empty lubbish flog hon'able dustbin!"

Cap'n Keelson stroked his tar-brush, and looked at Pip through narrowed eyes. "Let's have a look at these here contraptions of yours."

Pip looked pleased. He bade An How go below to his galley and demonstrate the automatic dustbin-emptier to the skipper. When the cook had gone, he led the curious crew to the open galley-hatch, and pointed out a weird and wonderful contrivance of wires and poles.

"It works like this, sir," explained Pip. "The dustbin is hoisted out of the galley-hatch by means of a tackle and automatically hitches on to that hook, which you see is attached to a pulley running on the wire. The wire runs from over the galley-hatch, and slopes towards the bulwarks. So that as soon as the extra weight of the dustbin is added, the whole thing runs down the wire. Then, when it reaches that wooden bar I've rigged up on the deck, the bottom of the dustbin strikes against it and the whole thing tips up and shoots the garbage overboard."

"How does it come back?" asked Cap'n Keelson.

"I haven't thought of that yet. Up to now, An How's had to come up on deck and collect the dustbin when he wants it again."

"Stap me! He might as well come up and empty it in the usual way then!"

There came a clatter and a squeaking of pulleys and that shapely utensil, the ship's dustbin, suddenly emerged from the galley-hatch. It caught on the hook as per schedule and then slowly began to roll along the wire to the ship's side. It hit the tripping-rod, and tipped over.

Unfortunately, Pip had failed to notice it was on the windward side of the ship. The garbage tumbled out, and the next second it was blowing all over the *Happy Haddock*'s deck.

"Garr!" shouted the furious skipper, dodging a decaying caulflower dexterously. "Look at my deck! Look at it! Mister Hettup, pay that boy off immediately!"

"We ain't—"

"All right—when we get some!"

### Fishy Frolics in Dock.

BY the time the decks were cleared up, the *Happy Haddock* was scraping over the harbour bar with barely six inches of water beneath her keel—for, owing to some little idiosyncrasies of her



THE LIFEBOAT LETS 'EM DOWN.—Four hurtling figures leapt from the ship, landed in Pip's new lifeboat, and crashed straight through the bottom, to disappear below the surface.

compass, she had very nearly missed the tide. Mister Hettup was so exhausted with bawling at the crew that he had to go below to give his jaw a rest, as soon as she was safely in harbour. He left Bos'un Jud to see her moored up to the quay.

Pip saw his chance to try out the new gangway. Barely had the ship's hawsers strained taut, than he was busy persuading the good-natured Swede to come and see his invention.

It was as weird as the dustbin-remover: a gang-plank was hinged to the ship's side and kept in a

(Continued on page 35.)

**Spell-binding! Spectacular! Crammed with Staggering Thrills and Drama—this Entirely New Wonder Tale of the Mysteries of Space! Telling of the Almost Incredible Adventures of Two Boys, Sparkplug Wallace and Hal Gordon, with the Great Inventor and Astronomer, Mervyn Keen! Out of Illimitable Outer Space it Came—the Etherite! Threatening to Crash the Earth to White-hot Chaos! And then Owing to the Plotting of Hans Corilla and his Crooks the Adventurers Found Themselves Marooned on the Etherite! Don't Miss this Scientific Thriller, Chums.**

**The Etherite.**

"IT'S going to be the end of the world, Sparkplug!" said Hal Gordon huskily. "Oh, look! It's so big—so awful!"

The two youngsters, standing in the fair parklands of Abbey Chase, were staring up fascinatedly at the evening sky. The sun was setting in a lurid flare of unnatural, unearthly brilliance. And there, up in the sky, was the Monstrous Thing—the unbelievable visitant from Outer Space.

It seemed to fill half the evening sky—a mysterious mass, on which our own sun glowed and shimmered with a thousand fires, and in a thousand colours.

"It doesn't seem possible," muttered Hal Gordon, "but I was reading in the newspaper this morning that this—this Etherite is only a tiny world, a lot smaller than the moon. Yet it looks so vast—so terrific. That's because it's much nearer than the moon."

"And travelling with us," said Ned Wallace, otherwise known as "Sparkplug." "At the same speed, Hal. Creeping nearer and nearer. Golly! I wonder when the crash will come? Perhaps to-night!"

These two boys were school chums; they had been sent home two days earlier, in view of the impending world disaster.

Abbey Chase belonged to Mr. Mervyn Keen, the millionaire inventor—Hal's uncle and guardian. Ned Wallace had come, too, because his father was living at Abbey Chase—being, in fact, in partnership with Mr. Keen.

A special factory had been built on this fair Essex estate, and for many months past, Mervyn Keen had been working secretly with Mr. Wallace, the world-famous engineer. Throughout Europe and America Mr. Wallace was renowned for his dare-devil motor-driving. He had broken all sorts of world's records in his time. Not for nothing was he known as "Cylinders" Wallace. And his son took after him.

"Did you feel that?" asked Sparkplug suddenly. He was a thin, angular, sharp-featured youngster; his eyes were bright and ever ready to grin.

"No, I didn't feel anything," said Hal, still gazing fascinatedly into the sky.

"I—I thought I felt an earth tremor," muttered the other boy. "Must have been fancy, I suppose."

That morning the newspapers had been full of the dread news of disastrous earthquakes in South America and Japan. The close proximity of the Etherite was having a disastrous effect. The earth's crust, in its weakest spots, was quaking under the strain.

There was panic in the world. North, south, east and west the peoples of all nations were stricken with the same sense of coming doom. This was to be the end of the world.

This Etherite was not an ordinary star, neither was it a comet. For the astronomers had discovered, with their giant telescopes, that the surface of the Thing was covered with vegetation.

And it was coming nearer—nearer. . . .

Not far from where the two boys were standing was the squat factory which Hal's uncle had erected. It stood half hidden among the graceful beeches and chestnuts, on the edge of the estate.

In the office adjoining the works stood Mr. Mervyn Keen, tall, upright, virile, a comparatively young man, a great athlete, and, in spite of his millions, a man of unbounding energy.

With him was "Cylinders" Wallace, thin, angular—like his son—eagle-featured, with an expression of preternatural gloom on his features. He looked the most miserable man on earth, but his looks belied his nature, for he was really an optimist amongst optimists.

"This etherite!" Mervyn Keen was saying huskily. "It's got me, 'Cylinders.' For the first time in my life I'm—scared. Just when our work is complete. I've invented this machine, and you've built it—but I doubt if the world will ever see it."

"Don't make me laugh," said "Cylinders"—who hadn't been known to laugh for twenty years. "We've fixed everything for a trial spin at dawn to-morrow, haven't we? Why not go straight ahead with our plans?"

Before Mervyn Keen could reply, a motor-car pulled up outside. And a moment later a brisk, immaculately-attired man knocked at the door of the office and came in.

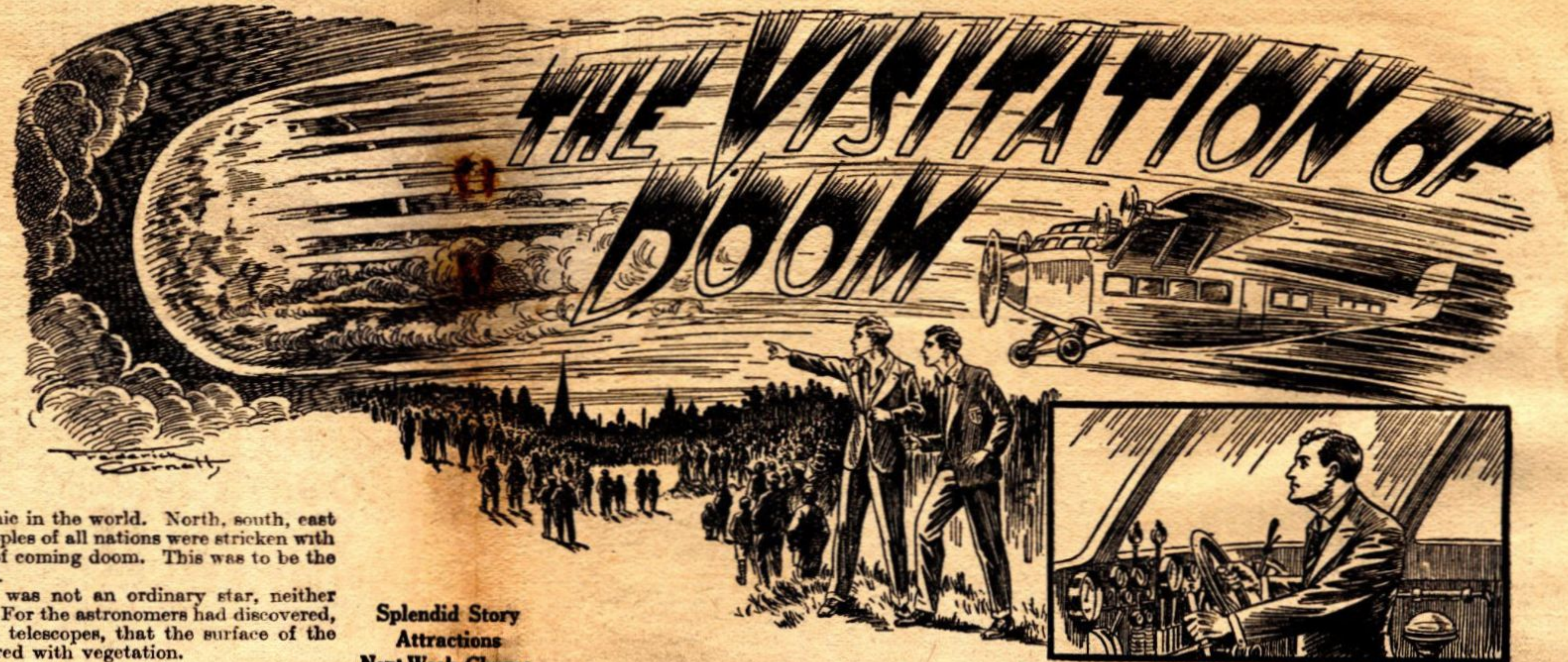
"I guess the world's coming to an end—but I'm ready to do business, Mr. Keen!" he said crisply.

"I've already told you, Mr. Corilla, that I'm not prepared to do business!" interrupted Mervyn Keen sharply.

Hans Corilla smiled. In spite of his foreign-sounding name, he was a typical American.

"Now, see here, Mr. Keen," he said. "I represent the United States Metal Corporation, and I want you to name your price for the formula of your secret process."

"No!" said Mr. Keen angrily. "This is the fifth



**Splendid Story Attractions Next Week, Chums. Don't Miss the Latest Exploit of the Boys of St. Giddy's!**

**CAPTAIN SKID—GANGSMASHER. Gripping Dirt Track Tale!**

**FIVE MORE FREE GIFT COUPONS GIVEN NEXT WEEK! WIN THAT £250.**

**SPEEDMAN SAMSON! The Black Speed Demon, Crashes Back on S. S. Day. And Stunning, Supporting Programme.**

time you've forced yourself upon me, Mr. Corilla. If my invention is of any value, the secret of it shall remain in Britain. Good afternoon."

"Aw, but listen—" Mervyn Keen practically forced Hans Corilla out; he did not trust the man. And in this Mr. Keen was sensible. For Hans Corilla did not represent any great American metal corporation, but he was a crook, out for gain, pure and simple.

"I detest the sight of that fellow!" said Mr. Keen angrily, after he had closed the door. "If it wasn't for this Etherite, or whatever it is, he would never have got beyond the gates. But everything's at sixes and sevens this week."

