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Boys' 2D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



THE MENACE OF THE CLOCK MEN APPEARS INSIDE

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YOUR EDITOR'S CORNER

Great Story Attractions Next Week, Chums! Don't Miss **THE DANDY COWBOY, THE BOYS OF ST. GIDDY'S, THE MAN WITHOUT EYES, THE BOY MILLIONAIRE, THE SIX STAR GANG,** and Another Great Free Gift Book: **BANDITS AND BRIGANDS.**



MY DEAR CHUMS,
The most marvellous free gift ever presented in a boys' paper, new stories such as have never before appeared in print and some other wonderful surprises are on the way to my loyal battalions of B.M.-ites. Very soon now everything will be cut and dried and the great schemes your editor has in preparation will be launched. So just sit tight and keep your eyes on my chat, chums.

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Next week's number contains a special feast of favourite *Boys' Mag.* yarns with the Dandy Cowboy and his Bar Eight 'punchers in the van. To help round up the worst rustler gang in the West, the boys of the Bar Eight Ranch journey to Trail's End, Arizona, and there, against the mysterious background of the famous Wineglass Mountain, pit their wits and six-guns against the ruthless law breakers.

The Quick-change Cowboy

is the arresting title of this gripping yarn—penned in our rancher author's inimitable style. For thrills, for real Cowboy stuff and full measure of drama you'll have to go a long way to find a yarn that beats this one. And for another big treat you must read

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This is none other than Captain Star—the terrible leader of the dread Six-Star Gang—who is the last of that infamous sextet Corporal Keith Kennedy has set himself to bring to justice. In the grim fastnesses of the Rockies, with the added peril of

wild bear and wolf, Keith and Timberhead find adventures and excitement that provide a fitting finale to their quest.

More laughs with Hoppy Travers, our tame boy millionaire. His latest stunt is to set up in opposition to the B.B.C.—with astonishing and highly amusing results. His

Wireless Wanderings

will keep you chuckling all through.

In blood-chilling contrast you'll enjoy

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This great yarn is the next in the series featuring Spud and Phil, and the Man Without Eyes.

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The Big Fag is none other than mighty Harold Mugginger, the mufi of the Remove. Harold has his likeable points—but nobody can deny he's a DUNCE with capital letters. Well, Catty gets so fed up with his academic blunderings that he sticks him in the Third among the fags. And then the fun begins. Drama and heroism, too, in this fine school tale.

I hope to have some astonishing news for you next week. So don't miss the page of

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.



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FALCON SWIFT FIGHTS
THE AMAZING DR.
COWL'S ROBOTS.

**ON THE ISLE
OF GLASS!**

WEIRD, SCIENTIFIC
MARVELS, MYSTERY
AND EXCITEMENT



Our Startling Science and Sleuth Tale, featuring the Monocled Man-hunter, Chick Conway, Miles Stormalong, and Dr. Cowl of Phantom Isle.

IN the stately, oak-panelled library of Adventure House, Miles Stormalong, dare-devil explorer, sat alone, poring over an array of maps and plans connected with his most recent exploits in the remotest corners of the globe. All was quiet save for the regular ticking of the huge grandfather clock, and the occasional rustle of the papers.

"Falcon Swift's late!" Stormalong muttered, glancing at his watch.

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

He gathered the papers together and, placing them in a large envelope, carefully sealed it, inscribing upon it the curious words "The P.I. Plans." He then crossed to a corner of the room and, reaching up, touched the left hand glass eye of the stuffed head of a huge buffalo.

Noiselessly the panel beneath slid back, revealing a small steel safe. With a grim smile, Miles Stormalong thrust the package within, and closed the panel once more.

As he did so, the inky shadows outside the open french windows seemed to take on a queer, square shape which fitted across the broad lawns.

Nearer and nearer the shadow moved, till it spilled its grotesque shape across the very threshold of the room itself. Then, cutting into the stillness, came a voice, low-pitched and coldly commanding:

"The P.I. Plans!"

With an astonished ejaculation, Miles Stormalong spun round. The whole of the doorway seemed to be filled with a gigantic figure wearing a suit of heavy mail. From a strangely square head, a pair of luminous eyes burned with a malevolent intensity. In the visitor's hand was an ugly-looking automatic, levelled at the explorer's heart.

"What the thunder!" Stormalong roared, and made to spring.

On the instant the automatic spat, and a bullet sang past the adventurer's ear and buried itself in the wall.

"The P.I. Plans" repeated the mysterious marauder, in the same dead, level tone.

Stormalong was no coward but he realised the wisdom of obeying this command, if only to gain time. He backed across the room, reopened the safe and took from it a large, heavily sealed package.

His visitor stepped into the room in a curiously stiff manner and took it with his free hand. Without glancing at it, he thrust the package away into a pocket of his armour-like suit. Then he, too, backed towards the door, the automatic still levelled. As he reached the threshold, he spun round and sped away into the night.

With a shout, Miles Stormalong streaked after him. Through the belt of trees beyond the lawn, the explorer spied his quarry, making for the tall hedge that surrounded the grounds of Adventure House. When he reached the spot, the weird figure had vanished. Heedless of the tears and scratches of the thornbush, he plunged through the hedge. He leapt the ditch into the main road beyond—and was suddenly blinded by a pair of dazzling lights. At the same time he heard the jar and scream of abruptly jammed brakes.

In the very nick of time Stormalong nipped clear of a big limousine that had swung round a bend in the road. The car came to a shuddering standstill and one of the occupants, a tall, lithe figure, sprang out.

"Why, it's Miles Stormalong himself!" cried a familiar voice. "What on earth's happened man? Nearly ran you down that time!"

"Falcon Swift!" exclaimed the explorer, in relief. "My stars, I'm glad you've turned up, though I'm afraid you're just too late. Did you see him?"

"Bet your life I did!" said Swift. "But why—"

Stormalong cut him short, grabbing his arm. "After him!" he yelled. "We've got to catch the fellow! Biggest giant you ever saw—seven feet nine if he's an inch! Come on, man!"

With a nod towards Chick, who promptly shut off the car's engine, Falcon Swift followed the adventurer, leaping the ditch on the other side of the road and plunging through the hedge. Chick followed close on his heels.

"There he is!" cried Miles suddenly. "My stars, he's making for Bleak Lodge! That's queer!"

Falcon Swift had heard of that strange, derelict house which had stood empty for so many years. They pressed on, moving towards the decayed mansion which stood bleak and desolate, like a gaunt, forgotten sentinel.

"He's vanished again! Through the trees, Swift!" Once more their weird quarry had melted from sight. As they raced on, Chick caught his foot in what seemed to be a pothole and went sprawling. He scrambled up, and Falcon Swift turned the light of his electric torch upon the spot, Stormalong whistled beneath his breath.

"Some hoof!" he exclaimed.

It was indeed a grotesquely large footprint and it sank deep into the soft soil. Falcon Swift moved forward and, some distance ahead, found its fellow.

"Look at the length of the stride," he said. "More than three times that of my own. No wonder he's outdistanced us, Miles!"

They pelted on, Falcon Swift making a cautious detour as they reached the trees. Suddenly the detective hissed out an order.

"Take cover! Down, both of you!"

They dropped noiselessly in their tracks. Behind them the shadows had moved, and Stormalong recognised that gigantic, armoured figure. Now it stumbled, slowly and painfully, a queer, hissing, rattling sound accompanying the muffled thud of its tread. It passed barely a dozen yards from where they crouched and halted at last, leaning heavily against a neighbouring tree.

Hardly had they observed this than a light, like a solitary, unwinking eye, streamed through the fretwork of leaves and bushes. Next moment a figure, as grotesquely small as that of the armoured man was gigantic, stepped into the tiny glade.

Weirdly insignificant he looked in the moonlight, with an absurdly large head, completely bald, which tapered like a pear down to a narrow, pointed chin. From beneath bushy eyebrows a pair of amazingly keen eyes peered, out of a parchment-like face, at the armoured giant.

"Ah! Got run down before you could reach home again, eh?"

The midget's voice was high-pitched and squeaky, yet the armoured figure quailed visibly.

"I did but obey orders, Lord and Master!" came the answer, in the same dead-level, monotonous tone which the strange figure had first used. "And I have brought the 'P.I. Plans'!"

"Give them to me, X77!" snapped the other, imperiously, snatching at the sealed package and ripping it open.

Then, as he glimpsed its contents, his white face became livid with fury.

"Tricked!" he cried. "These pages are blank—this is a dummy package!" You've given yourself away, you fool! And on the very night that Falcon Swift and his brat of an assistant are expected at Adventure House! You know what this means—a trap for me and a complete scoop for them!"

"I am sorry, Lord and Master!" came the answer, but the other's harsh voice broke in.

"Sorry, eh? You'll be sorrier yet!" The bald-headed man stepped closer. "Who was it gave you life and being, X77? Who but I, Dr. Maxim Cowl! But it seems you have developed feelings of your own accord. Well, there is only one way to deal with creatures who can feel pain, so—bite on to that!"

His hand shot out, something gleaming viciously from those long, pointed fingers. Miles Stormalong gasped and made to dash forward, but was restrained by a vice-like grip on his wrist.

"Stay where you are!" whispered Falcon Swift.

A vivid blue flash streamed from the thing in Dr. Cowl's hand. Again and again it was repeated. The armoured giant flung up his hands and with a queer, cough-like scream, he collapsed at Dr. Cowl's feet.

With a low chuckle of diabolical satisfaction, the bald-headed midget turned and vanished in the direction of Bleak Lodge.

"Why did you stop me, Swift?" Miles Stormalong demanded, horrified. "That was rank, cold-blooded murder!"

"It would have been," corrected the Sporting Detective drily, "if I hadn't stopped you! And we should have been the victims! As it is, there's not much harm done. Look!"

away just as speedily as he can. Come on—there isn't a second to waste!"

They pelted towards Bleak Lodge and as they emerged on to the weed-grown lawn, Chick gave an ejaculation.

"We're too late!" he cried, pointing upwards.

Even as he spoke, the silence of the night was broken by the roar of engines. At the same instant there rose from the roof of the house a brilliantly lighted aeroplane of amazing design. Above a tapering fuselage, a set of whirling, vertical vanes lifted it clear and for an instant it hovered, like some fantastic, metal bird. Then, swerving round, it zoomed away into the night.

"Well, he's slipped through our fingers, after all!" muttered Falcon Swift, disapprobately.

"Not for long!" was Stormalong's surprising answer. "I think I know where we'll find him again! You forget, Swift, that you haven't yet heard my story!"

Falcon Swift nodded. "We'll have your story as soon as we've prowled round Bleak Lodge, old man," he said.

They forced an entrance and made a speedy but thorough search. The place was empty save for an upper room. Here the bare floor was littered with odd springs and ratchet wheels, screws, and pieces of a light, grey metal not unlike aluminium. One or two cheap articles of furniture completed the contents of the room.

They went back to Adventure House, where Miles Stormalong briefly explained his part in the mysterious affair.

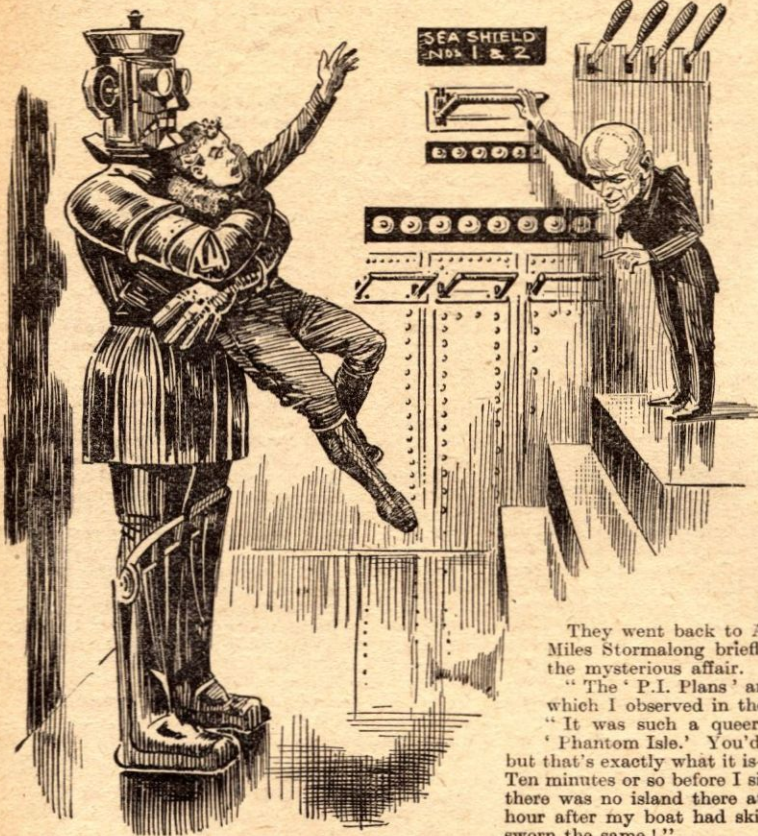
"The 'P.I. Plans' are the maps of an island which I observed in the South Seas," he said.

"It was such a queer place that I called it 'Phantom Isle.' You'd hardly believe it, Swift, but that's exactly what it is—a ghost among islands. Ten minutes or so before I sighted it, I'd have sworn there was no island there at all. And less than an hour after my boat had skimmed past it, I'd have sworn the same!"

"Yet you were able to make maps of the place?" queried Falcon Swift.

"I went back—of course," the explorer replied. "I persuaded the skipper of the tramp—who also noticed the island—to hang about in the vicinity for hours and we kept a close watch. Sure enough the island appeared again, though we didn't actually see it come. One moment it just wasn't there and the next—well, we were gazing at a rugged pile of grey rock. This time it stayed long enough for me to sketch out these maps which, as you see, give little more than the ragged coast line plus the latitude and longitude."

"And that was what Dr. Cowl was after—the plans you had made," nodded Falcon Swift. "It means



THE GRIP OF STEEL.—As Maxim Cowl reached for the lever, Chick leaped forward with a cry of horror—to find himself enclosed in the massive steel arms of the Clock Man.

He crossed the glade and bent down. Gripping the huddled heap by the collar of its armour-like clothing, he lifted it bodily, and let it fall again. It dropped with a jangling clatter, like a pile of scrap metal!

"Jumpin' snakes!" gasped Chick. "It's a clock-work man!"

Falcon Swift smiled grimly, then turned on his heel.

"You heard what Dr. Cowl said?" he exclaimed. "No. X77 has scared him and he'll be making a get-

that by some uncanny means he got to know that you were observing the island, that you had actually made a rough map of it, and he was determined that you should not have such information in your possession for longer than he could possibly help. It suggests that he is connected with the island. Miles, old man, we're going to root that secret out, and we're going to start right away!"

Falcon Swift was essentially a man of action. Within half-an-hour, he had set out, with Chick and Stormalong, in the detective's high-powered car, making for the private landing-field, where the Monocled Manhunter kept his own specially constructed and armoured aeroplane. Ere dawn they had taken off, heading for Phantom Isle.

The Phantom Isle.

FALCON SWIFT was justly proud of his self-invented aeroplane, and the fact that its engines ran without a sound was in itself one of its chief claims to his pride. Though built for high speed and fitted out as a fighting plane, *The Comet*, as he called it, was luxuriously appointed. Now, while Chick looked after the controls, Swift and Miles Stormalong reclined at ease in the comfortable saloon.

"Did you ever see Phantom Isle by night, Miles?" Swift asked presently, and the explorer shook his head.

"No. That's why I'm a bit worried about locating it now, though I know it should be very near. But we want above all to take Cowl by surprise, and—"

He broke off as Chick's voice came from the cockpit to their ears through the invisible loudspeaker at Swift's elbow.

"Lights ahead on the starboard bow!"

Stopping only to switch off all lights except those at the controls, Falcon Swift crossed over to the starboard window. Miles Stormalong followed the Sporting Sleuth. He gasped in amazement as he gazed upon a network of tiny lights.

"Well, Miles, we've reached the exact latitude and longitude noted on your map," said Swift, "and by all accounts that should be Phantom Isle!"

"You're right," Stormalong agreed, amazed. "But, man, it's not merely inhabited—it looks like a veritable city!"

Nearer and nearer the lights came, until the whole of the black coast line could be clearly distinguished—revealing, too, what looked like street upon street of great, square buildings surmounted at various points with towering chimney-stacks from which belched clouds of smoke. Chick dropped the plane a little, and the streets sprang into sharper relief. They were thronged, here and there, with people who seemed to be marching like soldiers in and out of the tall buildings.

Suddenly Miles Stormalong gave a cry of warning. But he was a split second too late.

From the maze of lights below, one of them sprang to unexpected action. It soared upwards, like a gleaming pointing finger, and finally settled upon Falcon Swift's aeroplane itself.

"Searchlight, by Jove!" the detective exclaimed. "They've spotted us!"

Came the sharp splintering of glass. With a cry, Stormalong sprang back in the nick of time. One of the windows of the saloon fell away in a crystal shower, and something whizzed across the room and buried itself in the opposite wall.

Falcon Swift wrenched it free—a slim, metal arrow, round whose shaft was rolled a spill of paper. Smoothing it out, the Monocled Manhunter read the neatly typed message it contained:

TO FALCON SWIFT AND HIS COMPANIONS.—Take notice that you are forbidden to enter within the three-mile radius of this island. Should you choose to disobey this instruction, the

gyroplane bringing this message has orders to open fire.—Signed, MAXIM COWL.

Falcon Swift crushed the note in his hand and flung it through the broken window. Across the broad, challenging ribbon of the searchlight, a weird machine, like an enormous black bird, swept in sinister majesty.

"Unmask guns!" Swift ordered, and Chick, in the cockpit, stretched out a hand.

On each side of the fuselage a metal strip slid open, revealing the snub nose of a gun. Falcon Swift himself touched a second lever, and at once the twin noses stretched telescopically into long, business-like barrels.

The Sporting Detective motioned to Stormalong, and they took up their positions before the gun controls. Chick climbed into a suitable position to attack, and, height attained, he pushed forward the stick and they swept down, in a hurricane dive upon the enemy's tail.

Taken utterly by surprise though it was, the gyroplane replied with a hail of bullets, and Chick saw the fabric of their wings rip and tear. But he put the machine into a steep-climbing turn and returned with a laugh to the attack.

