

NAPOLEON—KIDNAPPED!

**GREAT NEW
STORY SERIES**

Boys' 2-D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



**THIS
Wonder
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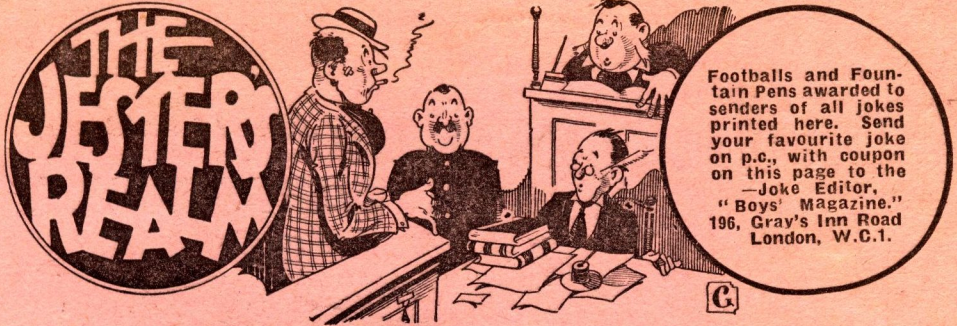


**Free
INSIDE**

Special News of Grand Football Gift Inside

VOL. XXI.—No. 561—Dec. 3, 1932

REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION
BY CANADIAN MAGAZINE POST.



Magistrate : Have you been in prison before ?

Prisoner : Yus, yer 'onour.

Magistrate : What for ?

Prisoner : To see my father.

(Football to HARRY CAPLAN, 7, Bury New Road, Manchester.)

JOKE COUPON.

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

3/12/32.

A SUITABLE JOB.

UNEMPLOYED MAN (to Works Foreman): Could you find me a job, sir ?

FOREMAN : Sorry, my man, but we have not enough work for our own men.

UNEMPLOYED MAN : Oh, that's all right! You can take me on, it will make no difference.

(Fountain pen to BERNARD SHIPMAN, 76, Melbourne Row, Riddings, Near Alfreton, Derbys.)

A BAD STROKE.

A golfer, impatient at having to wait for his opponent who was badly bunkered, asked his caddy.

"How many strokes has Major Boyle had now ?"

"Oh," was the reply. "Sixteen ordinary and one apoplectic, sir !"

(Fountain pen to ROBERT TULLY, Warren Mill, Belford, N'umberland.)

A CHEAP SEAT.

FREDDY (to doorkeeper at circus): What are the prices of the seats ?

DOORKEEPER : Front seats one shilling; back seats sixpence; and programme a penny.

FREDDY : I'll sit on a programme, please !

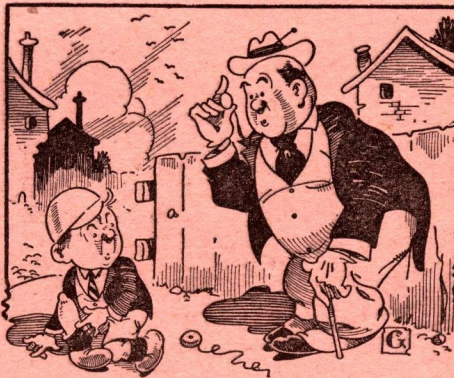
(Fountain pen to W. C. SHEPPARD, Windermere, Lavender Road, Hordle, Near Cymington, Hants.)

MIXED.

UNCLE : You silly boy, you have got your shoes on the wrong feet.

JIM : But, Uncle, I have no other feet.

(Fountain pen to DAVID JONES, Trenova House, Droer's Road, Lampeter, Cardiganshire.)



Gentleman : Now, my little man, fallen down and bumped your knee ?

Small Boy : Course I 'ave. Did yer think I'd fell up and bashed me head agin a cloud ?

(Football to M. THORNEYCROFT, Ash Hill Compton, Wolverhampton.)

UNCLEAN.

A London boy, on a first visit to the country, was ordered to take a glass of new milk every day "to feed him up."

On the second day, however, he refused the milk, and, when asked why, he replied :

"Cos in 'ammersmiff we gets our milk out of a nice clean shop; dahn 'ere you gets it out of a dirty ole cow !"

(Fountain pen to KENNETH DIXON, 19, Newcome House, Powell Road, Clapton E.5.)

CONTRADICTORY.

MAGISTRATE : My man you may find yourself in great trouble, even charged with perjury, if you are not careful. You have said, on oath, that you have only one brother, and now we have your sister stating on oath that she has two. Be careful, young man—be careful.

(Fountain pen to E. SINGLETON, 9, Marton Folds, Near Blackpool.)

A QUEER FELLOW.

BUTLER : Here's the doctor, sir !

ABSENT-MINDED MASTER : I can't be bothered with visitors to-day. Tell him I'm ill !

(Fountain pen to KENNETH PHILLIPS, 62, Derwent Road, Palmer's Green, N.13.)

MISPLACED.

SHOPPER : Can I stick this wallpaper on myself ?

SALESMAN : Yes, sir, but it would really look better on the wall !

(Fountain pen to MICHAEL T. CLARKE, The Spinney, Fendale Road, Burgess Hill, Sussex.)

THE GAY HUSSAR—
IN A GREAT
NEW STORY SERIES.

Drama, Excitement, and a Baffling
Mystery in this Old-time Thriller,
Featuring Captain Lefarge.

THE FIRST
LONG YARN
IS BELOW.

NAPOLEON-KIDNAPPED!



THE LITTLE EMPEROR IN THE CLUTCHES OF LEATHER-MASK.

Leather-Mask!

IT was winter of the year 1806, and the scene was one well suited to the festive season of Christmas, for the length and breadth of Poland was shrouded in a mantle of snow.

Nor could the grim prospect of War altogether submerge the spirit of good cheer, and there was an air of revelry in the French army of invasion which had marched across Europe to do battle with the Russian legions of Tsar Alexander.

The cafés and inns of Posen town were crowded with soldiers who had already been in occupation for some time, and the deep voices of old campaigners roared lusty choruses into the night—greeting with song their comrades who were still marching in.

No such spirit prevailed at the headquarters of Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France, for an earnest conference was in progress there.

It was taking place in Napoleon's bedchamber, and, apart from the Emperor himself, there were

but three men present. One was Marshal Murat, the magnificent cavalry commander who had led the French squadron of Horse to victory in many a hard-fought action. There was also a certain Major Vladimir, officer in a regiment of Polish lancers that had volunteered for service under the French. The third, like Marshal Murat, was a dashing Gascon, faultless in attire, and possessing a bravado that only added to his charm.

He was Captain André Lefarge, of the famous 8th Hussars, the favourite of Napoleon and the first *sabreur* in all France.

"You choose to make light of this, sire," Marshal Murat declared gravely. "But the warning of this impudent brigand, whom they call Leather-Mask, is



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

not to be disregarded. His curious nickname and his deeds of daring are legend in this country, as our friend Vladimir will tell you."

Napoleon stood with his hands clasped behind his back. His small, but powerful figure gave an impression of the most perfect composure. His olive-skinned features wore a slightly sardonic expression.

"The thing is so much nonsense," he scoffed. "You believe that this Polish brigand would have the courage as well as the insolence to enter the

it is scarcely necessary to have this Captain Lefarge here at all."

The last words were spoken with an unmistakable sneer. Vladimir did not share in the general admiration accorded to the Gay Gascon, and was jealous of the Hussar's reputation as a swordsman, for he considered himself to have more than average skill with the blade.

Lefarge turned towards him, and with an inimitable gesture fingered the ends of his own waxed moustache. His bearskin poised upon the crook of his arm, his fur-trimmed dolman hanging from his shoulder with a superb and studied negligence, he looked at the Pole mockingly.

"Monsieur takes too much upon himself and his lancers," he told the Major. "He forgets, besides, that Lefarge is no ordinary man. If it came to the necessity of a choice, I fancy that the Emperor would entrust his safety to me rather than all the Vladimirs in Poland."

The Major flushed darkly, and would have made some retort, but Napoleon interrupted.

"Enough," the Emperor said. "You stay in my room, Lefarge, as I have already ordered. Major Vladimir, you will see that your men are posted in the corridor outside. And Murat, my friend, you had better go and seek some sleep. I still believe that these precautions are foolish, but, if they help you to rest easy, then they will not be altogether wasted."

Murat departed, as did Major Vladimir, and Lefarge remained with the Emperor, who dropped into a great chair and discussed the strange situation with his captain.

They had scarce settled down when the tramping of feet told the Captain and his Emperor that the guard outside the bed-chamber was being changed. Lefarge at once opened the door, and saw a file of stalwart grenadiers of the Old Guard marching off along the corridor, while about a score of Polish lancers took their place.

Satisfied, the Captain closed the door again, and returned to Napoleon's side: and Bonaparte engaged him in conversation once more, Lefarge answering him with that mixture of respect and familiarity that he always used with his beloved Emperor.

They had been talking for some time, and the hour of midnight was striking, when three knocks sounded upon the door.

"Enter," called Napoleon.

The door was flung open, and a figure in a cloak crossed the threshold. The newcomer was powdered with snow, and one corner of the cloak was thrown over his shoulder, so that the folds of the garment covered his face.

He closed the door behind him, and started to walk towards Napoleon without uncovering. He had taken only a few paces when Lefarge planted himself in his path.

"Sapristi!" he swore. "You forget yourself, my friend. It is customary to remove one's hat in the presence of the Emperor..."

"One moment," Napoleon interrupted, remaining in his chair, but looking at the stranger keenly as Lefarge moved aside. "Who are you, and how did



THE KIDNAPPING HUSSAR.—With a wave of his sword and a loud huzza, Lefarge leaped over the orchestra, the unconscious actor across the pommel of his saddle.

French lines and take me prisoner in my own bed-chamber, *hein?* Bah, it is ridiculous."

"It may sound so, on the face of it," agreed Murat.

"But to ignore completely his warning stating that you will be seized about midnight, is the rankest folly."

Napoleon's dark and piercing eyes flashed fire.

"Well," he observed, "he will meet with a harsh reception if he is fool enough to call upon me to-night. Marshal Murat here insists on precautions being taken, and, unnecessary as I deem them to be, I am willing to abide by his appeal. Captain Lefarge will stay in my room with me. You will have a small detachment of your lancers posted outside my room, Major."

"We Poles will know how to deal with this fellow Leather-Mask if he presents himself," Vladimir announced. "Indeed, I am inclined to think that

you come to reach that door without being announced?"

"How I came here does not matter," the newcomer replied in a muffled voice. "But I need no announcing, for I am here by appointment!"

With the words he cast his cloak from his shoulder, revealing to the startled gaze of Lefarge and Napoleon a mask—a leather shield that covered the face of the intruder from temple to chin.

"Leather-Mask!" cried Lefarge, and reached for his sabre.

But the gesture that had thrown open the cloak had also displayed a pistol held in the hand of the notorious bandit, and the sinister barrel was directed at the Captain's heart.

"Have a care, Frenchman," Leather-Mask warned, his eyes glinting evilly through two slits in his disguise. "Stay where you are, if you value your life!"

Treachery.

WITH a pistol before his breast, many a man would have stood irresolute, but not so Lefarge. The safety of his Emperor was at stake, and he counted his own life as nothing compared to it.

The words were not obeyed. Instead, the soldiery rushed forward at the astonished Emperor of the French, and, while two of them clutched him by the arms, a third whipped out a handkerchief soaked in some potent drug—and in a trice it had been clapped over Bonaparte's face.

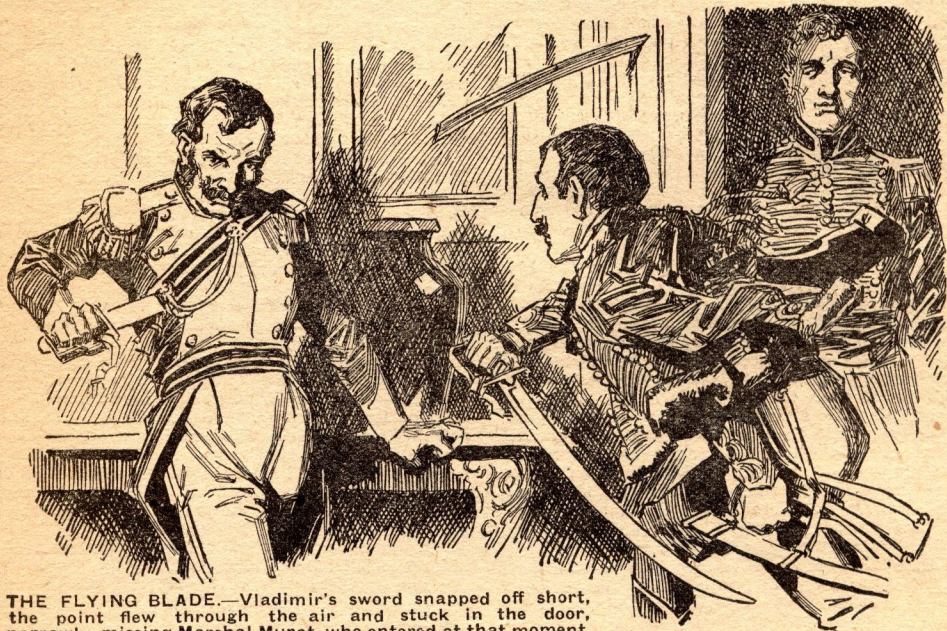
The truth dawned on Lefarge in a flash. *Sacre bleu!* these fellows were no troopers, but the rascally minions of Leather-Mask in disguise!

Out came the Gascon's sabre, and with a shout he hurled himself into the midst of the brigands. His blade, a flashing arc of steel, scattered them at the first three or four strokes, but they rapidly recovered from their disorder, and closed in upon him savagely.

The odds against the Frenchman were too heavy, and, coming up behind him as he strove to keep the pack of foes at bay, Leather-Mask struck Lefarge over the back of the head with the butt of his pistol. The Captain fell to the floor, knocked senseless by that heavy blow.

Leather-Mask turned towards the men who were supporting the limp, senseless emperor.

"You know what to do, comrades," he said. "Act according to instructions, and you will soon be safely in our lair."



THE FLYING BLADE.—Vladimir's sword snapped off short, the point flew through the air and stuck in the door, narrowly missing Marshal Murat, who entered at that moment.

His hand leapt from his hip and struck up the wrist of the brigand. The pistol went off with a flash and a roar, but the ball zipped harmlessly above the Gascon's head.

Next instant, Lefarge had dashed his clenched fist into the brigand's face. The man staggered back, and in that same moment Napoleon sprang to his feet and pulled violently at a bell-cord. But the report of the pistol had been an alarm in itself—or so it seemed, at least, as the door was again thrown open and the men in the uniform of the Polish lancers swarmed into the room.

"Seize that scoundrel!" cried Napoleon, pointing to the reeling figure of Leather-Mask.

A cloak and another mask of leather were produced, and Napoleon was disguised in them. Not long afterwards, he was being half-dragged from his quarters by the bogus detachment of lancers, but the real Leather-Mask was not with them. He had completely disappeared.

A berline coach was waiting in a courtyard below. It had been commissioned to receive Leather-Mask in the event of his capture. Towards this the party moved, and a group of genuine soldiers gathered round the carriage while the prisoner was being placed in it.

"Then these rumours we have been hearing were right enough, *hein?*" a corporal of the Old Guard

growled. "It was true that the Emperor had been threatened."

Napoleon was groaning inarticulately as he was bundled into the coach. Two of his captors piled in after him. Another turned to answer the corporal of the Old Guard.

"The rascal has been wounded," he explained. "We are taking him to the citadel, where he is to be thrown into prison. Convey word to Marshal Murat that all is well."

The coachman, doubtless a brigand in disguise, took up the reins as the party of lancers mounted their horses. The carriage and its guard moved off through lightly falling snow, and none of those who watched its departure guessed the illustrious nature of the captive in the coach.

Nor was it until another half-hour had elapsed that Marshal Murat, arriving in the bedchamber of Napoleon, found Lefarge struggling to his feet in a dazed condition, and learned to his horror that the Emperor had been kidnapped!

"Kidnapped!" he kept repeating, when his rage and consternation had given place to some semblance of calm. "It is incredible—disastrous! We shall recover the Emperor—we *must* recover him! This affair must be kept a close secret! If it became known among the troops that their beloved Napoleon had vanished, the moral effect on them would be nothing less than shattering!"

Throughout the wintry night an untiring search was made, as eager as it was guarded.

An early result of the search was the discovery of Major Vladimir's drugged and insensible form. He was found lying in a gutter, and, when he recovered, was only able to say that he had been attacked by a band of men in the uniform of his own comrades. He had never reached the quarters of his regiment to call out a detachment for the purpose of guarding the person of the Emperor.

Later, the berline that had figured in the kidnapping was found abandoned on the outskirts of the city, inquiries bringing to light the fact that a body of Polish lancers had galloped forth into the open country with a cloaked figure in their midst.

They had been allowed to pass the pickets on giving a very plausible explanation of their mission. Their tracks were plainly visible in the snow that carpeted the countryside, but, some miles from Posen, they merged with the mass of imprints that marked the passage of the Russian army, which had retired upon the town of Pultusk. And in that sea of slush, churned up by men, horses, wagon-wheel and cannon-wheel, those tracks were completely lost.

The Emperor Held to Ransom.

A DAY or two later, Lefarge presented himself at the quarters of Murat, and there he found Major Vladimir awaiting an audience with the Marshal.

The Pole looked at Lefarge through narrowed lids as the Frenchman entered the room, and there was something unfriendly in the gesture with which he returned the Captain's stiff and formal salute.

There was a spell of silence, both of them pacing the room as they waited to be called into the presence of the Marshal. Then all at once Vladimir planted himself in front of the Hussar.

"Lefarge," he said in his deep, truculent voice, "the more I think of this kidnapping, the more I am convinced that there is a traitor in our midst—else how did this man Leather-Mask know our plans for protecting the Emperor?"

"I am inclined to agree with you, monsieur," the Captain murmured.

Vladimir's lips curled in an ugly sneer. "Perhaps

you have good reason to agree with me," he observed. "Perhaps you know that I am speaking the truth."