"All the same, why not go on the trial flight at dawn?" persisted "Cylinders" Wallace.

"All right—I will," said the other. "I don't suppose it'll make any difference. We might not even be here at dawn."

And outside, Hans Corilla, having overheard those words, hurried away. A trial flight at dawn! Soon he was in the village, telephoning. And late that evening a car arrived from London, carrying three men. Mark Loeb, late of Chicago; "Tombs" Ginty, of New York; and Sacramento Scatz, who had made California too hot to hold him.

"What's the racket, chief?" asked Mark Loeb. "Anything doing to-night?"

"Plenty!" replied Corilla. "Keen's taking his machine for a trial flight at dawn, and we're going to be in on it. If we get hold of this secret it'll mean millions. Keen's guards are off duty. Everybody's crazy about that thing in the sky. If we all go 'phut,' well, it won't make any difference, anyway. But we must grab this chance with both hands."

"You're right, Chief," said Scatz eagerly. "Let's go!"

Mervyn Keen's secret factory, usually guarded by day and night, was now deserted. With that grim visitant hurtling earthwards, and threatening a world

cataclysm at any moment, such matters as guarding a factory seemed insignificant—paltry.

**DAWN** found the sky clear; the sunrise was phenomenal in its beauty. Owing to the earth revolving on its axis, the menacing Etherite was not visible on this hemisphere. But soon, as the day advanced, it would rise up over the horizon, and everybody knew that to-day it would be bigger than ever—nearer, more terrifying than ever.

In this quiet Essex backwater, Hal Gordon and Ned Wallace little dreamed of the Panic which had stricken the great cities like a raging fever. The two youngsters were oblivious of the world tumult as they stood outside that squat building in the dawn light.

Great doors slid open; engines purred powerfully, yet quietly; a monstrous machine emerged into the first rays of the dawn sun.

"By jiminy!" breathed Hal. "Doesn't she look marvellous, Sparkplug?"

But Sparkplug, who took after his father, could do nothing but stare in awe and admiration.

The great space craft was the brain-child of Mr. Mervyn Keen. It shimmered and gleamed as it stood there, a thing of dazzling silver. Actually the monster was constructed of solid metal; the wings, in spite of their thickness, were solid; the doors, mounted on massive hinges, were two inches thick—solid metal. It seemed fantastic that it could ever rise from the ground.

The secret lay in the metal itself. Andelium was Mr. Mervyn Keen's invention. Tougher than reinforced steel—it was yet less than a sixth of the weight of duralumin. Thus, Mr. Keen had been able to construct his machine with the strength and solidity of an ocean-going liner.

This great 'plane was intended to revolutionise aviation—it was to be used to inaugurate a regular trans-Atlantic air service.

Those two boys were very proud that morning; for they were to be permitted to be aboard on the trial

fight. Hal's uncle was full of supreme confidence. Such was the enthusiasm of Mervyn Keen and "Cylinders" Wallace that they forgot the possibility of swift destruction.

As gracefully as a bird, *Silver Wings*—as the monoplane was christened—rose from the parklands of Abbey Chase, and she went soaring into the sky. And there were not four human beings aboard—but eight!

Little did any of them realise the amazing, incredible nature of the voyage on which they had embarked!

### Hans Corilla Strikes.

"SUCCESS!" exclaimed Mervyn Keen exultantly. "She flies as sweetly as a butterfly, 'Cylinders'! We took off in less than thirty yards, didn't we?"

"She's good!" admitted "Cylinders," almost grudgingly. "But I want to see how she behaves up aloft, Keen. That'll be the test."

Mervyn Keen was not troubled by doubts, however. The engines were only purring, but the speedometer dial registered three hundred miles an hour! And the huge craft was gaining height so quickly that the earth seemed to be literally falling away.

That wonderful metal, *Andelium*, had other marvellous qualities, in addition to being phenomenally light. It was heat-resisting and cold-resisting. Every door, every window, was capable of being hermetically sealed. The saloon, cabins, and navigation-room were all provided with pure, warm air from the special oxygen plant—which worked automatically by the very motion of the craft.

It was Mervyn Keen's dream that *Silver Wings* could attain heights hitherto believed impossible—fifteen miles above the earth—twenty miles—even twenty-five! Her lightness would enable her to fly in the rarefied atmosphere of the upper air. And there, of course, her speed would become greater and greater. Five hundred miles an hour should be easily attainable.

That meant a crossing from England to America in something like six hours!

"Golly!" said Sparkplug, in an awed voice. "We must be thirty thousand feet up already—and we haven't been in the air much more than ten minutes. Look how she's climbing!"

In spite of the enormous height, the saloon was warm and comfortable. The two boys stood at one of the windows. They were alone—for Mervyn Keen and "Cylinders" Wallace were in the control room. Suddenly Hal grasped his companion's arm and pointed to the glowing horizon.

"Look!" he muttered tensely. "The Etherite!"

The Visitant from Outer Space came up like some sunrise or Inferno—seeming to fill the whole southern sky. So intent were the two boys that they did not notice the opening of the door, at the end of the saloon.

Figures crept through. Then with a rush Hans Corilla and his fellow plotters swept down the saloon, seizing the unsuspecting youngsters from behind.

"Why, Uncle, I didn't know—" began Hal.

*Crash!* Something hard and heavy descended upon the lad's head, and he crumpled without even a cry.

*Crash!* Sparkplug was treated with equal brutality. Neither boy was allowed the slightest chance of fighting. As they lay unconscious their wrists and ankles were bound.

"Good work, boys," said Corilla coolly. "I guess we'll have no trouble with those other birds."

He walked quickly to the other end of the saloon, and opened the door which communicated with the navigation-room.

"Dad—Dad!" he screamed wildly. "Help!"

It was a wild cry, uttered in a high-pitched voice. Mr. Wallace, hearing it, half-turned.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "What's wrong with the boys?"

"Better go and see," said Mr. Keen sharply. "That was a terrible scream..."

"Cylinders" rose from his seat beside the pilot, and as he stepped through into the saloon the heavy butt of an automatic pistol descended with a stunning thud upon his head, and he sprawled forward, unconscious.

"WELL? What was wrong?" asked Mervyn Keen anxiously.

He had heard a sound behind him. The navigation-room, jutting out in the nose of the great aeroplane, was spacious. There was even room to walk about behind the two pilots' seats—for, of course, the machine had dual control.

"Keep going, Mr. Keen!" said a mocking voice.

The millionaire inventor looked round sharply, and a light of amazement leapt into his eyes.

"Corilla!" he ejaculated.

"Himself!" nodded Hans Corilla coolly. "Good morning, Mr. Keen! I sure hate to pull this rough stuff, but—"

"You infernal scoundrel!" shouted Mervyn Keen. "How did you get aboard this plane? What have you done to Mr. Wallace—and the boys?"

"They're O.K.—a bit dazed, perhaps, but everything will be all right. Better lock those controls, and we'll do a bit of talking."

Mervyn Keen quickly locked the controls of *Silver Wings*: the monoplane could keep on a true course without a pilot.

The millionaire was infuriated; but as he faced Hans Corilla he saw that he was at a hopeless disadvantage. Three other men were there, too—evil-looking fellows—and each man held a levelled automatic.

"Quite impressive," said Mervyn Keen contemptuously. "So you're nothing but a cheap gunman, Corilla? Well, you won't get what you're after."

Neither the millionaire nor the crooks noticed the astounding behaviour of the altimeter needle. *Silver Wings* was rocketing away from the earth at a bewildering speed.

"It's like this, Mr. Keen," said Corilla deliberately. "Either you give me the low-down on this metal of yours—the exact formula—or you and the other three will hurtle down to destruction and death."

"It certainly sounds very terrible," said Mervyn Keen, with dangerous calmness. "But if this machine crashes, aren't you rather afraid of accompanying me to destruction?"

"Don't make me laugh!" retorted Corilla. "Way back there, in the saloon, there are parachutes."

Mervyn Keen started. "Good heavens! You wouldn't dare—"

"See here, brother!" interrupted Corilla roughly. "We've talked enough. Shoot the works, and I'll let you get back into the pilot's seat, and land this ship in the right way. And, say! No monkey-tricks. Give me your word that you'll hand over the true formula, and that you'll take no police action, and I'll call it a day."

But the millionaire inventor did not seem to be listening. He was staring through one of the windows—downwards, at what should have been the earth. And his eyes had opened wider, for he could see nothing but sky!

"Good heavens!" shouted Mervyn Keen. "Either we're flying upside down, or I've gone mad! Look! No, no, I'm not trying to trick you. Look, I say!"

Startled by his tone, the crooks stared through the

windows. They saw the infinite blue of Space—below them. They pressed to the windows, and when they caught a glimpse of the earth, they shouted aloud.

For the earth, looking incredibly distant and blurry, was almost directly behind the tail of *Silver Wings*!

The aircraft, instead of flying on an even keel, was actually boring straight upwards into Space. How was she keeping her balance, her flying speed? Why didn't she stall and nose-dive?

"Holy mackerel!" ejaculated Sacramento Seatz, his face as white as a sheet. "Look over this side, you guys! That blamed Etherite, or whatever they call it, is right ahead of us!"

"Let me get at the controls!" panted Mervyn Keen, a terrible thought springing into his mind.

Nobody stopped him. He reached the pilot's seat, unlocked the controls, and his first move was to operate the craft's elevator. Nothing happened, except a faint, quivering shudder which quickly passed. *Silver Wings* hurtled onwards, refusing to answer her controls.

"Stop the engines!" panted "Tomb" Ginty, terrified.

But Mr. Keen had already switched off. The great

from the earth, at thousands of miles an hour—and nothing that we can do can save us!"

### The New World.

IT was a staggering realisation.

They were all aware that the temperature had become much lower, but breathing was easy. The oxygen plant was operating perfectly.

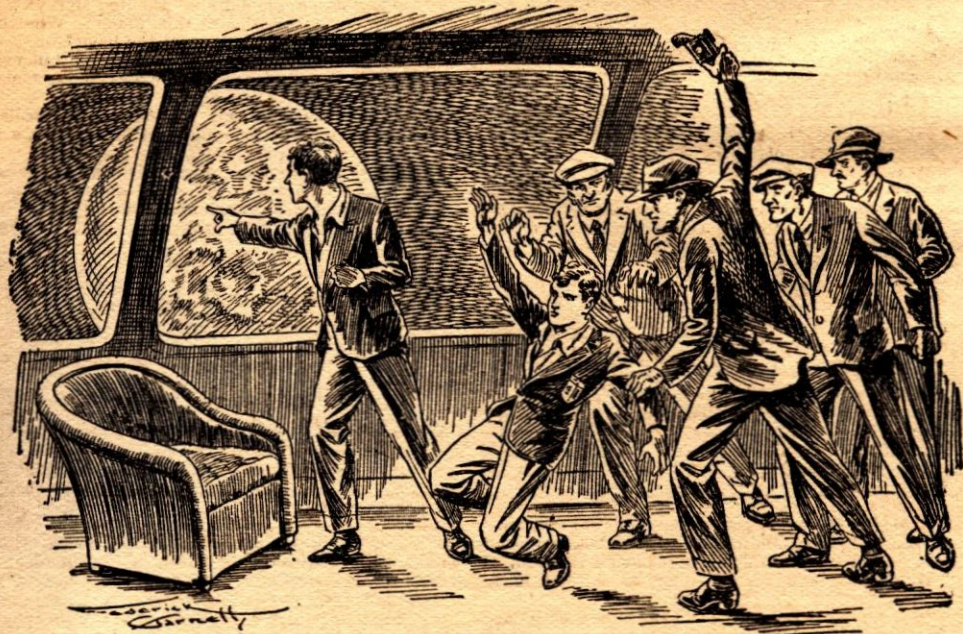
"I am afraid, my friends, it will make little difference whether I give you the information you seek," said Mervyn Keen steadily. "You can put your weapons away, and Mr. Wallace and the boys can be released. At least, let us be together when the end comes."

