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WITHIN

Boys' 2-D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



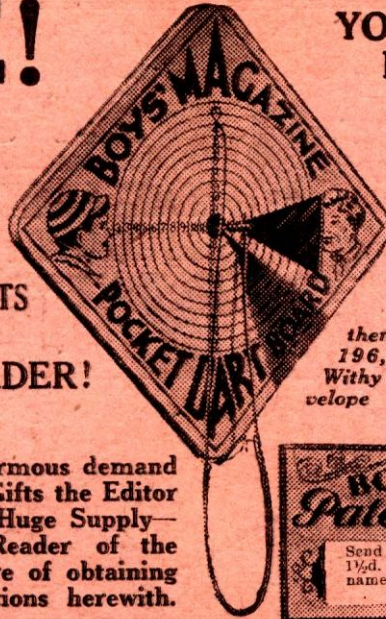
The Black Shadow, Dick Turpin, St. Giddy's Inside

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DICK TURPIN AND THE BLACK SHADOW

(Continued from page 13.)

An instant later Dick heard Bootles utter a startled yell, followed by the sound of Tom King and Joe Button shouting in alarm.

"Love a duck! Wot was that!" he heard Joe gasp.

"'Tis the Terror," Tom shouted in reply. "Art hurt, Bootles?"

Dick heard a loud groan, and then the sound of the negro's voice.

"Blow me up a gum tree, Massa Tom. Dis pore nigger hab dislocated his wish-bone."

Presently, much to Dick's relief, Tom King climbed in through the mouth of the cave, followed by Bootles and Joe. They all uttered startled cries as they saw Dick lying there, purple in the face.

Dropping on his knees beside him, Tom whipped the gag out of his mouth, whilst the negro and Joe Button loosed his bonds.

"Art hurt, Dick?" Tom asked anxiously.

Dick was half-choked, and it was some time before he could reply. Then he shook his head.

"I'm all right," he said faintly. "What hath happened, Tom?"

"The Terror of Tavistock pitched down the cliff and fell on top of Bootles," Tom King answered gravely. "Luckily Bootles escaped with a few cuts and bruises, but the Terror will rob and murder no more for he lies at the foot of the cliff with a broken neck."

"God rest his sinful soul," Dick said quietly.

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THE HEADLESS MEN OF DROONE



The Tale that Beats **TERRORLAND**.
By the Same Author. Introducing
THE MAN WITHOUT EYES!

"WHAT'S that, Spud?" Phil Tregennis asked the question sharply, and as he did so he leaned over the boat's tiller and strained his ears towards the nearest shore, which was half-hidden in the drifting, wind-blown mist.

"I didn't hear anything," said Spud uneasily. "There's nobody on that island, Phil. It's Black Jason's rock!"

It was not a very pleasant afternoon for sailing; but as Phil was on the last lap of his holidays, he had ventured to take the trim little

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

sailing boat out for a cruise amongst the islands. Accompanied, as usual, by his boon pal, Spud Briggs, he had left Hugh Town, on St. Mary's, an hour earlier, and having skirted past the island of Treseo, the two sturdy youngsters were now in one of the lesser roadsteads, with Droone Island looming vaguely to starboard.

The Scilly Isles were Phil Tregennis' home, for he had been born on St. Mary's. When holiday times came round, it was Phil's greatest delight to take out his little boat and skilfully navigate it amongst the hundred-and-one rocks and islands of the Scillies.

"There it is again, Spud!" he said, wonderingly. "A dog barking—on Jason's Rock, too."

Spud, thick-set, ruddily featured, dressed in a stained old blue jersey, looked doubtful. He was a fisher-lad of the Scillies, and his family had served the wealthy Tregennis family for generations.

Spud and Phil had played together as children; and it was more natural than ever that the pair should still be bosom pals. For only six months ago Phil's father and mother had gone to their deaths in a mysterious wreck off the treacherous Bishop Rock. Phil had been at school at the time, and his homecoming, this summer, had been a tragic one. During the latter days of his holiday, however, Phil had recovered some of his old buoyancy and characteristic cheeriness.

He had inherited a considerable amount of property in the Scillies and, at his request, Spud's father and mother had moved into the big old granite house in Hugh Town, where Mr. Briggs had gladly taken on the work of general steward of Phil's property.

At the end of the week Phil would go off to the mainland—back to a great public school, and he was making the most of his last free days.

"If I didn't know it was impossible, Spud, I'd swear that old Bosco was on that island, barking," said Phil, with a puzzled frown.

"Like as not, it ain't a dog at all," muttered Spud. "There's queer things happen on Droone Island."

His gaze was fixed uneasily upon the misty, rocky shore of the island. He would not have landed there, alone, even in daylight, for twenty pounds in solid gold. But Phil was with him, and he always felt bold in Phil's company.

The mist was thickening; drifting down the roadstead in a sort of semi-drizzle. Nevertheless, Phil steered the boat closer to the shore.

Droone was one of the wildest of all those rugged, picturesque islands—one of the most exposed. Like the other islands, it was composed wholly of granite—outliers of the highlands of Cornwall. Those islands which could be distinguished from mere rocks, numbered about forty, but only five were inhabited—St. Mary's, Treseo, St. Martin's, St. Agnes, and Bryher.

"Look!" exclaimed Phil suddenly.

The drifting mist had cleared for a moment, and the two boys gained a fairly clear view of the island, with its rugged foreshore, its gorse covered slopes. There, perched on the summit, stood a squat, forlorn, granite building, half ruined. It was known as Droone's Folly, and it had stood empty for over a century.

But Phil hardly noticed the ruin; he was looking at a shaggy terrier which bounded up and down in the gorse midway between the shore and the squat building. Then the mist rolled over again, blotting out the view.

"It is Bosco!" cried Phil, in amazement. "Come on, Spud! We're going ashore."

"Lawks, Master Phil, it's risky!" said Spud, with a shiver. "Nobody ain't set foot on Droone for many a year."

"But Bosco is there!" retorted Phil. "It's a mystery to me how he could have got here. We left Bosco in Hugh Town—at home!"

It was a riddle which Spud Briggs could not solve. In fact, he didn't believe it. Now that the mist had rolled back, he thought that he and Phil had made a mistake.

The little boat rammed into the shingly beach, and at the same moment the sail tumbled down. Phil sprang out, and Spud joined him. They hauled the craft up.

"Bosco—Bosco—Bosco!" shouted Phil, running up the beach. "Here, boy! Come on, Bosco!"

Spud followed reluctantly. Since a tiny child, he had heard strange and terrible stories about Droone Island. He was a sensible lad, but his superstitions clung to him.

"He ain't here, Master Phil!" declared Spud. "We'd better get back to the boat. Let's get off this island."

"Why, Spud, you look scared!" said Phil, staring.

"I am scared, too!" growled Spud, almost defiantly. "Droone Island is known as Black Jason's Rock, ain't it? In the old days, it was the haunt of smugglers and wreckers. Black Jason was the most murderous wrecker of all. And 'tis said that he beheaded all his victims, and that the ghosts of headless men are seen on Droone."

"That's only a bit of folk lore, you ass!" laughed Phil. "Besides, there's Bosco, and—"

He broke off abruptly. A gust of wind had cleared the mist for a moment, and Phil was startled to see the little sailing boat drift out into the roadstead.

"Quick, Spud—the boat!" he yelled.

The vessel appeared to be more than drifting. It was vanishing into the mist as though propelled by some hidden force. And the boys were quite certain that they had drawn it well up the shingle. But by the time they reached the shore there was no sign of the craft at all. Even Phil was beginning to grow uneasy at this mysterious happening.

"Master Phil! Look!" croaked Spud, suddenly clutching wildly at his companion's arm. He was pointing—and there, vague and illusory in the drifting mist, figures could be seen on the gorse-covered hillside. Figures dressed in the quaint garb of centuries ago—and every one was headless!

Droone's Folly.

H EADLESS men!

Phil Tregennis saw them distinctly—or as distinctly as the drifting mist would allow. There were four of them, and they were moving stealthily amongst the gorse, their arms waving in a grim, beckoning way.

"Am I going mad?" muttered Phil, rubbing his eyes.

When he looked again, the mist had thickened, and the figures were no longer visible. Spud was trembling like a leaf, his rugged face as pale as a sheet.

"We'll swim for it, Master Phil!" he panted, his voice unsteady. "The tide is mighty dangerous, but 'tis safer than staying here. Did I not tell ye, 'tis the Headless Men of Droone!"

"Steady, old son!" said Phil, sharply.

He was a Cornishman born and bred, but years in a great public school had broadened his mind. Moreover, he was not superstitious. And, on the instant, he read something suspicious in all these strange circumstances.

"Some fools are playing a game with us—that's all," said Phil. The idiots knew that we should be passing Droone, and they put old Bosco ashore so

that his barking would attract us. As for those headless men—"

He stopped, and the expression on his face was grim and set. Phil was not the kind of fellow to back out of danger. Not that he really believed that any danger lurked on this desolate, rocky isle. He meant to investigate. And Spud, after a few moments, gained some of Phil's confidence.

"But the boat?" he muttered. "How can ye explain that, Master Phil? How did it get adrift?"

"Swimmers!" replied Phil promptly. "Hidden by the mist, we couldn't see them—and they dragged the boat out, that's why it drifted so quickly. Let's get up to the Folly," he added abruptly.

Spud stared at him aghast.

"Nay, 'twould be rash!" he panted. "For 'tis said that the Headless Men roam amongst the Folly ruins."

Phil did not answer. He was determinedly mounting the gorse-covered slope. And Spud, who was only fearful because of his superstitions, followed. Actually, he was as brave as a lion.



THE MEN OF MYSTERY.—"Look!" croaked Spud. There near the ruins were figures, vague and illusory, in the quaint garb of centuries ago—and every one was headless.

The mist had thickened perceptibly during the past few minutes, and it was now, indeed, a veritable sea fog. The grim ruins loomed up before the two boys suddenly, unexpectedly. They picked their way alongside one of the creeper-festooned walls, and, finding a gap, they passed through into an enclosure which had once been an interior room. Now it was roofless, and the stony flags, at their feet, were mossy, grass and weeds growing between the interstices.

"Bosco—Bosco!" called Phil urgently.

Spud kept close to his pal, and it was for that reason that he shared Phil's misadventure. Suddenly, unexpectedly, one of the great stone slabs tipped as the two boys stepped upon it.

"Look out!" yelled Phil, in alarm.

It was too late. They were both slithering down. They shot feet first into a black yawning cavity, hurtling down a stone slope, slithering, sliding, the blackness enveloping them . . .

Crash! They brought up in a heap, bruised and shaken but otherwise uninjured. Phil, sitting up, saw a square of misty daylight overhead; it grew less and less. A low thud sounded, and Stygian blackness enveloped them.

"A trap!" muttered Phil fiercely. "By ginger! A deliberate trap!"

"'Twas an accident, Master Phil," came Spud's voice. "One of the old slabs gave way—"

"And I suppose the ghosts fitted it back into position?" interrupted Phil. "Forget all those ideas of yours, Spud. There are no ghosts here. Some dirty trickery is afoot, arf!"

He broke off abruptly, for he suddenly became aware that the blackness was going. A faint, mysterious radiance was developing about them, until they could see the ancient stone walls of the

vault, or cellar, into which they had fallen. A great arched tunnel loomed black and sinister, just ahead of them. The glow increased. Yet the source of it could not be determined.

"Look!" panted Spud, horrified.

Figures had apparently materialised from nowhere. Strange, hideous, grotesque—in old time clothing—and they were without heads!

It was a horrible, terrifying sight. The bodies all stopped short at the shoulders, as though the head had been forgotten or was blotted out as by a screen. Before the two youngsters could move, the Headless Men had surrounded them.

"Steady, old-timer," muttered Phil, as he felt Spud's trembling hand on his arm. "There's some trickery about this. They're not ghosts."

In that dim radiance, Spud gazed wild-eyed at the awful apparitions. Even now his superstitions were foremost in his mind. But Phil was absolutely certain that these Things were fakes. The creatures were wearing false shoulders; they were dwarfs, wearing the special attire. From even a short distance, in the mist, they looked foul and ghoulish. But at close quarters, Phil detected the fake. Even Spud became convinced after a few moments—and all his sturdy courage returned.

"We'll make a bolt for it!" he shouted desperately.

But the boys were not allowed to fight. They were seized from behind, their hands were held in vice-like grips. They were marched through the arched-roofed tunnel.

It was only a short walk. A great section of the granite wall swung back, and the boys were taken down a long flight of rock steps, which led into the bowels of the earth. Along another tunnel—a rock slab moved back, and they were in a great, electrically lit cavern.

There, awaiting them, stood the Man Without Eyes.

The Tube of Yellow Mist.

EVEN Phil Tregennis, courageous though he was, checked with a low cry of amazement and horror. In a few short minutes they had been transported from their tiny sailing vessel into a region of mystery and magic. The transition was so sudden that the youngsters could not—as yet—regain their balance.

Phil was convinced that the lighting of the cavern was electric, but it was cunningly concealed, and a soft unearthly light illuminated the place. A brazier, set upon a stone support, was sending forth a ruddy glow, and wisps of smoke arose from it. There were crucibles, apparently filled with molten metal, great benches with test-tubes and retorts. Yet there was nothing of the modern laboratory about this cavern. In every respect it was the exact replica of the den of a medieval alchemist.

And there stood the alchemist himself—a hideous personage dressed in a great black robe which reached to his ankles. On his head stood a conical hat, and his white beard reached almost to his waist. These features, however, were not noticed by the boys until later. Their horrified gaze was concentrated upon the upper part of the alchemist's face. For the man possessed no eyes!

There were not even sockets! The plain white skin stretched down from his domed forehead—stretched right to his cheeks. And where there should have been eyes there was nothing—nothing but skin!

"Master," said a voice. "We have the prisoners!" "So I see!" exclaimed the alchemist, with a wave of his hand. "Bring them forward."

Phil and Spud both felt that they were in the midst of a ghastly nightmare. Headless Men who could speak—and a man without eyes who could see! As the two chums were forced forward, Phil fought against the feeling of terror which threatened to overwhelm him. He took a grip on himself.

"Who are you?" he demanded fiercely.

"I am Zarazan, the Sorcerer!" replied the Man Without Eyes. "I am a worker of magic, a master of mystery. A necromancer, a wizard. Within me lurks the soul of Black Jason, the smuggler. By my mysterious powers I can produce the ghosts of the headless dead, and materialise them so that they serve me as slaves."

His voice was flat and expressionless—a voice which, in itself, was terrifying. He stood before the two captured youngsters, facing them squarely, and apparently looking at them. A sudden revulsion of feeling swept through Phil Tregennis.

"I don't believe you!" he said boldly. "It's a fake—a trick! You can't scare us with that childish nonsense! What's the meaning of all this, anyhow? Where's Bosco, my terrier?"

"I do not waste words in answering the idle questions of my prisoners," replied the self-styled Zarazan. "Yet I will unbend to this extent. I know nought of your mongrel. You come upon my island, and for that you shall die."

"Your island!" Phil burst out indignantly. "Well, I like that! Droone Island belongs to me! It has been in the Tregennis family for centuries. It's mine! And I'm beginning to suspect things, too! You're a crook, and these headless fakes are crooks, too!"

The Man Without Eyes took a step backwards, as though momentarily baffled.

"Boy!" came a snarling voice from his white whiskers. "You are too clever! Here, take them!" he gritted to his Headless Men. "Let them be thrown into the bottomless chasm!"

Spud was now trembling with excitement and anger. Phil was right! These men were crooks—

they were fakes! Zarazan's momentary discomposure was eloquent. He had betrayed himself. And Spud, now that he knew that he was up against something material, was a veritable firebrand.

"Come on, Phil!" he yelled. "We've got to make a fight for it!"

Phil was already struggling desperately. And it was just at that moment that a little red light, high up in the rock wall of the cavern, flickered in and out. It continued doing so, and Zarazan uttered a sharp cry.

"Chain the boys up!" commanded the sorcerer. "Do not bother with them now. There is other work."

Phil and Spud were flung violently backwards. Heavy chains were fastened round their wrists, and within a minute they found themselves helplessly chained to great iron staples in the rock wall. And as they tugged and wrenched they only succeeded in hurting their wrists.

"Tis useless, Master Phil," muttered Spud. "What does it all mean?"

"I don't know," panted Phil. "Look over there, old son. What do you make of it?"

Spud saw that a heavy section of the cavern wall had swung completely back, like a door. On the other side there was an amazing array of weird electrical equipment. At least, it seemed to be electrical. There were switches and dials and gleaming coils of copper wire.

Right in the centre of the rock panel there was a flat glass tube, projecting outwards, with a spout at the end. And as the boys watched, the air became filled with a strange droning hum.

Zarazan strode forward and touched some of the switches. Great bulbs, like enormous wireless valves, glowed and flickered. Several of the headless men were busy in another part of the cavern, dragging forward a great waggon, with heavy, solid wheels. But the thing scarcely made any noise as it was trundled, and Phil saw that the wheels were rubber-tired.

There was a hollow cavity in the wagon, and this was manoeuvred into such a position that it stood immediately beneath the great glass tube with the spout.

The queer humming increased. Zarazan gave sharp orders to his hideous minions. They stationed themselves near the switchboard, and the humming strengthened alarmingly; the sound throbbed and sang through the heads of the startled boys. They were left quite to themselves—temporarily forgotten.

"Look!" exclaimed Phil wonderingly.

The great glass tube in the centre of the rock panel was filling with a golden mist, and it seemed to send forth rays of light. It circled round and round, becoming thicker and thicker, whirling, swirling madly.

Now a tiny stream was beginning to pour from the funnel—yellow, like golden water. Then the truth struck Phil like a blow between the eyes. That thick yellow liquid was gold—molten gold!

All the time the sorcerer stood by, rubbing his long, bony hands together, uttering exultant chuckles.

"Gold!" he crooned. "Again, I succeed! Gold—gold—gold!"

His voice arose to a scream of triumph.

The Vanishing Gold.

THE great Atlantic liner, *Sansonie*, was outward bound, and the famous Bishop Rock, at the extremity of the Scillies, was within sight. It was not misty out here, in the open Atlantic. Many of the passengers, on deck, were taking their last glimpse of England.

Two men, middle-aged and wealthy, were leaning over the rail of the promenade deck on the port side. They were chatting with the liner's first officer.

"Yes, that's the Bishop Rock," the officer was saying. "Just beyond, are the Western Rocks and the Dorreagan Neck. We can't distinguish St. Mary's Sound—"

"Pardon my interruption, Mr. Walton, but can you explain the strange sensation which has developed

outwards, over the sea. Then, as they watched, the ring vanished completely.

"But—but this is impossible!" gasped the first officer, blinking. And then he became aware of an outcry. Ladies in all parts of the ship were calling aloud—and their story was precisely the same in every case. Rings and other articles of jewellery—but only those made of gold—had melted away as though influenced by some magic Force.



CAPTURED IN THE CAVERN.—Grotesque, hideous, headless figures materialised from nowhere. Before the two boys could make a move they were seized and made secure.

within the last few moments?" interposed one of the passengers. "I can't quite explain it. Perhaps it is something to do with the engines, or the atmospheric conditions. It's vague and mysterious. A kind of—of magnetism in the air. I can almost feel it tingling in my blood."

"Gad, that's queer," said the other passenger. "I've felt something of the sort, too."