"There is a meaning in those words that I fail to detect, monsieur," Lefarge replied hotly. "But I do not like the tone of them."

"Then let me explain myself more fully," Vladimir snapped. "I am wondering what motive you might have had in working cheek-by-jowl with this brigand. I am wondering just how much he may have paid you as a bribe!"

Lefarge's eyes blazed like embers that some wrathful breath had fanned into flame. Clutching his gauntlets in his fist, he struck Vladimir sharply across the face.

"Name of a name!" the Gaseon roared. "No man insults me with temerity! Draw, *cochon*, if your courage is as ready to display itself as your tongue is to utter vile accusations!"

Vladimir needed no second invitation. His hand leapt to his hilt, and the sabres rasped clear of their scabbards. Next second, steel rang upon steel as the first blow was struck.

By sheer fury of onslaught Vladimir drove the Frenchman back and back, but though on the retreat, Lefarge fought with the lithe grace and unfurried skill so typical of his swordsmanship. He recognised in Vladimir an able and dangerous opponent.

Lefarge came up against the wall, and, braced there with his shoulders to the panelling, he suddenly altered his tactics and took the offensive in a lightning-like attack. The sabres clashed, loud-ringing, and the hilts became locked, both men standing chest to chest, eyes glaring into each other's face, blades forced high up above their heads.

Lefarge pushed Vladimir away, and then, as the Major sprang forward to engage him again, the Frenchman warded off the blow with a terrific back-stroke. Instantly there was a loud snap, and, breaking near the hilt, Vladimir's sword whizzed across the room and stuck quivering in a door—just as that door was pulled violently open by Marshal Murat himself.

"What is the meaning of this?" the Marshal cried angrily. "Lefarge—Vladimir—have you lost your senses?"

Captain and Major stood silent, and Murat went on speaking.

"Whatever your difference is," he said, "this is no time for quarrelling. We have heard from this ruffian, Leather-Mask. His note informs us that the Emperor is to be held to ransom, and he will be handed over to the highest bidder. The scoundrel is prepared to bargain either with Russia or ourselves, and he has told us that we need not offer less than fifty million francs!"

"If we could but trace those brigands to their hiding-place," Lefarge muttered.

"All attempts to do so have failed," Murat replied. "Meanwhile, we are doing our best to keep the troops in ignorance, but rumours are on every tongue."

"*Pardieu!*" breathed Lefarge. "If the truth becomes known, the French army will collapse. The very empire will collapse. Nor can I see how these things are to be prevented when this brigand, Leather-Mask, invites Russia to bid against us for the Emperor's ransom."

Murat pursed his lips. "We are holding a conference to-night, and will try to reach a decision," he said. "But meanwhile, Lefarge, you are to go to Pultusk, under a safe-conduct pass, and deliver to Tsar Alexander an ultimatum drawn up by the Emperor the day he was kidnapped. It is an ultimatum offering peace if Russia will agree to France's terms."

Lefarge turned to go. But as he was passing Vladimir he stopped and looked him full in the eyes.

"You had better find a new sabre," he said, "for, when I have more leisure, monsieur, you are going to have need of one."

A quarter-of-an-hour later he was on the road to Pultusk, riding his magnificent and faithful horse, the Sarde.

The Imperial Impostor.

THE theatre in Pultusk was crowded with Russian officers, and, in a box decorated with the royal arms of his house, sat the proud and autocratic figure of Tsar Alexander, surrounded by his staff.

could not suppress an exclamation. Then his brow darkened as he realised how the actor was making a figure of fun out of the French ruler.

The culminating incident of the scene had been reached, a horseman dressed as a Russian Cossack suddenly galloping from the wings, and chasing the impersonator of Napoleon around the stage at the point of a lance.

While the audience howled with applause, the attention of Lefarge was diverted by a movement on the part of the Tsar, who, having read the ultimatum, now contemptuously tore it into fragments.



BANDITS TO THE RESCUE.—With a volley of shots the bandits, led by Leather-Mask, spurred forward, scattering the wolves that were attacking Lefarge.

A pantomime, in keeping with the Christmas season, was in progress, and a particular scene had been inserted to make a mockery of the French.

The central figure in the scene was a man who bore an amazing resemblance to Napoleon, a likeness that needed no make-up to accentuate it, for in face and form the actor was the French Emperor's double.

He was caricaturing Napoleon, playing the clown in a style that must have made any Frenchman turn livid with rage, but the man's audience was fairly rocking. The Tsar himself was laughing heartily when word was conveyed to him that an enemy officer desired to see him.

Lefarge was shown into the royal box under escort, and, before a battery of hostile glances, he handed the Tsar the document expressing Napoleon's ultimatum.

The Tsar took the parchment, and then, with a twisted smile, indicated the stage.

"You may remain while I read this, Frenchman," he said mockingly. "It is an excellent pantomime, I assure you."

Lefarge glanced down at the stage, and as he saw the man who was impersonating his Emperor, he

Lefarge stood quite still for a moment. His brain was cool, clear, as through his mind there flashed an inspiration. Then, without a word of warning, he sprang to the parapet of the royal box and leapt down to the stage.

He hurled himself at the Cossack, and, seizing him by the ankle, hauled him out of the saddle. The impersonator of Napoleon promptly ran towards Lefarge, expostulating, but with a shout the Gascon drew his sabre and struck the fellow senseless with the flat of the blade.

An instant later he had swung Bonaparte's double across the back of the Cossack pony. With a swift and agile jump he landed in the saddle and turned the animal's head towards the orchestra stalls.

With a touch of the spurs Lefarge sent his steed bounding over the heads of the orchestra and down among the surging host of foes! They scattered in terror, and with a loud huzza the gallant Captain swung his sabre above his head and half-turned towards the royal box of the Tsar.

"So much for your actor," he cried. "I, André Lefarge, will throw him at your feet the day that you plead for peace, Emperor of all the Russias!"

Next moment he was charging down the aisle, his blade sweeping away those who sought to clutch him. At last he burst forth into the annexe and galloped out to the street, where his own Sarde was tethered.

He swung himself out of one saddle into the other, and, seizing the Cossack pony by the rein, spurred out of the eastern gate of the town, but avoided the main road and struck off across fields.

He was hailed from a coppice by a picket of Russian infantry ere he had gone a quarter-of-a-mile. Lefarge took no heed of the challenge and the enemy blazed at him with their muskets.

The bullets whistled around the Frenchman, but both he and his unconscious prisoner galloped on unscathed. He struck southward with the idea of passing round the extreme fringe of the Russian outposts, and thence working eastward to Posen again.

He had been riding for half-an-hour when his captive recovered his senses, and almost slid from the saddle of his pony in the process.

Lefarge drew rein and grasped him, pulling him fairly into the saddle. For all his likeness to Napoleon, the actor's resemblance was a sorry one now, for he was wild-eyed with fear.

"Spare me," he gasped in fluent French. "Spare me, I beg of you! I meant no harm, monsieur. And I am no Russian. I am a neutral—a Swedish subject. My name is Axel Gronwald—"

"Ha, you speak French, *hein?*" Lefarge interrupted. "So much the better, *M'sieur* Gronwald, and have no fears for your life. You are going to play Napoleon as you never played the rôle before. *Mon ami*, you are going to have the honour of being Napoleon for a little while!"

The Attack of Wolves.

THE following morning, Lefarge and his captive were well clear of the Russian outposts. They were still some miles from the French position when they saw a horseman approaching.

The Captain put himself on his guard, but a minute later he recognised the rider as Major Vladimir. He looked at the man with some surprise as he came up.

"You are far from our lines, monsieur," he said. "Can it be that you are here to meet me and finish our interrupted duel?"

Vladimir seemed unable to answer. In the early light of the dawn, he was staring in amazement at Lefarge's companion.

"Ha," the Captain observed, "you see the startling likeness. No, he is not the Emperor, but if my advice is taken at headquarters, he will play the part of him and thus silence all rumours until such a time as we can recover Napoleon himself."

Still Vladimir made no comment. His eyes were fixed piercingly on the actor's face.

"As for Leather-Mask," Lefarge continued, "he will find himself bound to trade with the French alone, for I fancy he should find it difficult to convince the Russians that his prisoner is indeed the Emperor."

Vladimir turned his glance on him. "You are a shrewd man, Lefarge," he said at last. "I grant you that."

"You will find my sword as sharp as my wits," was the calm reply, "and I shall be looking for you after I have reported to Marshal Murat."

Vladimir's eyes flashed venomously. "I, too, have a mission to perform," he said, and without another word he spurred across the snow.

The Major had passed out of sight, beyond a belt

of trees, when he observed a number of sinister shapes away in the distance.

He gave a violent start as he realised that they were wolves, starving creatures driven from their haunts in quest of food by the bitter cold.

Now Vladimir's scent was not carried to their eager nostrils, for the wind was in the wrong quarter. But all at once an idea occurred to the Pole, and he started to make a detour that seemed nothing short of suicidal. For it brought him to windward of the pack and almost instantly they sensed human prey.

The moment the wolves broke forward he wheeled and dashed back to the forest. The pack came on in full pursuit, and Vladimir led them through the trees in headlong style, charging out into the open country again close to the spot where he had encountered Lefarge and the Emperor's double, Gronwald.

The Gay Hussar turned his head, and called out to Vladimir in surprise as the Major swept by. But the latter answered never a word, and Lefarge was staring after his receding figure in bewilderment when a terrified shriek from Gronwald drew his attention to the woods once more.

The wolf-pack was swarming from the trees only twenty or thirty yards away. Lefarge scarce had time to draw sabre and pistol ere the wolves were upon him, and the leader of the pack leapt snarling at him from the snow.

Lefarge thrust the pistol forward and down, his hand between those gleaming fangs, the barrel rammed into the wolf's throat. He drew trigger, and, its head almost blown off, the brute dropped lifeless, to be torn to pieces by some of its starving companions. But the rest of the pack encircled Lefarge and Gronwald and sprang at them from all sides.

Far out of harm's way, Vladimir turned in the saddle to watch for a moment. Then with an ugly smile he worked back towards the course which he had originally been following, and he was soon lost to view.

Meanwhile, on the fringe of the forest, the sanguinary battle betwixt man and wolf-pack was being waged with furious desperation.

Hacking right and left with his sabre, striking a wolf to the snow at almost every blow, Lefarge fought like a titan. But for every one that fell, another bounded forward to take its place in the terrible onset.

Gronwald was useless in the deadly affray, a whimpering creature who could not have struck a blow even had he been armed. Lefarge kept the Sarde on the move, prancing around the hapless actor and the terrified Cossack pony, endeavouring to shield them as well as himself.

The Frenchman's sabre slashed through the air like a shaft of lightning, carrying death into the midst of the snarling wolf-pack. His tunic and breeches were torn by the snapping, slashing fangs, his dolman stripped from his shoulder. His arm grew weary with striking, and as time dragged by, his muscles from shoulder to elbow seemed like to crack with the unrelenting strain.

It seemed only a question of time before numbers triumphed over valour, and Lefarge was visibly weakening when suddenly there came a loud halloo from the woods.

Out of the trees dashed a body of horsemen, armed to the teeth, but wearing civilian dress. Brigands, for a certainty, decided Lefarge.

Then, with a start, he saw that at their head rode a man in a cloak and a leather mask, and it was he who fired the first shot in a volley that set the wolf-pack by the heels!

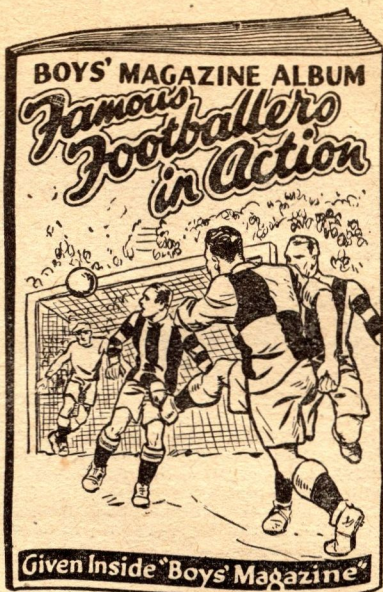
Your Editor's Great News!

BUMPER XMAS NUMBER

NEXT WEEK, CHUMS,

AND

**THIS WONDER ALBUM
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MY DEAR CHUMS,
Next week you are booked for the treat of the year—the Bumper Christmas Number of the Old Mag.

Crammed tight with fascinating Yuletide Tales, every page is a flash with surprises and fresh delights. And in addition to this ripping Xmas feast you will be presented with your editor's Christmas Gift—

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The story programme, too, is superb. First on the bill is a gigantic new Christmas serial by that famous boys' author, Mr. Bernard Buley. A brand new plot and a new bunch of absorbing characters makes

The Ice Pirates

the most thrilling tale we have ever included in our pages. Think of it—a lost land under the arctic ice; a phantom galleon and her gallant crew hidden away from the ken of the world for four centuries. Thanks to the air in the lost land these men are still living and they have discovered a strange secret. What that is you'll read for yourselves as the deeply thrilling scenes of this great yarn are unfolded.

The Boys of St. Giddy's have a real spooky time this year.

The Haunted Schoolboys

is the title of their exploits at the festive season—hair-raising, weird and mysterious doings in a strange house of terror.

And don't miss Dick Turpin. The hero Highwayman appears in the first yarn of a gripping trilogy entitled

The Phantom Archer.

A mysterious, spectral figure, clad in the vestments of the sixteenth century, plays a dramatic, spectacular part in this strong old-time tale. But the Laughing Highwayman, not forgetting Bootles, the giant black and the rest of his comrades, are even more to the fore. Dick's Christmas Eve exploits will give you laughs and thrills galore.

Tons of other good things including Cannon Foot and other favourite B.M. characters in Xmas exploits; Christmas Jokes, articles, tricks, etc.—but I could fill this whole number with a description of them all. So get it for yourselves on Saturday.

Till then,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

P.S.—Get ready to get busy! That album's a corker!

Ring of Steel.

THE brigands came on at a full gallop, and, as in a dream, Lefarge saw them sweep past and chase the wolves across the plain, to make certain that the brutes did not return to the attack.

Lefarge let his sabre fall to his side, and leaned wearily over the Sarde's arched neck, breathing heavily and marvelling at the strange manner in which he and the actor, Gronwald, had been rescued.

"Methinks you have been delayed in your journey to Posen, Frenchman."

Lefarge turned quickly at these words, to see Leather-Mask himself near by.

Lefarge moved closer to him. "The delay might

have become permanent," he observed, cool and collected in spite of his ordeal. "*Mon ami*, you have served France by saving the life of its finest officer—for such am I. It would be well if you could serve her by restoring her Emperor," he added.

"Napoleon is where you will never find him," Leather-Mask rejoined, "and he goes to the highest bidder."

Lefarge eyed him keenly for a moment, and then, with a sudden and unexpected gesture, he stripped the mask from the brigand's countenance. Next instant he was recoiling in astonishment, for he gazed on the face of Major Vladimir!

The Major smiled crookedly. "You have saved



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BOYS' MAGAZINE LEAGUE COUPON.

Boys' Magazine, 3/12/32.

me the trouble of disclosing my identity," he said. "Yes, Lefarge, I am Leather-Mask! I set those wolves on you to delay you until I could gather my band of rascals. True, I might have let the wolves finish you, but I preferred you to live, my Captain—just long enough to feel the edge of my sword!"

Lefarge saw the whole cunning plot now. "So!" he remarked, fingering his moustache. "The edge of your sword, *hein?* Eh, bien, monsieur, we'll settle our score here and now!"

Out came Vladimir's blade, and he aimed a terrific blow at Lefarge; but with a swift parry the French-

man baffled the stroke and turned his enemy's sabre to one side.

The duel was on with a vengeance, with the awe-struck Gronwald as the only witness.

Lefarge displayed his usual *sang froid*. Almost effortlessly his blade seemed to dart from parry to cut, parry to cut, but the strength of arm was there.

The brief respite that had followed the rout of the wolves had given Lefarge an opportunity to recover from his fatigue and exhaustion, and his supreme skill more than counter-balanced Vladimir's advantage of being fresh. And gradually it dawned upon the Pole that he had indeed met his match, and as fear took hold of him, he swiftly degenerated into a bungling novice.

"The Major has lost his fire," Lefarge said, even as he launched a determined attack. "*Bah!* there is no shame in defeat, monsieur—when it is at the hands of such a man as I."

The last words accompanied a downward cut that passed inside Vladimir's wavering blade and took him in the shoulder. A hoarse cry escaped the brigand chieftain, and, with the blood gushing from the wound, he fell half fainting from the saddle.

His horse took fright and made off at the gallop, and Vladimir's foot becoming fixed in the stirrup, the rider was dragged through the snow.

Lefarge promptly started after him. But there came an angry outcry, and the Captain saw that Vladimir's band were returning from the pursuit of the wolves, and had witnessed the fall of their chieftain.

Lefarge abandoned his idea, and, turning, seized Gronwald's rein.

"This way, friend," he cried, and next moment the pair of them were riding at top speed across the snow.

A dozen of the brigands gave chase, but they could not make up to the fugitives, and turned about when they came unhealthily near to the French outposts.

* * * * *
SEATED at a desk in his quarters at Posen, Marshal Murat signed to an officer of staff.

"Have Major Vladimir report to me at once," he said. "Some Russian stragglers have been taken prisoner, and I should like the Major to act as interpreter while I question them. . . ."

He broke off as the door was burst open, and on the threshold stood Lefarge.

"Marshal," the Gay Hussar observed, "I regret that Major Vladimir will not be available for your service—a fact which I shall explain later. In the meantime, behold!"

As he spoke the word, he entered the room and drew after him a figure at sight of whom Marshal Murat sprang to his feet.

"The Emperor!" he exclaimed joyfully.

"No, Marshal," Lefarge rejoined. "An actor known as Gronwald."

He proceeded to outline the inspiration that had occurred to him in the theatre of Pultusk, and the forceful arguments with which he urged its adoption gradually impressed the Marshal.

"You really think it will work, Lefarge," Murat said. "You think we can carry this thing out?"

"Only leave Gronwald to me, and I am sure it will work, Marshal," the Gay Hussar replied. "Remember, my wits are as keen as my sabre, sir."