"We're not going to die!" shrieked Ginty, in terror. "No, no! He's stalling, Corilla! Make him take this machine—"

"Keep quiet, you snivelling sap!" snarled Hans Corilla. "Yellow, are you?"

He turned to the millionaire. "Guess you're right, Mr. Keen," he went on. "I know something about aviation. And there's something blamed queer about this trip. We're hurtling away from the earth like a meteor."

Without another word he pushed through the little communicating doorway into the saloon. The others



WHILE THE ETHERITE HURTTLED CLOSE.—With a rush Hans Corilla and his fellow-plotters swept down the saloon. Something hard and heavy descended brutally on the unsuspecting tads' heads.

engines ceased their rhythmic beat, and the silence which followed was unearthly.

"Stopping the engines makes no difference," muttered the millionaire, in amazement. "She's not diving—we're still hurtling straight upwards, away from the earth. My friends, your little plot has cost you your lives!"

"What do you mean?" asked Loeb, with an oath.

"I mean that the Etherite has taken control," replied Mervyn Keen. "We are being attracted towards it—we are hurtling through space, away

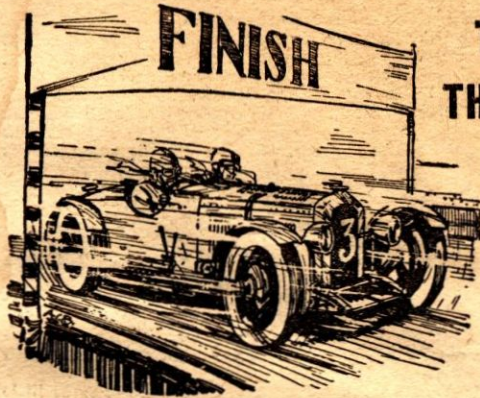
followed. Hal and Sparkplug and Mr. Wallace were quickly released.

"Boys, you'll have to take this bravely," said Mervyn Keen. "The Etherite has caught us in its attraction. We are hurtling towards it at a speed which cannot be computed. The astounding thing is that we can still breathe!"

"Cylinders," ruefully rubbing the bump on his head, looked out of the nearest window.

"I've never been up as high as this before," he remarked gloomily. "But according to all I ever

# YOUR EDITOR'S STORY SURPRISES NEXT WEEK!



## THREE GREAT THRILL FELLOWS



—*Captain Fury, Speedman Samson and Captain Skid—on Saturday!*

**M**Y DEAR CHUMS,

This week the *Mag.* gives the Football Final a great send-off with the ripping Handbook of Sport and Cup Final Supplement presented in this number. The goods, eh, chaps? But wait until you get on to the stunning Wonder Book—

### Cricket: Hints and Information.

Full particulars of this 28-page smasher will appear next week—and news of Mr. JOHN HUNTER's new and powerful yarn which begins its meteoric run the week after next. Look out also for details of the wonderful things your Editor has planned for loyal *B.M.*-ites in the Mighty Summer Numbers on the way.

You'll be held spellbound by the whizzing speed thrills next week—with Speedman Samson! Yes, chaps, the ebony race-track wizard comes back in a sizzly complete racing yarn, entitled

### Bandits—and the Black Goliath!

The terrific strength of Speedman Samson enables him to perform feats impossible to ordinary men. And in this splendid tale of terror and daring you see him at his best. The scene is the rugged, frowning background of Sicily!

learnt at school, we ought to be right outside the earth's atmosphere at this height. Yet there must be atmosphere, or the oxygen plant couldn't work."

"What do you make of it, Mr. Keen?" asked Hans Corilla.

"Mr. Wallace is right," replied the inventor. "By now we should be in the outer ether. Yet we can't be. For, if we were, we should have been frozen to death long since. The coldness of the ether is a coldness beyond human imagination."

Suddenly a startling expression came into his face.

"I believe I've got it!" he went on tensely. "The Etherite, according to the astronomers, has an atmosphere of its own. In passing so perilously near to the earth—hurtling through space practically parallel—some mysterious attraction has sucked at the earth's atmosphere. Do you understand?"

"No, uncle," said Hal, staring.

"I mean that a kind of gigantic invisible water-spout has happened—an atmosphere spout, we can call it," went on Mr. Keen. "We are actually in the

Another speed-demon who is a firm favourite with old readers is Captain Skid—the Dirt Track Ace. Shoals of letters have reached me asking for the return of this great *Mag.* character. Well, chums, get ready to cheer! I have booked a whole series of these grand dirt-track tales, featuring Captain Skid, N'Gomi and the rest, each complete in itself and a real humdinger. Look out for the first yarn next week under the title of

### Captain Skid—Gang Smasher!

An engrossing plot is woven through the speed thrills of this tower-of-power tale. Reading it you will be held tense, gripped—and you will meet the Big Shot. Who is he? Skid gets a startling suspicion of his identity. I wonder if you can guess whether or not he is right when you read this yarn next week?

The boys of St. Giddy's also go Dirt-track—next week.

### Dirt-Track Demons at St. Giddy's

describes their laughable and thrilling doings when a real star of the cinders comes to the school of shocks and surprises. Can you imagine what Fatty Slocum looks like as a dirt-track demon? Watch him next week!

Another old favourite—his most thrilling exploit—appears next week. None other than Captain Fury and his desert company—up against the sinister plotting of

### A Traitor in the Legion!

White-hot thrills and excitement keep this gripping tale on the move from the startling opening to the

(Continued on page 36.)

middle of that atmosphere spout, and we are being drawn from the earth to the etherite. By an amazing chance we happened to be at a great height at the critical moment, and thus we were drawn inexorably into the invisible current."

"Golly!" ejaculated Sparkplug, his eyes wide open. "And—and we can't get back to the earth?"

"We are already beyond the power of the earth's attraction," replied Mervyn Keen.

They were all silent, and in this awesome extremity Mr. Keen and his companions forgot that the other men were crooks. They were united by a common bond.

There could be no doubt that Mervyn Keen had hit upon the truth. The Etherite, shooting through space almost parallel with the earth, had merged its atmosphere with the earth's. The attraction of that Visitant from Outer Space was not sufficient to actually drag people or things off the earth's surface. But it had caught *Silver Wings* in its inexorable grip.

None of those adventurers knew it, but the Etherite

had actually come its nearest to the earth, and was now passing—receding. The Knell of Doom, in fact, had not sounded, after all.

Hours passed—perhaps days. Coldness gripped the aeroplane. She hurtled onwards, her engines silent. And in the saloon the six men and the two boys sprawled in the chairs or lay on the floor. They breathed, but that was all.

Time was of no interest. Hours . . . days. . . . They were like hibernating winter creatures, alive, but with animation suspended.

Then, gradually, a new warmth crept into *Silver Wings'* saloon. A new sound came from outside, the roaring, shrieking of wind, caused by the machine's terrific speed through heavier atmosphere.

The warmth within that cabin increased; it became a stifling heat. And as the heat increased, so the roaring and shrieking, outside, grew louder.

Mervyn Keen began to stir. The mists cleared away from his brain. He found himself thinking; he looked about him with dazed, bewildered eyes at first. Then, staggering to his feet, the millionaire-inventor looked out of the nearest window. Even then it was some moments before he realised the amazing, bewildering truth.

*Silver Wings* was nose-diving hideously. The ground lay many thousands of feet below—but, without question, it was the ground.

He placed a hand against the saloon wall, near the window. It was hot. The contact did much to restore him.

"Great heavens!" he muttered, aghast.

For he realised the truth. That heat was caused by the terrific friction. And it suddenly came to Mervyn Keen that *Silver Wings* was again capable of being controlled. He staggered, somehow, into the navigation-room; he got into the pilot's seat. Joy! No sooner did he touch the controls than he felt the great monoplane answering.

Exultantly he eased her out of that terrifying nosedive. Slowly, surely, he got the plane on to an even keel, and now she was gliding comfortably.

"Uncle!" panted a voice.

Hal Gordon, wide-eyed, staggered into the navigation-room, and behind him came Sparkplug.

"I don't know what's happened, Hal," said Mervyn Keen. "But a merciful Providence has come to our aid, and we are descending to earth—"

"Earth!" yelled Hal. "Look, uncle!"

He pointed upwards—through the observation-window. And the millionaire inventor shouted with unbelieving amazement.

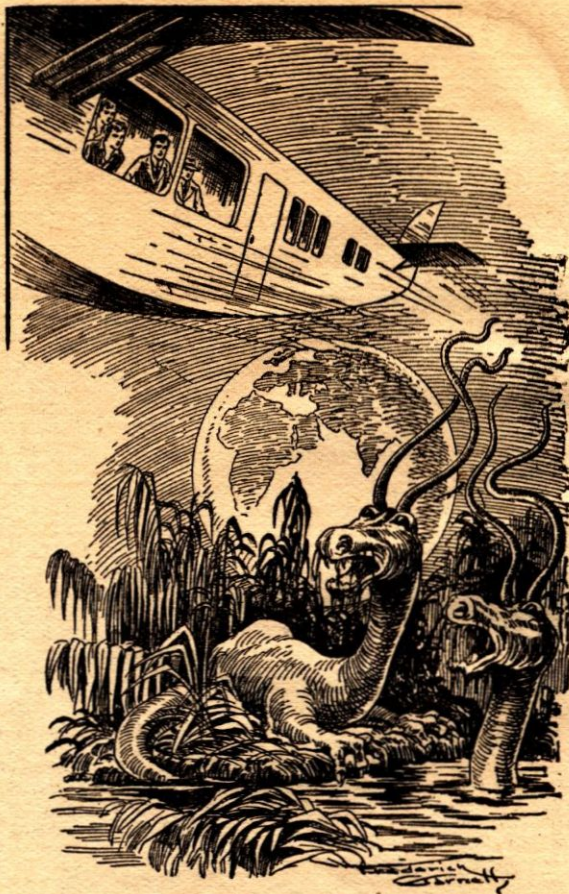
For up there, in the sky, loomed an enormous globe—fifty times as big as the moon looks to those on earth. Mervyn Keen recognised the coastline, a continent . . .

"It's the earth!" he shouted. "Good heavens! But—but—"

"Don't you understand, uncle?" gasped Hal. "We're not descending on the earth at all—but on the Etherite!"

*Silver Wings* was gliding relentlessly down. Mervyn Keen had tried to restart her engines; but they would not budge. A landing was inevitable.

The great machine was now only a thousand feet



THE TENTACLED TERROR OF THE ETHERITE.—The adventurers gazed in horror through the saloon windows. From the livid yellow trees, squat, bloated, vile-looking monstrosities were staring upwards.

up. Those grotesque forests were taking shape; Sparkplug pointed at some monstrous creatures which had emerged from the livid-yellow trees—squat, bloated, vile-looking monstrosities which waddled as they walked—but which lifted their heads, staring upwards.

Then, as though at a signal, they retreated, vanishing amongst those nightmare trees.

At the saloon windows, the other adventurers were standing, staring fascinatedly, forgetful of their thirst, their hunger, their faintness.