The first officer looked at them doubtfully.

"I can't say, gentlemen, that I have ever experienced anything queer off this coast," he said. "But now you come to mention it, there is an unusual 'feel' in the air."

He wondered, for a moment, if he was a victim of imagination. Perhaps it was auto-suggestion. Perhaps—

"Arthur—Arthur!" An elderly lady, very much agitated, came hurrying out of the saloon lobby doorway. One of the passengers turned.

"Why, my dear, whatever is wrong?" he asked.

"My diamond ring!" exclaimed his wife. "All the stones have fallen out! I've never known anything like it in all my life! And the ring seems to be so much larger— Oh, look!"

They were all staring aghast at the lady's gold ring. In some extraordinary way it had become extremely thin, and it was hanging loose on her finger. Even while they looked at it, it became smaller and smaller, as though evaporating into thin air. They could even see a tiny trail of golden vapour, drifting

"Can it be something to do with atmospheric conditions?" asked one of the passengers huskily. "Some unknown ray, perhaps, from outer space, or—"

"Look at this!" shouted one of the other men abruptly.

He had felt for his watch—and he held in his hand the works only! The solid gold case had gone—evaporated! Other men clapped their hands to their watches—and many were in the same plight. It was becoming clearer and clearer. Every article of gold had melted, had gone without leaving a trace. Here was an explanation, then, of that queer sensation.

"Pardon me, gentlemen!" said the first officer huskily.

He ran to the captain's cabin, and, bursting in, he gave the captain, who knew nothing of what had been happening, a considerable start. The good man stared hard at the flustered officer.

"Upon my word, Mr. Walton, you've been drinking!" he said sternly.

"No, sir!" protested Mr. Walton. "I'm telling you the truth! If you don't believe me, look at your watch!"

"Rubbish!" snapped the captain, nevertheless he took his watch out—and his jaw dropped.

"Good Heavens!" he ejaculated, as he gazed at the exposed works. "Am I going mad? This—this is fantastic."

"I'm thinking of the gold in the bullion room, sir," went on the first officer quickly. "If the gold can

vanish from our watches, what of that million pounds of bullion we're carrying to America, on behalf of the Government."

"Come with me!" ejaculated the captain, leaping up.

They ran along the deck, down a wide staircase, the purser and other officers being collected on the way. They all went far down into the ship—and, at last, they stood before the massive strong-room door.

"It's out of the question!" the Purser was saying. "Nothing can have happened to the gold in the bullion room. Why, it's locked up, and—"

"Never mind, Mr. Jacobs! We'll have the door open!" said the captain.

And then the discovery was made. The door being open, and the bullion cases exposed, there was a general cry of relief. The cases stood just as they had originally been packed. Not one was touched.

"Just a minute!" said Mr. Walton, moving forward.

He shifted one of the cases—and he did so without difficulty. He lifted it.

"Ye gods!" ejaculated the Purser. "You can't do that! It's full of gold—"

"It's full of air!" retorted Mr. Walton. "The gold has gone!"

Incredible though it seemed, he had spoken the truth. The gold from the bullion room had disappeared—in exactly the same way as the passengers' gold! It had passed through the sealed bullion cases, through the strong-room door to vanish into nothingness!

That, at least is what everybody aboard the *Sansonic* believed. But all that gold was pouring in a yellow stream into the container of the wagon in the cavern beneath Droone Island!

It was the tremendous, epoch-making discovery of Zarazan, the Sorcerer!

By sending out an invisible, mysterious beam, charged with that Force of which he alone knew the source, every scrap of gold aboard the *Sansonic* was transformed into invisible atoms—so infinitely small that they made their way through the outer atoms which barred their progress—through the atoms of the bullion cases, the steel doors, the walls, the ship's sides, and the sea itself. They flowed inexorably to Droone Island.

Having reached Droone Island, they were once again brought back to their original form—the millions and millions of atoms were grouped together; they formed, first mist, then they became a dust, and after that they returned to their original solidity. Gold!

The Bottle That Dripped.

SO intent were Zarazan and the Headless Men upon their work that the two young prisoners were left unheeded.

Phil and Spud were breathless with wonder and bewilderment. They could not know indeed, whether their enemies were watching them or not. For these vile creatures, apparently, had no eyes.

"If we don't get out now, Spud, we'll never get out!" whispered Phil breathlessly. "They're occupied with this gold! I don't pretend to know where it is coming from, or anything about it—but it's the only possible chance we've got of escaping. Before long they'll unchain us, and they talked of a bottomless chasm."

"But—but it's impossible, Master Phil!" muttered Spud. "These chains are made of steel."

Phil was wriggling and straining, and the perspiration was rolling from him. Thudding back against the rock wall, he caught his head unexpectedly against a low shelf. A long, black bottle, curious in

shape, thudded over on to its side, and some orange-coloured viscous, liquid dripped from the neck. A spot of it fell upon Phil's shoulder, but he took no notice.

Then, suddenly, he winced. It seemed to him that a red-hot iron had been held against his shoulder, and the agony was appalling.

"What is it?" whispered Spud.
"That—that bottle—it's dripping!" replied Phil, his face screwed up. "That vile stuff must be some sort of acid, and—"

He broke off, for his gaze had turned to the floor. He had been following the drips. The orange liquid was falling upon a bunch of rusty keys which were lying there—and as Phil looked, the keys steamed and melted. Only one drip was necessary to cut clean through one of them.

"Wait—wait!" he muttered feverishly. Tremblingly, he held his chained hands beneath the dripping bottle. A fever of anxiety swept over him. The drips were slower now. Perhaps there would not be another—

A drop of orange-coloured fluid splashed upon the links of the chains. Phil saw the link curl up in a flash, and then it parted. There was only a tiny wisp of steam-like vapour. And Phil's hands were free!

He glanced round quickly—every sense, now, on the alert. The Man Without Eyes had his back towards the boys. The Headless Men were busy with the gold. Quickly, Phil reached up, seized the fateful bottle, and in a moment he had poured two tiny drops of the magic liquid upon the links which encircled his wrists. The chains fell off.

"Lawks and love me!" breathed Spud, his eyes wide. "'Tis a rare queer place this, Master Phil!"

Phil did not answer. He was carefully dripping some of the precious liquid upon Spud's chains. They fell apart. There was something uncanny, something frightening in the action of that liquid.

"We're both free now—and it's our chance to bolt!" breathed Phil.

His eyes were gleaming. He had seen that the door of the cavern was standing open—just as it had been left when the Headless Men had brought the prisoners in. Beyond lay the tunnel, and the rock steps, and then the other tunnel, leading to the Folly ruins.

Like shadows, the two youngsters, their hearts throbbing madly, crept along the wall. But they were not to escape so easily.

One of the Headless Men had faced about, and now he uttered a sharp cry—and Phil was ready to swear that the sound came from the creature's chest. The man was a dwarf, and his head was hidden by that cleverly faked shoulder piece.

The Man Without Eyes spun round, and with a curse he waved both his bony arms.

"Seize them!" he snarled. "Fools! How did they get free?"

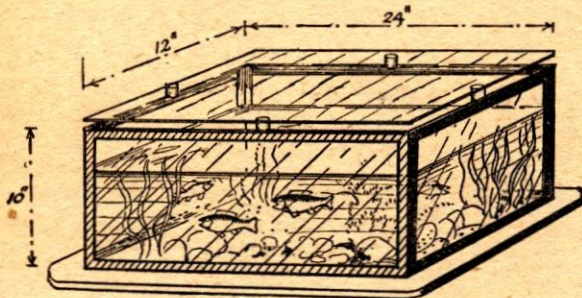
"Master, the chains were secure!" said one of the creatures.

Phil grabbed hold of the first thing that came to his hand. It was a heavy glass retort, filled with water, apparently. He raised on high, and flung it with all his strength.

A wild shout sounded from the Man Without Eyes, and not only did he back away, but he flung himself violently to the floor.

Craaash—boom! The retort seemed to explode like a cannon; and a great mass of dense white vapour arose from the floor, spreading rapidly in all directions. Phil could see the Headless Men staggering and falling.

A FASCINATING PASTIME HERE, CHAPS!



BE AN AQUARIUM KEEPER!

the water into it; the water flows gently over the sides and so disturbance of the plants or sand is avoided.

DOUBTLESS many readers have visited the wonderful aquarium at the Zoological Gardens and afterwards have endeavoured to keep some fish yourselves. One can imagine the purchase of the usual round bowl containing one or two goldfish, and the proverbial packet of ants' eggs for feeding them. After a few days, however, much to their surprise and disappointment, the fish have been found floating on the top of the water, dead.

The maintenance of a small aquarium is both interesting and instructive, especially if some of the coarse fish of our rivers are included in the collection.

Now for the secret of success. Purchase a rectangular, all-glass tank, which can be obtained cheaply at any store which deals in aquarium requisites. If possible, choose a tank the width of which is greater than the depth; in this case the surface of water is greater and better aerated.

Clean it thoroughly and paint three of the sides emerald green. It must be remembered that in nature the light only enters from the surface of the water. In the tank place about two inches of gravel or sand which has been previously washed clean with boiling water and afterwards stirred under a running tap. In the sand carefully plant several suitable water weeds, such as Vallisneria, Canadian water weed, or willow moss. Also introduce three or four water snails of the red variety, called "Planorbis corneus," these act as scavengers and keep down the growth of green weed on the glass; moreover, their eggs are food for the fish.

The tank can now be carefully filled with rain or tap water. This is best accomplished by standing a tall glass vase in the aquarium and carefully pouring

The aquarium should be allowed to stand for about ten days, so as to allow the plants to get going, after which time the fish may be introduced. In order not to overstock the aquarium, one inch of fish should be allowed to every gallon of water.

With regard to food, purchase a small tin of prepared fish food (not ants' eggs) with which is provided directions as to the quantity to be given daily. An occasional small worm or gentie may be given, as a change of diet, to some of the "coarse" fish. Carefully avoid overfeeding and do not place your aquarium at any time in direct sunlight.

Fish may show signs of distress in hot and thundery weather. Should this occur, remove them with a small net and place in a shallow receptacle under running water, and they will soon revive. In warm weather a small watering-can, fitted with a fine rose, may be used to refresh the aquarium.

To prevent dust entering the aquarium or the fish jumping out of the water, a sheet of glass should be supported on corks about threequarters inch off the top of the tank.

As tap water contains little mineral salts, it is advisable to put a pinch of Epsom salts in every fourteen days.

The important points to remember is keeping an aquarium are:

- Not to overstock it.
- Not to overfeed the fish.
- Give it a judicious amount of light.
- Give it a sufficient quantity of water weeds and snails.

Never try to move an aquarium when it is full of water; it is a simple matter to siphon off the water with a piece of indiarubber tubing.

"Hold your breath, Spud!" shouted Phil. "Close your eyes, and run for the tunnel!"

The next second the white vapour had enveloped them—and although they held their breath, they could feel the stuff tingling on their skins. It was a kind of gas—but neither of the boys could know whether it was deadly or otherwise. With tightly closed eyes, they stumbled to the tunnel. They reached it, and not until they had run for some distance did Phil venture to open his eyes.

"Quick—quick!" he shouted hoarsely.

They ran like the wind. They went helter-skelter up the rock steps. Then along the other tunnel. At last, the cellar.

Phil, leaping upon Spud's shoulders, had managed to reach the stone slab, above. He heaved with all his strength, and the slab moved. He managed to haul himself up, squeeze through, and then he wrenched the slab right back, and propped it.

"Master Phil—Master Phil!" came a cry. "They're coming!"

Phil lowered himself down that rock slope, his feet resting on the edge. Spud leapt, and clasped at his chum.

"Climb over me!" panted Phil. "Then help me up."

Thus they escaped. And with a thudding crash they slammed the slab down. They were in the open air, and the mist was thick round them.

They were free, and like hares they ran down the hillside, reached the beach, and plunged into the sea. Swimming strongly, they left the Island of Headless Men behind.

But little did they know of the grim adventures which were to befall them in the immediate future!

What is the mystery of these weird, terrible men of Droons? Next week further grim horrors befall Phil and Spud. Thrills and Mystery are crowded into the second of this eerie series.

HIGHWAYMEN VERSUS A HUMAN BAT!

Dick Turpin & THE BLACK TERROR



The Human Bat.

EXCEPT for the faint sighing of the wind among the trees, Tavistock Gorge was very silent. The moon was full, but for the most part it was hidden by the heavy clouds that were scudding before a stiff southwester, thus shrouding the Gorge in darkness.

Tavistock Gorge is a deep valley, with steep walls of rock, which overhang the roadway in places and look as though they may come crashing down upon it any day. Dick Turpin and his band could not have chosen a better place for an ambush, for they were completely hidden by a dense coppice of pines near one of the overhanging cliffs.

For nearly half-an-hour they had watched the road, and waited for a fat-pursed squire or a coach to pass. It was cold, dreary work, and presently Joe Button fingered his nose tenderly, for that prominent organ always suffered acutely in cold weather. Just now it was a rich, ruby red.

Suddenly Joe nearly jumped out of his skin as Bootles, the giant negro, leaned towards him and spoke in a blood-curdling whisper.

"Massa Button," he said. "You are in danger."
"Wot?" gasped Joe, looking nervously about him.
"Wot's that?"

The negro nodded solemnly.
"Your nose am shining like a li'l will-o'-de-wispers," he said. "Me t'ink it am frost-bitten."

"Huh! You hebony Himage!" Joe hissed, for

Grand Old-Time Tale,
Telling How the Hero
Highwayman Fell Foul
of the Terror of Tavi-
stock and Hoodwinked
the Horror of the High
Road!

Bootles was always making fun of his large nasal organ.

"Me once heard ob a gen'loman," the mischievous negro went on blandly. "Who had a large nose like yours, and it dropped off froo being frost-bitten. Afterwards he had a booful iron nose made, but whenever he wanted to blow it . . ."
"Hist!" Dick whispered sharply. "I believe I can hear hoof-beats."

A few moments later they all heard the *thud-a-dud-dud* of hoofs approaching their ambush, and Dick drew one of his long horse-pistols.

In a short while a horseman came into view, riding at a great speed, despite the fact that the road was full of deep ruts, and was in abysmal darkness wherever the sides of the Gorge overhung it.

Nearer and nearer he came, and the highwaymen were just preparing to ride out into the road to thunder, "Stand and deliver!" when a startling thing happened.

A weird figure appeared at the top of the cliff where it fell sheer to the roadway, and stood there silhouetted against the sky. In the brief moment during which the highwaymen saw it they got the impression of a tall human figure, with out-stretched, bat-like wings. Then the strange apparition swooped down from the top of the cliff in a gentle glide, wings outspread.

Down upon the galloping horseman it pounced, and landed behind him. Dick and his companions heard the man utter a terrified yell, that choked off sharp as the human bat seized him round the throat from behind. Then the two of them rolled backward off the horse, which reared madly, and then galloped on down the road leaving the bat-man and his victim struggling in the roadway.

For a moment even Dick Turpin felt his scalp bristle! As for the superstitious negro and Joe Button, they both gaped goggle-eyed with fright, and could not have moved to save their lives.

Then, recovering himself, Dick gave Black Bess a gentle pat, and the famous mare sprang out into the roadway and thundered towards the strange creature who was now kneeling over his motionless victim.

At the sound of the mare's hoofs the human bat glanced up, and in the dim light Dick caught a glimpse of a black, hooded face, and eyes that glowed green like those of a wild beast in the jungle.

Then, as Tom King also rode out from among the trees, the human bat rose silently and darted to

the side of the road. It seemed to Dick and his companions that the monster ran up the perpendicular face of the cliff as nimbly as a spider mounts its thread.

Dick Turpin fired at him, but either the bullet went wide, or was without effect, for the spectral figure reached the cliff-top, stooped and seemed to fumble there for a moment. Then, with a menacing gesture, it vanished from sight.

Dick leapt from the saddle and darted to the foot of the cliff, but realised immediately that it was impossible for him to scale the perpendicular bluff, which was almost as smooth as a wall.

So he turned his attention to the man, who lay spread-eagled on the ground, his tongue lolling out, and his eyes starting from their sockets after the fashion of a man who had been strangled. Round his throat were two sets of four red weals, as though he had been gripped there by steel talons; and Dick was certain that the most powerful of human handgrips could not have left such deadly wounds.

"Is he dead?" asked Tom King in a rather husky voice.

Dick felt the stranger's pulse, and found that it still beat feebly.

"Nay, he is still alive," he answered. "We will take him to the inn a couple of miles down the road Mayhap a drop of brandy will revive him, and he will be

Trapped.

MINE host of the Crooked Man uttered a fervent "Heaven preserve us!" when he heard their story.

"'Twas the Terror of Tavistock," he said in an awed voice. "'Tis a mercy you were at hand to help the poor gentleman or he would have been murdered as many another traveller hath been."

"Then this is not the first victim the brute hath claimed?" asked Dick.

The innkeeper nodded. "Three men have been found strangled in Tavistock Gorge," he answered in a hushed voice. "And several others have been pursued by a human bat and barely escaped alive. 'Tis a human vampire that haunts the Gorge."

Whilst he was telling them this, Dick was pouring a little brandy down the injured man's throat. Suddenly he gave a faint sigh, and his eyes fluttered open. But even when he had recovered sufficiently to speak, he could tell them little they did not know already.

"I had been warned not to pass through Tavistock Gorge after dark," he said. "But I have urgent business in London that will not brook delay, and I took the risk. Yet though I was prepared for an attack the monster took me by surprise in swooping down from the air. Then before I could defend myself he was clutching me round the neck with ice-cold fingers that felt hard as steel."



THE WINGED TERROR.—Swift as thought the bat-man turned and leaped through the window. At the same time Dick fired and heard a howl of pain as his bullet found its mark.

able to tell us something more about his mysterious assailant."

Tom King nodded. "I' faith! Dick," he said in a shaky voice. "What do you think it was?"

Dick Turpin shook his head.

"I don't know," he answered rather grimly. "Though I mean to find out. But this poor fellow hath the first claim on our attention."

He turned to Bootles who had just ridden up, followed by Joe Button.

"Take him in your arms, Bootles," he said. "And ride as gently as you can."

Then, with Tom King's help, he lifted the unconscious man from the ground, and the gigantic negro took him gently in his arms. They rode slowly to the Crooked Man Inn, two miles away.

He shuddered, and looked so faint Dick bade him drink a little more brandy.

"You had better get to bed and rest," he said. "And we shall need rooms for the night, mine host, for I mean to visit Tavistock Gorge as soon as it is light. Mayhap the Terror hath left some clue that will help us to solve the mystery."

The landlord shook a dubious head at him.

"If you will take my advice, your honour," he said. "You will not meddle with the Terror of Tavistock. Ill fortune comes to all those who meet it. Methinks 'tis a fiend from the nether world."

"Man or devil," Dick answered drily, "I mean to try conclusions with it. Now get this gentleman to bed, and then prepare a meal for us."

Still shaking his head doubtfully, the innkeeper

assisted the injured man to a bedroom and helped him to undress. Afterwards he placed a hot meal before Dick and his comrades, and when they had finished this, showed them to their rooms.

For a little while Dick lay listening to the drumming of the rain on the roof, whilst he thought over what had happened that night. Then he resolutely put all thoughts of the Terror of Tavistock out of his mind, and was speedily sound asleep.

About an hour later he woke suddenly with a vague sense of danger. The room was in darkness, and the window was a faint blur of grey, against which the rain lashed in angry torrents.