Murat nodded slowly. "Very well," he murmured, "we shall see if you can make good that boast, Lefarge. . . ."

Don't miss next week's monster Christmas number containing the next gripping tale of the thrilling duel of wits between Lefarge and Leather-Mask, the bandit.

THE LEAPING MAN OUT TO SMASH THE ROBOT RACKET AND THE HOODED TERRORISTS OF THE CRIMINAL CIRCLE OF SEVEN !

THE BLACK SHADOW AND
THE CIRCLE OF SEVEN



The
 Mystic
 Circle.

JOHN DAWSON looked up suddenly from the desk where he was studying some papers. Dawson was a millionaire and gave huge sums of money to charity.

It was past midnight and the old Tudor house which he occupied at Hilldown in Sussex was very quiet. All the servants had long since gone to bed, yet Dawson had an uncanny feeling that he was no longer alone, and his kindly face wore a slightly puzzled frown as he glanced about him. He listened intently; but the house was silent except for the faint ticking of the grandfather's clock in the hall.

Then a startling thing happened. A faint, phosphorescent light glowed upon one of the oak-panelled walls; a light that flickered greenish-white, and formed slowly into a large circle divided into seven equal segments by seven radii.

"Bless my soul!" Dawson exclaimed faintly; and blinked as though he thought his eyes were deceiving him.

But that amazing circle was still there when he looked again, and now a face, hooded like that of a Spanish inquisitor, began to grow out of it.

Suddenly the hooded head spoke in a low, clear voice.

"John Dawson," it said. "You intend to give

THE IRON KIDNAPPERS—
 Smashed by their Own Thunder
 in the hands of THE
 BLACK SHADOW.

one hundred thousand pounds to the East London Charity Fund. Instead you will buy bearer bonds to that value, and place them outside your lodge gates at midnight to-morrow. The Circle of Seven demands the money, and if you refuse, or go to the police, you will die just as Sir Thomas Banks and Lord Banford died when they defied us. We show no mercy."

The uncanny voice ceased. The face and the circle faded slowly from the wall.

The old philanthropist gasped and clutched at the edge of the desk for support.

Though he was no coward he was badly shaken, for recently the newspapers had been full of the Circle of Seven, a secret society possessed of almost occult powers. In the two instances mentioned by the spectral head, their victims had refused to be blackmailed, and both of them had been mysteriously done to death, and nearly every bone in their bodies broken. No wonder, therefore, that old John Dawson felt momentarily faint.

With an effort he pulled himself together, and stretched out a hand to the telephone meaning to call the police. But suddenly he changed his mind, and rang for his chauffeur instead.

A couple of hours later his powerful Daimler car halted in the vicinity of Baker Street, London, and John Dawson alighted. Telling his chauffeur to wait, the old man walked briskly into a block of mansions, and mounted to the top floor, where he rang a door bell. A tall, handsome man wearing a

silk dressing-gown answered the summons, and smiled when he saw who his visitor was.

"Come in, Mr. Dawson," he said.

The philanthropist stepped into the hall. When the other man had closed the door, he laid a trembling hand on his arm.

"I have come to you for help," he said in a tremulous voice. "I have been threatened by the Circle of Seven."

The man in the dressing-gown evinced no surprise, but merely nodded.

"Come in here, Mr. Dawson, and tell me everything," he said.

The Iron Men.

SOME twenty-four hours later, a watery moon was struggling to pierce the thick banks of clouds, and a high wind was screaming across Hilldown Woods. John Dawson's house was no more than a blurred shape, with one yellow light marking the room where the millionaire kept his uneasy vigil.

Hidden by the trees, a big, closed motor van stood by the side of a narrow, rutted track that led through the woods and met the main London road close to the lodge gates of John Dawson's house. A man sat in the driver's seat, muffled to the chin in a heavy raincoat, his hat pulled down over his eyes. There he remained as a statue till some time after a distant clock had struck twelve.

At length, he rose and entered the van. Closing the door behind him he pressed a switch, and the interior of the van was flooded with electric light which revealed what was surely the strangest cargo that any lorry had ever carried through the quiet Sussex lanes.

At one end of the van there was a small, electric motor, and a bewildering mass of

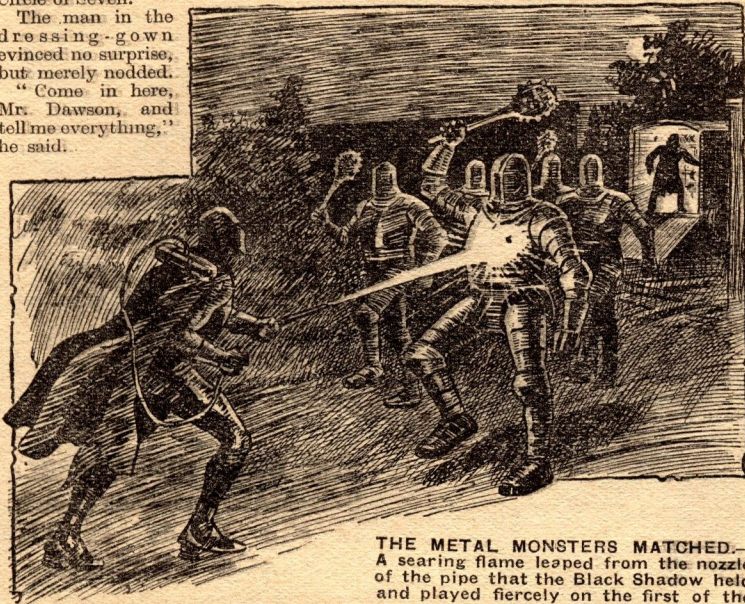
wires, condensers, and batteries; at the other end were five six-foot steel figures, each holding a gigantic mace in one gauntleted hand. They were, in fact, automata, and, within each steel body there was a small, but wonderfully efficient electric motor, and an apparatus which enabled their every movement to be controlled from the motor van within a radius of nearly half-a-mile.

One by one the motorist examined the iron men, making a few slight adjustments. Satisfied he turned to the electrical apparatus which controlled their operations by wireless waves, and pressed a small lever. With a low drone the motor woke to life, and crackling bluish-white sparks leapt from a big induction coil. Finally, he opened a steel door at the end of the van, and lowered a light collapsible steel gangway to the ground.

Once again he turned to the electric apparatus, and his long, tapering fingers darted hither and thither amid the delicate apparatus.

The five iron men came suddenly to life. With ponderous, yet strangely silent movements, they marched down the gangway. Any watcher might have noticed then that they moved on padded, rubber feet, which gave them a secure grip even on the slanting gangway. The man at the control-board pressed other levers, and the five weird shapes moved off through the woods, brushing aside bushes and small saplings as though they were merely grasses.

When they reached the roadway, their controller whirled a big wheel and the file of iron men swerved towards a wooden door in the boundary wall of



THE METAL MONSTERS MATCHED.—A searing flame leaped from the nozzle of the pipe that the Black Shadow held and played fiercely on the first of the automatons.

He led the way into his study, and there the millionaire told him of his recent eerie experience.

"I am glad you have come to me," Dawson's companion said when the old man had finished. "I have already made up my mind to smash this gang and the information you have just given me will help considerably. Pay no heed to their threats, but leave everything in my hands. I shall come down to Hilldown at once, fully prepared to deal with them if they make an attempt against your life. No," as the old man seemed about to ask a question. "Please don't ask me to explain my theories now, for I have to make a number of preparations."

The old gentleman smiled gratefully.

"You have taken a load off my mind," he said. "Good night."

"Good night," the other answered. "And don't worry!"

The old philanthropist left the flat and returned to his car. As the Daimler raced smoothly through the London streets he smiled a little wryly as he wondered what some of his friends would think if they knew he had just sought help from the Black Shadow. In the course of his philanthropic activities John Dawson had encountered the mystery man, and discovered, somewhat to his surprise, that he was a modern knight errant, who waged war against crime and injustice in cases where the police were helpless. Several times he had helped the Black Shadow, financially; and he was one of the very few men who knew of the dual identity of the grave, handsome man who occupied that quiet flat near Baker Street.

John Dawson's estate about a hundred yards from the lodge gates.

Again the man's fingers moved deftly among the complexity of levers and wheels, and four of the iron men halted. The leader, however, heaved up his mace and smashed a mighty blow at the door, whose timbers creaked and groaned. Then, so swiftly did he pound at the door that the metal arm and mace became a mere blur. Under this terrific onslaught, one hinge broke, and the door swayed inside and hung crazily by the remaining hinge.

In response to the invisible, wireless control, the five iron men stepped over the broken door, and headed across the grounds towards the silent house. There was something suggestive of irresistible strength in their slow, deliberate march, so that it seemed no power on earth could stop them.

Now the driver of the van sprang into the driving-seat, and took the motor van out of the woods, and along the highway to the broken door, so that from his control board he could watch the five robots.

Suddenly a strange figure leaped over the boundary wall. A figure that moved with thirty-foot bounds, and had an ample black cloak which streamed in the wind like wings. It was the famous Black Shadow!

On his back he bore a metal cylinder, from which

seeking to surround the Black Shadow. Their great maces rose and fell with lightning speed, and the robots moved at thrice their previous pace.

If one of the terrible weapons smashed down upon his skull even the bullet-proof mail which clothed him from head to heel could not prevent the Black Shadow from being brained; and with a clang of his spring-heeled boots he leapt clean over the heads of his weird assailants. Then he whirled round on his toes, and once again he turned his oxy-acetylene flame upon one of the iron men.

The man at the control-board spun his steering wheel, and the five mechanical warriors turned so swiftly that the Leaping Man only just avoided a death-blow from one of the maces.

He bounced backward, and as he did so the oxy-acetylene flame burned through the metal body of one of the robots, and bit into the delicate mechanism which controlled its movements. There was a sudden whirl of machinery, and the iron man staggered. Then it fell with a mighty clang of metal limbs, and never moved again.

The remaining four robots tried again to encircle the Black Shadow, but in the last split second, when it seemed that the pounding maces must batter the life from his body, he bounded lightly over their



THE CROOKS CRASHED.—The bomb exploded with a thunderous roar and a blinding flash. The car and the van were both smashed to a tangled heap.

projected a thin, many-jointed pipe, ending in a small nozzle.

Landing in front of the five iron men, he turned on this nozzle at the first of them. There came a sudden hissing roar as a blinding flame leapt from it, and played fiercely upon the automaton. White-hot sparks leapt from its body, but it continued its relentless march.

For a moment the man in the motor van stared incredulously. Then his lips drew back in a snarl, and his fingers moved swiftly among the controls. Instantly the five iron men spread out as though

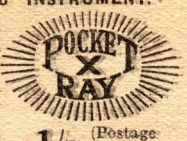
heads; then turned his roaring, white-hot flame on them once more.

So the strange duel continued, till but one iron man remained. Thereupon the man at the control-board seemed to realise that he was defeated. Hurling himself into the driver's seat, he thrust in his clutch, and the motor van went hurtling at breakneck speed along the road.

The Leaping Man stayed only long enough to destroy the fifth automaton. Then he went in pursuit, his spring-heeled boots carrying him in swift, thirty-foot leaps that gradually overhauled

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the racing motor van. Before he could overtake the machine, it roared through a ruined archway, tore along a short drive, and halted outside the frowning portals of Hilldown Castle. Leaping to the ground the driver darted across a drawbridge, and scarcely had he reached the other side, when the bridge rose with a stiff creaking of rusty chains, and a many-toothed portcullis dropped behind him.

The Society Of Seven.

AT the edge of the moat which encircled the castle, the Black Shadow halted and surveyed the place, his eyes glowing like live coals behind their metal mask. Then his body grew taut as a bent bow, and he rose in a magnificent leap that carried him across the moat to the battlements.

From this vantage point he was able to look down into the big courtyard, where stood the ancient keep. The place was in darkness, and nowhere was there any sign of life. The Black Shadow stepped to the edge of the battlements and calmly leapt down to the courtyard, where he bounced twice on his spring heels.

As he did so a massive iron-studded door in the base of the keep opened, and a flood of light poured out. The mystery man had a shrewd suspicion that he was being enticed into a trap, yet without hesitation he strode across the courtyard, and entered the keep.

A stone stairway led upward, and as the Black Shadow mounted this, lights appeared and gleamed on the mildewed walls. He soon reached the head of the stairs, and came to the great hall of Hilldown Castle, where of old five score men-at-arms had sat at meat each day. The huge, double doors of ancient, iron-studded oak stood wide open, and as the Black Shadow stepped through the doorway a great circle of light leaped into being at the far end of the hall. From the centre of this circle there radiated seven lines, which divided it into seven equal parts. At the centre, on a raised dais, a hooded man sat on a throne.

The Black Shadow took a step towards it, and immediately the whole hall was filled with light, which shone on a circular, crystal table, divided into seven equal portions by silver radii. At the end of each of these spokes there sat a man, hooded like the one who occupied the crystal throne.

The latter now spoke in a mocking voice.

"Welcome to the Circle of Seven," he said. "You are a bold man to come here, for none may see the Master of the Circle face to face, as you do, and live." "There is a saying that threatened men live long," the Black Shadow answered coolly.

The Master's eyes gleamed wolfishly through the slits in his hood, but the Black Shadow went on: "All this mummery does not impress me," he said. "For I have been probing your secrets for some time past, and I know that the Circle of Seven is no more than a gang of common crooks and black-mailers. As for the mysterious circle and hooded head which you caused to appear and speak to John Dawson, that is done by means of a televisior device which you have perfected. Neither this, nor your

wireless-controlled robots will stop me from smashing your gang and bringing you to justice."

Several of the hooded men sprang to their feet with angry cries; and the Master of the Circle dropped both hands to the arms of his crystal throne. On the alert for some trick, the Black Shadow tensed his body for a leap, but he was too late. The floor opened beneath his feet, and he fell so far he must have broken his legs had not the powerful spring heels taken the shock. Overhead an iron grille clanged shut and he saw the mocking face of the Master staring down at him.

"Farewell!" the crook said. "Since you have learned so many of our secrets, we must seek new headquarters. Moreover, since this castle is of no further use to us I am leaving behind a bomb with a time fuse that will blow the whole castle to pieces in fifteen minutes. Farewell!"

Then he was gone, and the Black Shadow heard the slamming of a door, after which the silence of the tomb descended upon him.

For a few moments the mystery man stood with his arms folded across his chest, staring thoughtfully up at the iron grille which closed the mouth of the oubliette. Then he leapt upwards, so that both gauntleted hands closed on the bars of the grille. He braced his feet against the wall, and still clinging to one of the cross-bars with his right hand, he operated his oxy-acetylene apparatus with the other.

The flame roared furiously and swiftly cut through one bar after another, till part of the grille came loose and fell with a mighty clang to the bottom of the oubliette.

The Black Shadow waited a little while so that the jagged edges of the bars might become cool. Then he heaved himself through the hole which he had cut.

As he sprang erect he heard the sound of a motor starting-up, and darting to one of the windows he looked out. The motor van and a motor car were just crossing the drawbridge.

Turning away from the window, he took an electric torch from a pocket in his cloak, and swept a long finger of light round the great hall. It fell upon a small, gleaming metal sphere which rested on the crystal table, and the mystery man knew that this was the bomb left by the Master. He picked it up rather gingerly, and heard a faint noise like the ticking of a watch.

Taking the bomb with him, he hurried downstairs from the great hall, bounded across the courtyard, and passed through the open portcullis and over the drawbridge.

Then he went in pursuit of the motor car and van, taking a short cut across the fields. He reached the road again and, saw the headlights of the car sweeping round a bend.

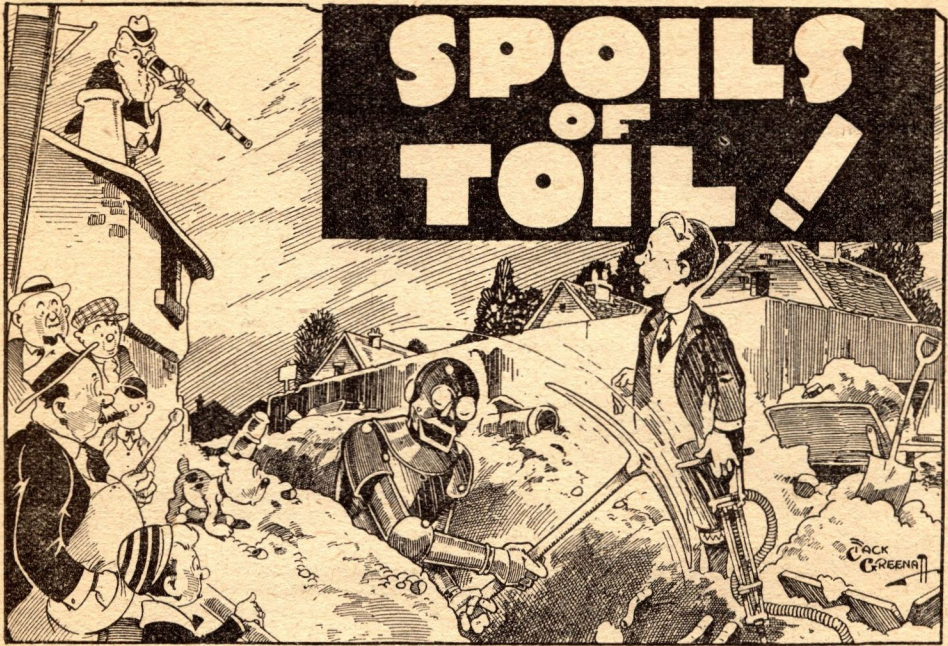
He leapt the hedgerow, and as his mail-clad body, gleaming steely blue in the watery light of the moon, shot through the air, he raised the bomb in both hands, and hurled it with all his strength, to the roadway immediately in front of the speeding car. It exploded with a flash of blinding, saffron-coloured flame, and a roar that seemed to split the heavens. The car and van were both smashed to a tangled heap of metal and machinery, and hurled into the ditch. Flames burst from them, and they blazed fiercely.

For a moment the Black Shadow stood there, arms akimbo. Then, satisfied that the seven crooks had paid the penalty for their many crimes, he turned and leapt the hedgerow again. He vanished into the Stygian darkness beyond, as the moon was hidden by a thick bank of clouds.