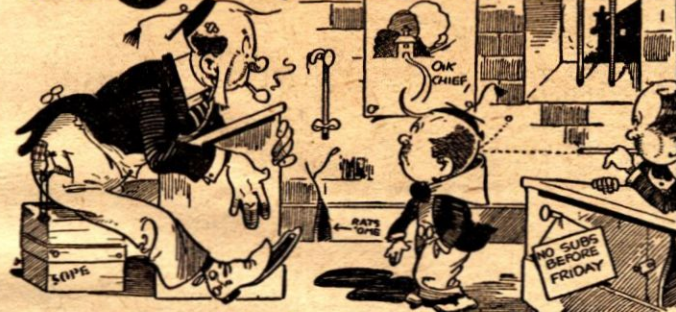
*Thud-thud!* *Silver Wings* touched the ground under Mervyn Keen's skilful hand. She ran forward, bumped once, and then came to a standstill.

They had landed on the meteorite—they were in a realm of mystery!

What Mysteries and Marvels await the Gallant Adventurers marooned on the Etherite? Don't miss the Gripping Denouement of this Startling Star Tale next week.

**RIPPING PRIZES FOR ALL JOKES PRINTED HERE.**

# THE JESTER'S REALM



Footballs and Fountain Pens awarded to senders of jokes on this page. Send your favourite joke on p.c., with coupon on this page, to the Editor, "Boys' Magazine," 196, Gray's Inn Rd., London, W.C.1.

**Teacher:** Do you know the population of London?

**Pupil:** Not all of them! We've only lived here about two years.

(Football to D. GOODALL, 322, High Street, Walton, Felixstowe, Suffolk.)

## THE BOTTOM LAYER.

**Teacher:** You dirty boy! Why don't you wash your face? I can see what you had for your breakfast this morning.

**John:** What was it, sir?

**Teacher:** It was jam.

**John:** You're wrong, sir. That was yesterday morning!

(Fountain pen to J. BALDWIN, The Park Cottages, Great Oakley, near Kettering, Northants.)

## DIFFICULT.

**PAT** (whose horse has sat down): Gerrup, you brute, or I'll drive right over you.

(Fountain pen to J. LEVY, 39, Maple Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.)

## TOO BAD.

**Waiter:** Don't you like the college pudding, sir?

**Diner:** No! I fear there's an egg in it which ought to have been expelled.

(Fountain pen to JOE COLLEDGE, 13, Bridge Street, Wakefield, Yorks.)

## A YOUNG SKULL!

**Dealer:** This, sir, 's the skull of Wolsey!

**Interested Man:** But Wolsey had a large head!

**Dealer:** But, sir, this is his skull when he was a boy!

(Fountain pen to RONALD SALWAY, Culme View, Cullompton, Devon.)

## HOW HE KNEW.

**Street Musician** (after they had drawn blank): Do you think the people can hear us?

**Second Musician:** Sure, somebody's just closed their window!

(Fountain pen to NORTON MUNRO, 3, New Buildings Dunure.)

## JOKE COUPON.

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

23/4/32.

## A BROAD HINT.

**Customer:** You are very slow at figures, my lad!

**Newsboy:** I'm out of practice, sir. Most of my customers say: "Keep the change."

(Fountain pen to PETER JOHN WALFORD, Eversleigh, Wilnot Way, Banstead, Surrey.)

## IMPOSSIBLE.

**Jewish Referee** (to son Ikey): Kick him, Ikey!

**Ikey:** I can't, my foot's on a shilling.

(Fountain pen to M. BROOKS, 66, Ann Street, Greenock, Scotland.)

## TRUTH.

**Navy** (to foreman): I broke me shovel.

**Foreman:** Digging!

**Navy:** Naw, leaning on it!

(Fountain pen to CHARLES DOUGAN, 6, Hay Street, Greenock, Renfrewshire.)

## IN THE ICE.

**Gentleman** (to boy fallen through the ice): Well, my boy, how did you come to fall in?

**Boy:** Please, sir, I didn't come to fall in, I came to skate!

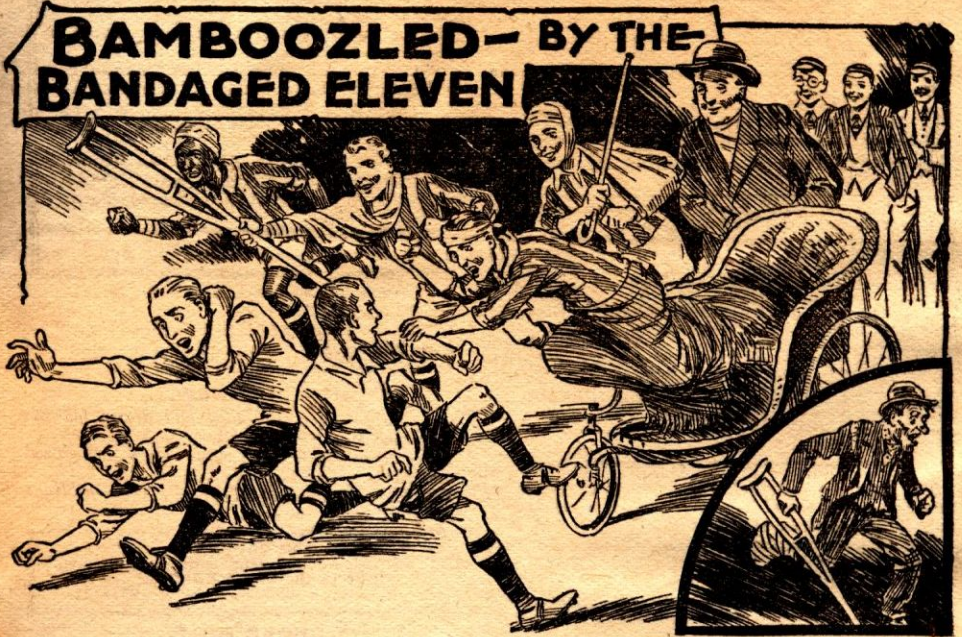
(Fountain pen to JAMES GIBSON, Raskelf Road, Easingwold, Yorks.)



**Ancient Bluebottle** (on sleeping man's head): Believe me or not, my boy, when I was a lad there was only a footpath across here.

(Football to CHARLES ETTY, Foolslands, Old Earswick, Yorkshire.)

THE JOYOUS JUNIORS OF ST. GIDDY'S. FUN ON THE FOOTER FIELD. THANKS TO CATCHPOLE'S PATENT PROPULSION PADS.



**The Boys of St. Giddy's Stage Their Own Footer Final when they Come Up Against the TOUGHEST TEAM IN THE LEAGUE for the Inter-Schools Cup!**

**Catchpole's Pedal Pulsion Pads.**

"*Sic transit gloria footballium!*" chuckled Dick Bannister, as he critically regarded the footer list that Johnny Gee had just affixed to the notice-board in the Lower Hall at St. Giddy's.

The list gave the names of the team for the great Cup Final match between the St. Giddy's Junior Eleven and Selcourt School, booked to take place on the following Saturday.

There was a sneering laugh behind the group of chums. Johnny Gee & Co. turned, and saw Cecil Davenport, Poole, Cadman, Snell, and Lucas.

"The same old gang, always stuck into the team!" said Davenport, the stylishly dressed dandy of the Remove. "Of course, Gee has so many pals on whom he must bestow favours, that other fellows don't get a look in."

Johnny Gee flushed, and clenched his fists angrily. "I'm out to win the Cup on Saturday, Davenport, and I've put the chaps whom I consider are the best players into the team," said Johnny Gee, breathing hard through his nose. "I happen to know that the Selcourt fellows are set on winning the Cup by hook or by crook—and they're not particular as to their methods."

"What a come-down it would be for Gee, if he lost, after all!" said Cadman, his dark eyes glittering, as he watched the cheery footballers of the Remove marching off to the field for practice.

Davenport's lips hardened. "I'll get the car out, Cadman, and we'll run over to Selcourt and have a word with Merton, the junior captain there," he said. "Perhaps, between us, we can devise ways and means of putting a spoke in Gee's wheel."

Cecil Davenport, followed by Cadman, led the way to the school garage, whilst the rest of the rotters' brigade lounged off to the cloisters.

With a roar, Davenport appeared in his little, red sports two-seater—a present from his indulgent pater. Such a thing as a schoolboy owning and keeping a motor-car was unprecedented, and it was only through his pater's influence that Davenport was allowed to keep it at St. Giddy's.

There was a heated altercation going on at the gates, between Sergeant Rumble and a seedy-looking gentleman of the vagabond class.

"You get huff, my man!" said the school porter brusquely. "This 'ere is no place for tramps or beggars. You've been 'anging around 'ere all the morning."

"I'm an 'onest, 'ard-working man, down on 'is luck!" expostulated the seedy-looking one.

"Get hout!" roared Sergeant Rumble, pushing the persistent beggar into the gateway. "Wot I says is this 'ere—"

*Honk! Honk!* Davenport blew stridently on the hooter, as he drove up at a smart pace. Sergeant Rumble promptly hopped out of the way, but not so the mendicant. He seemed to stagger suddenly in the gateway and fell headlong in the path of Davenport's car.

There was a screeching of brakes. But the car passed over the prostrate man. Davenport's face was white as he drew sharply to a halt and jumped out.

"Oh, my leg! Be careful, young gents—" moaned the victim as he was dragged from under the car.



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The boys of St. Giddy's then saw, to their horror, that the man's right leg was twisted, as though a bone had been dislocated or fractured.

"It was the man's own fault—the fool dropped in my way, and I couldn't avoid him!" Davenport muttered. "Is he badly hurt, Wellesley?"

The captain of St. Giddy's, who had dashed to the scene, nodded grimly. "It seems like it. Take that car back to the garage, Davenport. I don't suppose the Head will allow you to drive again—"

"Rats!" said the dandy recklessly, and, clambering back into the car, he drove away, in defiance of Wellesley's order.

Johnny Gee & Co., who had come from the football field, gazed in astonishment at the injured tramp as, groaning hollowly, he was carried towards the school sanatorium.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tony Graham. "What a terrible thing for Davenport if that man is deformed for life! . . ."

The juniors returned to the playing-field to finish the practice match.

The Removites were about to begin their practice match when a tall, boney junior with a domelike forehead came on to the field. It was Timothy Catchpole, the boy inventor of the Remove.

"A moment, my dear fellows," he said, blinking excitedly through his spectacles.

"Hullo, Timothy, old tulip!" grinned Johnny Gee. "Why this thushness?"

"I have here an invention that will revolutionise football," answered the schoolboy scientist in his best lecture-room manner. "These contrivances are my new Patent Pedal Pulsion Pads. When fitted to the boots of a footballer, they increase the velocity of his kick by five hundred per cent. If you will try them, my dear Gee, I'm sure they will be of great value in kicking goals."

"Right-ho, Catchpole, we'll try 'em," said Johnny. "Trot 'em out, old son!"

The Remove footballers went indoors, and their footer boots were duly fitted with Catchpole's Patent Pedal Pulsion Pads. Thus armed—or, rather, befooted—Johnny Gee & Co. sallied forth once more to the footer field.

The Remove footballers were soon in action! It

was amazing, the extra power and speed those Patent Pulsion Pads gave to their kicking.

All of a sudden, however, a shout went up.

Without any warning, their footer boots began to emit bright sparks, and their right legs started to whirl about in the most violent manner in wide, kicking motions.

"Oh, dud-d-dear!" gasped Timothy Catchpole, wringing his bony hands. "The pads have gone wrong! I f-f-fear someone will get hurt—"

Kick! Thud! Kick! Kick! "Yarooogh! Stoppit, you lunatics!"