Then Dick heard faint sounds above the beat of the rain. Someone or something was outside his bedroom window, climbing up to his room!

A moment later a blurred figure appeared. Dick watched it whilst his right hand stole slowly towards the chair beside his bed where he had placed a brace of pistols before lying down.

Now the thing outside the window was fumbling cautiously with the catch; and suddenly with a sharp click it opened.

The crouching figure on the window-sill remained motionless for a little while as though it waited to see whether the noise it had made had alarmed the highwayman. Then, as though reassured, it leapt lightly down into the room.

Now at last Dick knew for certain that his nocturnal visitor was the human bat. The big, leathery wings were folded back behind his shoulders, and in the darkness his eyes glowed like live coals.

With a gliding, noiseless tread, he approached the bed, and watching from beneath half-lowered eyelids, Dick saw that the creature's hands were armed with long, steel talons.

The bat-man reached the bedside, and his taloned hands stretched out towards Dick's throat. Then at last the highwayman jerked up into a sitting position. He might easily have put a bullet through the hooded head of his enemy, but he could not bring himself to shoot in cold blood.

Instead he smote the Terror across the face with the long barrel of his weapon, and the creature staggered back with a snarl like a savage wild beast taken unawares.

"Stay there or I shoot!" Dick shouted, levelling the pistol at him. But the bat-man uttered another snarl. Then, swift as thought, he whirled about and leapt clean through the open window. Dick had no further compunction about firing, and as he pulled the trigger he heard a wild howl that convinced him the bullet had found its mark. Darting to the window he saw the bat-man running with an unsteady gait across the inn yard.

Hastily dressing Dick scrambled through the window, and lowered himself from the sill. Hanging there at arms' length for a moment, he dropped lightly to the ground. As he ran off through the driving rain in the direction in which the Terror had vanished, he heard Tom King shouting to know what was amiss.

But there was no time to stop and explain, and he ran on across the yard till he came to a gate in the fence. This stood open, and the sight of some blood smeared on the top bar of it convinced Dick that his quarry had gone that way, and that he was wounded.

Hurrying out of the inn yard, he ran on through the darkness, and presently heard a faint yell from ahead. Cocking his second pistol, and peering through the driving rain, he ran in that direction.

Several times he caught a brief glimpse of the Terror; but always it vanished before he had a chance to use his pistol.

For nearly a mile the chase led him across the rain-

swept moor. At last a clump of trees and bushes loomed out of the darkness, and once again Dick caught a glimpse of his quarry. Then it vanished among the trees.

Plunging boldly into the coppice, Dick fumbled his way through the inky gloom, till once again he heard a queer, high-pitched cry—rather like the shrill piping of a bat.

Then he thought something moved in the darkness ahead, and he sprang forward. As he did so the ground seemed to open beneath his feet, and he plunged downwards. As he fell his head struck violently against what appeared to be a rock, and he knew no more.

In the Lair of the Terror.

WHEN Dick came painfully back to consciousness he lay for a long time without moving.

Then he opened his eyes, but closed them again at once for a strong light hurt them.

But presently, as his senses cleared, he looked about him, and saw that he was in a big cave. A lantern hung from the roof and by its light he saw the Terror of Tavistock sitting on a big boulder, his arms folded across his chest. The black hood was now thrown back from his head to reveal a sallow face, black, beetle brows, and a mouth that set as tightly as a steel trap.

He grinned evilly as Dick looked at him, and rose to his feet. The highwayman noticed that he was no longer winged, and that the steel talons were gone from his hands.

"Hoh-oh!" he chuckled. "I am glad you have come to your senses, Turpin, so that you may learn how you were tricked before I kill you. 'Tis an ill day's work for anyone to meddle with the Terror of Tavistock, as you did this evening, for I brook no interference with my plans. 'Twas for that reason I came to the Crooked Man to kill you as you slept, and when I failed, and you wounded me in the hand, I lured you hither. You stumbled neatly into my trap."

Dick eyed him calmly whilst he tried cautiously to free himself from the ropes that tied both his wrists and ankles.

"It seems you enjoy an excellent joke," he said blandly. "Prithee, will you not share it with me?"

The Terror bared his teeth in a ferocious grin.

"You are very bold now," he growled. "But I'll warrant you sing a different tune when I kill you and your busy-body friends."

"Faith! now," Dick chided him calmly. "That is indeed amusing. But you wish to explain to me how you tricked me? I am vastly interested, sir."

The bat-man glared at him evilly, but mastered his temper with an effort.

"Aye, you shall know," he ground out. "For you will never tell my secret to another, that I promise you. Yonder is my invention, a pair of wings that enable me to glide through the air. With their help I am able to leap down from the top of the Gorge upon unwary travellers and throttle them with my steel claws."

Dick glanced in the direction in which he pointed, and saw a big pair of leathern wings resting against the side of the cave. Close to them lay a pair of leather gauntlets fitted with big, steel claws.

"I fakens!" Dick said as calmly as though he were chatting to a friend. "This is vastly interesting, sir. And can you fly back to the top of the cliff when you have finished robbing your victim?"

"I have a thin rope tied about my waist, with the other end made fast to the top of the cliff," the Terror answered boastfully. "By means of that I am able to go swiftly back up the cliff. I once travelled

about the country with a troupe of acrobats, performing such tricks, but I find high toby more lucrative."

He chuckled again.

"I doubt not that is the case," Dick told him urbanely. "And this cave? I presume it is your hiding-place."

The Terror nodded. "Aye," he said. "And lest I should be tracked hither, it hath two exits. The one is an opening in the ground and is hidden by a coppice. 'Twas thither I lured you, so that you fell through the open mouth of the pit and knocked yourself senseless. The other mouth is yonder, and overlooks Tavistock Gorge though 'tis hidden from passers-by by gorse bushes."



THE BAT-MAN BOOTED OUT.—Dick drove his pinioned legs upward and outward. His boots struck the Terror in the stomach, and he went backwards out of the cave.

He pointed to the far end of the cave.

"Your comrades are already searching for you," he went on, "and presently it is my intention to show myself and to lure them here. Then, when they start to climb the cliff to my cave, I shall roll this boulder down upon them, and crush them all to death. 'Twill be a sorry ending to Dick Turpin's famous band. Afterwards I shall kill you, and dress you in my suit and wings, and when your body is found in the Gorge 'twill be thought the Terror of Tavistock was the celebrated Dick Turpin. As for myself, I have made money enow by robbing, and I mean to retire and lead the life of a gentleman of leisure in London."

Dick's blood ran cold as he listened to the villain expounding this horrible plot. But not a muscle of his handsome face twitched. He nodded calmly.

"A most ingenious scheme, sir," he commented.

The Terror of Tavistock rose, and, lifting the wings from the ground, fastened them to his shoulders by means of some leather harness. Then he drew on his steel gauntlets.

"I must bid you adieu for a little while," he said

in a mocking voice. "By this time your comrades ought to have reached the Gorge in their search for you, and I am going to entice them to their doom."

With another Satanic grin, he crossed to the mouth of the cave, and, thrusting his way through the gorse bushes which grew thickly outside, vanished.

Left alone Dick Turpin set to work with a will to free himself. But his efforts only resulted in chafing the skin from his wrists.

As he lay breathing heavily he heard the Terror of Tavistock utter his weird, bat-like cry. Then came a shot, followed almost at once by several more. A moment or two later Dick heard Tom King's voice raised in a faint, far-away shout; and then Bootles' bull-like yell. After that there were two more pistol shots.

Suddenly there came a rattle of stones outside the mouth of the cave, and the Terror of Tavistock reappeared. Grinning evilly at Dick, he put his shoulder to the big boulder, and began to heave it towards the mouth of the cave.

"Beware, lads!" Dick roared; but before he could shout again the bat-man had pounced on him and was thrusting his neckerchief into his mouth. He bound it in position with a piece of rope, and Dick was nearly choked and incapable of uttering a sound.

Then the Terror of Tavistock turned to the boulder again, and trundled it towards the mouth of the cave. Leaving it poised on the very brink of the abyss, he peered out through the bushes.

Again Dick heard Tom King's voice. "This way, lads," he shouted. "He hath gone up the cliff yonder."

After that came the sound of his comrades climbing the cliff. And suddenly he had an idea that set his pulses racing furiously.

Keeping his eyes fixed on the Terror of

Tavistock, who was too busy watching the other highwaymen to pay any heed to him, he wriggled slowly across the cave towards him.

Suddenly the bat-man drew back from the mouth, and put his shoulder to the great rock with the obvious intention of hurling it down on Tom King, Bootles, and Joe Button.

But Turpin uttered a strangled gasp, that attracted the villain's attention to him. For a moment the Terror glared at him. Then, as though he suddenly suspected some trick, he sprang towards his prisoner, with his taloned hands outstretched.

But the highwayman moved even more swiftly. He had already drawn up his pinioned legs so that his knees were touching his chin. Now he drove them upwards and outwards with all his strength.

His boots took the Terror of Tavistock in the pit of the stomach, and with a gasping cry he doubled up, and went backward out of the mouth of the cave. There was a loud swish of branches as he pitched through the gorse, and then an awful cry as he went plunging headlong down the cliff.

(Continued on page 2.)

BUNKUM'S ZOO!

An Artful Elephant's
Dizzy Day Out!



The Ethiopian Cannot Change His Skin; But Thanks to the Joyful Jumbo's Jazzy Doings, Bimbo Alters the Face of a Bogus Rajah Who Suffers a Watery Fate at the Fete!

The White Elephant.

"**S**PLASH it on, my boy, that's the stuff!" exclaimed Captain Jabez Bunkum encouragingly. "A little more white on the tail, and don't forget the inside of the ears!"

Bimbo, the little African assistant at Bunkum's Zoo, who was engaged in the arduous task of white-washing Fairy, the baby elephant, paused in his labours at the sound of his master's voice.

"What am de big ideah of turnin' ole Fairy into a whited sepulchre, Boss?" he panted.

"I'll explain, Bimbo," smiled Captain Bunkum. "Our noble neighbour, Lord Helpus, has asked me if he can borrow Fairy to assist at his fete in aid of the hungry Hindus of Jamboda. There will be a collection, and Fairy can make herself useful picking up coins, giving children rides and generally being the life and soul of the party."

"Ah see, Boss." Bimbo jerked his brush, depositing a large splotch of whitewash in Fairy's ear. "But why must de ole gal be white?"

"That, my boy, is in honour of the visit of Prince Jam of Jamboda."

"De name sounds familyah," remarked Bimbo thoughtfully.

"Of course it is. The Prince, or Rajah, as we call him, is an old friend of mine," went on Bunkum proudly. "In fact, he gave me Fairy when I visited Jamboda in 1911. She belonged to his famous team of white elephants, but she turned out to be black. So the Rajah presented her to me. We thought it would surprise him to see a white elephant at the fete, but I don't want him to find out it is only old Fairy until the end, so I shan't come."

Bimbo chuckled, and critically regarded Fairy, who was now completely camouflaged. The baby elephant appeared restless, and her little eyes were staring right past Bimbo at a hideous face peering over the zoo wall.

"Your job, Bimbo," continued Bunkum, "is to be Fairy's mahout. She is going to carry a scarlet howdah, inscribed with the Jamboda arms, and you must squat on her neck and guide her like a pukka Indian mahout."

Bimbo was not listening. Following the direction of Fairy's pointed stare, he saw Charley the Chimp leering at them over the wall.

"Hush!" he hissed. "We'm been overheard, Boss!"

Captain Bunkum swung round and regarded the chimp with undisguised distaste. "Fairy!" he exclaimed. "Remove that face!"

The baby elephant promptly plunged her trunk into the bucket of whitewash, and spurted a powerful jet of the clammy fluid in Charley's unprepossessing features. The ape disappeared, gurgling noisily.

"Confound the brute!" cried the gallant captain. "That means Maurice Mangle is somewhere about." Even as he spoke the equally repulsive features

of his rival, who ran a much inferior menagerie in the neighbourhood, popped up over the wall.

"What do you mean by assaulting my chimp?" he demanded aggressively. Then his eye fell on the whitewashed elephant, and he gave an unpleasant grin. "Huh! Captain Bunkum up to his old tricks, I see!" he sneered.

"May I ask you to remove your face, Mr. Mangle?" demanded the big-game hunter stiffly. "Fairy is a delicate creature, and cannot stand sudden shocks!"

Maurice Mangle opened his mouth to make a crushing retort when he found it unexpectedly full of whitewash. Fairy's aim was perfect. Her trunk curled hopefully round the handle of the bucket, but Mangle did not wait for a second dose. His head vanished with remarkable celerity.

"All right, Captain Bunkum!" he spluttered from the other side of the wall. "I shall remember this. Come on, Charley," and they heard the inseparable companions stumping off in high dudgeon.

Prince Jam of Jamboda.

THE day of the fete turned out fine. The sun was shining gloriously when Bimbo, a smart little turban perched saucily on his woolly nob, rode up to the gates of Helpus House, sitting astride Fairy's neck. A scarlet and gold howdah, inscribed with the arms of Jamboda, swayed on the white elephant's back.

Watched by an admiring crowd of yokels, Bimbo was about to ride through the gates when he noticed an altercation going on between the gatekeeper and a little dark-skinned man in a panama hat.

"You can't come in 'ere unless you pays your sixpence!" declared the custodian sternly.

The little man waved his arms excitedly. "Jam sinji rajah jamboda jelli!" he exclaimed.

"You can't have no jelly," was the scornful reply. "Pay your sixpence and 'elp the 'ungry 'Indus, or you stays outside. 'Ere, make way for the

elephant!" went on the gatekeeper, catching sight of Fairy.

Bimbo prodded her gently with his stick but, instead of marching in, she seemed to take it for a signal to salaam, and went down on her knees. Bimbo entered the grounds by himself—and landed on his head!

Picking himself up, amidst rapturous chortles from the crowd, he bellowed to Fairy: "Come on in, yo' blunderin' beast!"

The baby elephant, with an apologetic air, rose to her feet and waddled through the gates. The gatekeeper helped Bimbo on to her neck, and he proceeded on his way towards a distant marquee where he had espied the portly figure of Lord Helpus.

"Splendid, splendid!" exclaimed the nobleman, coming forward to greet him. "You look magnificent, my boy! Captain Bunkum has done his job well." He gazed round at the tents, coconut shies, swings, roundabouts, goldfish pool, and other delights all prepared for the multitude.

"I think the fete will be a success," went on Lord Helpus. "The Rajah has not yet arrived, so if you or your elephant wish to refresh yourselves go straight ahead. There is some water for Fairy." He indicated a large water-butt standing outside the marquee. "And champagne and ginger beer for you and the other helpers."

The people now began to flock in, and suddenly Bimbo started. He had noticed Charley the Chimp slinking furtively among the crowd.

His attention was diverted from the ape, however, by the sudden appearance of the little dark man in the panama hat, who, having forced an entrance in some way, was now hastening towards Lord Helpus.

"Banji, jamjinji salaam!" he cried, bowing almost to the ground.

Bimbo stooped to look curiously at the stranger, and the next moment hit the ground with the back of his neck. Fairy had gone down on her knees again!

At that moment a thunderous acclamation announced the arrival of Prince Jam. Bimbo just had time to scramble back on to Fairy's neck before the Rajah, superb in flowing robes and jewel-studded turban, came striding towards them through the press.

Lord Helpus hurried to meet him. "Delighted, delighted, Rajah!" he cried, extending a welcoming hand.

"Charmed, Lord Helpus!" replied the Rajah, speaking in rich tones through his luxurious black whiskers. "I will make my appeal on behalf of the hungry Hindus at once, and then the good people can enjoy the pleasures of your delightful fete."



THE MAMMOTH'S MIGHTY MITT.—Fairy lifted her foot and gave the punch ball a resounding wallop. The bell rang, a stream of pennies shot out, and the machine finally collapsed on Lord Helpus.

"Let me first introduce the celebrated white elephant," said Lord Helpus.

Prince Jam stared at Fairy. "A noble animal!" he declared. "I had no idea there were any white elephants in England."

The Rajah gave a glittering smile, smoothed out his glossy beard, and then mounted the little platform which had been prepared for him. Extending his arms, he made an impassioned speech on behalf of the impoverished people of his country.

"I ask you to give liberally," he cried, "or at least according to your means. Lord Helpus has kindly started the subscription with ten pounds," he rattled the collecting-box in his hand; "but every little will help. If you can't spare a pound, try to—what do you say in England?—cough up a tanner! The white elephant will now hand round the box!"

Fairy took the proffered box in her trunk, and passed it round among the visitors, whose response was so generous that it was soon packed tight with coins. Then she surrendered it to the Rajah.

"Thank you very much!" he exclaimed gratefully. "A gratifying result! I think this occasion should be celebrated in some way." He glanced round and his eye fell on the case of champagne. "I know! I will break a bottle of champagne in honour of the white elephant!"

Hopping down from the platform, he took out a bottle and smashed it against the side of the water-butt. The foaming bubbly poured in like a fountain. Bimbo, watching from Fairy's back, noticed that Charley the Chimp was observing the action with simian curiosity, but at the time the significance of this did not strike him.

The crowd roared with laughter when Fairy dipped her trunk in the water and took a long draught. She seemed to enjoy it!

"Now," said Lord Helpus, "I will show you round the grounds, my dear Rajah. And you, Bimbo, can get Fairy to give the children rides."

The village children pressed forward so eagerly that the little darkie did not remark Charley the Chimp take another champagne bottle out of the case and thoughtfully crack it against the water-butt.

Frolics at the Fete.

FAIKY did her bit with her usual gentle patience. The scarlet howdah crowded with shrieking children, she ambled round and round at a leisurely pace, guided by Bimbo's skilful hand.

After an hour of perambulating the grounds, however, she began to show signs of fatigue, and, having unloaded an extra heavy burden of passengers, turned her steps instinctively towards the water-butt by the big marquee.

Bimbo sat astride her neck, while the baby elephant drank her fill, almost emptying the butt.

"Come on, ole gal!" he said, prodding her with the stick. "Yo' gotta do some mo' work!"

Fairy gave a loud trumpet and, flourishing her trunk, pranced off somewhat unsteadily. Refreshed by the drink, she seemed quite frolicsome as she skeddaddled towards the queue of eagerly waiting kiddies.

On the way they passed Prince Jam, who was good-humouredly trying to recover a penny by thumping the ball in a punching-machine. Lord Helpus watched his efforts with a genial smile.

"I am afraid you've lost your penny, Rajah," he chuckled.

At that moment Fairy halted and looked at the machine with a considering eye. Bimbo prodded her, but she had made up her mind to test her strength.

Shouldering aside the crowd with a light-hearted abandon that made the people scatter on all sides, she lifted a foot and gave the ball a resounding wallop.

At that elephantine punch the bell rang, a stream of pennies shot out, and the machine, rocking on its pedestal, finally collapsed on top of Lord Helpus!

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Prince Jam, his whiskers shaking with glee. "The new white hope, what?"

Trumpeting cheerily at her joke, Fairy danced off skittishly towards the children.

It was a miracle how they all scrambled into the swaying howdah. Bimbo did his best, but he was quite unable to keep Fairy still. Once the screaming kiddies were packed safely on her back, she gambolled off to enjoy the fun of the fair.

"Whoa! Steady, old gal, steady!" implored Bimbo.