Meanwhile, Stormalong and Swift aimed their guns at the whirling vanes of the gyro, and they saw them sag and crumple as the damaged bracing wires and struts were severed clean.

With a sickening lurch the gyro's nose fell sideways and dropped, in a dizzy spin, to crash into the sea and sink.

And then, from the cockpit, came a yell from Chick.

"The island—it's vanished!"

Falcon Swift and Stormalong peered out. Only the lake-like surface of the sea met their gaze. Where, barely a minute before, the lights of Phantom Isle had glittered and gleamed, there was nothing but a kind of nebulous mist.

Suddenly Falcon Swift, who had been closely scanning the scene below, rapped out an order, and Chick dropped the plane, lower and yet lower. The detective turned to Miles Stormalong and pointed downwards.

"Watch!" he whispered. "We are about to land—on Phantom Isle!"

Down the plane swooped. As it dropped Miles Stormalong became suddenly aware that the movement of the water immediately below them was not so apparent as it was farther afield. It seemed, in fact, to be utterly still.

"Swift, you must be mad!" Stormalong cried. "We're dropping clean into the sea! There's no land here, it—"

But Falcon Swift merely laughed, and an instant later the plane's landing-wheels touched that gleaming, motionless surface—touched and ran along it, taxiing to a halt as easily and safely as if they had landed on solid ground!

All three clambered out, treading upon the polished surface of a gigantic sheet of solid glass!

"And there's the mystery of your disappearing island solved for you!" said Falcon Swift, grinning in amusement at the explorer's blankly amazed expression. "You see what it is—a special contraption, doubtless invented by Dr. Cowl himself—a gigantic crystal case, or, rather, two of them, one fitting inside the other like a Chinese box. They act as a light board, from which radiate countless electric lights, coloured to resemble the tint of the sea at every hour of the day and night and corroborating to give the effect of the sea's ceaseless movement. It is only when we are exactly overhead, and fairly low down, as we were just now, that the glassy effect could be observed. Of course, there must be

plenty of air-holes, and if we prowl round a bit we'll probably strike some of them and maybe find a way below the surface."

Deeming it safe, Falcon Swift went back to the 'plane and switched on the searchlight, by the aid of whose broad beam they began their tour of exploration. Chick, breaking away from the others, presently discovered what looked like a queer crack in the surface of the glass.

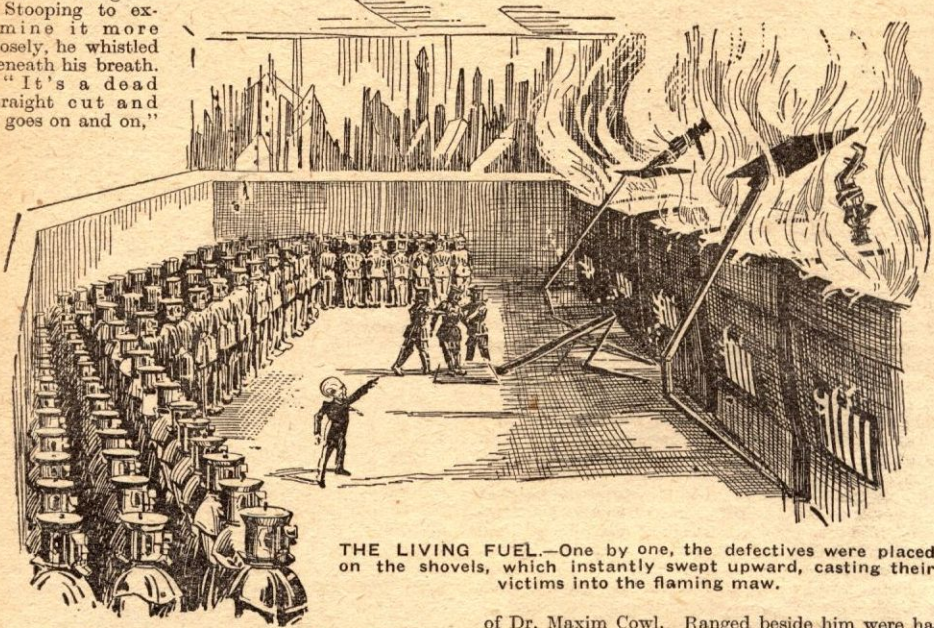
Stooping to examine it more closely, he whistled beneath his breath.

"It's a dead straight cut and it goes on and on,"

removed from the queer, cubist-shaped town itself and was steeped in shadow. The descent seemed endless, but at last he touched solid earth, to start back at the sound of a familiar, high-pitched voice.

"So! You've chosen to pay me a visit after all, have you? Well, I assure you it will be quite a lengthy one! Up with your hands, my young friend!"

He spun round to stare blankly into the evil face



THE LIVING FUEL.—One by one, the defectives were placed on the shovels, which instantly swept upward, casting their victims into the flaming maw.

he murmured. "Now I wonder where it leads?"

He began to follow it and gradually realised that it was part of a cross-cut section, dividing the huge glass case into four.

"Got it!" he muttered. "When the walls of this thingummy rise up from their slots, they meet overhead and fit together and this line is where they join!"

A few minutes later he halted again at a point where the deep-etched line was intersected by a wide circle in the centre of which was what looked like a glass button. Wonderingly he pressed it and then started back with a stifled exclamation. The circle was a cunningly contrived trap-door and at his touch it slid back out of sight, revealing a flight of glass steps, disappearing into the void below.

Intent on his discovery, Chick momentarily forgot his companions and began the descent. He found himself entering a vast greenish-hued cavern whose depth seemed infinite. Gradually he became aware of a myriad little points jutting from the silvered base, each point a coruscating bulb of light, whose rays, even as Falcon Swift had suggested, played upon the under surface of the main glass roof, creating the illusion of the restless sea itself.

At the bottom of the steps, Chick found, a few paces away, yet another trap door which was opened in a similar fashion. And now, as it slid back, a microscopic section of the blazing lights of the island leapt into life.

With the blood racing in his veins, Falcon Swift's assistant clambered down the second flight of steps which led, he observed, to an open space somewhat

of Dr. Maxim Cowl. Ranged beside him were half-a-dozen gigantic figures in coats of mail, exact replicas of the weird Clock Man they had encountered in the wood beyond Bleak House. And in the hands of each, as well as in that of Dr. Cowl himself, was an ugly-looking snub-nosed automatic!

Dr. Cowl rapped out an order, and Chick was surrounded by the Clock Men who, led by Dr. Cowl, marched him across the open space and on to a metal-faced road that ran, straight as an arrow, towards the heart of the weird city itself.

As they drew near, the stillness was percolated by a dull rumble that deepened to a steady, rhythmic roll, as of the beating of a myriad muffled drums.

At last the procession halted before a huge iron gate which swung back at a sign from Dr. Cowl. Chick was marched through a courtyard into a small cabin-like room, whose door closed instantly upon him, leaving him alone, save for a single guard, with Dr. Cowl.

The walls and floor of the room were all of shining metal, the former being lined with switchboards on which were row upon row of white press buttons and levers. Dr. Cowl turned to Chick with an evil leer twisting his sallow features.

"And now to welcome your respected employer, Mr. Falcon Swift, and his rather too inquisitive friend, Miles Stormalong," he said softly.

He moved across towards the switchboard, and reached for a lever labelled *Sea Shields, Nos. 1 and 2.*

Instantly Chick realised the other's fiendish purpose and with a yell he sprang forward—to find himself suddenly enclosed in an iron clutch as the Clock Man,

without moving a step, stretched out its arms and drew him irresistibly closer and closer till his back was pressed against the sheet metal chest of the Clock Man. The metal bolts that did duty for knuckles seemed to be biting into his flesh so that he could scarcely breathe. Still the grip tightened till, through a kind of swirling mist he saw Cowl's claw-like hand reach up and jerk the lever.

The City of Clock Men.

"LOOK out, Swift! The glass——" Miles Stormalong yelled the warning as he leapt backwards in the nick of time. Where, a moment before, there had been but a deep-etched straight line, there was now an open gap.

Falcon Swift had already acted, leaping across to join the other. They stood for a moment swaying unsteadily as the gap yawned wider.

"The 'plane!' cried Falcon Swift. "Make for the 'plane—quickly!"

They pelted and slithered across the moving glass towards *The Comet*—then brought up on their toes at the very rim of another cross section.

And the 'plane was on the other side!

"Jump for it!" Falcon Swift cried, himself taking a flying leap into the air and landing on all fours on the other side.

Scrambling to his feet he spun round at the sound of a cry of alarm, just in time to see Miles Stormalong, his hands upflung, his face twisted with horrified dismay, disappear like a plummet into the void!

Falcon Swift's immediate impulse was to rush back to the edge of the glass. But a rumbling movement told of the imminent danger to the 'plane. He raced on, skidding and slithering. He did the last fifty yards in a series of leaps and by a miraculous piece of luck somehow reached the 'plane and clambered into the cockpit, wrenching at the controls. The machine quivered and staggered and then magnificently rose clear of the now rapidly dropping glass.

As the double platforms of the glass shield vanished from sight, the weird outline of the island, with its glittering diadem of lights, was thrown into clear and sinister relief.

Guiding himself by the sparkling coruscation of lights below, Falcon Swift piloted the 'plane to a spot a good three miles from the "city." Trusting to luck, he dropped her and breathed a sigh of relief as he landed on a stretch of open ground. He shut off the engine, and he leapt out, his automatic gripped ready for use.

Hugging the shadows, he crossed the field and emerged on to a rocky plateau, beyond which was a steep descent into a valley, where the great steel buildings were clustered.

A narrow path, cut into rough steps, led downwards. Falcon Swift began the descent, and then stopped abruptly as a faint stirring of the shadows occurred near by.

"Hands up, whoever you are!" he rapped out; and broke off with an exclamation of surprised recognition as the white, strained face of Miles Stormalong loomed out of the murk.

The explorer's escape had been something akin to a miracle, as he briefly explained. He had fallen clean through the second platform of the sea-shield into a clump of bushes about a mile from where he now stood, and but for a few scratches and bruises was unhurt.

"We've got to find Chick!" Falcon Swift said grimly. "I'm afraid he's fallen into the hands of Dr. Cowl, and unless we're pretty quick——"

He broke off significantly, and, in grim silence the two pressed on towards Clock City.

Meanwhile, Chick, battling with the agony of that

vice-like grip and the swirling red mist before his eyes, suddenly found that he was released, upon a sharp order from Dr. Cowl. He staggered clear of those deadly steel arms and, momentarily overcome, collapsed to the floor at Cowl's feet.

The scientist turned to a shelf and reached down a tiny test tube, from which he poured a few drops of a golden liquid into a glass. He forced this between Chick's clenched teeth and in a few moments the boy revived sufficiently to get to his feet. He found himself confronted now by two Clock Men, who ranged themselves on either side of him.

"Remove the prisoner to the Waiting Room," said Dr. Cowl.

The two Clock Men stiffened. There was something almost human in the way in which they evinced surprise and even horror at the scientist's order.

"He will join the twenty rejects from the Mental Rectification Works to-morrow, for the Melting Pot. You understand?"

Still somewhat dazed, and too weak to offer resistance, Chick was led out of the control cabin, across the courtyard and through a maze of streets, ablaze with the lights of a thousand electric lamps.

Vaguely he was aware of great, steel structures rearing their mighty walls heavenwards and of huge gates bearing strange and unfamiliar names. At last they halted before a door which swung open and Chick was thrust into a steel-walled cell, the door closing again behind him with a metallic clang.

Hours later, it opened once more and the boy was seized without ceremony and marched out into the street. He had lost count of time and was surprised to find that the sun was now high overhead. Presently he found himself forming part of a procession that marched with military precision through the streets, flanked on both sides by a veritable regiment of guards, one of whom stepped forward and deftly tacked a label on to the boy's coat. He glanced down and read upon it the significant words, *Melting Pot*, No. 42.

At last the procession swung round into a huge, open courtyard, where they were lined up in serried ranks. Chick, glancing round, saw a number of great iron doors, one of which swung open at that moment to reveal a maw of living fire beyond. Despite his courage, the boy detective could hardly repress a shudder. Each of those bore numbers and each represented a section of that vast array of boiling vats which Dr. Cowl called the Melting Pot.

But now the eyes of every one of the uncanny metal figures in the courtyard were turned upon a dais raised in the centre of the courtyard. A bell clanged abruptly, the Clock Men stiffened in rigid salute, and the midget-like figure of Dr. Maxim Cowl appeared and mounted the steps.

A hushed silence fell upon the waiting throng. For a moment, Dr. Cowl surveyed them with lowered, penetrating eyes. Then his high-pitched, squeaky voice was heard.

"Before opening the vats of the crucible, I have something to say to you," Dr. Cowl said. "The work of production on Clock Island has been seriously impeded. There have been murmurings of revolt, even of civil war. Certain sections of the community have dared to whisper of treachery."

His strange, searching eyes swept the multitude and his thin lips parted in an evil smile.

"You will remember that but for me you would not exist," he continued. "You must learn to be patient. Very soon now the order of release will be given—very soon now I shall make an announcement that will stagger the world! I am building a mighty army—each one of you is being systematically trained to be a fighter—a part of an invincible host that will sweep down upon the whole world and possess it!

Think of it, dream of it! A world mastered and controlled by the Clock Men—yourselves! Men who never grow tired, men who can work and toil indefinitely, creatures of colossal power and unquenchable energy. And you owe it all to me, to my genius! I am your god, your overlord, the giver of life—and of death!"

Five minutes passed and then, with the harsh clangour of a bell, the grim business was resumed. Chick started a little at a touch on his arm. One of the Clock Men guards motioned him further into the recess.

"Silence!" he commanded. "Follow!"

Wonderingly, the boy obeyed. The second Clock Man touched something against the inner wall of the recess, and a panel slid silently back. Chick was thrust through it, his guards following, and the panel closed again. It was all done in the twinkling of an eye—and the boy found himself in the fresh air.

"This way! Quickly, now!" commanded the first guard.

Puzzled and mystified, Chick obeyed. They were taking him away from the Melting Pot, rushing him at a running pace through miles of metal streets, making for the open ground beyond the walls of Clock City.

Only when the last of the network of streets had been shaken off and they were standing on the high plateau above the valley did his guards reveal their secret. Their hands went up simultaneously, and their very armour seemed to drop from them like magic.

"Jehosophat!" cried Chick. "The Boss—and Miles Stormalng!"

Falcon Swift smiled in grim triumph, and the explorer, too, grinned like a schoolboy.

"It was tough and go, Chick!" Falcon Swift said. "And it was mainly due to the fact that a section of the Clock Men is in simmering revolt that we managed to get through. As it is, there's no time to waste. We must make for the 'plane. See, already your escape has been discovered."

Above the muffled roar of the stamping machines

The silence which followed his words was an eloquent tribute to the amazing power of this midget man who, though raised on a dais, yet looked like a child among those towering figures of steel and iron.

"One more word," Dr. Cowl proceeded. "There have been spies from the Outer World moving among us—stealers of secrets, enemies to our Cause! I have discovered their presence, and this morning one, at least, of their number will pay the penalty!"

He made a sign of imperious command. Immediately all the doors of the vats were flung wide, as if by invisible hands, and the mighty voice of the furnaces filled the place with a terrifying roar.

Dr. Cowl stepped down from the dais and the grim, ghastly business of feeding the Melting Pot began. File upon file of the Clock Men marched and re-marched in orderly array, forming themselves into blocks, each of which surrounded a detachment of "defectives" destined for the crucible. A section of steel plating slid from beneath each vat, and, from the aperture thus created, a huge flat shovel shot into position. One by one the defectives were marched forward and compelled to stand upon this shovel, which immediately swooped upwards, casting its victim into the flaming maw and returning again with electric precision, to its former place to receive yet another.

Chick watched the procedure with a horrified fascination, aware all the time that his own turn was soon to come.

A voice, harsh and metallic like a gramophone record, resounded through the loudspeakers which were affixed at various points within the courtyard.

"Interval! Change the Death Guard! Quick march!"

Chick found himself being turned right about and marched towards a recess, where he was handed over to two fresh Clock Men, his original guard clicking their heels and departing.



THE RESCUE MACHINE.—The weird looking contrivance closed with uncanny accuracy over the fleeing scientist. The plane rose, lifting the fugitive clear of his pursuers.

had suddenly come the strident blare of a score of maroons. As they gazed down into the valley, they saw the streets suddenly alive with a myriad figures. Again and again the maroons shrieked until the very

roofs of the factories were peopled with moving figures.

"They've spotted us!" cried Stormalong suddenly, pointing.

From the outskirts of Clock City myriads of the Clock Men were swiftly approaching, all concentrating upon the spot where Falcon Swift and his companions stood.

"Come on!" cried the criminologist.

Turning, they pelted across the plateau towards the field where *The Comet* still remained parked.

"Look! The sea shield—it's moving! Cowl's going to close us in!" yelled Chick.

From the very rim of the island the weird, glass wall was rising, slowly at first, but with ever increasing speed. They covered the last five hundred yards or so in a series of flying leaps, and tumbled headlong into the 'plane.

As the great machine responded to the detective's touch and rose vertically from the ground, Chick gave a yell.

"Boss, look! They—they're fighting down there!"

Falcon Swift peered over the edge of the cockpit, a grim, set look on his face.

"It's as I expected," he muttered. "The revolt has broken out!"

They were hovering now immediately over the centre of the city, and could easily pick out the great chimney-stacks marking the vats of the Melting Pot. All the excitement seemed to be concentrated round this spot.

"It's Dr. Cowl!" cried Chick. "They're after him! Look! There he goes—pelting like mad!"

Across the open space that weird, midget figure, divested now of all its power, tore in panic-stricken flight, while the hordes of Clock Men bore steadily down upon him, closing in and forming an ever-narrowing wall of living metal around him. And now the sound of their unceasing voices came again.

"To the Melting Pot with him! He who has given death shall pay with death!"

A shriek of terror came from the scientist's pallid lips. On and on he tore, in a mad, blind stampede. But at every moment the black, gleaming hordes were gaining on him.

And now Falcon Swift acted, for already he had noted that the walls of the glass sea-shield had been set into motion again. Touching a lever near the controls, he rapped out an order, and both Chick and Stormalong sprang to obey it.

