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Boys'

2D

EVERY SATURDAY

Magazine



CRAMMED WITH CHRISTMAS YARNS, BOYS

VOL. XXI—No. 534—Dec. 24, 1932

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By CANADIAN MAGAZINE POST.

GREAT NEW GIFT SCHEME for B.M. READERS

Birthday Gifts



WHEN WAS YOUR BIRTHDAY?

Were You **FOURTEEN** on August
10th Last?

EVERY reader whose age last birthday appears on this page, together with the correct date, can claim a wonderful Birthday Gift. Look for your birthday amongst the dates and ages given below. If you cannot claim a present to-day, you may be able to do so next week.

Special prizes of Treasury Notes, Sets of Boxing Gloves, Footballs, Chests of Tools, Cameras, Air-guns, etc., will be sent this week to B.M. readers who were:

14 years old on AUGUST 11th last.

In addition, every reader who was one of the ages printed under each date given below, on his last birthday, will qualify for a delightful gift from a splendid range of birthday presents, which include—

Electric Torches, Working Models of all kinds, Fountain Pens, Penknives, Writing Sets, Scout Knives, Pairs of Roller Skates, Indoor Games, Boxes of Paints, etc.

Jan.	May.	June.	Aug.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
27	9	23	10	17	6	29
9 ..	11 ..	10 ..	12 ..	10 ..	11 ..	9
12 ..	13 ..	14 ..	13 ..	12 ..	13 ..	10
16 ..	14 ..	15 ..	15 ..	16 ..	16 ..	13

HOW TO CLAIM A GIFT.

If your age last birthday appears on this page in connection with the date of your birthday, sign the coupon given below and get a friend to vouch for the accuracy of your claim, which will be checked. Then post the Claim Coupon to:

**Birthday Gifts No. 3,
Boys' Magazine,
Pump Yard,
Manchester (Comp.),**

to arrive not later than first post on Thursday, December 22nd.

Boys' Magazine will print in due course every date in the year—w.t.; new lists of ages every week. Your birthday is sure to appear. Look out for it.

CLAIM COUPON

BIRTHDAY GIFTS No. 3.

CLOSING DATE FOR CLAIMS,
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22 (first post).

I hereby claim a Birthday Gift, in view of the fact that I was (age) _____ years of age on (date) _____ last

NAME

ADDRESS

(This portion must be signed and filed in by a friend to whom you have given proof of the correctness of your claim.)

I have verified the above details, and am prepared to vouch for the accuracy of the claim.

SIGNED

ADDRESS

B.M. 24/12/32.

LOOK OUT FOR ANOTHER PAGE OF BIRTHDAY GIFTS NEXT WEEK.

Eerie Mysterious Doings
Bring the Joyous
Juniors Back

RIPPING XMAS
SCHOOL YARN.

To Save Chignook, the
Eskimo, from the
Blizzard Wolf.



Fatty Hampered.

BY Jove! That was ripping! Now for a toed—I can just do with some plum cake, and mince pies, and hot cordial!" Thus spake Johnny Gee, the cheery leader of the juniors of St. Giddy's, as he and his chums came into the spacious hall at Twin Towers, where they were spending the Christmas holiday, after a morning of skating, sliding, and snow-balling.

Lord Reggie Pelham-Smith good-humouredly shook the snow from his topper, which his chums had used as a target, for their snowballs.

"Begad! You're right, Johnny old chappie. Let's open the hamper I had sent over from Cholmondeley Hall this mornin', and tuck in!"

Early that morning Colonel Gee, Johnny's great-uncle, who had invited the juniors to stay with him, had gone to London to do some urgent business.

Fun and Breathless Drama abound in this Chortling and Dramatic Long Tale of the Boys of St. Giddy's. Fatty Comes into a Fortune, and Chignook, the Eskimo Boy, fights for Life against the Klondike Plotters with the aid of the Joyous Juniors.

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

So the chums of the Remove had been left to their own devices.

The Joyous Juniors all made their way to Lord Reggie's room. Their cheery looks vanished, and gasps of amazement and dismay burst from their lips, when they beheld the hamper, with its rope bindings cut, and the top off, and practically all the contents gone! A litter of crumbs, and empty bags, and various scraps of tuck lay on the carpet beside the hamper.

"Mum-m-my hat!" gasped Johnny Gee. "Someone's wolfed all the tuck! Who the—"

"Begad!" There was a sudden startled exclamation from Lord Reggie, who stooped down and picked up his valuable Russian leather pocket-book from the carpet. "My wallet, y'know! And—Oh, dear! There's a jolly old quid missin', old chappies!"

"Slocum!" said Johnny, gazing grimly at his chums. "Where's that fat pirate?"

Fatty Slocum—Samuel Arbuthnot of that ilk—had foisted himself upon the Christmas party, much against the will of Johnny Gee & Co. And it did not need the deductive genius of Falcon Swift to recognise Fatty's handiwork.

"Come on!" said Dick Bannister, grimly. "We'll find Slocum and pulverise him! The thieving little worm can't be far away!"

Snowball's quick ears caught the sound of a sudden scuffle down the back staircase and, looking through the window, he gave an excited shout.

"Dere he goes, boys!"

There, sure enough, was Fatty, running like a plump and superfatted hare across the snowy grounds of Twin Towers. Johnny Gee & Co. tore down the stairs and out into the open air after him.

Fatty had had a good start, and he simply flew through the main gateway of Twin Towers, and out into the road beyond.

Sammy Slocum was not an athlete, however, and his exertions quickly began to tell upon him. Besides, he was rather badly impeded by various articles that he had concealed about his person.

From sheer want of breath, he paused for a moment round a bend. He gave a start as a pinched and ragged figure came shuffling towards him from the trees. It was the pathetic figure of an old man, in broken, dilapidated shoes, with his ragged jacket drawn tight round his thin, spare figure, in an effort to keep out the biting cold.

"Excuse me, young gentleman," said the old man, in a quivering voice. "Could you help a poor old man who has no money, and nothing to eat at Christmas time?"

Fatty drew a deep breath, and his little round eyes gleamed artfully.

Opening his coat, he dragged out a cake, a bag of mince pies, and half a plum pudding. He thrust these into the thin, wasted hands of the old beggar. Then he emptied his pockets of pilfered food and gave this to the old man. Lastly, he took a rustling pound note from his waistcoat, and placed it hastily in the other's hand.

"Oh, thank you—thank you a thousand times, young gentleman!" cried the old man, fervently. "Your wonderful generosity—"

"Don't mention it!" said Fatty, hurriedly. "Get into hiding, quick, because there's a crowd of awful rotters coming, who'd thieve those things from you! I must be off, now! Good-bye!"

The old man, his eyes shining gratefully, drew back under the shelter of the bushes, whilst Fatty Slocum again took to his heels!

Johnny Gee & Co. swooped past the old man, and seeing Fatty's plump form a short distance ahead, they put on a spurt. Fatty also accelerated, but



Chuckling heartily, a strange figure watched Johnny Gee and Co. from a window.

tripped up in the snow and went down with a howl. Next minute, the chums were upon him. They rolled him in the snow, and then went through his pockets systematically, but drew blank.

"My hat!" said Tony Graham. "This fat fraud must have hidden it somewhere!"

"I haven't!" howled Slocum. "I never touched it—Yarooo!"

"I say, y'know, old chappies, I'm not worryin' about the jolly old quid!" said Lord Reggie. "But dash it, I vote we get rid of this fat bounder, y'know!"

"Good idea!" said Johnny Gee. "We'll pack him up and send him home to Slocum Hall!"

"Yo, yo, yo!"

The juniors yanked Fatty back to Twin Towers and set to work to make a huge hamper. Fatty Slocum was thrust into it, and securely trussed up. Straw was packed round him, so that only his head and shoulders were visible over the top of the hamper. A large label was tied to the hamper, and addressed to: *Slocum Hall, Great Podgbury, Sussex.*

"Groooh! Beasts!" wailed Fatty. "You can't send me home like this!"

"(an't we!)" chuckled Johnny Gee. "You're going on the next train to Podgbury, my fat pippin, and will be delivered by carrier to your own door. My word! Doesn't he look great—just like a regular Christmas goose!"

A cart was put into commission, the "Christmas Goose" was loaded upon it, Johnny Gee & Co. all jumped aboard, and they rattled away merrily to the village.

Great was the merriment created at the railway station when the cheery heroes of St. Giddy's marched in with that hamper! At first, the parcels' office clerk demurred, but he was persuaded eventually

to issue a ticket for the hamper, with its human contents.

The train came in, and Johnny Gee & Co. dumped the hamper in the goods van.

"You rotters!" Fatty howled, his red face glaring wrathfully over the top of the straw. "Ow! I don't wanna go home to my Aunt Hetty! Yah! Lemme come back!"

Johnny Gee & Co. sent up a roar of laughter as the train moved off, and then drove back to Twin Towers in merry mood.

The School of Spooks.

SAMUEL ARBUTHNOT SLOCUM writhed and wriggled inside the hamper as the train whirled him farther and farther away from Twin Towers and his cheery formfellows.

The train was moving more slowly, probably through fear of snow drifts. Now was Fatty's chance. Fatty opened the door quietly. He paused for a moment on the slippery footboard, and then he jumped.

It was a clumsy leap, but fortunately for Fatty Slocum, he landed in the middle of a deep drift of snow, which broke his fall.

"Grooogh!" gasped Fatty, shaking himself like a dog. "Now, wh-where shall I go? I must g-go somewhere. I shall c-c-catch my death of cold if I stay out much longer. Perhaps I had better make for St. Giddy's. Sergeant Rumble is staying at the school over Christmas, and he'll look after me, and to-morrow I'll go back to Twin Towers. Grooo-hooogh! Blow the snow!"

Fatty clambered up the railway embankment,



A GREAT TURN OVER.—Suddenly the Removites' feet slipped from under them, and, yelling wildly, they slid in a bunch to the School House steps.

Fatty was wont to brag loudly at St. Giddy's about the wealth and attractions of Slocum Hall, but at holiday times he always avoided going home to his Aunt Hetty, who was very strict with him, and regulated his meals to what Fatty considered was starvation diet. In fact, the "attractions" of Slocum Hall were purely imaginary, and Fatty was determined to get back to Johnny Gee & Co.

"Ow-wowow! Oh, dear!" groaned Fatty, as he tugged and strained at his bonds. "I—I'll—Oh!"

One of the cords had suddenly given! With heart beating fast and eagerly, the plump Removite redoubled his wriggling and straining efforts, and at last one fat hand was free. A few minutes later he was out of the hamper.

Fatty blinked through the window of the goods van. Through the blur of snow that was falling heavily, Fatty recognised the countryside. They were approaching Lexham Junction, where he would be transferred to the train for Podgbury. There, too, was the local connection for Merivale, the station for St. Giddy's.

got over the fence and plodded through the snow across the fields, until he came to a road.

It was afternoon time now, and owing to the dull, leaden sky and the blur of snow, visibility was very poor. Fatty plodded onwards, with his head held down against the driving snowflakes.

For nearly three miles he went, his pace growing slower and slower, when all at once he gave a start, as the sound of a powerful motor-car caught his ears and an electric horn shrilled out its warning.

Fatty was in the middle of the road, and in his hurry to get out of the way he stumbled in the snow and fell. The huge, glittering shape of an expensive limousine towered over him and drew to a halt. The driver got down and hurried to where Fatty was lying.

"Have you hurt yourself, my lad? You should not be walking in the middle of the road, you know!"

"Groooogh!" gasped Fatty, as he picked himself up. "You nearly ran me over, sir, and—Oh, crumbs! Mum-m-my hat!"

Fatty Slocum stared at the man as though he were

seeing a ghost. There was no mistaking those pinched and shrivelled features, and the high-pitched, rather quavering voice. It was none other than the old beggar-man to whom Fatty had given his ill-gotten spoil, only a few hours ago, near Twin Towers!

The old gentleman, too, gave a start of recognition. "My dear boy!" he cried. "This is a most amazing coincidence, because I have been searching for you!"

"F-F-For m-m-me!" gurgled Fatty.

"Yes, my boy!" cried the old gentleman warmly. "Listen, and I will explain. My name is Pemberton—Tobias Pemberton. I am a millionaire, and am devoting a large part of my fortune to the great cause of philanthropy. I have, however, been defrauded by so many unscrupulous persons who have had the handling of my money that I hit on the idea of disguising myself as a beggar, and going out into the cold and snow, to discover for myself someone who was genuinely unselfish and charitable. And you, my boy, are the one I found. I want you to help me spend a large sum of money in gifts for poor people this Christmas."

"Mum-m-m-my word!" gasped Fatty Slocum.

"Come, my boy!" cried the eccentric old gentleman gaily. "We will drive straight to Merivale, I want you to play the part of Santa Claus for me."

Fatty was hurried into the magnificent limousine, and the philanthropist drove off.

Fatty Slocum chuckled unctuously to himself as he saw the snowy fields and hedges flashing by. They came to Merivale and drove up the old-fashioned cobbled High Street, now inches deep in snow.

"Now is the time for you to start, Master Slocum!" said old Mr. Pemberton, drawing up his car near the railway station. He handed Fatty a large, bulky packet. "Take that—you will find that it contains five hundred pounds, in Treasury notes. Carry on with the good work, my boy, and don't stint the money. If you want any more, just get into touch with me, at the address on the envelope. I must be off to London now. Good-bye, and a Merry Christmas, if I don't see you before!"

The big car drove off towards Norchester, and Sammy Slocum was left standing there in the snow, with the packet clutched in his fat hand.

"Five hundred quid!" he murmured. "All to give away as Christmas boxes! Oh, my giddy aunt!"

Feeling that he himself was a most deserving case, Sammy rolled across the road to the bunshop opposite, and seated himself at the table.

He rapped out orders thick and fast, and soon a huge assortment of luscious provender was piled before him on the table. The champion trencherman of St. Giddy's travelled into all those good things with a will.

At length Fatty laid aside knife and fork with a sigh.

"Gooooogh!" he said, rising somewhat slowly. "Gimme the bill, waitress. One pound three and tuppence! Ow! Here's thirty bob—you can keep the change!"

With a very grandiloquent air, Fatty Slocum rolled from the bunshop. Wandering stares followed him.

Then, seeing a crowd of pinched and hungry-looking village urchins outside, Fatty flung open the tuckshop door and, beaming most benevolently, he called out:

"Come in and have a feed, you kids! Choose what you like, it's all free, and it's my treat! Come in—Gooooogh!"

Fatty was simply overwhelmed by the rush of eager, whooping urchins. The word seemed to fly through Merivale like wildfire, and youngsters of all descriptions fairly romped into the bunshop, until

that establishment fairly bulged with its noisy occupants.

Fatty Slocum flung a handful of pound notes on the counter. That was good enough for the bunshop keeper! All the good things were "trotted out" *ad lib*, and Sammy sat in the midst of his happy, jubilant guests, beaming expansively in conscious pride of his position.

When the feast was over, Fatty Slocum strode from the tuckshop, followed by a vast horde of cheering youngsters.

"This way to the toy-bazaar!" he said.

Fatty and his festive followers thronged into the toy-bazaar, and the counters and shelves were quickly cleared of everything. Loud and happy was the laughter, and proud, indeed, was Fatty! Some of the village boys, in their enthusiasm, insisted that Fatty should put on the Father Christmas costume in the bazaar. This he consented to do, and Merivale resounded with the loud cheers for Santa Fatty, who proceeded to make a tour of the shops, buying up stacks of turkeys, puddings, fruit, groceries and other Christmas fare.

Soon his purchases had grown to such a formidable



Johnny Gee and Co. watched, horror-stricken as the Blizzard Wolves raced after the sledge.

pile that Fatty had to hire the village carrier's cart. All his Christmas gifts were loaded on the cart, and Santa Fatty doled out parcels to all and sundry.

Tumultuous cheers rang out for him, and he had to pose on the cart, with his joyous admirers round him, whilst a photographer from the county paper took a flashlight picture of him.

At length all were satisfied, and Fatty, having brought joy and plenty into the hearts of hundreds of the humble villagers, through the good offices of his eccentric benefactor, felt very tired and weary.

He chartered the station cab and, piling that ancient vehicle high to the roof with a huge load of Christmas fare for his own delectation, he was driven off through the snow and darkness towards St. Giddy's.

"My word! This is great!" he chuckled. "I'll pay old Rumble to look after me at St. Giddy's, and have a scorching time on my own! He, he, he!"

St. Giddy's looked bleak, grim and desolate, however, in the gloom of a winter's evening! Not a light showed anywhere in that massive, ancient pile. Fatty grabbed the gate-bell and rang a shrill fantasia

upon it. Again and again he rang on it, but there was no response.

"Where's that old idiot Rumble?" snorted Fatty. "I'm going in! Draw the cab up close to the wall, cabby!"

Old Harry, the cabby, did as he was bid. Sammy Slocum clambered laboriously on to the roof of the cab, and from there he gained the top of the school wall. Fatty made his way to Rumble's lodge. It was empty. It seemed that Sergeant Rumble must have deserted his post for the Christmas holiday, after all.

So Fatty plodded to the gates and, after fumbling with the bolts, opened them. The cab drove across to the School House, where all Fatty's Christmas provender was unloaded. He dismissed Old Harry, and, opening the massive oak door, he went into the house.

Sammy Slocum went from room to room in search of Sergeant Rumble, but there seemed to be not a living soul besides himself on the premises.

At length Fatty decided that he would take up his habitation in the library. It was a nice, comfortable room with oak panelling. After several attempts, Slocum managed to get the fire alight, and

shiny, a glassy look came into his eyes. He sank deeper into the armchair and closed his eyes. Soon his deep, unmusical snores reverberated through the empty school.

It was some hours before Fatty awoke. He had no idea how long he had slept. He came back to consciousness with a sleepy growl and a shiver. The fire had burnt very low, so that only a few red embers remained.

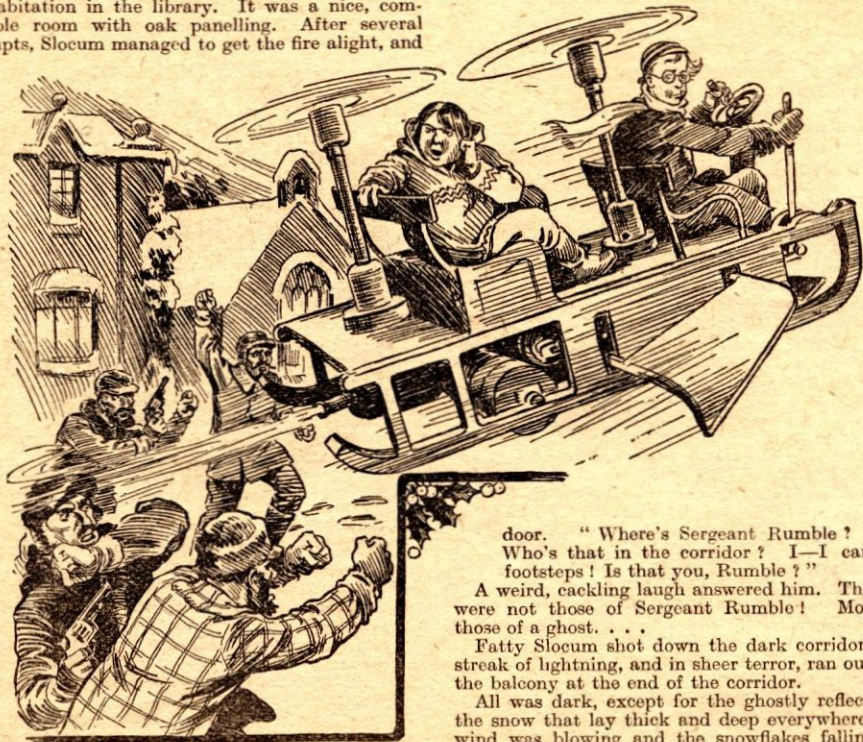
Fatty arose, and blinked about him. The school clock was chiming sonorously above the howling of the wind outside.