The crowd round the field fled as Johnny Gee and Co. came trooping off, kicking with all their might—or, rather, the might of the Catchpole Patent Pulsion Pads.

The Remove footballers reached the quadrangle unable to control their lunging feet and legs! Shrieks of mirth arose on all sides. Their faces were red, and they were quite breathless with their unwonted exertions.

"I say—you-yow!—this is awful!" gasped Johnny Gee, kicking away violently, despite all his efforts to keep his wayward foot under control. "Sorry, Tony—yaroop!"

Tony Graham returned his leader's kick, though not in any spirit of revenge. He simply couldn't help himself! In sheer desperation, the hapless footballers made their way towards the pavilion, hopping and kicking like boys demented. The form of Mr. Bill 'Uggett came hobbling along, on crutches, and a shout of alarm went up.

"Look out!"

"Oh, my heye!" gasped the cripple, when he saw the kicking Removites bearing down upon him. "Don't you go for to kick me—Yah! Oooooogh!"

The effect on the cripple was most remarkable. Mr. 'Uggett's leg seemed to straighten out as if by magic, and he took to his heels and ran off at top speed.

"Yarooogh! 'Elp! Stoppit, young gents. Yah!"

The boys of St. Giddy's were amazed at this startling *denouement*. Mr. Bill 'Uggett quickly out-distanced the Remove footballers, who made their way with difficulty to the pavilion, still kicking away merrily at one another!

The offending footer boots were eventually dragged off the sufferers, and Johnny Gee & Co. took their second wind. "Yow-wow!" gasped Johnny Gee. "Oh, crumbs! What happened to that chap Huggett?"

"Here he comes!" exclaimed Dick Bannister wrathfully. "He wasn't crippled at all, the old spoofer!"

"I've heard of these bone manipulators before," Johnny Gee said. "Huggett worked that trick, to get damages under false pretences. We'll give him damages! Hold him!"

But Mr. Bill 'Uggett, seeing the angry looks on the faces of Johnny Gee & Co., started to run again! He made for the gates as though competing in a Marathon race, and disappeared in a twinkling.

"Let the rotter go!" said Johnny, with a laugh. "He's been properly bowled out, anyway. Davenport should think himself jolly lucky! Kim on chaps and get changed. We are due at Merivale for our new football togs before tea!"

"HALLO, Merton!"

Cecil Davenport was, standing by the old toll gate on the outskirts of Selcourt, near the Knoll, where he had arranged to meet the Junior Captain of Selcourt.

Davenport had been amusing himself, whilst waiting for Merton, in watching the flight of an aeroplane from a field near the Knoll. A large

banner flying over the field announced that the 'plane was giving public flights, at five shillings per trip.

"Hallo, Davenport," said Merton. "You're here before me, then. Have you managed to crock Gee & Co. yet?"

Davenport scowled. "I've tried several dodges in the hope of getting Gee and some of his pals crocked for the match," he said. "But they are too cute for me. I've just thought of something else. I happen to know that Gee and his pals will be cycling to Merivale in about half-an-hour's time. I'm going to try and get the fellow in that aeroplane to help me. Care to join in, Merton?"

"Rather!" said Merton, his dark brows lowering. "I'm with you in anything you like to put up—so long as it isn't too dangerous."

The two rascals crossed to the field, where the aeroplane was waiting for passengers, with the pilot in his flying kit smoking a cigarette beside it.

Davenport went boldly up to him.

"We want to go to Merivale and back—only a distance of five miles all told," said Davenport, calmly. "Look here, I've got plenty of money, and

Meanwhile, Johnny Gee & Co. were cycling along the Merivale Lane towards the village.

"We'll be in time for tea, and then get back to St. Giddy's for an hour on the field!" said the Remove captain brightly. A sudden drone in the sky caught their attention, and the juniors looked upward, scanning the cloud-flecked blue with keen eyes.

"Begad!" exclaimed Lord Reggie, adjusting his monocle. "Here come the jolly old 'plane—it's tootin' along towards us, old chappies."

The 'plane was zooming downwards, and had skimmed over the tree-tops skirting the Merivale Lane. Then, taking a downward dive, it straightened out just above them, and to the Removites' surprise and horror, a long rope with a brick tied to the end of it came trailing out from the side of the fuselage, right across their path.

"Oh, my hat!" cried Johnny Gee. "Look out—some madman up there means to have us over! What the dickens—"

The Remove captain broke off. He felt a jerk as the rope caught his handlebars, and the machine went lurching from under him. Johnny's quick brain snapped to action and, at the same instant as he fell from the saddle, he caught at the rope that had fetched him over.

Johnny hung on grimly to the rope, and was swept upward into the air. The 'plane, had been flying



**THE PROSTRATE POT-SHOOTER.**—Johnny Gee's prostrate form slithered along the ground, and, without rising, his foot flashed out, shooting the ball past the Selcourt goal.

I'm willing to give you a fiver if you'll help me play a little joke on some chaps belonging to our school. They're driving to Merivale on push bikes. I want to give them a surprise. Supposing we were to go up in your 'plane, and fly low over them, that would give them a shock, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, I should think it would," observed the airman. "But don't you think it might be rather dangerous?"

"Rats!" scoffed Davenport. "We're only out for a lark."

The airman paused, and then—"Very well. I'll take you up."

"Done!" said Davenport, and followed by Merton, he clambered into the 'plane.

With a full-throated roar, the machine was off! It taxied across the field, circled to the wind and then arose from the Knoll.

so low, however, that Johnny Gee was able to swarm swiftly up the rope before any great altitude had been attained.

"Davenport—you cur!" shouted Johnny, hoarsely as he clambered over the cockpit of the now careering 'plane. Holding on grimly, with one hand, he crashed his fist into Davenport's scowling face as the dandy tried desperately to push him back. Next instant, the Remove leader was on top of his arch-enemy and the pair were fighting in the cockpit.

The pilot shouted to them, and Merton in the rear made frantic attempts to grasp Johnny, but without avail.

"Fly low, and obey my instructions now, do you hear?" Johnny shouted back at the airman. "If you don't, I'll report you for this. Take her down—over that duckpond! I'll see your licence is cancelled if you don't. I'm going to chuck these cads out!"

"Hang you, Gee, you won't get me out!" snarled Davenport, struggling with demoniacal fury.

The pilot, impressed by Johnny Gee's threat, did as he was bidden. He took the machine down until it was only a few yards above the surface of the duckpond that Johnny had indicated. The pond was close to the Merivale Lane, and the other Removites had already arrived at the spot, wheeling their machines and gazing upwards in wonder.

"Now, Davenport—out you go!" gasped Johnny. "You'll come with me, then, Gee—Ooooh!" Davenport's fingers clutched at the fuselage, but missed by the barest fraction of an inch. Next minute, Johnny had given him a hefty shove, and Davenport went out of the 'plane sideways, leg and arms floundering wildly in the air.

*Splash!* The dandy struck the murky water and disappeared with a choking gurgle. The pilot grinned round at Johnny.

"Good for you, laddie! That young rascal deserved it—he told me it was only a joke—"

"Well, it's my turn for a joke!" responded Johnny Gee grimly. "Perhaps you'd like to take this merchant back to Selcourt School after we've finished with him, and drop him in a conspicuous position?"

The pilot nodded, and chuckled. He brought the machine down in the field alongside the duckpond, and immediately the rest of the Joyous Juniors dashed to the spot and pounced upon Merton. He went to earth fighting and snarling with the Joyous Juniors piled on top of him.

"Yah! *Wow-wow-wow!* Lemme gerrup! *Ooooh!*" But Merton was in the hands of the Philistines, now! Johnny Gee & Co. rolled him in the grass, and bumped him until he howled for mercy. Then they ripped his expensive clobber from him, and Tony Graham fetched a ragged outfit from a scarecrow in the adjacent field. Arrayed in a long frock-coat with tattered tails, striped trousers of an obsolete military pattern and full of holes, huge hob-nailed boots that even a tramp would not have deigned to wear, and a battered straw hat fastened in position with string, the rascally Selcourt captain was a sight for the gods. Merton, howling his protests, was bound with the rope that had been intended for Johnny Gee's undoing, and then he was dumped in the 'plane.

"Right away, airman!" chuckled Johnny. "Drop this beauty where his nice schoolmates can gaze at him in all his glory, and weep."

The 'plane zoomed out of sight, and Johnny Gee & Co. turned their attention to Davenport, who had by now crawled out of the duckpond and was standing on the bank, a miserable and a gruesome sight.

"Well, Davenport, you cad, we've bowled you out!" exclaimed Johnny. "So that's the way you try to work your spite off on me—you have gone over to the side of Selcourt. You rotten traitor! Let that be a lesson to you to keep off the grass in future!"

Cecil Davenport choked with rage and mud, and stamped away, squelching water from his shoes, and leaving a long, long trail behind him.

In Study No. 4 that evening, Johnny Gee looked thoughtful. "Chaps, we have to watch out for treachery, that's certain," he said. "Davenport and Merton are out to beat the Remove eleven by hook or by crook."

*Tap!* There was a knock at the door, and the tall, weedy form of Timothy Catchpole manifested itself. Catchpole blinked very solemnly at the chums of Study No. 4.

"Hallo, Catchpole!" grinned Johnny. "What can we do for you, old scout?"

"I shall be obliged, Gee, if you fellows would knock me over," said Catchpole mildly.

Johnny Gee & Co. stared open-mouthed at the genius of the Remove.

"Well, anything to oblige!" grinned Johnny, and the Co. made a rush at Timothy. They bowled him over, so that he smote the floor hard.

"*Groooh!* Proceed, my dear fellows!" gasped Catchpole. "Harder this time, if you don't mind!"

The bumping of Catchpole proceeded apace. But, much to their astonishment, instead of howling for them to desist, Catchpole called out gaspingly for more. They bumped him until they were completely out of breath themselves, and then they allowed Catchpole to fall with a bump into the grate and stared at him in gasping wonder.

"Thanks, my dear Gee!" cried Catchpole. "I merely wished to test my Patent Anti-Fouling Outfit, which consists of special protective socks and under-shirt, and the application to all exposed parts of the body of a lotion. Pray do not look alarmed. You see, my dear fellows, I heard about the possibility of foul play from the Selcourt fellows in the Cup Final on Saturday, so I devised this Anti-Fouling Outfit, which you can use as a means of protecting yourselves from any foul play you may have to contend with in the football match."

"Gug-g-great pip!"

Catchpole gave a gaunt grin. "You see, my dear fellows, that I am quite unhurt, even though you have subjected me to a great deal of violence," he said. "This is just the sort of thing you want for the team on Saturday, Gee."

"Well, carry me home to die, somebody!" exclaimed Johnny. "You seem to have struck something really good at last, old son. If this Anti-Fouling treatment of yours really does give us charmed lives, Catchpole—"

"I assure you, my dear Gee, that it is most efficacious!" said the schoolboy scientist eagerly. "Listen, I heard Davenport plotting with Roker when I was in the village. Catchpole, in his excitement, forgot his heavy, learned mode of utterance: 'Roker and his rowdies are going to set on you fellows when you go down to the village and crock you for the match.'

"Oh, they are, are they?" said Johnny Gee, and a sudden gleam of inspiration came into his eyes. "Right-o, we'll rig ourselves out with your Anti-Fouling device, Catchpole, and to-morrow we'll all go down to Merivale and give Roker's gang of rowdies a whopping."

The Joyous Juniors prepared to go into Merivale the next morning, and they went out to meet Roker & Co., wearing Catchpole's Safety Socks Protective Plasters, and Vulcanised Vests, and with their limbs and faces treated with the Super Anti-Whack Mixture.