The 'plane zoomed in the wake of that tumultuous horde, overtook it, passed it, and hovered like a great, protecting bird over the madly running figure of Dr. Cowl.

The vanguard of the metal men had all but reached the scientist. Their arms shot out telescopically. A last, wild, despairing scream came from his lips and broke off into a shuddering gasp—a gasp echoed by a thousand steel throats.

For at that moment something swooped down from the fuselage of the 'plane—a weird-looking wire contrivance that opened out, like a gigantic steel umbrella, as it fell.

With unceasing accuracy it dropped, spreading its steel ribs till they enclosed and trapped the stumbling, stampeding form of Dr. Cowl. Suspended from the lower extremities of the contraption, a metal board swung free and, at a touch of the switchboard of the 'plane, it raised itself and shot deftly beneath the scientist's flying feet, lifting him clear, while the long steel ribs clamped into place—and the fugitive was caught like a bird in a cage!

"Altitude!" cried Swift urgently, and the vertical vanes screamed in answer to his touch of the controls, while Chick and Stormalong stood by the switchboard, tensely watching as the steel cage rose into the air.

"My stars, we'll miss it!" groaned Stormalong. "The glass wall, it's on us, it—"

All the world seemed to be plunged into a greenish gloom as the gigantic shield closed in. Swift strained at the controls, forcing the last ounce of power out of the 'plane, till suddenly there came a welcome cry from Chick.

"Okay, Boss! We're through!"

The base of the steel cage swung clear in the very nick of time, and the cage itself was hauled in. Dr. Cowl lay within it, a huddled, inert heap, his weird, parchment-like face a dull grey, his eyes closed.

The voice of Miles Stormalong broke the silence that had fallen over the little group.

"Dr. Cowl is dead," he said.

From below there came a sound that brought all three to the edge. The mirror-like surface of the water had become violently disturbed—it rocked and plunged and flung up great masses of spray, while from its unfathomable depths came a muffled roll, like the echo of distant thunder.

"Boss! Look! The island!" cried Chick.

All at once it had appeared, a thing of evil majesty. For the space of a single minute it reared its malevolent shape above the sea-line. The air was split by a deafening roar, a great jagged hole appeared, ripping that mass of rock and its grotesque metal buildings into two pieces. They fell apart, rose up on end, and plunged into the depths, to be seen no more.

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COMBING THE WILDS TO SMASH THE DREADED SIX-STAR GANG!**



**Drama and Daring
Among the Eskimo
Igloos!**

THE WEIRD WIZARD WITH UNCANNY POWER OVER THE WOLVES.

Lost in the Bad Lands.

"LISTEN! There it is again! The same weird tune!" Corporal Keith Kennedy, of the Canadian Mounted Police, took his hand for a moment from the steering-wheel of the *Kittiwake* to lift a finger enjoining silence.

Breaking the icy stillness of the air came a faint and ghostly strain of music from afar. It would have been uncanny anywhere, and in that bleak and frozen corner of the great Canadian Barrens it had the added spell of mystery. Timberhead, Keith's coloured partner, turned a sickly hue under his ebony skin.

"Oh, Baas!" he stammered, his teeth chattering with cold and fright. "Ah guess dat's de sperrits soundin' de las' post."

On the trail of Chinook, the Eskimo member of the Six-Star Gang, Keith and Timberhead were in the Bad Lands west of the Great Bear Lake.

"It sounds like some reed instrument," muttered Keith. "I wonder if the Eskimos—"

He broke off as Timberhead started up in the little electric canoe with an excited cry of: "Look, Baas!"

Keith followed the direction of his pointing finger. A fur-clad Eskimo was running at full tilt over the crumbling snow, and hot on his tracks came half-a-dozen gaunt, grey wolves.

Corporal Keith flung the gear into reverse, checking

the headlong course of his little canoe, and snatched up a rifle.

The Eskimo was making for a little kayak, or skin-canoe, moored amidst the broken ice by the bank.

Even as the fugitive stooped to scramble down the slippery slope, the leading wolf sprang with bared fangs. Simultaneously, Keith's rifle spoke and the great, lean body crashed to the ice. But, before the Eskimo could cast off, the other wolves had descended the bank and were leaping round him. Mad with fear, he snatched up his double-bladed paddle and struck right and left. One of the gaunt beasts seized it in his jaws, and the Eskimo, abandoning his paddle, sprang into the kayak and, with a vigorous lunge, sent it shooting out into midstream.

Keith had been afraid to fire while man and wolves were so close, but now he emptied the magazine of his repeating rifle, sending the stricken beasts retreating in disorder.

The Eskimo, however, had only exchanged one peril for another. Adrift without a paddle, his frail craft was hurtling towards an ice-jam! All the floes that had been hurried downstream met at this point, forming an impassable barrier bristling with jagged edges and knife-like points.

"Stop, Baas!" shouted Timber. But with consummate skill Corporal Keith steered parallel to the

kayak. But the boats were separated by a tossing floe of ice. Then the Eskimo sprang to his knees, and, dragging a bone harpoon from the recesses of his clothing, sent it clattering on the polished deck of the *Kittiwake*. Keith was quick to seize it. While Timberhead jammed the gear into reverse, he pulled with all his might. The Eskimo came out of his kayak like a cork, and, Timberhead lending his massive weight to the task, they succeeded in dragging the man across the tossing floes. He tumbled, half-fainting, into the well of the *Kittiwake*.



FOILING THE FLOOD.—Keith seized the rope attached to the harpoon, and with Timberhead's help, hauled the Eskimo over the floes to the *Kittiwake*.

Looking up, the Mountie realised that now they were not a hundred yards from the ice-jam.

The *Kittiwake* was powerless in the furious surge of waters. Only one thing to do! A quick tug at a lever on the dashboard brought the folding hood shooting over their heads, and, to the astonishment of the Eskimo, the *Kittiwake* dived below the surface. Through windows of deep green he saw the lower levels of the river strangely patterned with the shadows of the great floes tossing above!

Night in the Igloos.

KEITH had taken a risk in seeking to pass through the gorge by diving beneath the ice-jam.

Fortunately there was a channel of free water, which ran with such terrific force that the *Kittiwake* was swept through it in a flash.

Rising to the surface, they found themselves in a world of bleak waters and level banks of dreary ice.

"Well, I guess we've been lucky!" was Keith's only comment. "Now let's see what sorta fish we've

caught!" He looked curiously at the Eskimo, who was gazing at him from brown eyes in which gratitude mingled with awe. "Say, brother," he went on, "do you speak English? What's your name?"

"I am called Kooskosh, O Scarlet-Coat!" replied the man in fluent English. "Never have I met so mighty a chief as you! Twice have you saved my life!"

"That's so," admitted Keith. "It looked as if those wolves—"

"They were the Wolf-Wizard's Pack!" interrupted the Eskimo eagerly. "Kooskosh is the first man who has ever escaped their fangs! My people will never believe me, for when the Wolf-Wizard makes medicine-music it means death!"

"Say, brudder," Timberhead remarked, "who and wot am dis yar Wolf-Wizard? Yo' makes me go all goosey!"

"He is the Lord of the Bad Lands," replied Kooskosh, shuddering. "Terrible he is, and mighty, with the body of a man and the head of a wolf! He dwells in the cairn where our fathers and our fathers' fathers lie buried! My people must all offer him a tithe of our furs, and those who defy him he hunts to death with his pack of devil-wolves. I was poor and could not pay."

Keith was puzzled. "Why don't your people find some other hunting-grounds?" he asked.

"Every winter we come here," said the Eskimo, simply. "It is our custom, and fur is plentiful. Besides, Skulka, our medicine man, has told us we must obey the Wolf-Wizard."

The *Kittiwake* glided into the bank and Keith

sprang out. "Looks like we're wanted round this spot," he said laconically. "Say, Kooskosh, me and my pal will come along to your village. Maybe we can help you."

He fished out some snowshoes from the canoe, and, thus accoutred, the three men set off for the Eskimo village.

When the igloos, or snow-houses, of the little community came in sight weird incantations greeted their ears. A smile lit up the Eskimo's chubby face. "They mourn for my death!" he announced proudly.

The tribesmen were in the midst of a ceremonial death-dance, presided over by Skulka, a squat, blackbearded shaman whose head was decorated with moose-antlers. At the sudden appearance of the supposed victim the dance broke up in disorder and Skulka scowled his astonishment.

"Kooskosh has come back from the land of the shadows!" he gasped.

"No, the Scarlet-Coat saved him from the wolves,!"

replied Kooskosh; forthwith he described the many marvels that he had seen that day, and introduced his rescuers.

The elders of the tribe gravely shook hands with Keith and Timber, but Skulka frowned gloomily. "It is not well," he said. "The Wolf-Wizard will make us pay!" And, casting a suspicious glance at the young mountie, he shambled into his igloo, which stood apart from the rest.

Night was descending with Arctic suddenness. A bitter wind swept a few snowflakes through the village, and the moon, rising above the distant cairn, was half obscured by clouds.

Timberhead, bred in warmer climes, gave a shiver. "Dis chile am gettin' chilblains, baas!" he complained. "Ah should shoh like a squar' meal an' a warm bed!"

Kooskosh at once offered to put them up for the night. He showed them to a half-built igloo, with the snow still loose on the top; but the oil lamps burning cosily inside, and the furs spread on its floor, made it welcome enough to the two adventurers. Kooskosh thanked them again, and then went slowly away towards his own bed. Keith, looking after him, saw Skulka the medicine man peer out from his igloo, and then hastily withdraw his head.

"I don't like the look of that fellow, Timber," he remarked, as he crawled into the semi-obscurity of their strange quarters. "I reckon we'll take it in turns to sleep to-night—jest in case of accidents!"

They made a satisfactory meal of the bear's meat and blubber prepared for them by Kooskosh; and then Keith wrapped himself up in some furs while Timber mounted guard. Unfortunately the darkie was tired out, and, after vainly trying to keep his eyes open by staring at the flickering oil-lamps, he nodded off.

Suddenly he was broad awake—with the weird music of the Wolf-Wizard ringing in his ears! "Baas! baas!" he shouted. As he shook the sleeping mountie roughly by the shoulder, a piercing scream rent the night.

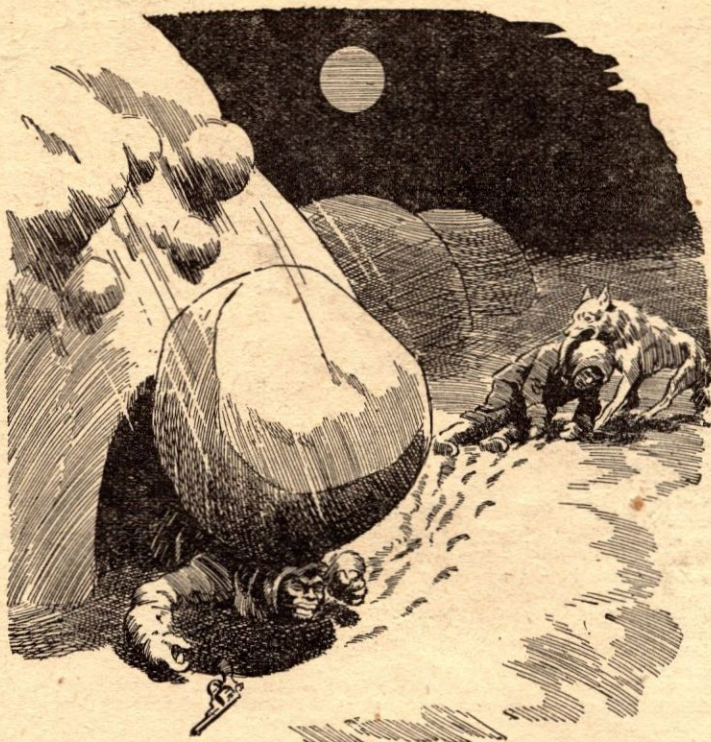
Keith was on his feet in an instant. Timberhead drew his revolver, and, rushing to the low doorway, ducked down to scramble through it.

An amazing sight met his eyes. Gleaming uncannily white in the moon, a huge shaggy beast like a wolf was dragging a captive over the snow. It was Kooskosh, bound hand and foot and with terror in his eyes. Without a moment's hesitation Timber

levelled his gun, but, before he could press the trigger, a huge fragment of ice crashed from the roof of the igloo on to his head. The weight would have crushed any normal skull, but in this case it was the ice which was shattered to splinters. Sprawling half-stunned on his face, the nigger was immediately buried beneath a great drift of snow which slid from the roof, completely blocking the entrance to the igloo!

Fortunately Keith seized Timber's legs and succeeded in dragging him inside before he was suffocated.

"Ah is all right, baas!" gasped the nigger. "Dig away dat snow! A white wolf hab got Kooskosh!"



BLOCK ON BLOCK.—Before Timberhead could pull trigger a great fragment of ice crashed from the roof of the igloo on to his head.

Keith worked furiously at the snow with his hands, and Timber recovered sufficiently to help him. But a good five minutes had elapsed before they cleared a passage and found themselves outside the igloo.

They were instantly surrounded by a crowd of excited, awe-stricken Eskimos. "Where is Kooskosh?" demanded Keith.

"In the hands of the Wolf-Wizard, O Scarlet-Coat!" replied one of the elders.

Keith looked round for Skulka, and saw that he was absent.

"I wanna see Skulka!" snapped Keith. "Maybe he knows something about this white wolf!"

"It was not Skulka's doing," quavered the old man. "The Wolf Wizard is angry with our tribe. We must carry an offering to the cairn or worse evil will befall us!"

Keith thought for a moment, and then said

grimly: "Well, in that case, I'll take the offering. I should like to meet this musical guy!"

The Wolf-Wizard's Lair.

EARLY the next morning a team of eight huskies dashed away from the Eskimo encampment, dragging a sledge over the hard snow. Timberhead held the whip and the reins, while Keith sat on a pile of pelts intended as a peace offering to the dreaded Wolf-Wizard.

An oblong pile of stones on the top of the distant grey mound indicated the spot where the Eskimos had buried their dead for ages past, and where the driver of the wolf-pack held his ghostly court.

As they approached the barrow, the dogs began to show signs of uneasiness; and presently, in spite of the crack of Timberhead's whip, they stopped, whining, and refused to go any further. An uncanny tune that floated elusively in the air gave the clue to their staring eyes and bristling backs.

"I guess I must go on alone," said Keith. "You stay here, brother, and don't move unless," he hesitated, "I call for help."

"All right, baas!" replied Timber; but Keith, looking at the faithful nigger's fear-haunted eyes, had his doubts as he strode off, a pile of furs slung over his broad shoulders.

The mound was larger than he had thought, and he found it quite a stiff climb to reach the cairn on the top. The large, flat stones were arranged in the form of a hut, in the middle of which was a hole just large enough to admit a man. Here it was that the Eskimos placed their tribute for the Wolf-Wizard to collect in his own time.

There was a strange hush in the air as Keith dropped his burden. Even the ghostly music had ceased. Locking quickly round, to make sure he was not observed, the young mountie sank down on his knees and crawled beneath one of the larger skins, which had once adorned a bull musk-ox. There, revolver in hand, he crouched to await developments.

A slight scuffling sound made him peep out from a corner of the robe, and he saw what he at first thought was a huge white dog slink out from the aperture. A second glance assured him that it was an albino wolf—the same that had carried off Kookosh!

Seizing one of the furs in his jaws, the great beast backed into the gloom of the hole, drawing his prize with him.

Keith half rose to his knees, and as he did so the wolf, evidently hearing the movement, reappeared. Before he had time to duck down again the brute had seen him—and sprung. There was a loud explosion as the revolver was knocked from his hand,

and Keith, struggling madly, felt his collar seized in powerful jaws!

He strove desperately to regain his feet, but in the effort lost his balance, and, dragged by the wolf, fell through the little doorway. The next moment he was turning head over heels down a flight of rough stone steps, to land with a sickening crash at the bottom.

Keith was winded and stunned by the precipitous fall. He hardly knew what was happening as a dark form bent over him, and passed a noose round his wrists and ankles. In a dream, he saw evil eyes glowing all around him, and his ears were deafened by a melancholy howling.

Then shrill strains of music rose above the devilish sounds. As Keith's eyes grew accustomed to the gloom and his faculties slowly returned, he saw a hideous figure dominating the lurid scene.

Built like a man, yet with the grinning head of a beast, the Wolf-Wizard was swaying gently to and fro as he played on a primitive reed instrument; and, hypnotised by his motions and the weird, haunting air, the wolves ringed about him rocked on their haunches to the rhythm!

The floor of the cave was littered with the bones of Eskimos. But Keith had eyes only for the colossal piles of skins, representing hundreds of pounds' worth of fur. These at once convinced him that the Wolf-Wizard was a man of this earth, greedy for gain!

Suddenly the white wolf uttered a low growl, and, lifting his head, howled dismally. The cry was instantly taken up by the others. The mesmerised ring broke up, and the excited wolves ran round and round, baring their fangs and snarling.

With an angry cry, like that of a wild beast, the Wolf-Wizard ceased playing and rushed towards the steps, his gaunt followers flocking after him. As the wild procession disappeared Keith heard a familiar voice shouting: "Baas! Baas! Whar am yo'?" Then there was a terrified shriek and a renewed outburst of frightful howls, which slowly faded away into the distance.

Struggling like mad, Keith found he had freed his hands. His cry of triumph changed to a gasp, however, as a lean shape hurtled down the steps. It was the white wolf!

But Keith was ready, and, as the brute leapt, he whipped out his knife and struck once, twice, thrice. Each blow found its billet, and, stabbed to the heart the white wolf sank lifeless to the ground.

In a moment Keith was racing up the slippery stone steps. But the little opening, through which the Wolf-Wizard and his pack had passed, had disappeared. In its place was a huge stone!

(Continued on page 34.)



Hi! Boys-look at this!

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KWANG, THE MIGHTY MONGOLIAN, UP AGAINST THE MYSTIC FLYING DEVILS OF KU-PI! ANOTHER THRILLING EXPLOIT.

HWANG KO'S CAULDRON



The Devils Of Ku-Pi

KWANG THE MIGHTY, the Fighting Hermit of Mongolia, sang loudly if not very tunefully.

Kwang stood seven feet high in his sandals, and had a voice in proportion, so that when he sang it made one think of a bull bellowing.