"Groooooogh!" he said. "Midnight! It's perishing cold here, and—Mum-m-m-my hat! Wh-what's that!"

A strange noise like the cry of some disembodied spirit, assailed Fatty's ears.

Crash! The library door opened and shut with a bang. Sammy Slocum jumped almost two feet in the air. His podgy face went very pale, and he trembled all over like a fat jelly.

"Oooooo—er!" he wailed, making a dive for the



THE FLYING FUGITIVES.—The helicopter vanes whirled and the sailing-sledge rose into the air, when the Blizzard Wolves were within an ace of seizing Gan.

it was soon blazing away merrily, giving warmth and glowing comfort to the room.

He then carted up his store of tuck, and the sight of all those delicious edibles made Fatty feel entirely happy. He reclined cosily in a deep armchair—borrowed from Lord Reggie's study—and, feeling peckish again after his exertions, he proceeded to tuck in once more.

Fatty munched on, until his face became very

door. "Where's Sergeant Rumble? Ow! Who's that in the corridor? I—I can hear footsteps! Is that you, Rumble?"

A weird, cackling laugh answered him. The tones were not those of Sergeant Rumble! More like those of a ghost. . . .

Fatty Slocum shot down the dark corridor like a streak of lightning, and in sheer terror, ran out on to the balcony at the end of the corridor.

All was dark, except for the ghostly reflection of the snow that lay thick and deep everywhere. The wind was blowing and the snowflakes falling fast. Suddenly, a strange swooping noise in the air above caused Fatty to look up. His very blood froze in awful terror when he beheld a wide, black shape, like some great bird of evil omen, looming down upon St. Giddy's. Two bright, glaring eyes bored upon him as the monster of the night descended. Fatty stood transfixed for a moment, and then with a piercing yell he turned on the balcony and fled indoors.

He dashed round the corner of the corridor, and then another howl of terror burst from his lips. There, in the darkness, stood a tall, spectral form in white, waving its arms and coming towards him slowly and menacingly!

Fatty turned to run, but his legs gave way beneath him and with a last despairing moan he sank in a heap on the floor. Slocum had fainted!

The Newcomer.

"UTTER rot!" said Dick Bannister, emphatically. "It can't be true!"
"But here it is, in black and white!" said Johnny Gee.

The chums of St. Giddy's were gathered in the big Hall at Twin Towers next morning. A photograph on the front page of the *County Observer* was the proof Johnny Gee showed the Co. It was a picture taken the night before, in Merivale High Street, depicting a juvenile Santa Claus, very fat and plump, standing on a cart and distributing Christmas parcels to the eager hands of a cheering throng! The photo was accompanied by a glowing report of Master Samuel Slocum's wonderful Christmas campaign of goodwill and generosity to the poor of the village.

"If this is Fatty, how on earth did he get to Merivale, and where did he get the oof from?" asked Johnny Gee. "We must find out more about this bizney. I wonder where he spent the night, and whether he's shown up at St. Giddy's? I think I'll ring up, and find out what the young scallywag has been up to!"

The juniors went to the telephone, and Johnny Gee gave the St. Giddy's number. After some delay, he was put through.

"Hallo!" he said. "Is that St. Giddy's?"
The Remove captain gave a start. Strange noises, scarcely human, were coming to him over the wires! It was a voice, yet the words were intangible. Then came a howl, wild and terrifying. The tones of that howl were unmistakable. It was Sammy Slocum! As suddenly as they had started, Fatty's wild yells were peremptorily broken off by the sound of the receiver being jammed on its hook.

"What's the matter, Johnny?" asked Tony Graham.

"I—I don't know!" exclaimed the Remove leader. "I got through, and heard noises like some awful animal at the other end. Then I heard Slocum yelling for help. He seemed to be in torment, or in absolute fear of something. I vote we take the next train and get to St. Giddy's to see what's going on."

This idea was acted upon. The Removites had a hasty dinner, and trooped down to the station. They caught the train to Lexham Junction, where they changed, and after a long wait on the chilly platform, they caught the local connection for Merivale.

They reached the village eventually, and crowded out into the well-known High Street. From the porters at the station, Johnny Gee & Co. received confirmation of the amazing affair of Santa Fatty Slocum last evening!

Greatly mystified, they set out along the lane for St. Giddy's. There was no sign of life at the school when they arrived. The gates were closed, and repeated ringings on the bell failed to produce any sign of Sergeant Rumble.

"Rum go this!" growled Dick Bannister, whilst Mist, the sleuth of the Remove, made copious notes. "We shall have to get in over the wall, Johnny!"

The heroes of the Remove got over one by one, and made their way together across the quadrangle, to the School House.

All at once, a shrill, ear-spitting howl rang out from within the cold, dark confines of School House, bringing them to a halt. It was a howl of mingled torment and terror, and was in the well-known tones of Sammy Slocum.

"Come on!" muttered Johnny Gee. "We'll soon see into this!"

The chums broke into a fast run towards the

School House. But scarcely had they come within twenty yards of the steps, than their feet seemed to slither away beneath them, and they found themselves sliding and slipping in a wild, yelling bunch, clutching one another for support.

One by one, the Removites landed at the bottom of the School House steps and toppled over with hard biffs. There they sprawled, in various ungraceful attitudes in the snow.

"*Yow-wow-wow!*" moaned Dick Bannister. "Gerroff my neck! Wh-what the dickens—"

The stained-glass window at the side of the hall door came open, and a figure appeared, one which caused the recumbent Removites to stare and blink and gasp in astonishment.

"*Hoo, hoo, hoo!*" Yo' has come nastyful croppers, old toposes—*hunk?*"

"Mum-m-my hat!" stammered Johnny Gee.

The fellow at the hall window—it was a boy—was the strangest specimen they had ever seen. He had a big, round, oily face with red cheeks, surmounted by long, black hair that was parted in the middle and plastered down close on his head; his eyes were small, black and twinkling, and his nose was very small and snub. He was dressed in a thick suit of furs, which only served to accentuate his fat, round body.

"*Hoo, hoo!* Whyfore yo' comes to this schoolses—*hunk!*" he demanded.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Johnny Gee, rising painfully to his feet. "We belong here, and we've come to find out what's going on at this school. Who the merry dickens are you, anyway?"

"Me callum Gan Chignook—me fine chap Eskimos!" was the grinning reply. "Me newful pupises—startum next term, but got here chunk too quickful and find um all alone except for big fat chapses who makum too muchful row. Yo' know him—*hunk?*"

"My hat! You mean Slocum!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "So you're the chap who answered the phone to me this morning and made all those funny noises. What did you turn up so early for?"

The wide grin on Gan Chignook's face suddenly vanished, and quite a serious look took its place.

"Me makum scoot to get here quickful—bad manses try killum me!" he said. "Me tell yo' all later on. *Hoo, hoo!*"—he burst out laughing again as he saw the snow-smothered juniors rubbing their several hurts. "Yo' have done funnyful stuntses on my slide—*hunk?* Me riggum up slide as protectful trickses, in case bad mans come and try to grabbum me."

"Where's Slocum?" asked Dick Bannister. "What's he bawling about?"

"He eatum too much—got nastyful pains in tummies!" grinned Chignook. "Yo' should hear the funnyful fat porpoises yowl about spookums—*hoo, hoo!*"

At this juncture there came another rending howl from within. The big oak door of School House was opened, and the Removites trooped inside. They saw a plump, anguished-looking object huddled in a chair, blinking at them with a ghastly expression on its face. Fatty Slocum—for it was he—made a most pathetic figure.

"*Ow-wow!* You've just come in time, you f-f-fellows!" he wailed. "I'm going to d-d-die, and I forgive you all. *ow-ow!* I saw the gig-gg-ghost, and heard those awful noises! *Oooooooooooph!* Lemme die in pip-p-peace!"

A few inquiries, however, quickly gave Johnny Gee & Co. a true idea of the situation. A surfeit of plum puddings, cakes, mince pies and other indigestible comestibles had taken their toll even of

YOUR EDITOR'S SPECIAL NEWS TO ALL READERS.



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Treat, Chums!



MY DEAR CHUMS,
Next week the fourth coloured plate in our series of

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will be presented with a great new programme of yarns. Your albums of these grand snapshots will soon be completed—only two more sets of pictures to come. Don't forget to write and tell me what you think of them. And **KEEP YOUR EYES SKINNED** for

Your Birthday

on Page 2. Remember you must **CLAIM** your gift when your age and birthday date appear on the form provided. Gifts are only sent to boys who claim. And you can take it from your old Editor the gifts are jolly well worth having.

Next week you will be introduced to

The Monster Of Marston Rovers!

in the most unusual tale of football and weird mystery ever written for the *Mag*. You'll make firm friends of the Rovers' team—from the fat jolly goalie, Bull Cricks, to Ken Prescott, the curly haired centre-forward, who is the main hero of this startling new footer series. And you'll meet Mahmoud. Strange as his name is, his identity is stranger still, for Mahmoud first lived four thousand years ago in old

Egypt. This yarn tells how Sir Hogarth Drood, a famous scientist, brings him back to life with the aid of his brand new football ground which he has presented to the Rovers. What happens then you must read for yourselves. There are more creepy thrills in this yarn than I have ever read before.

The Boys of St. Giddy's latest doings will hold you in tucks. Their exploits against the Earlswood japers and the Blizzard wolves are one long thrill interspersed with roars of laughter. And don't miss

X-Ray Optics!

The latest doings of Tommy Pink, the Chem-mystic Kid. Doctor Hypo invents a ray which makes Tommy see through blank walls. "Nuff said!"

How are you enjoying the **ICE PIRATES**? A truly great yarn isn't it. There are startling developments in this epic yarn next week, so watch out. And Captain Lefarge returns, in this packed number, in another gallant bid to save the kidnapped Emperor . . .

With Fire And Sword.

Now stand by for big surprises on the way and don't miss next week's grand footer plate or your Birthday Gift.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

Fatty's constitution, and now he was afflicted with the most excruciating pains.

Slocum gave forth wild stories of ghosts stalking abroad at St. Giddy's overnight, of mysterious footsteps, hideous howls in the night, and giant vampire bats circling over the school.

Johnny Gee & Co. did not pay much attention to Sammy Slocum. They were too interested in Gan Chignook, the comical and entertaining little Eskimo.

"Tell me, Blubberface, how did you get to St. Giddy's last night?" asked Johnny Gee. "I hear that all the train services were suspended until mid-day to-day, owing to snowdrifts, and—"

"*Hoo—hoo!* Me come in mine private airplanes!" chuckled Chignook. "You like to see mine airplanes—*hunk?*"

Wonderingly the chums of the Remove followed the fat little Eskimo out of doors and across the quadrangle to the football field. There reposed a very neat, speedy-looking monoplane.

"*Yo' likum him—hunk?*" said Chignook.

"Mum-m-my hat! So you run a giddy aeroplane of your own, Chignook!" ejaculated Johnny Gee. "You must be awfully rich!"

"*Hoo—hoo!* My father's big chunk fur-traders!" chuckled the little Eskimo. "He givum me all niceful things I want. Flying very niceful sports—me take yo' for some tripses—*hunk?*"

Chignook, it appeared, had parked his little Arctic Flyer on the school footer-field and got into the School House, only to find it deserted. Then, hearing groans, he had discovered Sammy Slocum lying in a dazed condition in a dark, lonely corridor. The fat Sammy, on fully recovering from his faint, had told him of the ghost and other noises, and suggested that they vacate St. Giddy's instantly. But the little Eskimo, apparently, was not a believer in ghosts, and after a feed he had gone to bed in the Remove dormitory and persuaded Slocum to do likewise.

"My word!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "So your 'plane coming down last night must have been the

merry vampire bat that Fatty was raving about. What was the young blighter doing here, anyway, and how has he grown so suddenly rich that he can afford to do the Father Christmas stunt in Merivale? Kinmon! We'll make him tell us!"

Sammy Slocum seemed to have recovered somewhat when they got back to the School House. He blinked nervously at them as they came in and surrounded him.

"*You-wow!* Look here, you fellows, I'm not going to give you any of this money!" he piped. "It's for doing good to the poor, you know!"

"Great pip! The young oyster's pockets are crammed full of quid notes!" ejaculated the Remove captain. "Slocum must have been robbing a bank, or a Slate Club, or—"

"I haven't!" howled Fatty indignantly. "Mr. Tobias Pemberton, the millionaire, gave me five hundred quid, to give away to the poor in Christmas presents!"

Gradually the whole amazing story came out, and the chums of the Remove gasped in wonderment.

"My hat! This Mr. Pemberton must be a bit of a crank—though a jolly good-hearted old crank—to entrust Slocum with such a stunt," said Johnny Gee. "There's three hundred and forty-eight quid left—plenty to give the people of Merivale a good time! We'll undertake the job, and I rather reckon, chaps, that we can do it better than Fatty!"

The heroes of the Remove lost no time in putting Johnny's idea into effect.

"Where on earth has Rumble got to, I wonder?" said Dick Bannister. "He'd come in jolly useful now."

The Removites left it to the expert hands of Marmaduke Mist, however, to discover where the worthy school porter had got to. Mist made various notes, and went off upon the trail, whilst the others made arrangements for their big Christmas Fete at the school.

The shopkeepers in Merivale had replenished their stocks, and the heroes of St. Giddy's quickly bought them out, loek, stock and barrel! They returned to the school, on vans fully loaded with all manner of purchases!

The Big Hall was transformed by the juniors' busy hands. There was a huge Christmas tree in the centre, hung with gifts, and hundreds of other gifts were piled up on either side.

At Lord Reggie's suggestion they rigged up a soup kitchen as well, to give cold and hungry wayfarers a warming meal, and Fatty Slocum was pressed into service to help make the soup!

Huge placards were displayed over the Hall door and the school gates, reading:

GRAND CHRISTMAS FETE—NOW ON!
FREE GIFTS AND GRUB FOR ALL!
ROLL UP! ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

The good folk of Merivale needed no second bidding—they rolled up in their hundreds! Sammy Slocum again wore his Santa Claus costume, and having been given permission to partake of the tuck himself, he was happy!

Lord Reggie Pelham-Smith presided over the big tureens full of hot, fragrant soup, and he was kept very busy doling out huge portions to the cold and hungry folk who joyfully came to him for sustenance!

Dick Bannister, mounted on a table, was distributing the gifts, and all went merrily.

At last, everything was finished, and the happy throng of villagers streamed away with their presents, leaving the Joyous Juniors well pleased to have done such good work.

The Ghost of St. Giddy's.

"WELL, Gan old scout, you've told us a thriller, and no mistake!" Thus spake Johnny Gee, in tones of tense excitement.

It was evening time at St. Giddy's, and Gan Chignook, the little Eskimo, had been telling Johnny Gee (o. of the astonishing events that had led up to his making a dash from his home in the frozen north, and coming to St. Giddy's in advance of the new term!

The little Eskimo boy, son of the powerful trader Chignook, of Fort Baffin, had accidentally cut across the path of the Blizzard Wolf, the notorious leader of a desperate gang of killers and robbers, and incurred the villain's hatred!

Making a trip in his monoplane, a gift from his father, the youthful Gan had come upon a solitary figure in the snow, staked out with his hands and feet exposed to the freezing atmosphere. The hapless man was a victim of the Blizzard Wolf, who wanted to wrest from him a secret, and had chosen this cruel way to make him talk!

Gan Chignook had descended in his monoplane and rescued James Warner, and got the unhappy man away just in time to save his limbs from perishing altogether. The rescue had been effected right under the noses, as it were, of the Blizzard Wolf and his gang. Warner had been taken to Port Baffin, where he now lay in the care of Chignook the trader, and was well on the road to recovery.

He had imparted his secret to Gan Chignook, in gratitude for his release. Out in the wild wastes of the Snow Mountains, he had taken refuge from a storm down in a deep cleft of the mountain side. And there Warner, an old prospector, had found a rich gold mine—vast deposits of pure gold.

The Blizzard Wolf and his gang, frustrated in their attempts to get at Warner, had set out to capture Gan Chignook, and either to force from him the secret of the Arctic gold mine, or so place the little Eskimo boy's life in peril that Warner would be forced to talk!

Chignook's father had already arranged for Gan to leave the Land of the Midnight Sun, and come to St. Giddy's for his education, and he was due to start next term, but Gan decided to leave at once! Thus he had arrived most unexpectedly at St. Giddy's at the start of the Christmas vac, with the school empty, save for Sammy Slocum!

"Anyway, you'll be safe enough here," remarked the Hon. Bob Vernon. "You'll like St. Giddy's, I think!"

"*Hoo-hoo!* Yo' bets I will!" grinned the little Eskimo. "Nice butterfuls places—*Oooooogh!* Can yo' hear funnyful noises—*hunk?*"

Johnny Gee & Co. started, too, as they heard a strange tapping noise, coming from outside.

"*Ow!* Hellup!" gasped Fatty. "I say, you chaps, that awful ghost is walking again!"

"Rot!" snapped Johnny Gee. "Come on—we'll soon lay the ghost!"

Johnny Gee & Co. sprang to their feet instantly, and rushed to the door, grabbing cricket stumps and pokers.

Mysterious unseen footsteps were heard in the passage and, in the darkness, a spectral figure glowed before their eyes! Brandishing their weapons, the juniors pluckily ran towards it, but the spectral marauder raised his arm and something round, gleaming like glass, was hurled before the path of the oncoming juniors.

The missile struck the floor in front of them, and burst with a crash. At the same time, a greenish haze arose, like a gas, which swiftly cast its smothering pall over the startled Removites. They felt them-

(Continued on page 35.)

The Comical Christmas Exploits of the Crew of the HAPPY HADDOCK.



For Fully Fifteen Minutes the Nautical Waits kept it up—and then They Discovered they'd Been Playing outside a Home for the Deaf! A Laughable Incident from this Grand Fun Yarn.

Christmas Cheer.

"WELL, if you ask me, I think the old man's a mean old what'sname!" said Slim Small. "Aw—tain't his fault, tain't!" returned Fat Burns. "I reckon the skipper is broke like he sez."

Duteby Jud, the Swedish bos'n of the old tramp, Pip, the cabin boy, and An How, the chink cook, added their laments to the chorus of groans.

It was Christmas Eve, and the crew of the *Happy Haddock* had just received a nasty shock. But a few moments before, they had applied in a body to Cap'n Keelson, owner and skipper of the old ship, for the wherewithal to celebrate the great anniversary. To their horror, however, the doings had not been forthcoming. Cap'n Keelson told them frankly that he was stoney. The *Haddock* had not been in commission for three weeks, and the harbour dues had swallowed up what little money he had by. Unless, he said, they could miraculously find a cargo that very night and get a sum in advance, the crew would have to celebrate on the morrow with their customary hard-tack and watery soup—and lucky to get that, said he.