Fairy's response to this appeal was to skip along with a light-hearted two-step which made the young passengers squeal with delight. Her pace rapidly increased until she was fairly thundering round the grounds.

People melted away magically at her approach, when she suddenly saw the dark man in the Panama hat standing in her path. Fairy stopped so abruptly that the children shot up in the air; then she crashed clumsily down on to her knees, spilling them all on the ground!

Bimbo, hanging desperately on to her ears, alone kept his seat. "Hi! what am yo' doing, yo' obstreperous beast?" he yelled.

It was soon quite evident what she was doing. She was racing back towards the water-butt for another drink! Her thirst was growing in proportion to her exertions!

Bimbo had no time for further commands. It was all he could do to keep his seat. But, as his tempestuous elephant greedily drained the contents of the butt, he saw something which, but for his ebony complexion, would have made him blanch with horror.

The ground was littered with shattered champagne bottles, and a glimpse of Charley the Chimp slinking into the marquee told him only too plainly what had happened. The wretched ape, imitating Prince Jam, had emptied the entire contents of the case into Fairy's drinking-water. The baby elephant was undoubtedly under the influence of liquor!

Fairy was still noisily ingurgitating the bubbly, and Bimbo, slipping off her neck, raced round to the rear and seized her by her short tail.

"Come away!" he gurgled. "Yo' hab had enuff!"

Finishing her drink with relish, Fairy bounded so suddenly into the air that Bimbo turned a complete somersault. Then, trumpeting her defiance, the jovial monster thudded off to find fresh worlds to conquer!

Sprawling on the ground, the little darkie watched her subsequent manoeuvres with bulging eyes. He saw her crash recklessly through the marquee, where a crowd of terrified people had taken cover, and emerge from the other side with the wreckage wrapped round her enormous bulk.

"Ah must stop dis!" gasped Bimbo, scrambling to his feet. "Dere will be a catastrophe in a minute!"

He was about to race after his refractory pet when he saw Lord Helpus, armed with a long hose, standing outside his conservatory in the attitude of Horatius defending the bridge.

The nobleman had watched the work of destruction with gathering horror, and suddenly he had remembered the rare tropical fruits and flowers which he cultivated in an enormous glass-house outside his mansion.

He signalled wildly to Bimbo. "Come here at once!" he bawled.

With a sinking heart Bimbo raced to his side. "What am we to do?" he panted.

"I don't know!" replied the nobleman breathing

heavily. "I don't care what happens to the fete, but I won't have my conservatory ruined by that lunatic boast! We must head her off at all costs!"

"Where am de Rajah?" asked Bimbo.

"I don't know and I don't care," snapped his lordship, unable to conceal his emotion. "He started this riot by giving that beast champagne. If she—"

He clutched Bimbo's arm and left the sentence unfinished. Fairy, having turned the fete into an



imitation of the ruins of Carthage, was now gradually working her way towards them.

Suddenly Lord Helpus felt a light touch on his arm. "Jam sinji rajah jamboda jelli!" said a soft voice.

"It's that confounded lunatic again!" yelled his lordship, now thoroughly distraught. He rounded fiercely on the man in the panama hat. "Go away, you blithering idiot! I'm busy!"

He started violently, as Fairy, suddenly catching a glimpse of the conservatory, remembered what she was after and charged straight for them.

With a blood-curdling yell Lord Helpus discharged a jet of water full in the face of the advancing elephant. But Fairy merely shook her head as the water sprayed off her massive forehead.

She was almost upon them, and Lord Helpus and Bimbo were prepared to perish under her thundering hoofs, when she suddenly applied the brakes and stopped dead in her tracks.

Waving her trunk with a graceful gesture of homage, she sank down on her knees, salaaming to the man in the panama hat!

"Jum jamjorum binji!" he said, and patted her graciously on the head.

"Your lordship!" Another voice made the nobleman jump, and he saw Prince Jam, the collecting box clasped under one arm, standing at his side. "I am afraid I cannot stay here another moment. This place is too dangerous. I must go."

"Oh, Rajah," protested Lord Helpus; and, raising his arms in an appealing gesture, he unwittingly turned the hose full on the Indian's face.

The Prince of Jamboda staggered back, dropping his box, and the next moment it was seen that his face had turned completely white. The gush of water had swept away not only his dusky complexion, but his magnificent black whiskers!

"Maurice Mangle!"

The cry came from Bimbo. He had recognised the repulsive features of the rival zoo proprietor.

In an instant he flung himself at the bogus Rajah.

The little darkie entwined himself round Mangle's neck, and they both crashed to the ground, the Rajah's turban unwinding itself in the struggle.

Lord Helpus, staring with bulging eyes at the extraordinary sight, felt another light touch on his arm, and found that Captain Jabez Bunkum had quietly joined the group.

"Pardon my interrupting," remarked the famous big-game hunter, "but I should like to introduce you to Prince Jam of Jamboda!"

He indicated the man in the panama hat, who shrank modestly back. "Jam sinji rajah jamboda jelli!" he said with a glittering smile.

A LIGHTENING CHARGE.—Unwittingly Lord Helpus turned the hose full on the Indian's face. The gush of water not only swept away his dusky complexion, but his whiskers, too.

"He is explaining that he is the Rajah of Jamboda," went on the captain. "Unfortunately, he cannot speak English, and I understand that he had some difficulty in getting in. In fact, Fairy was the only one who recognised him. An elephant never forgets!"

"Who—who is this ruffian?" Lord Helpus pointed at Maurice Mangle.

"That is an old enemy of mine," explained Captain Bunkum. "Prince Jam tells me that he received a wire not to come, but it aroused his suspicions, and he decided to ignore it. It is pretty obvious that it was sent by Maurice Mangle."

While they were talking Charley the Chimp had wandered on to the scene. Seeing his master in such a humiliating position, he dashed forward, chattering with rage, to extricate him.

Bimbo put up his hands to defend himself, but he already had a champion. Fairy, sobered by the unexpected douches she had received from the hose, began to repent of her disorderly conduct and saw a way to make amends. Lurching forward, she wrapped her trunk round Mangle and Charley, and picking them up bodily staggered off.

"Ah guess we better leave dem to Fairy," said Bimbo, calmly. "Dey am in good hands. Ah believe dere am a pond in yo' garden, Lord Helpus?"

The nobleman nodded, and a few moments later they heard two loud splashes.

Sunny Brown and Ruben the Robot, his Man of Metal, are here again next week. You must not miss this amusing yarn of the Mechanical Mirth-maker.

Surprises galore in next week's terrific tale programme, chums. Get ready to greet Corporal Keith and Timberhead in

THE SIX-STAR GANG

a rousing new Lumber Tale, and the second yarn of the Headless Men—

LURED TO GIANT'S FANG!

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INTELLIGENCE.
SCHOOL INSPECTOR: How do you know there were no motor-cars when "Lochinvar" was written?
BRIGHT BOY: Please, sir, it tells you:
"He swam the Eske River
Where Ford there was none."
(Fountain Pen to JACK GOODBAN, Mill Road, Greetham, near Horncastle, Lincolnshire.)

ALL THAT MATTERED.
DENTIST (to small boy who has had some teeth extracted): Never mind, Bobby, they'll soon grow in again.
BOBBY (eagerly): Will they be up in time for dinner?
(Fountain Pen to C. E. CASTLE, Kallanda, Kangaroo Hills, via Ingham, North Queensland, Australia.)

MY DEAR CHUMS,
The Jester and I are together again this week, but we have more room to spread ourselves as the jam said when Tommy dropped the jar and broke it! Well, I need plenty of space this week because I want to introduce to you two great new characters who are booked for the *Mag.* in a grand series of entirely new tales by a first-rate author Keith Kennedy, the wide-awake mountie, and Timberhead, his cast-iron assistant.

The first story of their terrific tussle of wits against

The Six-Star Gang

heads our programme on Saturday next. Six of the greatest crooks in Canada compose this desperate gang. They are Captain Star, Charlie the Conman, Jules Lemaitre, Chinook the Eskimo, Hoodlum Hank, and Killer Pete. And Corporal Keith has sworn to take the whole bunch back to Ottawa—dead or alive! The thrilling way in which he carries out this task is told in a series that will smash all records for strange happenings. And the background—the most colourful a story can have—the big trees and iron men of the lumberlands. Get ready to give Keith and Timberhead a rousing welcome next week.

How do you like the Headless Men of Droone?

Mysterious and eerie enough, eh? But wait until you read the second exploit of Phil Tregennis and Spud. It appears on Saturday under the title of

Lured to Giant's Fang!

Near Black Jason's Rock is the terror of mariners, a jagged tooth jutting from the treacherous sea: Giant's Fang. The *Hathaway*, sister vessel to the *Stornaway*, in which Phil's father was shipwrecked, is due to sail into the harbour of St. Mary's. But the Man Without Eyes for a strange, baffling reason, plans to sink this stately ship. And he chooses a terrible method. How he draws the *Hathaway* to doom with the aid of a phantom lighthouse and the daring way in which Phil and Spud turn the tables on him are told in this unique thrill-tale next week.

Next week's uproarious yarn of the boys of St. Giddy's tells the laughable story of

Fatty Slocum's Consolation Prize.

Fatty wins a prize in a recipe competition in the *Bakers' Budget*, and looks forward to a big sum of money. Imagine his astonishment when at last the prize turns up—a real honest-to-goodness Indian elephant! M'yes, there's laughs galore in this ripping long complete school yarn. Drama, too, when the elephant's real owner, an Indian Rajah, turns up at St. Giddy's. But I'll let you read it for yourselves next week.

The next exploit of Reuben the Robot, who made his bow the other week, is also a corker. It's entitled:

Sausages and SMASH!

and describes the tin-ribbed Tornado's doings as a waiter.

The last of a trilogy of tales recounting the early adventures of the Monocled Manhunter also appears on Saturday. You'll enjoy every word of

Iron Island,

a yarn crammed with detective work and thrills in the boxing ring.

Another great story in **Amaza Planet of Peril** reaches its crashing conclusion. I know from your enthusiastic letters that this serial has gone down like plum pudding. But though we'll mourn the finish of it you can be sure your old Editor has something even better up his sleeve to take its place. Just a whisper chaps. It concerns Mr. John Hunter, who is one of the greatest of boys' authors living to-day. For a long time he has been busy on a yarn which he says is the best he has ever done for us. I cannot give you full details this week, but it positively begins the week after next. Football is the keynote, but there's something more—one of the most baffling mysteries ever associated with the great winter game. Full news about this next week.
Your sincere friend,
THE EDITOR.

OVERSIGHT.

"As I was walking through the jungle," said the big-game hunter, "I tripped over a root and dropped my rifle. Before I could pick it up, two lions approached. Without hesitation, I grabbed each of them by the throat and—"

"Wait a bit," interrupted a listener. "You've only one arm."

"I know," replied the hunter. "But in the excitement of the moment I forgot about that."
(Fountain pen to K. GILLESPIE, Bryn Hyfryd, Bryn S. M. Corwen, North Wales.)

A BARGAIN.

An ancient car drove painfully to the gates of a cricket-ground. The gatekeeper, demanding the usual entrance fee, called:

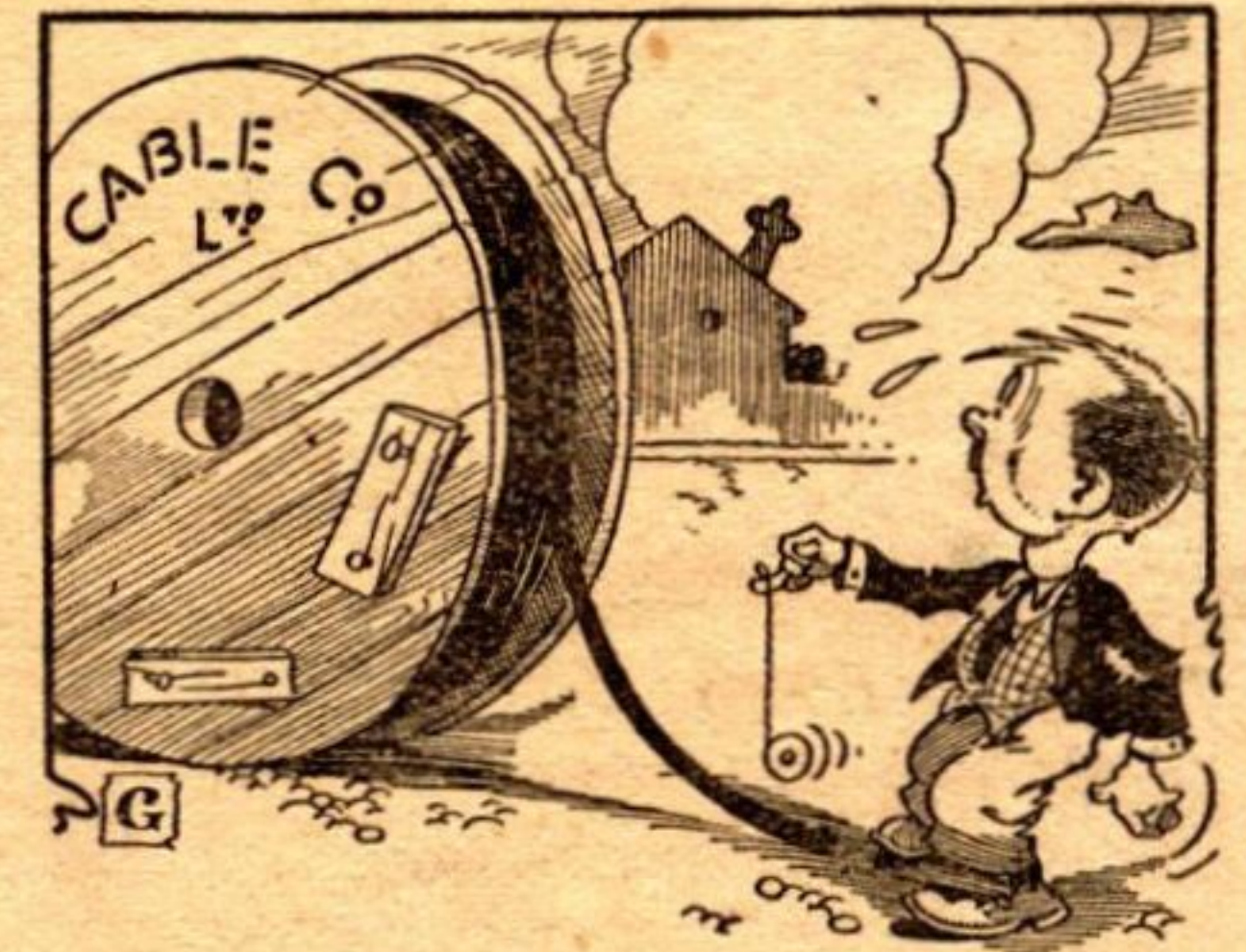
"Half-crown for the car!"
The driver sighed wearily and said: "Sold."
(Fountain pen to GEORGE STEPHENS, 77, Leigh Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.)

EXCHANGE.

Two Scotchmen came to London for the first time and they boarded a General omnibus. When the conductor came up, one of the Scotchmen held up four farthings and asked for a penny ticket.

The conductor glared at him, but took the money and dropped it in his bag.

When he handed the ticket to the Scotchman he said, "What's yer mate got—jam jars?"
(Fountain Pen to L. HARVEY, 274, Old Kent Road, London, S.E.1.)



"Blimey! What a yo-yo!"
(Football to GORDON WILSON, 20, Gladeville Road, Aigburth, Liverpool.)

LAZINESS.

A Jewish miner being too lazy to bring his shovel to the top of the pit, left it at the bottom, with the following notice:

Dear Sandy,
Please bring my shovel up, I've forgotten it.

The next morning he found his shovel in the same place, with the following notice on it:

Dear Ikey,
Take it up yourself, I haven't seen it.

(Fountain Pen to _____, 54, Croppath Road, Dagenham, Essex.)

A GOOD TASTE.

MISSIONARY: And you say you know something about religion.

CANNIBAL CHIEF: Well, we had a good taste of it when the last missionary came.

(Fountain Pen to FRED HAYCOCKS, 4, Hollins Lane, Tilstock, Whitchurch, Salop.)

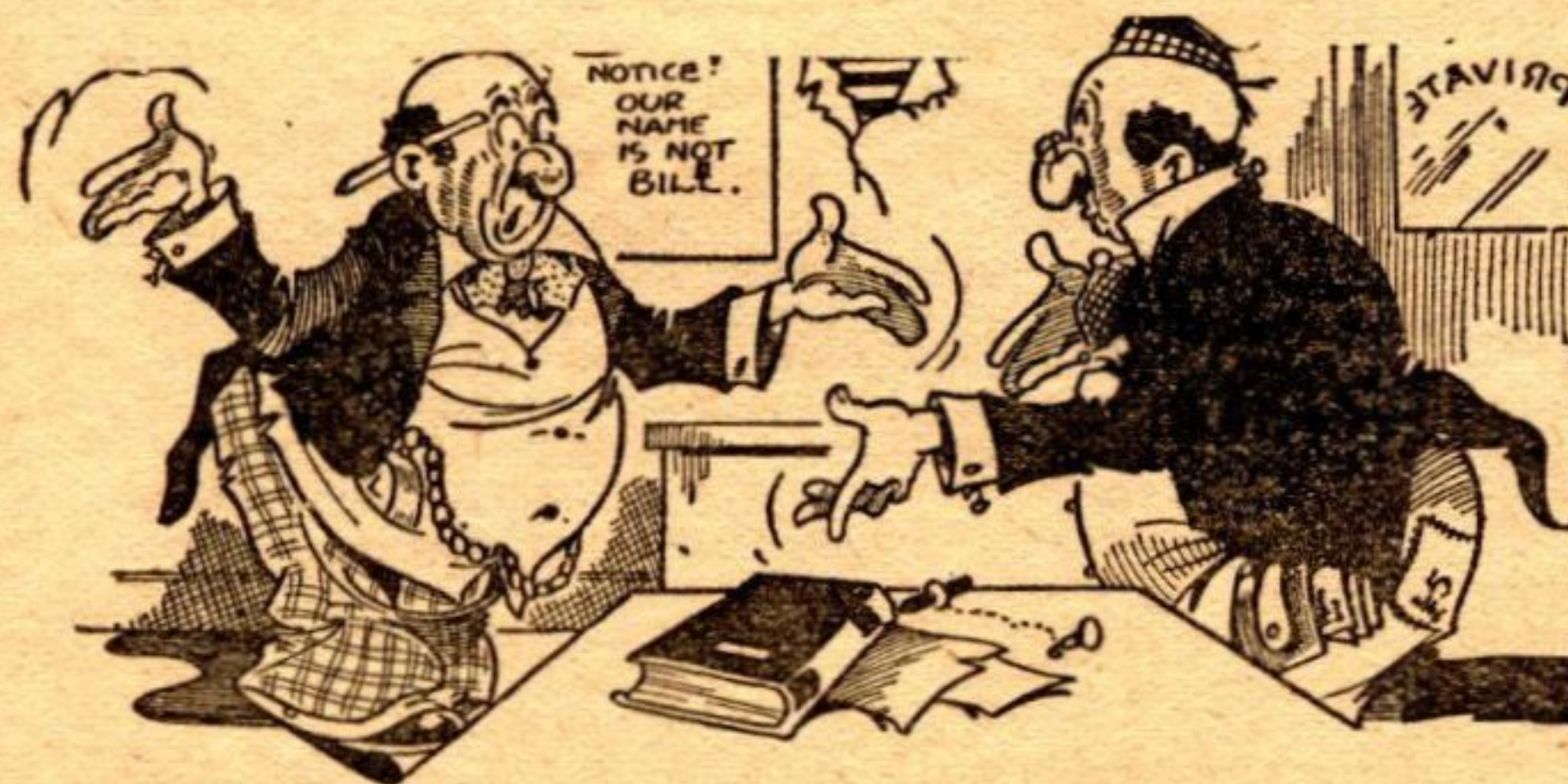
THE DISCOVERER.