The Fighting Hermit lived alone in a cave in the Khingan Mountains, but just now he was on his way to the construction camp where Tony Blake and Bill Haywood, two British engineers, were supervising the building of a new railroad through North-west Manchuria. Kwang and Tony were old friends, and when the young Britisher had sent a message to him saying that he badly needed help, Kwang had lost no time in setting out to go to him. Girding on a sword that was so heavy few men could even lift it, he had taken a seven-foot oaken staff in his hand, and started off.

Now he was approaching the Ku-Pi gorge, which was a deep ravine in the mountains across which the railroad builders were busy throwing a suspension bridge.

It was night, and the moon showed blotchy and blood-red through the white mists that rose from the valley.

Suddenly there came the patter of running feet, and a yell of terror. A moment later a Chinese coolie darted out of the mist and ran full-tilt into the hermit. Kwang's song broke off abruptly, and he gave a grunt. Then he seized the coolie in a bear-like grip, and spoke with some wrath.

"Unworthy son of unworthy ancestors," he roared. "Is the Evil One at thy heels that you run hither like a mad dog and butt me in the pit of my beautiful stomach whilst I am meditating upon the Four Sublime Verities and the Eightfold Path to Holiness?"

Ten Men's Strength and His Trusty Wooden Staff Aid the Fighting Hermit to Face the Cunning of Hwang Ko—the Chinese Sorcerer—with Startling Results—for Hwang Ko!

As he spoke he lifted the hapless coolie off his feet with one big paw, and shook him till his teeth chattered so violently he was unable to speak.

When he was on his feet again, the man gulped for breath. Finally, realising who it was addressing him, he kow-towed humbly. Kwang, who never forgot to be polite even when he was angry, bowed likewise, and his unshaven pate nearly touched the ground.

"O, most holy and sublime of hermits!" the coolie gasped breathlessly. "It is a blessed chance that led my unworthy feet to thee, for I have just heard the devils of Ku-Pi."

Kwang stopped abruptly in the act of making another profound bow.

"Devils of Ku-Pi?" he said. "What are they?"

The coolie shivered.

"Holy One!" he quavered. "For many nights now devils have haunted the Ku-Pi gorge, and men say it is because the white men build their bridge there and offend them. At nights we have heard the devils screaming, and twice men have tried to cross the bridge after dark, and have been plucked from it by the devils and hurled into the gorge so that all their bones have been broken. To-night I was returning from a visit to the village of Kiang-Shi, and I sought to cross to the compound by way of the unfinished bridge. But suddenly I heard a screaming of many devils, and then the voice of a man crying for help. Thereupon my blood seemed turned to water, and I fled, O, most holy and celestial hermit!"

Before Kwang could utter a word he heard a faint scream for help: followed by a weird, raucous shriek.

"Tis the devils, holy one," the coolie stuttered.

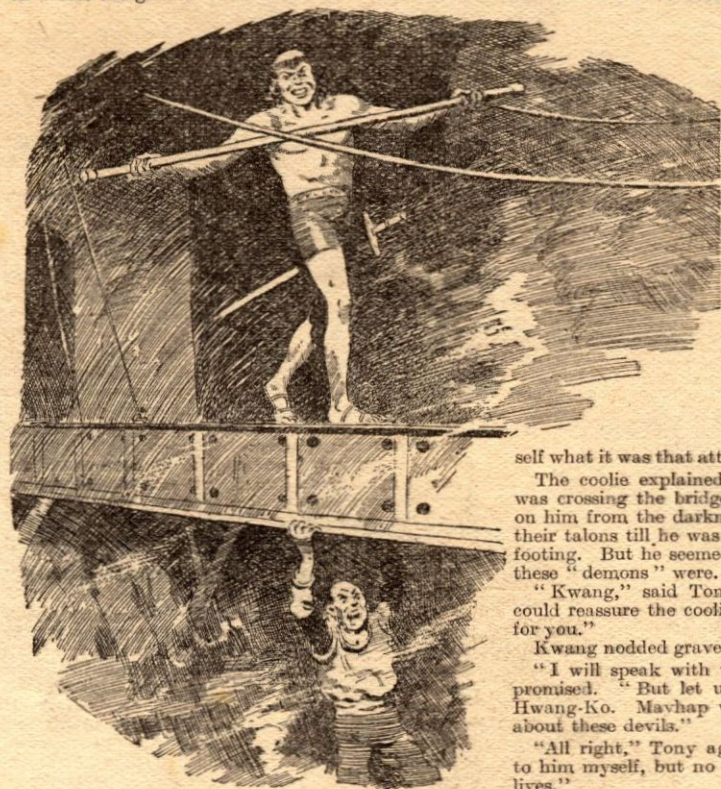
But Kwang was not listening to him. Already he was running with long strides through the thin fog towards the bridge-head.

Suddenly it loomed out of the mist, a spidery network of steel girders that went out across the black gulf of the Ku-Pi Gorge, to be lost in the darkness on the other side.

Again the unearthly, raucous screaming sounded, and mingled with it were shouts for help. Without a moment's hesitation Kwang ran along a broad girder, using his staff to help steady himself.

He saw the man hanging by both hands from the slippery girder, his face panic-stricken and his eyes bulging with terror. At the same time the Fighting Hermit had a vague impression that some monstrous figure loomed momentarily above him in the darkness. For the third time that night he heard the blood-curdling raucous shriek, farther away this time, and rather faint. Then the Thing was gone.

Stooping, Kwang seized the coolie by the scruff of the neck, and lifted him as easily as though he had been a kitten. The man was half crazy with fear, and his face was streaming with blood from several deep wounds that ran from forehead to chin. Doubting whether he would be able to walk, Kwang slung him over his brawny shoulder, and strode swiftly on across the girder.



HIS FATE "IN THE BALANCE."—Kwang stepped along the girder, using his staff to steady himself, to where the terrified coolie was hanging on grimly.

Still carrying the half-unconscious man, he made his way to Tony Blake's hut.

The Eyrie Of The Eagles

TONY sprang to his feet as Kwang towered in the doorway with his burden.

"The Seven Celestial Blessings be upon thee, Toni," the Fighting Hermit said in his booming voice, and beamed at him.

"I'm glad you have come, Kwang," the young Britisher said in a heartfelt voice, speaking the Mongolian giant's own tongue as fluently as a native. "But what ails this man?" he asked, pointing to the coolie, whom Kwang still supported.

"As I crossed your beautiful new bridge," he answered. "I found this man clinging to a girder. Moreover, it seemed to me that demons hovered in the darkness about us as I plucked him from death. So I bore him hither, thinking to question him."

Tony frowned. "Those demons again," he

groaned. "As if it isn't bad enough to have Bill Haywood down with a broken leg! The coolies are deserting because they swear the gorge is haunted by demons. They say that Hwang-Ko, the sorcerer, hath sworn that the gorge shall never be spanned by a bridge, because it will offend the local gods. And some mighty queer things have happened lately. Several men have been hurled from the bridge and killed. On one occasion we chanced to have a guard at either end of the bridge, and we made an immediate search for the murderer. But we found no one on the bridge. The coolies swore it was the work of demons sent by Hwang-Ko."

Kwang nodded gravely.

"Hwang-Ko is an evil man," he said. "But peradventure this unwholesome wretch can tell us something more of the demons who attacked him."

He gave the sagging coolie a sharp jerk that threatened to make him fall through his clothing.

"Speak foolish one," he said. "Tell the noble and highly descended white man and my own worm-like self what it was that attacked you on the bridge."

The coolie explained in a terrified voice that he was crossing the bridge when two demons swooped on him from the darkness, and ripped his face with their talons till he was blind and dazed and lost his footing. But he seemed to have no idea as to what these "demons" were.

"Kwang," said Tony. "I thought maybe you could reassure the coolies. They have a big respect for you."

Kwang nodded gravely.

"I will speak with thy servants to-morrow," he promised. "But let us seek out the evil-begotten Hwang-Ko. Mayhap we can learn something more about these devils."

"All right," Tony agreed. "I should have gone to him myself, but no one seems to know where he lives."

The Fighting Hermit smiled a little grimly.

"They know, but they fear to tell thee, Toni," he said. "Hwang-Ko lives in a cave in the mountains, even as I do. But instead of spending his time in contemplation of the Four Sublime Verities taught us by the Lord Buddha, he meditates evil."

Tony strapped a long-barrelled Browning to his side.

"I'm ready!" he said eagerly. Together they left the hut, and travelled for the better part of two hours, till they came to the foot of a dark, frowning mountain where the sorcerer had his cave. As they mounted it they climbed out of the mists which filled the valleys.

At last Kwang pointed to a narrow, winding path that wound up the face of a tall, perpendicular cliff. "This leads to Hwang-Ko's dwelling-place," he said; and they climbed steadily, going in single file.

Suddenly the deathly silence of the mountain was broken by a harsh scream, and looking up they saw a pair of eagles swooping towards them.

"Lo!" Kwang cried. "Yonder come Hwang-Ko's demons. He hath a magic power over beasts, and doubtless he hath tamed these savage birds and uses them now for his own evil purposes. Probably,

Toni, it was these birds that beat your labourers from the bridge with their wings and claws."

Tony Blake whipped out his Browning, and blazed at the two great birds as they circled screaming overhead. But they made difficult targets as they swooped and planed in the air, and Tony emptied his gun without effect. Then, as he began to reload the Browning the two birds hurtled down towards them.

Kwang clung to the face of the steep cliff with one hand, and whirled his staff in the other. On the level ground he would have beaten off the eagles with ease, but on the path he had scarce any room to move. Even so, the iron-shod end of the staff smashed into one of the brutes, and with a last harsh scream it went hurtling downwards, a crumpled mass of feathers.

At the same instant the other bird swooped on him from behind, but the Fighting Hermit smote swiftly with the other end of the long staff, and the second eagle followed its mate down into the valley.

In dealing these blows Kwang put a severe strain on the tuft of rank grass to which he was clinging, and suddenly it came away from the face of the cliff. The Fighting Hermit made a wild effort to retain his balance; then he pitched headlong down the mountainside.

At the same moment Tony heard a shrill yell of rage from above. Glancing upward he saw a slant-eyed, yellow face glaring down at him from a ledge of rock some twenty feet up from where he stood. Then a rope came snaking down, a noose fell over his head, and tightened cruelly around his neck. Instinctively his hands reached up for the rope. That movement was his undoing. For his feet slipped off the narrow path, and he was dangling in space, kicking wildly, and still clawing at the rope.

For a moment or two it seemed to him that his head would be torn from his shoulders, and that his lungs must burst for want of air. The mountain appeared to whirl madly above him, and come crushing down upon him, and then merciful oblivion engulfed him.

The Sorcerer.

WHEN Tony Blake struggled painfully back to consciousness, he realised that he was lying on the floor of a large cave, bound hand and foot.

As he stirred and tried to free himself, he heard a low chuckle. Turning, he saw Hwang-Ko seated on a flat-topped boulder. The sorcerer was a short, squat man, with a yellow, wizened face that might have been carved out of old ivory. His face seemed dead, impassive, except for his eyes which burned with the bright fire of the fanatic.

"Why have you done this, Hwang-Ko?" Tony demanded in a feeble, husky voice. It hurt his throat horribly to speak.

The sorcerer smiled grimly.

"Listen, foolish one," he said in a guttural voice. "The Ku-pi Gorge is sacred to the ancient gods, and none may build a bridge across it. Since you have been guilty of sacrilege in seeking to bridge the sacred

valley you shall be sacrificed to the gods that their wrath may be appeased."

Tony felt a thrill of horror, though his face showed no trace of it.

"Hwang-Ko," he said quietly, "what shall it profit you to kill me? If you do this thing the Government will surely send soldiers to behead you."

Hwang-Ko smiled contemptuously.

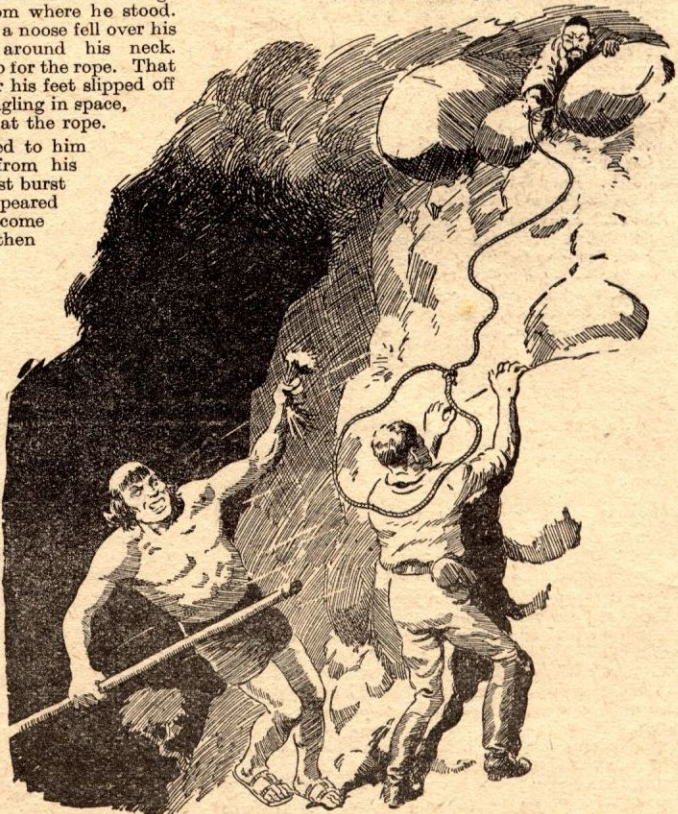
"Who shall ever know what hath become of you?" he asked. "For Kwang the Mighty hath fallen into the valley with my eagles, and none shall ever find his broken bones. As for yourself, you will perish utterly in the Furnace of the Gods and leave no trace behind."

He rose to his feet as he spoke, and seizing the young Britisher heaved him on to his shoulder. Then, with a strength that was astonishing for such a wizened figure, he carried him out of the cave and began to climb towards the summit of the mountain.

With terrible suddenness Tony Blake understood the full horror of the fate in store for him. The top of the mountain was shaped like a gigantic sugar-loaf, and a thin haze of smoke overhung it. Tony realised that it was an active volcano; this was the Furnace of the Gods!

In a comparatively short time they reached the summit, where the ground was covered ankle deep in soft, volcanic dust. Here the sorcerer climbed to a

(Continued on page 36.)



THE PERILS OF THE PATH.—As Kwang reeled outwards, a rope came snaking from above, and a noose settled firmly over Tony's head.

GRIPPING DRAMA IN THE AFRICAN WILDS.

The Jungle in Turmoil; Terror Stalking and Horror Let Loose when the Devil Drums of the Oturi Thud their Dreadful News of Fire, Fury and Killing! Mystery, too! But K'leebi, the Big Black Boss of the K'lala Tribe, is On the Job.

THE MYSTERY OF THE BOGUS WITCH-DOCTOR.

Devil Drums of Death.

BOM-br-rump! Bom! Br-rump. Bom! Br-rump! Bom! Br-rump!

The drums sounded with sinister, rhythmic beat. It was a distant sound, yet it seemed to come from all sides. And the small party, which had halted in the moist heat of the West African bush, looked uneasy. The native police were particularly troubled; and Corporal Tigili, who was in charge of them, had all his work cut out to keep them from bolting.

At the head of the party, in that reeking forest pathway, stood a fine, upright young African, clad only in a leopard's skin. He was K'leebi, the young chief of the K'lala tribe. With him were two British lads, lightly clad in cotton shirts and shorts. They were Dick Stanhope and Roddy Clarke, and they had been staying at the Residency with District-Commissioner Anderson. Ever since their arrival in the settlement the boys had longed to take a trip into the real forest.

At last their wish was granted—though even now they wouldn't have been here had the Commissioner not been down with fever. K'leebi had taken a great liking to the boys, and it was he who had permitted them to accompany this expedition.

"Black boys scared, b'wana," said the Corporal, as Dick Stanhope gave him an inquiring look. "Oturi Ju-ju drums much bad. Dem boys lib for go back."

K'leebi stepped forward.

"Tell them we go forward," he said. "Ju-ju much foolishness. We seek Chief Imga of the Oturi."

The march through the forest recommenced.

Bom! Br-rump! Bom! Br-rump! Bom! came the inevitable drums.

"Nothing to be afraid of, I suppose," murmured Dick, as he noticed that Roddy was looking uncomfortable. "K'leebi knows what he's doing. Mr. Anderson trusts him to the limit."

"He'll see us through," agreed Roddy, nodding. "We're not on war palaver, anyhow. We're going to inquire about that diamond thief, Dawson, aren't we?"

In the African interior, small things can grow into big and dangerous situations. In the present instance, the escape of a single white man, a thief, named Walter Dawson, looked like precipitating an ugly rising of the Oturi. Undoubtedly, the Oturi tribe was inflamed; the incessant beating of the drums from the Oturi country was significant.

Rumour had it that Dawson was dead. He was an unprincipled scoundrel, who, for years, had been engaged in the questionable trade of diamond smuggling. Tricky, cunning, with a full knowledge of

the native languages, he had so far eluded capture. But he had been run to earth, at last, in the Oturi country—and there he had vanished!

District Commissioner Anderson believed that old Chief Imga knew something about Dawson's disappearance. So K'leebi had offered to go to the Oturi country to make inquiries. But since the start the ominous sounds of the drums had become incessant.

"Oughtn't we to have brought a larger force, K'leebi?" asked Dick Stanhope, suddenly.

The young chief laughed contemptuously.

"The Oturi are but women," he replied. "They have no leader, for Chief Imga is an old fool. We are in no danger."

"They say that Bolimbo, the Oturi witch-doctor, is the real leader of the people," put in Roddy.

"Bolimbo is a great talker," replied K'leebi. "He has the large mouth. Both Imga and Bolimbo know that if it befalls us, my people will fall upon them, and give battle to them, and destroy them. For have not the K'lala people always been the masters of the Oturi?"

K'leebi had every cause for his confidence. Not for generations had the Oturi dared to lay a finger upon a chief of the K'lala tribe.

Bom-br-rump! Bom! The little expedition had reached the top of a hill, and the path, opening out, revealed a deep ravine, where the trees were less dense, and where a bend of the K'lala river itself came into view.

"See, b'wana!" muttered the native corporal, pulling at Dick's sleeve.