Hence, it was with pensive gloom that the boys of the old *Haddock* stood on deck watching the merry, twinkling lights ashore.

"Someth'ing gotta be do!" said Duteby Jud profoundly. "Ja! Someth'ing gotta be do 'bout it!" "Something certainly has got to be done!" said Pip with sudden determination. "You blokes be quiet a minute while I think. My genius will probably suggest a way out!"

The company relapsed into a dull, gloomy silence, while Pip registered an expression of deep concentration. Then, from somewhere on shore, a shrill,

youthful voice piped up, cutting into the silence like a knife:

*Good King Wences-larst looked out
On dre feaster Steeeeee-run!
An' dre snow lay rahnd abaht
Cold an' crisp an' eeeeeeee-run!*

"I've got it!" Pip burst out, as the ditty came to an end. "We'll be waits!"

"Huh?"

"Yes, waits! I just thought of it as I heard that kid singin' carols. S'easy! You get your trombone, Fat, Slim's got a jew's-harp, an' me an' Duteby can make music with combs and paper—an' you, An How, you can get a whacking big washtub out of the galley and slug it with a belaying-pin like it was a drum! Gosh! I bet we'll be able to collect enough money for a good feed to-morrow—easy!"

"Say!" said Fat Burns, his face lighting with hope. "That's a good idea!"

"Sink the ole lugger! I'll say it is! Pip, you got brains; I can't help sayin' it!" Slim produced the jew's-harp from his pocket and gave it a preliminary twang by way of rehearsal. "Come on boys—let's start in on it right away!"

The Musical Mariners.

ABOUT half-an-hour after the momentous decision above recorded, a weird and wonderful procession threaded its way through the busy streets ashore, turned down into a quiet by-road, and stopped before a large house. The procession consisted of Fat Burns, with the only real musical instrument—a trombone—Slim Small, with his jew's-harp. Pip and Duteby Jud with their comb and paper improvisations. An How with a make-shift drum, and lastly, Davy Jones, the ship's pet goat, with a notice around its neck and a large tin mug, provided for the offerings of the admiring audience.

"Now," said Pip, gazing at the large building in front of which they had stopped. "Mostlike there's

WAITS AND MEASURES

a lord or an earl or summat lives in the place, so do your best. I'll conduct. Ready? One—two—go!"

Terrarra!—thud! Bump! Whack! Bzzzerrrrzz, Bzz! Terrarra! Twanka—twang! Wallop! Biff! Bzzzerr! Bzzzerr! Bzzerr! Mh-h-h-h-errr! Biff! Bump! Twanka—twang!

"Not bad," said Pip, as the first "tune" drew



WETTING THEIR WHISTLES.—The contents of the bucket descended in the midst of the waits, and their tune abruptly terminated in splutters and gurgles

to a close. "'Christhuns Awake' wasn't it?" "Course it weren't!" said Fat, indignantly lowering his trombone. "I was playin' Good King Wenceslas!"

"S'funny! I vos playin' Christmas are Comin'," said Dutchy Jud. "An' vot ver' you playin, Slim?"

"Oh, I was just makin' a tune up as I went along."

"Be better if you all play the same tune, I reckon," said Pip, with simple candour. "They always does in these here big bands, I've heard tell. Now, boys, ready? One—two—go!"

Once again that terrific din broke out, and

Christmas Eve became hideous. Fat Burns blew mighty earth-shaking blasts from his trombone, Slim twanged his jew's-harp until he had to stop for fear of knocking his front teeth out, and Dutchy "buzz-ed" on his comb and paper like a chorus of ten thousand bees. Davy Jones bleated persistently and An How thudded and whacked the washtub until his arms ached.

For fully fifteen minutes they kept it up and then exhaustion overcame them and they had to stop. Not a sign from the great house in front of which they stood. Yet it was obvious that the place was occupied, for lights burned brilliantly in several of the windows.

"S'funny," murmured Pip.

"P'raps you don't have to wait till they comes out," suggested Slim. "Go up to the door, Pip, an' say 'please remember the waits' or summat."

"That's an idea," agreed Pip. "You boys keep on playin' while I knock at the door."

The *Happy Haddock* orchestra tried another item from their repertoire. Meanwhile Pip unhitched the tin collecting mug from about Davy Jones' neck and strode boldly up to the front door of the house.

He grasped the door knocker and was on the verge of bringing it down with a wallop when his eye caught a small brass plate fastened to the door. He read it, dropped the tin mug, and staggered limply back a step. The notice read:

NATIONAL HOME FOR THE STONE DEAF.

Pip picked up the collecting tin with a muttered expression of disgust, and went back to his shipmates.

"Can it, you blokes! You're wasting your time. It's a home for deaf people!"

"Gor!"

Without further comment the waits collected up their instruments and wandered off in search of more appreciative fields for their efforts.

They stopped at last before another house, bearing signs that the occupants thereof were prosperous enough to do the honours anticipated by Pip. They were careful, however, to examine the place for any notices before commencing.

"Now, boys," said the self-appointed conductor. "Do your very best this time. All ready?"

Pip gave the signal to start, and the beautiful silence of the night was sent to shreds.

They all played the same tune this time, but they all played it in a different key, and as they all seemed to have differing opinions as to the exact melodic sequence of that tune, the ensemble effect was, to say the least, unusual.

Suddenly an upper window of the house flew open and an irate head was thrust forth into the night.

"Hey!" yelled the owner, but the cry was swept away in the flood of discord from below. "Hey! Stop that din! I'll have the police on you! Go away!"

The waits blithely continued, unaware of the angry gent.'s presence altogether. The man at the window yelled himself purple in the face before he realised that mere shouting would not be heard above the din, made by those below. Then he disappeared momentarily and returned to the window grasping a heavy boot.

He hurled the boot, and it struck Dutchy Jud a resounding thwack on the headpiece. The comb-and-paper noises disappeared from the general concerted effect, but the rest of the band were playing so loudly

that nobody noticed its sudden withdrawal. Dutchy found himself seated unexpectedly, and dizzily witnessed an astronomical revolution.

Finding his missile had not had the desired effect, the man at the window disappeared again. He was away longer this time, but re-emerged, in due course, holding a large bucket of water.

Swish! The contents of the bucket descended full in the midst of the waits and their tune abruptly terminated in wild spluttering and gurgling noises.

"Clear off!" shouted the angry householder, audible now in the silence he had so drastically induced. "Clear off before I set the dog on you! Kicking up a din like that! And Christmas-time, too!"

The *Happy Haddockites* didn't argue. Reserving their opinions of the angry gent., they swiftly mizzled, leaving trails of moisture behind them.

Wireless Wheezes.

"SNO use," groaned Fat Burns, when they had removed themselves a safe distance. "We'll never collect any money in this way!"

"Don't get downhearted," cheered Pip. "Let's have another go. Perhaps that chap didn't like music."

"Anot'er go!" cried Dutchy Jud. "*Nein!* Notta

musicians, they had shortcomings. And as they stood there deploring the hopeless outlook, a powerful car suddenly whirled round the corner of the street, and hurtled towards them at a terrific pace.

"Look out!"

Slim leapt aside just in time. The car, driven by a tough-looking fellow with an equally tough-looking companion beside him, swerved aside to avoid him. The back of the car was loaded up with boxes, and it gave a terrifying lurch, tossing one of the topmost boxes out. Said box struck Slim square in the centre of his capacious tummy, compelling him to sit down forcibly and depriving him of all his available breath.

The car rushed on without the slightest slackening of speed, and next moment was out of sight.

"Sink the ole lugger!" gasped Slim, rubbing the stricken portion of his person. "There ought to be a law agin them moty-cars rushin' around an'—"

Slim's remarks were interrupted by the sudden appearance of yet another car, moving equally fast. In a couple of seconds it had whirled past them and vanished, fast on the heels of the other.

"Gor! Did you see that? There was a copper standin' on the step!"

"Must want to see his licence," suggested Fat. "What's in the box, Pip?"

"Something mighty hard and heavy," said Slim, still suffering from the effects of the accident. "I know that!"

Nobody paid attention to Slim, however, for Pip already had the box open and was turning out the packing.

"Hello," he said eventually. "It's a wireless set and a loud-speaker. Works, too," he added, twiddling the tuning-knobs, thereby evoking a number of screeches and howls from the apparatus. "Let's see if we can get Daventry."

After a little experimenting, Pip succeeded in tuning-in the station. A rich, deep voice issued from the instrument, singing *Good King Wenceslas*.

"Gosh!" gasped Pip, after listening for a few moments. "What a marvellous stroke of luck! Here, Fat, come here a minute. I got an idea."

Fat Burns approached the cabin-boy, looking a trifle mystified. Pip took the loudspeaker, which was detachable from the rest of the apparatus, and tucked it under Fat's jersey.

The rich, deep voice quite miraculously seemed to be issuing from Fat Burns.

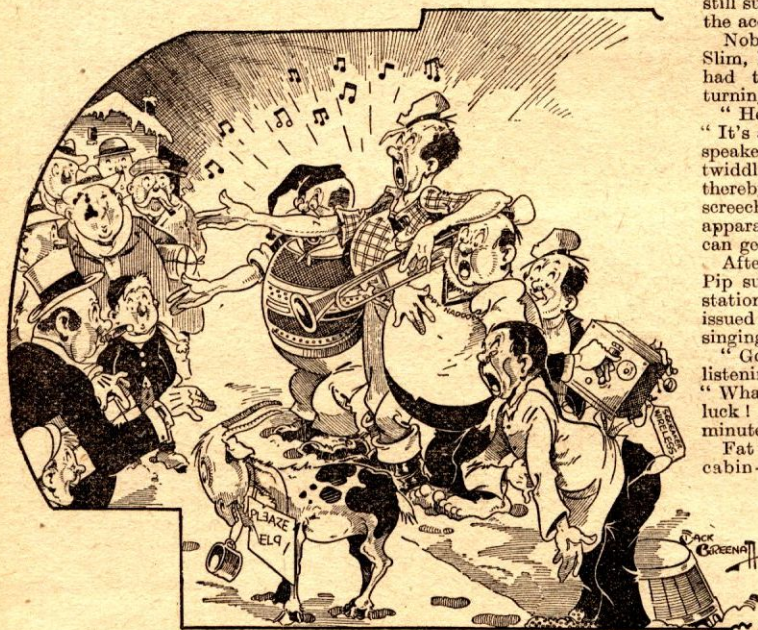
"What do you think of that!" said Pip.

"Move your lips, Fat, like you was singing." Fat Burns obeyed and further heightened the illusion by flinging out his arms occasionally in the manner of an opera singer.

"Sink the ole lugger!" said Slim, in awed wonderment. "That boy's got brains. I can't deny it!"

"Come on, blokes," said Pip, taking up the wireless set and trailing Fat behind with the loudspeaker wires. "We'll soon earn our Christmas dinner now!"

They took up their stand in the adjoining mair



WIRELESS WARBLERS.—Pip, unseen by the crowd, got the set tuned-in after a few preliminary screeches, and Fat began to sing—in a beautiful soprano voice.

me! I vos biffed on de napper till I vos knocked silly, and I vos soaking vet vid de varter! No more waiting for me, not at all!"

"Nor me!" agreed Slim Small, squirming in his damp clothes. "I've had enough! Sink the ole lugger, I have an' all!"

"We ain't good enough," said Fat. "We should have had a day or two pratisin' fore we attempted this."

The rest of them could not help but agree that, as

street, busy with Christmas shoppers. They managed to camouflage the bulge in Fat's jersey, made by the loudspeaker, so that it was not too noticeable. Meanwhile, the other boys grouped round Pip and the wireless set so that they could not be seen. "O.A.," whispered Fat, striking an operative attitude.

Pip switched on the set and commenced to turn the condenser knobs.

"WEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!" announced Fat to an astonished world. Pip feverishly spun the knobs in another direction and Fat apparently gave voice to an astonishing series of shrieks and groans. A crowd collected around him in no time and gazed askance.

Presently, however, Pip got the set tuned in. To all appearance, Fat began to sing—in a beautiful soprano voice.

Dutchy nudged Pip frantically. "Switch it off—quick! It vos a vumman's voice!"

"Gosh!" gulped Pip. "So it is!"

Then Fat Burns' voice, apparently, passed through a remarkable series of quick changes. Something like the following:

"No rose in all the world, until you came. No—WEEEEEEEEEE! The police are desirous of information—WEEEEEEEEE! You're driving me craa-zy, do-do de-o do! You're dr—WEEEEEEEEEE! Many happy returns to Charlie Higginbotham of—WEEEEEEEEEE! This is Midland Regional calling, the—WEEEEEEEEEE!"

"Sink the ole lugger! Don't keep switching it about like that!" said Sam, looking at the crowd of spectators who had begun to show serious signs of alarm. "Keep it on something steady!"

Pip hastily spun the tuning-knobs and Fat commenced to declaim as follows:

"At this season of the year, the thoughts of all gardeners naturally turn to preparing for those charming little harbingers of spring, the snowdrops. These should be planted early in January so as to ensure them having ample time to sprout—Pip, you fool!—through the hard winter soil. If planted in—Get something else!—a garden box, one should also allow plenty of room below the seedling, so—"

Fat turned round and glared towards Pip; then, swiftly, the glare turned to a look of astonishment. For his shipmates were struggling in the arms of four hefty policemen!

No sooner had he realised this fact than the heavy hand of yet another bobby descended upon his own shoulder.

"Here! What's the matter? We ain't done nuth'n'!" yelled Pip.

"You can say what you got to say at the station. That wireless set you got there was stolen from a shop not twenty minutes ago! Come on there! No arguing!"

Protesting volubly, the would-be waits were hauled off to the neighbouring police-station—the wireless set still instructing an inattentive world on the care of snowdrops.

Jailbirds.

THUS the crew of the *Happy Haddock* found themselves finally, on that sad Christmas Eve, locked in a cold and unpleasant cell, the victims of misunderstanding. For the police would not believe a word of their story. A wireless-shop had been raided, and the set they had in their possession was part of the stolen property. A policeman, attracted by the crowd around the "waits," had happened to spot the set, and the obviously careful way that Pip and his chums were attempting to conceal it had aroused his suspicions. So the crew of the *Happy Haddock* found themselves in jail.

"I'll have to think of something," Pip said. "We can't stop here!"

They glared menacingly at the cabin-boy of the *Haddock*.

"You think of any more ideas," hissed Fat through clenched teeth, "an' you'll come to a sticky end!"

As Fat spoke, a policeman unlocked the cell door and admitted a soberly-dressed old boy. He glanced round at them with a beaming smile.

"I come to spread a little sunshine in dark places," he said. "I represent The National Criminals Benevolent Society. We endeavour to lighten the punishments inflicted upon criminals for their misdeeds—we believe that if criminals are occasionally allowed a little treat, they will be touched to the heart with remorse for the kindness they so little deserve, and will reform."

"Gor!"

"Therefore, every Christmas, we are allowed by the police authorities to provide a Christmas dinner of turkey, plum-pudding, mince-pies and all things the luckier members of society indulge in at this season, to the criminals of various prisons—of which this is one. This feast will be provided for you in your cell here to-morrow, and—"

He went on for about half-an-hour, with the crew of the *Happy Haddock* gaping around him, almost unable to believe their ears. At last he finished, and was set out of the cell by the policeman, leaving the overjoyed prisoners within.

"Well, sink me!" laughed Fat Burns. "If this ain't the luckiest break we've ever had!"

"Sink the ole lugger! I can't hardly believe it, I can't!"

As they marvelled at their unexpected luck, the door of the cell was again opened. A policeman came in.

"Sorry we detained you. We got the real crooks of that raid, and we find you ain't had nothing to do with it. You can go out of here without a stain on your characters!"

"G-g-g-g-out!"

"Yes—you're free!"

"Oh, mister!" wailed Pip. "Can't we stay in jail, till after to-morrow? We're just homeless orphans what ain't got no Christmas dinner an' no one to guide us. Let us stay in your lovely cosy police-station another day!"

"Good Lord!" said the policeman. "Have you all gone crazy? Here! Come on! Out of it!"

And the unhappy crew of the *Happy Haddock* were protestingly turfed out of the police-station.

THEY returned wearily to the *Happy Haddock* and spoke not a word as they made their way towards the fo'castle, intent to bury their sorrows in the sweet oblivion of sleep. But a cry arrested them.

"Hey, there!" It was Cap'n Keelson's voice. "Stap me! Where you bin, boys? I've searched the town for you."

The skipper hurried towards them.

"Is the cook with you?"

"Yes, sir. He's here."

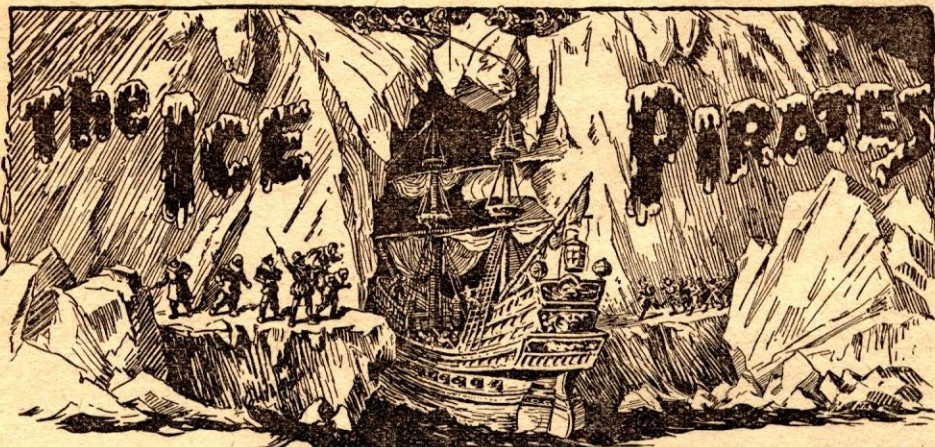
"Good. See here, An How, you'll find three nice fat turkeys an' materials for makin' plum-puddin's an' mince-pies an' everythin' down in the galley. Me an' the mate's just bin shoppin' while you boys was ashore. I want you to get busy right away, 'cause we're goin' to have a real swell slap-up feed to-morrow! I was lucky enough to get a cargo an' a big sum on account, an' if you all come to my cabin right away, you can all have another month's sub. on your wages. (heer up, boys! Prosperity's returned to the old *Haddock*!)"

Dr. Hypo gives Tommy Pink, his amazing assistant, another of his patent physics next week—with astounding results. Look out for this chortling yarn of the Chem-mystic Kid.

**GIGANTIC XMAS
WONDER YARN!**

**A Thrilling Quest to a Mystic Ghostland
Below the Bergs and Blizzards of Arctic.**

**BEGIN
BELOW.**



Startling Science Secrets and a Fascinating Bunch of Thrilling Characters in this Great New Polar Tale by BERNARD BULEY.

THE Lost Land! A vast cavern-land beneath the snowy wastes of the Arctic Seas. A land where monsters long since forgotten on Earth, still flourished, in a kind of eternal sleep, occasionally rising to ravage and lay waste all things living: a land where men lived for centuries and Time was of no consequence.

Here Sir Vallance Treherne and the crew of the *Pride of Bideford* had lived for nearly four centuries in constant conflict with a large band of pirates.