TEACHER (taking class of duds): Tommy Brown, come and point to America on this map.

TOMMY (after hesitating): Here, sir.

TEACHER: Who discovered America?
CLASS: Tommy Brown, sir.

(Fountain Pen to H. R. DUTTON, 49, Macdonald Street, Wavertree, Liverpool.)



Mr. Cohen (in Mr. Goldberg's office): I say, Isaac! Wat's dat I smell?

Mr. Goldberg: Oh, dat's business—it's rotten!
(Football to R. GREEN, 65, Richmond Ave., Colonel Light Gardens, Adelaide, South Australia.)



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See News on this Page



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THE STOLEN FOOTER CUP

(Continued from page 36.)

got to join in with him. We have already dealt with those cads, and, under the circumstances, we are willing for the match to be replayed this Wednesday."

Johnny Gee's face cleared, and his eyes shone with a very bright light.

"That's jolly good of you, Tommy!" he exclaimed. "I'm sorry for the rotten things I said. You're a sportsman through and through. Shake on it!"

The two rivals shook, and Tommy Rhodes & Co. left St. Giddy's, after being the guests at tea in Study No. 4.

The next day was Tuesday, and Blenkinhorn, now fully recovered, appeared in the ranks of the Remove once more. The boys of St. Giddy's could not help noticing that he seemed changed, somehow. He still spoke in jingles, but now he went down to the playing-fields and evinced the keenest desire to play football.

Johnny Gee & Co. were standing near the net, when a step sounded behind them, and they saw Jack Jordan.

"Excuse me, Gee, but I have every reason to believe, from what the doctor has told me, and from my observation of Blenkinhorn, that the shock of the fire has turned him back again into his old self," said the footballer earnestly. "It will be a long time yet, of course, before he can shake off his habit of talking in rhyme, but I think, if you give him another chance in the team, he will prove a very useful player."

"My hat!" said Johnny Gee eagerly. "I hope

you're right, sir. We'll see what Blenkinhorn can do."

The following day was a half-holiday at St. Giddy's, and as big a crowd as ever turned out to see the replay for the Cup. The Earlswood fellows stared when they saw the lanky, big-booted form of Clarence Blenkinhorn come trotting out with the Remove team.

They had good cause to stare, though in a different way, as soon as the game had started. The play opened sensationally. Blenkinhorn got away with the leather, running like the wind. He cut in towards goal with the ball, and just as one of the hefty backs loomed up to tackle him, he slipped the pill to Johnny Gee. Johnny was not marked, and he shot in a hard, powerful drive that spun well and truly into the net!

"Goal!" roared scores of jubilant rhodes.

Earlswood looked grim. Tommy Rhodes & Co. made a determined attack in retaliation, and the game was thrilling to watch.

Half-time saw the score unaltered. Soon after the resumption, however, Tommy Rhodes, who had been leading his team in dashing style, took the ball in his stride and sent in a terrific shot that nicked its way into the net. It was the Earlswood fellows' turn to "crow"!

With only a few minutes to go, the Remove forwards made a magnificent effort, and forced their way through their opponents' defence. Johnny Gee took the ball from the Hon. Bob Vernon, and there was a stentorian roar.

"Shoot, Johnny!"

The Remove skipper shot. It was a glorious effort, but the goalie leaped across and pulled the ball down. There was a scramble for possession, but all at once a tall, skinny, big-booted fellow barged in and caught the leather on his chest. At the same moment he gave a quick forward lunge of his long, lean body, and the ball spun clean past the hands of the astonished goalie, to bump into the net!

"Go-oal! Bravo, Blenkinhorn!"

A few seconds later the whistle shrilled, and the match was over!

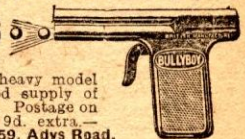
St. Giddy's had won the Jack Jordan Cup, after all!

On the following Saturday the Remove heard that Blenkinhorn was leaving. He was going with Jack Jordan on tour with the Norchester United team, and he hoped soon to be able to re-enter professional football himself—when he had completely cured himself of the rhyming habit.

Samuel Stocum, the fat Removeite of St. Giddy's, wins a prize in a competition next week. What this is and the trouble it leads Fatty into will keep you thrilled and amused from beginning to end.

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The Air Pirate.

ZOOOM-OOOO-OOOOOOO! As the big biplane dived over Kent an occasional belated cyclist or motorist heard the faint roar of its engines, and staring skyward saw a moving speck of light like a rather bright star.

Presently, as the biplane neared the coast, a startling thing happened. From behind a big bank of cloud out of which the moon had just sailed, there appeared something that can only be described as a monstrous, three-bladed propeller, with a great metal sphere for its hub. It was hurtling through the air like a great ball.

Straight for the biplane it rushed, and there came a sudden deeper roar of the latter's engines as the vessel swooped in a power-drive. By this swift manoeuvre the pilot avoided a collision with the strange flying vessel, which flashed down and past it like a meteor. But levelling out from its dive as swiftly as a single-seater 'plane might have done, the flying sphere rushed towards the biplane again.

Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat! The snarling clatter of two Lewis guns cut in upon the roar of the biplane's

engines, and flashes of scarlet flame leapt from the vessel's gunpit.

But the stream of bullets had no effect upon the mysterious sphere. Zooming until it had climbed above its slower-moving prey, it seemed to hang for an instant from the clouds. Then it swooped a second time.

Again the biplane's pilot tried to slip out from under his assailant, but this time without success. The Flying Sphere dropped like a thunderbolt upon the vessel, and the whirling, three-bladed propeller tore through fabric and wood and metal like a giant saw.

The biplane dropped like a stone, and as it did so the pilot leapt clear. Suddenly his parachute blossomed above him like a big, white mushroom, and he floated earthward, to land nearly a mile away from the wreck of his machine.

Meanwhile, paying no heed to the pilot, the Flying Sphere had descended as swiftly as the wrecked 'plane. When it was only a few yards from the ground it checked its headlong swoop, hovered a few seconds, and then landed lightly on the turf. With a last slow whirl the great propeller came to rest, and a small circular door opened in the side of the vessel. Five men emerged, and approached the wrecked biplane.

One, who was a thin, swarthy man with piercing black eyes, pointed to a number of steel boxes which had been scattered on the turf when the biplane had crashed.

"Those contain the bullion," he said in a deep, guttural voice. "Get them into the Flying Sphere. Quick!"

Even as his companions lifted two of the heavy

steel boxes and began to stagger with them towards the Flying Sphere, a startling thing happened.

The weird figure of a man, clothed from head to foot in a tight-fitting chain mail, rose in a great leap from a coppers half-a-mile away. Then, moving in thirty-foot leaps, he came towards them whilst an ample black cloak streamed behind him in the wind like sable wings.

One of the men carrying the boxes saw him and his lower jaw dropped.

"Look, doctor," he gasped. "The Black Shadow."

The swarthy man snarled, and a snub-nosed automatic pistol suddenly appeared in his right hand. Then as the Black Shadow landed thirty feet away he fired at him.

But with a mocking laugh the Black Shadow bounded into the air again, and shot above the doctor's head in a long, low leap. As he passed overhead he stooped and long arms reached down to grip the crook by the collar. He was jerked off his feet and hurled a dozen yards away.

Meanwhile, the Black Shadow landed close to the wrecked biplane, whirled round on his spring-heeled boots, and faced the other four crooks as they all drew guns and blazed madly at him.

He staggered for a moment as a bullet smacked against his chest and glanced off the proof mail. Then he leapt among the scoundrels, and his steel-gauntleted fists hit out right and left, hurling two of them dazed and bleeding to the ground.

Thereupon the remaining two men let out panic-stricken yells, and bolted into the Flying Sphere. As they scrambled through the doorway, the doctor picked himself up and hesitated a moment. Then seeing the Black Shadow turn towards him he followed his companions' example. The steel door clanged behind him; there came a sudden thunderous roar of a motor, the great propeller woke to life, and the Flying Sphere literally leapt skyward, and was soon no more than a tiny speck in the deep, purple vault of the sky.

The Black Shadow now turned his attention to the two men whom he had knocked down. One was still stunned from the blow which he had received; but the other was sitting up and holding his jaw as he groaned feebly. Hands akimbo the Black Shadow stared at him, and behind the metal mask his eyes glittered like points of polished steel.

"Listen," he said in a cold voice. "Your companions have deserted you, even though they know you will spend the better part of your life in prison for to-night's work. But I am more concerned with capturing the Flying Sphere than I am with handing you over to the police. Tell me, therefore, who is your chief, and where he has his headquarters, and you shall go free. Refuse, and I hand you over to the police."

The injured man scowled at the fast vanishing Flying Sphere, and cursed.

"All right," he growled. "I got nothing to thank Drood for, deserting me like this—the rat! Our chief is Doctor Drood. He invented that Flying Sphere. He owns a place called Thor Island, off the Scottish coast near St. Judith's, and he's got a big cavern there where he keeps the Flying Sphere. He thinks he's quite safe, because there's no way into the cave except by the sea. But, by chance, I found another way. There's a big headland at the north end of the island, and near the bottom of the cliffs you'll find a small opening that leads right down to the cavern. Drood knows nothing about it, and you can steal in on him unbeknownst that way."

He stopped as he caught sight of a tall, strongly built man running across the Downs towards them.

"Lumme!" he cried. "It's the airman what we brought down. If he catches me . . ."

The Black Shadow made a contemptuous gesture with his hand.

"You can go," he said. "And you had better take that fellow with you."

He pointed to the other crook, who had recovered by this time and was staring goggle-eyed at them from the ground. The first man helped his companion to his feet, and they both made off across the hillsides. "Hey!" the airman panted wrathfully as he ran up. "Why did you let those two crooks go!"

The Black Shadow laid a hand on his arm as he was about to start off in pursuit.

"They are only tools used by the real criminal," he said quietly. "I made a bargain with them that they should go free if they betrayed their leader to me. They have kept their side of the bargain, and I am keeping mine."

The pilot seemed suddenly to realize that the Black Shadow was queerly clad.

"Say!" he exclaimed in an excited voice. "Are you the Johnny the newspapers call the Black Shadow?"

The mystery man nodded.

"Jumping Jehosaphat!" the pilot said, and his blue eyes opened wide. "This is what you might call a gala night for me. But look here," he added suspiciously. "Some of the papers say you are the man who flies that infernal machine that has been responsible for robbing three different planes carrying gold to the continent."

The Black Shadow's eyes flashed behind their steel mask.

"The papers lie," he said contemptuously. "I am neither a murderer nor a thief. Listen, young man. I know where the crook who owns the Flying Sphere has his headquarters, and if you are willing you can help me to raid his hide-out. What do you say?"

"Can a duck swim?" the young airman said warmly. "Why, believe me, I'm just aching to sock that pirate chief. He killed Charlie Fellows, my best pal, when he brought his machine down near Dover last week. What do you want me to do?"

"I followed you from Croydon in my own biplane," the Black Shadow answered. "I believed the Flying Sphere might attack you because of the gold you were carrying, and I hoped in that event to follow the pirates to their lair. Now I want you to fly to Scotland with me to help me bomb their hiding-place. Come with me."

And the Black Shadow led the way across the Downs towards where he had left his biplane.

Thor Island.

THOR Island was little more than a great square of weather-beaten rock some four or five miles from the mainland. The eastern sky was growing grey with the first hint of morning when the Black Shadow and the pilot—his name was Dan Heard—crossed the coast near the tiny fishing village of St. Judith's.

Heard was piloting the machine, and as the Black Shadow picked up the island with the help of a pair of night glasses, he called through the headphones to him from the other cockpit.

"Throttle your motor," he said. "And glide in so as to give Drood no warning of our approach."

The pilot obeyed, and put the vessel into a long, shallow glide that carried it down towards Thor Island as silent as a ghost.

Now the Black Shadow rose to his feet, and took a long coil of thin wire from the cockpit. Like his bullet-proof suit and spring-heeled boots, this wire was his own invention, and though it was lighter than aluminium it was tougher than the strongest steel.

Climbing out on to one of the lower wings, he swung himself down till he reached the landing gear. Then,

whilst Dan did his best with joy-stick and rudder-bar to hold the 'plane steady, he fastened one end of the wire to the landing gear.

"Ready?" he called to the pilot.

"Yep," came the cheerful answer from Dan. "I'll do my best to keep the old bus steady for you."

The Black Shadow wasted no further words, but went swiftly down the wire, till he was hanging by his steel-gauntleted hands from a small loop at the end.

For a little while the Black Shadow swung below the biplane while the black bulk of the island seemed to rush upwards like a huge flying monster. Then suddenly, when the ground was still a hundred feet away, he dropped, and the biplane seemed to bounce skyward, as it went gliding swiftly away into the darkness above the sea.

The Black Shadow's wonderful, spring-heeled boots broke his fall, and, bouncing twice like a big india-rubber ball, he stood rocking on his feet whilst he peered into the darkness. Then he went swiftly towards the big headland which formed the northern extremity of Thor Island.

Far below the sea rumbled unceasingly like some

arched away into the darkness, and at regular intervals great pillars of natural rock rose to support it.

At the opposite end of the cave the sea heaved with big, oily ripples as the Atlantic rollers smashed themselves against the reef outside and spilled over into the pool of water that closed the mouth of the cave.

Near this pool several acetylene flares sizzled loudly, and shone on the sleek sides of the Flying Sphere, and provided light for several men who were playing a card game. Apart from them, at the back of the cave, Drood and another man were talking earnestly together.

The Black Shadow watched them closely. Then, anxious to discover what fresh villainy they were planning, he climbed silently down from his hiding-place to the big cavern, and stole from one pillar of rock to another.

Suddenly as he neared the two men a bell jangled harshly, though there was no sign of wires or any other agency that could have set it ringing.

Iron-nerved though he was, even the Black Shadow was momentarily startled. Then he turned



HIS LIFE AT STAKE.—The Black Shadow ducked as the crook fired, and the next instant he had driven the head of the stake squarely in the man's bread basket.

monstrous beast growling over its prey, but the Black Shadow never hesitated. Lowering himself over the edge of the cliff, he went swiftly down it till he found a small, black opening about thirty or forty feet up from the sea. Swinging himself into this, he crept on hands and knees through inky darkness, till suddenly the tunnel twisted sharply, and he saw a gleam of light ahead.

Making his way to this, the Black Shadow found himself looking down into an enormous cavern thirty feet below. Above him the roof of this cave

to escape. But the succession of pillars made it impossible for him to use his spring-heeled boots, and before he could reach the end of the cave two members of the pirate gang were on him. Guns leapt from their bulging hip pockets, and roared deafeningly in the cavern. But though they fired point-blank at the Black Shadow, and he reeled as though struck by a giant fist, his chain mail saved him from death. Right and left he hit, and both the crooks went down yelling with pain.

A moment later, however, the rest of the gang were

upon him, and he was dragged down. The metal hood was torn from his head and the butt of a gun descended on his temple with a sickening force. With a gasp he went suddenly limp in the hands of his enemies.

Justice!

WHEN the Black Shadow came back to his senses he discovered that he had been stripped of his bullet-proof suit and his spring-heeled boots, and was tied hand and foot.

He just had time to become aware of this when Drood rose from the rock where he had been sitting.

"I am deeply honoured that the famous Black Shadow should visit me," he said in a mocking voice. "But you were unwise to venture into my stronghold, for every entrance is guarded by an invisible ray which, by means of a photo-electric cell, rings a bell the moment any one passes through it. However, I am delighted to see you, for as a fellow-inventor I have often wondered by what process you have made chain mail so strong as this."

He pointed to the suit of mail which lay beside his prisoner.

"I am sorry," the Black Shadow said, "but I reveal my scientific secrets to no one."

Drood still smiled, though a reddish glare came into his eyes.

"How unfortunate," he said mildly. "I shall be sorry to use torture."

He spoke in a low voice to several of his men, whereupon they carried the Black Shadow through several smaller caves, and finally into a big grotto opening on to the sea.

Here they drove a large stake into the sand, and tied their prisoner to it with a rope round each wrist, and another that passed across his chest and under his armpits. Then the doctor addressed him again.

"Observe the simplicity of my plan for inducing you to speak," he said suavely. "As the tide rises it converts the sands of this grotto into quicksands, and you and the stake will be sucked down and you will be slowly stifled. Perhaps you will speak now? No? Well, I shall leave two men with you, and when you are willing to tell me what I wish to know, send for me."

With a mocking bow he walked out of the cave, leaving two of his men behind. For a little while these stood watching the Black Shadow. Then they seated themselves on a flat-topped rock and began to play cards, and were soon too keen on their game to pay much heed to their prisoner.

Having convinced himself that he could not loosen his bonds, the Black Shadow ceased his futile struggles, and did some quick thinking.

In a little while his keen mind had hit on a novel scheme of escape, and keeping his eyes fixed on the pirates, he heaved on the stake, and tried to loosen it in the sands.

For some time his efforts were fruitless. But presently as the incoming tide filtered through the sands, and began to loosen them and convert them into quicksands, he felt the stake move.

Thereupon he tugged more and more furiously at it, till suddenly one of the guards looked up, realised what was happening, and let out a yell as he grabbed for his gun.

But as he did that the stake came loose out of the sand, and the Black Shadow ducked swiftly. A bullet whipped the air above his head, and the next instant he had driven the head of the stake squarely into the pirate's face. The man went back, his face a ghastly mess, and lay sprawling on the ground, moaning.

Before his companion could draw a gun, the Black

Shadow swung swiftly round in his direction, and the top of the stake smashed into the pit of the man's stomach. He doubled up with a grunt and lay moaning with pain, whilst the Black Shadow dropped on his knees beside him, and managed to pick up the automatic pistol which he had dropped.

Then he aimed carefully, and the bullet snapped through the rope that fastened his wrist to the stake. After that it was easy for him to free his other limbs, and crossing to some rocks that stretched out through the mouth of the grotto, he dived into deep water, and swam some distance to a sandy beach. There he climbed to the top of the cliffs by a winding path.

By this time dawn was breaking, and Dan Heard, who had glided a mile or more from Thor Island, and then restarted his motor, was now patrolling overhead. Catching sight of the Black Shadow, he swooped down and made a neat landing on the smooth, wiry turf.

"What happened?" he asked excitedly, as the Black Shadow climbed into the cockpit.

"I'll tell you later," the mystery man snapped. "Climb for your life."

Dan wasted no time asking further questions. He opened out his idling motor, and they climbed steeply.

But long before they reached the mainland the Black Shadow saw the Flying Sphere leap upward from the sea like a ball hurled heavenward by a giant's hand. Straight for them it rushed, and the Black Shadow spoke swiftly through the headphones to his pilot, outlining a daring plan for destroying the pirate vessel.

Dan nodded, and went on climbing steadily, whilst their pursuer raced after them. Presently it hovered above them like a hawk attacking a pigeon. Then it flashed downward.