Down in the gully a number of men were visible. They were moving at a swinging gait, and many were beating drums, or tom-toms. Some were capering about. And all of them—significantly enough—were wearing war paint.

One figure was grotesque, indeed—a hideous caricature of a man, with gleaming black limbs, only partially covered by a leopard's skin. He



THE DEVIL DOCTOR'S SECRET



wore a weird-looking head-dress, and through his nose there was a great bone. Enormous rings, gleaming in the hot sunshine, depended from his ears. Streaks of coloured paint disfigured his evil countenance.

"Wau! It is Bolimbo himself!" muttered K'leebi.

The boys watched fascinatedly. Bolimbo, the dreaded witch-doctor of the Oturi! Behind him, six black bearers carried a litter on which lay an ominous form, sewn up in a blanket.

"They've got a dead body with them!" muttered Roddy Clarke, uneasily.

"I see much!" said K'leebi, his finely chiselled face becoming stern. "It is the body of Dawson, the thief. Was it not rumoured that Dawson was killed by the Oturi?"

"But why are they carrying his body?" asked Dick.

"Many years ago, before the coming of the white man, the Oturi practised many evils, including human sacrifice," replied the young chief. "They no longer dare to practise their rites upon living men. But when they get the chance, they sacrifice dead men. And the body of a dead white man is a great prize."

"Hadn't we better let them get on with it?" asked Dick.

"No! For there lies danger," replied K'leebi. "The practising of these rites would inflame the Oturi, the blood fever would spread, and there would be much killing. My good friend, Mr. Anderson, expects me to see that Dawson's body shall be given decent burial. Come! The wishes of the Commissioner must be complied with."

And the march continued. By the time K'leebi and the native police reached the bottom of the

gully, the Oturi had vanished. But it was an easy path through the forest now. And soon there came a great clearing, and here was the chief village of the Oturi.

A scene of wild excitement met the eyes of the newcomers.

Circles of swaying, wild-eyed, half-delirious natives sat around great fires. The air echoed and re-echoed to the pounding of drums, accompanied by a hideous wailing and chanting.

"Great Scott!" muttered Dick. "They're all mad!"

"The madness of animals!" said K'leebi with scorn. "Come! With me you are safe."

It was no boast. For as the party advanced into the village clearing, the beating of the drums dramatically ceased; the wailing died away. The painted Oturi squatted silent, watching. And they were fearful. The very sight of this noble young K'lala chief quelled them and restored them to sanity.

In front of the biggest hut squatted old Imga, a wizened, foxy-eyed old man. Boldly, K'leebi approached, and the native police were encouraged by his example. Dick and Roddy were frankly thrilled.

"We meet again, Imga," said K'leebi, in his own language.

"And am I not honoured?" asked the old chief, spreading his hands. "K'leebi, Chief of the K'lala, is welcome in my insignificant village."

"You are the father of liars," replied K'leebi calmly. "I come, Imga, to claim the diamonds which were carried by the white man, Dawson. They must be given to the Lord Anderson. I come, also, to

see that the white man, Dawson, is given burial."

Old Imga became excited. "I have no diamonds," he protested. "I know nothing of the white man, Dawson."

K'leebi took a step nearer, and the cunning old man cowered back.

"Nay! I will speak the truth!" he gasped. "But first let the great Bolimbo talk with you—"

He was suddenly interrupted by a great shouting. K'leebi, turning, saw that Bolimbo, the witch doctor, was yelling at the top of his voice. The excited Oturi were gathering round and they were looking ugly.

"See—see!" screamed Bolimbo. "There are less than twelve, and at their head, K'leebi, your sworn enemy. Seize them! Kill! Kill! They come to you! Let the Oturi prove that they are the masters of the whole wide forest!"

He was shouting like a madman, and the Oturi warriors, already inflamed, took up the shouting, too. And then, abruptly, dramatically, before the native soldiers could even take aim, the Oturi swept down.

K'leebi, the young chief, stared in amazement. For what had never happened before was happening now. And K'leebi knew not why.

The Human Rope.

AT the last moment, as the Oturi warriors were dashing to the attack, Bolimbo screamed to them to seize their enemies, and hold them alive.

"Do not kill—yet!" he commanded. "For if you kill, the white Lord Anderson will come and he will burn your village and kill your headman. I will show you another way—a better way."

The natives were swayed completely by Bolimbo;

they obeyed his every word. And soon the scene was one of indescribable violence.

Dick and Roddy, fighting desperately, put up a good show. But they were seized on all sides, forced to the ground, and held.

K'leebi himself, a giant of a fighter, not only beat the Oturi off, but he managed to force his way through the maddened savages to the litter. For, having heard Bolimbo's words, K'leebi, in his shrewdness, was suspicious.

With a slash of his knife, he ripped through the blanket which covered the dead man. He took one look at the face—and recoiled.

For he saw, not the face of Dawson, the white man—but the horrible countenance, made more horrible by the lapse of time since death, of Bolimbo the witch-doctor!

"For this you, too, shall die!" hissed a voice in his ear.

Then he was seized and pulled back. Bolimbo, with deft fingers, closed up the gash in the blanket. None of the Oturi had seen. But K'leebi knew the truth—and he understood how it was that the Oturi had been persuaded to attack.

For Bolimbo, the witch-doctor, was not Bolimbo—but Dawson himself!

"You said they wouldn't harm us, K'leebi!" muttered Dick, as K'leebi was flung down by the side of the two boys.

"And I was right, young friend!" said K'leebi in anguish. "But how did I know? The white devil, Walter Dawson, has killed Bolimbo and taken his place."

"Oh, my goodness!" exclaimed Roddy staring. "What—what does that mean?"

"Dawson is desperate," continued K'leebi. "It was easy for him to make himself black, and to wear the hideous garb of the witch-doctor. And the ignorant Oturi do not guess! Bolimbo was a fool—but Dawson is clever. And that is the difference. The people think that Bolimbo has acquired great powers, and they do not guess. He speaks the language, even as themselves."

"But I don't understand," muttered Dick. "What good will Dawson do himself by this?"

"When we are dead—and they mean to kill us—Dawson will quietly escape," replied K'leebi. "Mr. Anderson will not suspect Bolimbo, and even if he does, Bolimbo will have disappeared. And none can say whence he went."

A figure came up and bent over the helpless prisoners.

"We know you, Dawson!" said Dick fiercely, as he glared into the hideous painted countenance. "You didn't fool K'leebi. You're a white man. You can't kill us—"

"It is too late!" muttered Dawson, bending nearer, his eyes leering, his voice charged with hatred. "You are to be sacrificed. Pah! Do you think I care for the Oturi? Let them be wiped out by that fool of a District Commissioner! I shall be gone—yes, and I shall take the diamonds with me. While the fool Commissioner is getting up a punitive expedition to punish the Oturi, to burn their villages, I shall be making my escape. Quite clever, eh?"

He laughed uproariously, and the boys shuddered. For it was the laugh of a fiend. Long years amongst the savages had warped the character of this white man. He was a savage himself. And he was far more dangerous than any native witch-doctor, for he possessed cunning; he was a man of knowledge, of ingenuity.

And soon he proved his brilliance.

The two boys and K'leebi, bound and helpless, were carried through the forest. With them went a



Dawson, alias Bolimbo the witch-doctor, was hacking at the ropes of the bridge.

howling mob, and all the time came the sound of the hated drums. In the moist heat of the afternoon the party forced its way through the tangled forest.

The boys did not know what had happened to Corporal Tigili and the native police. Perhaps they had all been killed. Perhaps they were lying in a hut, bound and helpless—waiting to be dealt with later. It did not matter. Dick and Roddy felt that no help could reach them now. They were many miles beyond the Oturi border, and well within the enemy country.

At last the river was reached—a wide, sluggish, black stream. Every now and again there was the swirl of the water, as a crocodile came to the surface, or slinked off one of the mudbanks.

A rough raft was prepared. The two boys were placed on this raft, and bound to it. Lying flat down, spreadeagled, their wrists and their ankles were tied to the rough logs. They were helpless.

At the other end of the raft, K'leebi was bound in the same way. Then the raft, with its helpless cargo, was pushed into the stream. And at the last moment, Dawson bent over, his distorted grin hideous to see.

"Do you not see the cunning of my plan?" he whispered, in English. "You will float down the stream—placidly at first. But soon the current gets stronger, and some miles lower down there is a great waterfall—"

"Oh!" muttered Dick.

"That frightens you, eh?" chuckled the villain. "You will be pitched over that waterfall, my young

friends—and in the boiling rock-studded whirlpool below, this raft will be pounded to fragments. You will be tossed, broken and mangled, and when your bodies are found, people will think you've met with an accident. Do you understand? Your bonds will be broken, and there will be no clue. And while the inquiries are going on, I shall be escaping."

He laughed again, and with a contemptuous kick, he sent the raft out into the stream. It was caught by the current, and soon it was drifting along. From the bank came the yelling of the Oturi, and the beating of the drums.

"If I die, it is all I deserve," said K'leebi bitterly. "But it is wrong, my young friends, that you should suffer the same fate, for all the fault is mine."

"It wasn't your fault, K'leebi!" said Dick quickly. "How were you to guess that that devil, Dawson, had killed Bolimbo and taken his place? It was Dawson who inflamed the Oturi."

By now the raft was gathering speed. The current was stronger, and the wooded banks slipped by rapidly.

The plucky youngsters tried hard to wrench at their bonds; but they could do nothing. K'leebi, however, was a young giant; his strength was phenomenal. Already he was meeting with some success. One wrist was becoming loosened; then, with a rending and tearing of rope, he freed his right hand. Never did the boys

know of the superhuman effort that K'leebi had made.

It was more difficult to free his left hand, for the ropes were stronger. The minutes slipped away . . . the raft was now shooting down the river dangerously. And from the distance, ahead, came the growling, ominous sound of the deadly waterfall.

A gasp came from K'leebi; and Dick and Roddy, to their joy, saw the giant figure of the young chief rise. K'leebi, who was now intent upon freeing his bound ankles, caught his breath in sharply between his perfect teeth.

For he saw, in that glance, that there was no time for him to get himself free—let alone liberate his unfortunate companions. For the raft was already within a few yards of the dizzy brink. He looked up in despair—and saw a chance of salvation. Practically on the edge of the falls, a great tree bent its branches low down over the water. K'leebi made his decision.

As the raft was swept beneath, he reached up, and seized one of the strong limbs, hanging on desperately.

The speed of the raft was checked, for K'leebi had converted himself into a human rope! The strain upon him was terrible. At any moment, the horrified Dick and Roddy expected to see their brave companion torn apart. His ankles, held by the bonds, were fast to the raft.

The raft itself nosed its way over the edge of the falls—and there it remained poised.

The Pool of Horror.

"BLAZES!" Dick Stanhope knew that he and his companions hung between life and death. K'leebi could not hang on for much longer. He had made a desperate effort—but he must inevitably fail.

And then the youngsters saw something which struck them, at first, as a miracle. Yet it was a perfectly natural consequence of K'leebi's act. The raft, slowly but surely, was swinging sideways, getting nearer and nearer to the river bank!

The movement was caused by the swing of the tree branch, which was supple and

young. K'leebi's grip upon it was like that of a vice. Slowly the raft swung nearer and nearer to the bank, drawing away from the deadly edge of the falls till at last it jammed against some jutting rocks.

"Wah—we are saved!" shouted K'leebi triumphantly, above the roar of the falls.

He released his grip; the raft stayed firmly, jammed between the rocks. Quickly, now, K'leebi freed his ankles. And once that was done he took some of the ropes, and made certain of the raft, fixing the ropes round a projection of rock.

Then he released his companions, and they all scrambled ashore, mounting the steep gully, till they stood overlooking the deadly whirlpool into which they might have fallen.

"Thanks, K'leebi," said Roddy quietly, as he pressed the young chief's arm.

"Wah! Do not add to my anguish," said K'leebi. "For 'twas I who brought you into this deadly peril. Even now we are not free from danger."



THE BRIDGE OF DOOM.—The boys were half-way across the bridge when they became aware of a horde of gesticulating savages behind them. At the other end of the bridge it was the same.

"What do you think we had better do?" asked Dick eagerly.

"Return to the Residency," replied K'leebi promptly. "There must be a great army sent forth against the treacherous Oturi. They must be crushed—and the man, Dawson, must be punished."

Although the boys did not guess it, K'leebi was in agony. He had undergone a tremendous strain whilst saving the raft from destruction. But not a word of complaint did he utter.

He led the way through the forest; his instinct, or his sense of direction, was perfect.

Just ahead there was a native bridge. It was an affair of ropes, made of creepers—a crazy swinging contrivance which sagged in the middle. And below, far down, there was a steaming, festering pool of black water in which the vile snouts of crocodiles showed.

"Gosh!" said Roddy, with a gulp. "I wouldn't like to fall into that happy family!"

K'leebi led the way—cautiously.

It was when they were half-way across that the surprise came. K'leebi uttered an exclamation, and swung round. At the further end of the bridge there were numbers of painted Oturi, dancing and gesticulating.

"Look!" gasped Dick.

It was the same at the other end. They were trapped! And, to add to the horror of the situation, Walter, Dawson himself, alias Bolimbo, the witch-doctor—was hacking at the ropes of the bridge, intent upon sending his enemies to death.

"You escaped once—but you won't escape now!" came Dawson's snarl. "The crocodiles await you. They don't often get such a relish for their evening meal!"

With a mighty run, K'leebi attempted to reach the scoundrel; but the ropes parted with an awful sound of rending, and Dick and Roddy had a glimpse of their black friend plunging down—down towards the jaws of the waiting reptiles.

Dick and Roddy themselves, clinging to the rope bridge, managed to maintain their hold. And, to their horror, they found that they were within reach, almost, of the snapping jaws of the crocodiles. The water was churned ferociously, and many of the creatures came nearer, their mouths wide open, their jaws hideous with rows of deadly fangs.

"Might as well drop!" muttered Roddy. "Better to be eaten by the crocs. than to fall into Dawson's hands again!"

"Where's K'leebi?" panted Dick. "I believe he's killed, isn't he?"

"Look!" muttered Roddy, with a shudder.

He pointed to the far side of that horrid pool. There was a great commotion going on. Several of the crocodiles appeared to be fighting. The boys dared not look any closer...

"So ends the life of K'leebi, Chief of the K'lala tribe!" jeered Dawson. "I have an even more spectacular death in readiness for you, my young friends—I meant to let you die comfortably. But you are too tricky—and I cannot afford to take any further chances. This time I will make sure of you. Yes, and I'll give the Oturi people such a treat as they have never had before!"

He laughed fiendishly. Dick and Roddy, in climbing up and escaping from the crocodiles, had inevitably fallen into the hands of the savages. They were seized, rendered helpless, and carried away.

By the time they reached the Oturi village, it was dark. Fires were blazing, making the scene lurid and unreal. The boys were thrust into a hut. And soon Bolimbo, the witch doctor, came to them.

"Everything is being made ready," he said noddingly. "This time, my young friends, I am



Above the cage, amid the dense foliage of the trees crouched K'leebi.

going to show the Oturi what a powerful witch-doctor I am! Is it not a good joke?"

"You devil!" panted Dick. "Does it give you any pleasure to come here and taunt us?"

"A great deal," retorted the renegade. "Every man's hand has been against me for years. Now it is my turn! K'leebi is dead, and when you are dead, too, the way will be clear for me to escape. I shall leave these devils indulging in their orgy. I have a canoe ready, and I shall be many miles down the river before morning."

But Walter Dawson was counting his chickens before they were hatched! For at that very moment K'leebi, very much alive, was in touch with some friendly natives on a neighbouring hilltop. The drums were already sounding—drums which would be repeated in that strange way of the "forest telegraph." It was K'leebi's call for help—and, like magic, the message was carried through the forest—until it reached District Commissioner Anderson himself.

The Cage Of Death.

DAWSON had made very rapid preparations—and this fact, alone, seemed likely to nullify K'leebi's fine effort.

K'leebi had deliberately dived into the crocodile pool, plunging far beneath the surface. More than one set of teeth had snapped at him, but swimming under water he had reached the further end of the pool, and there, unseen, he had crawled out in safety. K'leebi possessed an uncanny power over all forest creatures, and even the crocodiles seemed to hesitate before attacking him.

When Dick and Roddy were brought out of the hut, they found a raving, howling mob of Oturi.

There was one great fire now—in the centre of the

clearing. Round it squatted the blacks, beating their tom-toms. Others were dancing crazily.

And standing near the fire was a great cage-like contrivance.

It appeared to be a double cage, crudely constructed of split wood. And it was mounted upon a great trolley arrangement, with wheels. One half of the cage was quite empty—the other half contained a restive, vicious-looking lion.

"Let me introduce you to your new home!" said Dawson, with a leer.

Dick and Roddy, helpless in the hands of their captives, were thrust into the empty half of the cage—and they saw, with horror, that the partition which divided them from the lion was fragile. It was merely constructed of thin laths; and even as the lion moved, the laths bent ominously.

A dozen of the blacks put their shoulders to the great cage—and, slowly but surely, the cage itself was trundled nearer and nearer to the fire.

And then the boys understood. The cage was being wheeled over the fire—the lion-end first! The savage creature of the forest, maddened by the flames, would dash itself against the barriers in its efforts to escape. One barrier would give way—the thin partition which separated the cage into two sections!

"The filthy scoundrel!" panted Dick.

At last the flames were beginning to lick the extreme end of the cage, and the lion, with a mighty roar, backed away, hurling itself about in a frenzy of fear.

Crash—crash!

Even as both the boys looked, K'leebi released his grip—and dropped.

The cage was nearly over the fire—the lion was frenzied. And K'leebi dropped straight down—to crash through the top of the cage, falling into the cage itself—not with Dick and Roddy, but with the lion!

From outside came the frantic shouts from Dawson as he urged the Oturi to push the cage further and over the fire. There was complete confusion for the moment, while Dick and Roddy saw something which seemed like a miracle.

In the other part of the cage K'leebi was bending over the terrified lion. For, in truth, the lion was far more terrified than savage. K'leebi was talking to it, even caressing it—and the savage creature responded. Never once did it make any attempt to attack the young chief.

He was talking to the creature still—and suddenly it seemed that the lion actually understood what K'leebi was saying. With one clean leap, it shot out of the opening in the top of the cage—that opening which K'leebi had made when he had fallen through.