Here, too, he was followed by two of his descendants, Roger Treherne, sixteen years old, dark, curly-haired, strong as a young ox, and his cousin, Phil, two years his junior, fair, blue-eyed, and their ally, Captain Silent. They were chasing Carl Lieberstrom, a rascally U-boat commander, who had stolen the log-book of the *Pride of Bideford* from Treherne Court.

In spite of the monster, fearful, scaly, with dragon-like head and giant claws, that guarded the entrance, the adventurers sailed into Lost Land, with Lieberstrom aboard, a prisoner.

Once inside, peril followed peril, for they found themselves being sucked into the deadly maw of a whirlpool. Only with the aid of the magnetised stone of the Lost Land did they escape.

Even then their dangers were not over. For their appearance had been witnessed by the Ice Pirates, who were led by the tall, broad-shouldered dandy pirate, Captain Crossbones.

The Log Book.

"PIRATES!" ejaculated Roger tensely. He looked at his cousin Phil whose boyish face was queerly flushed.

As he paced the poop, Sir Vallance had recounted his story, of how he had come into Lost Land. He had told them how his vessel, caught in the weeds of the Sargasso Sea in the year 1580, had drifted

**NON-STOP ADVENTURES
AND EXCITEMENT IN A
WORLD OF WONDER AND
AWE BELOW THE ICE.**

into the open side of a long extinct volcano. Down, down the ship had plunged, over steps of waterfalls. And after a time the crew and her master knew nothing, for they had slept, while for years the ship must have drifted on. Eventually she had drifted through the vast undersea tunnels into this Lost Land. Those tunnels now were filled by the seas, and no other ships might drift in.

"Faith, we came to waking to find the ship sailing out through the Straits, past yonder Guardian Rock," Sir Vallance exclaimed, pointing to a mighty promontory of rock ahead.

And beyond was a vast, tideless sea, like that of the Mediterranean. Here Sir Vallance had encountered the pirates. The *Pride of Bideford* had entered upon fierce running engagements with the pirate craft.

Eventually marooned amongst the bergs of the frozen land, Sir Vallance and his crew had survived. Sleeping for long periods. Awakened to hunt their game in the Arctic wastes. Fighting the pirates whenever they appeared—until their powder and shot had run out.

"Aye, and there is the tale of the Pirates' Treasure. And how we fought for it, and were turned out of Lost Land," Sir Vallance exclaimed. "'Tis all writ down in the ship's log book. I'faith, and yon blustering rogue hath the book yet!"

He pointed as he spoke to Carl Lieberstrom who appeared still to be safely trussed to the foot of the mainmast.

"'Tis of vast import," Sir Vallance cried. "D'ye mind me now on this. There be a chart in the log book, showing where the treasure is hidden, out in the icefields. 'Tis guarded by Death Spiders—"

The lads looked at one another quickly. They were beginning to learn of the dangers that were to beset them on this amazing quest.

"I'll get that log book," snapped Captain Silent again. He was striding to his enemy, his hand on his revolver when Sir Vallance checked him with a sharp exclamation.

"By heaven's light! I had forgot. The pirates, Cap'n Crossbones and his men. . . They will be warned of our coming. I'faith, they will have heard the monster's roar."

The Teuton Terror.

THOSE words of the old-time mariner brought Captain Silent facing about, his light eyes steely.

"You think they'll have the advantage of us?" he asked sharply. "Why, this ship has forty guns, and we have all the powder and shot we want. You say Captain Crossbones had none?"

"Of that I cannot be sure. He was ever a cunning rogue," Sir Vallance replied with a paling of his face. "Look you, we are anchored here in open water. Any craft can steal out from yonder Straits, encircle us and deliver but one broadside, that would sink us like a stone."

It was quite true, as Captain Silent saw in one sweeping glance. "Then it's obvious we can't waste time," Captain Silent snapped. "We've got to put out a boat, and get a rope to shore, quickly."

That was the only way. A landing party would have to tow the ship off the rock, past the headland. In the open sea she could manoeuvre and fight the pirates, but here on the edge of the whirlpool there was positive danger.

"It'll be a long pull and a strong pull," Captain Silent considered, and he looked round. "I want two with me."

"We'll go, sir!" came like a shot from Roger and Phil, and Pitaluk chimed in with his broad grin: "me coming with th' cap'n."

Captain Silent nodded curtly, and one of the quarter boats was lowered into the swirling waters, and the lads climbed down into it.

"*Mein Freund*, you forget der log book!" Lieberstrom's voice rasped across the deck, and Captain Silent stopped short as he was about to clamber after the boys. His jaw muscles tightened. He strode back.

"Yes," he gritted. "I almost forgot. I'll have that log book. Come, where is it?"

Their eyes clashed. The swarthy German's glittered blackly. His beard was half-grown, and this once monoceled Teuton was now thoroughly ill-kempt.

"In my breast-pocket it iss," he said sullenly, as if cowed and beaten.

Captain Silent moved nearer to take the log book. And in that moment Carl Lieberstrom acted with the swiftness of lightning.

With an animal-like snarl he burst the bonds he had loosely re-tied, and springing, he snatched the Service revolver from Captain Silent's holster. Instantly he brought it up to fire.

Crack! Captain Silent ducked and threw his right arm in a punch, and the bullet breathed in hot flight past his cheek. But his own counter-blow to the German's jaw got home, and it sent Carl Lieberstrom staggering backwards.

He still clutched the revolver, however, and, frenzied with hate, he brought it up, the killer light in his eyes. Then other thoughts prevailed. Escape. . . .

He moved backwards. "A step vun of you move—and I shoot!" he snarled.

Captain Silent, a hard light in his eyes, made to spring at him, but he was given no opportunity. Lieberstrom was clambering over the ship's side, and the drama in a few swift seconds was over.

"Good-bye, my frien'!" With a fiendish grin, he fired again, and disappeared.

Crack! Captain Silent leapt pantherishly aside—and Lieberstrom missed a second time. Immediately, the naval man raced for the bulwarks, travelling at speed.

The boys in the boat saw a figure in naval uniform coming swiftly down the ladder, and they stood up. The shots on deck had startled them, but they had not put their wits to sea.

"That you, Captain Silent?" Roger asked sharply, for in that uncertain light he could not be sure.

The figure landed heavily in the boat, almost swamping it, and Carl Lieberstrom turned like a snarling wolf, his revolver menacing the Treherne cousins and the Eskimo lad.

"Aun move from you—and you're dead!" he snarled gutturally. "Sit down; get to the oars—and row!" Just then Captain Silent's head appeared over the side of the ship, and Carl Lieberstrom leered upwards, brandishing the revolver.

"Der Pirate's treasure!" he mouthed, with almost insane fires in his black eyes. "Dese boys haf a share—*ach, ja wohl!*" He laughed harshly, excitedly. "If you make a move, I will shoot dem."

Captain Silent nodded grimly, understanding that the boys' lives hung in the balance. With bitter chagrin he watched the lads pulling for the mainland.

Then suddenly a hopeful light leapt into his eyes as he saw that Pitaluk, the Eskimo lad, seated in the stern of the boat, was stealthily paying out the coil of rope. The act was unnoticed by the German, who was concentrated on the two boys rowing. There was still a chance.

In the Pirate's Power.

"GOSH, we're up against it! Keep a sharp eye open, Phil!" whispered Roger Treherne.

He rowed behind his younger cousin, and the German sat opposite them, menacing them with his revolver. Both lads gritted their teeth as they laid back on the oars. It was stern work, and the tiny beads of perspiration stood out even on stalwart Roger's forehead, as he pulled with all his splendid young strength.

But his eyes, too, glimmered with hope as he saw Pitaluk, the Eskimo lad, stealthily paying out the rope from the stern of the boat. There was a broad grin at moments on the Eskimo lad's flat face, and he appeared quite unconcerned at the danger.

If only they could make fast that rope to some crag on the mainland, Roger thought desperately, all would not be lost.

They were getting into easier water now, outside the influence of the whirlpool. The rope was still paying out well. And the *Pride of Bideford* appeared like a luminous ghost-ship half-a-mile astern.

But Roger noted these things in a detached way; he was desperately alive to the danger of their position.

Now, however, under the shadow of the mainland, Carl Lieberstrom seemed suddenly to relax his vigilance over the two boys. He was peering past them, his hand seeming to tremble on the revolver he held, and in his black eyes there was a crazed look of mingled greed and fear.

"*Das Gold—it iss mine,*" he muttered, and moistened his thick lips with his tongue, peering hard past the boys, his body tensed for action.

Suddenly, he started violently. And well he might. For, lying in waiting round the curve of the rocky promontory to their right, he saw a vessel, ready to strike out into the waters like a hawk on the kill.

It was a galliot, such as was used by the fierce Barbary Coast pirates of the sixteenth century. A long, rakish vessel manned on either side by black

galley-slaves, three at each tremendous oar. It was the pirate vessel of Captain Crossbones.

This was the vessel he used in the tideless waters of Pirate's Pool, beyond the Straits. For the vast cavern sea, two hundred miles in length and fifty miles across at its widest, was in reality a great lake, through which the pirate vessel, rowed by galley-slaves, could move with the speed of a canoe in a torrent.

Captain Crossbones, blade in hand, stood at the prow, a little in advance of the mob of eager, blood-thirsty pirates, impatient to be let loose upon the vessel that had arrived in Lost Land.

Not all eyes were strained upon the *Pride of Bideford*, however. Captain Crossbones and Black Mayo, waiting behind him, were peering with fierce, exultant faces at the boat coming in to the rock. And the pirate chief stood ready to give the signal to dash out upon it.

His plan was simple. Lurking there in ambush, Captain Crossbones had seen the rope being paid out. And it was his purpose to allow the *Pride of Bideford* to warp nearer the mainland, out of danger of the whirlpool, and then to capture its boat, fill it with a quantity of inflammable stuff he had ready, and having set it alight, launch it upon the *Pride of Bideford*.

The pirate knew that the fireship would put the crew of the other vessel into the wildest confusion, so that they would abandon their gun stations in an effort to escape. Then he would strike like a hawk.

And so he would take this fine vessel, loaded with powder and shot. And he having only enough powder remaining to fire two balls from his pistols!

But both Captain Crossbones and his lieutenant, Black Mayo, reckoned without the cunning of that twentieth century pirate, Carl Lieberstrom.

To those craning over the rails of the *Pride of Bideford* the pirate ship could not be seen. It lay behind a reef of tooth-like rocks, in deep water.

But Captain Silent aboard the *Pride* gave a little click of relief as he saw their boat grounding on the rocks. He saw Pitaluk dive overboard with the rope and swim strongly for a few moments. Then he stood upright in the water and signalled wildly with his arms. He had secured the noose of the rope over a tooth of rock!

Sir Vallance barked sharp orders, and they sprang to their stations, some to heave in anchors, others to the capstan. Frantically they turned the great

wheel, winding on the rope, and the *Pride of Bideford* surged away from Devil's Fang towards the mainland like a ship under full sail.

In a few moments she was out of the dangerous currents of the whirlpool. But Captain Silent, standing at the poop rail, suddenly barked an order. "Run out the starboard guns!" he cried sharply. "The pirates! They're on the boys!"

CAPTAIN CROSSBONES' black brows were bent in a frown over his gleaming eyes as he peered at the boat. "Methought yon fellow had a weapon in his hand. But 'tis not so—'tis a book."

Indeed, Roger and Phil thought for a moment that Carl Lieberstrom had gone crazy. He put the revolver on his lap, and taking a yellow calf-bound volume from under his coat—the stolen log book of the *Pride of Bideford* it was—he commenced to turn its yellow leaves, poring over the ancient writing.

Here it says it, he muttered. *Der treasure . . . hidden in der cave, guarded by Death Spiders. Believed none can touch it, but—* "Ach!" He looked up from his reading, and



MISSING THE MARK.—Carl Lieberstrom broke free of his bonds and fired. Captain Silent ducked, and the bullet whistled harmlessly over his head.

snapped the log book closed. They were just grounding on the rock.

He leapt to his feet all of a sudden. On the prow of the pirate vessel Captain Crossbones had suddenly lifted up his gleaming blade with a sharp cry of command. The signal was followed by the creak and splash of oars as the pirate vessel swept out from ambush. The long, armoured poop was a-swarm with the villainous pirates, their weapons gleaming

(Continued on page 33.)

THE MOST EERIE YET ABSORBING CHRISTMAS TALE EVER PENNED. QUITE COMPLETE, BOYS. Snatched by the Dreaded Red Controls of Terrorland from their Cosy Christmas Dinners, Harry Tracey, Bottles, Professor Kingswood and Captain Tracey are Borne to Face Horrors and Awful Perils in Terrorland. **THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE COMES BACK, BELOW.**

Back To Terrorland.

"THIS is indeed a joyous occasion," said Professor Warren Kingswood, as he smilingly raised his glass. "I drink not only to a merry Christmas for us all, but to your health, Captain Tracey, and to the health of Harry and our friend Bottles."

Glasses were merrily raised, and that little party settled down to enjoy a novel Christmas night. There were just the four of them in the house, for the servants had gone home and would not be back until the morning.

Snow surrounded the picturesque cottage which was set in a rural part of Kent; it was Captain Tracey's summer retreat, really, but it had a charm all its own in the midst of winter, surrounded as it was by snowbound fields and meadows.

At the head of the table sat Captain Tracey himself, lean, athletic, keen-eyed—one of the most brilliant men in the British Secret Service. Opposite him sat Harry Tracey, his son, lean like his father; keen-eyed, too, with a cheery, happy face. The guests of the evening, who sat on either side, were Jim Glass, otherwise known as "Bottles," a sharp-featured, quick-witted Cockney aeroplane-mechanic, and Professor Warren Kingswood, a very learned, elderly man of science, and a brilliant inventor.

This curious quartette all had one great bond. Months earlier they had shared awful perils and privations in the grim fastnesses of the Harz Mountains, when they had battled against the evils of the greatest criminal confederation the world had ever known.

"Them was the times!" said Bottles, almost regretfully. "We didn't 'arf have some narrer shaves, Master 'Arry!"

"Yes, but we smashed up the crooks," said Harry.

"Terrorland!" said Captain Tracey, as he sat back in his chair. "That place of horror was aptly named, and—"

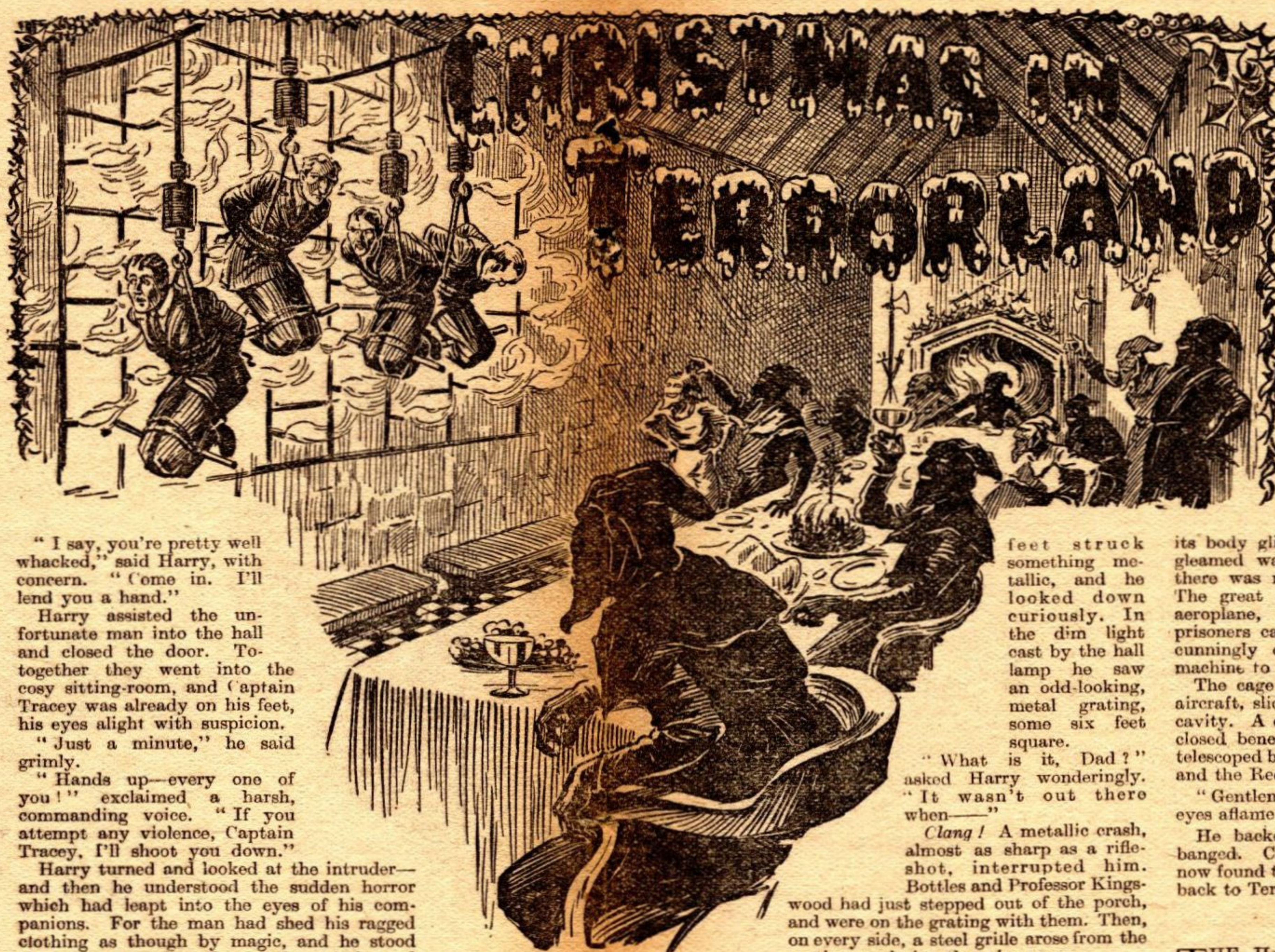
Thud-thud-thud! They all stared at one another across the Christmas festive board, at this unexpected interruption.

"Strange," said Captain Tracey, frowning. "Somebody is knocking on the front door. Perhaps it is a summons for me—"

"I hope not, Dad," cried Harry, leaping to his feet. "Surely your Chief will not need you on Christmas night?"

Thud-thud-thud! The knocking came again, and in the tense stillness of the evening there was something almost ominous in the sound. Harry ran out into the little hall, and flung the front door wide. There, half-collapsed in the porch, was a ragged, pitiful figure.

"Don't send me away, young gent!" wheezed a tired voice. "I'm broke—starving—and it's Christmas night! You wouldn't turn—"



"I say, you're pretty well whacked," said Harry, with concern. "Come in. I'll lend you a hand."

Harry assisted the unfortunate man into the hall and closed the door. Together they went into the cosy sitting-room, and Captain Tracey was already on his feet, his eyes alight with suspicion.

"Just a minute," he said grimly.

"Hands up—every one of you!" exclaimed a harsh, commanding voice. "If you attempt any violence, Captain Tracey, I'll shoot you down."

Harry turned and looked at the intruder—and then he understood the sudden horror which had leapt into the eyes of his companions. For the man had shed his ragged clothing as though by magic, and he stood there, a menacing figure, dressed in red from head to foot, including a cowl and mask which completely enveloped his head.