Instantly the two men leapt clear of the biplane. But though they had parachute packs strapped to their shoulders they did not dare pull the rip-cords yet.

The Flying Sphere crashed on the biplane, and the mighty propeller cleft clean through it. An instant later there was a thunderous roar as the two bombs exploded under the impact. A great sheet of saffron-coloured flame wrapped round the pirate air vessel, and, with its propeller smashed to a thousand fragments, it dropped seaward, a twisted, blackened wreck. A great fountain of water shot skyward as it struck the sea. Then all that was left of the pirate was a widening circle of oily scum upon the wildly tossing waters.

An instant after the explosion occurred the Black Shadow pulled his ripcord and the parachute opened above him. Dan Heard followed suit, and they both drifted landward before a steady wind.

There they made a safe landing, and, slipping out of his parachute harness, the young air pilot came towards the Black Shadow.

"Guess we avenged poor Charlie's murder," he said in a sober voice.

The Black Shadow nodded. Then he offered his hand to the youngster.

"And now it is farewell," he said quietly. "We are never likely to meet again. But whenever you hear men saying that the Black Shadow is a thief and a murderer, remember to-night's adventure. Farewell!"

And he was gone, striding swiftly across the cliffs.

Corporal Keith Kennedy of the N.W. Mounted Police and his negro pal, Timberhead, appear next week. They are out to catch every member of the Six Star gang, and the chase leads them into some startling adventures. Don't miss this ripping yarn.

NEW MYSTERIES AND MARVELS IN THE UNCHARTED VOID !

*The Gripping Story of***AMAZA****PLANET OF PERIL.**

Specially Written for the "Mag." by

BERNARD BULEY*The Famous Scientific Writer.*

THE countless forces of Amaza landed in England on Salisbury Plain, and at other principal towns in Europe. They were gradually gaining the upper hand: wiping out whole brigades; bombarding London, and destroying the machines of war that were launched against them to stem the tide of their devastating advance.

In spite of the defensive ray web in Jimmy's possession, the invaders were wreaking terrible havoc. And, to cap all, Blattner swooped down in his helicopter and captured Monty Mildmay and Jimmy Wade, and the ray web.

As the teuton warlord stooped to switch off the ray, however, Monty gave him a mighty kick that knocked all the breath out of him.

"A killing, is it, by hokey?" roared Spike Derriker, and rushed at the two lads, his terrible hook raised to slash at them.

The Helicopter Captured.

JIMMY WADE and Monty turned as they saw the sailor springing at them with his terrible hook.

All they had to fear was that a lucky slash from that iron hook might break their glassite helmets.

They sprang, and fastened on to Spike Derriker like leeches. Luck was on their side, for the sailor's foot slipped, and he crashed down on his back.

Only by sheerest chance—for him—was it that his glassite helmet did not hit the metal platform of the helicopter.

It was going upwards, like a released gas balloon, but with terrific velocity. The lads' senses were swimming.

So also must have been the sailor's—or else all the fight was gone out of him. He had seen Blattner crash down as if dead, and at bottom, the blustering hook-clawed sailor was an arrant coward. The thought of his helmet cracking terrified him.

So he suddenly relapsed, sobbing with hard dry

breath. Cunning lay behind this move of Spike Derriker's, though the boys did not know it. It will be remembered he had signalled the space cruisers. He hoped for rescue from them.

"Strap him up; he's dangerous!" gritted Jimmy Wade.

There were leather straps hanging from the rails supporting an ammunition carrier. Grimly holding on to their nerve on the lifting helicopter, they secured the straps, and made Spike Derriker fast with his arms bound behind him and his legs buckled up under him.

When at last they straightened, reaching for the rails to steady themselves, they had the satisfaction of seeing the two terrors of space helpless before them.

But, indeed, everything was a blur. While the sheer sensation of speed gripped with an iron hand at their hearts. "Must stop this," Monty muttered, and lurched to the centre control tower.

There he saw a lever marked "Elevator," and he switched it down hastily.

The result was amazing. Like the sudden cessation of a storm, a dead calm following. The vicious thrum of the helicopter fan died to a gentle purr, and they were still, motionless in space.

"Look!" cried Jimmy Wade, pointing. His shrill voice rang with fear as Monty sprang to his side.

"The space cruisers of Amaza. Look! A score or more of them!" Jimmy Wade shouted. "They've seen us; they're coming for us, Monty!"

It was an awe-inspiring sight. Twenty immense glowing cigar shapes were circling in the blackness of space. They could not have been more than three terrestrial miles distant. And plainly the lads could see guns bristling from their sides; see Amazans in their grotesque space suits scrambling over the decks, as if clearing them for action.

A glance at their own ray guns told them that both of them had been fired. Jimmy made a helpless gesture.

Then suddenly a loud buzzing, and a flash of sparks, broke out from the wireless. And the chums crossed to it quickly.

Its inky claw was tracing out the dots and dashes of the morse code on the paper under the glass.

Surrender (the lads read). Give up our master, Professor Blattner and his servant. Else a terrible fate shall swiftly be yours.

The message ceased. Instantly Jimmy seized the tapper, and energetically rapped out a single word in reply. *NEVER!*

He grinned at his chum. "That's done it," he said. "We don't know what to expect, but I've got a hunch it's something particularly beastly. And b'gosh," he blazed out fiercely, "we're not going to let these two blighters get away with it while we go West. Let's heave 'em overboard, Monty!"

In other circumstances both lads would have shrunk from the idea. But they had been hardened by all they had gone through. These two were deadly enemies of the World, and both Jimmy and Monty felt that they should be put out of the way as a dreadful menace.

Bending over Clubfoot Blattner, they seized the villainous space schemer and lifted him as high as the lower rail. And they tossed Blattner between that and the higher rail as if he had been a bag of meal.

They stooped for Spike Derriker, screaming now with fear underneath his glassite helmet. What mattered it? He had shown them no mercy.

"One—two—three!" measured Jimmy Wade grimly. And at the third intonation they heaved the swinging body of the hook-clawed sailor through the rails.

Without even a second glance at the two villains they had cast overboard the chums of space stared out into the darkness at the space cruisers, expecting them to open fire.

Suddenly they gasped. "What is it? What's happening?" cried Monty.

They might well have asked. For sweeping up out of the gloom suddenly, like a mighty shooting star, came yet another space cruiser. And its guns were blazing! Was it firing at its own friends?

It was travelling at far greater speed than the flotilla closing in menacingly upon the lone helicopter. It came like a mighty flash out of the darkness—and destroyed.

The lads on the helicopter could not know that that streaking starship held Professor Hawke Cruise

and Nick. They had repaired their damaged engines, and had managed to get away from the lake of Mallemitte, travelling at speed to the scene of strife. Then rising up above, where no atmosphere obtained, they had streaked in from behind—to strike.

"It's war, Nick!" the Professor had cried in a ringing voice. "When I give the word—fire!"

Nick ran to the gun, and swiftly had it ready for action. Then he waited tensely as the starship bore down at a fearful rate upon the Amazon fleet.

At a word from the Professor, he loosed the wrath of the ray gun. And the last ship in the fleet dropped in white, incandescent flame.

Actually the rearmost space cruiser was far behind the rest of the Amaza fleet, and so swiftly was it done, so concentrated were the rest upon the attack, that the annihilation of one of their number passed completely unnoticed.

Though strangely enough the starship that had gone to its doom bore the commander of the fleet. He had been diving his ship under the others, in order to bear down more swiftly upon the helicopter. For the Amazans had seen what Jimmy Wade and Monty Mildmay had not been able to see.

The two villains of space were floating beneath the helicopter!

Observing that their swift attack upon the rearmost of the Amazon fleet had passed unnoticed, Professor Hawke Cruise in the space cruiser came to a momentous decision.

"We can't fight them all, Nick," he exclaimed, turning to his nephew. "But we'll try strategy. We'll take the place of this ship we've dropped, and watch our opportunity."

It was a pity for Jimmy Wade and Monty Mildmay that they did not realise what was taking place, nor recognise their own friends.

The Globed Reptiles.

THE flotilla had moved nearer, and now Jimmy Wade and Monty Mildmay, standing on the deck of the helicopter, saw the airlock doorway of the foremost ship opening. Grim Amazans stood on the threshold.

"What have they got there?" cried Jimmy Wade in sudden shrill fear.

Huge crystal globes, they appeared to be, and the Amazans in the six leading starships were rolling them out from the airlock chambers. Now they were floating in space like immense bubbles—floating towards the helicopter.

The two lads stared at them, frozen with horror. For each held some horrible, reptilian monster, impossible to describe. They were like giant lizards, but of so loathesome an aspect, with pointed teeth, clawing and scratching at the transparent globes that encased them, that they could not be said really to resemble any even of the lowest order of reptiles seen on earth.

Their eyes were sly, film-covered, yet shot with fierce rays as they glared at the chums on the helicopter. They seemed to hold them transfixed, hypnotised, whilst a wild terror ran through them.

"They're going to board the helicopter!" Jimmy Wade gasped. "Can't we do anything?"

For answer Monty Mildmay sprang to the controls. The red-headed lad knew nothing of its mechanism, but he was game to experiment—to try any ruse that might aid them to escape this horror.

But though he moved the "elevator" lever, and the "forward" lever, nothing happened. They remained motionless in space.

His fat chum all of a sudden remembered the defensive ray box on the platform of the helicopter, and he bent to it hastily. With a great gasp of relief, he switched on the power.

But nothing happened. Barely stifled cries rose to the boys' lips.

What had gone wrong? Why wouldn't the helicopter controls act? And the ray box?

The terrible crystal globes were looming upon the helicopter now, and Jimmy and Monty had nothing with which to protect themselves, no weapon of defence.

"Look!" shrieked Monty suddenly.

A stifled gasp came from Jimmy. The foremost globe had landed on the platform of the helicopter, and had broken like an eggshell. From it emerged the monster of Amaza, grotesquely clambering over the rails.

Its mouth, full of horrible crooked teeth, kept snapping like a yelping dog's, but its baleful eyes were fixed on the boy space adventurers. The lads stepped back against the farther rails, and it seemed to each in that moment of dire peril that his reason was reeling.

While this was taking place, the space cruisers of

crystal shells containing the monsters—can well be understood.

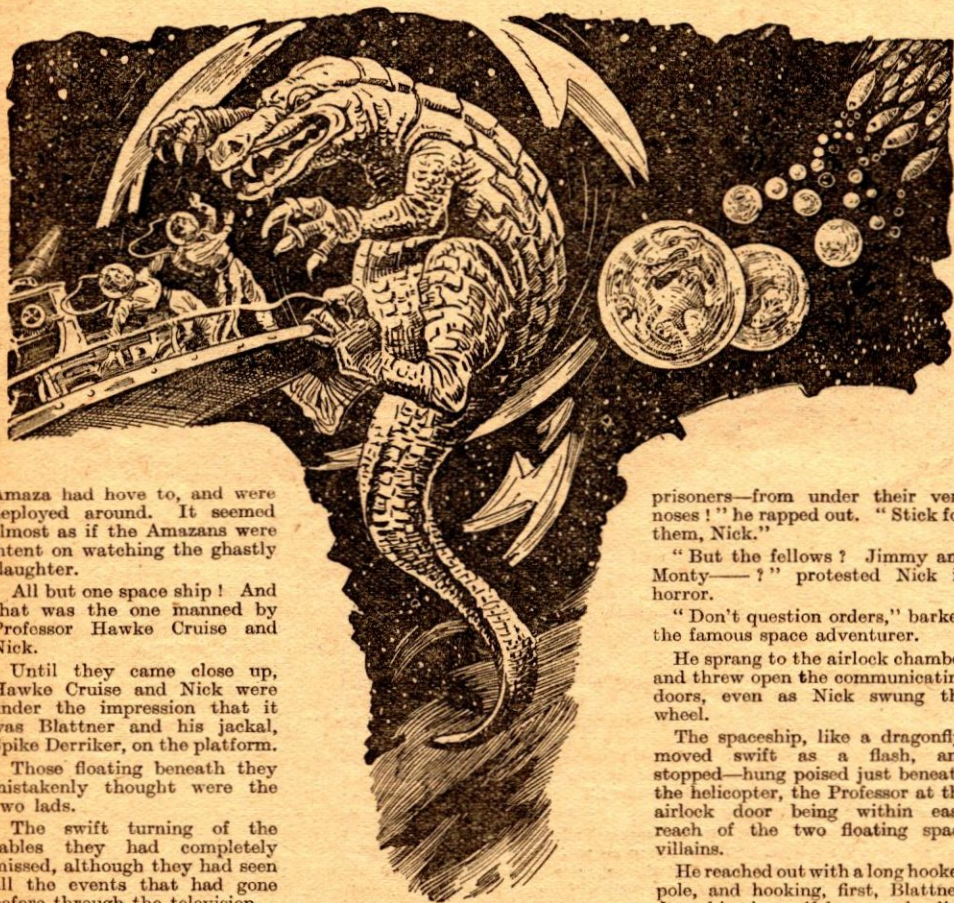
The Professor had to make up his mind how to act. And quickly! If he made a move to rescue the boys he would betray himself and Nick, and the armoured fleet of Amaza would fall upon him with blazing guns.

The Professor had no defensive ray box aboard. Though by a simple device, known only to himself, he had put Jimmy Wade's out of action directly he had seen the lad about to use it. But that was when he had believed Jimmy was Clubfoot B'atner! And it was too late.

Three of the shells had landed on the helicopter now, and had cracked, erupting their fearful occupants.

Professor Hawke Cruise had only a moment or two left to him in which to act. And he determined on a very bold move.

"We've got to take Clubfoot Blattner and Derriker



Amaza had hove to, and were deployed around. It seemed almost as if the Amazons were intent on watching the ghastly slaughter.

All but one space ship! And that was the one manned by Professor Hawke Cruise and Nick.

Until they came close up, Hawke Cruise and Nick were under the impression that it was Blattner and his jackal, Spike Derriker, on the platform.

Those floating beneath they mistakenly thought were the two lads.

The swift turning of the tables they had completely missed, although they had seen all the events that had gone before through the television.

Their surprise and consternation on recognising the lads through their glassite helmets—Jimmy and Monty standing powerless against these horrible

prisoners—from under their very noses!" he rapped out. "Stick for them, Nick."

"But the fellows? Jimmy and Monty—?" protested Nick in horror.

"Don't question orders," barked the famous space adventurer.

He sprang to the airlock chamber and threw open the communicating doors, even as Nick swung the wheel.

The spaceship, like a dragonfly, moved swift as a flash, and stopped—hung poised just beneath the helicopter, the Professor at the airlock door being within easy reach of the two floating space villains.

He reached out with a long hooked pole, and hooking, first, Blattner, drew him in as if he were landing a fish; then he performed the same service for Spike Derriker.

It is not to be supposed that the Professor was callous of the boys in their fearful plight. The fighting

GLOBED DEATH.—One of the great glassite globes struck the helicopter and burst. Next moment the huge Amazan reptile was scrambling on to the machine.

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scientist was desperately hoping that Jimmy and Monty would have sufficient presence of mind to throw themselves off the helicopter.

Their weight would carry them as far down as Clubfoot and Derriker had come, and he would thus be able to rescue them.

But the Professor could not know that both Jimmy and Monty imagined that they would crash down to earth.

Swift as he had got his prisoners, Professor Hawke Cruise shut the airlock door and turned his head; a word to Nick who manipulated the wheel, and the space cruiser flashed up in a lightning spiral to the helicopter.

Fighting the Monsters.

FACE to face with the monsters of Amaza bursting from their shells on the deck of the helicopter, Jimmy and Monty braced themselves against the further rail, their faces set, determined.

The creatures were creeping, crawling over the helicopter deck. They seemed very sure of their prey, very slow, sluggish in movement. Only their eyes, glaring and fearful, told of their awful anticipation of a meal.

Jimmy and Monty could scarce take their eyes from the spectacle of the ferocious brutes creeping upon them inch by inch. They felt that their death would be a terrible one. They would be torn limb from limb by these horrible brutes of another planet.

If only they had some weapon—something with which to smash at those snapping jaws with cruel, crooked teeth!

Out of the corners of their eyes the lads saw a space cruiser flash down beneath their ken.

They did not know that it contained Professor Hawke Cruise and Nick. The fighting scientist and his nephew were on the scene: they were rescuing Clubfoot Blattner and Spike Derriker, unknown to the boys. Rescuing their enemies because they could do nothing else. They were surrounded by hostile space cruisers, and if it became known that they were the earthlings, they would immediately be knocked from space in flaring white flame.

As he stood at the airlock door of the space cruiser, fishing Blattner and Spike Derriker in with the hooked pole, the fighting scientist turned, his blue eyes burning with a fierce light. He had a wild, improbable scheme for rescuing the boys.

"Nick, the rapiers!" he rapped out sharply. "Get them! We must do what we can!"

Hurriedly, even as he turned the wheel, Nick darted away from his post. In half-a-minute he had the rapiers in his hands. The Professor carried them aboard the starship for the sake of the exercise they afforded, and he and Nick were accomplished fencers.

Now the rapiers were to come in for an entirely different use.

The fighting scientist had studied deeply the conditions on Amaza, and he had a theory that those beasts from the dying planet on the helicopter deck

had some vulnerable spot, in spite of their scaly armour—and it was this spot that Jimmy and Monty must find with the rapiers.

Up in a flash the starship whirled, level with the helicopter and the boys, gripping the rails, surrounded by the snapping monsters. Their eyes staring in horror from their heads. There was only one thing the fighting scientist could do—the ruse he had reckoned—and now he put it into effect.

He flung first one shining foil, in a flashing arc, through the gloom of space, then the other, quick as lightning, his aim unerring.

Both whirling blades took effect. They bit into two of the monsters who were on the point of leaping up at the throats of the boy space-adventurers. The rapiers went home into the greyish-coloured flesh beneath.

And they found the vulnerable spots. The brutes started with fearful, dumb, inarticulate sounds. They had been more than stung: blood, black as ink, horrible and repulsive, oozed from their greyish bellies.

Startled, Jim and Monty looked up. Their fear changed to joyful cries as they recognised the Professor and Nick. Instantly they understood what was demanded of them.

Quick as light, each had seized the handle of one of the quivering rapiers and pulled it out, thrusting them again and again into the brutes who, but a few moments before, seemed to hold them so surely at their mercy.

They drove at the eyes and at the fat, loathsome bellies of the beasts. And in a few moments there was a bedlam of surging, pushing beasts, seeking desperately to escape from those flashing, stabbing rapiers.

It was the opportunity Professor Hawke Cruise sought. He had Blattner and Spike Derriker prisoners, and he meant to travel back to Amaza with them! To stop at its source the peril with which this planet threatened the world. Only by posing as Amazans themselves could Hawke Cruise and Nick hope to succeed.

"Over them!" ordered the Professor, and the starship flashed nearer the helicopter.

Hawke Cruise leant out. "We are going to loose your controls!" he shouted. "Drop over Earth! Understand? We'll blow you up!"

What he meant by this, Jimmy and Monty could not understand. They could scarce distinguish his words, in fact, though they tried to read his lip-language, as they had been taught to do.