Dick Turpin, the Laughing Highwayman, makes his bow again next week in a thrilling daredevil yarn of the road entitled "The Phantom Archer."

THE LATEST LAUGHABLE DOINGS OF
REUBEN THE ROBOT FUN-MAKER

THE TIN-RIBBED TORNADO
UNEARTH'S BURIED TREASURE



Champion Trenchermen.

IT is a well-known fact that nothing attracts a crowd like road-mending operations, and when the main street in Wortlebury was "up" the usual collection of the world's workers was gathered round the navvies' bivouac.

It was the siesta hour, and the horny-handed sons of toil were arranged in graceful attitudes of inactivity round a fire-bucket. Nothing broke the peace and quiet save the sizzle of sausages frying on a spade, and the occasional snore of a recumbent workman.

Among the spectators of this stirring scene of still-life was Sunny Brown, the brilliant young student from the College of Applied Mechanics, accompanied, as usual, by his marvellous mechanical man, Reuben the Robot.

"What do you think they're doing, Reuben?" Sunny said. "Digging for treasure?"

The Robot naturally returned no answer, but one of the navvies took up the challenge. "'Op off!" he observed in the vernacular. "We don't want none of them wisecracks! We're 'ard-working men, we are!"

"You look it," retorted Sunny, courteously. "You've been working like this for six weeks! My Robot could pick up the whole of this street while you're finishing your lunch!"

This exchange of repartee had been overheard by a big man whose features consisted principally of horn-rimmed spectacles and white whiskers. He had been shuffling along the road, studying a

**Reuben Becomes a Knight of the
Pick this week. A Pity he Made
Such a Pit. The Result Was a Riot
—with a Strange Aftermath.**

map; now he suddenly broke into the little altercation to exclaim excitedly: "This is the spot!"

Then, murmuring "Pardon me!" he tried to push his way through the throng

But those who had won a place next to the barrier were not going to yield up their vantage point. So, after a vain effort to reach the pit, the human doorman approached Sunny, who stood at the extreme end of the barrier, and remarked in a stage whisper: "Look! Look up there!" At the same time he pointed into the wintry sky.

Sunny eyes naturally turned upwards, and human curiosity caused the rest of the audience, as well as the peaceful navvies, to gaze hopefully into the heavens. The stranger took advantage of this optic movement to lift the barrier, with the apparent intention of jumping down into the pit.

But his action deprived the whole contingent of star-gazers of their support. One and all, including Sunny Brown, were precipitated into the abyss in a struggling heap!

Alarmed by the unexpected havoc he had caused, the bearded merchant beat a hasty retreat, brushing against Reuben as he made his escape. The Robot's mechanism was set in motion and the next moment he had stepped over the edge amidst the wallowing crowd.

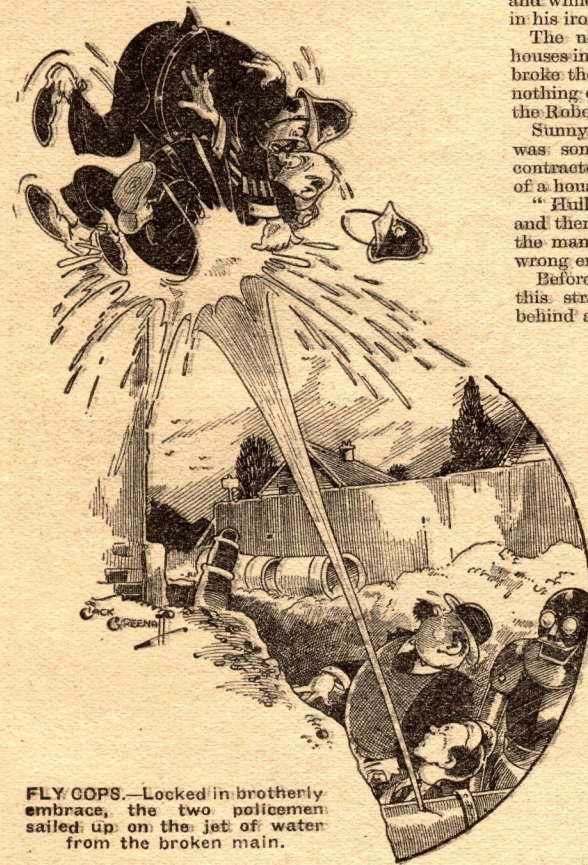
Acting on the simple laws of his being, Reuben did his best to restore order, by automatically seizing all within reach and tossing them out of the excavations into the roadway again. In a few moments he had effectively cleared the pit of all its human occupants, with the exception of Sunny, who had

wriggled out of reach of his obstreperous creation. He tapped his mechanical man on his dome-like head, just in time to prevent any more damage being done.

The navvies who had either vacated the pit or been expelled by the invader now gathered on the brink to voice their disapproval in well-chosen words.

But, before they could proceed to any extremity, the bearded gentleman, who had been the unwitting cause of the disturbance, stepped forward and said sweetly: "Dear friends, I beg you not to be rash! It was really my fault. Would you share a little refreshment with me—at my expense?"

This request was greeted with enthusiasm by the hot and thirsty sons of toil. Quickly recovering their good-humour, they followed their unknown benefactor in the direction of the local inn; and the rest of the crowd soon dispersed after addressing a few pointed remarks to Sunny and his Robot.



FLY COPS.—Locked in brotherly embrace, the two policemen sailed up on the jet of water from the broken main.

Road-Up Ructions.

THE young inventor was still engaged in dusting down his Robot when the hirsute gentleman unexpectedly returned. There was a wild light in his eye as he sprang down into the pit and placed one finger against his nose in conspiratorial fashion.

"Could your Robot dig up the whole of this street in an hour?" he demanded eagerly.

Sunny looked startled. "Eh?" he exclaimed. "Yes, I suppose he could; but——"

"I heard your boast just now," cut in the stranger, trembling with excitement, "and it occurred to me that you are the very man I want! I am the contractor in charge of these road repairs, and according to my contract the whole road must be dug to a depth of six feet before three o'clock this afternoon! If it is not done," the wild light returned to his eyes, "I shall be ruined!"

Sunny thought for a moment. "I'm on!" he said. "That fellow challenged me to do it in a couple of hours. Well, old Reuben will just show 'em how to hustle!"

"Splendid!" exclaimed the contractor, gripping his hand. "Now I'll dodge back and stand them another round of drinks while you get on with the job!"

Sunny Brown had enough knowledge of practical engineering to set the drills and steam-shovels going, and while he tended these he left Reuben with a pick in his iron fists.

The next moment the whole street and all the houses in it were vibrating to the raucous din. Sunny broke the surface with a drill, but his efforts were as nothing compared with the vigorous work of Reuben the Robot, who soon reduced the road to a vast trench.

Sunny, looking up during an interval in the work, was somewhat taken aback to see the bearded contractor watching the proceedings from the roof of a house!!

"Hullo! what's he doing up there?" he thought; and then, his astonishment growing, he noticed that the man was gazing steadfastly at him through the wrong end of a telescope.

Before he had time to reflect on the meaning of this strange manoeuvre the watcher disappeared behind a chimney-pot.

"I suppose he wants to be sure I'm getting on with the work," thought the boy. "But it's a curious way to find out."

The road surface being sufficiently broken by the pneumatic drill and the mechanically plied pick, Sunny provided Reuben with a shovel. In a few moments showers of debris were being flung out of the deepening pit to line the excavations with a rapidly growing embankment.

Sunny's first intimation that all was not well was the sight of a row of astonished faces peering at him and Reuben over this bank. The refreshed workmen had returned and were reviewing the busy scene with bulging optics.

Sunny wiped the dew from his brow with the remark: "Wotcher, mates! Come to see what real work looks like?"

The navvies' reply to this gibe was to rise in a body, and, uttering strange war-like cries, they jumped down into the pit like soldiers going over the top.

At that moment Reuben stooped to scoop up another spadeful of gravel, which he flung light-heartedly into the faces of the enemy. As they reeled under the attack, Sunny touched a button in Reuben's steel chest. The tin-ribbed tornado, dropping his spade, instantly lunged forward, and, while the navvies were still trying to get the grit out of their eyes, they found themselves seized in his mighty arms and hurled, one after the other, out of the trench.

The excitement of battle prompted Sunny to shout triumphantly: "Hurrah!" and his cry of victory was taken up by another enthusiastic voice.

"Up, Guards, and at 'em!" yelled the hirsute contractor, dancing about in a state of uncontrolled excitement, on the roof.

The navvies did not wait for any more. Scrambling to their feet, they left Sunny and his Robot in undisputed possession of the field.

Sunny was about to resume work when the contractor popped out from behind the chimneys, holding an open umbrella over his head.

"Look out for the barrage!" he cried warningly, and, going down on all fours, he crept out of sight, still sheltering beneath the umbrella.

Sunny felt vaguely disturbed by this extraordinary behaviour. "He must have shared the navvies' refreshment!" he thought. Still ruminating uneasily, he replaced the spade in Reuben's hands and once more the street was humming with the sound of toil.

But not for long. The next time Sunny looked up he was startled to see the helmets of two policemen rising cautiously over the embankment. They immediately bobbed down again as he raised his eyes.

"Hi!" shouted Sunny. "What's the matter?" and, now seriously alarmed, he added: "Don't hide! I won't hurt you!"

Reassured by this promise, the two guardians of the law and order came cautiously out of cover. One was a sergeant, the other a plain constable, and they were accompanied by a red-faced man with a bowler hat and a walrus moustache. All three climbed down into the trench.

"Here, what d'you think you're doing?" demanded the latter individual aggressively. "Pulling up the whole road like this! Have you gone mad?"

Sunny stared at him. "I'm working for a contractor," he replied mildly. "He was dissatisfied with his men and put me and my Robot on the job."

"Contractor? What contractor?" howled the man in sudden wrath. "I've got the contract to make this road. And let me tell you, young man, we had nearly finished it!"

The Irresistible Robot.

SUNNY felt his knees grow suddenly weak. "Nearly finished it?" he repeated in a strangled voice. "Why, I was told to dig it to a depth of six feet before three o'clock!"

"Six feet!" gasped the man with the walrus moustache. "Who's this man you're working for?"

"He's—he's a big chap, with glasses and white whiskers," stammered Sunny.

"And where is he now?" The sergeant, looking grim, stepped forward. "I should like to meet him."

"Well," Sunny swallowed hard, "the last time I saw him he was on the roof!" He pointed to the chimney-pot.

"On the roof, eh?" echoed the sergeant, and he exchanged a meaning glance with the others. "And what was he doing on the roof, if I may ask?"

"Well, first of all," explained Sunny carefully, "he was looking at me through a telescope. The next time I saw him he was sheltering under an umbrella."

The two policemen drew closer to him while he was speaking, and the sergeant said soothingly: "Oh, sheltering under an umbrella, was he? But it wasn't raining, you know."



A WINDFALL.—The ground suddenly gave way with a rending crash, and the whole party was swallowed up in the cellar of a house.

"I know," admitted Sunny, feeling hopelessly at sea, "but he warned me to look out for the barrage. That was after he had shouted: 'Up, Guards, and at 'em!'"

The next moment the two policemen flung themselves on the apparently demented boy and pinned his arms to his sides!

Sunny, taken completely by surprise, staggered back and struggled like mad to be free. In the scrimmage they all bumped against Reuben, who was still industriously shovelling large quantities of earth out of the pit. The spade was knocked from his hands, and his steel arms shot out and collected them all in a crushing embrace.

Fortunately, Sunny managed to reach his dome, and at the pressure of the boy's hand, the tin-ribbed tornado relinquished his captives. Stumbling forward, his great hands closed once more round the handle of a pick, and he resumed work with undiminished ardour.

(Continued on page 22).

The Last Amazing Complete Yarn in our Grand Mystery Series, featuring

THE MAN WITHOUT EYES!

Zarazan, the Crook Magician Meets his Just Deserts—But Not Before Spud and Phil Run the Whole Gamut of his Evil Resources.

The Castle Of Crooks.

"LOOK out!" whispered Phil Tregennis. "Somebody coming, Spud!"

The two youngsters pressed themselves back into the black shadows of the deep recess. By entering Garth Castle they were taking their very lives in their hands; but Phil was determined to rescue his Uncle Roderick from the fiendish clutches of Zarazan the Sorcerer. They knew they could not take their sensational story to the police, because Zarazan would murder Roderick Garth as soon as the castle was raided.

Spud Briggs, the plucky fisher lad, and Phil's boon companion, was equally determined to stick by his pal. They were both natives of the Scilly Islands, but Garth Castle, the home of Roderick Garth, the astronomer, was situated on the rugged, desolate coast of Cornwall.

The boys knew that Zarazan—sometimes known as the Man Without Eyes—had imprisoned Roderick Garth, and was impersonating him. He was a super criminal, and this old building was a veritable nest of crooks. Far below, reached by a secret lift, there was a great cavern, from which a tunnel extended far out beneath the English Channel.

Zarazan, amazingly enough, was making a secret Channel Tunnel. The men who worked on it were negroes, and all of them were kept hypnotised by the master criminal.

On more than one occasion Zarazan had attempted to kill the two boys, and he believed, indeed, that he had achieved his object. Phil and Spud had escaped death by a hair's-breadth, and they had succeeded in keeping the knowledge from their enemies.

For some days they had remained hidden in a little side cavern, far below. Now they were in Garth Castle itself, and as they pressed themselves back into the shadowy recess, a hard-featured man came down the gloomy corridor, to vanish into a side passage.

"We're taking an awful chance, Master Phil," murmured Spud.

"I know it!" breathed Phil, grimly. "But we're not escaping until we've rescued Uncle Rod."

It was a noble decision. The boys only knew that Uncle Roderick was imprisoned in some secret room in the castle. They did not know where it was situated, or how it could be reached. They were obliged, therefore, to lie in wait—to watch.

Twice, Phil had penetrated into the castle alone. On the previous night he had heard one of the crooks saying the "old man" had his last meal at seven p.m. It had been the first ray of hope.



It was evening now, and Garth Castle stood stark and grim in total darkness. The hour was six-forty-five. The boys had been lurking in the draughty, shadowy corridors for half-an-hour.

Phil knew the lie of the land; he knew where the kitchen quarters were situated, and having visited the castle many times in his childhood, the geography of the old place was familiar to him.

"The man who carried my uncle's evening meal must come along one of these main corridors, Spud!" Phil had declared, at the beginning of their vigil. "If we're lucky, we shall spot him—and if we're luckier, we shall be able to follow him to my uncle's secret prison."

Phil was taking no chances. He was prepared to wait, night after night, until an opportunity presented itself.

"Listen!" he whispered, a sudden note of excitement in his voice.

From their retreat the boys could not only see up and down the corridor, but they could also see into the main hall, and glimpse the great staircase.

Spud quivered. He, too, had heard the soft closing of a door, and, the next second, the unmistakable rattle of crockery.

The same thought sprang into the minds of the two boys. And they were right. A moment later a mis-shapen man shambled into view from the hall. He was an unsavoury-looking creature, and he was carrying a metal tray, containing some dishes and a jug.

"We're in luck!" breathed Phil exultantly.

"It's Uncle Rod's evening meal!" The mis-shapen man passed them within a foot—and guessed nothing. The faint odour of hot meat was wafted to the boys, confirming their suspicions.

"Come!" whispered Phil briefly.

He glanced up and down the corridor. Not another living thing was within sight. Phil and Spud left their place of concealment, and, like shadows, they crept after their quarry.

The mis-shapen man went far along the corridor, then he turned into a narrow stone stairway which led upwards in a spiral. Phil knew that stairway of old. It had sometimes been used, in the old days, by the servants.

The boys ventured to press more closely on the heels of their quarry now, and it was just as well they did so. For when Phil reached the top of the stairway he was just in time to see the man with the tray inserting a key in what appeared to be a blank stone wall of an upper passage.

"Look!" breathed Spud, clutching at Phil's arm.

A portion of the stone wall swung inwards, and a dim light came out into the passage. The man with the tray passed through—and there could be no doubt that the chamber beyond was Roderick Garth's secret prison.

"Now's our chance!" murmured Phil Tregennis tensely. "Come on, Spud! Everything depends upon the next minute."

They hurried down the passage. The guard had not closed the door completely, and when Phil pressed upon the stonework, it swung inwards.

He saw a small stone chamber, with a single light glowing. An old man, with flowing hair and a great beard sat at a table. The guard was placing the tray down—and his back was towards the boys.

"Here you are, old man," he said gruffly. "A treat for you this evening—Irish stew!"

He gave a cackle of laughter; for he knew well enough that the prisoner was fed with an unsavoury meat stew every evening.

Thud! Phil had closed the stone door, and the man swung round in surprise. He was just in time to see the two determined boys leaping at him.

Crash! Phil's fist, as hard as teak, rammed home into the fellow's face. At the same second Spud dived at the man's feet. Down he went with a crash to the hard stone floor. The boys, fighting like young tigers, held their captive down.

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"Phil—Phil!" came an incredulous exclamation from the bearded man.

"Yes, Uncle Rod, it's me!" gasped Phil. "Can you lend a hand? Have you any rope or string?"

Roderick Garth, who was actually much younger than he looked, realised the situation in a moment; he leapt to the aid of his two rescuers. Within a minute the guard, his eyes alight with fear and hatred, was tightly bound and gagged.

"Phil! Phil, my dear boy!" said Uncle Rod, with mingled joy and concern. "You took a terrible risk in coming here—"

"Can't stop to explain now, Uncle—we've got to get out!" interrupted Phil briskly. "Spud and I have sworn to beat Zarazan, and we can't do anything until you are safely out of the castle."

The Threads of Death.

FORTUNE favoured them. It was the quiet hour of the evening—the hour, indeed, when Zarazan himself was partaking of dinner. The castle corridors were empty and deserted. It was Uncle Rod himself who led the way down the stone stairs, and pointed out a small side door which was unknown to Phil.

It was a quick way into the open. They found themselves under the stars, with the cool night air blowing on their heated faces. It was a joy untold.