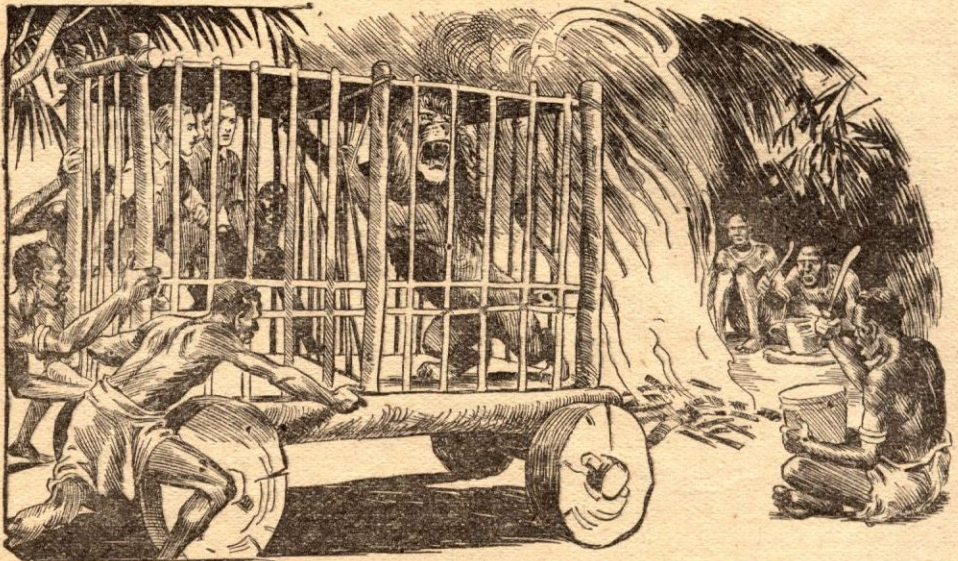
Dick and Roddy, watching fascinatedly, saw the lion fall full upon "Bolombo." Shrieking with fear, the renegade died—and, mercifully, he died quickly.

"Listen!" shouted Dick almost hysterically.

Crack—crack—crack!

"Rifle shots!" roared Roddy.

Scores of figures, clad in the familiar uniforms of native police, burst into the clearing, and the inflamed Oturi fled.



CAGED DEATH.—The great cage was slowly wheeled towards the fire. The flimsy partition sagged ominously as the terrified lion reared against it.

It came against the partition, and the boys thought that their end had come.

"The fire would have been better than this," breathed Roddy, lifting his bloodshot eyes upwards.

And then he became transfixed. He clutched at his companion and pointed.

"Look!" he breathed. "Am I going mad, Dick?"

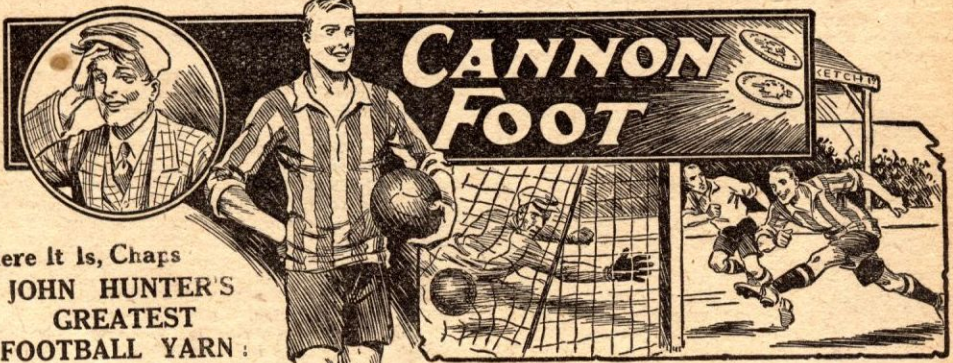
Dick looked up, too. Far above, amid the dense foliage of the overhanging trees, a face was plainly visible. And it was the face of K'leebi, the young Paramount Chief of the K'lala tribe!

* * * * *

THE boys returned to the Residency fully satisfied with their adventure in the primitive forest. It would last them for many a long day. They took the body of Dawson with them—to say nothing of the smuggled diamonds which had been found in Dawson's clothing.

Zarazan the Sorcerer works more of his devilish magics in next week's eerie mystery yarn, entitled, "Behind the Skeleton Hands."

BEGIN TO-DAY! The Mightiest Mystery Tale Ever Penned with Real Footer, Live Characters and Thrills from the Kick-Off.



Here it is, Chaps
**JOHN HUNTER'S
GREATEST
FOOTBALL YARN!**

TWO smooth guinea pieces were the clue—the clue to the greatest mystery of football and crimedom ever conceived. Immense crooked forces were out to find them, led by Dan Vorgan, but a seemingly simple Cornish lad, who had earned the nickname of "Cannon Foot" on the footer field, and "Dotty" off it, found both of the pieces first.

Only one of them was of any use to Dotty in his quest. On one side of this were four lines of apparently senseless doggerel; on the other were some measurements and directions. The meaning of it all was a mystery.

When strolling through the back streets of Derby, after a football match, Dotty was laid out and kidnapped by Vorgan. When he recovered consciousness he found himself, with his feet tied, on a bridge crossing a railway in the heart of the country.

"Ever heard of the Northern Limited?" snarled Vorgan. "She's the fast flyer to Scotland, and she's due any minute now. You'll find her interesting! Get to it!"

At this command Vorgan's men seized Dotty, but the footballer at last realised Vorgan's diabolical plot, and he struggled furiously.

The Killer Train.

THE man Dotty had knocked out had by this time recovered, so that, with the driver, they were four to one. His ankles being tied together, he himself lying in the roadway, Dotty had no chance against such odds, and in a few moments they had further secured him with another rope about his wrists—his arms tied in front of him, for they could not force them behind him.

The Northern Limited was now plainly to be heard. She was roaring along at about sixty miles an hour—some four hundred tons of steel crashing through the night away north.

Vorgan gave sharp-orders. Dotty was hoisted to the parapet of the low bridge, and the rope about his ankles was paid out.

He now hung head downwards, and Vorgan leaning over the bridge advised him of his fate.

"We're just going to hold you low enough," he cried, "for the smokestack of the locomotive to knock your clever head off for you. Get me?"

Dotty said nothing. It seemed that nothing on earth could save him.

Even if the driver and fireman of the flier happened to see him as the train swung the bend before smashing beneath the bridge, they would be unable to save him; for they could never pull the train up in time.

Now the upflung glare from the locomotive's fire-box was plainly visible, and the thunder of its steel wheels distinctly audible in a sustained roar of high speed.

"Lower away," said Vorgan in a strange voice. "And just low enough. Let him see the train coming. Try and keep his face that way."

They managed to steady him. He now hung head downwards, swaying slightly like a big pendulum, but with his face along the cutting in the direction the train was coming.

Seconds hung like years—and yet fled incredibly swiftly. The tension increased. Vorgan was flinging vile insults at Dotty. Dotty was the object of an intense and terrible hatred, and Vorgan was flinging that hatred in poisoned words over the parapet of the low bridge, while the flyer smashed on to Dotty's doom.

She was coming round the bend, her speed slightly slackened, but still standing at fifty.

"Right level?" asked Vorgan hoarsely.

"O.K.," said the truck driver, who was handling the rope.

She was leaping forward, and as she leapt her speed checked and her brakes began to shriek madly. The driver had seen Dotty.

But he was centuries too late. Nothing could stop the monster before she reached the bridge. Vorgan yelled with mad laughter—for mad he was for those moments, mad with hate and rage.

And Dotty did the only thing possible. With a superhuman effort, an effort worthy of a vaudeville trapeze artist, he doubled himself at the waist, lifting the upper part of his body upwards, and, taking advantage of the one mistake they had made in binding him, he managed to clutch at his ankles with his tied hands and hold them, so that he swung in a doubled-up ball from the rope's end. Had they tied his hands behind him he would never have been able to do it.

The locomotive went slashing by beneath him, missing him by a foot or two.

Vorgan shrieked: "Drop him! Drop him!"

But the train was sliding to a standstill now, under its powerful brakes.

Vorgan changed his tune. "Pull him up! Keep him! Pull . . ."

But he was too late. They had hastened to obey his first command, and Dotty, hitting the top of one of the now slowly moving coaches, rolled sideways towards its edge, hit the little gutterway and was kicked outwards, to fall on the bushes at the side of the embankment.

The train was now at a standstill. Vorgan, frantic with rage and chagrin, piled into the truck with his men, and away went the truck into the night, while the passengers got out of the train, and Dotty, little the worse for his adventure, and amazingly cool, was released from his bonds and questioned.

He made the same reply to all the questions. Strangers had descended upon him while out for a walk, and the result of their descent had been witnessed by the driver and fireman of the train.

The train carried him to the next station, where it checked its run on purpose to drop him; and from that station he got a slow local back to Melchester.

As the local bumped along the branch line Dotty considered Dan Vorgan, and decided it was time he got hurt.

The Plotter Blotter!

BEFORE Dotty set out definitely to indicate to Mr. Vorgan that unwarrantable interference was not permitted without incurring grave penalties, an interesting football match took place on the Rovers' ground.

The Rovers had, by reason of an omission on the part of their secretary, to play through various of the qualifying rounds of the Cup competition. In one of these rounds they were drawn against Panchenham United

The United were a league team of considerable strength and horrible reputation. Also, they were doing badly in the way of winning home matches, and their gates had suffered accordingly. Progress in the Cup meant a whole lot to Panchenham, and how much it meant was shown two days before the match—which took place at Melchester.

Two men approached Dotty. He was out on road work early one morning. He made it a practice to get up early, have a cup of cocoa and a couple of biscuits, and then do a mile or two on the roads. It is as bad to exercise on an empty stomach in the morning as it is to do so directly after a heavy meal.

Dotty, seeing these two men approach, got ready to fight, thinking they might be Vorgan's men. He had not abandoned his intention to make Vorgan sit up and take notice; though afterwards he was bitterly to regret the decision.

The two men, however, seemed quite friendly, and Dotty checked his loping, ugly run which covered

ground with such amazing speed, and permitted them to talk.

"You're Bideford, aren't you?" said one of them. "That be my name," replied Dotty in his broadest Devon drawl. His slow eyes wandered across their faces. They were the "clever" type, the flash type who know all about horse-racing and standing in bars, and pretending to be men of the world, and who are really just wasters and crooked and rottenly useless.

"It's about Saturday's game," added the spokesman. "Now the United want to win. We've got money on them, and there's certain men in the team stand to pick up a bit if our bets come off. We made the bets before the draw. That is, we backed them to get through this next round, whoever they played. Our luck was out. They got drawn against the Rovers at Melchester, and that puts them out . . . bar one thing."

"And what be that?" asked Dotty quietly. "If the Rovers don't score," said the speaker, "the United might pull it off. That is . . . if you had, say, an off-day. Everybody does at times. You can't always play on the top note. And there might be fifty quid for you at the finish. What do you say?"

"Are all the United in this—management and all?" asked Dotty.

"My word, no, kid. The management's straight enough. They allow rough play, but they wouldn't stand for this. We've got bets on the team. We're nothing to do with it. And we've straightened two or three fellows . . . see?"

"To do what?" asked Dotty. "You don't have to pay footballers to try and win."



THE HUMAN BATTERING RAM.—The centre-half was about to head the ball when Dotty charged with the force of a battering ram, sending him into the net with the leather.

The man looked straight into his eyes. "To see you get yours on the field if you don't agree to what we say. So come on, kid. Be sensible. We'll . . ." He said no more. He and his companion momentarily imagined two thunderbolts had fallen from high heaven in rapid succession and picked on them. By the time they dragged themselves to their feet, Dotty was loping away.

They howled after him: "You wait till Saturday."

Dotty waited, and Saturday came. The United were a tough-looking lot, and Dotty, as the teams lined up, wondered which among them were the three "straightened" men who were to get back at him at all costs for his refusal to sell his team.

United kicked off against a strong wind, and they came tearing away in their own crude style, long booting down the field followed by terrific rushes.

It provided a spectacle of tremendous energy and enthusiasm. But against sheer science, clever positioning, and unwasted kicks of the Rovers, it battered itself in vain.

They never got near to the goal. And the Rovers' forward line was set in motion. In that moment the whole ground realised that something unusual was taking place. Dotty happened to have the ball, and he swiftly found the three men whose "duty" it was to show him that his refusal to concede the demands of the bettors was likely to cost him dear.

The centre-half and the two backs made a dead set at him. There was no question of going for the ball. They went for the man—mad shoulder charges, with elbows stuck out nastily, splits tackles which were likely to sweep a man's legs from under him and break his ankle if he were not quick, kidney punches as they ran alongside him and were covered from the referee's sight by their own bodies.

For a few moments Cannon Foot had a rough time. He reeled at last to the ground, his legs torn from under him; his body jolted by a nasty punch which escaped the observation of everybody.

Of course, the whistle went for a free kick. As Cannon Foot dragged himself up he looked into the eyes of the centre-half. They happened to be apart from all the other players, and the half said: "That's nothing to what you're going to get. We're going to put you out of football for the rest of the season."

And Dotty grinned. The centre-half stared at him in surprise. That anybody should grin after such a jolting staggered him. It ought to have warned him.

The free kick was taken by Barney Gibson. He dropped it right into the United's goalmouth. It came down on the centre-half's head; and as he went to head it away, just before it touched his head, something like a locomotive hit him.

He went into the back of the net as though kicked there, and the ball went with him. Dotty really need never have fallen on top of him, but he did so, because he wanted to whisper something to the dazed and shaken man. It was: "Did ee bring a doctor with ee?"

Of course, the United protested; but the goal was a perfectly legitimate one, as Dotty had taken the centre-half as the ball touched him, and, in fact, it was Dotty's head which actually carried the leather into the net.

They lined up. Off went the ball again. Dotty knew there was going to be real trouble now. A one-goal lead against such a team was sufficient to ensure the Rovers winning; was, in fact, probably only the prelude to others; and his three "policemen" would be out after him like tigers.

They were. But another tiger walked that way that day.

The centre-half was disposed of first. He tried a particularly dirty trick as Dotty jumped for the ball. He "gave him a back," swinging his hips against him so as to bring him over on to his head—an old trick and one which every referee in the land penalises severely.

Dotty came over all right. But in coming over he did a perfectly natural thing. He flung out his left hand in an effort to save himself, and this hand, by a strange chance, clutched the nape of the centre-half's neck. Equally natural was it that the half

should be dragged down with Dotty; but what was not quite so natural was that all the strength of Dotty's immense arm should, in the dragging down be exerted, so that the half's face was literally smashed down on to the ground.

They got him up and they bathed his face and brought him round, and the referee then cautioned him. He protested. He was hurt. His nose was bleeding and his left eye was partly blacked; for the ground was hard and frosty. But the referee waved him aside; and another free kick was taken.

This time Dotty secured from that free kick, and the two backs rushed him as one. He did something neither of them expected. He put his foot on top of the ball, brought it to a standstill and, dropping his foot back to earth, stood foursquare and solidly against their rush. They had thought to catch him as he ran. Instead, they ran into something which reminded them of the Rock of Gibraltar.

He dealt with them swiftly, one after the other, two shoulder charges right and left as they came up, and while the crowd howled with delight, he took his time and slashed across a daisy cutter which the keeper dived for but could not touch.

The crowd was now roaring. They had, as has been said, realised that very special and unscrupulous efforts were to be made to stop Dotty, and that he should do the "stopping" and score two goals into the bargain within twenty minutes was something which sent them into the third heaven of delight.

Rackets were buzzing, a bugle blowing, whistles shrilling. The two backs picked themselves up and looked a bit sick. The centre-half was not quite so certain of his ability to dispose of a person who did most of the disposing; and altogether the game had settled down into an unusual and interesting event.

Off they went again. Dotty was annoyed, and showed it. He gave the centre-half a shoulder charge within the next five minutes which was nearly the last straw for that battered and unfortunate man. And just before half time he overtook the right back, as, having robbed Rovers' inside left, he ran towards his own goal with the intention of turning and clearing.

The back had no distinct memory of what actually occurred. His first clear knowledge was as he picked himself up from behind his own goal line with the roar of the crowd greeting a third goal scored by the man he was to have stopped, and who, having put him over the chalk, walked the leather into the net.

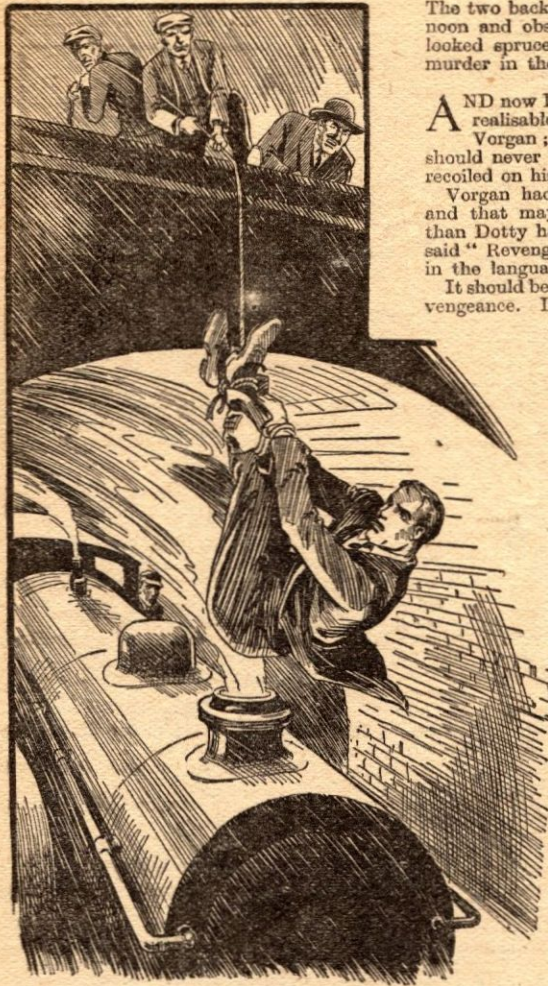
That was half time. Rovers 3—United 0. And Dotty on the warpath with a vengeance.

The three "stoppers" viewed the second period with a little apprehension. The centre-half's left eye was now quite closed, and his nose was hurting him. He had bells ringing in his head, and he was in a really bad way. The two backs were bruised and shaken but fit to go on.