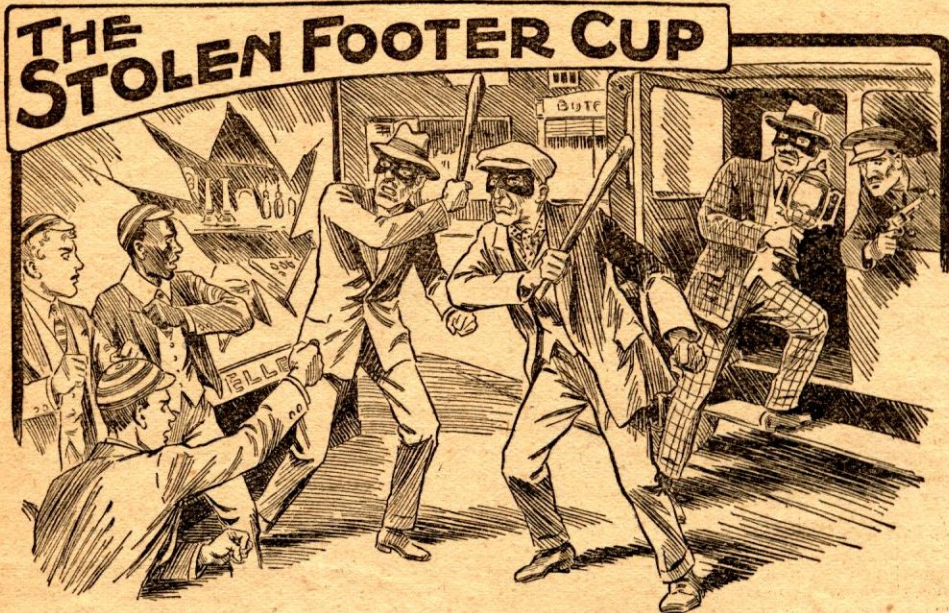
They saw that the Professor was issuing rapid-fire directions to Nick. They saw the Amazans peering from the space-cruisers, under the impression that this was their Commander. But the lads did not know what Professor Hawke Cruise knew—that the Amazans' eyesight was exceedingly poor. They could not see well in the gloom of space. They had missed those flashing rapiers entirely. The Amazans watched in amaze and consternation as the boys drove and lunged at the beasts, killing them like pigs. It must have seemed to them some form of magic.

But now Jimmy and Monty themselves saw with horror and consternation a gun swivelling round from Professor Hawke Cruise's spaceship. It was manoeuvred by Nick, and seemed to be directed at them. It seemed that the Professor meant to annihilate his own friends, for there was a sudden terrible vivid flash like lightning.

When it had died, the helicopter was no longer there. It had gone.

The Boys of St. Giddy's Here Again, Chums! The Mystery of Blenkinhorn, THE SOCCER SONNETEER—Solved by the Wizard Centre.

FOOTBALL, FUN AND DRAMA AT THE SCHOOL OF ADVENTURERS.



ANOTHER OF THE SCHOOL TALES THAT BEAT THE BAND. Quite Complete.

The Footer Cup.

"GOAL! Hurrah!" chirruped Dick Bannister. "That puts the kybosh on the Upper Fourth, I reckon!"

Johnny Gee, the popular junior skipper, and hero of the Remove, had just kicked another goal for his side, in the last phase of the match between the Remove and the Upper Fourth!

Soper of the Fifth, who was refereeing the match, gave a sheep on his whistle, and the match was over, with the score of 4-1 in favour of the Remove!

A tall, long-haired youth with enormous feet, came clumping along to Johnny Gee & Co., his eyes shining with excitement.

"Come, let us shout and dance with glee, upon your splendid victory!" he cried. "Let the welkin ring from south to north, for thou hast licked the Upper Fourth!"

The Joyous Juniors grinned widely. Clarence Blenkinhorn was the latest addition to the ranks of the Remove and he was, indeed, a crazy poet. He made all his remarks in verse or jingles.

A tall, handsome, sturdy young man who had been watching the latter phases of the match, stepped up to Johnny Gee & Co. from the pavilion. It was none other than Jack Jordan, the famous international footballer who was now playing for Norchester United.

"Hallo, my lads!" he exclaimed, shaking hands with Johnny. "I came over to see you about something important, and was glad I dropped in just in time to see you play. You did splendidly!"

"Thanks awfully, sir!" said Johnny, his eyes shining proudly.

"I can see that you have a first-rate team, Gee," he said. "As a matter of fact, it was concerning football that I came over to see you. I am offering a Silver Cup, to be played for by the junior teams of this school and Earlswood respectively."

"Gug-g-great pip!"

"The Cup I have already procured," went on Jack Jordan, smiling, "and it is now on view in the window of the sports shop in Merivale High Street!"

Johnny Gee & Co. looked at one another, and at Jack Jordan, and their gleaming eyes and beaming faces betokened their eagerness.

"It is something that I owe you, my lads, for your bravery in saving me from that rascal Hugenberg and his gang of 'sporting' racketeers," said Jack Jordan.

Johnny Gee & Co. had not looked for any reward for the services they had rendered Jack Jordan, in his battle of wits with the gang of crooks of whom Carl Hugenberg, a notorious figure in the world of sport, was the leader.

Hugenberg had set out to smash the Norchester United team and, for some reason that the chums of the Remove could not fathom, was aiming to kill Jack Jordan, or to get that popular young footballer in his power.

It had come as a great surprise to them to find that Clarence Blenkinhorn was a friend of Jack Jordan, and was, in some mysterious manner, implicated in the "racket" that Hugenberg had launched against the footballer pro. It was evident that some more than ordinary relationship existed between the potty poet of the Remove and Jordan.

"My hat! What will those Earlswood bounders

say, when they hear of this?" exclaimed Johnny Gee enthusiastically. "We must breeze down to Merivale and have a dekho at the Cup!"

"I must be off, now," said Jack Jordan, with a smile. "The match, I would mention, will have to be played very soon—on Saturday, I suggest, as I shall be going North with the Norchester United team on tour, and naturally I want to see the game for the Cup before I go."

Johnny Gee grinned serenely.

"That suits us, sir!" he said. "We'll fix it with Rhodes and his crowd!"

The young footballer took his departure from St. Giddy's and Johnny Gee & Co. noticed that he had quite a lengthy conversation with Clarence Blenkinhorn at the gates before he left.

The chums of the Remove rushed indoors to change, and they lost no time in setting forth to the village.

They were not surprised to see a crowd of boys wearing the blue and white caps of Earlwood School, swarming outside the sports shop in the old-fashioned High Street at Merivale.

"Hallo, you St. Giddy's worms!" Tommy Rhodes, the leader of the rival juniors, greeted them. "Have you come to see our Cup?"

"Don't you be so cocksure, you Earlwood microbes," retorted Johnny Gee, glowering. "That Cup's coming home to St. Giddy's to roost!"

The St. Giddy's juniors gazed at the large Silver Cup that was mounted on a plush cushion, prominent in the window of the sports shop. It was, indeed, a handsome trophy, and one to be prized by the lucky victors.

The Earlwood boys made an ominous concerted movement towards Mr. Snook's grocery store, outside which a large crate of eggs "going cheap" was displayed. Johnny Gee was quick to sense the significance of this manoeuvre.

"We must stick up a barrier!" he said. "Kim on—let's shift these carts!"

There were two large farmers' wagons drawn up at the side of the green. They were empty and horseless. That troop of lusty Remove lads dragged and pushed at the carts, and soon had them shifted to a new position.

The barricade was set up only just in time, for a few moments later there was a loud whooping noise, and the Earlwood boys came dashing along. The Removeites were outnumbered, but they stood on the farm wagons, and whacked manfully at the foe below after the preliminary showers of over-ripe eggs.

All at once the roar of a powerful motor-car was heard coming along the Merivale Lane towards the green. An electric horn shrieked its strident warning and Tommy Rhodes & Co. scattered before the oncoming vehicle.

Crash! The car that had come whirling out of the Merivale Lane at top speed had swerved wildly, the driver taking the mad risk of driving between the wagons and then going across the green.

The front bumper of the car struck the wheel of the wagon and went on, but the impact had upset the driver's steering, and it went lurching dizzily across the green, and then ran full tilt into the duck-pond.

Two men came scrambling out of the car, and as soon as he saw them, Johnny Gee gave vent to a loud, ringing shout:

"Hold those rotters! They're up against Jack Jordan."

The rival juniors joined in a swift rush across the green, but Hugenberg and his confederate had had a good start, and were out of sight before the combined forces had time to get across the green.

Tony Graham was the first to notice the bubbles

that were coming to the surface of the pond from the semi-submerged car.

"There's someone inside the car, and—and he can't get out!" he shouted. "Those villains have left him to drown!"

Johnny Gee, followed by half-a-dozen others, waded out into the murky pond. They dragged open the door of the rapidly sinking car, and Dick Bannister gave a gasp of amazement.

"Great pip! It's Blenkinhorn!"

Johnny Gee and the others grasped the Removeite poet in sturdy hands, dragged him out of the car, and took him to the bank, where he was released from his bonds. Fortunately, he was little the worse for his hair-raising experience.

"What happened, Blenkinhorn?" demanded the Remove leader.

"Groooooogh!" gurgled Blenkinhorn. "That car outside the school did stop, and then they caught me on the hop. Without a chance to run or hide, I was seized upon and dragged inside."

Johnny Gee grinned. "Jolly lucky we happened to be having a rag with those Earlwood rotters, and so nipped Hugenberg's little kidnapping game in the bud!" he remarked.

P.C. Dooley, the village constable, was quickly on the scene, and he took down copious notes, with all the majesty pertaining to the law. After which the rival juniors parted at the cross-roads, both parties vowing to win the Cup.

At Crupper's Copse.

JOHNNY GEE lost no time in getting his team together. When the list was posted on the notice-board, everyone agreed that he had made the best selection—barring a few malcontents.

George Cadman, the bully of the Remove, was the chief of these.

"What a come-down it would be for Gee, if he didn't win the Cup, after all!" muttered Lucas, the bully's crony, while they watched the Remove team at practice one day.

Cadman nodded, and gritted his teeth angrily.

Johnny Gee kept his team hard at practice during the ensuing days, and on Saturday the hopes of the St. Giddy's juniors ran high.

After dinner on the day of the match, Johnny Gee, Tony Graham, and Lord Reggie Pelham-Smith repaired unto Study No. 4. There was still an hour to go before the Earlwood fellows were due to arrive. The chums were discussing the prospects, and the weather, which was getting a little stormy, when Buttons, the school page, poked his head in at the door.

"A note for you, Master Gee," he announced, placing an envelope on the table. "It was handed in at the gates by a boy from Earlwood just now."

Greatly wondering, Johnny took up the missive and opened it. The note was written in the well-known scrawling "fist" of Tommy Rhodes, and it ran as follows:

Dear Gee,—Would you mind bringing along a couple of your chaps to meet me at the old stile at Crupper's Copse right away? I am waiting there for you, now. Please don't fail to come along. It's urgent.

Yours,

TOMMY RHODES.

The Remove captain gazed in astonishment at this epistle, and handed it to his chums to read.

"Begad! This is deuced strange, an' all that, y'know!" observed Lord Reggie.

"It's certainly very mysterious," said Johnny Gee. "Anyway, we've plenty of time, so I'll go along and see what the trouble is. Who's coming along?"

Tony Graham and Lord Reggie elected to accom-

pany their leader. The trio put on their caps and left St. Giddy's, bending their steps across the fields towards the appointed meeting-place. At length they came to the old stile at Crupper's Copse, and halted there.

"Funny," remarked Johnny Gee, looking round wonderingly. "Rhodes said in his note that he was waiting, yet there's nobody here, and— Oh, my hat! Look out!"

Johnny's warning came too late! A number of youthful figures, wearing black masks, dashed out of ambush close to the stile, brandishing sticks. The three chums staggered under the sudden onrush, but put up a desperate fight. The odds were too heavy against them, however, and they went down one by one.

"Tie 'em up!" said a gruff voice. "We'll shove 'em in Crupper's old barn, and they'll be safe there for the rest of the afternoon."

"You rotters!" shouted Johnny Gee fiercely. "So this is a trap to keep us from playing in the match this afternoon—"

His voice was drowned by the roar of mocking laughter from his assailants, whom it was impossible to recognise under the masks they wore.

The three victims of the trap were tied up with

crowd was augmented by Earlswood fellows, who had come over with their team.

The Earlswood boys were growing impatient, and the ground at St. Giddy's resounded with their whistles and cat-calls.

"Look here, you St. Giddy's worms, are you going to start this match, or are you not?" demanded Tommy Rhodes briskly. "If three of your men can't be found, you'll have to play reserves, that's all. You don't want to scratch the game altogether, I suppose?"

Dick Bannister set his teeth doggedly.

"No—we'll have to play!" he said. "Bob, I think you'll have to skipper our side, until Johnny turns up."

The Hon. Bob Vernon nodded.

Jack Jordan, who had consented to referee the match, went on the field with the teams, and the two captains tossed the coin. Tommy Rhodes won, and chose to play against the wind.

Pheep! The whistle went, and the play opened with great gusto.

The ball was collared by Snowball, the little darkie winger on the right, and he sped away with it like a hare. He centred the ball perfectly, and all eyes turned on Ward, who ran forward to meet the ball.



THE VILLAGE LAUGHING STOCKS.—The four Earlswood boys were left in the village stocks, their hair glued, their faces chalked and dressed in comic footer togs. Before them was a battered pail as a Cup.

lengths of strong cord. Then they were dragged through the bushes, into a large barn in a remote part of Crupper's land.

With mocking chuckles, the six departed, and Johnny Gee, Tony Graham, and Lord Reggie were left alone.

The Cup Match Fiasco.

"WHERE the dickens is Johnny Gee?" That question was being asked on all sides, at St. Giddy's.

It was half-past three o'clock and the playing field was crowded. All the school had been waiting for half-an-hour to see the game for the Cup, and the

It missed his head by inches, and dropped to the ground, to be instantly scooped up by Frank Girling of Earlswood and rushed up the field in a twinkling.

There was a groan from the boys of St. Giddy's drowned by the jubilant shouts of the Earlswood fellows, as Tommy Rhodes, crashing in a fast shot, got the ball past Otto Schmidt's hands.

The play went on, a stern struggle. The Remove team played up like Trojans. The Hon. Bob Vernon seized on the ball as it rebounded from the crossbar, and he travelled away with it at lightning speed. There was a fierce scrimmage in mid-field, and Erroll distinguished himself by getting the ball in a break-

away, and shooting it across to Snowball. Again the dashing little darkie of the Remove sped away with the rolling leather, and after getting the better of the Earlswood left back, he dodged round him and whipped the ball across to the Hon. Bob Vernon. And Bob was not slacking! He took a swift, sure shot that beat the goalie hands down!

Tommy Rhodes & Co. attacked strongly. After a regular firework display round the goal again, it came as no surprise to the spectators when the ball again found its way into the net.

The score remained unaltered at half-time.

The hopes of the boys of St. Giddy's sank lower and lower. The wind was quite strong now, and whereas the home side were showing signs of strain after their gruelling struggle in the first half, Tommy Rhodes and Co. were almost as fresh as daisies. And they would have the wind in their favour in the second half!

Earlswood attacked right from the kick-off for the second half, and though the home players did their utmost to keep the enemy at bay, they were soon penned in their own territory again.

When the last whistle went, the score was 5-2 against St. Giddy's, and a great cheer went up from the Earlswood fellows.

"Hurrah! We've won the Cup!"

"Rats! You cheats! You've won by means of a rotten trick!"

It was Johnny Gee's voice, rising clearly through the medley of shouts as he came dashing on to the field, followed by Tony Graham and Lord Reggie.

Johnny Gee, his handsome face flushed, his fists clenched hard together, stood facing the rival captain.

"You cad, Rhodes!" he hissed between his clenched teeth. "You lured me and two of my players out to Crupper's Copse, and then a crowd of your fellows set about us and had us tied up in the barn for the afternoon! We should be there now if a tramp hadn't come in and discovered us. We had to pay him to let us loose, and now we've come to have it out with you—you cheat!"

"What do you mean, Gee?" demanded Tommy Rhodes. "I don't know what you are talking about."

"You lie!" burst out Johnny Gee fiercely. "You know you are telling rotten lies, Rhodes. Take that, you hound!"

Smack! Johnny's open palm smote across the Earlswood leader's face like the crack of a whip.

"Now put up your fists, you rotter—I'm going to give you the thrashing of your life!" rapped out Johnny.

The Earlswood leader's face went crimson. He spluttered something incoherently, and then sprang at Johnny Gee. Next moment the two rivals were fighting hammer and tongs.

Dick Bannister sent up a stentorian shout. "Come on, Remove! Down with these Earlswood wasters!"

Within a few minutes a terrific battle was raging on the junior playing-field at St. Giddy's. Footballers and spectators fought together in a milling, struggling mass. It was a scene without parallel on a football-ground.

The situation was getting ugly, when Jack Jordan and Wellesley & Co., by shouldering their way into the midst of the excited combatants, managed to restore some semblance of order.

"Now what's this all about?" rapped Jack Jordan in angry tones.

"You've heard, sir, what happened!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "We were enticed out of school by a note from Rhodes, and when we got to the place he appointed, we were set upon by Earlswood fellows wearing masks, and dumped in a barn for the afternoon—to keep us out of the match and so make certain of these cads winning!"



Through the trap Snowball hooked the cup with his fishing rod and line.

"And I say it's a lie!" shouted back Tommy Rhodes. "I didn't send you any note, Gee! Let's have a look at it, anyhow!"

Johnny felt in his pockets, and a look of perplexity crossed his face.

"I—I can't find it now!" he exclaimed. "It must have dropped out of my pocket in the struggle at Crupper's Copse. Graham and Pelham-Smith can back me up in what I say, though. They read the note, and it was in your handwriting, Rhodes. But you shan't have the Cup! Come on, chaps!" The Remove leader turned to his followers, his eyes flashing with anger. "We'll go down to the village and take the Cup by force from the sports shop, and we won't give it up until this match has been replayed and it's been properly decided who is the winner!"

Johnny Gee dashed off to the gates, followed by a crowd of Removites, including the defeated team. Down the High Street they surged, with Tommy Rhodes & Co., until they came to the sports shop. There, in the window, stood the handsome silver Cup. "Some of you can come in with me, and—Oh!"

The Remove captain broke off with a start of alarm.

The schoolboys crowded in the High Street were leaping on to the pavement, to avoid being run down by a large car that had come speeding along from the direction of Norwich.

Three roughly dressed, burly looking men were in the car, which swerved sharply to the pavement outside the sports shop. Two of them, hulking ruffians of the bruiser type, leaped from the car, and sprang across the pavement to the shop. The foremost raised a heavy weapon and, with one terrific blow, shattered the plate-glass window. Thrusting his arm through the gap, he snatched up the Cup and jumped into the car again.

With a fierce roar of the engine, the raiders' car shot up the High Street and disappeared down a side turning.

"Oh, my hat!" Johnny Gee gasped, absolutely

dumbfounded. "The villains—they've stolen the Cup under our very noses!"

A large blue sports car drove up, and Jack Jordan sprang out. Hastily Johnny Gee explained what had happened.

"Good heavens! The Cup—gone!" Jack Jordan cried hoarsely. "It has been stolen by Hugenberg's gangsters?"

"Yes, sir—I recognised two of them as the villains who attacked you in the wood last week!" replied the Remove captain swiftly.

"Which way did they go?" rapped out the footballer.