"Great Heavens!" gasped Professor Kingswood. "A Red Control!"

The intruder was dressed exactly like one of the dreaded Red Controls of Terrorland! This visit could be no mere coincidence.

"Outside—all of you!" ordered their grim visitor. "You will go first, Captain, then your son. But remember—if you make one false move, you will die."

There was no chance of putting up a fight. The Red Control had gained an advantageous position, so that he could cover them all and yet stand clear of the door.

"Come, Harry, we must humour him," said the Captain curtly.

He strode out of the room with Harry just behind. Then came Bottles, and Professor Kingswood brought up the rear. At the gun-point they were ordered to open the front door and walk out.

Snow blew into their faces as the party filed through the porch. Just beyond, Captain Tracey's

feet struck something metallic, and he looked down curiously. In the dim light cast by the hall lamp he saw an odd-looking, metal grating, some six feet square.

"What is it, Dad?" asked Harry wonderingly. "It wasn't out there when—"

Clang! A metallic crash, almost as sharp as a rifle-shot, interrupted him.

Bottles and Professor Kingswood had just stepped out of the porch, and were on the grating with them. Then, on every side, a steel grille arose from the grating, enclosing them in a cage.

"What on earth—" Captain Tracey began angrily.

"Once again, Captain, you are in the hands of the Masters of Terrorland!" gloated the Red Control. "We have decided that you are to have a novel Christmas—not here, but in Terrorland itself."

As he spoke, he raised his pistol and pulled the trigger. But instead of a shot being fired, a kind of miniature rocket went soaring upwards, emitting a sharp whine which died away in the clouds.

"There will be a pretty mystery here to-morrow," chuckled the Red Control, as he took his seat on a kind of cradle which projected outside the grille-work. "Your servants will come, Captain Tracey, and they will find the Christmas dinner untouched. You and your guests will have gone—and no trace will remain to indicate the method of your departure. Not even a footprint in the snow!"

Even as he was speaking, the cage jolted slightly; and now, to the amazement of the boys, it commenced rising rapidly into the night sky. Captain Tracey had already detected a steel cable which

The Heat came out in suffocating waves. Nearer and Nearer went the captives, twisting and turning on their spits. And the Cloaked and Hooded Figures who stood watching laughed with inhuman glee.

vanished into the upper air, and which was attached to the top of the cage. They were being drawn from the earth by some monstrous aircraft—something which hovered far above the cottage.

The clouds were comparatively low, as snowclouds are, and soon, to their astonishment, they broke completely free of the smother of snow, and still rose rapidly.

"Look!" whispered Harry amazedly.

Directly overhead, and not far above them, hung a great airship,

its body glinting silvery in the moonlight. Lights gleamed warmly from numerous port-holes. But there was no gasbag, as in an ordinary dirigible. The great body was more like that of a super-aeroplane, with graceful spreading wings. The prisoners caught a glimpse of flashing air-screws—cunningly devised helicopters which enabled the machine to hover.

The cage was drawn right into the body of the aircraft, sliding neatly and silently into its allotted cavity. A clang of metal sounded as a shutter was closed beneath. Another clang as the grille-work telescoped back into place. Electric lights glimmered, and the Red Control bowed mockingly.

"Gentlemen, a pleasant journey," he said, his eyes aflame with evil amusement.

He backed away, and a moment later a door banged. Captain Tracey and his Christmas guests now found themselves whirling at an incredible speed back to Terrorland!

A Delectable Dish.

THE Harz Mountains, home of mystery and witchery, looked more grim in the moonlight than ever before. From the air, the scene was one of incredible desolation—a great vista of rugged peaks, pine-clothed slopes and snow-buried passes.

Here, in this ill-omened district, was Stelth Castle, a great medieval pile which was the traditional home of Count Von Stelth. There were vast estates, surrounded by a wall of extraordinary thickness and height.

It was within the Stelth Castle estate that the Man Without a Face had controlled his vast criminal organisation. Count Von Stelth himself had been held a prisoner, and had been unable to raise a hand. Because of its evil reputation the mountain fastnesses had become known as Terrorland.

The mystery airship, having sped from England at such speed that scarcely more than two hours had elapsed, dropped lower and lower into the great outer bailey of the castle.

A great mooring cable was affixed, for the airship itself did not completely descend. She hung there, riding gracefully at the cable, and now her helicopters

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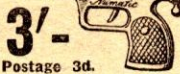
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were still. By some secret hitherto unknown to aeronautics, her metal hull was lighter than air itself, and thus she floated.

The cage descended just as it had been raised. As soon as it touched the cobbles, numbers of figures, entirely clothed in hooded gowns, stood round. The four prisoners were marched under escort through a great arched doorway, and then along paved corridors. The castle was apparently empty, for black shadows lurked everywhere, and there was a chill in the air which penetrated to one's bones.

Then came a startling change.

Great doors were flung open, and Harry and Bottles, with Captain Tracey and Professor Kingswood in the rear, were thrust forward into the great, domed-roofed dining-hall of the castle. Two great log fires blazed and crackled at either end of the hall. A great table, covered with snowy linen, and laden with rich Christmas fare, occupied the centre of the open space. Lights gleamed warmly, scintillating on crystal glass and polished silver.

Round the table stood a full score of cloaked and hooded figures, some in brilliant red, some in dazzling green. Red Controls and Green Controls! And at the head of the table stood the most imposing figure of all—a tall man clothed in rich purple. The Supreme Unknown!

"Gentlemen, we have awaited your coming," said a smooth, silky voice. "You are to be our guests at this Christmas feast."

It was the voice of the Man Without a Face! But that arch-crook had been killed when Terrorland had been broken up months earlier.

"Are you seeking to bluff me?" asked Captain Tracey contemptuously. "The man you are mimicking was shot through the head—"

"No, my friend!" said the Supreme Unknown, with a sudden change of voice. "You thought I was shot through the head, but that was a trick. I vanished. Since that day I have been working to one end—to re-establish Terrorland, and to make you its first slaves."

And with a sudden movement the Man in Purple whipped away his hood. The prisoners recoiled. They saw a hideous Thing—a face which was not a face. This master-crook, with the brain of a genius, was barred from living amongst his fellow-men by reason of his cruel deformity. So he had declared war on mankind, and he lurked in the wild places of the earth, scheming—ever scheming to wreak evil.

"This is my hour of revenge!" he gritted, replacing the hood and bending forward. "To-night is Christmas night, and we must make merry! Let the guests take their places on the table!"

There was a devilish humour in the Supreme Unknown's command. Hooded men seized the four prisoners. They were trussed like turkeys, bound helplessly—and even great skewers were thrust under the crooks of their knees as their legs were doubled, and ropes were passed from these around their bodies. Then they were lifted upon enormous

dishes, and thrust into the great open space in the centre of the table.

Captain Tracey shuddered as he wondered why they had been trussed in this way. It hadn't been done merely so that they could adorn the festive board on those grotesque dishes. There was something else behind it—something which promised to be appalling.

The prisoners were soon to learn. For the feast came to its natural end, with the diners not only filled to repletion with food, but flushed with wine.

At a shout from the Supreme Unknown, men became active in other parts of the dining-hall. Great gas-jets leapt into life along the farther wall. There were hundreds of these jets, and long, blue flames licked up from each.

"Courage, Harry," whispered Captain Tracey. "I think there's going to be something pretty devilish next. I've suspected— God Heavens!"

While he was speaking, steel wires, with hooks at their ends, slithered down from the darkness above. And within a few moments the four prisoners were attached to the hooks and hoisted up. They were, in truth, hanging upon great spits, turning round and round in the approved *rotisserie* manner.

"Let the entertainment begin!" said the Supreme Unknown softly.

The wire cables, working on overhead runners, moved in unison. The four trussed victims were edged nearer and nearer to the softly-roaring flames. They were to be roasted alive!

The Monster Mantrap.

THE heat came out in suffocating waves, scorching in its intensity. Nearer and nearer went the captives, twisting and turning on their spits. And the cloaked and hooded figures who stood watching laughed with cruel and inhuman glee.

"Stop this!" shouted Captain Tracey suddenly. "Do what you like with me, but let the boys go! Do not submit them to this ghastly torture!"

"Fool!" snarled the Man Without a Face, suddenly enraged. "It was the boys who worked hardest to bring about my ruin—and nothing shall spare them from my revenge."

"It's all right, dad," said Harry, clenching his teeth. "Bottles and I aren't scared."

Nearer and nearer to the flames they went. Twisting, twirling back, twisting again, they faced the scorching blue flames. It seemed to them that their very faces were becoming blistered. Nearer! The heat swept over them, choking, deadly. The roar of the burners was like some fiendish song.

Then it was that Captain Tracey acted.

He was slightly nearer to the flames than the others, and suddenly he deliberately got a swinging motion on to his own cable. It seemed a suicidal act, for he swung nearer to the flames.

Yet he managed, in that swing, to thrust with his bound feet. They kicked at the burners, and his next swing was a long one. Back he came, like a pendulum. And this time his trussed feet struck against the main supply pipe, which ran outside, on the face of the wall. The pipe jarred noisily, and with a sudden crack of metal it broke.

A length of the pipe swung round drunkenly, and as it did so the gas, pouring freely from the broken end, ignited. A great sheet of livid flame went hurtling across the room to the table, swaying this way and that. In a trice the tablecloth was blazing, too, and the conflagration became serious. Shouts of rage and consternation arose from the hooded figures.

"Master 'Arry!" came a gurgle from Bottles.

Harry, swinging on his cable, saw, with amazed eyes, that Bottles was unhooking himself. Some of

his bonds had become scorched—in fact, brittle and rotten by their close contact to the flames. With a terrific effort Bottles had broken them. And now he was free.

None of the crooks was able to pay any attention to the prisoners. They had all their work cut out to dodge the licking flames. It was necessary, too, to quench the fire before it took a serious hold.

Bottles had never worked more rapidly in his life. Leaping forward, he snatched up a knife which had been flung from the table in the confusion. With a few slashes he released Harry. Harry himself took

They backed out of the hall, which was now thick with dense smoke and choking fumes. And in the confusion the prisoners sped silently away.

Dashing down a dark corridor, Captain Tracey urged his companions to keep close behind him. Their object was to find an outer door—one which would lead them into the open air. In the darkness, perhaps, they might elude pursuit.

"Here!" he said breathlessly.

They had reached a door. He felt for the bolts, pushed them back, and flung the door open. They emerged into the cold air of the night, forgetful of their burns. Liberty! It was within reach!

They found themselves plunging through ankle-deep snow, and Captain Tracey, who was leading, made for a belt of dense trees, which could be dimly seen in the distance.

Suddenly Harry stumbled. His foot had caught against something in the snow. A stone, perhaps, or— He gulped. A great metal claw had pushed itself up from the snow right in front of him, and before he could check himself he was in the grip of the thing. With automatic cunning it locked itself round his body as his weight fell upon the inner surfaces of the claw.

"Dad!" he panted. "Hi, Bottles! Something has—"

He broke off. Was it his imagination, or was he being lifted from the ground? That claw, which had come upwards from the snow, was, in reality, a cunningly-devised man-trap, but it did not remain on the ground. It was affixed to the end of a metal pole, which was now rising vertically into the air, carrying Harry upwards on its end.

"Harry!" came a startled shout from Captain Tracey.

He had just noticed that Harry was missing. He came running back with Bottles. The Professor, older, was half-exhausted, and he stood where he was, trying to regain his breath.

"Don't wait, dad," urged Harry. "Run! Save yourselves."

Captain Tracey made no answer, but he leapt at the pole, intending to swarm up it to his son's rescue. It was at that second that a searchlight suddenly blazed out from the castle. It hovered round, steadied itself, and then played fully upon the fugitives. Captain Tracey pulled himself up short, for he realised the narrowness of his escape.

The metal pole, which had looked smooth enough in the inky darkness, was actually festooned with thousands of needle-points, which sprouted out like so many stilettoes. If the Captain had attempted his climb, he would have been grievously wounded.

"By Heavens! What a fiendish contrivance!" he muttered hoarsely.

It was impossible to climb the pole, or to do anything to help the unfortunate Harry. And now, in the distance, came an ominous sound—the angry baying of animals. Not dogs, but wolves!

"We'll save you yet, Harry!" he called.

He and Bottles turned and ran for the trees. With Professor Kingswood they reached the welcome cover. Climbing hard, they found safety—temporary safety, at least.

And across the snow-covered ground came the wolf pack. The starved brutes collected round the



THE MANTRAP MENACE.—The wolf pack leaped hungrily round the spiked pole of the mantrap, while Harry writhed impotently in the giant claws.

out his penknife, and Captain Tracey and Professor Kingswood were freed, too. Even now the Supreme Unknown did not know what was happening.

"This way!" muttered Captain Tracey tensely.

He had already seen a dark opening in this corner.



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spiked pole in the beam of the searchlight. And there they leapt upwards, seeking in vain to reach their prey.

The Weight of Death.

WITH long whips which slashed cruelly, a number of the hooded men drove the wolves back. The fire, evidently, had been got under control, and now the Supreme Unknown was bent upon regaining his captives.

The Supreme Unknown himself was directing the operations. Men secured the wolves, and conveyed them back to the castle—for there was no need to set them on the trail of the other fugitives, since the footprints in the snow were all too eloquent.

Some of the men operated a hidden mechanism, and the great pole, with its deadly spikes, sank back into its buried slot. The Supreme Unknown was filled with a demoniac rage.

"Well, you've got me, you rotters—but you won't get my dad!" said Harry defiantly, when he was freed from the claws.

"Poor young fool!" snarled the Supreme Unknown. "Your friends will soon be in my power again. They shall walk right back into my hands!" He turned to his men and rapped sharply. "Bring the boy."

Harry was forced along, with grim hands gripping both his shoulders; with guards in front and guards behind. After a short walk across the snow, they came to a row of picturesque stone outbuildings, which did not belong to the castle proper. Near one of these stood a curious tower of girders, shaped like a tripod, fully seventy feet high. About two-thirds of the way up, inside the tripod, hung an enormous concrete weight, suspended by steel cables on a series of pulleys.

"You know what this is, boy?" asked the Supreme Unknown mockingly. "Have you ever heard of petrol gas? You saw some not long ago—and it nearly burned you. This petrol-gas plant is worked automatically by means of the great weight you now see. The weight is raised by means of a small electric motor—and then the plant operates itself."

Harry had seen smaller plants in many country districts of England. The weight provided the energy, and, as the gas was used, so an automatic contrivance released a brake, bringing the mechanism into operation so that a constant supply of gas was provided in the miniature gasometer. With normal use, the weight would take anything up to twenty-four hours to descend to its limit.

"Tie him up!" ordered the Supreme Unknown.

Harry was bound hand and foot. Then he was placed upon a great slab of stone which had been pushed into position directly beneath the great weight—which was all of two tons, in solid concrete. At the same time, by the Supreme Unknown's orders, two searchlights were turned upon the base of the tripod—and Harry could be seen there, clearly defined.

"Disconnect the main supply pipe!" ordered the crook chief, with a leer. "With so much gas being

used, that weight will descend quickly—but not so quickly that you won't have time to realise your fate, you young whelp."

It was a devilish plan. The weight was soon descending perceptibly. It dropped lower and lower, moving down inch by inch.

"If you would see your son spared, Captain Tracey, surrender!" shouted the Supreme Unknown, using a megaphone. "Remain in hiding, and this weight will crush him out of existence! You must bring with you your two companions."

Captain Tracey, who could see everything clearly from his eyrie in the trees, was pale to the lips with horror. Bottles and Professor Kingswood were watching just as fascinatedly. They could all see the weight dropping upon its victim. Down—down!

"Strike me into a pink elephant!" muttered Bottles. "We can't let Master 'Arry die like this!" "You are right, Bottles—we can't," said Captain Tracey. "I'm afraid we must surrender!"

Even before they reached the ground they could see that the weight was now no more than a couple of feet above the helpless prisoner. Captain Tracey ran forward, with the others at his heels.

"Stop the weight!" he shouted. "We are here."

"You are wise, Captain Tracey," said the Man Without a Face, as a dozen of the Red and Green Controls surrounded the trio. "Turn off the main tap!"

Men were ready in one of the outbuildings—which contained the gas plant. Not a second too soon was the order given, for when the weight came to a halt it was not more than three inches above Harry's prostrate figure.

"You shouldn't have done it, Dad!" he almost sobbed, after he had been pulled clear. "Why should four of us die when three could have escaped?"

"None of you will die—for many a year," said the Supreme Unknown. "You will be thrown into the dungeons now—and to-morrow you will start your work as slaves. You are only the first of my slaves. With this new airship of mine I can kidnap men whenever I like—from every corner of Europe. Within a month this deserted estate will be humming with activity."

The prisoners were marched back to the castle, and taken along flagged passages, down crumbling stone steps to the dungeons, men in front lighting the way with powerful vapour lanterns.

A great door was flung open, and they were pushed into a black, damp, noisome stone cavity. The door slammed, the great bolts were shot, and they were left alone in the darkness.

"Dad! You shouldn't have come back!" reproached Harry.

"There was nothing else to be done, lad," said Captain Tracey. "Those demons would have killed you. If we escape from this vile place, we must escape as a whole party."

As he finished speaking, Captain Tracey moved over to the door and stood listening intently. The others could see him but faintly in the intense darkness.

"There are two men outside in the passage," whispered Captain Tracey. "I think it might be as well to act at once—before the Supreme Unknown can think of any additional safeguards."

"Act?" breathed Harry. "But—but what can we do?"

"Listen—all of you!" murmured the captain. "I had a good reason for surrendering—in addition to saving your life, Harry. At the foot of that tree where we sought refuge I found something—a heavy metal case, half-buried in a tangle of undergrowth. It contained dynamite—prepared sticks, with fuses

complete. I only pocketed one, and, luckily, we were not searched again. Are you ready to take a chance?"

"What—what are you thinking of doing, dad?" whispered Harry.

"Lighting the fuse of this explosive and pushing the stick under the door," replied Captain Tracey grimly. "We may all be killed—but that would be

men's guns, and Harry possessed himself of the other. With these weapons in their grip, they felt more comfortable.

"Come on—quickly!" urged Harry's father.

They went racing down the dungeon corridor. Then up steps, Captain Tracey had remembered every foot of the route, and, unerringly, he led the way back to the surface—back to the open.

At the top of a flight of stone steps they came into a great stone passage, and, advancing towards them were a number of green-cloaked figures. Without hesitation Captain Tracey pulled the trigger of his weapon—and Harry did the same. To their astonishment, no report sounded, but streaks of fire leapt from the guns, and the thin flames licked round the advancing figures. They fell, screaming—not killed, but rendered unconscious by the super-electric shock which the weapons had discharged.

Just those two shots had disabled a dozen men. Rushing on, the fugitives reached an outer doorway without encountering any more of the enemy. But hardly had Captain Tracey and his companions commenced running across the grounds than fresh shouts sounded, intermingled with the baying of the wolves.

"They're after us, sir!" panted Bottles.

"Go—all of you—go!" urged Professor Kingswood. "Leave me behind to cover the trail. It will give you a chance—"

He broke off, for at that moment Captain Tracey had recoiled, as though struck by something. As a matter of fact, he had struck something—a steel cable which had been unseen in the gloom. Staring upwards, he saw, for the first time, the strange airship at anchor overhead.