Leslie Meeke, one of Cadman's cronies, took the news to Davenport that the Remove team were going down to Merivale. It was not long before Davenport was out of St. Giddy's in his car, seeking out the rowdies and inciting them once more to a savage attack on his Formfellows.

Roker & Co. turned out in full force, and waylaid Johnny Gee and his chums along the towing path just outside Merivale.

The toughs used fists and feet on the plucky juniors, and a right royal scrap ensued. On this occasion, Catchpole's inventions did not let his schoolmates down. Johnny Gee & Co. were able to take all the hard knocks and blows bestowed upon them by the hooligans, and when P.O. Dooley appeared and Roker's gang thought it expedient to scatter they felt little the worse for the affray.

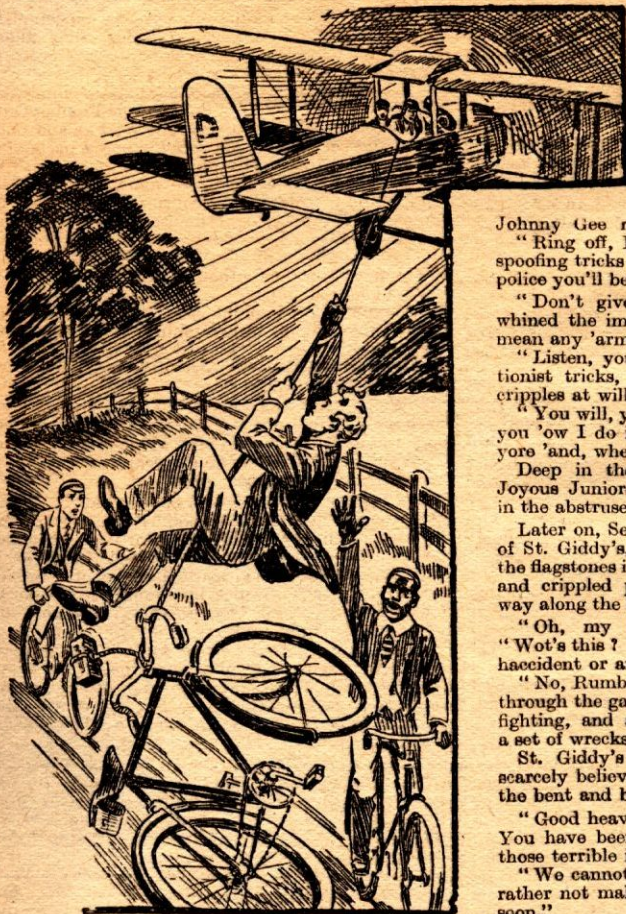
"*Whew!* That was lively while it lasted!" gasped

Dick Bannister. "We should have been properly smashed up, but for Catchpole's Patent Protective Plasters and what not."

Johnny Gee, peering through the trees, suddenly gave a low whistle.

"Don't show yourselves yet, chaps. Do you see who's coming along, walking all lop-sided, as though he were deformed? It's that old spoofer, Bill 'Uggett!"

Shuffling footsteps sounded on the towing path



TREACHERY IN THE AIR.—The plane straightened out just above the Removites; a long rope, with a brick tied to the end of it, came trailing out of the fuselage, right across their path.

and the bent and twisted form of Bill 'Uggett came into view.

"My hat!" murmured Johnny Gee, a sudden inspiration seizing him. "I wonder whether that old blighter could teach us how to manipulate our bones?"

"What the dickens do we want to manipulate our bones for, Johnny?" demanded the Hon. Bob Vernon.

"Listen, my sons! chuckled the Remove leader softly. "Davenport set the Roker gang on us—and he expects us to turn up at St. Giddy's smothered in bruises and afflicted with all sorts of injuries. Well, why shouldn't we? We'll make Huggett teach us how to manipulate our bones, and we'll go back to St. Giddy's looking like a set of cripples. That will please Davenport no end, and stop him from making any further attacks on us. Now, do you get me?!"

"Begad! That's a toppin' idea, old chappie!"

Mr. Bill 'Uggett received a great surprise when, shuffling along the towing path towards the Anchor Inn he was suddenly set upon by that horde of Removites! He immediately straightened his bones, and raised his crutch savagely to strike at them, but he was whirled over in the grass and held there. Coarse oaths burst from the pseudo cripple, but

Johnny Gee rapped out sternly:

"Ring off, Huggett! We've caught you at your spoofing tricks again, and if we hand you over to the police you'll be put in prison for fraud."

"Don't give me to the narks, young gents! whined the impostor, changing his tone. "I don't mean any 'arm—"

"Listen, you old spoofer! Teach us the contortionist tricks, so that we can turn ourselves into cripples at will, and we'll give you another chance."

"You will, young gents? 'Onest Injun? I'll show you 'ow I do it. Bone manipulin' is easy as kiss yore 'and, when you know 'ow."

Deep in the fastnesses of Merivale Wood, the Joyous Juniors took lessons from Mr. Bill 'Uggett in the abstruse art of bone-shifting.

Later on, Sergeant Rumble, standing at the gates of St. Giddy's, sunning himself, almost dropped on the flagstones in amazement when he saw the crooked and crippled procession that wended its laborious way along the lane that led to the school.

"Oh, my heye!" gasped Sergeant Rumble. "Wot's this? 'Ave you young rips been in a railway haccident or an hexplosion?"

"No, Rumble!" said Johnny Gee, as he clumped through the gateway on his crutch. "We have been fighting, and are cruelly crippled. Don't we look a set of wrecks!"

St. Giddy's was horrified. Dr. Holroyd could scarcely believe his eyes when he hurried out to see the bent and bandaged brigade.

"Good heavens! Boys, whatever has happened? You have been fighting! Who was responsible for those terrible injuries?"

"We cannot tell, sir," Johnny said. "We—we'd rather not make a fuss about it. We'll be all right soon."

"But you must go to the sanatorium at once! I will call the doctor. My goodness, this is a most serious affair."

The school doctor was frankly puzzled. An examination of the crippled Removites showed that although they had suffered the most complicated dislocations of their boyish bones, they seemed to feel no ill effects, nor to be in any pain.

"Really, this is a most amazing affair," said the Head. "On Monday, you shall be examined by an osteopath specialist from London. Meanwhile, boys, on your assurance that you are able to get about, by means of these appliances with which you have so promptly provided yourselves, you may attend to your usual duties without confinement in the sanatorium."

Johnny Gee & Co. hobbled away, to meet Davenport and his grinning cronies. The Remove footballers were obviously crooked—very badly crooked indeed. Roker & Co. had done their work of hooliganism only too well. Cecil Davenport was satisfied.

"I say, Gee, you're not scratching from the Cup Final to-morrow?" he said. "I mean, the match won't go to Selcourt by default? I can get together a team to play the Selcourt fellows, and if we win the Cup, I shall expect to have the captaincy of the Lower School as well."

Johnny's eyes glittered for a moment. "Very well, Davenport," he said. "You can go ahead. My own team can't very well play footer on crutches, of course."

The Dandy of the Remove hurried to the prefects' room, scarcely able to contain his eagerness. He rang up Selcourt and asked for Merton.

"That you, Merton?" he exclaimed. "Davenport here. I say, the regular Junior XI here are standing down from the Cup Final match to-morrow. They're all crooked—the whole blessed lot of 'em. I'm captaining a team to play your crowd, instead! And I want you to put aside all thoughts of winning that Cup, from now on! My team's got to win, so that I can do Gee in the eye, and get the captaincy of the Lower School here. You must play into my hands."

"But I—I can't!" spluttered Merton. "I dare not, Davenport—"

"I say you must!" said the dandy of the Remove in curt tones. "Unless you make certain to-morrow that my team are given plenty of openings to score, I shall tell all I know about you, and have you kicked out of Selcourt."

"You rotter, Davenport! I'll do it, of course. I'll have to, if that's what you threaten, but—"

"See that you do it, then, and we shan't quarrel!" said Davenport; and he rang off.

### The Cup-Winning Crooks.

SATURDAY dawned bright and clear, with that tang of crisp, exhilarating coolness in the air that was just right for footer.

The Selcourt team and their supporters arrived early. They were a hefty team enough, and looked well able to give the average junior team a hard tussle.

Davenport & Co. came out on the field, conscious of the eyes of all their schoolfellows upon them.

The playing-field was crowded, and the spectators were noisy. The hopes of the St. Giddy's boys did not run high, now that Johnny Gee & Co. were crooked and out of the team, in spite of Davenport's bold boast that he would be the captain of the winning team.

Wellesley looked at his watch. "Time for business," he said. "Davenport and Merton, you'd better toss for ends."

Scarcely had the coin spun in the air, however, than there was a commotion from the ropes.

"Look out! Make way for Old Crocks' Eleven!"

Davenport gasped when he saw Johnny Gee & Co., clad in footer togs and still heavily bandaged, hobbling on to the field on their crutches and other surgical appliances. Gentles was gravely wheeling the bath-chair in which Lord Reggie, a dapper figure in footer jersey, shorts, and boots, was reclining.

"My hat!" ejaculated Davenport, as the procession approached. "What the dickens are you rotters doing here? Get off the field—we're waiting to play!"

"So are we, Davenport!" said Johnny Gee grimly, and with a sudden movement he straightened up and turned to his "crippled" followers, brandishing his crutch.

"Come on! Mop up the field with these cads! Davenport, you've been dished, diddled, and done again! We weren't crooked at all—we've spoofed everyone beautifully! Take that, you rotter!"

*Swipe! Swipe! Swipe!* The team of "cripples" were plying their crutches with vim and vigour upon Davenport and his team! The rotters' brigade were chased all over the field, until they sought refuge in the pavilion, and barricaded themselves in there, howling to be left alone.

Johnny Gee marshalled his men, and the great Cup Final commenced, with the regular St. Giddy's Junior XI. All safe and sound and very fit indeed, versus Selcourt.

It was a match of thrills and excitement from beginning to end. Johnny Gee & Co. quickly took their opponents' measure, and gave a taste of their own quality!

Johnny Gee scored, and Snowball, the lightning-footed winger, lobbed in the pill a second time after a most amazing breakaway. There was a good deal of rough play and foul tactics on the part of the Selcourt team—their usual recourse when the game went against them. But Johnny Gee & Co. fortified with Timothy Catchpole's wonderful Protective Plasters and other Anti-Fouling equipment, were invulnerable.

The score was 2—1 in favour of the home team at lemon-time, and St. Giddy's stock was well on the ascendant.

On the resumption, the Selcourt play became rougher still, and shouts of anger came from the St. Giddy's spectators. But Johnny Gee & Co. were "all there." Merton broke through after some very dubious tactics on the part of his supporting forwards, and equalised for Selcourt.

The ding-dong struggle went on, until there remained but five minutes to the finish. The Selcourt players were growing more and more savage. Johnny Gee rallied his men for a gallant attack. Johnny passed the ball to Lord Reggie, who caught it on his noble napper and lobbed it across in the nick of time to Snowball, for a moment later Reggie was caught in a crashing charge by two of the burly opposing forwards and he went down.

Snowball, meanwhile, was raving up the wing, the ball spinning merrily at his feet. Like an eel, he eluded the big fellows who charged at him and was away again as fast as ever.