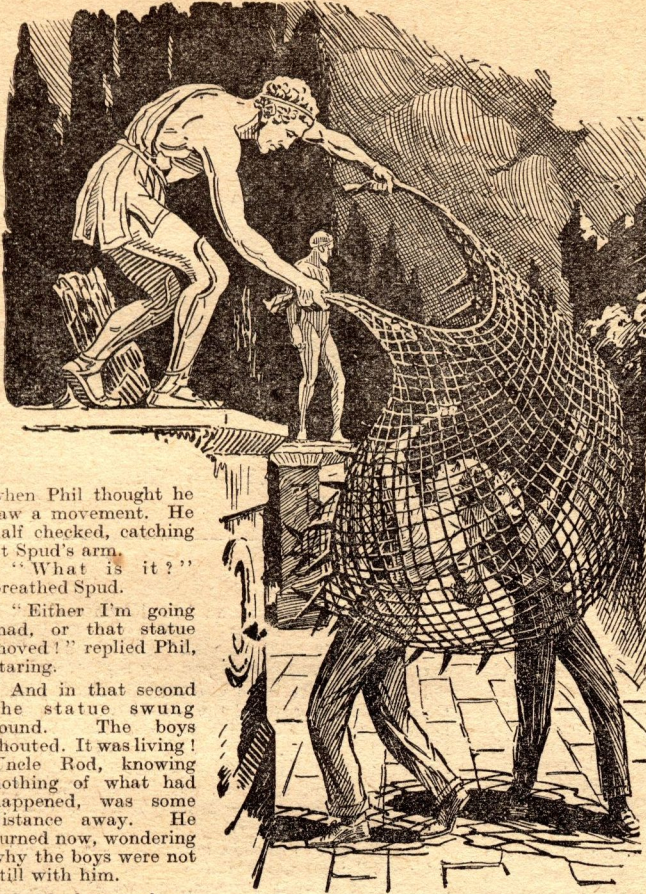
"Glory be! We've done it, Master Phil!" exclaimed Spud breathlessly. "We're out!"

"But we haven't escaped yet," replied Phil cautiously. "We've got to get out of the grounds—and you know the tricks of Zarazan."

But they knew that there had been no alarm. There was no pursuit. The odds were all in their favour.

"This way, boys," said Uncle Roderick softly.

It was his castle; he knew the shortest cuts. They went at the double over a shadowy lawn, and then cut along one of the paths of an ornamental garden. Uncle Rod had got beyond the silent stone statue of a Greek god, which stood like some guardian on its pedestal. Phil and Spud were passing, too,



when Phil thought he saw a movement. He half checked, catching at Spud's arm.

"What is it?" breathed Spud.

"Either I'm going mad, or that statue moved!" replied Phil, staring.

And in that second the statue swung round. The boys shouted. It was living! Uncle Rod, knowing nothing of what had happened, was some distance away. He turned now, wondering why the boys were not still with him.

Suddenly, a steel net, glittering in the moonlight, and deadly with spikes, was flung by the "statue" and it dropped over Phil and Spud, enveloping them.

"Too late, Phil realised that the "statue" was one of Zarazan's secret guards! The steel net was cunningly devised, for the spikes prevented the boys from struggling. Even a slight movement caused the sharp points to dig into their flesh.

"Run, Uncle—run!" yelled Phil urgently. "It's our only chance."

Roderick Garth realised the truth of Phil's statement. He could serve the boys best by escaping—and bringing help.

"Have courage!" he shouted. "I will bring help, boys!"

He ran with desperate haste. From the battlements of the castle two hideous figures, looking like vultures, but with human heads, fluttered through the air.

Uncle Rod never knew how he reached the wall, or how he climbed over. But at last he was on the road, running—intent upon reaching the village. He heard a flutter of wings, and looking up and round, he saw the Vulture Men swooping towards him.

Then, round a bend of the road, came the

THE "NET" RESULT.—Suddenly the "statue" flung a steel net, deadly with great spikes, over Phil and Spud, enveloping them.

two headlights of an automobile.

"Help—help!" shouted the fleeing man, running in the centre of the road, his arms upraised.

The Vulture Men were caught for a moment in the dazzle of the car's headlamps; then they winged away into the darkness. With a shriek of brakes, the car swerved, and came to a standstill. Men leapt out. They were wearing uniform. Some were police-constables, others were warders. A convict had escaped from the great prison on the moor, and many search-parties were scouring the countryside. Luck, at last, was with Zarazan's enemies.

While Roderick Garth was panting out his amazing story to the police, Phil Tregennis and Spud Briggs, helpless, were forced into the presence of Zarazan. At sight of the boys, the fury of the Man Without Eyes knew no bounds.

"Twice I have attempted to kill you wretched boys!" he snarled. "You are like cats! You have nine lives! But this time I will make certain."

He turned to the men who were holding the youngsters.

"Take them down into the tunnel!" he ordered. "Let other men scour the countryside for the escaped prisoner. He cannot have got far—"

Zzzzzzz-zzzzzz! A telephone buzzer sounded, and Zarazan reached for the instrument.

"Is that you, Chief?" came a gasping voice. "This is Number Ten. I'm in the village."

"Well?" snapped Zarazan.

"The old man is here—he has told his story to the police!"

came the voice. "The village is swarming with police and warders to night. A convict has escaped . . . The police are coming up to the castle at once . . ."

"Curse them!" snarled Zarazan, slamming the receiver down. Like a wild animal he swung round on Phil and Spud. "You boys have brought disaster upon me! By Heaven! You shall die a dreadful death—and, in dying, you shall destroy every scrap of evidence!"

Without the loss of a moment, Phil and Spud were taken down the secret lift; they were rushed through the great cavern, and then into the secret Channel Tunnel which Zarazan was boring. Far, far down the boys were led; and now they were in the hands of giant negroes. These unfortunate men were like children, obeying all orders without question. For they were under Zarazan's hypnotic spell.

The boys were bound by their ankles and waists to great stakes in the tunnel wall. Their arms were left free, and they wondered what devilish plan Zarazan had in mind. They were soon to know.

Opposite them, on the other side of the tunnel,

a great barrel was placed. Its top was open, and the boys could see a strange grey powder within.

Above this barrel a board was on a bracket—precariously balanced. On one end stood the biggest candle Phil and Spud had ever seen—a candle which gave a flame like a great torch. Thin threads were secured to the other end of the board, the threads were run through eyelets in the tunnel roof, and brought across to the prisoners.

Then the fiendish nature of Zarazan's plan became apparent. For the threads were bound to the wrists of the helpless boys—and their arms were now held high above their heads, so that there was no slack in the threads.

"Be careful, my young friends!" said Zarazan mockingly. "If you lower your wrists by a single inch, the threads will become taut, and the balanced board will be tipped."

"You—you fiend!" panted Phil.

"I see that you grasp the possibilities," mocked Zarazan. "If the board is tilted, the great candle will tumble—and fall into the powder! And that powder, I may add, is a thousand times more effective than dynamite! You will soon grow tired. Five minutes, perhaps—ten minutes at the outside. And this tunnel—with all my negroes, and everything connected with my work—will be destroyed, and not a trace will be left as evidence against me."

With a last snarl of hatred, the Man Without Eyes hurried away—leaving Phil and Spud to appalling torture with inevitable death to follow.

Retribution.

"WERE done, Master Phil," said Spud. "We can't even blow the candle out—it's like a bonfire!"

"Keep your pecker up!" muttered Phil. "The police are coming—they'll save us if we can only hold out."

Even as he spoke, he realised the farcical nature of his words. They would not be able to last five minutes. Already Phil had moved his wrists a mere fraction, and he had seen the thread tighten, and the candle had quivered. Even the effort of talking was almost sufficient to tighten those threads. One second of relaxation would mean death.

The seconds ticked away . . . "Oh!" gasped Spud suddenly.

Without his knowing it, his upraised wrists had sagged less than a quarter-of-an-inch—an almost imperceptible movement. But the thread on this side had twanged taut, and the balanced board moved. Phil closed his eyes as the great candle tipped, rocked, and oscillated. Miraculously, it found its balance, and did not topple over.

But one more tightening of the thread would mean the end. The boys stood there, rigid, con-

centrating every ounce of their will power upon holding their arms on high.

* * * * *

AT that exact moment, Zarazan had reached the open air, but he was not returning to Garth Castle. He was hastening across the rock ground towards the cliffs. Here there was a steep path which led downwards to the desolate shore.

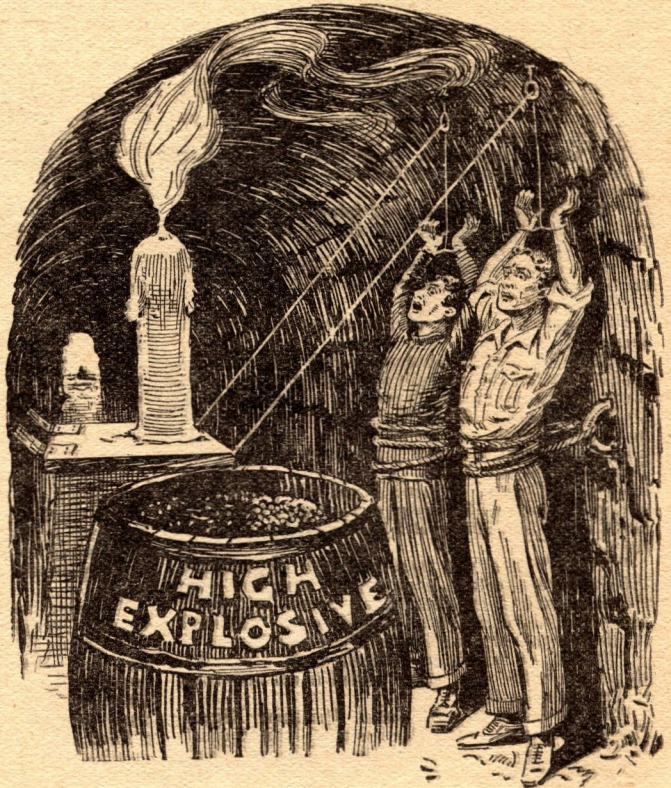
Suddenly, two figures swooped down from the darkness, and Zarazan found himself face to face with the Vulture Men.

"Chief!" gasped one of the crooks. "What's happened? There are five or six cars breaking into the grounds, and—"

"Out of my way!" snarled Zarazan.

His henchmen knew then, that they were being deserted. Zarazan was bent upon escape—leaving his assistants to fall into the hands of the police.

"You're taking us with you, Chief!" said one of the Vulture Men grimly. "You can't leave us behind—"



THE THREAD OF LIFE.—The least movement from Phil or Spud would pull the thread and jerk the great candle into the barrel of high explosive. Slowly the seconds ticked away. . . .

Thud! A silenced gun spat fire. Zarazan was in no mood for delay. One of the Vulture Men staggered as a bullet ripped into his side. The next moment both the "Vultures" hurled themselves at their master. They dragged him over backwards.

(Continued on page 23.)

SPOILS OF TOIL!

(Continued from page 17).

"Stop him, can't you?" screamed the contractor in a frenzy. "He'll strike the water-main in a minute!"

The gallant constables rushed one more to the attack, but at that moment the Robot's pick penetrated the main. A column of water shot up right under their feet, and, flinging their arms round each other's necks, the two bobbies were launched into the air. Locked in this brotherly embrace, they sailed up on the jet of water, and landed on the tiles of the houses where Sunny's peculiar employer had been last seen.

As the boy and the contractor stared upwards in horror, they saw the bearded one emerge from cover behind the chimney pot. He still held the umbrella over his head, while his free hand was occupied with the telescope, with which he scrutinised the policemen stumbling and slipping on the tiles.

"Blimey!" gasped the contractor. "You were right, boy!"

"Of course I was right!" retorted Sunny.

The old gent was crawling towards the policemen on hands and knees. Suddenly he gave a screech and leapt at them like a cat! There was a confused struggle—a jumble of kicking arms and legs—and then all three slid down the roof. Luckily for them, they landed in a heap of wet cement, which broke their fall though not adding to their appearance.

The next moment the crazy one was standing between the two constables, his arms securely gripped.

"Now then!" demanded the bewildered sergeant. "Why did you get that boy to dig up the road without authority?"

The man winked one eye, and replied in a deep, confidential whisper with the one word:

"Treasure!"

"Treasure?" repeated the sergeant. "What treasure?"

"There is hidden treasure buried beneath this road!" replied the stranger in thrilling tones. "It is marked on my chart. If you will release my arms I will show you." He carefully placed the umbrella and the telescope on the ground to fumble in his pocket and produce a map yellow with age. "I am Professor Diggan Delve, a humble student of history, gentlemen. When I heard this young man asking the workmen if they were digging for treasure I knew I had found the spot I have been searching for years."

"Hum!" muttered the sergeant suspiciously. "Let's have a look at your map." He pored over the chart and then wrinkled his brows. "I can't make head or tail of this!" he exclaimed. "It's full of whales and ships, and looks like water to me!"

"That's not surprising," declared the contractor gloomily. "The only thing buried under this road is the water main."

"That's what it is!" cried Professor Diggan Delve jubilantly. "It's the treasure of the Spanish Main! Yo ho ho, and a bottle of H₂O!" And, snatching up his umbrella, he began dancing round under the shower, chanting: "Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!"

"We'd better take him into custody," announced the sergeant. "And you, too," he turned indignantly to Sunny, "stop that blinking-Robot of yours and come along quietly. You can consider yourself under arrest!"

But it was too late. Reuben had been plying his pick with ceaseless industry during this conversation. When Sunny stepped towards him, the ground gave way with a rending crash and the whole party was swallowed up in the earth!

They dropped ten feet and landed with a dull thud. Sunny was the first to recover his feet and his presence of mind. He found himself in a cellar belonging to one of the houses, and, as he looked round him in bewilderment, his eyes slowly opened wider and wider.

Then he shouted the one compelling word: "Treasure!"

The others dizzily gathered their senses together, and, their eyes gradually becoming accustomed to the gloom, saw that the walls were stacked with old chests and bulging money-bags. One of the chests was open, revealing heaps of glittering coins!

The two policemen pounced on the find and snatched up handfuls of bullion. But, instead of being doubloons or pieces of eight, the coins were ordinary half-crowns.

Professor Diggan Delve was joyfully counting out the hidden riches, muttering madly: "Eldorado! Eldorado!" when the sergeant suddenly declared: "This stuff ain't real!"

They gathered round him as he placed half-a-crown between his teeth and—bit it in half. Then, looking sternly from face to face, he said: "Boys, we've stumbled on a coiners' den!"

A long silence followed this dramatic announcement, broken only by the professor's crazy croonings.

Then the sergeant said grimly: "We must search the house for the gang! Follow me!"

He plunged off into the gloom, with all but Professor Diggan Delve close on his heels. Mounting a flight of rickety stairs, they found themselves confronted by a massive door, on which the sergeant rapped authoritatively.

"Who's there?" came gruffly from the other side.

"Open in the name of the law!"

There was no answer to this command, and the sergeant laid his hand on the knob. But the door was locked and bolted on the inside. "Here," he said, turning to Sunny, "this is a chance for your Robot!"

The boy touched Reuben, who was still armed with his pick. Striding forward, the colossus swung the weapon over his head and shattered the door at a blow. The policemen were about to rush in, but they recoiled before the sight of three desperate looking men crouching behind a machine-gun!

"One step and we'll blow daylight through you!" threatened the leader of the counterfeiter.

The dread command was obeyed by the human invaders of that secret den, but Reuben the Robot was deaf to such threats. Still swinging the pick-axe in his powerful hands, he clumped stolidly into the room.

There was a staccato rattle, and a stream of bullets whined through the air. They merely had the effect of increasing Reuben's pace, and the next moment he had launched himself among the dismayed counterfeiter, striking right and left with his pick. They scattered before the invulnerable attack, and were overpowered by the police just as Reuben, riddled through and through with bullets, collapsed in a heap.

THE counterfeiter spent a long vacation in Wortlebury Jail at his Majesty's expense. Professor Diggan Delve recovered his faculties in the local asylum, and was soon lecturing on history again—but rarely made any reference to the Spanish or any other Main. Sunny was handsomely rewarded for his share in rounding up the crooks, and spent the sum on rebuilding his shattered Robot.

Spent a merry, chortling Christmas with Washington Hayseed next week when he has a messy Xmas crook-hunting. Look for the title, "Santa Clues."

MECCANO

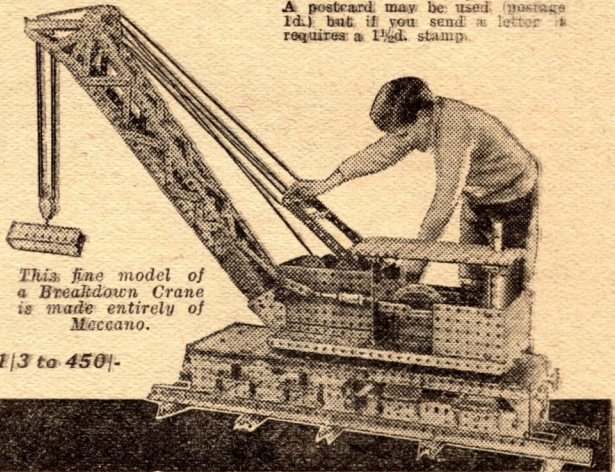
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ZARAZAN THE SINISTER—SKY HIGH

(Continued from page 21.)

Crash! As Zarazan fell his foot slipped, and the back of his head struck a rock with such force that he was stunned.

The result was something like a miracle.

For as Zarazan's senses left him, so every one of the niggers in the underground tunnel, were freed from their hypnotic trance.

"Look, Spud!" panted Phil feverishly. "Am I going mad, or what? The niggers are different. They're talking—they're staring at us intelligently."

It was true. With the spell broken, the negroes were taking an active interest in the plight of the two boys.

"Help!" shouted Spud hoarsely.

"Yes—come here, you men!" exclaimed Phil. "These threads—cut them! If you don't, every one of you will be blown to death!"

Somehow, Phil managed to make himself understood. For two of the negroes came forward with knives. The threads were cut, and the hideous danger was over.

Phil and Spud were released from the stakes, and in the intense excitement of the moment, nobody thought of removing the candle.