"Look, boys!" he exclaimed. "The airship! If we can climb this cable—"

"We can!" interrupted Harry. "You first, dad. You next, Professor, and I'll come immediately behind you. Bottles can look after himself."

"You bet!" said Bottles eagerly.

Captain Tracey was already swarming up the taut cable. The Professor put up a good show, climbing hard, but Harry, just beneath him, rendered him noble assistance. They were only just in time, too, for scarcely had Bottles got clear of the ground when the wolves came leaping at him.

Even now it was touch and go, for the Supreme Unknown and his henchmen were rushing to the spot with guns—even rifles. Searchlights were blazing.

(*crack!*) The first rifle sounded, and Harry heard a bullet whine past his ear. But it was at that moment that Captain Tracey reached the airship. He climbed over a low rail, and was just in time to meet the attack of a man who came sleepily out of a half-opened doorway.

(*crash!*) Captain Tracey's fist bored its way into the fellow's mask, and with a scream the man backed to the rail and went toppling over. Dashing into the cabin, Captain Tracey looked round. It was the control chamber.



DYNAMITING FROM THE DUNGEONS.—The adventurers threw themselves flat on the ground as the dynamite exploded with a thunderous roar, and the dungeon door vanished into fragments.

better than suffering months of torture. On the other hand, if the explosion expends itself outwards, we may come through. It is a question which must be put to the vote."

"One and all they decided to take the chance. And without hesitation Captain Tracey lit the deadly fuse, and then he suddenly thrust the explosive in the crevice between the door bottom and the stone flags.

"Back!" he commanded. "Back to the rear of the dungeon—and lie flat on your faces."

They obeyed, and crouching there, they waited. Suddenly they heard excited voices from outside, a violent banging on the door, the rattle of one of the bolts, and then—

(*raaaaash—boooooom!*) There was a blinding flash of fire, a splintering of woodwork and a shattering of stone. The door and part of the arched doorway vanished into fragments. But the force of the explosion, as Captain Tracey had hoped, exerted itself outwards and downwards.

He and his companions were stunned and dazed by the shock; they suffered from many bruises and ugly grazes, but, in the main, they remained whole. And when the smoke cleared they saw an opening. The way of escape was clear!

Doomed To The Dungeons.

ONE of the lanterns in the passage was still burning, and by its light they saw that the two guards were outstretched on the floor, both of them unconscious. The captain took one of the

Crack! Crack! More shots were fired, and the Professor caught his breath as he felt a searing pain in his left calf. His leg became half-paralysed. Then abruptly the airship gave a mighty lurch. Propellers and helicopters roared into life, and so powerfully did they jerk at the mooring cable that it was torn completely out of its seating, on the ground.

"Hang on!" yelled Harry urgently.

It was a necessary warning. The next moment he and his companions were swaying dangerously. To climb another inch was impossible. All they could do was to hang on. Even now they felt their grip failing, and once or twice they slid down as the airship gained speed, rising rapidly into the upper air.

"Look—the great wall!" exclaimed Bottles gloatingly.

It was true. They were being carried right over the great wall, but their grip was weakening all the time. Professor Kingswood was the first to give up completely. His strength could no longer bear the strain; and Harry, who had been helping him, was exhausted, too. They both started slipping together—slipping precipitately. Bottles, below them, was helpless. He was thrust down until his palms were burning with the friction.

"Let go!" yelled Harry. "It's our only chance. There might be some wreckage at the bottom of this rope, and if we foul it we shall be killed."

With one accord they released their grip. They all believed that the fall would kill them. But they had forgotten the snow. Instead of striking hard ground, they plunged deep into a dense snowdrift, rolling over and over, bewildered, dazed, but unharmed.

At first Captain Tracey believed they had perished. He brought the airship to the ground lower down the mountain-slope. He leapt clear and, dashing back

through the snow, was amazed and delighted to see three figures struggling towards him.

"We've done it, dad!" almost sobbed Harry. "We're out!"

They got back on the airship, and it was Captain Tracey's intention to get her into the air again. But no sooner had they set foot aboard the craft than it started sliding bodily. Their very weight had done the trick. Once having started, it tobogganed giddily down the mountainside with ever-increasing speed.

Down they went—slithering, sliding, the great craft sending the snow in great cascades on either side. The mountain, on this side, was almost smooth—a great stretch of snow-covered expanse, sloping down into the valleys below.

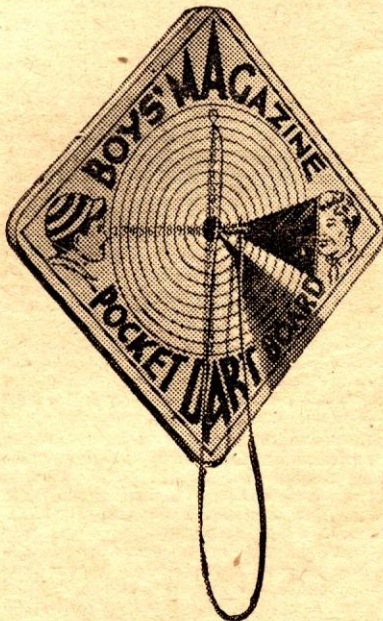
Two or three miles were covered in a few minutes, and then it was that more level ground was reached, and the speed became less. There were trees ahead—a gully—frowning rocks which jutted out from the snow. But before any disaster overtook the aircraft it sagged over into soft snow, slewed round, and came to rest.

In the distance twinkling lights could be seen—and down in the ravine the moonshine was gleaming on steel. A railway track! And a mountain train was even now lumbering heavily onwards.

"Freedom!" shouted Captain Tracey exultantly. "Come, Professor! One last spurt and we're saved!"

They reached the ravine, slithered down an embankment, and managed to get aboard the slowly-moving train. And thus they were carried away from Terrorland—back to civilisation and safety. And in spite of their hectic adventures they were able to spend a happy Christmas, after all.

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**Drama and Daring Deeds
on the Snowy Highway
Two Centuries Ago!**

**DICK TURPIN'S
XMAS TRIUMPH.**

**A Plot Against the Fleet
—Foiled By Our Four
Famous Highwaymen.**



**The Laughing Highwayman's
Last Duel of Wits—and Swords
—with the PHANTOM ARCHER**

The Press Gang.

"**T**HEN if naught will hold you here longer I give ye good-bye, Dick, old friend. I would fain work to gain ye all a king's pardon, but as ye'll ha' none on't, I am helpless."

The speaker, a sun-tanned handsome man in the naval habiliments of the times, addressed Dick Turpin, the hero highwayman, and his comrades: Sixteen String Jack, Joe Button, and Bootles, the giant black rumpad. He stood with the highwaymen, who were muffled in great-coats, booted and spurred, ready to take farewell of Cleeve Grange.

'Twas with no little regret that they were departing from Captain Cleeve's friendly roof, but the ways of the well-endowed king's messenger and a band of highwaymen lay in widely different paths. A service they had rendered to the gallant Captain had brought them his undying friendship and gratitude. They had saved him and certain precious documents of the Admiralty from the clutches of that international plotter, Giles L'eccon, or the Phantom Archer. Working for France, this miscreant had kidnapped Captain Cleeve, who had been travelling to Bristol with secret dispatches. The British fleet was about to sail from Bristol on a punitive expedition against the French invaders of the Netherlands. But if the information in those dispatches had reached our enemies across the water, annihilation of the British sailors would have been the result. Dick and his comrades had turned the tables, however, and the Phantom Archer had only escaped capture by a clever ruse. Now, after spending the night at the Grange, Dick's band were setting out with the avowed intention of laying the rascally French spy by the heels and handing him over to justice.

"One last word, Dick," quoth Captain Cleeve. "An ye wish to communicate with me ere the fleet

sails, I shall be aboard Admiral Covel's flagship. He is giving a Christmas dinner, after which we sail for the Netherlands at dawn. And so fare ye well, my gallant friends, highwaymen though ye be!"

Salutations over the rumpads swung into the saddles of their waiting horses and cantered off down the winding drive. 'Twas to the old seaport that Dick and the rest turned the horses' heads.

"Methinks the Phantom Archer will not let the fleet sail without one last desperate throw to prevent 'em. Though how he'll accomplish it, I ha' not the faintest notion," said Dick Turpin. "But we must watch the waterways for any suspicious move—an' then, eecod, we'll know how to act!"

Along the snowy highway their horses bore them, good Black Bess always in the lead. At a convenient hostelry the highwaymen stabled their nags. They had already feasted at the Grange and they set forth without delay on their mission. Peradventure they kept wary eyes open for any Bow Street Runners, their deadly enemies, who might be a-prowl.

Yet danger came from an entirely different source. The highwaymen were swinging down a narrow street that led to the river, when a sudden hullabaloo sounded and a dozen lusty sailors, with a youthful lieutenant at their head, burst into view. At once Dick guessed their significance.

"Quick, lads—run. 'Tis the press-gang!" he yelled, and with his comrades pounding behind him he fled back the way they had come. Seeing this, the pressmen hurtled after them. With these human bloodhounds in full cry behind them, the highwaymen turned into a network of alleyways, hoping thereby to throw their pursuers off the scent. The subterfuge only half-succeeded, for poor Joe Button, less fleet than the rest, lagged behind. To his assistance went Bootles, for, though Joe and the

big black rumpad were constantly at war, the latter had a genuine regard for the little ex-coachee.

"Burn me, Massa Button, hab you got a bunion?" questioned Bootles, even in this emergency unable to refrain from poking fun at his friend. "Here, take my hand!"

"Rat me, I ain't got no bunion," grunted Button, but he took Bootles' welcome hand, and the pair ran on. The delay had been fatal, however. The press-gang jumped upon them like a pack of wolves on a pair of fat oxen. A wild and whirling struggle ensued. Joe was quickly subdued, but Bootles fought like an ebony hercules. At one stage of the combat he picked up a brawny seadog bodily and flung the surprised foe among the rest, knocking half-a-dozen over like skittles. But desperately as the black rogue of the highways fought, he was at length overpowered and, trussed like a fowl, borne among his captors towards the seaway.

Meanwhile, Dick Turpin and Sixteen String Jack had discovered the absence of Bootles and Joe, and cast back through the streets to find them. This they did at last—but, alas, the twain were helpless prisoners of the pressmen, and 'twould be mere folly to attempt a rescue.

"Sdeath! This is a pretty pass," said Dick gloomily. "How to get 'em free, Jack?"

"Beats me, captain," returned the dandy rumpad, thinking hard. For the moment, all thought of their real mission in Bristol was wiped from the highway-men's minds.

"Somehow, we must get aboard the admiral's flagship. They'll be taken there to be sworn in. But how?"

Before Sixteen String Jack could answer, their attention was attracted by a startling scene. They had been walking as they talked, and, as they swung into the main Bristol highway, they came to a sudden stop. A coach stood on the cobblestones, its horses pawing restively. While, on the pavement, the occupant and the driver were engaged in a one-sided battle with a dozen swarthy knaves, who, at first sight, Dick saw were gipsies. The fare, a man well past middle age, was no match for his dastardly foes. Even as Dick and Jack came in sight, a cruel blow from a cudgel stretched the man senseless on the sidewalk.

"Hold a moment, Jack lad," hissed the hero highwayman, as his lieutenant made to dart to the rescue. "We are two against a dozen. So—take this!" And he nodded to one of a couple of large Christmas-trees, that were standing outside a tradesman's shop. Dick himself grabbed up the other one, and motioning to Jack to copy him, he held it in an on-guard position and charged with a blood-curdling yell at the footpads.

The startled gipsies turned at the cry—to behold the twin apparitions of Dick and Jack, with their strange weapons, coming down on them through the whirling snowflakes. Next moment they felt, as well as saw, those weapons—and liked it not a bit. For Dick and Jack hurtled full among them, scattering them left and right, yelling lustily in pain as the sharp needles stuck in their flesh. A half-hearted attempt was made by the leader to rally his Romany cut-throats, but he went down the next minute as Dick's Christmas-tree struck him full amidships. At the fall of their leader the rest turned tail.

As though by magic, the twisting old-world street cleared of human occupants save for the two rumpads and the gipsies' victim. The windows of the shops and houses hereabouts were devoid of watchers, for the hour was four of the afternoon, when everybody of those days partook of the main meal of the day.

So Dick and Jack, bending over the man they had

saved, did so without let. Dick Turpin dribbled some brandy from his flask between the white lips—to be rewarded almost instantly by a flicker of the man's eyelids, as his senses returned to him. Now he opened his eyes, and stared uncomprehendingly for a space at his rescuers.

"Soho, friend. How now?" asked Dick kindly, helping the footpads' victim to his feet.

"Not too well—but, ecod, better than 'twould ha' been, thanks to ye," answered the gentleman, rubbing his head dazedly. "Gad, look you, methinks I'll need some of my own physie!"

"H'm—a doctor, eh?" queried Dick.

"I am that same," returned the other, with a wry smile. "Apothecary William Andrews, at your service—attached to his Majesty's fleet. I was journeying thither to take up my appointment on the flagship, when these rascals attacked me!"

Now, at this mention of the fleet, Dick Turpin's thoughts turned again to Bootles and Joe Button. His agile mind was already planning how to use this meeting for the rescue of his friends.

"Sink an' burn me," quoth the leech, amazedly. "The cut-purses did not rob me, after all!" And he displayed a well-filled money-bag to the highway-men.

"Mayhap they had no time," murmured Dick, and all the while he was thinking on the wild yet strangely convincing notion that had come to him. The surgeon's coachman returned at this moment, looking, in truth, somewhat sheepish. He received a sound rating from his master, plentifully interspersed with round sea-oaths. Then, turning to his rescuers, Dr. Andrews held out his hand.

"I thank ye from the bottom o' my heart for what ye ha' done," he said earnestly. "Any time Surgeon Andrews can do aught to repay ye, why, let me know!" And, giving them his address, he prepared to depart. Dick laid a detaining hand on his brocaded sleeve. For a moment he had thought of enlisting the kindly surgeon's help to rescue Bootles and Joe, but thinking better on it, he said: "Tell me, surgeon, wilt be going straightway on board?"

"Rabbit me—nay. I must return home for a change of costume an' to mend my bruises. I shall catch the flagship ere she sails on the morning tide."

"Codso," muttered Dick, and renewing his farewells, left the old ship's doctor. As soon as Dick and Jack were out of sight of the surgeon's coach, the hero highwayman clutched his companion's sleeve with as great a show of excitement as he had ever permitted himself.

"Tell me, Jack, lad," he questioned, "where did we last ha' a set to wi' gippos?"

"Why, at Black Castle, the Phantom Archer's hang-out, till we drove the rascal thither! Why, Dick"—as he suddenly caught Turpin's meaning—"ye don't think these footpads had aught to do wi' the Frenchman!"

"I do," nodded his leader. "'Tis becoming plain to me that that attack on the admiral's surgeon was not meant for mere robbery. The Phantom Archer wanted to prevent Andrews from boarding the ship. And why should he wish to do that, if not so that he could take the surgeon's place?"

"Zounds, 'twould seem so, Dick!"

"Then, come! Methinks we, too, shall contrive to be present at the admiral's Christmas dinner—thereby killing two birds wi' one stone!"

The Bogus Doctor.

T WAS a goodly company that sat itself down before the groaning festive board in Admiral of the Fleet Phineas Covel's stateroom, aboard the *Royal George*. A uniform naval costume was not

introduced until twenty years after the date of this history, so that the captains, who were the admiral's guests, were brilliant in silver and brocade and silks and satins of varied hues.

And though many there knew they might never return from this mission to the Netherlands, no shadow was allowed to fall on their merriment. Had any whispered that England's deadliest enemy sat at the side of the admiral himself, he would have been laughed to scorn. One or two knew Giles L'eeon by sight, though none identified him now. He had relinquished the vestments of the Phantom Archer for another disguise—that of old Master Andrews, the surgeon of the flagship. As Dick had already guessed, the Frenchman had come aboard posing as Andrews, though he did not know of Dick's rescue of the real surgeon from his gipsy kidnappers.

Suddenly a hush fell over the scene, the noisy, good-humoured chatter was stilled, and all eyes turned towards the entrance. The doors had been flung wide, and two serving-men appeared bearing a huge charger between them, on which was a smoking, steaming boar's head. And so savoury was the odour arising from that yuletide dish that a chorus of shouts went up from the feasters.

do, methinks," he answered in the voice of Dick Turpin, for 'twas none other than the highwayman and his friend, Sixteen String Jack. The pair had managed to get jobs in the cook's galley aboard the *Royal George*, in furtherance of Dick's plan to outwit the Phantom Archer. It only remained to put his suspicions of the ship surgeon's true identity to the test.

The opportunity to do this was not long delayed. For as he was placing another boar's head before the admiral for him to carve, Dick acted. As though by accident he brushed his shoulder against the massive candelabra at the admiral's elbow, sending it toppling. Then, muttering an apology, he swiftly grabbed it ere it fell—and deliberately held it so that the flame of one of the candles was directly under the surgeon's wig. Next moment that elaborate, over-powdered creation burst into flame.

"*Nom d'un nom!* Careless dolt!" hissed the supposed surgeon, tearing the burning wig from his head. And thus he doubly betrayed himself. Startled at sound of that French oath issuing from the lips of an English surgeon, the officers stared at the man who now sat wigless and with his false eyebrows badly singed.



THE CHRISTMAS TREE CHARGE.—With blood-curdling yells, Dick and Jack charged at the startled gipsies, who were bowled over by the prickly Christmas trees.

"Aisy, now, aisy, gemmen," quoth the chief cook, who had entered behind the bearers of the dish. "Old 'ard, an' we'll ha' ye all served, begorra!" He was a big, red-faced Irishman—and he filled the part of server of the boar's head to perfection. After a preliminary wipe of his huge carving-knife against the steel, he set to with a will, and the two serving-men were kept busy handing round smoking, hot plates of the delicacy to the diners.

"Egad, Dick," whispered one of the servants as these two perspiring menials passed each other, "tis hot work—warmer than fleeing from the Red-breasts!"

The other grinned at his companion's red face. "Ha' patience, Jack, we'll soon ha' other work to

"Giles L'eeon! 'Tis the French spy!" thundered the admiral. "Hold him!"

Half-a-dozen men leapt up to seize the miscreant, but ere their eager fingers could reach him, the Phantom Archer flung himself backwards from his chair. Even Dick Turpin was not prepared for what happened then, for almost in the same movement the fellow jumped clean through the window of the stateroom.

For a moment even the naval discipline could not prevent confusion. Under cover of it Dick and Jack went through the window after the Phantom Archer. They saw him swimming strongly away from the ship, but did not immediately follow. Instead, at a command from Dick Turpin, the twain made for a

row-boat they had previously tied to a buoy close by. In this they had already arranged for Joe Button and Bootles to make their get-away, but, apparently, the prisoners had not yet been able to saw through the port-hole bars of their prison with the file Dick had smuggled in to them.

"No matter—we can return for them," panted Dick, as he and Jack dropped dripping wet into the two rowing seats. "Follow L'eeon!"

Pulling like furies at the oars, the two highwaymen sent the frail craft shooting in the direction in which they had last seen their quarry. For a time there was no sign of him in the darkness; then Dick caught a glimpse of a bobbing head. The spy was swimming on a course that would bring him to land some distance from the shore-lights. He was, indeed, so far ahead that 'twould be impossible for the row-boat to overhaul him ere he reached the land.