He drove off at top speed in his car, taking one of the shopmen and P.C. Dooley with him. The big blue speedster swung round into the side street on screaming wheels, and was then lost to view.

Johnny Gee & Co. were left in the High Street, gazing in horror and consternation at one another. Johnny Gee turned fiercely to his followers.

"Let's settle with these Earlswood cheats now!" exclaimed the Remove leader. "We'll make examples of four of them. Rhodes, Nutter, Girling, and Cakebread will do—they're the ringleaders!"

The four youths named backed away hastily, but they were surrounded by the St. Giddy's boys so that there was no escape.

"We're going to put you four rotters in the village stocks, as an example to all and sundry!" said Johnny Gee grimly.

Tommy Rhodes & Co. roared and protested, struggling wildly, but they were dragged down the High Street to the Market Square, where the old-fashioned village stocks were still standing.

They were large, and there was room for four occupants. A length of rope was procured, and poor Tommy Rhodes and his three hapless comrades were stuck in the stocks and roped there securely. Glue

was rubbed into their hair, and their faces adorned with ink.

Johnny Gee's quick eyes had seen an old, battered pail in a refuse bin, and he took this out and placed it in front of the four gasping Earlswood boys.

He chalked on the side of it, "THE CUP," and stuck a large placard over Tommy Rhodes & Co., bearing this legend in huge, glaring characters:

THE CUP WINNERS!

Please Throw Something!

"Now then, gents, roll up and feast your eyes on the glorious heroes!" cried Johnny Gee. "Throw what you like at 'em. The entertainment's free!"

"Haw, haw, haw!" guffawed the highly tickled villagers, and missiles flew in great profusion at the hapless boys in the stocks.

At length, all the other Earlswood fellows having been routed out of the village, Johnny Gee & Co. returned to St. Giddy's. They left their hapless rivals in their humiliating position, the centre of a large and chortling crowd.

The Potty Poet Pinched.

"HALLO! There's our tame poet again!" chuckled Dick Bannister.

It was evening at St. Giddy's. The tall, skinny form of Clarence Blenkinhorn was strolling about in the quadrangle, and it was easy for the chums of the Remove to see that he was in another of his poetic moods.

Johnny Gee & Co. grinned as they watched him pass through the gates and meander down the Merivale Lane, wrapt in poetic thought.

He was, like the immortal Wordsworth, "wandering lonely as a cloud," and he took no heed of the mundane things about him. Blenkinhorn's mind was troubled—he could not find the last lines to the verses in his "Ode to Evening."

Thus, Blenkinhorn wandered into the stilly



THE (C)UPLIFTING.—The men uttered startled gasps as the cup was whisked off the table, around which they were gathered, and rose into the air.

fastness of Merivale Wood. But though the wood was stilly, he was not as alone as he thought.

There were prowlers in Merivale Wood that evening. Boyish forms, wearing blue-and-white caps—emblems of Earlswood School—were concealed behind the scenery.

"Shush-sh-sh!" hissed Tommy Rhodes—for it was he, accompanied by certain of his followers. "It's that poetic gink they've got at St. Giddy's. We're in luck's way, my sons! He's likely to stray around like a lost baa-lamb for hours, and soon Gee and his crowd will be after him to yank him home for the more worldly affairs of prep. But in any case, we can use Blenkinhorn as a decoy for those rotters. We could tie him up somewhere, and pinch those big boots of his, and one of us could put 'em on and lead a spoof trail through the wood, to some spot where the rest are lying in wait for them."

Bob Nutter drew a deep breath.

"My aunt! That's a good wheeze, Tommy!" he exclaimed. "Kimmon, and let us be doing things."

Poor Blenkinhorn! He was brought to earth—figuratively and bodily—by the sudden rude and violent attack that burst upon him out of those placid woodland glades.

He gave a dismal yell as his body smote the hard, unsympathetic ground, but he started to hit out with a couple of ham-like fists, delivering several telling blows that fetched yelps of anguish from their recipients.

Blenkinhorn was overpowered, despite the plucky fight he put up; he was duly secured, and his large shoes yanked off. Tommy Rhodes & Co. left him tied to a tree, with a handkerchief stuffed into his mouth to keep him from yelling out.

They departed farther into the wood, tenderly rubbing their many hurts. Tommy Rhodes put on Blenkinhorn's shoes—they were at least four sizes too large for him—and plodded onward through the soft and yielding soil, where tracks were easily made.

Meanwhile, Blenkinhorn was left alone in his parlous predicament. He had been there for a quarter of an hour or more, wriggling in his bonds, when all at once he heard footsteps approaching.

At first it seemed that they must pass him by, but suddenly they stopped within a few yards of him, and he heard an exclamation of surprise.

The footsteps started again, and there was a rustling of the leaves as the newcomer pushed his way to the spot where the poetic Removeite was a prisoner.

Blenkinhorn blinked eagerly at the tall, burly form that emerged into view, and then his heart skipped another beat, and a wave of alarm and terror surged through him. The newcomer was one of Hugenberg's racketeers, the rascal known as Tug!

"Well, if it ain't the very young bantam we're after!" The burly rascal's eyes glittered with a deadly light. "The Boss will be pleased when I take you in. You're comin' alonger me right now, me 'earty!"

Blenkinhorn gasped in dismay behind his gag. The gangster untied the rope that fastened him to the tree, and loosening the bonds on his legs, so as to enable him to walk, he pushed the hapless junior before him into the ever-darkening shadows of the wood.

Pot-Hunting.

"MY hat!" Thus Johnny Gee as he stood at the gates of St. Giddy's in the deepening twilight, with his chums.

A yokel who worked on Farmer Starling's land had just brought him a startling message to the effect that he had seen a tall boy wearing the St. Giddy's cap, with large feet and eyeglasses, struggling in the

wood with "a big, 'ulking villain wot seemed set on a-doin' murder."

"What silly asses we were to allow Blenkinhorn to go out wandering on his own!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "Come on—we must find out where he is, and rescue him. He's evidently run into the hands of one of Hugenberg's gang."

The six Removeites dashed down the lane and into the wood. Following the directions given them by their informant, they plunged onward into the inner fastnesses, until all at once Dick Bannister gave an eager gasp.

"Look! Here are Blenkinhorn's footprints—there's no mistaking the marks of his large hoofs!"

It was growing dark in the wood now, but Johnny always carried a small pocket-torch with him, and he flashed this on the ground, thus enabling him to follow the tracks closely. That trail, in fact, was remarkably easy to follow—the veriest novice could have picked it out, and Johnny Gee was highly skilled in woodcraft.

"I say, Blenkinhorn seems to have walked in the very places where he knew his trail would show!" he exclaimed. "Either he was deliberately making spoof, or—My hat! Here are some other footprints in the grass, not quite so easy to spot!"

Johnny had noted the impression of a smaller foot on some wet leaves, over a yard from the trail he was following. He stepped across on to the grass, and searched closely all round him in the light of the torch. When he rose to his feet again there was a gleam in Johnny Gee's eyes.

"It looks to me as though someone's playing a lark on us!" he said softly. "In fact, I begin to smell a rat! There are at least five other sets of footprints over here, all made by chaps of about our own sized feet. It seems to me, chaps, that we're being spoofed—and by those Earlswood rotters! There's one trail here of a fellow who walks slightly duck-footed, and we all know who that might be."

"Cakebread!" exclaimed the Hon. Bob Vernon swiftly. "He walks with his toes turned in. My word! Rhodes and his gang nabbed Blenkinhorn, and made him leave this trail, to lead us on, after sending that spoof message back to us by the farm-hand!"

The chums of the Remove moved cautiously onwards, spreading themselves out at Johnny's suggestion.

Following the other footprints through the trees, they heard sundry soft chuckles in the well-known tones of Tommy Rhodes & Co. Peering through the foliage, they saw their rivals of Earlswood in ambush.

"Better keep those shoes of Blenkinhorn's out of sight, Tommy!" they heard Bob Nutter say. "The St. Giddy's chaps shouldn't be long now. They'll run right into that booby trap we've rigged up over the path."

"Rather!" chuckled Tommy Rhodes. "We've plenty of cord left to tie 'em up with, and—*Yah! Yaroooooh!* Wh-what the—"

A huge chunk of turf, aimed by an unseen hand, came whizzing across the open space, to strike him full on the chin. Tommy Rhodes went reeling backwards with a yell, and collapsed between Girling and Cakebread.

Johnny Gee & Co., hidden in the trees, had discovered another "dump" of faggots, left there by the wood-cutters. Selecting large, stout branches from the pile, they dashed out into the open, and "went for" their rivals tooth and nail.

"*Swish! Whack! Wallop!* Tommy Rhodes and Co. were taken completely by surprise. The heroes of the Remove drove them down into the path over which the booby-trap had been erected.

Crash! With a fierce swooshing noise, that avalanche of faggots descended on the luckless Earlswood boys, knocking them over and pinning them down, whilst Johnny Gee & Co. advanced, grabbed their kicking legs, and made them secure with the faggot binding.

"Good!" chuckled Johnny Gee, surveying the captives. "Now we'll take their shoes off, and tie 'em on their hands. They can walk home on their mitts, dragging their legs behind 'em."

Quickly the chums of the Remove carried out this plan. It was a comical sight to see those hapless youths crawling along through the wood, wriggling like worms! There was simply no help for it—Tommy Rhodes & Co. had to get back to school, anyway, so they got along as best they could on their hands, followed by roars of laughter from their victorious rivals!

"Now we must find out what the rotters have done with Blenkinhorn!" said Johnny Gee, turning to his chums. "We shall have to look slippy, too. It will be locking-up time soon!"

The Removites hurried back along the trail, and soon Johnny Gee picked out the spot where Blenkinhorn had had his struggle with the Earlswood boys. The Remove captain looked keenly round in the light of his pocket-torch.

"This is where the cads first set about Blenkinhorn, evidently, and they tied him to this tree!" he said. "Hallo! Look over here! Another trail—made by a man, by the look of it—a man wearing large, heavy boots! And— Oh, my hat! He must have taken Blenkinhorn away with him, for here's the double trail now, leading farther on into the wood. This looks jolly queer to me. We shall have to do some more trailing, that's all, and see what we come to."

The chums of the Remove hurried on into the wood, Johnny Gee picking up the trail ahead of them. It led towards the River Rudd, and soon they came out upon the towing-path.

The heavy footprints suddenly turned off the path, and went towards an old, gaunt, tumbledown boathouse jutting out into the river.

The Removites halted in the dark shadows, and gazed at one another with definite alarm now gripping their hearts.

"Mum-my hat!" murmured Dick Bannister. "There must be some dirty business going on in there!"

Johnny Gee nodded grimly. "This might be the hiding-place of Hugenberg and his gang!" he muttered. "A couple of us could get up into the loft, by climbing on the lean-to shed there and getting through the hole in the roof. Are you game to come up with me, Snowball?"

"I'm wid you, Massa Johnny!" whispered the little nigger.

The rest of the Co. remained in hiding down below, whilst Johnny Gee and Snowball clambered on to the shed and then, by agile climbing, gained the roof of the tumble-down boathouse.

Moving with infinite caution, they wormed their way through the hole in the roof, and found themselves in the dark, musty loft over the boathouse. Slowly they crept to the trap-door and crouched close to it so that they could peer through the chinks.

The room was lighted by means of a solitary lamp that cast a sickly yellow glare through the darkness. In the centre was a table on trestles, and around it were gathered four men—Carl Hugenberg, the vulture of the sporting world, and his three gangsters!

Lying on a pile of old mats on the floor, his form half-obscured in the shadows, was Clarence Blenkinhorn, bound securely and gagged.

Something bright and metallic gleamed in the hands

of the man whom they recognised as the fellow who, in the Merivale smash-and-grab affair, had broken the window and seized the loot.

It was the stolen Cup!

"Well, Boss, we've done all you told us to do—an' we've taken big risks," the gangster was saying. "This 'ere's the silver cup you ordered us to get—worth about a fiver, I should say. We've worked 'ard for you, Boss, and you ain't paying us enough for our trouble. Lay thirty quid on the table—that's ten each for us—and the cup's yours!"

Up above, Johnny Gee had been watching this scene in tense, wondering silence. Snowball, however, had crept away silently, like a snake, across the floor of the loft, and had come back with a long object in his hand.

"Dis am a fishin'-rod, Massa Johnny," he whispered in response to his leader's inquiring look. "De ting was lying jus' down here. See dis iron hook I picked up, too? Dis am goin' on de end ob de line—like so! Now you watch dis chile seop up de Cup!"

Greeley had laid the silver cup on the table, whilst Hugenberg paid out a sheaf of Treasury notes. They did not hear the trap-door open softly, or see the coal-black visage of Snowball grinning in the aperture.

The little nigger Removite made an unerring cast, and the hook curled round one of the handles of the Cup. Next minute it was whipped up into mid-air before the startled eyes of the gang, who burst into shouts of amazement and rage.

Hugenberg's dark eyes blazed evilly at the boys framed in the open trap-door aloft.

"Don't let those little whelps get away!" he raved. "I'll murder them for this— Ah!"

There was a crash as Greeley lurched into the table, and the oil-lamp went rolling. It fell into a pile of wood shavings on the floor, where it burst. The oil swamped out, and there was a livid spurt of flame.

Within the space of a few moments the interior of the old wooden boathouse had become a raging inferno. The flames etched the faces of the two juniors at the trap-door above in horror. With a last diabolical look at them, Hugenberg dashed from the blazing room, slamming the door behind him.

Uttering a hoarse cry, Johnny Gee leaped down into the room below, regardless of his own peril. Snowball jumped down, too, and together they fought their way blindly to the spot where Blenkinhorn lay.

The hapless boy could utter no sound, but his eyes were distended with horror as he lay there helpless at the mercy of the flames! Johnny Gee leaped towards him, and with a few swift slashes of his penknife he released him from his bonds.

Blenkinhorn tottered to his feet, but the ordeal of terror had been too much for him, and he swooned in the arms of Johnny Gee and Snowball.

The interior of the boathouse was now a hideous, raging inferno. The ceiling and rafters were alight; the whole place was full of fire and smoke, that choked and blinded the plucky juniors as they fought to open the door.

"Help! Help!" Johnny's voice rang out, dry and hoarse, over the crackling roar of the flames.

There was a shivering crash at the lock, followed by other blows that shattered the woodwork and sent the door rocking inwards on the twisted hinges.

Seeing their chums limned in the red glare from the fire, Johnny and Snowball staggered forward with glad cries. Dick Bannister, wielding a heavy bar of iron, had battered the door down only just in time! Blenkinhorn was taken from his rescuers' arms and laid gently on the grass.

"Where—where are those fiends who locked us in there?" gasped Johnny.

"Oh, they're on their way to the lock-up now!" grinned Dick Bannister. "Jack Jordan arrived just as they came out, and he just stepped into their path and pointed a gun at them! That did the trick! We helped tie 'em up and bundle 'em into Jordan's car. He drove away with the villains just as we saw the flames for the first time, and realised that the place was on fire. My hat! Snowball's got the stolen Cup, by jeminy!"

Snowball gave a rich, rolling chuckle. "You bet I nobber let go ob dat!" he said.

The teeming crowd on the towing-path made way for the doctor who had been summoned to attend to Blenkinhorn. After a swift but thorough examination of the dazed and groaning junior, he looked up into the anxious faces of the Removites.

"He is suffering from shock, but otherwise is not badly hurt," he announced. "He must be taken to bed as soon as possible, and—"

"Here's Jack Jordan's car back again!" cried the Hon. Bob Vernon. "Blenkinhorn can go back to school in that!"

Jack Jordan took Blenkinhorn and the Removites in his car back to St. Giddy's, where Blenkinhorn was instantly put to bed after hurried explanations.

Johnny Gee was later called to the Head's study. Jack Jordan was there.

"You and your chums are to be congratulated, Gee, on the fine work you have performed this evening," said the Head in his deep, scholarly voice. "I have called you here at Mr. Jordan's special request, so that you shall be made acquainted with the facts of this amazing affair."

Jack Jordan was smiling, too. He picked up the Cup, which was on the table, and unscrewed the base. There, in a small aperture thus revealed, appeared a wad of cotton-wool. The young footballer extracted this, and took from it a ring of peculiar design, set with a single stone.

"This," he said, holding up the ring, "was what Hugenberg was after. Under the will of his uncle, Lord Holbrooke, Blenkinhorn inherits a vast fortune when he comes of age, which will be a few years yet, of course. Until that time, I am the boy's guardian, and I have to wear this ring as the token. The setting of the ring beneath the stone is of hard steel, so cut that it forms a key, which opens the lock of the

specially constructed safe which contains, not jewels, as one might suppose, but the papers relating to a secret invention that Lord Holbrooke wished his nephew to develop when he was old enough. Lord Holbrooke, you see, was interested in many things as well as sport, and it was during the course of his scientific researches that he made this great discovery. It was Lord Holbrooke's wish that no one but himself and young Blenkinhorn should hold the secret—a very valuable one, I believe—and he trusted me to keep faith with him."

"A most remarkable and interesting affair," said Dr. Holroyd, nodding.

"These facts were known only to Lord Holbrooke and myself," went on Jack Jordan, "but in some way this rascal, Hugenberg, got to know—he was connected with Lord Holbrooke in his sporting activities—and shortly after his lordship's death, the safe containing the papers was stolen—by Hugenberg. But the man was baffled, for the safe was constructed of the same steel as the key-setting in this ring—a specially-made steel that resists the safe-breaker. He has been using every dastardly trick that he and his gang can resort to in his efforts to get the ring from me. So for safety I hid it in this cup. But the clever rascal found out, somehow, where the ring was hidden, and you know the method he adopted to obtain possession of the Cup. Through questioning Hugenberg's men, and bribing them, I now know where Hugenberg keeps the stolen safe, and I shall take steps to-morrow to recover it."

"It seems strange to me, Mr. Jordan, that a lad of Blenkinhorn's—er—unpractical turn of mind should be chosen by the late Lord Holbrooke to develop the secret of his discovery," said Dr. Holroyd, drily.

"Blenkinhorn, a year ago, was a very different lad from what he is now," replied Jack Jordan. "He came up to the standards demanded by his uncle in every way. He particularly excelled at football, and became such a brilliant player that he entered professional football with me, and became the youngest League player in the country. Then, suddenly his habits changed, and he took up this craze for poetry. That was why I decided to send him to St. Gideon's. I wanted to have the obsession for poetry knocked out of him, and his interest in football reawakened. I am hoping that with a little more perseverance, Dr. Holroyd, we shall succeed."

Johnny Gee left the Head's study, thrilled and amazed by the revelations he had heard.

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BOYS' MAGAZINE LEAGUE COUPON.

Boys' Magazine, 24/9/32.

The Cup-Tie.

THE news that the Cup had been recovered created great joy and satisfaction throughout St. Giddy's. The boys of Earlswood heard it, too, and with that notification they received a challenge from Johnny Gee for a replay on Wednesday afternoon.

That evening a party of four youths in Earlswood caps waited on Johnny Gee & Co. at St. Giddy's.

"Well, you rotters, what do you want?" demanded Johnny Gee.

"We've come to tell you that we've got at the truth about that trick played on you last Saturday," said the Earlswood leader. "The note you received was written by Cadman, belonging to your form, Stacey, a rotter at our school, and a pal of Cadman's, has confessed to helping him work the trick. The six chaps who attacked you at the stile were Stacey and some rotters belonging to our school, whom he

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