But when they were at the end of the tunnel, and entering the great cavern, Phil remembered.

"Wait a minute!" he said breathlessly. "That candle's still burning. I'll run back—"

He broke off, his heart in his mouth. Staring down the tunnel, he saw a stray negro lurching along. The man had evidently been with the great tunnelling machine, at the end of the excavations.

"Be careful!" shouted Phil, cupping his hands.

At that moment the unfortunate negro, knowing

nothing of the terrible danger, reached the fatal spot. He was an enormous man, and his shoulder just touched against the balanced plank. Phil shut his eyes as he saw the candle totter and then fall—

Boooooom-ooooom! There was a blinding flash, an ear-splitting explosion, and a blast of air came hurtling down the tunnel which sent Phil and Spud and all the niggers flat upon their faces, dazed and deafened. Fragments of rock fell in showers. Mercifully the full force of the explosion had been upwards, and although the tunnel was destroyed, the great cavern—which was a natural formation—remained intact.

Phil Tregennis and Spud Briggs and the negroes lived to see another day.

ZARAZAN was caught in his own trap. A terrible retribution overtook him.

For at the moment of the explosion he was escaping—and had, indeed, apparently made good his escape. For he was in a powerful motor-boat, streaking out across the sea.

Then came the explosion—far below, under the water. It was seen by many people on the cliff tops. A vast column of water arose, and on the brink of it hurtled the motor-boat, shattering to fragments, with Zarazan in the middle. And from the sea came a volcano-like burst of fire and smoke—an almost incredible sight.

For one second Zarazan was visible in that lurid glare, his arms outflung. Then he fell back amidst the wreckage, into the boiling smother of flame and smoke and water.

It's coming next week, chaps! Our Special Monster Christmas number of glamorous old-time yarns and bumper new Free Gifts.

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**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 and Gus Halway, 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.

After Vorgan had made many diabolical attempts on his life, Dotty decided that it was time he got hurt. He tracked Vorgan to a gambling den and there fought with him. All the time Dotty himself had been shadowed by Halway, who was biding his time in the shadows of the passage.

Suddenly the lights went out, a shot was fired, and it was later discovered that Vorgan was dead.

Dotty was instantly accused, but escaped the police and fled to the hills outside Melchester. Here he hid all day, but at night he ventured into Melchester for he thought he might get on to the track of the real culprit.

One of the gamblers had slipped out with Vorgan's money as soon as the trouble started. If Dotty could find this man . . .

He reached the Brake Street district again. He turned a corner and saw a man lounging on the railings. Instantly his whole being shouted “detective.”

At that moment the detective started forward—towards him.

A Game of Strategy.

THE encounter with the detective was the worst possible bit of luck for Dotty. To begin with, he had to find his quarry in two or three days. Not for long could he remain free in a closely policed country like England.

The detective's movement was not too quick. He did not wish to alarm his prospective quarry. Dotty stood still. The officer came up to him.

“You,” he said, “are Bideford, and you are wanted for the murder of Daniel Vorgan.”

Dotty nodded. “That be right,” he agreed. He looked vaguely foolish and helpless. “I be real glad you've found me. I'm tired of walking about.”

Then the officer did something Dotty did not anticipate, and he did it with the tremendous speed and skill of long practice. There was a click. Dotty found himself handcuffed.

This was a check on which he had not reckoned. The detective took his arm and urged him down the street.

Dotty looked round. Above the low and noisome houses, in the background, like a giant dominating the scene, was the half-erected mass of a new factory; and standing on a mighty trestle, towering high, was one of those gigantic cranes which are used in such building operations.

From the head of this crane a long steel hawser ran vaguely and obliquely downwards towards the mass of the factory, terminating Dotty could not see where. He suddenly realised, as he and his escort swung the corner, that they had to pass this factory. The officer would undoubtedly secure a taxicab on the first occasion he could, but in the Brake Street district taxicabs were practically unknown.

The officer talked as they went on their way. “Who's been hiding you up?” he asked.

“Nobody. I haven't been to Melchester all day. I've been up along on the hills.”

“Is that so? Well, step it out quick, my lad. The sooner you get to the station, the less attention you'll draw.”

The officer quickened his pace. His grip on Dotty's arm was purposeful and firm. Dotty strode alongside him, and they came to the shadow of the half-finished factory.

There Dotty acted like lightning. He twisted his arm free, and, at the same time, he gave the detective a heavy shoulder charge which sent him skittling away to the ground. On this Dotty rushed at the crane trellis.

The detective, floundering for a second, began to blow his whistle, and the shrill notes rang clearly throughout the district, to be followed instantly by the rush of running feet.

Dotty had counted on the man's whistle when he started to climb. Otherwise he would have run away. But he knew the whistle would bring people into the streets, and that his way would be blocked.

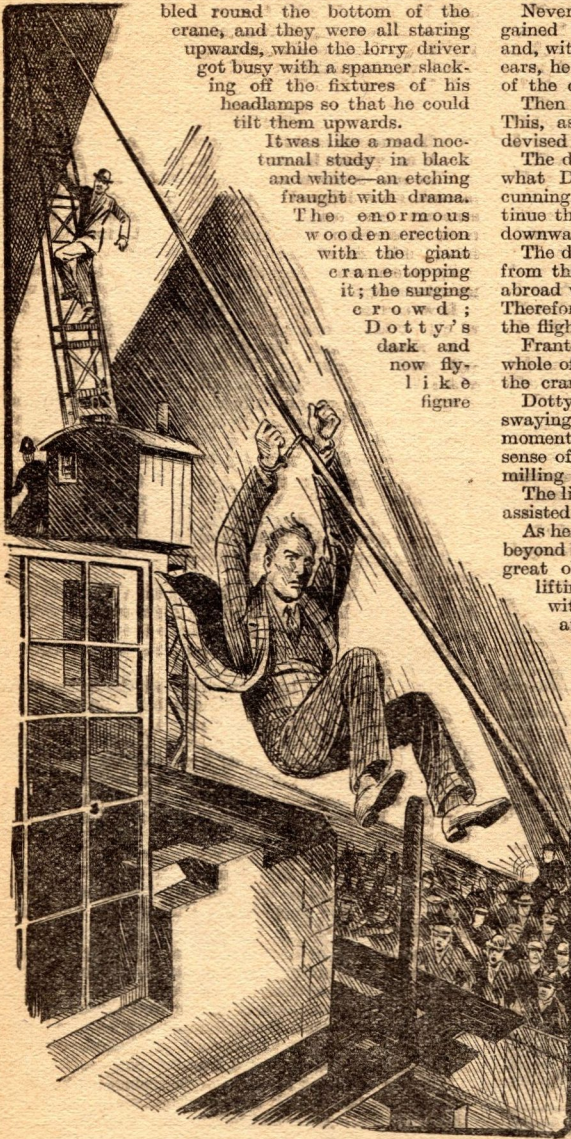
Climbing the trestle was extremely difficult with

his hands fastened together by the handcuffs; but he made amazingly swift progress. The detective, now on his feet, checked a passing lorry, and ordered its driver to try and swivel his headlamps upwards on to the crane. The detective himself, reinforced by two uniformed constables, started to climb after Dotty.

An enormous crowd had assembled round the bottom of the crane, and they were all staring upwards, while the lorry driver got busy with a spanner slackening off the fixtures of his headlamps so that he could tilt them upwards.

It was like a mad nocturnal study in black and white—an etching fraught with drama.

The enormous wooden erection with the giant crane topping it; the surging crowd; Dotty's dark and now flying figure



SWITCHBACKING TO SAFETY.—Dotty jumped off the crane-top and slid down the rope on the handcuffs, a hand on either side of the hawser.

scrambling upwards; and the police after him, farther down.

The lorry driver got his lamps off. A man in the

crowd took one lamp, the driver manipulated the other. The lamps swivelled upwards, one broad beam held the fugitive, the other was directed just above the policemen's heads to assist them in speed of climbing.

Dotty was panting hard, despite his training. The handicap of his handcuffed hands was terrific, and the strain on his arms was immense.

Nevertheless, he managed to hold the start he had gained before the detective could begin to climb, and, with the yells of the excited crowd ringing in his ears, he hauled himself face downwards over the lip of the crane platform.

Then he began to ascend the crane arm itself. This, as usual, was a trellised structure, carefully devised to take stress and strain.

The detective, still climbing, looked upwards, saw what Dotty was doing, and realised his instant cunning. He urged the two police officers to continue their upward journey while he began to climb downwards with reckless desperation.

The detective realised what Dotty had anticipated from the first. Everybody in the district who was abroad was congregated round the foot of the crane. Therefore, the streets beyond were quite clear for the flight of a fugitive.

Frantically, the detective strove to get down the whole of the trestle ere Dotty could reach the top of the crane-arm. He failed.

Dotty was now right on the end of the great arm, swaying high and perilously above everything, momentarily experiencing a strange and exalting sense of lordship as he gazed down on the tiny folk milling below him.

The light of the headlamp still held him, and really assisted him.

As he had expected, the long cable stretching away beyond the top of the unfinished factory wall in a great oblique line was merely a guy rope. The lifting cable of the crane hung straight down, with the enormous container swinging heavily at its end.

The guy rope was attached to the trellis by a gigantic hook, and Dotty, wrapping his legs round the steelwork, put both hands to the task of unhooking it.

He managed it, though, as the heavy cable swayed, he was nearly torn from his hold, and the crowd loosed a frightened and maddened yell.

But his legs held. He got the cable between his arms and hooked it into place once more.

Then, taking a deep breath, with the steel link of the handcuffs across the cable, a hand to either side of it, he stood up and leaped forward into space.

He got up a great speed from his jump, and, with the cable sizzling above him, with the steel of the handcuffs developing heat already, he shot downwards and across towards the factory wall.

Below, the crowd were simply frantic with excitement. They simply stood and watched and shouted.

Dotty saw the jagged top of the factory wall coming straight at him. He lifted his legs, doubling himself into a ball, and felt the unfinished brickwork whizz beneath him as he missed it by inches.

Then he was lunging downwards into utter gloom and the recesses of the vast, incompletable place.

Now he realised that he had to check himself, else he might be dashed to unconsciousness against some fixed object at the lower end of the guy rope.

He twisted a bit with his hands. The steel link bit hard at the cable. Literally the metal on metal screamed, and Dotty wondered how long the cable would be before it severed the link of the handcuffs.

His speed was slackening. The handcuffs, twisted across the cable, were offering severe resistance. The heat of the link, from the great and sustained friction, was communicating itself to the bracelets, and where Dotty's wrists actually touched the link in this twisting process, they were badly burnt.

Suddenly there was a snap. The overheated, overstrained link of the handcuffs had broken under the increased strain, and Dotty, with no hold whatsoever, dropped downwards into the lower darkness.

He tensed his legs, doubling his knees slightly, ready for the shock of falling. He landed on his toes, his strong legs taking the impact, and he pitched forward to his hands, staying there for a second, and then scrambling up—utterly unharmed.

By this time the street was alive with fresh movement. The excited crowd were breaking all ways.

Meanwhile, Dotty, smashing forward in the darkness, found the further wall of the factory, and climbed over it. He landed on the soft earth of a garden on the other side. Here was a great setback, for he would have to go through the house to get to the street.

Quickly Dotty reached the house—a large one, probably holding two or three families. He saw an open window, on the second floor, which he could reach from the roof of an outhouse.

In a matter of moments, he was on the outhouse roof and he scrambled through the window into the

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dark room, which he discovered was a bedroom, fortunately unoccupied.

And, as this juncture fate played one of her strange tricks. For the last two days misfortune had dogged Dotty's footsteps. Now he had the most wonderful piece of luck he could wish for.

Dotty groped his way to the door, whose outline was shown by a chink of light, and which Dotty thought would naturally lead on to a landing of the stairs.

He turned the handle and found himself in a room, and there, seated at a table was—the man who had stolen Vorgan's bank.

Not Guilty.

THE man was counting money. He had counted it ever since he stole it the previous night; for he hardly knew what to do with it. It was the money of a murdered man, and the police had pretty strongly intimated to him that he must not move from Melchester and that he might find himself involved in the matter of Vorgan's death.

He looked up with a start as Dotty entered, and, uttering a cry, he tried to gather the notes to himself.

Dotty himself somewhat taken aback, said: "All right. I've not come for Vorgan's money."

It was an effective opening. The man went rather pale, and stammered: "What d'you mean?" His voice held a shaky note of false defiance.

Dotty, the door closed behind him, stepped to the table and put his hands on it. The man, staring at them, cried out, for he saw the shattered bracelets of the handcuffs dropped across Dotty's hands.

"I've come," added Dotty, "to talk about Vorgan's murder. His money means nothing to me."

The thief, huddling low in his chair, staring at Dotty frightedly, suddenly launched himself forward in frantic desperation, coming across the table, hands clawing for Dotty's throat.

Dotty hit him without compunction clean in the face, a blow which landed with a high cracking sound and sent him back over his chair to the floor.

He sobbed. "I'll get you for this, or my name's not Sam Jenks. I'll . . ."

Dotty was after him, and he had the knife from the man's hand ere he could climb to his feet.

"You don't want to take on so, Mr. Jenks," he grinned. "This be a pretty knife I will say." He dropped it and trod on it, breaking the blade off short. "Now we'll talk." His voice altered.

"Jenks, they're after me, as you know, for the murder of Vorgan. Well—you're going to help me clear myself. If you don't help me, I'll hang; so I might as well hang for you as well. Do you understand?"

Jenks gasped: "You wouldn't do that, Bideford!"

Dotty contrived to look terribly ferocious. "You don't leave this room alive unless you help me. And that's a fact."

Of course, he had no more idea of killing the man than he had of going into the street and murdering the nearest policeman. But Jenks had lived for years in an atmosphere of horror and crime, and he believed every word Dotty had to say to him.

"What do you want to know?" he asked, sullenly. And Dotty asked him a number of questions.

Twenty minutes later, two policemen, who were engaged in the search for the fugitive, encountered their quarry. He was walking through the streets holding Sam Jenks by the arm. He went straight up to them and spoke quietly.

"I'm Bideford. I want to surrender myself to you. And I want this man brought to the police station. He has a statement to make."

The end of the Vorgan murder business was as sensational as its beginning. Dotty was duly brought

before the magistrates, and the police put forward evidence on his behalf.

A man named Samuel Jenks, who had been in the gaming room on the night Vorgan met his death, had voluntarily made a statement to the police—as follows.

He said that, in alarm, he slipped out of the gaming room before Vorgan was shot, his idea being to dissociate himself from any trouble which might be brewing. In the dark passageway outside the room he had passed two men. It was at this moment that the lights went out—but not quite in time to prevent his seeing one of the two men lift an automatic pistol and fire it into the room.



THE WORM TURNS.—Jenks leaped snarling at Dotty, his hands clutching for his throat. Dotty braced himself for the assault and drew back his fist.

Only one shot—on the evidence of everybody in the room—had been fired. Therefore, the shot loosed by the mysterious stranger in the passageway must have been the fatal one. Sam Jenks said he would not be able to identify the shooter.

Needless to say, Dotty left the court without a stain on his character, and was duly received by the members of the Rovers' team with much jubilation. He himself was jubilant, but, the following day, his joy was somewhat tempered by a discovery made by a farm labourer on his way to work.

He found the body of Sam Jenks lying in a ditch, riddled by machine-gun bullets.

Jenks may, or may not, have been able to identify the killer of Vorgan; but Halway took no chances.

Wannaker's Revenge.

IT was now within a few days of Christmas, and the Rovers were facing a heavy holiday programme. Christmas Day fell on Thursday. They had, therefore, a match on the day itself, one on the Friday—Boxing Day—and the ordinary Saturday fixture; three games in succession, which would tax their resources to the utmost.

During the interval up to Christmas Dotty made a discovery which perturbed him. While he had been in flight from the police his lodging had been burgled. The burglary had been carried out with cunning and skill, and the marauder had left behind him no indication of his entry—save one. The smooth guinea piece with the code directions engraved on its

surfaces, was missing, from the picture frame, where Dotty had hidden it.

Dotty, however, had made various handwritten copies of the directions to assist him in solving the code, and two of these copies were still in his possession.

The position, therefore, was that Dotty had directions where to find the hoard, and so did Halway. For that it was Halway who had had the guinea-piece stolen, Dotty did not doubt.

Dotty sensed that the end of the great and dangerous game was in sight. Vorgan was dead, but in Vorgan's place was a man far more formidable than he. Beside Halway, Vorgan was a child in villainy.

Dotty waited, with considerable tension—for he respected Halway's ability—for an attack. He guessed that Halway having wiped Vorgan out, would now wish to finish the job.

Christmas Eve came. The Rovers were, the next day, playing one of their most important matches of the year—at home. Their opponents were Southern Wednesday, at the moment racing with the Arsenal for top place in the league, and leading the famous Highbury Team by a decimal point in the goal averages column. Arsenal were at home to Aston Villa, third on the table, on the same day, and the game at Gillespie Road would be one of the matches of the day.

But, win or lose, the Arsenal's fortunes would turn on the Rovers' performance at Melchester. Further, the Rovers were fourth to the Villa, also by goal average, and a win for them over the Wednesday would push them—should Arsenal also win—into second place, with Arsenal on top and due to play the Rovers on the Saturday. The Saturday matches, provided that the Boxing-Day matches ran level, would then show which team rested on top of the table . . . Rovers or Arsenal.

Snow had threatened for days, and the Rovers' authorities, leaving nothing to chance, had had loads and loads of straw brought in and laid across the playing pitch.

On the morning of Christmas Eve it started to snow. Fortunately, it left off in mid-afternoon, and, with a chill wind holding and preventing any possibility of a thaw, everything promised a good old-fashioned Christmas.

And at this time Wannaker came to Dotty. It was probably Dotty's fault. He had a great love for tobogganing, and, with Harry Jackson, he had constructed a sledge, which they took to the hills where crowds of other folk were already enjoying themselves.

Harry had a bit of a spill and decided to go home before he got hurt—because he dared not risk injury before the three big games. Dotty stayed on, though it was now dusk.