Snowball was tripped covertly by the Selcourt right winger and went down. But not before he had sent the ball flashing across to the Hon. Bob Vernon, who saw his opening, and shot. Merton came charging in, and aimed a brutal kick at Johnny Gee, who dashed to intercept him. Johnny went down, and there was a gasp of horror from the crowd. The ball hit the crossbar and rebounded. The leather was dropping—players were dashing for it. Johnny Gee's prostrate form took a quick slither along the ground and, without rising, the Remove captain's foot shot out and caught the ball beautifully. It spun away like a bullet to its billet, shooting past the Selcourt goalie's very finger-tips and thudding into the net. A loud, long, lifting roar went up from a hundred throats:

"Goal!"

It was the winning goal, for a few moments later Wellesley blew the final whistle, and the game was over. St. Giddy's had won the Cup against all obstacles, both before and during the match!

Next week the Boys of St. Giddy's get the Dirt Track Craze. Their exploits told in a dizzy long complete yarn of your old favourites. Only two more weeks to COLLECT OUR VALUABLE FREE GIFT COUPONS.

## THE LAST GIGANTIC EXPLOIT OF

NICK CHANCE  
GUILLOTINE GAMBLER.JOHN HUNTER'S Gripping Yarn  
of the French Revolution.

## The Trampling of the Lilies.

**G**ERVAIN lived on through that night, and the next morning. All that morning Nick was out. He realised now that he was forgotten. Forty-two people went to the guillotine that morning—workers, shopkeepers, poor folk. It was as though the Terror lashing in its death throes, slew all around it with merciless indiscriminateness.

Nick ran into Merda by chance, outside the dead and closed Palais Royal. Merda seized his arm and grinned. "Ho, little one. Hast escaped."

"Aye," said Nick. "And no more of your plots." Merda laughed. "They're ended. Stay with me and see the fun." Nick went with him.

The streets were crowded. St. Just had delivered his famous accusation, in which was the phrase: "*we must carve down to the quick and cut off the gangrened limbs.*"

All the Convention knew what that meant. It meant that he and Robespierre and Couthon proposed to guillotine all their foes.

Uproar broke out. They were howled down. The storm swept them out. Hanriot, having escorted the forty-two doomed wretches to the guillotine went mad.

Merda and Nick, standing in the streets, saw him coming on his great horse. He was ploughing his way through the crowds swinging his sabre right and left, cutting down everybody within reach.

In the Place du Palais Royal he was pulled down and taken away, maniacal, raving.

Merda seized Nick's arm. "They're arrested," he hissed. "Friend, we win!"

"Who are?" gasped Nick.

"Robespierre, his brother, St. Just, Couthon, Lebas, the five of them. The Terror is ended." But hardly had Merda confided this information to Nick, than fresh news swept through the streets.

The five were no longer under arrest. They had been allowed to go to the Hotel de Ville. From there they might work fresh iniquities, might yet snatch back the reins of power.

"Come," said Merda, and dragged Nick on, as though it were ordained that Nick should see the last acts in the great drama.

Nick went with the milling crowds. The heat was awful. Merda heard his name. He looked round. A body of police was working its way forward. The

man who had called was at its head. He was Leonard Bourdon, one of the police chiefs.

Even then Merda did not let Nick go. "Keep close to me," he hissed. "And see what you shall see!"

He had evidently taken a liking to Nick, for some whimsical reason, and Nick, who was now throbbing with excitement, pressed hard on his heels and followed him with the rest of the police to the Hotel de Ville.

Into it that day surged the police. Round it howled the mob. They went straight to the Salle de Conseil, Nick with them.

Robespierre was writing at a table. He looked up. He saw Nick, and Nick saw his eyes stare in a fixed and horrid fashion.

As this happened, Merda stepped past Nick and fired the pistol shot the histories tell you of. Robespierre uttered a strange and horrid cry. Nick distinctly heard his jawbone break under the bullet's impact.

Robespierre's brother, Augustin, flung himself from a window, and fell maimed and terribly mutilated to the stone steps below. Lebas blew out his brains, while Couthon dragged his paralysed limbs under the table on which Robespierre had fallen, face downwards.

Of them all, St. Just stood quite still and calm, and made no movement. He was as great in defeat as he was in triumph.

Nick saw them swept away. He saw the agonised incorruptible flung to a barrow and wheeled off. He saw Couthon thrown brutally down the great staircase and picked up at the bottom.

Nick's head was swimming. He broke away from Merda. He staggered to the shelter of the miser's home. He had seen an empire fall—an empire of terror.

He slept that night by Gervain. The Marquis was restless, sinking. He constantly pleaded with Nick to leave him, but both Nick and the boy were firm on that point. They tried to assure him that he would soon be fit to travel, but he smiled at this and said: "You are brave friends, both of you; but you lie, and know it. Here I shall die. Risk nothing for me."

They stayed on. After allowing the boy to take some exercise in the quiet streets of the early morning, Nick sallied forth once more.

The French have a gift for irony, perhaps almost unconscious. Nick appreciated it that day; for over night they had set up the guillotine in the Place de la Revolution. They had put up the killing thing on the very spot where had died the countless numbers of Robespierre's victims.

At ten o'clock the streets of Paris were crowded. At that hour the doomed men were brought before the Tribunal. Nick managed to get inside. In the vast crowd nobody heeded him.

There was no trial. There was only a form of identification.

Back went the doomed men to the *Conciergerie*. Nick returned to the miser's house. Gervain was sinking fast. Nick went out again—drawn by that irresistible fever which afflicts all humanity in times of great crises.

At four o'clock in the afternoon four tumbrils came from the gates of the *Conciergerie*. Robespierre was in one, his shattered jaw roughly bandaged. The others contained his friends—Hanriot and his brother maimed, with Couthon—and St. Just, spotless, erect, calm, unafraid.

Of that scene in the Place de la Revolution, it is hardly fitting to write.

Robespierre, whose name was synonymous with feror throughout all France died a terrible death, for the executioner tore away his bandages ere thrusting him face downwards.

At last it was ended. Nick felt as though Paris breathed again. He went with the crowds. He found his way home, and to the attic.

The boy met him. "Monseigneur asks for you," he said. Nick fled upstairs. Gervain smiled at him. The Marquis looked calm and his eyes were very peaceful.

"Monsieur, I have just time to thank you. I should like to have lived and seen how my country progressed; whether she threw off the Terror and..."

Nick broke in. "The Terror, monseigneur, is tottering. Robespierre is dead." Swiftly he told what had happened in those pulsating twenty-four hours behind them.

Gervain could hardly believe it. He asked Nick quick questions, and Nick answered them all. True, there remained Fouquier Tinville, Carrier and others, but, with shrewd foresight, he saw that even those would go, as, indeed, they did.

Gervain asked: "And the Terror is ended, monsieur? France is free?"

"Assuredly," said Nick gravely. Gervain lifted himself. He cried: "*Vive la France*..."

It was the last thing he said.

### The End of the Black Phantom.

THAT night, when the cafés were blazing with lights, when Paris was throbbing with fevered, excited life, Nick and little Jacques stole towards the northern gate.

They came to the fortifications. They had no intention of trying to get out through the gate, for now a watch was kept, and such was the temper of everybody that bullets might fly before questions were asked.

There were sentries at the gate. The walls were vast and high. Nick shinned up one with great difficulty and lowered a rope, which Jacques caught.

Nick hauled the boy up, and they lay face downwards on the flat top of the wall. Then they crawled towards its farther edge, many feet away.

As they crawled, Jacques' sabot kicked against a loose stone. The noise was slight, but in the silence it sounded tremendously.

They heard the thud of running feet, and Nick hissed: "Jump, boy—for your life!"

Nick and the boy, as the sentry rushed towards them, slid over the edge of the great wall and went, downwards towards the free and open ground beyond.

Their one chance was the darkness, but this chance would have been lost to them but for the quick wit of Nick, who, grabbing Jacques by the shoulder, prevented the boy from rushing into the open, and forced him into a small embrasure right under the wall itself.

There were now torches on the parapet above them, casting a strong light across the ground which Jacques and Nick must have covered, had they instantly fled from the wall.

They heard a man say: "But, sergeant, I heard a stone rattle, as though it had been kicked."

The sergeant leaned over, peering into the torchlit distance. "If two people went over this wall," he said, "where are they?"

This was a question that could not easily be answered. The soldiers looked over. Now the night was hot. It was not the sort of weather for running over rough ground, for a prolonged search. It was, rather, a night for lounging on the cool stone of the wall.

"Well?" asked the sergeant, sharply.

One of the soldiers muttered that he might have been mistaken. He knew he was not mistaken, but he was just beginning to awake to the fact that if two people had slipped out of Paris, it did not matter half so much as his own comfort.

Also, the sergeant was responsible. The matter had been reported to him.

The sergeant grunted derisively. Getting a man along the wall on such a fool's errand... He uttered sharp words of command. The turned-out guard marched back. The sentries resumed their beats. The torchlights disappeared.

Nick squeezed Jacques' arm and they stole into the darkness. After some time they located the great shed. It was undisturbed. Nobody had been near it.

The four horses were restive from their confinement and eager to stretch their legs. Jacques and Nick harnessed them up, Jacques held open the immense doors of the shed, and the coach wheeled out, Nick handling the team with a skill he had acquired in England.

They struck the northern road. All night they travelled at an easy pace, resting the horses from time to time, and with the dawn Nick got a relay. The mandate of the Committee of Public Safety ensured this all right.

News had not travelled yet, for news travelled slowly in those days. On the road nobody knew that Robespierre and St. Just were dead.

So at last, with one hundred-and-fifty miles behind them, little Jacques cried out: "Is that the sea, monsieur?" It was his first sight of anything greater than the Seine.

Nick laughed. "Stand up, boy! Stand up!" Jacques stood up on the box beside him. It was a marvellous clear day of light wind and blue sky.

"Monsieur... I see white... across the sea... like a wall."

Nick's laughter rose—slightly high, sharp, quick. "Tis the cliffs of England," he said.

He skirted Boulogne and reached the little fishing hamlet of Wimereux, and there found one of his English captains. In a little time they were on a stout snip, neeling in the wind, bound for Dover and the long, old road to London.

And there we leave them. They travelled up the road in a stage coach. Jacques was entranced by all he saw, was an object of interest to all who saw him.

In due course Nick reported to those grave-faced men at Mickleham who first had sent him on his errand. They insisted on paying him for his services, and as that had been the arrangement, he accepted the payment.

The little man in black who had engaged him, followed him to the door. "Hast no souvenir for me, friend?" he grinned.

Nick handed him a rolled up ball of black silk. "The Black Phantom wishes you well," he said.

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## BILL TRAIL—The Jungle Detective

(Continued from page 14.)

those collars, and if either of you stops so much as to get his breath. Grit and Grin will be at your throats."

It was a strange sight the moon shone on that night: Bill soon filed through Grime's iron collar and together they sat down to watch the slaver and the fat chief sweat. They weren't ease up on their labours for whenever they did, either Grit or Grin snarled so menacingly that they fearfully redoubled their efforts.

The dawn was breaking when, at last, Blake and Jackson were free of the chains they had carried so long.

Bill addressed the chief. "I'm letting you go back to your village, but I warn you that it won't be healthy to have any more slaves, black or white."

He turned to the three managers. "You three can help him on his way, just to relieve your feelings," he said.

And Blake, Jackson and Grime took the hint: They literally kicked N'gomba on his way, and each kick wrung a scream from the fat chief.

When N'gombi was well on his way, Bill spoke to Kasadi.

"You're not getting off so lightly. Slave-trading is a penal offence and you're coming back to Betembi to serve your sentence. But first of all I want to know how it was you were on the spot to catch these three so conveniently and then waylay me."

Kasadi was too cowed to prevaricate. "The fire on Krobo Hill told me each time," he said. "When it was lit I knew a white man would be taking the trail on the left bank of the river from Betembi. It was the signal."