A splash sounded from the *Royal George*. They had launched the admiral's cutter to search for the fugitive. But half-an-hour later the sailors returned to the parent vessel—empty-handed.

In that short space, Dick and Jack had their fill of excitement and peril. They grounded their boat on a deserted beach, scarcely a minute after L'eeon had scrambled ashore. Up a dark alley they darted in pursuit—to run full tilt, at the corner, into a company of Bow Street Messengers, led by Tom Noddy himself.

"Sdeath, 'tis Turpin! After him, foos!" bawled Tom as the two highwaymen slipped adroitly passed the Runners and were lost in the gloom.

Thus far the night had been overcast; now it began to snow. Big, icy flakes that blew wickedly into the faces of the Runners, making their pursuit even more difficult. Dick and Jack got their share of the snowflakes, too, but their masks, which they had hastily donned, gave them some measure of protection.

The chase now led back towards the sea—came out on the seashore itself. Here the Phantom Archer seemed to disappear into the sheer side of an overhanging cliff, but, running on, Dick and his ally found the entrance to a dark and narrow tunnel. Without hesitation they plunged down it. Gradually the cave widened, until, turning a bend, the highwayman saw a red glow ahead.

"Careful, now, Jack," cautioned the hero highwayman. "Methinks we're nearing the end of the trail."

Dick spoke truth, for, creeping along close to the wall, the pair found the tunnel terminated in a vast cave. Crouching in the shadows, they peered into it—and their eyes widened at the strange scene thus unfolded to their gaze. Like the setting for some grotesque stage-play, the cave was hung with stalactites that glistened and glittered in the light from dozens of blazing torches round the walls. About twenty gypsies clustered round their leader, asking sagerly for news.

"News, say you? *Sacré bleu*, all is almost done. See!" He showed them a heavily sealed envelope. "These are Admiral Covell's sealed orders to the fleet. I am taking them to France aboard the lugger that sails an hour hence. Though 'tis only a precaution, friends. For"—here his voice was raised dramatically—" 'tis very unlikely that the English fleet will sail at all!"

"How so, master. Tell us!" chorused the dark-skinned listeners.

A gloating smile twisted the Frenchman's saturnine face.

" 'Tis soon told," he replied. "As you know there is a feast in progress aboard the flagship. I have just been there—impersonating the ship's surgeon. A dog of a waiter made it necessary for me to flee the ship—but my work had already been done. In

sooth I was only waiting an opportunity to retire from the feast. For before it commenced, I seized an opportunity to visit the cook's galley, when it was unoccupied, and I treated the pudding with an ingredient of my own. It is the most deadly explosive known to the world—far more potent than gunpowder! Can you picture what will happen when the admiral's Christmas pudding is set alight? It will—"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" A gay, mocking laugh suddenly cut into the plotter's speech. And at the unexpected interruption, his face blanched for a moment in almost superstitious fear. For with that laugh he was already only too familiar.

"Dick Turpin!" he gasped.

The King's Christmas Present.

DICK TURPIN had been far from laughing mood, when he set that peal echoing through the cave and the passage that led to it. Both he and Sixteen String Jack had listened with the blood almost freezing in their veins, to Giles L'eeon's dastardly plan. Only too well they could imagine what would happen when the brandy was lit on that huge Christmas pudding. The explosion would kill, or maim, every one of the feasters. Worse! it would set fire to the ship, and, in those days of wooden vessels, fire spread rapidly. It could easily travel through the whole fleet, for the ships were anchored close together.

It had seemed a bitter jest of Fate that, at that terrible moment, the voice of Tom Noddy had sounded outside, urging his men into the cave. They had followed the highwaymen's footprints through the snow to the entrance. But the appearance of these new foes had given the resourceful highwayman a desperate plan. Caught between the devil, in the shape of the Phantom Archer and his minions, and the deep sea (Tom Noddy & Co.) he decided to let the deep sea drown the devil! Hence that laugh, with which he had deliberately betrayed his presence to the Runners!

"As I thought—the rascals are here!" thundered Tom Noddy. "Seize 'em!"

Like a human torrent, the Bow Street Runners came dashing along the tunnel, blunderbusses ready to fire. And as they did so, Dick gripped Sixteen String Jack's arm and drew him into the shelter of a deep alcove in the tunnel wall. The Runners never saw them in the gloom. They shot past the highwaymen's hiding-place and hurtled on into the cavern itself. There they halted in surprise at sight of a score of gypsies, instead of the two rumpads they sought. But not for long did they hesitate. For, the gypsies attacked like a pack of wolves.

Followed a whirling combat in which Dick and Jack were forgotten by both parties. As for those worthies they were running, as though pursued by the fiend, for the spot where they had hidden the little rowboat.

"Pull for your life, Jack!" gritted the hero highwayman, as they ran the boat out into the waves. And both bent to the oars with a will.

Ahead of them the riding lights of the fleet winked and beckoned. Could they reach the *Royal George* in time?

The voice of the look-out hailed them; Dick replied with some swiftly concocted tale of their being two cooks returning with extra food for the banquet, still in progress. 'Twould be useless to tell the fellow their real mission. So wild and fantastic a tale would hardly be believed.

So they trod the decks of the flagship once more. Sobbing for breath they ran, stumbling over the coils of rope that lay in their path. But at last they

gained the door of the big state-room—and flung it open.

The scene that met their gaze lived in Dick's mind ever afterwards. A score of startled faces turned towards them from the table, and there, in the centre of it, the great Christmas pudding wreathed in blue flame.

"Back, gentlemen—for your lives!" roared Dick Turpin. In three strides he went across the room, snatched up the pudding before any could stay him,

In this latter Dick spoke too soon. For the highwayman band were entering the Bristol inn where they had stabled Black Bess and the rest of their nags, when Mine Host accosted Dick with a message. The highwayman tore open the missive with a puzzled frown. A single strip of parchment met his gaze. On it was penned the legend:

*Meet me if thou darest at the West cross-roads
midnight... Swords. The Phantom Archer.*

For a moment even the debonair Dick Turpin was



SINGING THE SWINDLER.—As Dick placed the boar's head on the table, he knocked the candlestick under the bog's surgeon's wig, which instantly caught alight.

and flung it like a thunderbolt through the window. "Blood and death! What ails ye, rascal. I'll ha' ye keel-hauled for this. Sink an——"

A terrific lurch of the *Royal George* capsized the admiral, putting an abrupt end to his speech. As though it came from the very bowels of the earth, a dull, rumbling explosion sounded. The vessel lurched again—forward this time till it seemed her bowsprit must be awash. For the next sixty seconds she behaved like a ship in a bad storm; then, gradually, the sickening motion ceased and she lolloped gently on the winter sea.

"Sdeath!" quoth the admiral simply, mopping his brow with a voluminous silk kerchief. "What hath happened. Ha' the devil come?"

Laughing now that the danger was passed, Dick Turpin told the admiral the whole story of the Phantom Archer's grim plot. He was substantiated in some of the details by Captain George Cleave himself, who had been one of the guests at the feast. When Bootles and Joe were mentioned, the choleric yet kindly old admiral ordered their instant release from durance vile, and allowed Dick to buy them out of the navy for the nominal sum of one penny.

The feast was concluded with Dick and his comrades as honoured guests, and when they took their leave, just before the fleet weighed anchor, a salvo of cannon gave them the admiral's salute.

"Egad, lads—all's well that ends well. Now, heigho, for the highway once more! Methinks Tom Noddy and his Redbreasts will take good care of the Phantom Archer."

nonplussed. He stared with wide-open eyes at this message from the man he thought safely in the hands of the Law. Then his gay laugh rang out.

"A challenge for a duel—a trifling affair of honour," he told his comrades, and showed them the Phantom Archer's challenge. "Well, if Tom Noddy hath fumbled his capture, methinks I must present our Frenchman to King George myself!"

It wanted a quarter to midnight when the four highwaymen, muffled in greatcoats, rode away from their cosy inn for Dick's meeting with his bitter foe.

Giles L'eccon already awaited them at the west cross-roads. Shorn of his allies, the gipsies, who had all been apprehended by the Runners, he himself only escaping by a desperate bid for liberty; all his plotting come to naught, the French plotter lived for only one thing—to exact vengeance on the man who had outwitted him at every turn.

So, in silence, the two enemies faced each other across the snow. The formalities over, Dick fell into an easy position, his handsome face wearing his inimitable, debonair smile. Giles L'eccon's own visage was a twisted, white mask of malevolence.

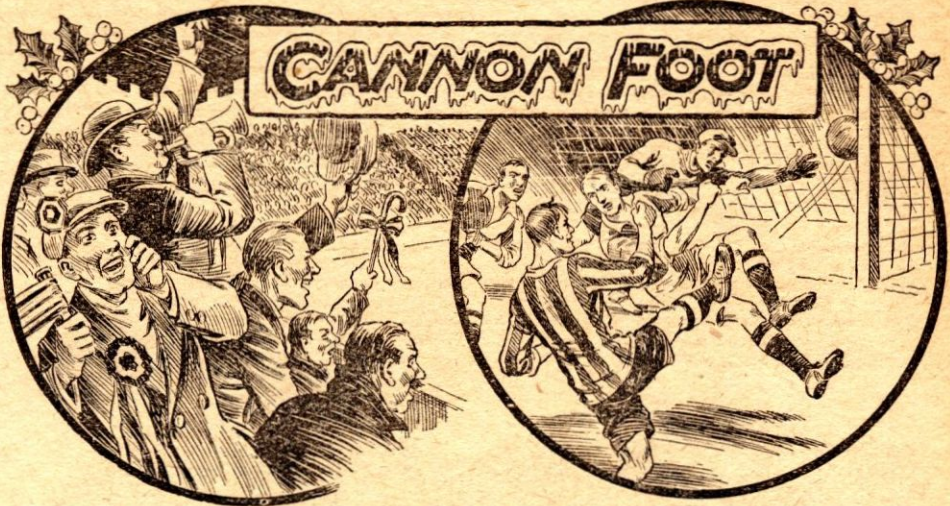
Then they were at it. Guard, riposte, parry! The blades flashed like white fire in the moonlight. For what seemed an age to the watching highwaymen, the duel ran its course; neither man giving the other an opportunity for the fatal thrust. Then, as suddenly as it had begun the rapier play ended. With a masterly stroke Dick Turpin got through the spy's guard. A quick twist of the wrist and he sent L'eccon's blade flying to the snow.

Now he held his own weapon's point at the Frenchman's breast.

"I win, *monsieur*?" he suggested icily.

(Continued on page 32.)

GUNMEN OVER-RUN THE ROVERS' FOOTBALL GROUND.



JOHN HUNTER'S GIGANTIC FOOTBALL YARN.

Wannaker's Warning.

SHEER terror kept Wannaker's right foot down hard as the big car sliced through the darkness towards Melchester. What was to happen at the end of the journey, Wannaker could not guess; but what would happen if he attempted in any way to avoid reaching that journey's end, was very apparent to him.

He had tried to murder Dotty in a peculiarly cruel fashion and, judging the lad by his own standards, he was unable to visualise him as bent on anything but vengeance. That that vengeance would descend on him if he failed in the slightest degree to carry out Dotty's instructions, he did not doubt.

So on he went, the engine maintaining a steady roar and keeping the speedometer needle on the fifty-five mark for most of the distance.

Dotty sat hunched beside Wannaker and said nothing. He kept the man's gun in his hand, though he would not have used it for anything in the world, except to save his own life. He had no use for guns, nor for men who used them. After all, the pistol is the weapon of the coward.

Hours passed. Wannaker's sight was blurred. He had driven very hard, and without a stop, and the drive was having its effect on him. At last, however, they saw some tiny dots of yellow light far ahead of them, against the blackness of the night. They were running into Melchester.

Dotty issued instructions. "Do you drive straight to the football ground," he ordered. "Do you know it?"

"I should say I do," answered Wannaker. "I didn't live in Melchester with poor old Dan all that time for nothing."

"Poor old Dan," grinned Dotty. "I forgot him. Well, as you know the ground very well, pull up outside the main entrance gates, and as you get near them, switch your headlights off so that no warning of your approach is given."

Wannaker shot a swift sideways look at him, forgetting his fear in his amazement.

"Are you going to the ground at this time in the morning?" he asked. "What's the big idea?"

"You just go," ordered Dotty.

Wannaker drove on. He was plainly thinking, as he did so, for he gasped: "The stuff. It's hidden in the ground! I've got you now. Jawkes played for Melchester. . . . And Dan and I never thought of it!"

"There were lots of things you and Dan didn't think of," grinned Dotty. "And that's one of them."

Wannaker said nothing. He now knew that the loot was concealed in the football ground somewhere, and, being what he was, he determined that if chance offered he would secure it. The car reached the outskirts of Melchester. Wannaker switched off its headlights, and it drifted on its way with only sidelights showing. The time was about half-past three in the morning, and the streets were utterly deserted.

They reached the big main gates of the ground.

"I go over these," whispered Dotty smiling. "And thankee for the lift. I shouldn't try and hang about if I were you. I might hurt you by mistake." He showed the gun.

Wannaker's teeth bared. "I see. I'm given the kick-off when I've done the driving, eh?"

Dotty's face was very close to his, and Dotty spoke very quietly.

"You'll be given more than the kick-off if you talk like that," he said.

Wannaker made no reply. Dotty slid out of the car, dropping the gun into his pocket as he did so, and, taking a running jump, got a hold on the top of the gate. He pulled himself up and vanished on the other side.

Wannaker gave him a minute's law, and then, leaving the car, he slipped along the fencing and climbed it some distance from the gate.

There were lights showing by the stand. The Halway gang were undoubtedly at work already. The great ground itself was a lake of utter darkness, and the lights might have been the lights of boats showing across black water. There was something

erie about the whole scene, and Dotty, despite his cast-iron nerve, shivered slightly as he climbed the steep slope and began to descend the terraces of the main bank.

A football ground, he thought, was entirely different at night from what it was on a Saturday afternoon when a game was in progress and it was packed with people. It seemed that the ghosts of old dead footballers now paraded the blackened turf below him.

The place seemed immense. The big main open bank was a veritable mountain, its crush barriers rising constantly before him, impeding his progress; for he could not see them in the darkness, until he touched them.

In addition, a thaw had set in, and the banks were wet and slushy. There was no longer any snow on the roof of the stand, and all about him he could hear the trickle of running water. This added to the feeling of mystery which hung across the ground.

He dropped over the barrier at the bottom of the big terrace and found himself on the well-known

Then, unable to bear the suspense any longer, he once again moved forward.

As he drew near to the stand he could hear the sounds of muffled knocking, and he guessed the gang were hard at work on the tremendous concrete platform on which the stand stood. They had to cut through about five feet of this platform before they could reach the hiding-place Jawkes had devised.

This was going to take them a long time, for the concrete was reinforced: and Dotty could not see how they could accomplish their object by morning. Daylight would mean discovery, for the Rovers' staff always visited the ground, even on a Sunday, as was the morrow.

Suddenly it dawned on him. Halway, a desperate and tremendous scoundrel, might have no intention of leaving the ground. He might intend to go on with the work in the day time. After all, Sunday suited him. No players came for practice. The offices were shut. Only the head groundsman and sometimes the manager came down just to look round.

Dotty began to see Halway's supreme cleverness



THE MACHINE-GUN TERROR.—From the darkness behind came the sharp crack of rifles, and bullets spattered around Dotty as he raced for the banking.

playing pitch. He made straight for the stand, going soundlessly on the now soft ground. It was not wet, however, for the snow had been swept from it, with its protection of straw.

His idea was to slip unseen into some portion of the vast stand and investigate what was toward. If the Halway gang had, as of course he had reason strongly to suspect, found the loot, he wanted to get hold of the confession clearing his brother, and then put the police on to them.

It was, you will say, a fair ambition, and, indeed, even Dotty wondered if he could achieve it as he loped lightly and soundlessly across the sward.

As he moved the lights went out. This brought him to a standstill. Did it mean that his presence in the ground was known? Was a trap being prepared for him—that he might walk straight into it? He stood motionless and considered these things for some minutes.

Halway was taking advantage of the week-end's idleness, and before that week-end was over, he would have cut through the slab of concrete and have lifted from beneath it the immense hoard of loot.

Dotty hurried on. The lights which had gone out as he crossed the ground showed momentarily once more. It was now clear to him that various men, were on sentry duty about the stand, and that these men occasionally flicked on electric torches to assist them to see their unaccustomed beats. He could calculate fairly certainly that he was as yet undiscovered.

He went right round the stand to the back. There everything was quiet save for the continued and even, muffled knocking as Halway's men drove in the steel crowbars they were using to break through the concrete platform.

Near the main door into the offices was a small window, which Dotty soon saw had been forced.

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR THE KING

(Continued from page 29.)

And seeing his fate in the highwayman's narrowed eyes the spy's courage left him. He sank on his knees in the snow babbling for mercy.

"Mercy? You, who would have sent thousands of Englishmen to a helpless death, ask for mercy?" gritted Dick. "Nay, 'tis not mine to give."

But 'twas impossible to slay the cringing wretch before him. Another way suggested itself and he suddenly sheathed his blade.

"Hold him!" he commanded to Bootles. Helpless in the black's iron grip, the French spy suffered himself to be tied with a length of cord Dick carried in his saddle-bag. Close by, a gibbet showed stark and sinister. To this he was taken and hung in the chains.

And on the notice-board, used by the authorities for the names of criminals placed in the gibbet, Dick scrawled the words:

A Christmas Present to the King, from Dick Turpin.

Don't miss the dashing exploits of Captain Lefarge next week in his attempts to rescue Napoleon. Make sure you read this glamorous old-time yarn.

CANNON FOOT (Continued from previous page.)

Dotty cautiously opened the already smashed window and slid through it.

He went downstairs, descending some stone steps which took him underneath the ground level of the great stand, and down to what, for want of a better term, might be called its cellars, where Halway and his folk would be working.

He came into view of the workers. He peeped round the buttress of a concrete wall and saw them.

As he did this a man rushed into the circle of light. Instantly three guns covered him. The man was Wannaker.

Halway, leaning against a girder, asked: "What's this, Wannaker? Do you want to follow Vorgan?"

"No!" Wannaker panted. "I've come to help you. Bideford's here. He's in this stand at this minute. I know—because I followed him into the ground. I brought him up from London in a car. If you don't get him, your game's blown."

Gunmen in the Grandstand.

AS Wannaker panted these words, Dotty realised how serious had been his mistake when he left the man free outside the football ground. Wannaker had betrayed him, and it was now only a question as to whether he would get away with his life.

Halway was uttering curt words of command. Dotty waited for no more. He turned and fled. If Halway were to be prevented from winning through, he, Dotty, had to get out of the ground alive. He now could see that. He could follow all Halway's reasoning quite clearly.

Halway could ensure the whole of Sunday to himself by the simple expedient of hiding his men in the bowels of the stand during the short time the groundsman was there on Sunday morning; and thus, if he prevented Dotty from getting away, he would until the small hours of Monday, remain unsuspected. That would spell success. He would be through the concrete before then.

Dotty began to run. The noise of his flight awoke a clamour, and the hunt was instantly up. Dotty naturally made for the shortest way out, through the rear part of the stand. But he found this blocked.