He was at the top of a hill called Danny. Danny was a particularly dangerous fellow when snow covered him, for his sides were precipitous and, at his foot ran a deep, and—in the times of heavy snow and rain—turbulent, swift stream, rock-dotted. It was part of the fun to run down Danny, face-downwards on your sledge, and steer a wide sweeping path away parallel with the stream as you approached it—digging at the snow with your toes. Only the most daring and skilful did this, for if you didn't steer away from the stream you crashed into its rushing current and against its jagged rocks.

Wannaker, it will be recalled, was Vorgan's chief lieutenant. The death of Vorgan had thrown him out of a job. Dotty was stooping over the toboggan when a figure loomed out of the gathering darkness round Danny's head and said: "Put 'em up, Bideford—and quick!"

Dotty lifted his hands. Wannaker had a gun down at his side, and he looked desperate.

He went on talking: "You've busted our game, with your interference; and I'm going to bust you."

"'Twas Halway killed Vorgan," said Dotty. Wannaker looked him over. "That's a lie, Bideford."

"It be true," said Dotty quietly. "Why should I lie to you about it, anyhow?"

Wannaker considered this. He spoke again, almost

as though to himself. "I don't care. If I get you Halway'll let up on me. If I go to him and tell him I outed you, maybe he'll let me in with him."

Dotty glanced sideways. Some distance away, just visible in the gathering gloom, was a party of young fellows. They were building a big snowman right on the summit of Danny.

"If you shoot me," said Dotty, "those men will come after you. They're sure to hear the shot."

"I know," said Wannaker grimly. "But I will shoot, if you don't obey me; and I'll take my chance what happens. I'm going to give you a fifty-fifty chance, Bideford. Fond of tobogganing, aren't you?"

Dotty said nothing.

Wannaker spoke through compressed lips. "Lie down on that sledge . . . face downwards. If you don't, I swear I'll kill you and risk what comes to me."

Wannaker's desperation was patent, and Dotty laid down on the sledge. Wannaker was very swift and unexpected. Ere Dotty could move, he had a cord whipped round his ankles, lashing them securely to the rear member of the sledge frame, on a running noose which, tightened, was fastened into place by a swiftly tied knot.

"Now hold each side member with your hands," hissed Wannaker. "And remember there's a bullet in the back of your head if you don't."

Dotty obeyed, and his hands were tied into place. Wannaker hissed: "A good slide—a long slide . . . to death, Bideford. So long!"

He gave the toboggan a push. It suddenly sliced away down the hard, glass-polished slope, careering like mad, swaying slightly, with no control, heading like a loosed arrow for the roaring torrent.

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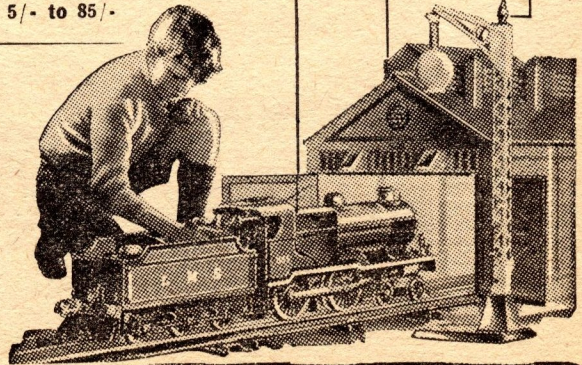
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ferthermore, that P. Titmuss of the Sekond, who akkompnies me into the outer world, shall likewise be reppreeved!

(sined) H. MUGGERIDGE.

Mr. Cattermole blinked speechless at this remarkable epistle. He was brought to his senses by the arrival of Buttons, the school page.

"Farmer Starling to see you, sir!" he announced, and the big, stalwart form of the local farmer pushed his way forward.

"Good morning, sir!" said the bluff old farmer respectfully. "I have coom to report the loss of a hoss—my old Dobbin—from a field during the night, and some 'arness. Taken, they be, by a lad named Muggeridge from—"

"That boy Muggeridge has run away from school," hissed Mr. Cattermole. "I will have a search made at once. Your property shall be returned, and Muggeridge shall suffer deeply for his reckless behaviour!"

Johnny Gee & Co. chortled, as the old farmer went away, scratching his head in perplexity. Titmuss' absence was soon discovered and things looked black for Harold if he should be found.

Remington & Co. of the Sixth set out instantly for Farmer Starling's land to search for the two runaways. Johnny Gee & Co. and a whole crowd of juniors followed, eager to see what transpired.

It was an easy matter to find the hoofprints of old Dobbin, which led out of the field, and along the Merivale Lane, passing the outskirts of the village and on to the Heath.

Remington & Co. were groping through some bushes, which bore distinct signs of having been broken down by the passage of old Dobbin. On the other side, the ground was boggy, and all at once there was a concerted yell from the three prefects, as the rushy ground on which they were treading suddenly gave way beneath them, and they plunged into a thick, deep, slimy morass below.

"Yah! Wh-what the dickens—Ooooooogh!"

"Oh, my ziddy aunt!" ejaculated Johnny Gee.

"Muggeridge—the artful bounder—laid this trap for his merry pursuers! And—and these poor duffers have fallen for it!"

Gurgling gasps and wild moans came from the three luckless prefects, wallowing around in the thick, clinging mud.

"My hat!" Johnny Gee exclaimed, looking at his watch. "Time's getting on, and we shall have to run to get back for morning lessons. Cheerio. Remington! Hope you get on all right!"

The heroes of the Remove scampered off, and the lesson bell was ringing just as they arrived at St. Giddy's.

On the Highway.

"YAW-AW-AW! Gerraway!" Tain't rising bell yet!" Harold Muggeridge stirred sleepily, and mumbled these words as he felt something pushing at his face. That "something" continued to push, however, until Harold awoke.

He almost jumped out of his skin in fright when he saw a large mouth near him, and a pair of big round eyes staring down at him.

"Why, wh-wh-what the thump— Oh, crumbs!"

The mouth and eyes belonged to old Dobbin, the venerable horse that he had "borrowed" from Farmer Starling after his midnight breakaway from St. Giddy's.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harold. "That blessed horse gave me a fright! Groooogh! It's jolly cold! Where's Titmuss? Hi! Titmuss!"

The schoolboy runaway jumped out of the straw and glared around. At that moment the door of the barn came open, and little Titmuss of the Second appeared, carrying a bucket.

"You're awake, then, Muggeridge!" he said. "I've been out, getting some breakfast, and this bucket of water for you to wash in."

Titmuss grinned, and went on with the cooking, whilst Harold devoted himself to the cold-water bucket. The "suice" did him good, and he felt particularly fresh and vigorous after it. By that time the tea was made, and the eggs and bacon were ready, and the two exiles sat round the fire enjoying an appetising meal.

"Well, we'd better be on the move as soon as possible," said Harold. "The morning is getting on, and I expect Cattermole's already raised a blessed hue and cry after us. Douse the fire, Titmuss, and pack everything, and we'll make tracks."

Titmuss dutifully did as he was bid. He had unbounded faith in the big, heavy-handed Harold, who was already a hero in his eyes. Half-an-hour later they were once more under way on old Dobbin.

The morning passed, but thrilling adventures seemed rather a discount. All of a sudden, however, Harold gave a jump in the saddle, as a shot rang out in the distance. It came from within the wooded grounds of a large estate which they were passing. The shot was followed by another, and men's voices were heard, shouting excitedly.

Then a gate lower down the road was opened, and a young man, dishevelled and scared, came dashing into the lane. He carried a leather bag, which he hugged tightly to him as he ran.

Harold reined in his mount, and stared at the young man as he ran up. Here was adventure at last!

"Hi!" he shouted peremptorily. "Where are you going—and what's the game?"

The young man drew to a halt beside Harold, and stared wildly behind him.

"Help!" he cried. "I am being chased by men who are employed by my wicked uncle, Sir Josiah Kempton. I have just managed to escape with these

papers, which prove my claim to the estate. My wicked uncle is trying to seize these papers, and to keep me a prisoner, so that I shall not enforce my claim.”

“Mum-my hat!” gasped Harold. “The awful rotters! Here, gimme that bag! I’ll look after it for you! Stick it in the knapsack with our things, Titmuss—that’s right!”

They had just hidden the bag when a number of burly, determined-looking men came leaping over the wall, and others came out of the gate lower down the road. The young man’s retreat was cut off from both directions!

“There’s young Jefferson!” shouted one of the men. “‘Old ’im!”

They closed in on Jefferson, and he backed towards the side of the road, fighting fiercely.

That was enough for Harold! Down he came off Dobbin’s back and, with fists going like flails, he pitched into the young man’s aggressors.

Biff! Bang! Wallop! For a moment, it seemed

Muggeridge understood at once. They had got the unhappy Jefferson tied up, a prisoner in that room!

With scarcely a moment’s hesitation, Harold started to climb up the stack-pipe, and in no time reached the window. Breathlessly, he raised the sash and clambered within.

Jefferson was bound securely hand and foot, and his eyes gleamed when he saw his intrepid rescuer. Harold whipped out his pocket-knife and quickly cut the ropes.

“Where is my bag, containing all those valuable papers—is that safe?” asked Jefferson breathlessly.

“I’m looking after that all right,” said Harold. “Now, o’mom, before the alarm is raised!”

They scrambled out of the window and hurried off, but as they were making their way through the shrubbery, a warning whistle from Titmuss rang out. At the same time, men’s angry shouts were heard.



THE BULLIES (AD)MIRER.— Remington and Co. pushed their way through the bushes; next moment they were floundering in the thick, slimy mud of a bog.

that Harold would clear the way for the young man’s escape. But two of the men, shouting angrily, grabbed him and hurled him bodily into the midst of the bramble-bushes, while the others seized upon Jefferson and dragged him away.

Titmuss, looking scared, jumped down from Dobbin’s back, and helped Muggeridge out of the bramble-bush. Harold’s clothes were badly rent, and he had suffered many nasty scratches. But there was a hard squareness about his rugged jaw that betokened great fixity of purpose.

“I’m going to rescue young Jefferson, bowl out that wicked uncle of his, and have everything put right!” he announced grimly. “You can follow at a distance, Titmuss, and keep eave for me.”

Harold entered the grounds of the estate through a gate, and crept with great stealth through the trees towards the big mansion behind the shrubbery.

Harold reconnoitred carefully round the house, and all at once he gave a start. Someone was staring down at him from an upper window and, having caught his attention, beckoned to him with his head.

“Oh, crumbs!” gasped Muggeridge. “They’re after us! Let’s dodge behind these sheds, and—why, what the dickens—*yaroooooogh!*”

Jefferson at that moment turned on Harold, a menacing light flashing in his eyes and, with a deft movement, tripped him up. Jefferson wrenched open the door of a shed and, whilst Harold was still staggering, shoved him headlong through the opening.

Slam! The door shut tight, the bolt was shot, and Harold was alone in the darkness. A sound of movement, and of a strange snort, caused him to start. Then a big, grisly form loomed up before him, and a pair of red, glaring eyes stared at him. It was a big, angry-looking billy-goat!

Snort! The goat charged violently. Harold dodged aside, just in time, and had to grab the animal to save himself.

“*Yarooooogh!*” wailed Harold, as he was dragged off his feet and sprawled across the goat’s back.

Heavy footsteps sounded outside, and the shed door was opened suddenly. With one mighty, sweeping charge the billy-goat shot out of the shed,

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with Harold Mugeridge hanging on its back like grim death!

The Billy-goat raced through the gates and o'er the leas, Harold howling dismally all the time. Then he saw Titmuss' small form running across the fields, towards the road.

The little fag, enacting the part of a toreador, waved a jacket in front of the oncoming goat, who butted at it, horns well down. Titmuss dodged aside, and Harold came rolling off the goat's back, to measure his length in the muddy road. The goat went onward, and disappeared from view.

Harold was assisted to his feet by the faithful Titmuss. Groaning in an anguished manner, he mounted old Dobbin's back, Titmuss scrambled up behind him, and they continued on their journey.

He had not gone far, however, before a menacing figure leaped out into the middle of the road ahead, and Harold found himself gazing down the gleaming muzzle of a revolver.

"Stop!" rapped the gunman sharply—it was Jefferson. "Now, my young buck, I'll bother you for that bag!"

Gasp! Harold took the leather bag from their bundle of belongings, and Jefferson snatched it, with a sneering laugh.

"Thanks for all you have done for me, Don Quixote junior!" he said mockingly. Then he ordered Titmuss to tie Harold to the horse. The fag tremblingly took the rope and fastened Mugeridge's hands to the saddle.

Jefferson then made Titmuss dismount, and rope Harold's feet together underneath the horse. The rascal ordered Titmuss up behind again, and secured his hands so that he could not release Harold.

"Now I'm going to turn you adrift, to prevent your sending pursuers after me!" sneered Jefferson. "I hope you have better luck next time you play the brave hero!"

Saying which, he led old Dobbin across the fields, and there left him to roam. The horse ambled about the countryside, until he came to a pond, when he bethought himself to have a drink and a dip.

FOR CIGARETTE CARD COLLECTORS.

CIGARETTE-CARDS were first introduced into this country as stiffeners for the paper packets used nearly forty years ago. In America, however, cards with stamps attached were issued as early as 1885.

The lack of any organised research into the history of these old sets has been a serious drawback to collectors, handicapping them for want of authoritative catalogues. Now, as a result of the pioneer work of a firm of cigarette-card dealers, detailed and authentic lists are available to collectors all over the world.

A point that makes for the popularity of cigarette-card collecting is the fact that a really comprehensive and large collection can be built up at a very low cost; on the other hand, rare sets have changed hands at as much as £25.

In spite of Harold's shouts the horse stood in the pond, its legs almost submerged in the water, and gave no indication of ever wanting to budge.

Soon, however, a number of angry men arrived. They were Harold's pursuers. Sticks and stones were brought into commission and, after a great deal of "shooing," Dobbin consented to wade out of the water.

"You little rascal!" roared one of the men. "We're going to and you over to the police, for helping that dangerous crook to escape—"

"Ow! I d-d-didn't know he was a crook!" gurgled Mugeridge.

"Why, the man is one of the slickest tricksters in the country! Do you know, my lad, that he had several thousand pounds' worth of stolen valuables in that bag—and you've helped him get away with his loot?"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Harold Mugeridge.

He was floored!

The runaways were released and mounted on Dobbin's back, Harold Mugeridge and Titmuss pursued their weary way onward, still on the lookout for glorious adventure!

Harold, The Hero.

SOME time later they were seated round a fire, enjoying their mid-day meal, even though it was being taken under the most primitive conditions, and decided to rest for a while after it.

Suddenly, Harold Mugeridge gave a start.

"Hark! What's that?" he exclaimed.

Sounds of turmoil and strife came to their ears, from beyond the trees. Mugeridge jumped to his feet, a grim look on his face.

"I'm going to look into this!" he said, determinedly.

He and Titmuss mounted on Dobbin's back, and Harold drove onward towards the sound of the commotion. At length, they emerged into a clearing on the edge of the common, and there an amazing scene met their gaze.

Three pantechnicons were drawn up on the grass, in a sort of camp.

Around the first of the caravans, a wild and whirling fracas was being waged by about thirty schoolboys. This vehicle was somewhat different from the rest, and had more the appearance of an ordinary caravan, with a glass-panelled front door, complete with brass knocker and letter-box. Across the side, in large letters, were painted these words:

DR. DITCHLING'S TRAVELLING
COLLEGE FOR BOYS.

Sound Education Combined with the Advantages of Healthy Travel. New Pupils may be Enrolled en route. Moderate Terms.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Mugeridge.

Led by a somewhat skinny youth, with wild eyes, the pupils of Dr. Ditchling's Travelling College were besieging the pantechnicon where, two gentlemen in cap and gown were visible behind the door, the top panels of which were open. One was a short, wizened old man with a long nose, a beard and sharp, gleaming eyes. This, obviously, was Dr. Thomas Ditchling, the Headmaster of the Pantechnicon School.

"Boys!" cried Dr. Ditchling from the door of his pantechnicon, "Spittle, how dare you behave in this manner. Go back to your desks at once!"

"Rats!" shouted the skinny youth, apparently named Spittle. "No more lessons for us, until we have our rights! Out with all the stuff!"

A number of boys made a rush towards the rear

van. The door was flung open and Mugeridge, gazing through from his vantage point on Dobbin's back, saw that the interior of the pantechnicion was fitted up as a class-room, complete with desks, forms, blackboard and easel, master's table, cupboards for school books, and other scholastic equipment.

Spittle & Co. dashed into their travelling class-room, and commenced to hurl out all their desks and books in a heap, in the open.

Having piled up their "school" on the grass, the scholars once again surged round the masters' van. Things began to look very dangerous for Dr. Ditchling and his assistant, Mr. Mott.

At this point Harold decided to take a hand, and he set old Dobbin off at his fastest run. Spittle & Co. fell back with shouts of astonishment, when they saw that "fiery charger," with Harold and Titmuss on his back, come storming into their midst.

"Out of the way, there, you rotters!" shouted Harold, seizing a long ruler from one youth and jabbing away with it as though it were a trusty sword! "All serene, sir! I'm coming!"

Harold drove Dobbin up to the steps of the van and leapt down. Handing the ruler to Titmuss, he waded into Spittle & Co., hitting out straight from the shoulder.

Biff! Bang! Wallop! "You-wow! Oh, crumbs! *Oooooop!*" howled Spittle, as Harold sent him sprawling down the steps. Dr. Ditchling watched the valiant Harold in wondering admiration.

"Bless my soul!" he cried. "Mott, just look at that lad—he has taken complete control of the situation! Ah! Bravo!"

Harold's eyes gleamed with the light of triumph. Here was glory at last! Spittle and Co. were simply overwhelmed by the force of Harold's hurricane attack, and all the belligerency was knocked out of them!

"Well, you rotters?" cried Mugeridge. "Do you want any more? I'm ready to tackle the lot of you! Come on!"

Spittle & Co. did not accept that kind invitation. Dr. Ditchling came scuttling through the door, and he fairly wrung Harold's big, brawny hand.

"My boy, allow me to thank you for your bravery!" he cried. "These pupils of mine are most unruly. Boys," he went on, "replace those things in the school van, at once!"