They went on, and the Rovers went away like lightning, in a swift, accurate and deadly raid, wingers cutting in, Dotty storming down the middle, the United splayed to the chalk lines, and the goal laid open. Strategy executed in the matter of seconds, and goal Number Four notched by Harry Jackson with a swift low shot which had more skilful placing than power behind it.

The centre-half was now desperate and so were the backs. They had forgotten they had to stop Dotty. They only wanted vengeance. The centre-half kicked his legs from under him a moment or two later. It was deliberately done. It was a foul which cried to high heaven. Dotty got up, rubbing his shins, and grinning.

The referee ordered the centre-half off the field; At once he was surrounded by the clamorous United



THE TRAIN — MISSED.—With a superhuman effort, Dotty doubled himself at the waist and managed to clutch his ankles, just as the loco slashed past.

players. He waded them away, and the centre-half obeyed his marching orders.

That left the two backs, and in a little while they wished they had been sent off, too.

Of the details of the rest of that match it is needless to write. In the last fifteen minutes the backs were avoiding Dotty. The left back was playing automatically, his head ringing from constant contacts with the hard ground. The right back was scared stiff. And the Rovers were six up.

And all the while Dotty had played only shoulder charges, heavy and terrible, but within the rules of the game, in that he had employed them only when his men had the ball.

After the match he strolled out of the Rovers' dressing-room, fully dressed, and he happened to meet the United as they trooped towards the 'bus which was to take them to their home town.

The centre-half, very pale and sickly, glared at him.

The two backs looked away. Dotty bade them a good afternoon and observed that it had been a pleasant game. He looked spruce and clean and unhurt. They departed with murder in their hearts.

AND now Dotty prepared to make his great mistake. It is realisable that he must have desired vengeance on Vorgan; but vengeance, at its best, is wrong, and Dotty should never have contemplated it. As is often the case, it recoiled on his own head, and in terrible fashion.

Vorgan had, after all, treated him with fiendish cruelty, and that may be taken as his excuse. Many better men than Dotty have gone out after vengeance. Somebody once said "Revenge is sweet." It is one of the wickedest sayings in the language.

It should be mentioned that he had only one object in seeking vengeance. It was to give Vorgan a sound thrashing. The thrashing was not to be an ordinary one. It was to be one which would leave its mark on Vorgan's black heart, so that he would, in future, hesitate to practise his cruelties on somebody who could hit back in no uncertain fashion.

Now one thing Dotty did not count on. He could not possibly count on it, because he was entirely unaware of it. It was that, coincident with his determination to revenge himself on Vorgan, Halway decided to make certain moves against him.

What those moves were will be apparent later, and the outcome of them will also be apparent. It was an outcome most terrible in the extreme, and gave rise to the biggest football "sensation" of that year.

Getting hold of Vorgan was, to begin with, difficult. Ever since Dotty's audacious kidnapping exploit, Vorgan had kept himself doubly guarded. He no longer used the top floor of his slum dwelling, with its dangerous skylight. He stayed on the ground floor, and there were gunmen about the place. They had instructions to shoot Dotty on sight.

It will be realised that between Dotty and Vorgan it was now war to the knife. So much so that Dotty had temporarily abandoned trying to solve the puzzle of the inscription on the smooth guinea piece—until he had settled with Vorgan.

Meanwhile, Halway was having Dotty watched, was himself attending to this watching in person, and was biding his time. Of course, he did not know that Dotty intended to kidnap Vorgan for the second time and thrash him. He only learnt that afterwards and, with his normal cunning, took instant advantage of it; as will be seen.

So observe Dotty planning to secure the person of Vorgan, and, in doing so, planning his own dreadful downfall.

Getting Vorgan out was the difficulty. Dotty tackled it with characteristic boldness. He went down to Brake Street, in which was Loski's place.

Loski's place had long been a gambling den in that district, and the coming of Vorgan and his crew had brought to it an era of unexampled prosperity. It was really called "Loski's Club." It purported to be a "sports" club. The police have no very great powers where clubs are concerned. It was difficult for the local police to "pin" Loski's place down. So it went on, difficult to enter. . . .

Dotty got in. He got in in his own fashion. He knocked on the door. A grille in it slid back and a face showed. A pair of eyes scrutinised Dotty, and then a voice demanded: "What do you want?"

(Continued on page 29.)

Fountain Pens and Footballs for all Jokes Printed

The JESTER'S REALM



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

Cockney Tommy (on foreign service, getting his first view of the desert):
Lumme! The tide don't 'aif go out 'ere!

(Football to K. GOUGH Desmond House, Walsworth Road, Hitchin, Herts.)

JOKE COUPON.

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

19/11/32.

A CLOSE SHAVE.

ORDERLY OFFICER: Have you shaved to-day?
OLD SOLDIER: Yes, sir!
ORDERLY OFFICER: Well, next time stand a bit closer to your razor!
(Fountain pen to MICHAEL EATON, 63, Hartington Street, Bedford.)

BOW-WOW.

The bus conductor waited patiently while the old gent laboriously read through the destination board. "Is this a Barking bus?" he asked, at last, "No, sir," answered the conductor, jerking impatiently at the bell cord. "This one purrs!"
(Fountain pen to L. A. STEVENS, 129, Ditchling Rise, Brighton, Sussex.)

SKY-HIGH.

SERGEANT: If a bomb dropped on the barracks, what would you do?
RECRUIT: Go up with the report, sir!
(Fountain pen to SIDNEY HIGHMORE, 270, Brown-hill Road, Catford, London, S.E.6.)

TAKE THE STRAIN!

SMALL BOY (to porter lifting heavy trunk): Can I help?
PORTER: What can you do?
SMALL BOY: I'll grunt while you lift!
(Fountain pen to HENRY BARNES, Raybridge Laock, nr. Chippenham, Wiltshire.)

PAID FOR IT.

An elderly gent watched a man digging in the road for some time.
"What are you digging for?" he asked at last.
"Money!" replied the workman.
"Really!" cried the gent. "And when do you expect to get it?"
"Pay-day!" was the reply.
(Fountain pen to SAMUEL AGNEW, 77, Woodhey Road, Swilly, Plymouth.)

WAY BACK.

TRAMP: Ah, there was a time when I used ter ride in me own carriage, I did!
HIS PAL: Gwan, so did I, wiv me dear ole muvver pushin' behind!
(Fountain pen to F. J. LAMBERT, 6, Lily Avenue, Widzy, near Cosham, Hants.)

W-HOLE-LY SATISFACTORY.

FOREMAN (testing wall in new house): I'm speaking quietly, Bill. Can you hear me?

BILL (on the other side): 'Ear you? Lumme, I can see you in three places.
(Fountain pen to SIDNEY W. JENKINS, Mount Pleasant, Eardiston, Tunbury Wells.)

SHIRTY WORK!

MASTER (after lesson on Chemistry): Now, Smith, tell me three articles containing starch!
SMITH: Two cuffs and a collar, sir!
(Fountain pen to HARRY BOLTON, 25, South Cleatham, Winston, Gainford S.O., Co. Durham.)



"Hey, waiter! This steak's so tough I can't get my fork into it."
"Well, that's not so bad, sir. At the place over the road the meat's so tough you can't get your fork into the gravy!"
(Football to KENNETH ASHWORTH, 134, Norwich Road, Wisbech.)

Now, if YOU know a Funny Joke send it along—
The Joke Ed.

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CANNON FOOT—(Continued from page 27.)

"Mr. Vorgan's here," panted Dotty, as though he had run some distance.

"Well . . . ?" The voice was non-committal.

"I've got to see him. It's important. I've run a mile. If I don't see him there'll be big trouble. And Mr. Loski, too."

There was some hesitation. Then the door opened, and Dotty saw a big man, who said: "I'll take your message for you. What is it? You can't go any farther than this."

Dotty had had time to see exactly the distance to his jaw. He hit it, and the man went down.

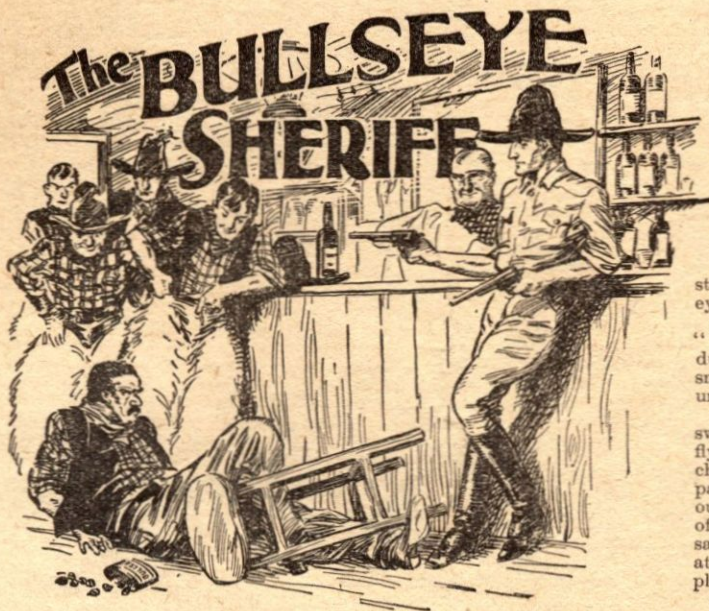
Down the passageway a line of light showed beneath a closed door, and from beyond this closed door came the sound of many voices. That was the gaming room, and there Vorgan was to be found, surrounded by his villainous friends.

Dotty, with a glance at the unconscious man, walked down that passageway and boldly opened the door.

And behind him, in the shadows, lurked Halway and his man.

Into what terrible trap is Dotty walking with the dreadful menace of Halway at his heels? Look out for Cannon-Foot next week.

A NEW WILD WEST FUN-MAKER MAKES HIS BOW! MEET BULL'S-EYE BAILEY BIG BOYS, AND DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH!



Bull's-eye Bailey.

"YOU'LL have to watch your step now, buddy." Slim Jackson stood back from the bar and polished a glass industriously, keeping a watchful eye on the big man who was glaring angrily at him across the polished top.

"Watcha mean?" Jake Larkin, ranch foreman and bully, thrust out his blue chin.

"There's a noo deputy sheriff comin' in to-night—takin' charge till old Tom's got over his accident." Slim replied, and the men nearest roared at the stress he laid on the word "accident." Then he went on: "E's called Bull's-eye Bailey—an' they say 'e's tough. 'E's an Englishman."

"What?" A chorus came from the group of punchers.

"Yep—'e's an Engländer—naturalised, maybe—an' 'e's rough." It was Red Burton who spoke. He joined the group and, propping his six-foot-two of skin and bone against the bar, continued, "Buddy o' mine bumped agin 'im last brandin'—'e says 'e's a real 'andful."

"I'll give 'im Bull's-eye." Jake's two nickelled guns were in his hands as he swung round and faced the punchers.

There was dead silence and one or two of the punchers fidgeted uneasily.

"Good evening, boys," said a quiet voice from the doorway.

Jake jumped round—his guns flashing under the lamps. He choked, gasped, and, throwing back his head, roared with laughter. A young man, dressed in a khaki-drill riding suit, stood in the doorway, calmly watching. After a moment or two he walked slowly up to the bar.

"My name's Bailey," he said. "I'm taking Tom Black's place while he's in the bay—thought I'd just say how-do."

The He-Men in Chaps and Sombreros thought him a Soft Mark—but they Didn't Know one half of the Wilkness of the New Sheriff—Bully Ragger!

Jake was gurgling helplessly, straddling a high stool. "Bull's-eye Bailey," he gasped.

The young sheriff turned. "Yes—have one?" He produced a flat tin from his pocket, snapped it open and held it under the sneering bully's nose.

Jake scowled, and with a sweep of his hand sent the tin flying. Bull's-eye's expression changed from friendliness to pained surprise. His foot shot out and hooked at the cross-bar of the bully's stool and at the same time both hands grabbed at the nickel guns Jake had placed on the bar.

Crash! Jake's legs flew up into the air and he sprawled in the sawdust, with a howl of pain and surprise. Bull's-eye was standing back to the bar, the guns swinging loosely in front of him—so loosely that one muzzle covered the cursing bully while the other travelled to and fro across the saloon.

"Pick up that tin," The command was almost a whisper. "Go on—pick it up, I said."

Jake muttered and watched the brown finger creeping under the trigger-guard. He rolled over and picked up the tin handing it sheepishly to Slim, who, silently ordered by the jerk of one of the guns, reached over the bar.

"Now get up—stand there—listen. That was no way to greet a new sheriff. You must learn better manners. Get out!"

Jake cursed and, turning, shuffled slowly out. Bull's-eye placed one gun on the bar and with a leap sat beside it, swinging his legs. He opened the tin, popped a bull's-eye into his mouth and sat calmly sucking as he surveyed the occupants of the bar.

"Listen, boys," he said quietly. "I'm not looking for trouble, but I've got a job to do. I want to find out all about this accident Tom Black had. Check me if I go wrong—this is what I've been told. Tom went out at dusk, riding alone. Next morning he was found in a gully, ribs smashed, head out, one arm broken. His horse had gone. Is that so?"

A mumble of assent came from the punchers and the new sheriff leaned forward.

"That looks like a real honest-to-goodness accident," he continued, "but for three little things. First—Tom's been riding ever since he was a little kid, and it's a million to one against his horse throwing him into a gully. Second—I've found out that that horse of his was a pet. If it had fallen into the gully it would have got hurt as bad as Tom; if it had thrown him it would have stayed around. Third,

Tom's got rope marks round the top of both arms. He can't tell us how, he can't remember a thing about it."

Some of the punchers fidgeted, but none of them spoke. Bull's-eye shrugged his shoulders and slipped off the bar.

"That's O.K.," he grinned. "I'll find it out—that's why I'm here." He pushed the guns across the bar. "Give them to your little pal when he calls." He walked to the door, and before the cowboys could recover from their astonishment, had gone.

For a moment he stood outside the door sucking meditatively at a bull's-eye, then he stepped forward to an old, rusty push-bike leaning against the saloon wall. Instead of mounting it, however, he wheeled it to the hitch rail and placed a large sack of chaff on the saddle. This he crowned with his wide-brimmed Stetson, so that it made a fair representation of a man.

To complete these strange preparations the new sheriff ran across to the pens and got a large calf-net. Carrying this he returned to his steed, unusual for these parts, and began to walk down the street, pushing the whole contraption before him.

The sheriff had not gone far, however, before a huge dark form shot out from the side of a shack, where it had evidently been in hiding. Jake, for Bull's-eye Bailey instantly recognised the bullying cow-waddie, grabbed at the chaff bag and, clutching it firmly, toppled over the wheel, into the road.

Before he could get to his feet, Bull's-eye slung the net over him, gave it a twist and rolled Jake into the mud. Next moment he picked up his bite, jumped into the saddle, and pedalled off.

Cursing luridly, Jake struggled violently with the net, twisting and turning in the mud and filth of the road. At last he flung the net clear and staggered to his feet. He lurched along the road and walked through the doors of the saloon. There was a scurry of feet and chairs as the punchers scrambled back to the bar and attempted to stifle their laughter, for they had witnessed the last part of Jake's unhappy experience.

"Gimme my guns," Jake yelled, wiping mud from his face.

Slim slid them across the bar, saying, "'Avo a bull's-eye, Jake?"

The bully roared with rage and the two guns flashed as they swung round. There was a crash and a scurry as the cowboys dived for cover—and the hammers clicked harmlessly!

Slim, still polishing, looked up and smiled. "The sheriff unloaded 'em, Jake," he said.

The bully howled with anger, thrust his guns into their holsters, kicked his stool aside savagely and tore out of the bar.

The Midnight Marauder.

BULL'S-EYE BAILEY let himself into the shack he had taken over, bolted the door behind him and stood looking round the disordered room. To a casual observer the shack was just as Tom Black had left it on the night of his "accident," and Bull's-eye, shrugging his shoulders, threw his hat on to a peg behind the door and lit the oil lamp.

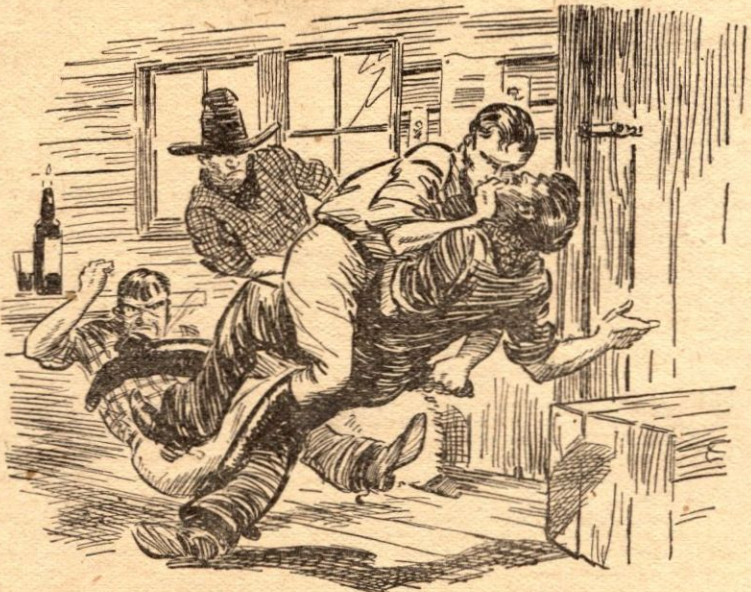
He stood up suddenly and walked over to an old chest of drawers which stood under the window. He pulled the top drawer open. The woodwork round the lock was splintered, and the papers inside the drawer showed signs of having been tumbled out and thrown back hurriedly. Bull's-eye sat down and stroked his chin.

"It looks as if old Tom knew too much about someone down here," he muttered. "But why the dickens didn't he report it." He rose and, removing his jacket, started preparing supper.

His meal done, he tidied up and prepared for bed. As he turned the bolster over his hand encountered a hard lump inside the mattress, and he whistled softly as he ripped open the case and withdrew an old leather wallet.

He sat on the edge of the bed and read through the cuttings the wallet contained. There was a report, three years old, of the conviction of two hold-up men and the description of the third member of the gang, who had escaped.

"So that's why old Tom was playing a lone hand," he muttered.



THE FIGHTING SHERIFF.—The Sheriff's right hand was clutching at the man's throat, while the other hand grabbed at the handle of his gun.