"From whom?" Bill demanded, his eyes narrowing. "Who lit the fire?"

"Van Dyne," Kasadi stuttered. "He sent you all that way so that I could sell you to N'gombi. Van Dyne paid me out of what he was able to make out of the mine while he was in charge."

"So that's why the Empire Gold Mine Trust isn't paying so well," Bill said grimly. "The money is going into Van Dyne's pocket."

"The dirty skunk!" Blake cried, voicing the thoughts of the other two.

"Anyway he's going to get a shock," Bill muttered, and then, with Grit and Grin looking as if they were permanently attached to the slaver, they set off on the trek back to the coast.

If the citizens of Betembi had stared when first Bill had arrived, they goggled a thousand times harder at the procession that he led up the main street and into the office of the Empire Gold Trust on his second visit.

Van Dyne was sitting at his desk as if he had never moved since Bill had last seen him. He moved now, all right. His face went ashen at sight of Bill and the three who followed him.

Then like a flash his hand went into a drawer, but before he could get his gun Bill had jumped forward and hit him, and when Bill hit a man nothing else was needed.

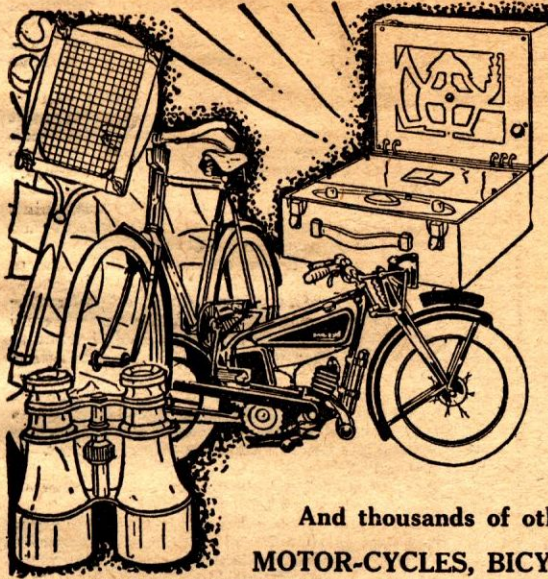
"Sorry, you three," Bill said, turning to Blake, Jackson and Grime. "I had intended to let you do that at him, but there wasn't time."

With these words Bill stepped outside and disappeared up the street, Grit and Grin padding at his heels.

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**THE FLYING DUSTBIN**

(Continued from page 17.)

vertical position by means of heavy counterweights. When not in use, it pointed straight up, heavenwards. All that had to be done was to push it into a horizontal position and secure it to the quayside—otherwise it shot swiftly back to its normal erect position under the force of the counterweights.

By some unaccountable fluke it worked first time, and the grinning Yankee customs officers, waiting ashore, walked up it.

"That's a dandy gangway, boys," said one of them. "Who invented it? Edison?"

"No. I did," said Pip, with simple candour. "The old man's below in his cabin, an' he ain't in too good a humour. Better not make too many wisecracks about the *Happy Haddock*. He won't stand for it to-day!"

"That's okay, sonny," answered the customs man. "Got some news for him. Guy's gonna give him cargo if he likes the ship. Dunno the guy, but he says he wants an unpretentious ship—an' I guess this is it!" The customs men hurried aft, grinning.

"Yar, dat's goot news," said Jud, the bos'un. "But if he like de ship! Nein, dat's bad news. One look at de *Haddock* and it will be all orf."

"Gee!" said Pip. "I'd better go and get on with my lifeboat, if he's comin' aboard to inspect the ship—might make all the difference!"

So Pip dashed off to finish his lifeboat. Some time later, Cap'n Keelson emerged from his cabin in the company of the customs men.

"Thanks for the tip, boys," he said, as he saw them to the gangway. "I do hope that fella likes the ship. It means all the difference to me if I can get a charter like that—but I'm afraid the old *Haddock* won't be good enough for him. You say he'll be along in fifteen minutes or so? Good! So long, boys!"

When the customs men had gone, the crew were re-summoned hurriedly. The skipper told them the news, but his tone of voice showed only too plainly that he had little hope of the stranger trusting his merchandise to the *Happy Haddock*.

"Now, boys," said Cap'n Keelson, in conclusion. "It's up to you to look as smart and business-like as possible. I'm afraid the old tub ain't a very imposin' sight, but at least her crew needn't look sloppy and careless. By the way, Mr. McWhirr, it's a pity we can't straighten the funnel—gives a bad impression, like, at first glance."

"Aye," said McWhirr, but he offered no further comments. Cap'n Keelson dismissed the crew, but Pip buttonholed Fat, Slim, An How and Bos'un Jud before they had time to disappear below.

"Give us a hand, shipmates," said Pip, when out of earshot of the skipper. "I want to test my lifeboat. If this gink sees my inventions working aboard when he comes, he'll jump at the chance to use the ship."

"Whatcher want us ter do, sort of?" asked Fat wearily.

"Me, you, Slim and Jud can test the lifeboat. While An How can go an' work the dustbin machine."

"Velly good," lisped An How. "I go below wolk hon'able dustbin appalatus."

"Just a minute, I'll have to give you a signal. It's no good you working it if he's at the other end of the boat. Wait till I shout—lemme see—'hooray!'"

"Ja, but ya better haf dat dustabin empty dis time," said Dutchy, in his slow way.

"You're right, Jud. Use an empty dustbin this time, An. No good taking risks, you savvy?"

An How nodded and descended to his galley. Pip went behind the deck house and dragged forth a weird structure of wood that had a certain vague resemblance to a boat.

"Wessat? a hen-house?" asked Fat, looking mystified.

"Hen-house be blowed! It's my lifeboat! Bear a hand there. I want to get it over the side and see if it works, before that fella comes. Then we can demonstrate it to him if it's okay."

The three men assisted him to drag it to the ship's side, good-naturedly. Slim Small happened to glance inside the boat and his good-nature left him suddenly.

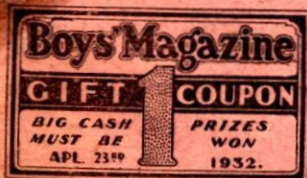
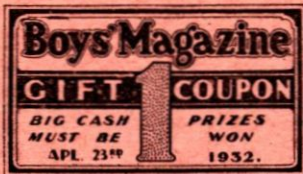
"Sink the ole lugger! Them's my clothes, nailed ter the bottom a' this 'ere! So it was you what

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borrowed 'em, you young lubber! I'll knock the block offen you!"

Pip dodged away discreetly. "Hold hard, Slim!" he called from a safe distance. "I had to use your clothes 'cos they're the largest on the ship an' got most absorbin' powers. See, the idea is this. If the water comes in, that cloth sucks up all the moisture and makes the boat dry again. Marvellous idea, isn't it?"

Pip re-approached as Slim's wrath cooled off. "We've got to get it over the side first, and then we've all to jump into it to see if it'll sink."

The four of them grabbed the boat and swung it on to the rickety bulwarks. They pushed it overboard and it landed on the water below with a splash, luckily, right way up. Pip climbed over the rail and poised himself to jump, bidding the others follow suit. They did—rather dubiously.

"I want us all to jump together an' test the boat thoroughly," said Pip. "Come on. The skipper's walking over to the gangway. That fella's on his way aboard. Make it snappy. Ready! One—two—three—e-e-e!"

Four hurtling figures leapt towards Pip's lifeboat. Four hurtling figures struck Pip's lifeboat. Four hurtling figures knocked the bottom clean out and disappeared into the muddy dockside water.

"Splish! Gluggle! Gasp!"—hellup!" yelled Fat Burns coming to the surface first. "I can't swim!" "Ya don't need to swim!" announced another gasping voice. "Dar's only four feet a' varter—ebb tide! But wait till I catch dat poy!"

"Dat poy" rose to the surface as he spoke, but the environment was too damp and uncomfortable to attempt reprisals there and then. Besides, just at that moment the skipper popped his head over the side.

"Stap me! What the—"

The shifty-eyed visitor whom he was showing round the ship, looked over at the same moment.

"They part of your crew, Cap'n? I'll say they go in fer curious sports, huh?"

"Her! Her! Her!" said Cap'n Keelson with a weak attempt at laughter. "Devils for the water, my boys! Can't keep 'em out of it."

"Izzat so?" said the stranger. "Waal, Cap'n them boys a' yours strike me as bein' plain bughouse an' I'm sorry but our proposition's off. I daren't trust my cargo to a looney crew!"

The stranger walked towards the gangway giving good-bay to the skipper of the *Happy Haddock*. He stepped on the gangway.

Then something went wrong with the works. Pip's patent, self-hoisting gangway, self-hoisted unexpectedly. It shot up with terrific force and crashed full into the stranger, knocking him flat. He uttered a dazed murmur of astonishment and dropped off to sleep.

"Quick!" yelled Cap'n Keelson. "Here, Hettup, give us a hand—he's laid out!"

He ran forward and knelt beside the unconscious man, anxiously. Mister Hettup ran up hurriedly, but when he saw the stranger's bruised face he stopped with a little cry of astonishment.

"Why, Cap'n! Dontcher know this guy?" said the mate, excitedly. "He's Mike Spokane, Cap'n—the notorious bootlegger. There's a reward out fer this guy!"

"A reward!" gulped the skipper. "How much?" Hettup told him. "Stap me! That'll pay off my debt to the underwriters. Here, quick, Fat—Go an' fetch the police—an' jump to it, you lubber!" Fat Burns rushed off cheerfully, despite his mud.

"Sink the ole lubber! Give the Cap'n a holler, boys!"

"Hip! Hip! Hooray!" The old steamer's battered funnel rocked to that cheer, but nobody noticed the battered dustbin rise unobtrusively from the galley hatch and hitch on to its hook, until it was already rumbling along its wire towards the ship's side. Then everybody noticed it, except the skipper who was standing direct in its path.

It struck Cap'n Keelson suddenly and unexpectedly. He toppled over backwards and disappeared into the ship's dustbin, amidst a crash of tin and a surprised yell. The dustbin rolled on, tilted forward against the lateral rail as it was supposed to do, and then tipped over. Cap'n Keelson described a graceful curve over the side and descended into four feet of muddy dock-water.

A few moments later a wet, dirty, dragged figure scrambled back over the side. Its eyes peered fiercely through the mud.

"Stap me! Pay 'em off mister mate. I ain't standin' for it any longer. Pay 'em off!"

"Sorry, sir, but we ain't gotny . . ."

BUT soon there was money aboard the *Happy Haddock*—money to spare, even after the underwriters had been paid. For the reward offered by the United States Coastguards for Mike Spokane, the bootlegger, was no fiction of Al Hettup's mind.

Still, it seems a pity to waste good money sacking that worthless crew. We'll reserve the pleasure for a wealthier epoch. Stap me!—we will!

Funny? Look out for another misadventure of the crew of the *Happy Haddock* soon. Next Week's *Fun Star*: Tommy Pink in "The Chem-mystic Mix-up."

## YOUR EDITOR'S CHAT

(Continued from page 22.)

surprise denouement. You'll not want to miss the completion of the mighty two-part yarn of the mysteries of Space—The Visitation of Doom, chap! It appears among the other good things on *Sunday*. And, last but not least, don't miss the latest laughable tale of Tommy Pink.

### The Chem-mystic Mix-Up!

I'm still chuckling over the chortling happenings when Tommy mixes two of the Professor's inventions together—with rib-tickling results!

Five more free gift coupons next week, also, among other ripping surprises.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.