Spittle & Co. hesitated, and started to murmur, but again Harold Mugeridge took up the situation.

"Go on—do as you're told!" he said threateningly. "I'll whop the first chap who disobeys!"

The boys of the pantechnicion school meekly took back the furniture.

"Come into my study!" said Dr. Ditchling, when order had been restored and Mr. Mott had rather gingerly gone into the rear pantechnicion, to take his classes for afternoon lessons.

Mugeridge and Titmuss followed the rather eccentric old Head into his sanctum. Dr. Ditchling beamed on them.

"What are your names, and where have you come from?" he inquired.

Harold told him, and then proceeded to recount how badly treated he had been at St. Giddy's, and how he had "retired" from the school with Titmuss, to seek glory farther afield.

"Very sad—very sad!" said Dr. Ditchling. "But really, you know, you cannot exist long under the—er—conditions you have adopted. You two lads must join my school. Perhaps, if I accepted you

as a pupil and made you captain, you could keep the unruly elements among my pupils in order!"

"Made me captain!" gasped Harold. "Why, that's just what I'm cut out for, to be captain of a school! I'll accept, sir! That goes for you, too, Titmuss, of course!"

"Very well, then!" said the eccentric Dr.



THE FIGHTING REMOVITE.—Without hesitation, Harold waded into the creak, who had Dr. Ditchling's cash-box, and was menacing him with a revolver.

Ditchling, beaming. "I will enrol you at once as new pupils—the question of fees can be settled with your parents, later. Come, and I will show you to your quarters!"

The middle pantechnicion was fitted up as a combined dormitory and common-room for the travelling pupils. It was quite snug, really, if somewhat cramped. Bunks were assigned to the two new pupils, and Dr. Ditchling then took them into the class-room, where Mr. Mott was struggling with a geography lesson.

Harold Mugeridge took his seat with the senior boys, and looked round loftily. At last, he seemed to have found his station, and was cock of the walk at school!

The Footer Fiasco.

"CHEER up, Tommy!" Johnny Gee spoke breezily to Tommy Mugeridge as he and the other merry members of the Co. came out into the quadrangle at St. Giddy's. "Come and have a mooch round the village."

Tommy Mugeridge accepted the invitation and together they strolled down the Merivale Lane.

All at once Lord Reggie Pelham Smith gave a startled exclamation.

"Begad!" he exclaimed. "I say, old chappies: do my jolly old ears deceive me, or is that Mugeridge's merry tootle!"

The Removites drew to a halt and listened tensely. From behind the trees came a loud, magisterial voice—unmistakably the tones of the missing Harold.

"Now, you lazy slackers! Quick march! Step it out there, Spittle!"

Greatly wondering, Johnny Gee & Co. approached the spot, and peered through the trees. In a wide clearing, Dr. Ditchling's Travelling School was drawn up. There was a big field at the side of the clearing, and goal posts had been rigged up, evidently in readiness for a game. The boys of the Pantechnicol College were being marched round the clearing, in front of their "caravans," and Harold Mugeridge, looking very big and brawny, was in command!

"Left—right—faster now!" bawled Harold. "You're lucky to have a captain like me to lick you into shape for footer!"

Harold gave quite a jump, when he suddenly caught sight of the St. Giddy's school caps amongst the trees, and saw Johnny Gee & Co. standing there.

"Halt!" he rapped out, to his new schoolfellows. "Stand at ease—and be prepared for trouble!"

Spittle & Co. halted. The chums of Study No. 4 and Tommy Mugeridge advanced into the clearing. The boys of Pantechnicol College blinked wonderingly at Tommy who, of course, was the living counterpart of his twin brother. Tommy stepped towards his brother.

"Harold, you—you burbler!" exclaimed Tommy, in concentrated tones. "What idiotic game have you got up to now—hey?"

"No idiotic game at all, Tommy, and if I have any of your cheek, I'll whop you!" snapped Harold.

The Troublesome Twins exchanged a mutual glare, and a moment later were "at" one another, tooth and nail! Spittle & Co., naturally pugnacious, did not need any encouragement, but promptly surged forward, and hurled themselves at Johnny Gee & Co.

The Joyous Juniors put up a gallant fight, but were soon overwhelmed by superior numbers, and were tied to trees.

"Now," said Harold. "We'll show these duffers how we shape at football. Hurry up and get into your togs."

Spittle & Co. crowded into the middle caravan and changed into footer togs. In a short time they emerged, and Harold who, had changed, too, sorted out his new schoolmates to make up two sides. Harold captained one eleven and Spittle was skipper of the other.

They tossed a coin, ends were chosen, the teams lined up, and the match commenced on Titmuss, who was referee, blowing a fortissimo tootle on the whistle.

That whistle was the signal for a terrific rush on the part of both lines of forwards.

Harold was in the thick of it from the first. Being much bigger and hotter than any of the other players, he quickly managed to send flying all who ventured in his way, and thus cleared a path for himself clean down the field until he came to the goal.

Biff! Harold took a terrific kick, that almost ripped a hole in the net when the ball landed within it.

"Goal!" he cried rather breathlessly. "There you are, my lads, that shows you how goals should be scored!"

"You idiot!" howled the goalie. "This is your own goal!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harold. "I—I clean forgot!"

The game was started again. Each player took his cue from Harold, and went "all out" to capture the ball and kick it into the goal. The result was one long, tumultuous scuffle for the ball.

It was not long before Spittle & Co. became thoroughly fed up with being charged about the field and treated to such "rough stuff" as Harold meted out to them. Upon a general call from Spittle, they all massed forces and bore down upon Harold, who had barged through to the goal. Next moment he was fighting furiously.

By that time Johnny Gee had managed to wriggle free of his hands, and had released his chums.

"Let the rotter get on with it as best he can," said Johnny Gee. "Kimmon! We'll bring a few of the others along, and mop up the field with these walters!"

The Removites hurried off.

Meanwhile, Harold stood in goal, with shoulders squared, hitting out gamely at his aggressors. A few of Spittle's satellites yanked on the goal-posts and pulled them out of the ground. The net fell with a rush on top of Harold, and he went down.

"Good! We've got him now!" cried Spittle. "Let's drag him through the village, and dump him back at St. Giddy's, where he belongs."

Spittle & Co. grabbed the net and dragged Harold off the field. Along the towing path they went into the village streets, and great was the sensation in Merivale.

Four personages, who happened to be coming along the High Street, halted suddenly. The four were Mr. Ernest James Cattermole, M.A., the cross-grained Housemaster of St. Giddy's, and the prefects—Remington, Slade, and Bond.

"Bless my soul!" cried Mr. Cattermole. "It is Mugeridge—he has been captured at last, then!"

The prefects followed Mr. Cattermole as he made a dive towards the net. Spittle & Co. grinned.

"Does this idiot belong to you, sir?" asked Spittle. "We were bringing him along to St. Giddy's, but if you like to take him now, it will save us the trouble."

Mr. Cattermole and the prefects eagerly seized the net, and Spittle & Co. went off, jeering.

Standing in a doorway nearby, and well out of sight, was Titmuss, his face was white and scared. He had some of Dr. Ditchling's boys with him, and knew that he could rely on their help . . .

An idea had entered Titmuss' head. Standing near the kerb, was the local garage breakdown van, and lying in the van was a tow-rope, complete with hook. Titmuss hastily whispered to his companions.

A moment later, the tow-rope had been "lifted" from the breakdown van, and a stealthy figure crept up behind the net, inserting the hook in its meshes. The other end of the rope was swiftly run along to the back of a cart and fastened there, whilst Titmuss and three others jumped on the cart and whipped up the horse!

The rope drew taut, and then the net was suddenly jerked out of the hands of Remington & Co., to go whirling away over the cobblestones.

"Why, what the dickens—" ejaculated Remington.

Harold yelled, too, as he found himself being towed over the cobblestones behind the cart. But the net, though a strong one, was not proof against such treatment, and soon there was a rending noise, and Harold slid to a standstill.

Mugeridge, however, did not lie there long. He saw Mr. Cattermole and Remington & Co. dashing towards him, and he came up in a trice, flung the torn net from him and took to his heels!

He had not much of a start, but he made the most

of it! He dodged down a side street, and vanished into a maze of narrow turnings by the riverside quarter, so that his pursuers had to give up the chase at last, and return to St. Giddy's.

Haley House.

"TUMBLE up, chaps! It's half-past six!" Thus Johnny Gee awoke his fellows next morning. Nearly twenty of the Remove heroes left St. Giddy's a short time later, to enact the deep-laid plot against Dr. Ditchling's Travelling School!

They crept stealthily through the trees, upon the site where the Pantechnicon School lay "on location."

Johnny Gee & Co. cautiously opened the door and peeped inside. They grinned, as they saw the boys of Dr. Ditchling's College asleep in their various bunks.

"Bless their little hearts!" chuckled the Remove leader. "Now, to fasten this giddy door, and get on with the moving job!"

The door was duly fastened from the outside.

dragged open, and Spittle & Co. came tumbling forth.

"You rotters!" howled Harold Mugeridge. "This damage will have to be paid for, and—Oh, crumbs! Here comes Dr. Ditchling!"

The little wizened form of the eccentric schoolmaster appeared round the bend. Just as Dr. Ditchling arrived, the crowd parted, to make way for Dr. Holroyd.

"Sir!" Dr. Ditchling yelled, glaring at Dr. Holroyd. "Your pupils are responsible for this! I will sue for damages! A valuable and indispensable part of my school has been ruined—"

"And not before it was necessary, sir!" retorted Dr. Holroyd with asperity.

"I shall consider it my

duty to report the matter to the educational authorities."

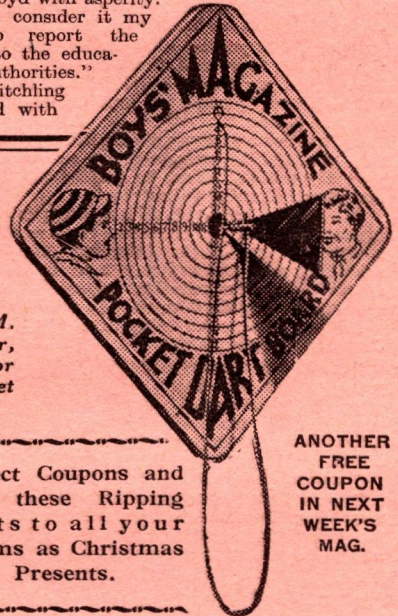
Dr. Ditchling went red with

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Then, marshalled by Johnny Gee, the Removites gathered fore and aft and heaved and pushed with all their might. The big, heavy pantechnicon moved slowly across the grass to the road.

Startled yells and howls of amazement came from within, and soon wild faces appeared at the windows.

Loud hammerings sounded at the door and Harold Mugeridge's voice bawled forth.

"Ooo! You—you rotters! Stop it! Oooogh!"

The Removites, however, dragged the pantechnicon along the Merivale Lane, past the cross-roads, and right on towards St. Giddy's.

There was a steep hill leading down to the school, with a bend at the bottom. The pantechnicon started to gather speed, and Johnny Gee shouted out a warning.

"Look out! Put the brake on there, Snowball!"

"Golly, golly, boys! De ole brake won't work!"

The heavy vehicle simply ran out of the Removites' hands, down the hill, gaining speed at every yard! At the bend the pantechnicon struck a rut, and plunged wildly into the hedge, opposite the gates of St. Giddy's!

Crash! Over went the pantechnicon, and howls of terror came from the boys inside.

As Johnny Gee & Co. reached the scene of the disaster, the rear door of the pantechnicon was

anger, though a nervous light gleamed in his eyes.

"I'm going, sir!" called out Harold, as he saw Mr. Cattermole crossing the quad, and he ran off, with Titmouse following faithfully at his heels.

Dr. Ditchling lined up his badly shaken pupils, and marched them off in the direction taken by the two runaways.

When lessons were over, large numbers of St. Giddy's boys strolled over to pay Harold Mugeridge and Spittle & Co. a visit. To their surprise, the "menagerie" was nowhere to be seen!

P.C. Dooley happened to come along, and Johnny Gee & Co. made inquiries of him.

"Doctor Ditchling 'as taken 'Aleyon 'Ouse, along the Merivale Lane," he said. "They're all in now."

The chums of the Remove returned to St. Giddy's highly tickled by Dr. Ditchling's "rival" establishment.

Mugeridge Makes Good.

HAROLD MUGGERIDGE quickly set about "making things hum." It was his lofty ambition to become cock of the walk in the neighbourhood and to squash St. Giddy's utterly. But he got rather the worse of the encounters with Johnny Gee & Co.

A crisis developed when, one Wednesday afternoon, he and his companions had suffered rather badly at the hands of Johnny Gee & Co. They returned to Halcyon House, and Spittle & Co. turned on their captain.

"Yah! We've had enough of you, Muggeridge, and your mad ideas!" howled Spittle. "Go for him! Down with the idiot!"

Harold went down before the onrush. He was seized upon by many hands and whirled indoors fighting wildly.

"Gag him!" said Spittle. "We don't want to bring Ditchling or Mott after us. We'll keep this big duffer under lock and key for an hour or so, and then dump him back on St. Giddy's."

Harold was yanked along to an empty room on the ground floor, and there he was incarcerated, bound, and gagged—a helpless prisoner. Chortling with triumph, Spittle & Co. departed, and Muggeridge was left alone!

He writhed and struggled frantically in his bonds, and managed to wriggle along the wall, into an upright position. Thus, he shuffled to the window, and glared forth into the open.

All at once, he gave a violent start, as two figures appeared on the garden path. One was the small, shrivelled form of Dr. Ditchling. There was no mistaking the other young man in horn-rimmed spectacles, although he had apparently made some attempt to disguise himself. It was Jefferson.

As they came close to the window, Harold heard Jefferson's words plainly.

"And I can assure you, Doctor Ditchling, that if you appoint me Secretary and Housemaster of your new Academy, I will use all my powers and experience to make it a really prosperous affair, although I dare say you made quite a tidy penny out of your Travelling College?"

"Indeed, yes!" piped Dr. Ditchling eagerly.

"Then I will show you how, by modern commercial methods, we can increase your capital still more!" said the trickster. "You will allow me to handle the money on your behalf, Doctor Ditchling?"

Dr. Ditchling and the swindler passed out of sight and hearing, and Harold was left to boil inwardly in captivity, unable to stir a limb or utter a word!

An hour passed, and then Spittle & Co. arrived outside the window.

Muggeridge, glaring downward, started violently when he saw what they had with them. It was a huge soap-box on a couple of perambulator wheels, with a plank of wood projecting in front, to which was attached a pair of smaller wheels on a swivelling axle. A length of rope tied to either end of the axle enabled the barrow to be steered.

Spittle & Co. opened the window, and dragged Harold forth. Yelling with mirth, they jammed him in the soap-box, his legs sticking out in front!

Willing hands shoved the barrow, and away it went, down the garden path, through the front gate of the Academy and out into the Merivale Lane. Terrific speed was attained in descending the hill towards St. Giddy's, but Spittle dragged on the rope, and steered the barrow through the gateway of St. Giddy's.

"Great pip!" yelled Dick Bannister. "Look out!"

Swoooooosh! Johnny Gee & Co. scattered as that barrow whizzed along. At last, it ran full tilt into a pile of sand, sending Harold head-first into it!

Roaring with laughter, the Removites dashed to

the spot and dragged out the hapless Muggeridge. The gag was removed, and his bonds taken away.

"Well, you prize chump, you've come back again—and how!" chuckled Johnny Gee.

"I'm going back!" shouted Harold. "Don't stop me, you chaps! There's an awful crook at Halcyon House, and he's trying to swindle Dr. Ditchling out of all his money! Lemme go!"

Muggeridge broke away from the group of Removites and raced towards the gates. He disappeared down the lane in a twinkling, and Johnny Gee and Co. ran after him.

Straight to Dr. Ditchling's Academy went Harold. He made a bee-line for Dr. Ditchling's study, and burst open the door without ceremony.

Jefferson was there, standing over Dr. Ditchling, whose small, wizened form was crouched in the arm-chair by his desk. There was an evil, threatening sneer on Jefferson's face, and he held a revolver pointed menacingly at the unhappy Head.

He whirled towards Muggeridge, his sallow face contorted into a snarl of mingled rage and amazement. "You—again!" he hissed. "You interfering young whelp—"

Brave as a lion, Muggeridge closed with the miscreant, and together they weaved to and fro, fighting desperately. All at once, Jefferson whipped up a chair and brought it crashing down on the plucky schoolboy's head. Harold went down with a sobbing moan and lay on the carpet huddled and motionless.

Jefferson turned to snatch up the box, but as he did so, there was a rush of feet in the doorway, and Johnny Gee & Co. dashed in. Jefferson made a dive for the window, but the Removites were too quick for him. Johnny Gee and Dick Bannister brought him down with a swift Rugger tackle, and the others piled on top of him!

The specious Mr. Rashbrook, alias Jefferson, alias many other names besides, was made a prisoner, whilst Dr. Ditchling grabbed his box of savings.

Harold Muggeridge was lifted tenderly by his old schoolmates.

When Harold Muggeridge really came back to consciousness he did so with a start. He was in bed, in the school sanatorium at St. Giddy's!

He started, as a soft footfall sounded outside. The door opened, and a small figure came in. It was Percy Titmuss, his faithful follower!

"I say, Titmuss, what has happened?" he demanded.

"Spittle & Co. have revolted, Muggeridge, and they've all run away!" replied the fag. "Dr. Ditchling and Mr. Mott are out looking for them. Remington, and a lot of the St. Giddy's prefects are on the hunt, too. I came back with Mr. Cattermolé, and they had me up before the Head. Dr. Ditchling was there, and he told Dr. Holroyd what a brave chap you are, Muggeridge. Anyway, the Head said that when you were better, you could go back into the Remove, and we'd be forgiven for cutting loose. That's honest Injun, Muggeridge! What do you think of that?"

Harold Muggeridge stared in silence at his little fag companion. Then he extended a brawny hand towards Titmuss.

"Shake, kid!" he said. "We've won through, as I said we would!"

The Joyous Juniors of St. Giddy's have a merry Christmas treat next week. And so will you when you get those coloured, action pictures of Famous Football Teams free next week.