As he turned a corner there was a bang, and something crashed viciously against the angle of concrete by his head. He turned and bolted, two gunmen in hot pursuit. He knew his life hung by a thread. Any one of the bullets might bring him down. And, thinking this, he told himself that if

he could get into the open, even if it were but to the terraces or playing pitch, they would not fire at him, for fear of raising an alarm. Only in the confines of the rooms below the stand did they shoot, where the reports could not be heard.

Thinking this, he bored for the front of the stand and the well-known passageway through which he and the other players came out to the field on match-days.

Two men tried to bar his path. He came on them so unexpectedly that they could do nothing but fling themselves in his way as he burst through into the open. He hit them—left, right—skittled them to the touchline, and rushed on to the pitch.

There he felt safer. They had to locate him. He had a great many points to choose from for making his escape from the ground. He thought he had won to safety.

But in that he was wrong, and instantly realised it, Halway could not afford to let him break from the ground. Halway had to prevent him from doing so at all costs. Whatever happened afterwards, Halway must stay Dotty's flight.

A dozen powerful electric torches leapt to life, sweeping the ground like miniature searchlights. One of them, racing widely, touched Dotty, checked, held him and the others instantly concentrated on him.

A shot rang out. It was not the shot of a pistol, but the harder, more vicious voice of a rifle. Something went across Dotty's shoulders with a venomous whine—a high-speed rifle bullet.

Instantly Dotty realised his danger. That the rifle might awake the whole neighbourhood was no consolation to him, if it killed him in doing so. He flung himself on the ground and began to crawl. In that position, the electric torches could not show him up so plainly, but the rifleman had another shot at him, and the bullet plugged deep into the turf, so close to him, that he felt uncomfortably prickly about the spine.

However, he reached the rails at the far side of the ground and gathered himself for the risk of climbing them. By this time the men with the torches were advancing across the grass, and Dotty knew he must take a chance. He stood up and vaulted the rails. Instantly a shot rang out. The bullet actually plucked at his jacket sleeve, so accurate was the sharpshooter, and he dropped with a rush to the far side of the barrier.

The scene was now weird in the extreme, for lights were stabbing all over the football ground, and were making great white circles which crawled up and swept along the terraced bankings as they searched for Dotty.

Dotty, crouching low, was running along the low level behind the rails. He guessed they would watch the banking immediately above the spot he crossed, and he wanted to make a break for liberty at another point, and unexpectedly.

He made this break at the far end, where he knew there was a comparatively low fencing beyond the other drop of the terrace, a fencing which cut the ground off from a number of narrow alleys, wherein pursuit would be difficult.

Climbing the terrace was more than hazardous, for the rifleman opened fire again. More ominous still, two other rifles added their fire to that of the first, and Dotty began to realise the full extent of Halway's dangerous game.

He was near the top of the banking, when the ultimate peril of the night was presented to him. From away behind him, in the darkness, came the unmistakable and sinister staccato chatter of a machine-gun.

How can Cannon Foot escape this new peril? Don't miss the astonishing developments in next week's gripping chapters of this grand Footer yarn.

THE ICE PIRATES*(Continued from page 17.)*

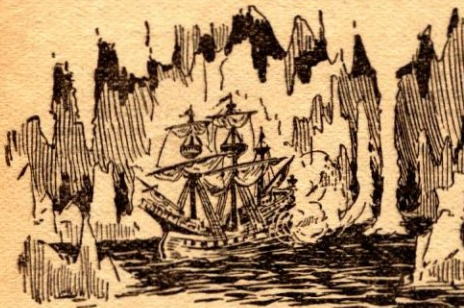
in the weird half-light. Under the impetus of its flashing oars, the galliot moved through the water like a striking torpedo.

"Look out, Phil . . . b'gosh!" cried Roger sharply with a hissing intake of his breath as he leapt to his feet.

But the suddenness of the attack took the boys all unwarned, even if they could have done anything against far superior numbers of such ferocious foes. The armoured prow of the galley crashed into the boat, smashing it like a cockleshell and precipitating the lads into the water. But the German submarine commander, Carl Lieberstrom was not there.

A moment ere the alarm was raised, he had jumped into the water, waist-deep and waded hastily to the rock, clambering up the wet slippery sides to the weird cavern-land above ere the pirates discovered that he was missing.

The *Pride of Bideford*, warping to shore, was moving now as if under a spanking breeze. More than that, the long swivel-gun on the fore-castle, which was the ship's pride and the master-gunner's



THE HUMAN TARGET.—At the point of the sword, Phil and Roger were forced to climb the rigging. Instantly the guns of the other vessel ceased firing for fear of hitting the two boys

joy, had commenced to open fire on the pirate's rigging.

Across the waters of the whirlpool a sound rolled like a clap of thunder. Another—and another. Clouds of smoke belled from the fore-castle, and great splashes uprose a few yards astern the pirate galliot. The *Pride of Bideford* was getting range. In a few moments she would be able to open with a devastating broadside from all her starboard ports.

In a very fury Captain Crossbones ordered the prisoners to be hauled aboard, and wet and dripping the lads were dragged to the mainstays and ordered to clamber up and exhibit themselves.

"Thunder! If they fire on us now, we are lost," gritted Captain Crossbones. While Black Mayo cursed the pirate chief roundly, his one eye glaring like a live coal.

"Ye have mismanaged it," he rasped. "Swizzle and sink me, we must make through the Straits into Pirate's Pool ere we're blown out of the water."

But the next instant the firing ceased. Aboard the *Pride of Bideford* Captain Silent had issued frantic orders, and the plan now was to sail in and engage the enemy closely.

"SOFTLY, softly, Silas," Captain Crossbones almost whispered, turning his narrowed, glittering eyes on his second-in-command. "There be a man escaped!" he roared. "Look

to it. Find him and seize he, ye dogs, or by thunder—"

He broke off. From the caveland above, a guttural voice cut harshly across the water.

"Ach! I am here!"

A startled look leaping in his eyes, the pirate chief looked up and saw Carl Lieberstrom, framed against the ice-caves.

Captain Crossbones seemed taken aback. Then he became contemptuous, but alert. His hands hovered over the pistols stuck in his sash.

"Seize him, men!" he growled.



Carl Lieberstrom smiled thinly. And he held up the log book. Something there was about him that stopped the pirates' rush.

"I did gom to der Lost Land to help you get away," he purred, "vere you might all be rich, der richest men in der world. But vat do I find? *Captain Crossbones is a traitor to der rest!*"

With an enraged, surprised hiss the pirate chief whipped out his pistol's. But Carl Lieberstrom spoke on, in low cat-tones.

"It was agreed to divide der treasure, *nicht wahr?* And it was all took off der ships and hid in a cave. Tell me if I am wrong!"



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**BOYS' MAGAZINE LEAGUE
COUPON.**

Boys' Magazine, 24/12/32.

"He iss der traitor," Carl Lieberstrom hissed. "He has take der treasure from der cave and load it in gallions hid out in der Frozen Sea."

"Art a foul liar!" shrieked Captain Crossbones, as with one accord they turned on him. "Take this!" he rasped as he pulled up his pistols. Two flashes followed. But the range was long. And Carl Lieberstrom had known it beforehand.

His lips drawn back from his teeth, he raised his own modern, high-precision weapon. And deliberately he shot Captain Crossbones dead. With a wild

scream the pirate threw up his arms and spun round. Then he toppled headlong off the poopdeck into deep water under the ship's side.

Carl Lieberstrom, smiling thinly, cruelly, his smoking revolver in hand, came clambering down the rocky ledge.

"I will show you vere der treasure iss hid!" he cried harshly. "Ja wohl! And lead you out of der Lost Land. I will be your chief!"

Such was the terrific dominance of his personality that they accepted him at once. A great oar was laid down, and he crossed it as a plank. They hailed him with growls and shouts of acclaim.

"Fetch der poys!" he grated with his hands in his pockets.

Grumbling, Black Mayo obeyed. He looked upon himself as the logical successor, but events had taken him by surprise.

Roger and Phil, their minds spinning with horror, were dragged roughly before Carl Lieberstrom. And he looked at them with his glittering, pitiless eyes.

Softly he purred his question: "You want to join mein crew—share in der treasure?"

Phil shivered; Pitaluk, the Eskimo, who had been dragged forward also, merely looked stoical. But Roger said stoutly:

"You go to blazes! Captain Silent'll be on you in a minute!"

Carl Lieberstrom struck him then a vicious, slashing uppercut, which ripped the flesh of his cheek. And at his command half-a-dozen of the villains fell upon the lads and hazed them unmercifully, pummeling them, knocking them down and kicking them. Every foul blow they used, and even stalwart Roger lay supine at last, his body a mass of shooting pains.

In a despairing daze, however, he realised that the pirate galliot had put about, and that flashing oars were carrying her swiftly away from her pursuer. She was making for Guardian Rock and the straits through into Pirates' Pool.

The Death Spiders.

ROGER TREHERNE felt the sting and splash of icy cold water, as it was dashed over him where he lay on the poop of the galliot, and it revived him somewhat.

The three lads were jerked to their feet, and their wrists were cruelly tied behind their backs with hemp rope.

Swiftly the pirate galliot, under the impetus of its oars, struck inland. The cave was near by, as the pirates knew well, and they tumbled over one another in their eagerness to reach it, hustling the lads roughly amongst them.

"There! I told 'ee 'twas so!" cried Black Mayo triumphantly.

They had rounded a dark corner and had come in sight of the cave of treasure. And Roger and Phil stared with starting eyes, suddenly overcome by sickness and horror.

There, covering the large entrance to the cave, was spread a thick black spider's web, and over it crawled innumerable spiders the size of a man's fist. Behind could dimly be discerned the treasure!

Chest upon chest of it, some of them open and overflowing with doubloons and pieces of eight.

"Ve will see how much treasure is dere," said Carl Lieberstrom grimly. And then he turned his bright cruel glare on the boys.

"Tie dem together, and push dem into the web," he said gloatingly. "Let the spiders get dem—den we can get in der cave!"

Into the web of the Death Spiders! How can the boys avert this terrible fate? Thrills beyond belief in next week's breath-taking episodes.

FATTY SLOCUM— SANTA CLAUS!

(Continued from page 10.)



selves choking, their senses reeled drunkenly and the whole world seemed to be whirling about them as they staggered blindly forward. As if in a dream, they heard that cackling laugh ring out again mockingly in their ears, and then they stumbled heavily into unconsciousness.

JOHNNY GEE came to his senses, with a feeling of sickening horror in his brain. His chums were with him, and they were all lying on the stone floor of a low, vault-like chamber, in complete darkness save for the flickering yellow light of a hand-lamp that stood on the floor. The other Removites, too, were coming back to consciousness, and one by

one they staggered to their feet, looking round them with eyes wide with wonder. A noisome, suffocating stench was in the close atmosphere of the vault. Through cracks in the stone slabs that formed the floor, dark grey fumes were arising, fumes that revolted and sickened them. Poison gases from an underground sewer or well that had gone stagnant through the centuries!

The Removites, choking and dazed, crowded to the oak door of the vault and beat upon it with their fast ebbing strength. But it would not move! They were locked in that awful lethal chamber, to meet a horrible doom through suffocation!

One by one, the hapless juniors collapsed on the floor, crying out feebly and choking in the fumes that gathered thicker around them.

A black mist seemed to swim before Johnny Gee's eyes, and he knew that his last moments had come . . . but suddenly, through his swirling senses he caught the sound of a lock grating and the big oak door coming open!

Realism came, with a swift gust of cold, fresh air that swept away the death-bringing vapours and relieved his burning lungs. Johnny staggered to his feet with a glad cry as Marmaduke Mist and Gan Chignook appeared in the doorway.

"Thank—goodness—you've come, Mist!" cried the Remove captain, and he looked round wildly. The others were groping their way to the door, too!

They lost no time in leaving that deadly lethal chamber. Mist led them through a series of dark underground passages, until they came out into the parts of the school vaults that they recognised and so back to the library.

The Blizzard Wolves.

THE following morning, the juniors made a wide search at St. Giddy's for traces of the "ghost."

Marmaduke Mist, his notebook full of weird entries and r-forness, kept assiduously "on the scent," and so dark and mysterious were his methods, that the others quite lost the run of him.

"Well, chaps, we've drawn blank so far!" said Johnny Gee, when they were once more gathered in the library. "Perhaps, to-night, we'll be able to get on the track of something. This much is certain—it's the work of a real villain, and not a jape."

"Hi! Hoo!" Gan Chignook broke out with a sudden startled cry. "Listen! Mere spookums!"

The Removites listened in startled wonderment for, sure enough, from somewhere along the corridor came weird noises. They rushed out, and traced the sounds to the Remove Form room.

"Golly, golly, boys—de ghost am in de chimney fo' sure!" gasped Snowball.

"Yah-ah-ahhhhhhh!" *Swoooooosh!* There was a sudden fiendish howl and a grisly form came whirling down from the chimney, to land in a heap in the wide, open fireplace.

Well, might Johnny Gee & Co. and their Eskimo pal stand and gasp! It was a living edition of Santa Claus himself that had come so precipitately down the Form room chimney! And, as they stood staring, the figure stirred, and a choking gurgle came from under the beard. They saw, then, that the apparition had a blackened notebook in one hand, whilst with the other it was attempting to adjust a huge pair of horn-rimmed spectacles on its nose!

"Mist!" yelled Johnny Gee. "Oh, my only sainted topper! Mist, you awful duffer, what's the lark—hey!"

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"*Yow-wow-wow!*" Mist arose, shedding soot in all directions. "Wh-where am I? *Groogh!* Is that you, my dear Gee? I was following a secret passage, and it apparently led into a chimney, and I—I tumbled down it. *Ow-wow!* Pray do not be alarmed—I merely put on this disguise to scare the unknown marauder, should I meet him—"

"Poor old Mist!" chuckled Johnny Gee. "He's—Hallo! Is that the telephone?"

From afar, the telephone bell in the prefects' room was jangling. Johnny Gee hurried along to answer the call.

"That was Mr. Tobias Pemberton on the 'phone!" he said, when he had hung up the receiver. "He's on his way from London, and is going to look in on us, to see how things are going."

Chignook, meanwhile, was in the quadrangle with Timothy Catchpole, the inventive genius of the Remove. Catchpole had evolved a marvellous sailing-sled, fitted with huge revolving sails, like a helicopter, that enabled it to go forwards or backwards, and to rise in the air.

The little Eskimo was greatly taken up with Catchpole's sailing-sled and, mounted behind the schoolboy inventor, was enjoying some thrilling trial runs round the quad!

Johnny Gee & Co., busy with their decorative work inside, were suddenly startled to hear a loud yell from outside, in Chignook's high-pitched tones.

"My hat! I hope that idiot, Catchpole, hasn't had a crash," gasped Johnny Gee, rushing to the hall door. "What the merry dickens— Oh, good heavens!"

Out in the snowy quadrangle, six men, burly and villainous-looking, with hard faces and narrowed, glinting eyes, were pursuing Catchpole's snow-sailing craft. Their rough, fur-lined clothes and heavy leather laced top-boots proclaimed them to be men from the North. A sharp command, like the crack of a whip, rapped out from the men's leader, who was a huge gorilla of a man, thick-necked and with wickedness stamped in every line of his repulsive features.

"Get him—it's that blamed Eskimo we want!"

Johnny Gee turned grimly to his chums at the doorway.

"It's the Blizzard Wolf!" muttered the Remove captain. "Oh, my hat!"

Catchpole flung a wild glance round him. The Blizzard Wolves were dashing through the snow towards the sailing-sled, and their outstretched hands were within an ace of seizing the terrified Gan, when Catchpole set the helicopter vanes to work, and the whole caboodle shot up into the air!

Shouts of baffled savagery burst from the crooks' lips as they saw their quarry soaring aloft, out of their reach! Shots were blazed at the flying snow-sled, but the miscreants did no damage.

"Look out, Catchpole!" shrieked Dick Bannister involuntarily. "You'll crash into the wall— Oh, crumbs!"

Biff! The flying-sled, its vanes whirring wildly, took a sudden swoop towards the School House, and it ran full tilt into the wall! Cries of horror from the watching Removites turned to gasps of astonishment, for the dizzy craft had swept over the top of the high buttress and landed itself and its occupants on the snow-clad balcony above the School House steps.

"Hurrah!" shouted Johnny Gee jubilantly. "Here's a chance to rescue Gan now!"

The Blizzard Wolf started to run to the School House steps, but Johnny Gee & Co. promptly slammed the door in his face, and the bolts were shot. The juniors dashed upstairs, locking the hall door behind them, and were just in time to drag Chignook and Catchpole through the window at the end of the upper corridor, from the balcony.

"Now, boys, we've got to look after Gan, and drive off those villains before they have a chance to get in!" said Johnny Gee. "Hark! They're shooting down the lock of the hall door now!"

Johnny Gee set his teeth grimly.

"There's only one thing for it, chaps—we must disappear!" he exclaimed. "I know a way—through the Form room chimney—the way Mist came down!"

The juniors dashed off to the Remove Form room. The heavy oak door was locked and barricaded with desks and forms piled up against it.

Snowball, the little nigger schoolboy, went up the chimney first, to prospect. His rich, melodious voice came down from the confines of the chimney. "All serene, Massa Johnny! Dere am an openin' up here dat Massa Mist came froo. Heaps ob room!"

Crash! Crash! Crash! Blizzard Wolf and his desperadoes had arrived outside, and were smashing at the Form room door.

"Open this door, you whelps!" he raged cursing foully. "I want that Eskimo boy—"

"Kats! We're not handing him over!" shouted back Johnny Gee.

By dint of some man-uvring and much squeezing, Gan (Chignook was stuffed into the chimney, and Snowball helped him from above. Fatty Slocum went next, and by the time he had got safely through, most of the soot from the chimney walls had been rubbed off, so that the rest of the juniors made a comparatively clean ascent, one after another.

Johnny Gee found that there was an opening at the side of the wide chimney, and this led to a bricked tunnel, apparently built between the walls of the School House. At last the juniors were all up the chimney—and safe!

There was a crash as the form-room door burst in and the infuriated desperadoes hurled the barricaded desks and forms out of their path.

Johnny Gee & Co., crouching on the ledge in the middle of the wide chimney, heard the Blizzard Wolf's baffled cries as he found the room empty!

He came to the chimney and looked up, his glaring, malevolent eyes ablaze with rage and hatred. The Blizzard Wolf's flow of lurid language was suddenly cut short by a torrent of soot that was dislodged and sent hurtling down on top of him.

"*Yerrrough!* You blamed little coyotes— *Gerroooooogh!*"

The juniors crowded into the narrow passage that led from the chimney. They crept down a flight of narrow stone steps, Johnny Gee shining his torchlight ahead to show the way. Their hearts thudded with tense excitement. They were going down—down—into the very bowels of the earth, it seemed!

At length, Mist pushed open a heavy oak door, and beyond this was a long, low-ceilinged room.

"My hat! This is great!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "We'll take up our quarters here until those villains are gone! We've two jobs to tackle now—the mystery of the ghost, and these rotters from the Arctic, who want to get Gan into their clutches!"

Next Week—the sequel to this gripping school yarn: "Ware Blizzard Wolves." More Xmas thrills, chums.