He replaced the papers and looked round the room. He blew out the lamp and, instead of going to bed, quietly unbolted the door and took up a position in the lean-to woodshed.

The noises from the other shacks gradually died down and the lights went out one by one. Occasionally a dog howled, and Bull's-eye shivered and yawned in his cramped hiding-place.

Suddenly a stone rattled, and he peered through the

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Boys' Magazine, 19/11/32.

darkness at the clumsy figure of Jake, who was creeping towards the shack, keeping close up against the walls. Bull's-eye held his breath as the bully passed, sniffed hard, and sat up straight.

"Paraffin!" he muttered.

Jake stopped under the half-open window and reached up. The casement swung back—a match scraped and flared. As Jake leaned through the window to throw his fire-lighter well into the room, Bull's-eye sprang forward and grabbed at his boots, jerked upwards and heaved.

With a yell and a crash the bully toppled head first into the room. The sheriff turned, grabbed a bucket, and filled it from the rain tank.

Swoosh! The icy water splashed over the yelling bully, extinguishing the flaring torch. Bull's-eye refilled the bucket, pushed the tank under the window, trotted round to the door and jumped into the room as Jake dived for the window.

Crash! The bucket struck the big man as he jumped, his foot caught the sill and he splashed into the tank. Spluttering and cursing, Jake hurled himself out of the tub and scuttled off.

The sheriff lit the lamp and ruefully examined his sopping bed.

"Horse-blankets on the deck to-night, old son," he muttered.

The Bandits Bamboozled.

NEXT morning Bull's-eye Bailey sat on the horse rail outside the saloon solemnly chewing. Suddenly he sat up straight, staring at two men who were strolling slowly towards the saloon. He whistled softly, slid off the rail, and made his way into the bar.

Presently the two strangers entered and walked up to the bar, where Slim Jackson was industriously polishing glasses. One of them, a short, sturdy man with shifty, pale eyes, looked Slim up and down.

"D'you know anyone called Jake Larkin?" he asked.

"Yes—foreman over to the Leanin' O," Slim said sleepily. "Guess 'e'll be down 'ere midday. 'E works up a thirst by then."

The two men looked at Bull's-eye, who was slouched back, seemingly asleep, in a chair. They ordered drinks and sat on the high stools talking in whispers. The sheriff watched them from under lowered lids.

"It's come quick," he thought. "I'll have to wait for Jake to turn up before I do anything."

The strangers finished their drinks, looked up at the clock and turned to Slim.

"If Jake comes in, tell 'im visitors are comin' to see 'im at midday," said the short one, and they walked out.

Bull's-eye rose and stretched. Still chewing, he walked quietly out behind the strangers, winking at Slim as he passed the bar. Once outside, he darted through the open stable door and sat down to keep an eye on the saloon.

Soon after midday Jake and his two visitors appeared and entered the bar. Bull's-eye crept up to the door and watched the big man beckon to Slim, who opened the door of an inner room. The trio entered and, as Bull's-eye walked in, the door slammed.

"Any more doors to that room?"

"Yea—one opens into the cook-house."

The sheriff slipped round the bar, hurried noiselessly into the kitchen and pressed himself close against the door. Jake was speaking in a hoarse undertone.

"It's all cached under the stove in my shack. We'll share out to-night, an' you can clear. It's plenty good for me 'ere."

The husky voice of the big man broke in. "Yeah? So you're quittin' now. We do three years apiece while you 'ave a good time outside. Now we can take our share—what's left—"

A chair scraped and Jake's voice roared. "What d'ya mean, what's left? Mean I've been usin' it?"

"Can that!" The little man hissed the words. The voices dropped to whispers and Bull's-eye stood and chewed thoughtfully. "That proves it," he murmured. "I ought to get Jake now and turn him over, but I've got to get proof that he was the one who smashed old Tom!"

He moved suddenly and darted into the bar, where Red Burton was standing talking to Slim.

"Where's Jake live?" he demanded.

"Leanin' O—shack built on to the bunkhouse."

Bull's-eye walked quickly to his hut, brought out his battered bicycle and rode as hard as he could pedal in the direction of the Leanin' O ranch.

He covered the five miles of rough, dusty road in half-an-hour and, hot and red, pushed his machine out of sight into a shed. The door of the shack was shut and padlocked, but a short spanner levered the staple out, and the sheriff was in the solitary room. He ran his eyes quickly over the contents, opened drawers and cupboards, and searched the pockets of various garments hanging on the walls.

He pulled out a stained oilskin pouch and turned the contents out on to the table. A letter, months old, bearing a New York postmark, came to light, and the envelope was addressed to "Sheriff T. Black." Bull's-eye slipped the pouch and its contents into his pocket and turned.

There was a rattle of hoofs outside, and he slipped

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behind the door. Footsteps approached, and he heard a muttered curse as Jake found the padlock hanging loose. Bull's-eye softly walked across the room and sat down on the edge of the table. The door opened and Jake, guns levelled, burst in.

"Stick 'em up!" he roared. "You snivellin', candy-suckin' rat!"

"Put your guns up—you big boob!" The little man pushed his way in. "Let's hogtie him and beat it—you'll have to come with us now."

Jake lowered his guns and the three men seized the sheriff and, tying his hands behind him, threw him roughly into the corner. Jake walked over to the stove and, levering out a stone slab from the floor, pulled out a black tin box. He shot a shimmering heap of jewels on to the table and the three men clustered eagerly round. The short man held up a pearl necklace admiringly.

"Beehive Roadhouse hold-up, too, eh?" said Bull's-eye's quiet voice. "Lawyer Johnson, they didn't get you for that. You've got that to come."

The short man turned with a curse. "You know too much. Sheriff or not—you'll have to be put some place where you'll forget it." He kicked savagely at the helpless prisoner, who rolled over and groaned. "We'll tie 'im so 'e can't get loose an' leave 'im 'ere. It'll give us half-a-day's start."

Jake bent over the sheriff, untied his hands and jerked him into a chair. Bull's-eye's head slumped forward and for a moment the bully's grip on his hand relaxed. Next moment the two men were struggling on the floor, the sheriff's right arm round the big man's throat while the other hand grabbed at the holster.

Jake's companions dived to the attack. Bull's-eye twisted, kicked upwards and Lawyer Johnson pitched headlong. The tall man grabbed at the kicking leg—caught the heel under his chin and staggered back.

Bull's-eye was up in a flash, revolver in hand, and slipped out of the door. He slammed it shut and hammered the staple home with his revolver butt. He ran into the shed, sat down, produced his tin and slipped a bull's-eye into his mouth.

"Good going, so far," he muttered. "Now what's to be done?"

The three men were shouting angrily and Bull's-eye grinned as he chewed. He sat thinking hard for a few minutes. At last he slipped quietly over to the horses tethered outside, picked out the roan he knew to be Jake's and loosened its girth. Running back to the shed he sat down to watch the window.

The Lawyer's figure appeared, squeezing through the opening. Bull's-eye picked up a lariat and slowly twisted the loop. As the man got his head and shoulders through, the rope whistled through the air, the loop dropped neatly round his neck and with a succession of jerks Bull's-eye sent spiral after spiral of rope round the startled man's shoulders.

The sheriff tugged. Lawyer yelled and choked. Yet still the rope tightened and the window gave way. Lawyer shot headlong to the ground and was dragged slowly across the muddy yard into the shed, where Bull's-eye trussed him up, keeping one eye all the time on the window.

The tall man appeared, gun in hand, jumped to the ground and bolted for the corner of the shack. He pitched suddenly forward and sprawled headlong over a feeding trough placed across the corner. Bull's-eye jumped and ran, grinning. Before the man could rise, a wet sack was slipped over his head and the revolver kicked out of his waving hand.

"Get up!" The sheriff wrenched the cursing bandit up to his feet.

"Undo that door—quick." He steered the man to the door and watched him draw the staple. "Tell Jake it's O.K.," he hissed. "Tell him to wait till

(Continued on next page.)

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THE BULL'S-EYE SHERIFF

(Continued from previous page.)

you've located me." He jabbed Jake's gun into the man's ribs, and was instantly obeyed.

There he steered his prisoner back to the shed, tied his legs together and tipped him on top of Lawyer. He tiptoed softly to the smashed window, pushed the revolver barrel over the sill and fired three shots up into the ceiling.

Jake gave a yell and a jump. Next moment the door burst open and he was racing for his horse. He snatched the bridle free, vaulted into the saddle as the horse reared, and leaped away, crouching low. A look of surprise spread over his red face as he slipped slowly sideways and under.

Bull's-eye followed slowly down the road, revolver in hand. He saw the capering horse swerve, Jake's grip gave out and the big man crashed down to roll

over and over in the dust. The sheriff turned him over and dragged him back to the shed.

HALF-AN-HOUR later he was using Slim's 'phone.

"Supply number four speaking, Cap," he said. "Dropped lucky. I've taken the man who got Tom Black. He's Bluey Larsen, calls himself Larkin now, the missing member of Lawyer Johnson's outfit. I've got the whole bunch, and the stuff. For the Beehive Roadhouse stick-up. You'll send the truck down—O.K.—bye."

Bull's-eye turned to Slim who was staring at him pop-eyed. He produced his little tin, slipped a striped sweet into his mouth, then slid the tin across the bar. "Have one?" he said quietly.

Hoppy Travers buys a wireless station in next week's humorous tale. Look for the title, "Wireless Wanderings."

THE WOLF-WIZARD'S WATERLOO.

(Continued from page 14.)

The Peril of the Pack.

TIMBERHEAD, alarmed by the shot and the continued absence of his pal, had tethered the dogs to a harpoon stuck in the ground, and, overcoming his own fears, approached the cairn.

But the wolves had sensed his coming. He had no sooner peered down the hole and called for Keith than he saw the wolf-headed horror, followed by his yelling pack, racing up the steps towards him. With a shriek of terror, the nigger turned and fled down the mound.

The wild strains of the reed, rising shrill and clear above the howl of the pursuing wolves, made him turn his head. He saw the Wolf-Wizard mounted on a sledge, which was being drawn over the snow at a furious rate by a team of eight wolves. The rest of the pack loped along in front, like the vanguard of some phantom army!

The sight urged Timber to greater speed. He gained his own sledge just as the dogs, almost paralysed with fright, uprooted the harpoon and scampered away.

Terrified, Timberhead madly drove the dogs away from the speeding terror behind. Once or twice he turned to fire back at the wolves, but the furious pace made accurate aim impossible.

At last the little group of snow-houses of the village came into sight, and Timber urged the dogs to yet greater efforts. But they were almost spent. Some of the wolves were now running beside them; gradually the snarling brutes closed in on the terror-stricken huskies. On the outskirts of the village, one of the dogs was seized and pulled down, and in a flash wolves and huskies were inextricably mixed in a biting, scuffling heap. The traces of the sledge burst and the vehicle, skidding to one side, overturned!

Timber was flung out. Springing to his feet, he beat off the brutes that immediately assailed him, and ran like mad into the village. It was deserted. The frightened Eskimos, who had watched the chase from afar, had sought the shelter of their igloos.

Timber fled to the first igloo he saw. He was so panic-stricken that he did not realise it was the medicine-hut of Skulka. As he scrambled through the low doorway, two dark forms rose to greet him. He started back.

"Keep calm, brother!" cried a familiar voice. "It's only me!"

It was Keith of the *Kittiwake*, with Kooskosh standing by his side!

"All right, I won't eat ya!" he laughed, as Timber shrank away in awe. "I found a long chain of ice-grottoes from the cairn which brought me here." He pointed to a trapdoor in the floor, disclosing a flight of stone steps similar to those leading into the Wolf-Wizard's lair. "On the way I came across poor old Kooskosh, bound hand and foot. It was Skulka who kidnapped him that night, and then tried to smother you in snow!"

As he spoke, the strident music of the Wolf-Wizard drew nearer, and the baying of the baffled wolves struck a chill into their blood.

Keith knitted his brows. "It's time that music stopped!" he muttered grimly. Taking a harpoon from the wall, he crept to the opening.

The Wolf-Wizard had dismounted from his sledge and was parading through the village, extracting the most fiendish airs from his reed. He seemed to be working on the feelings of his wild followers, who bounded after him with a kind of rhythmical frenzy.

Abruptly the music ceased. A harpoon sang through the air and, striking the Wolf-Wizard squarely between the shoulder-blades, came out at his chest. He reeled, clawed for a few moments at his hideous grinning mask and then slumped to the ground!

Instantly a dreadful change came over the wolves. Freed from the spell of the music, they became the ruthless marauders of the wild again, and pounced on their fallen master.

Suddenly the air was rent with furious yells, as the Eskimos rushed from their igloos, brandishing spears and knives. The wolves were startled at the unexpected charge, and when a volley of shots from Timberhead's revolver launched death and destruction into their midst they turned tail and fled like whipped curs.

The elders of the camp, grave and curious, joined Keith as he stooped over the lacerated body of the Wizard. Gripping the wolf-head in both hands, the mountie ripped it off the hunched shoulders. The evil, bearded face of Skulka the medicine man stared up at the awe-stricken Eskimos with sightless eyes!

"Say, brudder," whispered Timberhead, a light breaking in on his usually thick skull, "dere's on'y one Eskimo could play a cunning trick like dat!"

Keith nodded. "I know," he said, and, tearing open the shaman's hairy shirt, he pointed to a blue star tattooed on his chest. "It is Chinook, the fifth member of the Six-Star Gang. Now for the biggest of the lot—Captain Star himself!"

Corporal Keith on the track of the notorious Captain Star, former leader of the dreaded Six-Star Gang, next week. Don't miss this thrilling yarn of the Man-hunting Mountie and his darkie pal, Timberhead.

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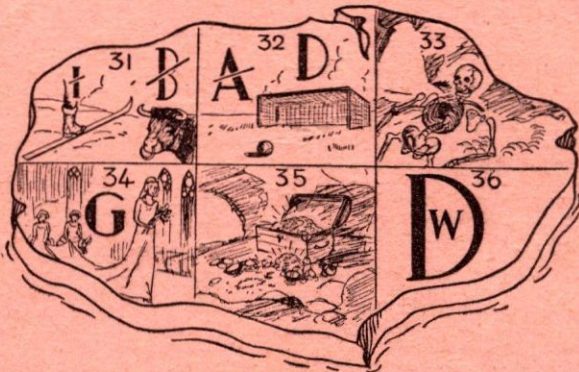
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HWANG KO'S CAULDRON—*(Continued from page 17.)*

wide ledge that overlooked the smoking crater, and dropped Tony to the ground.

Hwang-Ko raised both his arms above his head and began a wild incantation to his heathen deities, whilst Tony struggled hopelessly with his bonds. Then at last the sorcerer ceased, and stooping, seized the young engineer.

"Receive the White Devil!" he screamed like a maniac; and began to drag Tony towards the edge of the ledge, despite his struggles.

The Fiery Furnace.

BY all the laws of probability Kwang the Mighty should have been killed when he fell from the narrow pathway and went headlong down the steep mountainside. But he was saved by a lucky chance.

He fell sheer for nearly thirty feet; then the long, oaken staff which he still clutched in one brawny hand caught between two jutting fragments of rock. The staff snapped under the sudden strain, but it had stayed the hermit's precipitate descent momentarily, thus enabling him to seize one of the rocks with his right hand.

For a moment he hung perilously there, half dazed by his fall. Then he seized the rock with both hands, and clung to it, whilst he looked about him. Some little distance away a few sturdy shrubs grew out from the face of the cliff, and Kwang decided to try to reach them.

He began to sway his body to and fro till he was swinging at arms' length like a human pendulum. Suddenly he released his hold on the rock and catapulted through the air. He clutched the bushes with one hand, but for a moment they threatened to slip through his fingers. Then his other hand closed securely on a thin but leathery branch, and he was safe.

From there it was fairly easy to scramble to a narrow ledge of rock, whence he climbed slowly upward to the narrow pathway.

Nodding grimly, he unsheathed his huge sword, and wetting his thumb ran it gently along the razor-sharp edge. Then he went swiftly up the path, keeping a sharp lookout all the while for the sorcerer.

He attained the summit, however, without further adventure, and found himself facing the mouth of Hwang-Ko's cave. It was empty.

"What mischief hath the ill-begotten Hwang-Ko done to Toni?" Kwang muttered uneasily.

Searching for some sign of his companion, he turned his eyes towards the summit of the volcano. He saw the sorcerer standing there, a weird, sinister silhouette against the moon, waving his arms in his wild incantations.

Kwang let out a growl, and went bounding up the slope. Before he could reach the ledge of rock overhanging the crater, he saw Hwang-Ko seize Tony Blake and begin to drag him towards the smoking mouth of the crater.

Kwang uttered a cry of horror, for he realised that he could never arrive in time to save his friend. In desperation he let out a bull-like roar, which attracted Hwang-Ko's attention. The sorcerer dropped Tony Blake, and rose upright.

At the same time Kwang the Mighty whirled the great, double-handed sword round and round his head, till it was like a glittering arc of silver-light in the moonshen. Then he hurled it with all his strength.

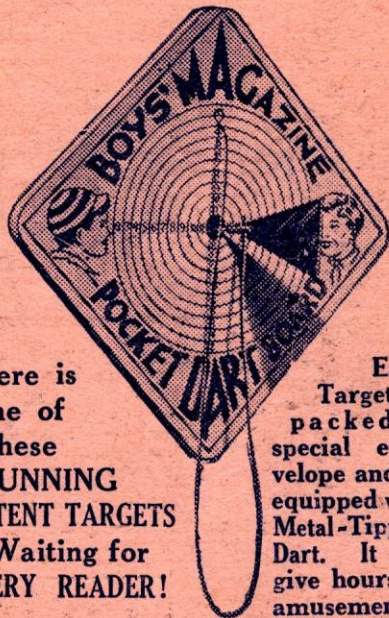
Kwang's aim proved deadly, for the great sword smote the sorcerer squarely across the face, and with a shrill cry he reeled backward over the edge of the crater.

Meanwhile Kwang the Mighty had bounded to the summit of the mountain. Seizing his sword, which had dropped point downward into the ground, he cut Tony Blake free of his bonds.

"Thanks, Kwang," Tony gasped weakly.

"The Big Fag-Rag at St. Ciddy's" is the title of next week's uproarious yarn of Johnny Gee & Co. at the school of larks and learning.

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